

The RED MIST

A TALE OF CIVIL STRIFE
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SYNOPSIS.

Confederate Sergeant Wyatt of the Staunton artillery is sent as a spy to his native county on the Green Briar by General Jackson. Wyatt meets a mountaineer named John Taylor. They ride together to a house beyond Hot Springs. In the house Wyatt and Taylor meet Major Harwood, father of Noreen, and an old neighbor of Wyatt, who is sent to bed while the two other men talk. Wyatt becomes suspicious, and finds that Taylor has murdered Harwood and escaped. Wyatt changes to the U. S. cavalry uniform he has with him, and rides away in the night, running into a detachment of Federal cavalry, to whom he identifies himself as Lieutenant Raymond, Third U. S. Cavalry, by means of papers with which he has been provided. Captain Fox finds Harwood's body and follows Taylor's trail. Fox and Wyatt believe Taylor to be old Ned Cowan. The detachment is ambushed. Wyatt escapes to the Green Briar country and goes to Harwood's apparently deserted home.

CHAPTER VI.

The Mistress of the House.

I stood with ear pressed against the panel, fingers gripping the butt of my revolver. An ordinary latch held the door closed, and I pressed this, opening the barrier slightly. The movement made not the slightest noise, and gave me a glimpse within.

In front of a small grate fire, her back toward me, snuggled comfortably down in the depths of an easy chair, sat a woman reading. I could see little of her because of the high back of the chair rising between us—only a mass of dark brown hair, a smooth, rounded cheek, and the small white hand resting on the chair arm. I knew vaguely her waist was white, her skirt gray, and I saw the glimmer of a pearl-handled pistol lying on a closed chest at her side. Still she was only a woman, a mere girl apparently, whom I had no cause to fear. The sudden reaction caused me to smile with relief, and to return my revolver silently to the belt. Her eyes remained on the page of the book. I think I would have withdrawn without a word, but at that instant a draft from the open door flickered her light, and she glanced about seeking the cause. I caught the startled expression in her eyes as she first perceived my shadow; the book fell to the floor, her hand gripping the pistol, even as she arose hastily to her feet. The light was on her face, and I knew her to be Noreen Harwood.

"Who are you? Why are you here?" she asked tersely, a tremor in the voice, but no shrinking in those eyes that looked straight at me.

I moved forward from out of the shadow into the radius of light. It was only a step, but the girl recoiled slightly, the pearl-handled pistol rising instantly to a level with my eyes.

"Stand where you are!" she ordered. "What are you doing, creeping about this house in the dark?"

"Not in the dark exactly," I answered, seeking to relieve the strain, and holding my hat in one hand, as I bowed gravely. "For my lamp is on the stairs."

I marked the quick change of expression in her eyes as they swept over me. There was no evidence of recognition; scarcely more than a faint acknowledgment that my appearance was not entirely unfavorable. Yet surely that alone was all I could hope for. Except for that one chance encounter on the road we had never met since we were children, and she would not likely associate the son of Judge Wyatt with the man now confronting her, attired in the wet and muddy uniform of a Federal lieutenant. Indeed it was better she should not; and a feeling of relief swept over me as I realized her failure to connect me with the past. No memory of my features found expression in her face, as her eyes fell from mine to the clothes I wore.

"You are Union? an officer of—of cavalry? I—can scarcely comprehend why you should be here." Her attitude no longer threatening, the gleaming pistol lowered. "There are Federal troops at Lewisburg, but—but I do not recall your face."

"My being here is wholly an accident," I explained quietly. "I supposed the house deserted, and sought entrance to get away from the storm. There was a broken window—"

"Yes," she interrupted, her eyes again on mine questioningly. "I found that when I came; someone had broken in."

"Robbery, no doubt."

"I am not sure as to that. I have found nothing of any value missing. Indeed we left nothing here to attract vandals." She hesitated, as though doubtful of the propriety of further explanation to a stranger. "I—belong here," she added simply. "This is my home."

"Yes; I supposed as much; you are Miss Noreen Harwood?"

Her blue eyes widened, her hand grasping more tightly the back of the chair.

"Yes," she admitted. "You knew my father?"

"Slightly; enough to be aware of the existence of his daughter, and that this was his plantation."

"Then you must be connected with the garrison at Charleston?"

"No, Miss Harwood; I belong to the Army of the Potomac, and am here only on recruiting service. A word of

explanation will make the situation clear, and I trust may serve to win your confidence. I do not have the appearance of a villain, do I?"

"No, or I should not remain parleying with you," she responded gravely. "The war has taught even the women of this section the lesson of self-protection. I am not at all afraid, or I should not be here alone."

"It surprises me, however, that Major Harwood should consent to your remaining—"

"He has not consented," she interrupted. "I am supposed to be safely lodged with friends in Lewisburg, but rode out here this afternoon to see the condition of our property. Word came to me that the house had been entered. The servants have all gone, and we were obliged to leave it unoccupied. I was delayed, seeking to discover what damage the vandals had done, and then suddenly the storm broke, and I thought it better to remain until morning."

