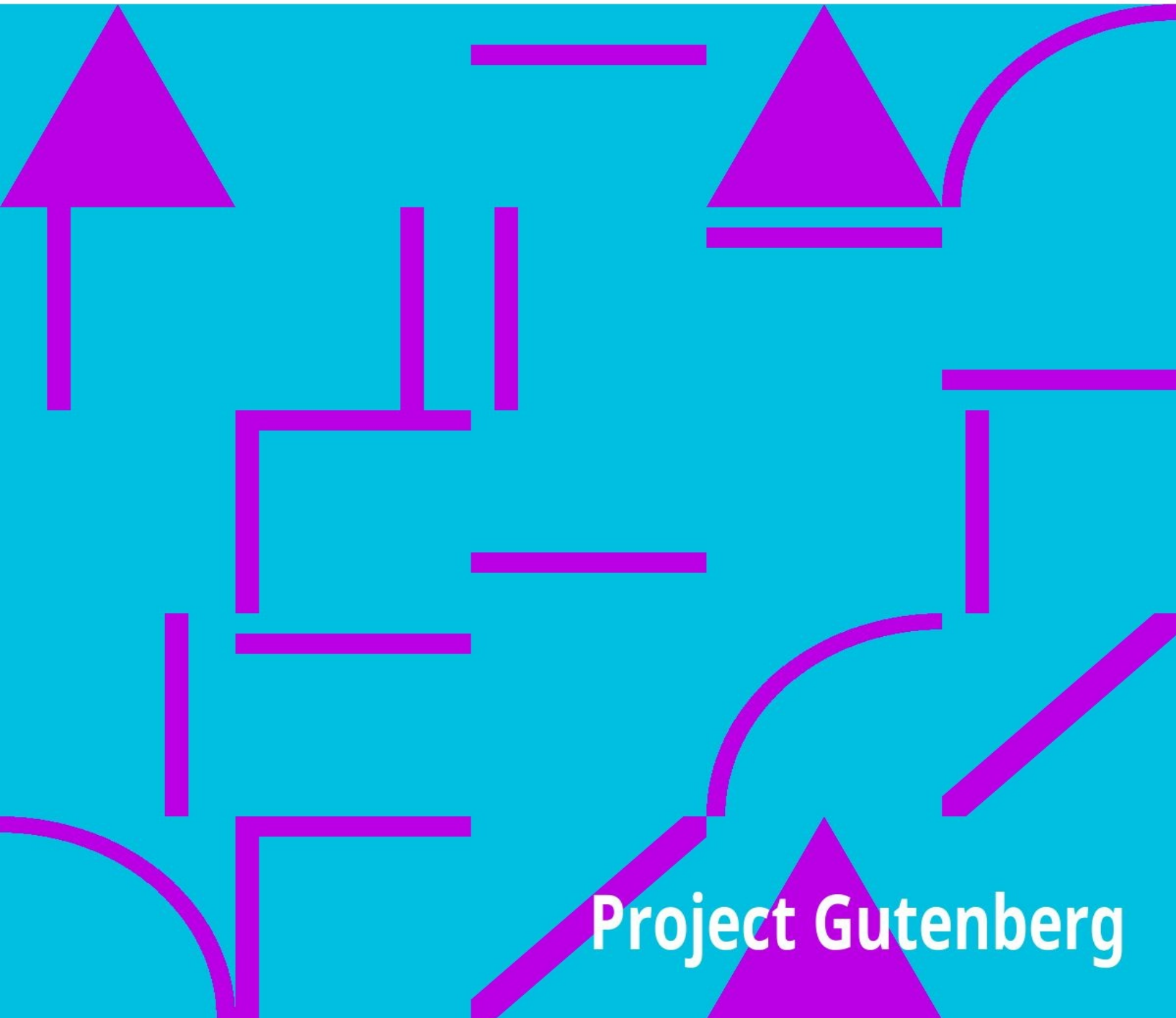
A Daughter of the Union

Lucy Foster Madison



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A DAUGHTER OF THE UNION

By

LUCY FOSTER MADISON

AUTHOR OF "A COLONIAL MAID," ETC.

