

A CONFEDERATE BELLE

By ALFRED R. CALHOUN.

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this time quite sure that if it were not for his large real estate and flouring interests he would go south and enlist at once. Mr. Kean, for all his valor, was a very quiet man at home, where he found it to his advantage to keep his secession proclivities to himself. When Miss Norton and her escort appeared for a week's visit, Mr. Kean felt more comfortable and became more outspoken under his own roof tree.

It so chanced that at the very time Raymond and his cousin stopped at Mr. Kean's on their way home a nephew of that gentleman, Charles Leland by name and a resident of Chicago, had come down on a visit to his uncle. Charles Leland was about 23 years of age, a recent graduate of Harvard and then a law student. He was an unusually fine looking young fellow, had been the star athlete of his class and in addition ranked fairly well in his studies. Mr. Leland's father was a New Englander, "an abolitionist from conviction and an out and out Union man from principle," and the son was very much the same kind of a person.

I have purposely dwelt on these details the better to illustrate the division that existed among many families, north and south, and the better to introduce the three leading actors in this little war drama.

True to his antecedents and training, Charles Leland was self-poised and not given to forcing his opinions down the throats of opponents, but this does not mean that he could not be brave and tenacious in maintaining them.

The Keans had always been very hospitable. Perhaps this is why that at this time their house was filled with guests—fugitives, coming north or hurrying south. A woman with less tact than Mrs. Kean, with such a diversity in her guests, would have found difficulty in avoiding an open rupture, and she certainly had difficulty, but her whispered counsel, rather than the breeding of her friends, avoided domestic war. She saw from the first the danger of having Tom Raymond and Charles Leland in the same house, and this danger was magnified to her when she found herself forced to put them not only into the same room, but to sleep in the same bed.

"Now, young gentlemen," said Mrs. Kean after the introduction, "I want no war talk in this house. Here at least we must have union, and you two must be friends, or pretend to be, which will answer my present purposes. After each has gone his way, if he feels that he must fight for the side he believes to be right and fights in a manly way, he won't forfeit my esteem, no matter which side he takes."

Very sensible advice this, and the young men laughed as they shook hands and promised to abide by it. But sharp eyed and shrewd though Mrs. Kean certainly was she had not secured peace by taboos of the war. It was soon very certain to her and her husband that the young men hated each other quite as heartily as they admired Puss Norton.

The young lady in the case was not long ignorant of the impression she had made on "the handsome Yankee," as she called young Leland when he was not in hearing. Instead of keeping her "southern sentiments" in the background, as her aunt advised, Miss Norton aired them before the Yankee, particularly when there was nobody else near, and she delighted to make such occasions, nor was he eager to avoid them.

"I think Puss is coquetting," was Mr. Kean's comment to his wife a few days before the young lady's departure for Mississippi, "but I am mighty sure of two things." On being asked to explain what these two things were, he continued: "First, that Charles is dead gone on Puss, and, second, that Tom Raymond would like to blow the whole top of his head off if he had half a chance."

One morning, just two days before Tom Raymond left, and when he was attiring himself with belt and pistol, as he had been doing with great regularity since his fourteenth year, Leland, with a sneer that the accompanying laugh did not wholly hide, asked him why he burdened himself with arms in the house of a friend and in a city where officers of the law stood on every street corner.

"The great God gave me power to defend myself," responded Tom Raymond, with fire in his eyes, "and so long as I can do that I ain't going to ask the help of any officer—not much!"

"Defend yourself from what?" "From insult."

"Then every time you strap on this pistol you anticipate that some one is going to insult you?" "That's it."

"How often have you had to use a pistol in this way since you first began the practice?"

"Not once, but I might have been insulted many a time if folks didn't know I had the thing handy." And Tom Raymond patted the stock of the pistol as if it were a dear friend.

"Then I am to understand that you would shoot a man for an insult, real or imagined, without giving him a chance to explain or shoot back?" persisted Leland.

"That would depend. But see h'ar, Mr. Leland, what fo' do you pashume to talk to me in this way? If you want

to carry a pistol, I won't object," Raymond, with light in his eyes, replied. "Thanks," replied Leland, "I never do burden myself with arms, but will have the warrant of the law to act, and I will promise in advance to carry it concealed near to the table of a friend."

Mrs. Kean must have overheard this conversation, for she called her husband's nephew into the hall and at once assigned him to another room. Raymond reported the "insulting language of Mr. Leland" to his cousin and asked her advice about calling him out, but she opposed it and tried to soothe her irate lover by assuring him that she had a plan to get even with the Yankee.

Up to this time she had given Raymond ample reason for jealousy, but during the rest of their stay in Louisville he heroically endured her flirtations with his rival, under the impression that her set purpose was to encourage his love and then to scornfully reject him, which would be vengeance enough for even so impetuous a man as the Mississippian.

