The Tarboro' Southerner.

"I AM A SOUTHERN MAN, OF SOUTHERN PRINCIPLES."—Jefferson Davis.

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THE SOUTHERNER is one of the oldest and gest Journals in North Carolina, and as e of the institutions of the Country and organ of Edgecombe County, its conduc will strive to direct it in the interest o e State and Country at larges, and he wil pare no pains to make it a fit representative t the section from which it emenates.

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Tarboro, N. C. june18-tf.

The Tarboro' Southerner.

Thursday, - - - October 23, 1873.

THEODORA.

"Come, come, my dog, we'll now turn in. I'm tired with a long day's watching. Why, Coorie, what's the matter?"

And as the beautiful Scotch terrier came up, wagging his tail, the young cavalry officer bent his bright, handsome face, already bronzed by the Indian climate, over him, till his own black, curly locks mingled with Coorie's yellow coat.

"What's the matter, dog?" We've picketed down Angus [his horse] ready saddled; we've had our supper, and the natives are all abed; so come along, too, *mon chien*, the Sepoys are a long way off as yet."

Throwing away his cigar, Edward St. Clare rose up and entered his little bungalow—the only white man in it or near it for the next picket was a couple of miles to the South.

Really tired, the young man threw himself on the couch and closed his eyes, bidding Coorie lie down. But Coorie was restless and fidgetty, and finally, as sleep seemed stealing over the wearied officer, he uttered a short bark, which instantly made the handsome gray eye open wide again.

"What now, Coorie?"

The dog jumped on him, licked his face, and pulling his arm violently the moment he sank back.

"You won't let me sleep, then. Ha! what's that?"

A man's suppressed voice beneath the window said: "St. Clare, for Heaven's sake, awake—the Sepoys are upon us!"

Capt. St. Clare was on his feet in a second, and at the window.

"Darville? Right! I'm armed and cloaked, and my horse saddled."

"Come, then," returned the other hurriedly; "we must fly for our lives. My horse is here; I have ridden like the wind."

St. Clare caught up his faithful little dog, sprung himself out of the window to the ground, and swiftly and silently fetched out his horse—a magnificent chestnut. To mount and put spurs to their animals was but the work of a moment. They could hear the advancing enemy through the jungle; they could almost see the natives, like demons, shuddered to think of the narrow escape they had from a terrible, torturing and ingenious death.

Neither drew rein for an hour, leading their way for the nearest station. Then as the rode on more carefully, St. Clare told the story of Coorie's strange, instinctive protection, during which the animal, perfectly understanding the loving voice and touch as he nestled in the bosom, folds his master's military cloak looked up gratefully.

"We heard their advance," Darville explained, "and being such a small detachment, Col. Manners fell back to the South, and sent me on to you with orders to fly and warn the stations between this and Burrat Peor, where you know the main bodies lie."

"Yes. Ah, there is the station below. How quiet they are! too quiet Darville. I don't believe there is a single regiment to be relied on!"

A little more and he pointed suddenly.

"Great Heaven! too late! The villains have risen. Look, look! we never thought to see such an awful sight a few short weeks ago!"

Blackened ruins where the station had been, corpses mauled and disfigured in every possible way that devilish savagery could invent—men, women and children; horrors too great, details too fearful to harrow the reader with here. For those who remember the Indian mutinies of 1856 it is enough for them to know, but for those who do not let them get in ignorance. This is not the place of its horrors, but simply a true incident out of the many episodes which occurred during that sad time.

Both rode on in silence, though Major Darville, the elder and less impressionable, was the first to recover his power of speech.

"We must keep on; a day's journey will bring us to Burrat Peor."

"Yes. What is that, exclaimed St. Clare, suddenly drawing rein.

"I hear nothing but the beasts howling. Ride on, man, ride on."

"I won't till I hear it again. By Heaven, it was the voice of a child!

"A wild cat, you mean; they cry like a baby."