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A DAUGHTER OF THE UNION

CHAPTER I
WHAT GIRLS CAN DO

"THAT finishes everything," exclaimed Jeanne Vance, placing a neatly folded handkerchief in a basket. "And oh, girls, what a little bit of a pile it makes!"

The five girls drew their chairs closer to the basket and gazed ruefully at its contents.

"How many handkerchiefs are there, Jeanne?" asked one.

"There are fifty handkerchiefs and five pairs of socks. It seemed like a great many when we took them to make, but what do they amount to after all?"

"There isn't much that girls can do anyway," spoke another. "If we were boys we could go to the war, or, if we were women we could be nurses. I don't like being just a girl!"

"Well, I wouldn't mind it so much if there was anything I could do," remarked Jeanne who seemed to be the leader. "But when Dick is in the army, father in government service, and mother at work all day in the Relief Association, it is pretty hard not to be able to do anything but hem handkerchiefs and make socks."

"A great many persons don't even do that," said Nellie Drew, the youngest girl of the party. "And they are grown-up people, too."

"Then the more shame to them," cried Jeanne indignantly. "In such a war as ours every man, woman and child in the United States ought to be interested. I don't see how any one can help being so. For my part, I am going to do all that I can for the soldiers if it is only to hem handkerchiefs."

"What else could we do? We can't help being girls, and Miss Thornton was pleased when we asked for more work. She said that our last socks were done as well as women could do them. I am sure that that is something."

"That is true," admitted Jeanne soberly. "I have heard mother say that some of the things were so poorly made that the ladies were ashamed to send them to the front, but that often the need was so urgent that they were compelled to do it. I am willing to knit socks and to hem handkerchiefs, but I would like to do

something else too. There is so much to be done that I don't feel as if I were doing all that I might do."

"We don't either, Jeanne, and if you know of anything we will gladly help to do it," cried the girls together.

"I don't know of anything else, girls, but maybe I can think of something," said Jeanne, looking at the earnest faces before her.

It was a bright May afternoon in the year of 1862, and the great conflict between the North and the South was waging fiercely. The terrible battle of Shiloh of the month before had dispelled some of the illusions of the North and the people were awakening to the fact that a few victories were not sufficient to overthrow the Confederacy.

Aid societies under the United States Sanitary Commission for the relief of the soldiers were springing up all over the Union, and patriotism glowed brightly inflaming the hearts of rich and poor alike. This zeal was not confined to the old but animated the minds of the young as well. Numerous instances are recorded of little girls who had not yet attained their tenth year denying themselves the luxuries and toys they had long desired and toiling with a patience and perseverance wholly foreign to childish nature, to procure or to make something of value for their country's defenders.

Our group of girls was only one among many banded together for the purpose of doing whatever they could for the relief of the boys in blue, and their young hearts were overwhelmed with a sense of their impotence. Jeanne Vance, a tall, slender, fair-haired girl of sixteen, serious and thoughtful beyond her years, was the leader in every patriotic enterprise of her associates.

Her father since the beginning of the war had devoted himself exclusively to furthering the interests of the government; her mother was a prominent worker in The Woman's Central Relief Association, giving her whole time to collecting supplies and money to be forwarded to the front and providing work for the wives, mothers and daughters of the soldiers. Her brother, Richard Vance, had responded to the first call of President Lincoln to arms: thus the girl was surrounded by influences that filled her being to the utmost with intense loyalty to the Union.

As she looked at the eagerly waiting girls around her a sudden inspiration came to her.

"Let's give a fair, girls. We could make pretty things to sell and I am willing that

all my toys and games shall be sold too. Perhaps we could get a great deal of money that way, and I am sure that even a little would be welcome."

"But how about the socks and handkerchiefs? Shall we give up making them?"

"No, indeed! We must keep right on with those, but this fair will be all our own effort. I believe that we will feel as if we were really doing something worth while if we can manage it. What do you say?"

"It is the very thing," cried they. "When shall we begin?"

