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CHATTANOOGA



A FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY WAR STORY BY F. A. MITCHELL.

"But the knowledge that the dogs would soon be upon him prevented a rest of long duration. Perhaps a party would cross the neck of Moccasin point, then cutting off a greater part of the long distance over which he had doubtless been traveling, in order that he might know them again. As soon as he saw the little bridge—if it could be called a bridge—he knew that he was on the Chattanooga pike, over which he had passed a few days before, and at the junction of the creek running near the Fain's plantation. Mark had not considered what he would do in case he should succeed in getting safely across the river. While in jail he felt that once out and across the Tennessee he would feel assured of safety. Now this had been accomplished, he began to realize that half the battle had been won. Indeed there were more chances that he would be retaken than that he would ever reach the Union lines. He wrung the water from his clothes and put them on, shielding his face with his umbrella, for, though he had no mirror to inspect his features, he fancied they must be streaked with burnt cork softened by water. Then setting out toward the Fain plantation he deliberated what he should do.

It was now between eleven and twelve o'clock—so Mark judged by the moon being on the meridian—and he knew that all the Fains were asleep. He reached the corner of the yard and was about to enter it when he heard a clatter of hoofs behind him. He had hardly time to vault the fence and crouch behind it when a troop of horsemen crossed the bridge over the creek. They drove rein on the hinder side and a hundred yards away from him. Mark heard a voice:

"Lieutenant, take ten men and scout the bank of the river from this on to the next creek, where I will make another detail."

The lieutenant with his men broke away from the column, which moved forward, passing within fifty feet of where Mark lay crouching.

Mark was for a few moments so completely overcome by the narrowness of his escape that he seemed to have no power to move. If he had been five minutes later, his capture would have been almost certain, for they would likely have discovered him between the road and the river, which space they were evidently intending to sweep.

He got up, and getting on the outside of the fence walked beside a portion of it which led back from the road, designing to enter the negro quarters in the rear. He feared that the dogs were loose in the yard, and that he would have trouble with them; he therefore stole along till he came to the nearest point to one of the negro cabins. A dog sleeping in the moonlight near the house gave a low moan. Mark paused a moment and listened, then entering the grounds he walked in a stooping posture, keeping one of the cabins between him and the dog. He wanted to reach the rear door.

Mark felt assured that unless he could be concealed in some place where searchers would not be likely to intrude he would be lost. He well knew that every foot of ground within five or ten miles of Chattanooga would be alive with people hunting for him. The negro cabins would not be safe, for no searching party would respect them. There was but one chance for him. He must effect an entrance into the Fain house, and that with the knowledge as to his true character of but one person—Laura Fain.

He reached the negro cabin and knocked.

"Who dar?"

"Whar Uncle Dan'l sleep?"

"Mark to de dar."

Mark went as directed and called up Uncle Daniel. He heard a movement as of some one getting up, and presently the old man stood at the open door.

"Uncle, I've got a message fo' yo' young mist'ra."

"Who from?"

"De po' white man whar war hyar las' week wid he little brudder."

"Sike man, dat. Hab he got in troubl'?"

"Nebber mind dat, uncle. Go in de house 'n wake up Missie Laura."

"Ain't got no key."

"Can't you wake up some one inside?"

"Why don' yo' wait till mornin'?"

"Can't do dat no how. De message must be given at once."

"Wash!" said Daniel at last, "I do what I can fo' dat man; he berry fine suttisman of de war po' white."

Mark followed the old man to the rear door of the basement. On the way a huge dog bounded at them, but seeing Daniel his screams ended in a yelp. Daniel succeeded in waking a negro woman who slept within; the door was opened, and they stepped inside.

"Go tell Missie Laura a celled gal want to speak to her right off. May she got message from de man whar war hyar wid he little brudder," said Daniel.

"At dis time o' night?"

"Yes; de message must be delivered right away," said Mark. "Don' wake no one but Missie Laura. Tread soft."

The woman lit a candle and went off with it grumbling, leaving



"WHY IN HEAVEN'S NAME DID YOU COME BACK HERE?"

Mark and Daniel in the dark. They waited for perhaps ten minutes, when they heard steps and saw the light returning. The negro woman was followed by Laura Fain, dressed in a wrapper. She knew Mark from the moment she saw him, but pretended only to see a negro girl.

"Hab message fo' yo', Missie Laura, but can't tell it to yo' widout dese algere git away."

"Come with me."

