

Hearts Courageous

HALLIE
By... ERMINIE
RIVES

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CHAPTER III.

THE Yorktown wharf was a fair sight to the passengers of the Two Sisters as the ship swung to her moorings. Beyond the yellow clay bank the shore glowed in a violet green dazzle of foliage, a flame of amethyst and pink, and over all the sun hung hazy, like some splendid dream rose, strewn its petals upon a bay of tinted glass.

The bank behind the wharf was a fringe of negroes, their vacant minded happiness shaking out laughter as wind shakes blossoms from a locust tree. The gray colored turbans bobbed like variegated poppies on a breezy day. The planking below was sprinkled with town folk, and on the road behind it several chariots were drawn up at some distance.

In advance of these and in the rear of the crowd, with Betsy Byrd in the saddle beside it, stood the Tillotson coach, fraying in its window a face with a flicker of laughter over it like the wind on a May meadow. Anne was in close green and with her oak yellow hair looked a gold spear rising straight from its sheath. As early as noon one of the Tillotson blacks had ridden to Gladden Hall with the news that the ship had been sighted down the bay, and Anne had ordered the chariot forthwith. Betsy had a new penecock shawl coming in Master Elvess' care and had made the pilgrimage from Williamsburg every day for a week.

"What a pity!" exclaimed Anne, who had been first to arrive. "Mr. Cary—Breckinridge Cary—came on the ship, but she lay in Hampton Roads last night, and he there found a packet for Philadelphia. So we shall not see him till the spring."

"I'm sorry," Betsy answered. "Frank saw him in London. What a lot there are here! There is Burnaby Rolph of Westham, here for more redemptions no doubt. He bought a round dozen last night. Why doesn't he leave that for his factor, like a gentleman, I wonder?"

Anne looked at the man she indicated—of medium height, with a sheep face, long in the tooth—and turned away with thick legs planted firmly, talking with a neighbor, his head turned over his shoulder, and as they looked he raised his sword hilt and struck savagely at a black who jostled him. "Poor servants who fall into Mr. Rolph's hands, I pity them," she said in a low voice.

"John the Baptist," she called to her mounted servant, "did you go down to inquire about Miss Betsy's chest, as I told you?"

"Yas'm, yas'm. Done been down dar twice."

"Are you sure?"
"Yas'm, on meh honah!"
"Honor!" Anne said severely. "What do you know about honor, John the Baptist?"

The darky responded with a ragged grin. "I uster hab er heap er honah," he said vaguely, "but I got so 'straw-gant wid it I spec' I ain't got much left now."

"Look yonder, Anne," whispered Betsy. "Isn't that a genteel looking young man? What a lovely brown his hair is! He's looking this way. His coat has a foreign cut. I warrant he came on the ship. There is Master Brooke vanding by him now."

Anne's eyes showed her a gray coat unslashed, plain hose and shoes with a neat steel buckle—a dress neither rich nor poor. There was no lace upon the hat, no paste knee buckles, no sword—none of the marks of distinction. But the face was open and the nut dark eyes frank and clear.

She had gazed but a moment when a familiar red coat shouldered its way through the press. She bit her lip and turned her head away, but Betsy was deep in chat with young Mr. Carlyle, kinsman to the Belvoir Fairfaxes, a youth lean as a rake, of a pae disposition, all hair and eyes.

The newcomer strode to the steps with assurance and touched Anne's fingers with his lips. "Still so cold, so far away? Still cherishing a frown for me?"

"I looked not to see you, Captain Jarrat."

"I am but just returned from London."

"On the Two Sisters?"

"Aye," he answered, with a slumbering flush on his face. "The moth returns to the lamp. A pretty conceit, is it not?"

She moved her shoulders with a gesture of impatience.

"Why am I doomed to be ever in your bad graces, Mistress Tillotson? Oh, 'tis true, I would it were not! 'Twas so in Williamsburg. Had you a smile for me? 'Twas when I went. Well, I return to the frown."

"I have naught else for you. I have told you so."

"And yet," he said constrainedly, "for another kind of look from you I would forget all else. I would change all, risk all. Can I never win aught from such a love as mine? Will you never tell me how to change myself for you? Shall I go always wanting? A fierce and unhappy passion was written in his face.

she said. "My answer was my answer. I can never give you more."

He touched his breast, drawing his hand across the gold slashings of his coat. "Is it this? Do you frown upon his majesty's uniform? I swear I would I were a Whig!"