"It was not a cat. Ha! again," and springing to the ground, he seized hold of a bush of greenwood close by, when lo! it came up with a readiness that almost threw him backwards. The voracious dog tore away the roots in a minute.

"It is a dry well," said Darville.

"And a little child at the bottom," added St. Clare, bending over the well. "It is very shallow, I can get it out if you keep a good look-out and hold my horse."

Darville anxiously watched his disappearance; but, in a moment his arms reappeared, holding a little white form which they placed on the edge while he scrambled on again himself.

It was a little child of three years old, whose extreme beauty neither terror, fears, nor semi starvation could hide.

"Poor little creature!" and a tear fell on the fair little face, as the young soldier clasped the child close to his breast. "How could anything born of woman hurt you? Your flask, Darville quick."

Capt. St. Clare gave his charge some brandy, then biscuit, soaked in brandy, till the exhausted frame began to revive. She smiled up tremulously in the young, handsome face, and then, with a cry of terror, clung round his neck.

"Hide me! hide me! oh, mamma! mamma!"

"My child, my darling, they shall not harm you, though they have murdered your mother."

"She cut—me—there," sobbed the child, "till she came."

"She will never come, darling. I must be father, mother, all to you now. We must ride on quickly, Darville, or the fiends will be down on us."

He held the child closer, lifted Coorie, and remounted, wrapping both child and dog in his cloak, retaining the strong clasp of his right arm.

"I am ready," he said; and the horses, refreshed by their rest, started off at a good, steady pace along the track which was the best route towards Burrat Peor. The poor little child, who must have suffered terrors for many hours, which, perhaps, few could estimate, slept soundly in her protector's arms.

"What a beauty she is, said Major Darville, once. "Poor little lass; wonder who she is—yours now, I think, St. Clare, by Joy, and I fear no one lives to claim her."

"Poor baby, no; and look here, Darville, if no one does own her, I'll not give her up to any body in the world."

"Stuff, boy," said Darville, "You are not rich; what can you do with the child? How the fellows would chaff."

"Let them. I can laugh who wins; and I will deny myself to save for her."

"Edward St. Clare, it is a thousand pities that your father and mother are dead!" exclaimed Darville. "They would have been proud of their son, as I am at this moment of my friend."

"Hush! Darville. See, here is a smooth piece; give rein. They shall never take us alive."

* * * * * * *

The day was dawning when the fugitives again slackened speed, and finally stopped by a stream to let their horses refreshment on mselves from Major Darville's well-provided saddle-bags.

"Ten minutes' rest," he said, bringing forth provisions. "Come, pretty one, wake up for some breakfast."

The little creature was sleepily asleep that her young protector placed her, cloak, dog, and all, on the ground before she began to awake up, with a scared look in the great blue eyes, which changed to a sunny smile as they went from one face to the other. Poor orphan! she was too young to know her loss. She, however, quickly settled herself against St. Clare, and eat her sandwiches in a pretty, dainty, ladylike way, which told as much as her appearance, she was the child of well-born, well-bred people.

"What is your name, golden-head?" said St. Clare, tenderly drawing the silky glittering curls through his long slender fingers.

The little bright face looked up into his as the sweet silvery voice said, simply, "Mamma's Pet."

A childlike answer, but one vivid in its sad picture of what she had been and what she was now, that it went like a physical blow to the young, brave, heart St. Clare suddenly covered his face, but he mastered himself at once.

"I can't help it, Darville. I am a perfect fool where women and children are concerned. My poor baby don't you know any other name?"

"No; only Mamma's Pet."

"Poor child, you shall be my little girl now—my pet."

"Till mamma comes," said the child, thoughtfully.

"Darville, how can I tell her? what shall I say or do?

The Major thought of his own wife and little girl in England, and cleared his throat before he answered, gruffly, "Don't tell her anything.

"Listen, baby," said Edward, "when mamma hid her pet in the well, what did she say?"

"She said that the wicked Sepoys were coming, and she would fetch me again when it was safe or else God would send some good man to me; and, you see He did, because he sent you didn't He.