Miss Norton and her cousin resumed their journey south at the end of eight days, she taking with her two trunks full of dry goods and a pretty good knowledge of the leading Union people and secessionists in Louisville. True to his purpose, Raymond, on reaching home, enlisted in an infantry regiment, and through his father, who had been a state officer, secured a second lieutenant's commission.

Young Leland went back to Chicago, and before the summer was over he was down at Cairo, captain in a cavalry regiment. He was with Buell on the march south, distinguished himself on the second day at Shiloh, and was with the advance that entered Corinth after Beauregard's retreat. I have reason to believe that Miss Norton had not been long absent from his mind since they parted. I know that as soon as Corinth fell he embraced the first opportunity to dispatch a messenger to the Norton plantation, a few miles away, tendering his services to the young lady and her family "in any way that might be consistent with his duty."

That very day Miss Norton, looking the more bewitching for her pallor and nervousness, answered his message in person. She did not meet him as if she regarded him as an enemy, but rather as a friend whose services were sorely needed at this time. She told him that her father, though not in the army, had gone south to Grenada to avoid falling



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into the hands of the Yankees, and that her mother and a younger brother were unprotected on the plantation, and that the hands were uneasy and inclined to abandon the place.

Captain Leland sympathized with her in a manly fashion and promised to do everything in his power for the comfort of her family. He took her to headquarters, introduced her to General Buell, and so secured a guard for the Norton place. The hands who had come into the town were returned to the plantation, and for a month but few days passed that did not find the captain a visitor.

Leland's brother officers, with whom he was at this time very popular, joked him about "the pretty little rebel" and laughingly told him that he had surrendered at the first fire. Of his loyalty to the cause he had sworn to defend there was not the slightest doubt, any more than there was of his ability and valor, nor do I think that at any time, even when the worst came and a dishonorable death stared him in the face, he ever wavered in his allegiance.

It was through the captain's influence that Miss Norton was permitted to go south through our lines for the purpose of visiting her father, who, she said, though she did not disclose the source of her information, lay dangerously ill at Jackson.

While Buell and Bragg were racing on parallel lines for the Ohio in August, 1862, Captain Leland, temporarily on the staff of General Hamilton, remained back at Corinth. The first week in September he received a letter from Miss Norton, dated at Memphis, then held by the Union forces, with General Sherman in command. The young lady explained her presence by saying that after leaving her father at Jackson she had come up to Memphis from Vicksburg on a flag of truce boat. As she was free to go north she had paid a visit to Louisville and was now anxious to go home, but General Sherman had refused to pass her through the lines, and so she appealed to her kind friend Captain Leland once more for help, and could he come to her assistance?

Captain Leland, eager to show his devotion, secured a week's leave, hastened to Memphis and met the young lady at the house of a southern family with whom she was stopping. And now comes the first false step in the captain's wooing, and that love blinded him to a critical examination of his duty in the premises who can doubt?

Miss Norton made no effort to conceal what she was pleased to call her "loyalty to the south." How, then, could he imagine that she planned treason to himself? That such was not her purpose I am now positive, though at the time when trouble came to the love blinded young soldier her perfidy seemed patent to every one.

She had brought down with her to Memphis a trunk full of wearing apparel for herself and mother, she said. Without applying to headquarters she and her friends knew that this trunk would not be permitted to go through the lines without inspection. "If women were to do the examining," she said, when explaining the case to the captain, "I would not mind exposing the contents, but one naturally shrinks from having one's things pawed over by a lot of rude soldiers." Captain Leland thought the matter over, and in his anxiety to help her he determined to take the box through to Corinth as his own. If he had known that that box contained a large supply of medicines, with hundreds of letters and much valuable information for the armies of Price and Van Dorn, then threatening Corinth and York, he would have refused and notified headquarters, I believe.

Without going into details, I will state that Captain Leland hastened back to his command, taking with him the young lady and her trunk, and sending both to the plantation after he had reached headquarters. From the time he met Miss Norton after the fall of Corinth to the hour of his parting with her after the return from Memphis, Captain Leland never heard her speak of her cousin Tom Raymond, nor did he remind her of a man for whom for many reasons he had formed a strong dislike. But, as subsequent disclosures proved, Miss Norton was in constant communication with her cousin, and in the very night of her return from Memphis he visited her and with her examined the trunk, taking from it such papers as she indicated as of immediate value.

A few weeks after this the Union situation at Corinth was changed. The Army of the Cumberland and much of the Army of the Tennessee were off with Buell on the Kentucky campaign. Price and Van Dorn, at the head of from 40,000 to 50,000 veteran troops, marched at will through northern Mississippi. Memphis was cut off, and the handful of brave men under Rosecrans in Corinth seemed doomed.