"A Tory before a turncoat," she answered him.

Jarrat shut his teeth like a trap. Then without reply he bowed to her and strode toward the ship. Betsy,

turning her horse, saw only his vanishing figure, Anne's face a flush red with anger and her eyes gleaming like blue ice.

"Why," exclaimed she in surprise, "'twas Captain Jarrat!"

"I wish," said Anne, with temper, giving Betsy's horse a slap that made him dance and called forth a curdling scream from its rider—"I wish Captain Jarrat was in Guinea!"

As Jarrat stepped on to the deck the gangway was thrown down for the herded human cattle that had thronged the lower deck. Sixty odd, they came trooping out to where the factors were gathered, and the ship's agent at once began the bidding by offering a convict smith bound for seven years and allowed only diet and lodging, who, he declared, made great diversion by singing and whistling, besides being rare at iron work.

The sale proceeded rapidly, for bond servants were in demand and the lot was above an average one. They stood for inspection eagerly or stolidly, as their faces promised, some sullen eyed, some smirking. The women were offered last. But few remained when the agent beckoned to the swarthy skinned woman whose babe had died during the voyage, and she came forward timidly, turning her sloop-black Italian eyes upon the crowd in misunderstanding and covering dread. Her hair and the red olive of her skin made a curious contrast to the light complexions of the other women.

Burnaby Rolph, who had purchased two laborers, looked her over with satisfaction.

"A likely wench," he gulped. "Twenty pounds is enough, I doubt not, since she is foreign. I take her. Put that down to my reckoning, Master Clarkson."

"Poor thing!" said Anne. "I would I were a man. That brute should never have her!" She looked up and felt the young Frenchman's eyes full upon her. He had clearly overheard.

"You belong to him now," said the agent to the woman, pointing to Rolph. "D'ye understand?"

She gazed into Rolph's face and drunkenly about the circle. Then, with a sudden cry, doubling like an animal, she dodged between the knots of spectators and threw herself at Armand's feet.

Rolph's curse was lost in a great laugh which rose from the factors, and Anne's face swung red at a coarse remark from one of them.

M. Armand did not seem nonplused. He stooped and lifted the cowering woman to her feet as Rolph approached, his lean eyes winking.

"My wench seems to have an uncommon fancy," the latter sneered. "Gall me, why did you not buy her?"

"Will you sell her to me?"

The latter looked at the secretary's dress and glowered at the merriment of the onlookers.

"No," he blurted. Armand smiled with suavity. "Perhaps it would please you to game with me for her? In my country, gentlemen," he remarked to those around, "we are overfond of the dice table. As for me, I could never resist to woo the hazard of fortune. Mayhap, however, here you are less adventurous, more cautious, monsieur, or, as those who, having little, hesitate to risk."

Rolph grunted at this airy thrust and gnawed his lip. His estate of Bentcliff was the largest on all the James, and this, it was said, he had won in the palace in Williamsburg fifteen years before in a wild night of play with Governor Fauquier's gambling crew.

"I will lay against her," added Armand, "double the amount she cost you. And a toss of a coin shall decide."

The factors gasped and stood looking the speaker over. Rolph stared an instant, then: "Done! Leave the indenture open, Master Clarkson, and bring it here."

A wager in Virginia never failed to provoke interest, whether it was for a pair of spurs or a pipe of canary, and now all were listening eagerly. The two girls, from their positions, could see without difficulty over the intervening heads.

"Let us go farther away," said Anne, but Betsy was of a different mind. "No, no," she protested. "They are going to toss. I wouldn't miss it now for anything. He is French, Anne. I can tell it by the accent."

Rolph called and threw the gold coin he had drawn from his pocket with a flourish. "The king's head!" rose a score of voices as it fell. "Mr. Rolph wins."

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Betsy in great vexation.

"I really believe," said Anne, with heat, "that you want that man to win."

"Weren't you just now wishing you were a man so Mr. Rolph shouldn't?" retorted Betsy.

M. Armand had drawn forth a wallet from his pocket and lifted out the sum. "Fortune beams upon you, monsieur," he smiled. "I was ever unlucky of a Wednesday. Shall we have one more throw? And double or quits mayhap, monsieur? Unless you deem the stake overhigh?"

"High!" said Rolph, with a growl. "Double or quits it is. Eighty pounds against your lost forty and the wench. But, mind you, this one throw ends it. D'you hear?"

