

THE PANSY'S MESSAGE.

BY MANDA L. CROCKER.

Heart of my heart, this blossom brings
A silent message, sweet, to thee,
As in its purple beauty clings
Love's sweet appeal, "Please think of me."

All bloom hath language, oft so sweet
That smiles and tears commingle there,
As th' leaflets cluster round your feet
In sentiment of love's fond prayer.

They are God's love to us, these blooms—
How sweet that they our paths attend,
Adorn the altar, wreath the tomb,
And carry friendship to a friend.

So, while your bark beats on its way
O'er life's dark, troubled, boisterous sea,
Clasp close these buds, and mind the day
They breathed this message, "Think of me."

And sometime, when the weather's fair,
And we have faithful proved, and true
To keep our trust, we'll laugh at care,
And sail our ships on waters blue.

Deep in my soul this song's attuned,
Though meager in its word and tone;
This song and blossom have communed
To make my heart's best wishes known.

So, friend of mine, may blessings fall
And gem for you a summer sea.
Here, take my hand. All is that all?
No; take my heart! "Please think of me."

THE PARTISANS OF VIRGINIA.

BY JAMES FRANKLIN FITTS.

We will take a long jump at the start, and come down to the middle of April, 1863.

The weary, sanguinary war was practically over. Lee had surrendered; so had Johnston, or was just about to surrender; there were no more battles to be fought, and it was plain enough that the immense Union armies would in a very brief time be required to doff their blue, and the soldiers to take their chances in that great battle of life, which is always a very serious affair, although it has

"—guns, and drums, and wounds—
God save the mark!"

The unmilitary reader might naturally say that nothing interesting could be expected to happen at such a time as that. So it would appear; yet it was at just that time that an incident occurred in the part of the military situation where I served at that, while not very important in itself, opened to me a whole field of the most interesting reminiscences.

The incident was the coming in of two of Mosby's band to General Dwight's headquarters near Winchester, Va., to surrender themselves and give their paroles, not to take up arms against the United States.

They were the first of this noted band who had claimed this privilege, and the incident naturally excited some interest and curiosity about headquarters. My narrative must not be unreasonably detained with the details of what is properly history, or by the whys and wherefores of the case as it related to these men, and it will be sufficient under this head to say that, upon hearing of the surrender of Lee, Colonel Mosby assembled his command at one of their rendezvous between the Upper Blue Ridge and the Potomac, told them that the war was ended; that they had nothing now to do but to go home and peaceably submit to the authority of the United States, and that he should claim the national protection for them. Immediately upon disbanding his troop, he sent a message to General Hancock, who at this time commanded in the Shenandoah Valley, asking if his men were to be accorded the same terms that Grant had given to Lee. The character of Mosby's warfare in this section had been such that Hancock was in some doubt about the matter, and telegraphed direct to City Point for instructions.

The reply came promptly back, that these men were to have the same treatment as other Confederate soldiers. The dispatch was sent to Mosby, and his guerrillas hastened to give their paroles and receive their protection papers. The two who came to our headquarters were the "advance-guard" of this movement.

General Dwight at this time commanded a division of what had been the Army of the Shenandoah, and I was an officer on his staff. A soldier could not possibly have served through that tremendous and sanguinary valley campaign under Sheridan of the summer and fall of 1864, without hearing much—and perhaps seeing something—of Mosby's guerrillas. I had often heard of them, and, as will appear later, had seen something of their work; and now that all the bloodshed was past, I had a great desire to see and talk with some of them about their novel experience, and their peculiar way of carrying on war. No better opportunity was likely to occur than this; so when our provost marshal had got through with these two disbanded warriors of the late Confederacy, and they were strolling about our headquarters, taking note of much that was new and strange to them, I took them under my protection long enough to have the long and interesting conversation with them. My task was mainly with the younger of the two, a bright, brisk young Virginian, who had lived on a plantation in this valley before the war, and who had taken his horse and joined Mosby upon the commencement of the hostilities, just as thousands of young Virginians went to Stuart, Ashby, and Mosby, from love of excitement and adventure, and without very much thought or care as to which side was right or wrong. The conversation, as I remember it—what I said to him, and what he said to me—will better illustrate the character and style of this partisan warfare in the Shenandoah Valley, which beset and hampered Sheridan from first to last, than any mere statement of facts could do.

"You Mosby men," I remarked, "are treated as Confederate soldiers now, since Lee's surrender; but our army in the valley here hasn't been used to regard you so. We have always considered you a lot of partisans or guerrillas—irregulars, I believe, is the correct name."

"Well, sir, you've been mistaken. We're just as much Confederate soldiers as any in General Lee's army. Every man is regularly mustered in, and our officers all have their commissions from Richmond."

"But you have not usually acted in a body, and not always even in a squad. Sometimes, to my knowledge, your men have prowled about our camps by twos and threes."

"O, yes," he said, "that's our way of fighting. It's not very often that as many as hundred of us have ridden together. Every man owns his horse; most of us have our homes within fifteen miles east or west of the Blue Ridge. Mosby has always had certain established places of meeting, which are perfectly secure, and when the band is dispersed and almost every man at his own home, it would amaze you to see how quickly they can be all called in."

Most of the people, of course, were friendly to us; they would carry messages to and for us, and help and hide us when we were pressed. And then how could you folks ever know who we were? We did not usually wear any uniform—except your uniform, which we would sometimes put on. You couldn't tell that the innocent-looking citizen standing in front of his house by the side of the road as your army marched by was one of the Mosby troops, and that before night Mosby would know all that he had discovered about you. But that happened often."

"Yes; and I remember about General Custer hanging some of your men as spies."

