

# "THEN AND NOW"

Reminiscences and Historic Romance, 1856 to 1865

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Rutherfordton, N. C.

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## CHAPTER 32

### The Trembling Of a Leaf—Fall, 1863

The altruism of the people of the South during the war between the states, if Comte was right in his doctrine, was never more exemplified than at that time.

For if every people did lay themselves, their property and their all upon the altar of sacrifice for the benefit of others, it was at that time, in the South.

While the communities were agog yet their one thought, aim and hope to do for and help others do for the general and common cause in waging the war for states rights and protection of their homes and property and person of their neighbors.

William Buster had recovered from the wound he received in the raid on the South Mountain after deserters. This had been a thrilling experience, but the parties sought had escaped into the mountains. That is so far as William and Bill Sniffles knew, Sid, Polly and Pope Ganes had fled and gone further into the mountains and would not return to aid and abet in the up-rising of the negroes on the 13th of December, 1863. But man is finite and can not discern the thoughts of the other fellow nor know his intrigues unless by some hook or crook he is informed. This Polly, Sid, Ganes and their like scattered all over the South knew. And with this knowledge on their part, they planned not to go back into the mountain fastnesses but return to the flat wood country and again take up their abode in the cave at Hanging Dog Rock near the Cannahan farm and Annie Lightfoot's plantation. This was great strategy on their part and was conceived in the fertile brain of Pope Ganes and was endorsed in a council meeting with Sid and Polly. They somehow anticipated just what William and Bill Sniffles would conclude. That because on the night of the

raid they had fled in the direction of the mountains, as a matter of fact they would go in hiding there. But instead they were coming back to their old haunts and Polly's home. William Buster and his friends were congratulating themselves that the band of outlaws had been routed and were now in hiding away somewhere in the mountains, possibly in East Tennessee with Kirk and his band of robbers. But this felicitation did not last long, for on the last Sunday in November, 1863, William rode his big roan horse from his home on Floyd's Creek to pay Annie a visit at her home on Second Broad river. The trembling autumn leaves along the road, for most of the ride was through a woody country, somehow did not smile at William as he passed but rather seemed to say we are drooping and as you see have changed from an active green to a yellow decaying tint. We are nervous as you can see and beginning to tremble as the cold blast from the North comes down upon us. William in his meditation as he rode thus alone, and observant, felt kinder tremble as he thought of the cold and disheartening news that was continually pouring in from the front up North. And in his reverie, said to himself, "Can it be the very leaves are trembling at the thought of the pending disaster that awaits us." At this thought he reined Old Roan up and galloped along and coming down Chinquapine Creek hill he could see Annie's home upon the other hill. With that scene in view his forebodings fled and he no longer noticed the trembling and decaying leaves and forest, but heard the song of a red bird in a willow tree on the bank of the creek and further on up the hill at Annie's home he heard the lowing of the cattle, the bleating of the sheep, the cackling of hens, the braying of mules in the stables, but the most melodious were the songs of the old negroes as they waited it

Sunday evening, as he rode up the hill to the gate. Before he was ready to alight he had forgotten the trembling of the decaying leaves along the way, for now he could see Annie standing in the door.

Just ten days before William rode up to Annie's on that Sunday evening and that most glorious of all seasons, Autumn, with the hills, valleys and heatherlands all bespecked, some with trembling leaves of golden tint, others with brown and green speckled, and yet they were falling with a gentle hint, saying fall time is afoot. Annie was standing at the same place reading May Petty's letter, her heart all broken up, but on this golden afternoon, as she stood looking at William as his steed bounded up the road her troubles subsided, and with a smile she bowed him welcome. It is strange but it is true, nevertheless, troubles may come and they may go but the brave heart will withstand the hardest of blows, especially if the times and the occasion demand the same.

She had not seen William since he was wounded. He had not seen her since she received the letter. Each felt sympathy for the other and to meet with a beaming smile, Annie thought, would be a balm to the wound and an inspiration to his soul and it was, for William, all dressed in his gray uniform, cap in hand, with military quick step, strode up the walk and on his face, too, was one of those big illuminating smiles that only Annie could read and when they met on the porch and clasped hands somehow they swayed inside the reception room and for a time there was silence except a sound like squeaking mice in the dead hours of the night. For an hour or more as the evening tide rushed on they chatted and of course had many things in common because their troubles were many, their aims and objects one and their hearts atuned in unison. But time, however pleasant, will pass and the greater the intensity of the pleasure the swifter the moments seem to fly and it was so on this occasion for now the sun was beginning to set beyond the western hill and to throw his halo of glittering gold back onto the tinted trembling autumn leaves as they twittered in the November breeze. William and Annie