She took the candle and led the way to the dining room above, leaving the two colored people below. Then she turned to Mark:

"Why in heaven's name did you come back here?"

"It was a choice between life and death. I escaped this evening from Chattanooga, where I was to be hanged tomorrow morning. Every place of concealment on this side of the river will be entered and searched. If concealed in this house, occupied by a family of white people and Confederates, I may not be found. Otherwise my recapture is certain."

She thought a moment, rubbing her palms together, as was her habit when excited. Then she called to the servants below:

"Go to bed, Uncle Daniel, and you, too, Auntie. This girl is worn out with traveling, and I am going to fix a place for her to sleep."

Then turning to Mark she motioned him to follow her.

They went up two flights of stairs, stepping on tiptoes, and at last reached a landing from which a pair of steps led to a trap door.

Mark climbed the stairs, pushed the trap open and entered the inclosure of the roof. Before lowering the door he looked back to whisper a "God bless you," but all was dark. Laura was gone.

**CHAPTER X
MARK'S NERVES.**

MARK stood for a moment looking about him. There were dormer windows, which let in the moonlight so that he could distinctly see everything in the room. Some trunks were piled in one corner, and in another some furniture. Among the latter he noticed a lounge with threadbare upholstery, and taking it in his arms, carried it, treading softly, to one of the windows at the front of the house. The room was very hot, and he raised the sash, swirling it with great care, so as not to make any sound. Then he sat down on the lounge, and looking out of the window began to meditate on his situation.

While thus engaged he heard a light tap at the trap door. Opening it he saw a bundle extended by the fair hand of his preserver. He took it, and

letting down the trap—Miss Fain did not utter a word—he unrolled it. There were complete suits of under and outer garments, the property of Miss Fain's brother.

The getting off of his damp garments and donning show white linen was a grateful sensation to Mark. Having put on what he needed for the night he laid himself down on the lounge. From his window he could see the Tennessee rolling in the moonlight half a mile away. He thought how much more comfortable he was in his dry clothes than he had been floating in the water. Then he heard the bark of hounds. They were on the water's edge, and he knew by the sounds that they were endeavoring to pick up the scent of his tracks.

"Bark on," he said. "When I leave this I'll take with me something to die with. I'll not be taken alive, and if I meet you some of you shall roll over."

Then there came an inexpressible gratitude. He felt thankful to Sour, thankful to Jakey, thankful to Laura Fain, thankful to his God. They were something especially engaging in Miss Fain's efforts on his behalf, inasmuch as she regarded him an enemy to her country. He thought of Sour in prison waiting for old Triggs to discover her deception. What would they do to her? And Jakey? Would they injure a mere boy? He vowed that if he should escape and outlive the war he would fit it out just what had happened, and if either had been harshly treated he would have his revenge.

Missing he fell asleep, but he soon awoke. It was past midnight—the day of his execution. He shuddered.

He tried to go to sleep again, but the dreadful fate which would have been his had not Sour saved him, and on the very last evening before his intended execution, got into his head, and he could not drive it out. And now, were not men and hounds hunting him for miles around, to drag him back to Chattanooga to that dreadful jailyard, the scaffold, the rope, the black cap?

And Laura Fain, suppose she should weaken; suppose she should, after all, consider it her duty to give him up; suppose a demand should be made to search the house; suppose a thousand suppositions chased each other through his excited brain.

He lay tossing till just before dawn, when he again fell into a troubled slumber.

He was awakened by a squadron of cavalry passing along the road. The sun had not yet risen, but it was light. He could look right down on them, though they could not see him. They trotted along slowly, all looking worn and sleepy. They were evidently the men who had passed by the night before, and were going back from an unsuccessful hunt. Mark noticed the different positions many of them took in order to keep their "dies." The sight took him to his own troop, and

he longed to be in the stirrups again with them.

An officer, followed by two men, came riding back. Maybe they were coming to the house. They stopped at the gate. One of the men rode forward, dismounted and opened it. The officer entered and rode up to the front door. Mark's heart seemed to stop beating. He could not see what was going on below so close under his window, but presently heard the officer talking to some one on the veranda.

"A Federal spy escaped last night from Chattanooga, madam. He was in the disguise of a negro girl." There was something more which was unintelligible.

Then Mark heard the word "no" spoken in a voice which he thought was Mrs. Fain's.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

insulting.
Youngster—I have just been insulted by the insolent old barber who shaved me.
Youther—[Edged?]
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