The Confederate cavalry drove back, and the Confederate infantry occupied every important outpost. General Van Dorn's headquarters were at the Norton mansion, and his boat that before the year ended there would not be an un-captured Yankee in Mississippi seemed about to be realized.

Excepting Lookout and Missionary Ridge, if I had to select for the purpose of graphic description the fiercest and most picturesque battle of the war, I think I should choose the Union defense of Corinth. Not even Pope's magnificent defense of the pass at Sitoma, in the Georgia campaign, equals it, for there the attacking forces, though proportionately superior, were not so continuously persistent.

Here, as on every occasion when he was brought under fire, Captain Leland's gallantry was conspicuous. In the sanguinary repulse of Van Dorn and the hot pursuit that followed it his tireless efforts won the plaudits of his superior officers, and he was recommended for promotion. But the fate had willed it that he should never wear the golden leaves of a major.

CHAPTER II. Love, like madness, will out. Captain Leland's infatuation for the beautiful southern girl, Puss Norton, had long been the talk of every officer's mess in and about Corinth. Some believed it was a case of mutual attachment that sooner or later must result in a match, but there were not wanting those who believed that the young Yankee was being made the tool or plaything of a designing woman.

(CONTINUED NEXT WEEK.)

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A STRANGE TRAGEDY.

By W. CLARE RUSSELL.

Just as I returned the tumbler to the rack which I had removed it, the door of Miss Le Grand's cabin was opened, and the girl stepped forth. She was arrayed in white. Probably she was attired in her bedclothes. She seemed to see me at once, for she emerged directly opposite, and I thought she would speak or hastily retire. But after appearing to stare for a little while she came to the table and leaned upon it with her left hand, sighing several times in the most heartbroken manner, and now I saw by the help of the dim lamplight that her right hand grasped a knife—the gleam of the blade caught my eye in a breath!

"Good gracious!" I cried to myself instantly, "the woman's asleep! This, then, is the ghost that frightened the Dane. And this, too, was the hand that murdered the captain!" I stood motionless, watching her. Presently, taking her hand off the table, she turned her face aft, and with a wonderfully subtle, stealthy, sneaking gait, reminding one strangely of the folding motion of the snake, she made for the captain's cabin. Now, that cabin, ever since Griffith's death, I had occupied, and you may guess the sensations with which I followed the armed and murderous sleep-walker as she glided to what I must call my berth and noiselessly opened the door of it. The moment she was in the cabin her motions grew amazingly swift. She stepped to the side of the bunk I was in the habit of using, and lifting the knife plunged it once, deep and hard, then came away, so nimbly that it was with difficulty I made room for her in the doorway to pass. I heard her breathe hard and fast as she swept by, and I stood in the doorway of my cabin watching her till her figure disappeared in her own berth.

So, then, the mystery was at an end. Poor Captain Griffith's murderer was his adored sweetheart! She had killed him in her sleep and knew it not. In the blindness of slumber she had repeated the enormous tragedy, as sinless nevertheless as the angels who looked down and beheld her and pitied her.

I went on deck and sent for the doctor, to whom I communicated what I had seen, and he at once repaired to Miss Le Grand's berth, accompanied by the stewardess, and found her peacefully resting in her bunk. No knife was to be seen. However, next morning, the young lady being then on deck, veiled as she always now went, and sitting in a retired part of the poop, the second mate, the doctor and the stewardess again thoroughly searched Miss Le Grand's berth, and they found in a hollow in the ship's side, a sort of scupper, in fact, or the porthole, a carving knife, rusted with old stains of blood. It had belonged to the ship, and it was a knife the steward had missed on the day the captain was killed.

Since the whole ghastly tragedy was a matter of somnambulism all points of it were easily fitted by the doctor, who quickly understood that the knife had been taken by the poor girl in her sleep just as it had been murderously used. What horrible demon governed her in her slumber who shall tell? For my part, I put it down to Mrs. Burney and a secret fever of jealousy which had operated in the poor soul when sense was suspended in her by slumber.

We tried to keep the thing secret, taking care to lock Miss Le Grand up every night without explaining our motive, but the passengers got wind of the truth and shrunk from her with horror. It came, in fact, to their waiting upon me in a body and insisting upon my immuring her in the steerage in company with one of the 'tween deck's passengers, a female who had offered her services as a nurse for hire. This action led to the poor girl herself finding out what had happened. God knows who told her or how she managed to discover it, but 'tis certain she got to learn it was her hand that in sleep had killed her lover, and she went mad on the selfsame day of her understanding what she had done.

Nor did she ever recover her mind. She was landed mad and sent at once to an asylum, where she died, God rest her poor soul, exactly a year after the murder, passing away, in fact, at the very hour the deed was done, as I afterward heard.

THE END.

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