"Child, child you are a lesson, indeed, to me. Yes, He sent me, indeed, and you to me, Darville, I will call her Theodora."

"Why? I am no classic."

"I means 'God's gift.' Listen again, sweet heart. Your mother will never come for you again—never see you till—till you see her in heaven. She is gone to heaven, my poor child."

"Never come again—nor papa either?" The coral lips began to quiver piteously—the large eyes to fill. Darville turned aside. St. Clare lifted her and rose—sighing, for he feared not speak, that they must resume; that there was danger in every minute's rest.

"We can push on now to Burrat-Peor," he said, as they started off again, the child and dog once more nestled in his arms.

"If you can," said Darville, for it will be then over forty eight hours since you slept, won't it?"

"Yes, though that's nothing. I shan't hurt."

The invaluable cloak sheltered the child as much from the sun's heat as from the cold night dews. It was a long and painful ride, full of trouble and anxiety, for how did they know but what they might meet a body of savage rebels?

* * * * *

Can you not imagine the wild joy and relief with which, towards evening, the well known sound of a drum, beating to quarters came upon the ear, and the smoke from many a fire floated upwards through the trees; for the strong, jovial English under Colonel Hayter, were encamped just outside Burrat Peor.

The pickets were passed, and the fugitives rode up to the commander's tent, and dismounted as Colonel Hayter came out.

"Why! you! Major Darville and Captain St. Clare! What new tale of horror do you bring?" said the old soldier, grimly. "You both look done up. And what has the boy got?"

The dog was frisking about his feet while the child was peeping out of the mantle, clinging tightly to her protector all the time, the more the officers came crowding round to welcome the fugitives.

"A child, sir, a wee lassie," said the young officer, half laughing and coloring as he threw back his mantle.

"What a beauty!" exclaimed several. Who ever did couple her up?"

"Didn't know you were married," said one slyly.

"What is your name, pretty one?" said Colonel Hayter, stroking the curly head.

"Mamma's Pet."

The deep unconscious sweetness, the pathetic tale it told in two words took them all. There was a hush for a moment, broken by Col. Hayter.

"We must see to our fugitives' refreshment, baby and all Jarvis"—to his orderly—"supper, and get ready the room next to mine, and send your wife to see to this little girl. Come in and let me have your dispatches and tell me the news and your story."

This, as the superior in rank, Darville did, the child listening with dilated eyes to the part which told of her parents' murder and her own rescue; but when Mrs. Jervis came in she hid her face in Edward's breast and burst into tears.

"No, no—oh, don't send Mamma's Pet away! She'll never come, you said, and Pet has only you to love! She'll go to sleep in your arms, will, and, south to say, so were the others."

"Colonel, I can't say no to the little motherless thing. Mrs. Jervis will kindly take her to wash, or what ever else she needs, and bring her back quickly. My darling, you shall come back to me."

The child suffered the good woman to take her away, but in about ten minutes she brought her back, washed and tidied." She sat on her protector's knees, and gravely ate her supper from his plate, much to Colonel Hayter's amusement.

"Well, St. Clare, it certainly is a strange idea for a young fellow like you to saddle himself with a baby of three or four years. Look! she's asleep."

"Faith, so shall I be, Colonel, for it's fifty hours since I slept a wink. Please excuse us. Darville, smoke a cigar on my behalf. Good night—come, Coorie."

Man, child, and dog vanished into the inner room, and in less than ten minutes the Major followed suit.

"I say, Hayter, look here. What a picture."

It was the young officer, just as he was, had thrown himself on the low pallet; his handsome, noble face slightly turned, as if the last look had rested on the little child. She lay fast asleep on his breast, nestled close within his arms and the heavy cloak, which wrapped them both and made a bed for Coorie, who was curled up close to his master's hand.

"He is as handsome as the babe is beautiful," said Colonel Hayter.—"He's a noble fellow, though of course he has his faults. I wonder if he looks to the future in taking charge of this forlorn birdie."

