



"He's spivin' out something, you can jest depend," said a harsh speaker whom she recognized by the tone as Ferril, the blacksmith. "You know what happened ter a feller over on 'th' Smoky hill, last summer, don't you?" he continued.

"'No; what was it?" queried McGrath, the school trustee.

"'Rid him on a rail," triumphantly. "Served him right. Might hev been worse an' not hurt nothin'."

"This is a free country," Lois spoke a cool, sarcastic voice which Lois could not identify.

"Yes, but it ain't free enough fer strangers ter come pryn' round our farms, like as not trumppin' up a charge that'll get us into trouble."

"Have you talked with this 'boogie' you seem so much afraid of?"

"No, but my Cal seen him close by as he come over Faze mountain night before last. The feller was sittin' on a log, thinkin' hard, an' Cal went close to him without bein' seen. He's got blue soldier clothes on an' is probably an officer lookin' for somebody, an' I'm in favor of givin' him."

What it was Ferril was in favor of Lois did not find out, for the voices sounded nearer, as though the men had started in her direction, and she fled through the underbrush to escape detection.

She gave but little thought to the conversation she had accidentally overheard, only in a vague way hoping that no one would get hurt. These mountaineers were so savage sometimes in their actions. It came to her, however, the next day in her schoolroom as she kept the tow-headed scholars in order.

It was hard work to teach school that day. She knew that in two days it would be June, and that as she heard the lessons droned out in solemn monotone processions by the thousands were wending their way to the graves of the gallant dead and flowers were be-

ing scattered over the low mounds. She had attended Memorial day once before herself, and had felt a keen heart pain as blossoms were laid on the mound dedicated to the "unknown dead." She felt as though it were her dead that was honored.

In her dinner basket that day there was a package done up in brown paper and carefully shielded from all observation. When none of the scholars was looking she had poured a cupful of water over it, and at night, after an early dismissal, she carefully took out the bundle and started with it down the mountain path.

"Where's teacher goin'?" asked one of the children of the others.

"Down to th' village, I guess," was the reply.

"Too far," spoke up one of the larger boys. "It's a good five mile, an' she ain't goin' to take no such tramp as that."

But she was. Far through the blue haze that deepened to a bluish in the shadowed ravines she could discern the church spire and the courthouse tower of the town. A mile this side, at the base of Faze mountain's projecting foothills, lay the cemetery. She knew that there had been such services there that day as she had once seen in the east. She knew they were held there every year, but she never attended them. Father would not like it. Nevertheless, not a Memorial day had passed but what the close observer coming to the cemetery on the following morning might have seen an extra decoration on the mound to the "unknown dead"—not hothouse blossoms, not the windflowers or mountain daisies, but a great bunch of nodding, handsome golden roses, such as would have made him, if a Virginian, feel a longing for the boyhood home. And Mrs. Brake as regularly missed the brightest flowers from the vine beside the door, the vine they had brought west with them in the white-covered wagon.

Horses' hoofs sounded a quick tattoo on the road a hundred yards below the teacher. She peered down into the valley and a most unwonted sight met her eyes.

Twenty men were cantering along on horseback. The cavalcade was in close ranks and suspicious-looking packages were rigged to the saddles or dangled from the shoulders of the riders. At the head of the company rode Ferril, and behind him was McGrath, while the others were nearly all known to her by sight.

For a moment she wondered what they were doing—then like a dash came the remembrance of the conversation she had overheard. Breathlessly she ran on until she had reached a bold lookout at a turn in the path.

Yes, they took the road that led around Faze mountain. Ferril's demand for vengeance had been successful and they were bent on a visit to the stranger.

She was despondent, wearied with the grind of daily labors, and was thankful for the solitude of the narrow mountain path. Suddenly voices sounded just ahead and she listened

She thought for a moment over the threats of the day before. Of all that she had heard one phrase stood out most clearly and emphatically in her recollection: "He's got blue soldier clothes on." Blue soldier clothes called up sweet memories just now, and she looked down at the package in her arms with the flower stems showing at the end of the brown paper.