"This afternoon," said Jeanne energetically. "There is no time like the present. This is May. We ought to be ready by the last of June. We can do a great deal in that time if we work hard."

"And we can get our mothers to help us too," suggested Nellie Drew.

"We ought not to do that, Nellie," replied Jeanne seriously. "They are so busy themselves, and it would not be truly ours if we have the older ones to help. Don't you think we ought to do just the very best we can without them?"

"Oh, yes, yes!" chorused the girls.

"I can make pretty pin cushions," said a girl about Jeanne's age. "I will make as many of them as I can."

"I can do pen wipers very nicely, mamma says," spoke Nellie modestly.

"Mother always lets me help dress the dolls for Christmas," cried another.

"Where will we have it, Jeanne?"

Jeanne looked puzzled for a moment. "I'll tell you, girls. Let's have it on our steps. We'll have a big card telling all about it printed and put up. Then people will stop and buy things when they know it is for the soldiers."

"On your steps," cried Nellie. "Oh, Jeanne, will your mother let you? It is right on Fifth Avenue."

"Why, mother won't care!" answered Jeanne, surprised at the question. "Fifth Avenue is the best place in New York for anything of the sort, because so many well-to-do people pass, and they will be sure to be generous for the soldiers' sake."

"Mercy, Jeanne, where did you learn so much about things?" gasped Nellie in admiration. "I wouldn't have thought of that."

"Well," said Jeanne, flushing at the praise, "I hear mother and the ladies talking,

you know. They say that such things must always be taken into consideration. If you have anything to sell, or you want money, you must go where there is money to be had. I know the ladies do that in their fairs."

"Then of course that is the way to do," remarked a tall girl decidedly. "Let's take our handkerchiefs and socks to the Relief rooms and begin right away."

The girls set to work joyfully, and labored zealously for their fair. Their parents were amused at their earnestness, but seeing them happy and contented encouraged them in their efforts. The days were busy ones, but the knowledge that every boat and train was bringing hundreds of wounded soldiers into the hospitals from the disastrous Yorktown campaign spurred them to greater exertion, until at last they declared themselves ready to open the sale.

Handkerchiefs, aprons, homemade candies, dolls, with all the paraphernalia belonging to them, pin cushions, pen wipers, and books, presented a goodly appearance as they were spread enticingly upon the steps of the mansion in lower Fifth Avenue. A large card, which Mr. Vance had had printed for them with the inscription, "For the relief of our wounded and sick soldiers. Please buy," reared its head imposingly over the articles, and five little maids, neatly dressed, stood in expectant attitude eagerly watching each passer-by in the hope of a customer.

The placard caught the eyes of an elderly man, and the little girls could scarcely conceal their delight as he paused before them.

"Well, my little ladies, what have we here?" he asked kindly. "For the soldiers, eh? Who put you up to this?"

"No one, sir," answered Jeanne as the other girls shrank back abashed. "We are doing it ourselves to help buy things for the boys."

"But who made the articles?" queried the old gentleman. "I am a poor judge of such things, but these handkerchiefs seem to be very neatly done. They are not of your making, I presume."

"Indeed they are," answered the girl earnestly. "We have done all the sewing, and made the candies. The toys were our own, given to us by our parents, but we would rather have the money to give to the soldiers, so they are for sale too. We girls have made everything but the toys and the books."

"But why," persisted he good-naturedly. "The government provides for its soldiers, and there are women and men to do what the government doesn't do. Why should you interest yourselves in such things? The war doesn't concern

you!”

“Whatever concerns our country concerns us,” answered Jeanne with dignity. “We are only girls, sir, and cannot do much, but what we can do to help those who are fighting for us we will do.”

“Nobly said, my little maid. I was anxious to see if this was a mere whim of the moment, or if you really were actuated by patriotic motives. You have taught me that girls can feel for their country as well as grown people. How much are those handkerchiefs?”

“A dollar a dozen, sir.”

“H’m’m!” mused the old gentleman drawing forth a well filled pocketbook. “Too cheap by far. Give me a couple of dozen.”