She laughed, as though amused at her own frankness of speech.

"There, I have told you all my story, without even waiting to hear yours. 'Tis a woman's way, if her impulse be sufficiently strong."

"You mean faith in the other party?"

"Of course; one cannot be conventional in war times, and there is no one here to properly introduce us, even if that formality was desired. So I must accept you on trust."

"My uniform alone should be sufficient guarantee."

She laughed; her eyes sparkling.

"Well, hardly. I imagine you fall to comprehend its really disreputable condition. But—well, you—you look like an officer and a gentleman."

"For which compliment I sincerely thank you. However, Miss Harwood, my story can be quickly told. I am a

father must have removed those of importance. "Possibly he carried them with him?"

She leaned her head on her hand, her eyes thoughtful.

"I think he once told me they were left in charge of a banker at Charleston—an old friend. It would be too dangerous to carry them about with him in the field. You see I do not know very much about his affairs," she explained. "I was away at school when the war broke out, and we have only met briefly since. My father did not talk freely of his personal matters even to me. I learned of his feud with Cowan by accident."

"It was a feud then?"

"On one side at least. My father was shot at, and several of our out-houses burned. The trouble arose over the title to property. Cowan," she explained, "was a squatter on land which had belonged to our family ever since my grandfather first settled here. We had title from Virginia, but the tract granted had never been properly surveyed. My father had it done, and discovered that Ned Cowan and two of his sons occupied a part of our land with no legal right."

Her eyes uplifted to my face, and then fell again, one hand opening and closing on the back of the chair. She laughed pleasantly.

"I hardly know why I am telling you all this family history," she continued almost in apology. "It is as if I talked to an old friend who was naturally interested in our affairs."

"Perhaps the manner of our meeting accounts for it," I ventured. "But truly I am more deeply interested than you imagine. It may prove of mutual advantage for me to know the facts. Did Major Harwood try to force them from his land?"

"Oh, no," hastily, "my father had no such thought. He tried to help them to purchase the property at a very small price, and on long time. His intention was to aid them, but he found himself unable to convince either father or sons of his real purpose. They either could not, or would not, understand. Do you realize the reckless, lawless nature of these mountain men?"

"Yes, to some extent; they trust no one."

"That was the whole trouble. Seemingly they possessed but one idea—that if my father was killed they could remain where they were indefinitely. Their single instinct was to fight it out with rifles. They refused to either purchase or leave."

There was silence, as though she had finished. She had seated herself on the wide arm of the chair, still facing me, and I could hear the rain beating hard against the side of the house. Suddenly she looked up into my face.

"How odd that I should talk to you so freely," she exclaimed. "Why I do not even know your name."

"Charles H. Raymond."

I could not be certain that the expression of her eyes changed, for they suddenly looked away from me, and she stood again upon her feet.

"Raymond, you say!" the slightest hardening of tone apparent, "on recruiting service from the Army of the Potomac?" She drew a quick breath. "I—I think I have heard the name before. Would you mind if I did ask to see your orders?"

"Not in the least," I answered, not wholly surprised that she should have heard of the other, and confident the papers I bore would be properly executed. "I prefer that you have no doubt as to my identity."

She took them, and I noted a slight trembling of her hands as she held the paper open in her fingers, her eyes glancing swiftly down the written lines.

"I have become quite a soldier of late," she said, and handed the package back to me. "And I cannot doubt your credentials. I am very glad to meet you, Lieutenant Raymond," and she held out her hand cordially. "As I have admitted already, I am Noreen Harwood."

"Whom I shall only be delighted to serve in any manner possible," I replied gallantly, relieved that she was so easily convinced.

"Oh, I think the service is more likely to be mine. You confessed you broke in here seeking after food and a fire. Down below we may find both, and it will be my pleasure thus to serve a Federal officer. You have a lamp without?"

"On the stairs?"

She led the way like a mistress in her own home, and I followed. There was a force of character about the girl not to be ignored. She chose to treat me as a guest, uninvited, but none the less welcome, a position I was not reluctant to accept. I held the lamp as we went down the stairs together, the rays of light pressing aside the curtain of darkness.

CHAPTER VII.

Parson Nichols.

She put aside laughingly my suggestion of assistance. The fire in the grate burst into blaze, and her hands were busily rearranging the table.

"With no servants left, and the house unoccupied for months," she explained, "I shall have to give you soldier fare, and perhaps, not very much of that. Pardon my not joining in the feast, as I have only just eaten."

She drew up a chair opposite to where I sat, supporting her chin in her hands. The light between us illumined her face, outlining it clearly against the gloom of the wall behind it. It was a young face, almost girlish in a way, although there was a grave, strong look to the eyes, and womanly firmness about lips and chin. I had seen so little of her in the days gone

by. And here I found her a woman—a woman of charm, of rare beauty even; sweet and wholesome in look, her cheeks aglow with health, her eyes deep wells of mystery and promise.