The other tossed. There was a shout as the coin descended, for it lodged in the brim of a spectator's hat and could not be counted. At the next trial it rolled in a spiral and finally stood edgewise in a crack of the wharf flooring.

A third time the young Frenchman sent it spinning. It twinkled in the sunlight, fell, bounded sideways, the crowd parting before it, rolled across the open space and toppled over a few feet from Anne. Instinctively she leaned far out of the coach and looked.

"It shows the arms!" she cried in spite of herself. The coin had fallen on its obverse side.

"Fortune has turned," the secretary observed easily. "It appears, monsieur, that the servant is mine. The remainder of the stake, if you please."

"'Twas but his assurance he wagered with," snarled Rolph. "It will not hold. What does this sorry raiment with this much money, gentlemen? He does not own so much. I dispute the bet!"

"And Mr. Rolph calls himself a gentleman!" Anne said disgustedly.

M. Armand looked at his antagonist with undisguised contempt, and murmurs of the assembly, who loved fair play, were so unmistakable that Rolph drew out bills and indenture with a curse and drove off with a black look.

Anne watched him go, a curl on her lip. When she turned at Betsy's exclamation it was first to be aware that all on the wharf were looking her way, that some of them were smiling and then that the young Frenchman, with the redemptioner woman following him, was approaching her.

Before she had recovered from her astonishment he was bowing low. "Mademoiselle," he said, "will pardon the liberty I take in addressing her?" She bowed coldly, half startled.

"Fate," he went on, "has made me the owner of this servant, for whom, being no landholder, I have scant use. She speaks a strange tongue and is in a strange land, and to free her without bond time were small kindness. May I beg the favor, mademoiselle, that you take her in your service, demanding such labor as will requite her support?"

The indignant color flooded Anne's brow. "Sir," she said frigidly, drawing herself up, "we have strange surprises in Virginia, but surely the effrontery of our visitors surpasses them all."

Armand looked clearly at her out of his dark eyes. "Mademoiselle will pardon," he answered, "the error of one of these visitors, who, seeing her face, has overestimated her graciousness and charity."

With this he bowed again till his hat swept the ground, and, followed by the bondwoman, walked down the wharf toward the unloading vessel.

The red in Anne's cheeks had grown to firebrands and her anger lent sting to the half concealed smirks of those who stood nearest.

"Land of mercy!" said Betsy, with emphasis. "What impudence!"

Soon the curious crowd was thinning. Betsy's search was ended, and Anne, having left her seat in the coach, watched at nearer view the disgorging of the cargo.

Here Brooke came primed with a new sensation. This now nothing less than the tale of a fight which had occurred during the voyage between the mate of the vessel and a passenger. Anne's eyes were very soft as he finished.

"And who d'ye think," he ended, "was this champion? Why, the young Frenchman yonder that you crushed so mercilessly, Mistress Tillotson."

"And the redemptioner woman?" asked Anne, with something like dread.

"'Twas the wench he won from Burnaby Rolph."

"Oh!" The cadence was full of liquid self reproach. "Where are you going?" Betsy asked as Anne rose. She did not answer, but walked quickly across the wharf to the spot where Armand stood. He made no movement as she came.

"Monsieur"—She faltered and stopped.

His hat was in his hand instantly, and he was gravely deferential.

"I wish to take back," she went on, "my words of awhile ago. I assure you they were not rudely meant. I—"

He stayed her with a gesture. "What am I that mademoiselle should speak thus? I was brusque, unmannerly—"

"No, no!"

"I forgot where I was—forgot that I had not the joy of knowing her—forgot everything but what I saw in her face as she sat in the chariot. For I am a great magician, mademoiselle. I know all who are lovely and gracious of heart."

"I was wrong," she said proudly. "And for this I ask your pardon. May—may I have the bond servant?"

He smiled gayly now and bowed low to her. "To be treated with such pleasant surgery all the world would be glad of wounds," he cried. "You recompense me a thousand times!"

He signed to the serving woman who sat stolidly upon a nearby chest and pointed from himself to Anne. She understood, and when Anne put her in charge of John the Baptist to take on ahead a pillion she went without question.

Betsy watched this transaction open mouthed.

"Did you ever!" she gasped. "I wonder what mother will say to that!"

Armand had stepped to position, hat under arm, at the coach door. "Mademoiselle will permit me to assist her?" he asked and gave her the tips of his fingers. His eyes were bright on her face.