Jeanne obeyed with alacrity and carefully wrapped the handkerchiefs in tissue paper. “I can’t change this bill, sir,” she said as the old gentleman gave her a twenty dollar note.

“I don’t want you to, my little girl,” returned he kindly. “Take it for the cause.”

“Oh,” cried Jeanne her eyes filling with glad tears. “How good you are! How good you are!”

“Nonsense! It’s a pity if I cannot give a little money when you girls have given so much time and work. Good-day, my little patriots. Success to you in your undertaking. You may see me again.”

“Good-day, sir,” cried the girls together. “And thank you ever so much.”

“Oh, girls,” gasped Jeanne delightedly. “Isn’t it fine? Twenty dollars! I didn’t think we’d make more than that altogether.”

“Here come more customers, Jeanne,” cried Nellie excitedly. “Oh, but I believe that we are going to have luck!”

It was but the beginning. There was little leisure for the girls after that. Their evident zeal and earnestness impressed the passers-by whose hearts were already aglow with sympathy for the soldiers, and bills and shinplasters poured in upon the little merchants until at dusk not an article remained upon the steps. Then, tired but happy, they assembled in Mrs. Vance’s parlor to count the proceeds.

“Two hundred dollars!” exclaimed Mr. Vance as the girls announced the result in excited tones. “Why, girls, this is wonderful! The government would better turn over its finances into your hands.”

“You blessed dears,” cried Mrs. Vance, “it will do so much good! You don’t know how much that will buy, but you shall go with the committee and see for yourselves.”

“We have done well,” said Jeanne in congratulatory tones.

“I don’t believe that grown people could do any better,” and Nellie Drew gave her head a proud toss.

“There’s a little lame boy asking to see Miss Jeanne, ma’am,” announced a servant entering at this moment. “Shall I show him up?”

“Yes, Susan. Who is it, Jeanne?”

“It must be Eddie Farrell. He lives down on Fourth Avenue. His mother washes for Nellie’s mother, and they are awfully poor. He came by while we were fixing our things and we told him all about what we were doing and why we were doing it. How do you do, Eddie?” as the door opened to admit the visitor.

A little fellow not over ten years old, with great blue eyes that were just now alight with eagerness, paused abruptly as he caught sight of Mr. and Mrs. Vance. He made a pathetic looking figure as he stood in the doorway. He was deplorably lame and leaned on a pair of rude crutches for support, balancing in some way known only to himself, a long bundle under his arm.

“Have a chair, my boy,” said Mr. Vance, kindly noticing his embarrassment. “Did you wish to see Jeanne?”

“Yes, sir.” The boy sat down and then opened his bundle disclosing a pair of well made crutches. “The girls told me what they wuz doing fer the sogers and I’ve been thinking ever since what I could do. I didn’t have no money ner nuffin’ ter give ’cepting these crutches. I thought mebbe they’d do some pore feller some good what ’ud have his leg cut off.”

“But where did you get them?” queried Mr. Vance.

“They wuz mine, sir. Bill, a sailor man I knows, he spliced on some pieces to make ’em longer, and there they are, sir.”

“My lad,” and Mr. Vance laid his hand softly on the boy’s head, “it is a great deal for you to give. You need them yourself.”

“I’ll get along all right,” said the boy eagerly. “’Deed I will, Mr. Vance. See, Bill he rigged me up a pair that’ll do me all right, an’ I’d like ter help some pore feller.”

Mr. Vance gazed pityingly at the rude substitutes which the boy held up, and then looked at the crutches so deftly lengthened. His voice was husky as he spoke:

“It is a great gift. More than you should give.”

“It ain’t nuthin’,” answered the lad. “I feel fer the feller that is born with two good legs an’ then loses one of them.”

Mr. Vance nodded understandingly. Mrs. Vance’s eyes were full to overflowing as she stroked the boy’s hair gently.

“We’ll write a little note and tie on the crutches,” she said. “Then whoever gets them will know who gave them.”

“That will be fine,” cried the lad gleefully. “I’m so glad you’ll take them. I wuz afraid mebbe it wouldn’t be enough ter give.”