in the silent hush of the departing day, the leaves of the old Sycamore tree, though brown and golden, were trembling because of the November breeze and as their decaying day had come gently dropped down upon the ground at the feet of the lovers. It was not yet dark and Annie could see way down the river and in the direction of Cannahan's farm, coming out of a woods, a man, walking, after a second look she said, "That's Charles, can you see him?" William looked and said, "I certainly do and he's in a hurry." It was faithful old Charles and he had been down the river while the lovers had been engaged—well, you know, and I will not say, but the time had passed and Charles had been somewhere and was returning. Now Charles was one of the old trusty slaves and could go any where day or night. And even at night the Patrols would not bother him, for he had Annie's permit which was good at any time and anywhere. Annie said, "Do you suppose he has been down to the old cave, looking for Sid and his crowd?" William said, "I hardly think so, for they are a way over in the mountains and I hope they never come back to these parts any more."

And of course William believed this and so did Annie in a way, but she said, "You can't tell what such people will do and what their plans are. For Sid and Polly are mean enough to do anything and Pope Ganes is a schemer." While this conversation was going on between William and Annie, Charles came up to the porch and did an unusual thing, for he stopped on the front step and looked in the direction of the garden where William and Annie were. Women, you know, seem to have a lot of intuition and when Charles did that she said, like women do sometimes, "What is it Charles?" Charles took off his hat and bowed low and said, "I would like to speak to Missus and Mr. Buster." "Come and speak, Annie said and he said, "Mr. Pope Ganes and lots of folks are down in the cave." And the leaves on the old sycamore trembled and so did Annie and William.

(To Be Continued)

READ CAREFULLY

Why a man quit using a Ford—He died. B. B. DOGGETT.

Whatever may be urged against ridicule in nature, the wholesome effect of legitimate humor and merriment cannot be denied. And the man who said that a taste of humor was a gift from Heaven, was right. It is a blessing, a very angel of consolation, without whose presence the thorny, briary path in this work-day world would be uncheered.

In the annals of English history we read that a crown was paid to one who had made King Edward II laugh, a medicine which was doubtless more valuable than a dozen prescriptions from a doctor. A hearty laugh is medical and remedial, and great philosophers of old believed and declared that a physician should possess a real humor as part of the equipment for healing. A noted physician of Richmond, Va., Dr. Robert Coleman, whose success was eminent, was said to accomplish as many cures by his wit and humor as by the drugs he prescribed. His entrance into a sick chamber brought an atmosphere of cheerfulness which really started the patient on the road to recovery.

The Emperor Titus insisted that he had lost a day, if he had passed it without laughing, and Chomfort was accustomed to tell his friends that the most utterly useless and lost of all days was the one upon which he had not laughed.

How naturally are we attracted to the man who laughs, genuinely and laughs in the right place. The honest laugh does not come from a scoundrel. A man may smile and be a villain still and may laugh grimly and sardonically, or the loud unmeaning laugh may betray a vacant mind, but the laughter that rings with genuineness and appreciation is the note of sympathy, culture and integrity.

Without laughter what a Sahara of barrenness would life be! Upon its journeys refreshing wells of humor gladdens and renews the soul.

Nobody likes the person that does not laugh and almost everybody likes the person that can laugh at the right time and in the right way. We should cultivate the tact of humor but let us always bear in mind that it is for the outer courts of God's temples and should not enter the Holy of Holies.

## ESTATE

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in a certain deed of trust made and executed by John Wilkins and wife, Texas Wilkins, on the 24th day of July, 1924 to W. L. Brown, Trustee, for Forest City Building and Loan Association, said deed in trust being on record in the office of the Register of Deeds of Rutherford County, N. C., in Book V-3 at page 249 and default having been made in the payments of said indebtedness thereby secured, I, the undersigned trustee will on the 25th Day of December, 1925 at the hour of noon (12 o'clock) in front of the office of the Forest City Building and Loan Association on the public square in the town of Forest City, N. C., offer for sale to the last and highest bidder for cash the following real estate to wit:

Lying and being in the town of Forest City, N. C., and known as the Street-Jones sub-division and shown on map of said sub-division as lots Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4. Said map being made by J. A. Wilkie, surveyor, recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for Rutherford County, N. C., in Plat Book 1 at page 12. Reference to which is made for a more complete description of said lots.

This 25th day of Nov., 1925.

7-41

W. L. BROWN, Trustee.

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