Her father! I dare not tell her of his death, of his dastardly murder it was strange she had not recognized me, yet probably the real truth was that she had never before observed me with any care or interest—considering me a mere boy to be laughed at and forgotten. I was only a stranger entering into her life for the first time.



I Noted a Slight Trembling of Her Hands as She Held the Paper Open in Her Fingers.

This expression was in the eyes surveying me as I ate—quiet, earnest eyes, utterly devoid of suspicion.

"You are a very young man," she said simply.

"Not seriously so," I answered, rather inclined to resent the charge. "I am twenty-four."

"You look like a boy I used to know—only his eyes were darker, and he had long hair."

"Indeed!" I caught my breath quickly, yet held my eyes firm. "Someone living about here?"

"Yes; his name was Wyatt. I never knew him very well, only you recalled him to memory in some way. He and his mother went South when the war first broke out. Where was your home?"

"In Burlington, Vermont."

"You are a regular soldier?"

"I was a junior at West Point last year; we were graduated ahead of our class."

Her eyes fell, the lashes outlined on her cheeks, her hands clasped on the table.

"Isn't that odd!" she said quietly. "Do you know Mme. Hammett's school for young ladies at Compton on the Hudson? That is where papa sent me, and I was at the senior hop at West Point a year ago last June. A half dozen of us girls went up; Fred Carlton of Charleston was in that class, and he invited me. You knew him, of course?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

MOST REAL FRIEND OF MAN

Dog is a Comrade Whose Loyalty Never Wavers. Whose Devotion is Certain.

Your dog is ready to go with you anywhere, at any time, through any thing, like Good Deeds in the old play. He is something more than a respectable family possession, a toy, a part of an exhibition; he is a comrade whose loyalty never wavers, whose devotion never obtrudes itself; who responds to your mood without pluming himself upon his tact and who neither commiserates nor flatters.

After you have taken a few tramps together you understand each other perfectly, and there is no fear of either changing his mind unless you yourself prove fickle past belief.

And, when you are no longer friends with your dog, you are beyond saving—Countryside Magazine.

Where Politeness Ends.

The Moors are the politest and most genial people, taken as a whole, that are to be found anywhere, a writer in Travel reports in describing a visit to Fez. Politeness ends, however, it seems in the vicinity of the mosque of Moulay Idris, founder and protector of Fez. The streets are barred off by poles, and Christians, Jews and even animals are forbidden to enter.

"A few days before our arrival a Frenchman had been almost beaten to death for trespassing in this quarter," the traveler says. The tourist naturally made no attempt to take photographs in this section; elsewhere the polite natives did not object to his use of the camera—a western invention not usually welcomed in Mohammedan towns.

Misled.

"There goes Professor Dobbins, the famous ethnologist."

"An interesting character, no doubt."

"Yes, indeed. Why he knows more about the races than any other man in this country."

"Fancy that! And he doesn't look as if he had ever been on a track in his life."

And He Knew.

Says Simple Laxative Better than Castor Oil

Case of Chronic Constipation Yields to Mild Laxative Compound.

Writing from The House of the Good Shepherd, at Sunnyside Ave., and 50th St., Seattle, where she is the guest of her life-long friend the Reverend Mother, Mrs. Mary Austin, widow of a wealthy San Franciscan, who lost everything in the fire of 1906, says she experienced speedy relief from the use of Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin and that she found this gentle, pleasant-tasting laxative more effective than several doses of castor oil.

The active principles of certain laxative herbs are combined in Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin to act on the eliminative organs in an easy, natural way, without griping or other discomfort. Its freedom from opiate or narcotic drug of every description, combined with its gentle action and positive effect, make it the ideal laxative for family use. Druggists everywhere sell it for fifty cents a bottle.

A bottle of Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin should be in every home for use when the occasion arises. A trial bottle, free of charge, can be obtained by writing to Dr. W. B. Caldwell, 203 Washington St., Monticello, Ill.



MRS. MARY AUSTIN.

Defects of Childhood.

"Physical defects of childhood are largely responsible for the retardation of children in their grades at school," says William L. Bodine, president of the National League of Compulsory Education Officials. "Many of our juvenile offenders are not normal children. Proper development of muscle and mind means the betterment of humanity in general. It should begin with the child. Health and the encouragement of fundamental principles that build up health mean a happy as well as a better citizenship now and in the future.—New York Herald.

Father Defines.

"Father, what's superfluity?"

"The words, 'Please deposit promptly' on the back of a check."—Now York Sun.

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Can Be Greatly Relieved by the New External Vapor Treatment.

Don't take internal medicines or habit-forming drugs for these troubles. Vick's "Vap-O-Rub" Salve is applied externally and relieves by inhalation as a vapor and by absorption through the skin. For Asthma and Hay Fever, melt a little Vick's in a spoon and inhale the vapors, also rub well over the spinal column to relax the nervous tension. 25c, 50c, or \$1.00.

THE GENUINE HAS THIS TRADE MARK "VAPORUB"

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