"I verily believe he has, during our flight," answered Darville.

"I wish he was my son," half murmured the colonel, laying his hand tenderly on the sleeper's rich black locks, and sighing. His own son Darville knew, had been a grief to his parents, and had died in no very reputable manner.

"Well, good night Darville," he said. "I suppose we shant see any of you at breakfast."

"Not me, colonel, certainly, but I dare wager that fellow there will turn up with his child. I never saw such a wide awake customer in my life." And he too turned in.

* * * * * * *

"Mamma's Pet" soon became the pet of the whole force at Burrat Peor, and to Captain St. Clare the very light and core of his existence, the idol of his life. In vain older and wiser heads advised this and that plan; to one and all he shook his own fine head and answered—"No, as I cannot discover who her parents are, she is my child."

"But you cannot keep her with you in India."

"I can and must. I can't afford to send her to England, and she'll do up country."

"But as she grows up?"

"Oh, time enough to think so far forward; we may not then be alive. At present she can stop actually with me, and Mrs. Jervis will attend to her. Why, the ladies couldn't spare her. We fall back on Lucknow in a few days."

The little Theodora, as her protector called her, perfectly idolized him and when off duty never lost sight of him, and as every one petted and spoiled the sweet, bright fairy, from gray-haired Colonel Hayter down to the drummer boys, no one ever objected to her presence as an inevitable addition to that of Captain St. Clare. Certainly any nature less docile, less delicate and fine would have been spoiled, but instead, the pure, gentle little being was a perpetual purifier to her young protector. Even the careless, thoughtless jest, of too light word, such as young men indulge in among themselves, was checked for the sake of the child hearer, till soon the habit was altogether lost. No ridicule kindly or unkindly, moved the young officer; and time, and danger, and privation, many a hard conflict fought, many a deed of daring done, and many separations endured only strengthened the tie between the man and the child.

This is no story of the Mutiny; it is enough that Edward St. Clare, whose luck carried him to all the posts of honor, as Lucknow, Delhi, &c., won promotion and honors and the right to much prize money—the two first were immediate; the latter of course nothing at the future. When the terrible rebellion was at length quelled and peace restored, Edward St. Clare found himself a married and distinguished officer. The new Viceroy of India singled him out to place in command of an important garrison, and there the child Theodora flourished and grew, clinging the closer to him after each separation, which a five military duty made necessary; for it was long, and even years, before occasional disturbances were crushed out. * *

The scene changes from India's gorgeous clime to the golden autumn of an English home, where the silver waters of the Thames flowed past the garden of a pretty villa taken for the autumn by a quiet gentleman and his wife.

Perhaps that is he standing by the French window, within which his wife sits reading; if so, we should know him—a fine, erect, military looking man, rather over forty; gray, yes, now, as he was not thirteen years ago."

"I wonder where Theodora has gone with her letter," says Major Darville. "How she eat me up with her great eyes, when I told her he had actually gone at any hour."

"Odd that Colonel St. Clare has never married," remarkable Mrs Darville what there's time yet; he will always be young. I wonder he even let that child go with you."

"It was a terrible partin, Mary, but it was necessary. She was thirteen and a tall, lovely girl; he far too handsome and young to keep her with him. Besides, though he, a thoroughly well educated man, had instructed her in all branches of useful knowledge yet at thirteen she needed in accomplishments and such things the finishing process; moreover, her health began to feel the climate. So did mine, and as I was coming home for good, and we were glad to have her, he wisely sent his darling away."

"I wonder whether he will find her much alter ed? At her age, passing from childhood to girlhood is a great change—and she is seventeen now. I suppose she is devouring his letter and photo, and starting at every falling leaf, thinking it is his step."

Was he not right? See that slight, beautiful girl with such a wealth of golden curls, bending over a photograph in her hand. It is of a dark and very handsome man, looking only about thirty, though really nearly two years over that. We know that bright, noble face, as well as she does—the child whose first orphan sleep had been upon