On the step she stopped, half turned, a delicate flush coming to her cheek—a flush that deepened to damask at his look. She hesitated an instant as if about to speak, then suddenly entered, sat down, gave the word to the driver and was whirled away. The secretary stood looking after the retreating chariot.

"A splendid creature," purred Brooke, at his elbow, "albeit you found her wintry."

"Wintry!" exclaimed the young man. "She who is made only of summer, its incense, its colors, its dreams! Yours is an enchanted land, monsieur, and she its goddess!"

"Egad, I'll make a sonnet of that!" exclaimed Brooke. "Sink me, but it's coming back!" The latter remark was applied to the chariot, which had turned and was now approaching more slowly the spot where they stood.

As it drew up Anne leaned from the window. "Monsieur," she called, "I had quite forgot to speak of the indenture."

He drew it from his pocket and held it out to her.

"Such have to be conveyed, I make sure," she said, looking at it doubtfully. "Your delicacy, sir, forbade you to set me right. We shall have to sign and witness a deed and what not, I suppose."

"'Tis a plain indenture," said Brooke, peering.

She drew it away sharply. "Alas, we women know so little of business. I bethink me my father will wish to receipt to you for it."

"Mademoiselle!"

"Aye, but he will. At any rate, you would not be so ungracious as to have me blamed, sir? Will you not ride to Gladden Hall with me? 'Tis scarce a half league away."

"Mademoiselle!"

"Your father is in Williamsburg, mistress," ventured the exquisite. "I chanced to overhear him say this morning he would remain over at Colonel Byrd's until tomorrow."

Anne frowned. "I fear you did not hear aright, sir," she returned coldly.

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"Fate," he went on, "has made me the owner of this servant, for whom, being no landholder, I have scant use. She speaks a strange tongue and is in a strange land, and to free her without bond time were small kindness. May I beg the favor, mademoiselle, that you take her in your service, demanding such labor as will requite her support?"

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poeket. The skipper was not deaf.

"The passengers?" he hazarded. "They are off for the north today. Boston blab will not hurt me. 'Tis the gazettes here I care about. As for the factors, they are bent on business. Our young Virginia woolpack has gone to Pennsylvania. I'll risk him."

"There's the marquis' secretary."

Jarrat snapped his fingers. "He'll be cheap. I know the breed. A leaf lost from a log is no great matter," he continued slowly as though to himself. Again the jingle. The skipper cleared his throat.

Jarrat's hand slowly, very slowly, tore out the leaf, folded it and placed it in his pocketbook. Yellow disks passed across the table.

"I'll be keel hauled if I see your game," said the skipper.

The other smiled. "I'll be keel hauled if I see why you should," said he.

Brooke was scarce done twisting his lovecock when Jarrat crossed the wharf from the ship hot from his bargain with the skipper. He made inquiries concerning a young gentleman dressed in gray and by good luck hit upon an apprentice lad who told him

he had carried the young gentleman's chest to the Swan tavern, at which he had been directed to bespeak supper and lodging.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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August W. Machen, the former head of the free delivery system of the Postoffice Department and the foremost figure among the officials, politicians and contractors indicted as a result of the postal investigation, and Diller B. Groff and Samuel A. Groff, both of this city, convicted in connection with the promotion of a letter box fastener scheme, left Washington with a party of eleven other convicts for the Moundsville, W. Va., penitentiary, shortly after six o'clock tonight, to serve a sentence of two years—Washington Dispatch, 7th.

When You Have a Cold.

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Twenty-five out of the thirty-four applicants for license to practice law successfully passed the examination by the Supreme Court last week.

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Among the many good stories in The Youth's Companion for February 9th is a comical one, suggested by the "servant problem" in the Philippines; a charming college story, "The Mouse," by Mabel Nelson Thurston; and a most remarkable tale of adventure "Among the Earth Pyramids" of Bolivia, by A. W. Tolman. These are supplemented by a number of short sketches, anecdotes, bits of fresh humor, and selections of miscellany.

The Raleigh Post says that "the town of Littleton is tired of the dispensary business and wants prohibition." They all get tired of it.—Charlotte Chronicle.

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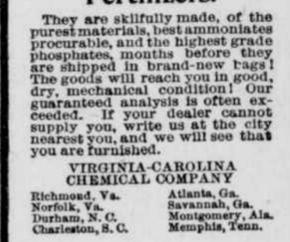
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