A comrade of her lover, perhaps? Did she not owe him something? It was growing late. The sun had dropped beyond the hills and she could already see the blue of night creeping up the eastern sky. But she had counted on being out late.

She knew from the men's talk and the direction they were taking where the stranger must be—a cabin perched on the other side of Faze mountain, that had often sheltered hunting parties, and was once the home for months of a couple seeking health among the hills. The road around the mountain would give the horsemen a long journey.

She turned short off from the path and climbed up the hillside, brushing recklessly through the ivies and brambles and pushing sturdily aside low-hanging limbs and swaying vines.

Faster and more eagerly she pushed on, regardless of torn skirts and bleeding hands. The thin shoes she wore gave little protection as she stumbled on sharp-pointed rocks, but she did not heed, and almost before she was aware the summit was gained. In vain she tried to distinguish the riders. Dark shadows held the valleys, and a white mist lay like a river in the lowest depths.

Downward she plunged on a course that she knew would bring her out near the cabin, taking long heedless strides that would have been impossible in a less impassioned hour. Her climb seemed to have taken so long—would she be in time?

In a shorter time than had seemed

stranger to his cabin and laid him on the bed of pine boughs that the place afforded.

McGrath was sent on the swiftest horse in the lot for a physician and the others remained to watch with the sufferer.

The man had picked up the bundle dropped beside him by Lois when she found him. The cover had come off and the contents were clasped close to his breast.

Lois noticed the action, as by the light of a flickering candle she arranged the few household appliances of the room. Then she took the light and turned to the stranger to see if he needed anything that she could prepare for him.

Ferril did not notice it, but a pallor crept over the woman's face that left it like marble. She gasped a little for breath, then withdrew to a shadow and watched the face of the stranger so peculiarly brought into her life.

When the doctor arrived he found that he had a pretty sick patient, exposed in the damp ravine having had a bad effect on the wound.

"You've got a siege of it," he remarked, "and I wish you could be moved to more comfortable quarters."

"I agree with you," replied the other. "I would like to be down where these flowers came from myself," he added, caressing the bundle which Lois had carried. The fragrant roses clung closely to the pale cheek and enhanced the strength of the fair but manly face.

"Where is that?"

"Down in old Virginia, where I grew to manhood—oh, I know these well."

Lois had crept closer and closer until her eager face was at the side of the rude bed. Her eyes, lighted by a strange longing, seemed to burn into those of the speaker.

She forgot maidenly modesty in the intensity of her feelings and remembered only the personality of the one before her.

When she spoke it was hoarsely: "You lived in Virginia—and your name is—what?"

"Harold Brooks," was the calm reply. A twinge of pain prevented his looking directly at her.

"And you do not know me?"

"Why, you are the woman who found me in the ravine. You have been my very kind and—" Then as his eyes sought the face so close before his own: "I know you—yes, Lois! Dotard, that I did not realize your presence before."

It was perhaps a little embarrassing to the roomful of men to see Lois hide her face on the shoulder of the patient while two strong arms enfolded her waist. They were not used to witnessing reunions of lovers.

Brooks realized it, and, putting the woman from him, remarked: "Gentlemen, we two were boy and girl lovers back among the hills of Virginia. I went into the union army, her father sided with the other forces, and I have not seen her for sixteen years."

"Why didn't you come back?" asked Lois. This first question that came to her mind opened the whole story.

"Come back? I did, but it was after many years. Wounded and left on the field of battle, I lay there until the armies had passed on. Then some kind hand lifted me, and for weeks I was looked after by a thoughtful family of the neighborhood. When I had recovered, I reentered the service and again I was dependent on the bounty of the warm-hearted people for life. When long after the close of the war I was myself again I made my way north and searched for you, but you had gone west—nobody knew where. I became a prospector and wanderer, and here I am."