"And didn't you hear of Mosby retaliating, and leaving half a dozen of your soldiers he had taken swinging to the trees, with a placard on the breast of each? I have heard him say more than once that he'd hang one of Sheridan's soldiers for every one of his that was executed; and I think he did."

"What made you fellows throw trains of the track on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, between Martinsburg and Harper's Ferry?"

"Oh!—that was for the greenbacks. Sometimes up in the mountains I've known Mosby to call a lot of us together and talk about like this: 'Now, men, about five o'clock this afternoon there's a train due at Harper's Ferry from Baltimore. After a short stop it goes on to Martinsburg. There'll be a Yankee paymaster aboard, with a chest full of greenbacks, to pay the troops at Martinsburg. I want those greenbacks! You know how to get them. And we did not often fail to do it.'

"I hope you don't call it civilized warfare to throw railroad trains off the track, with women and children aboard?"

"I don't call it anything," he replied with a laugh. "Mosby wanted the money, and ordered us to get it; and we took the only way we could. One of those green dollars was worth two in Confederate money anywhere in the valley."

Strange as this last statement may appear, I know it to be true from personal observation.

"But," I said, "what I particularly want to know, is whether Mosby's men did really, as I have heard, put on blue overcoats and ride along with our columns at night on the march?"

"Indeed we did! Do you happen to remember a time in August when your army fell back from near Strasburg to Halltown?"

I had good reason to remember that march. It was a disagreeable night's tramp in the rain, on which I marched with my company.

"And perhaps you were along on a certain retreat from Snicker's Ferry through the gap to Washington, the month before?"

Ah, was I not! That was the weary march, when soldiers already overtired in the torrid July weather stumbled along, asleep—when I slept as I walked.

"Well, sir, on both those times I rode along with your columns, riding sometimes with some General's escort, and picking up all the information I could. I felt perfectly safe—I was perfectly safe. Those were dark nights, as you know, and nobody could detect me; my blue overcoat was a perfect protection. Just out of Snicker's Gap, as daylight was coming on, and I was about ready to leave, one of your infantry soldiers struggled off a few rods for something or other. I rode up to him, showed him my pistol, told him who I was, and that I would shoot him if he did not go quietly along before my horse. He was too much astonished to disobey, and I took him right away as a prisoner. It was no uncommon thing for us to do this."

"Were your horses all good?"

"As a rule, yes. It was rare that one of us did not own his animal, so we had many real Virginia thoroughbreds among us. With such horses we could do almost anything. Shall I tell you my closest shave on an escape? It was over near Upperville, one night when I was stopping at a friend's house. My horse was in the barn, unsaddled and unbridled, with nothing but a rope halter round his neck; I was up-stairs, abed and asleep. We never slept with both ears; anyway, the tramp of cavalry roused me, and I heard my friend's whistle below. I knew it was neck or nothing, and it would have been prudent to surrender; but prudence was the last thing we fellows thought of. I jumped up, put on trousers and shoes, and, waiting for nothing else, raised the window and dropped out to the ground while the soldiers were coming up stairs. They had surrounded the house, of course, and I expected to be seen and halted as I darted for the barn; but I paid no attention to that, and a carbine-ball whistled over my head as I ran. I cut the rope, jumped on, and rode out right through half a dozen of the cavalrymen. I knew how to make my mare go from the start—and go she did, taking the fence at a leap, and flying up the road with a shower of balls after us. Neither of us was hit. But it was a great risk—too big a risk for any one to take. I mightn't have got off twice out of a hundred times such as that."

"You people made yourselves very useful to the Confederacy seizing our wagons, last fall," I remarked.

"Yes, that was always one of the Colonel's strong points. He had a system about it, too. He usually chose the time when the train was drawing out of park, in the morning, and there was more or less confusion among the mules and teamsters. Twenty horsemen dashing in at that time, with a yell, would put the teamsters to flight, and leave the train to us. The infantry guard was generally small, and would surrender at once."

"I can tell you of one train that you fellows didn't dare attack," I observed. "Near the last of September the One Hundred and Fourteenth New York was sent by Sheridan from Harrisonburg back to Martinsburg, an hundred miles or more, to guard a long, empty train and one hundred prisoners, and then to return with the wagons loaded with commissary stores and forage.

We made the whole distance, and were back to the army in time to lose half our men in the battle of Cedar Creek; we delivered every prisoner to the provost marshal at Martinsburg, and lost not a man nor a wagon. But we were vigilant! The soldiers rode in the wagons, keeping their muskets in their hands; the officers were on horseback, riding along with the train; we always had flankers out, and many times they reported horsemen prowling about. When we camped at night the regiment was formed in a square around the wagons and prisoners."

"One incident of this march I shall never forget. A little north of Mount Crawford, as the train passed along, we saw a dead body lying by the side of the road. It was that of a soldier, dressed in a bright, new cavalry uniform, and the figures and letters on his hat showed that he belonged to a

Pennsylvania regiment. Right in the middle of his forehead was the round hole made by the bullet that had killed him.

"This poor fellow was evidently some straggler, who had been 'bushwhacked.' Of course, I cannot say whether Mosby's men or some others shot him down from behind the wall; but it was murder, who ever did it."

I then told an incident which occurred the previous summer, at which the whole Nineteenth Corps had laughed, and which illustrated not only the audacity of the guerrillas, but the nonchalance of General Emery, who commanded the corps. Just at nightfall, and the close of one of our long and weary marches, when the headquarters tents had been pitched, a squad of horsemen came riding along at full gallop, close to the tents, crossed the turnpike, and disappeared. The whole thing was over, and the interlopers had come and gone before it crept through the hair of the astonished officer commanding the infantry company which acted as headquarters.

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