He reached out his arm and drew Lois down beside him. "These flowers first told me I had found a friend," he went on huskily. "Gentlemen, I hope I have not wearied you by this story."

"No, not exactly," spoke up a cool, hard, sarcastic voice, which Lois remembered having heard over on the mountain, "only we came to give you a horsewhippin' or something, and as it's getting rather late we'd ought to be about that."

He looked at Ferril, who blushed and sheepishly remarked something about "not makin' fools of themselves."

In the meantime Brooks had been consulting with the doctor and Lois.

"Boys," he spoke up, "before I left home I was engaged to this lady. This is the first time I have had a chance to see her and I do not want to lose her again. The doctor here is a justice of the peace and is going to marry us. You can stay to the wedding—that will offset your disappointment in not being able to punish me just now."

There was a surprised laugh at this, but hats came off and heads were bowed. Soon the magic words were said.

"Harold," whispered Lois, as she knelt beside the sufferer when the party had filed out into the night, "do you know what I was doing with those flowers?"

"No. Carrying them for luck?"

"Giving them to you. To-day is Memorial day, and I intended putting them on a grave of the 'unknown dead,' in recollection of you. But," she added, resting her womanly head against the faded blue coat, "I'd rather give them to you in person."

Time must have softened the feelings of Lois' father, for he was heard to say a few weeks after, when his son-in-law had been ennobled in the best room of the Brake residence to complete his recovery: "Brooks is a mighty good feller after all, an' bygones might as well be bygones. Besides, I reckon Lois earned him an' had a right ter him if she felt that way."

CHARLES MOREAU HARGER.

Ten-year-old Ethel's expansive idea of wealth consists in possessing "millions of dollars," and her imaginary calculations never fall below this considerable amount. "Auntie," she said, one day, "do you know what I would do first thing if I had millions of dollars?" Auntie confessed her inability to guess. "Well," said Ethel, "I would hire somebody to listen to grandpa's old stories."

WORLD'S YOUTHS' CONGRESS.

A Grand Convention of School Representatives.

Among the more than a hundred different congresses to be held during the world's fair, under the auspices of the world's congress auxiliary of the Columbian exposition, the one that stands out unique and alone, having no precedent in the history of such gatherings, will be the world's youths' congress, which will convene on July 17 and hold three half-day sessions. The fact of its having no precedent, so far from militating at all against it, seems to be in its favor, as something like this Columbian year should mark the inauguration of some new and decided movement looking toward the enlistment of the youth of America along lines calculated to most rapidly develop the lofty sentiments of patriotism and decided notions of what constitutes truest citizenship.

Delegates to this congress may be either boys or girls, and are drawn from the grammar and high school grades of the public schools in every county in the United States and of the public, private and parochial schools of all foreign countries, though confined to the ages between thirteen and twenty-one years. In Chicago the work was taken up with great enthusiasm in the schools under the recommendation of the board of education, and nearly every school already has its delegate enrolled. Most of these delegates were chosen by an essay contest in the several schools, and it was hoped by the committee having this congress in charge that all the delegates could be chosen in this way; but it is now so important that the names of these representatives of their several schools should be in the hands of the committee at the earliest possible time that this committee urges teachers everywhere to at once appoint in their schools a delegate and an alternate and forward their names, with age, county, name of school and post office address, to the secretary of the committee, F. Frederick Bliss, World's Congress Headquarters, Chicago.

Teachers everywhere are at liberty to send names, and if from any county a larger number is received than that to which its population entitles it, the committee will select the proper number from those first received. To insure the full quota from each county, the committee would be glad if names of delegates and alternates were sent from every school. No teacher should fail to make the appointments simply because none of the young people can attend, for some of the benefits of the enterprise are realized in the mere honor and pleasure the students feel in their appointment.

Requests have been sent to the ministers of education in all foreign lands to convey the committee's invitation to the youth of their several countries, and asking for their appointment in the same ratio and on the same terms as in this country. Replies are being received from these constantly.

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