“It is more than we have done,” said Jeanne as soon as she was able to speak.

“Then good-bye,” and Eddie arose. “I’ll run back and tell mother.” He nodded to them and left the room, his face aglow with satisfaction.

“We haven’t done anything,” said Jeanne emphatically. “We didn’t give a thing we could not do without. Oh, I feel so mean!”

She looked at the girls tearfully, then drew a slender chain from her throat, and detached the gold piece which was suspended from it. “There!” she said, putting it with the bills on the table. “Uncle Joe gave me that before he went to the army. After he was killed at Shiloh I thought I would never part with it, but I am going to let it go for the soldiers too.”

“It is good for us,” said Nellie wiping her eyes. “We were awfully puffed up over this fair. I was beginning to think that we had done something great.”

Mr. Vance laughed.

“You need not feel so bad, girls,” he said. “If it had not been for you that poor little fellow wouldn’t have thought of giving his crutches.”

“I wish he had some though,” remarked Jeanne wistfully.

“Make your mind easy on that score, my dear, I’m going to look after that boy.”

“And meantime you girls can go with me to the Association to carry the money and the crutches, and we’ll tell the ladies all about it,” said Mrs. Vance.

CHAPTER II
A GREAT UNDERTAKING

FOR a time affairs went on in their usual way, and the girls contented themselves with hemming towels and handkerchiefs and making socks. That is, all the girls save Jeanne Vance. With her the desire was stronger than ever to do something more than she had done.

“What makes you so thoughtful, Jeanne?” asked her father one evening looking up from his paper. “You are as still as a mouse. Come, and tell me all about it.”

“It’s the country,” said Jeanne settling herself comfortably on his lap and laying her head on his shoulder. “I was thinking about our army and how much there was to be done for it.”

“I am afraid that you think too much about the war,” observed her father soberly. “It is not good for you.”

“I can’t help it, father. Dick’s letters make me, and the work that you and mother do keeps it always before me. I am the only one who doesn’t do much.”

“I am sure that you carried that fair through admirably, and have made a number of articles for the soldiers. Best of all you are looking after yourself so well that your mother and I can devote our whole time to the cause. And that is a great deal, my little girl.”

“But I should like to do something else,” persisted Jeanne. “It doesn’t seem as if I were helping one bit.”

“Very few of us can see the result of our labors. If you were in the army it would be the same way. A soldier often has to obey orders for which he can see no reason, but his disobedience might cause the loss of a battle. We are all of us part of a great whole striving for the same end. If each one does his part all will be well. If every little girl in the country would do as much as you are doing, the amount of work accomplished would be startling.”

“If I were a boy I could do more,” sighed Jeanne. “It is very hard to be ‘only a girl,’ father.”

Mr. Vance laughed.

“But since you are one, Jeanne, try to be contented. I am very thankful for my daughter if she is ‘only a girl.’”

“You are troubled too,” observed Jeanne presently, noting a look of anxiety on her father’s face.

“Yes, child; I am.”

“Could you tell me about it, father? Perhaps it would help you. I feel ever so much better since I have talked with you.”

“I am afraid that you cannot help me, child. If only Dick were here,” and he sighed.

“Could I if I were a boy?” asked the girl, wistfully.

“Yes,” replied Mr. Vance unthinkingly. “If you were a boy, Jeanne, with the same amount of brightness and common sense that you now have, I would be strongly tempted to send you forth on some private business.”

“Oh, father!” Jeanne sat bolt upright. “Send me anyway. I am sure that I could do it just as well as a boy.”

“But this would necessitate a journey into the enemy’s country. A bright boy could go through all right if he would exercise his wits, but a tender, delicate girl like you! Why, I couldn’t think of it!”

“I could do just as well as a boy,” declared Jeanne with conviction. “I am sure that I could. Please let me try, father.”

“I am sorry that I spoke of it, child. I will tell you just what the service is, and you will see the impossibility of any girl undertaking it. In the cities both North and South there are men whose duty it is to look after certain private matters for the government. In our communications with each other we must be very guarded. We do not dare to risk even the mails, because in almost every department of the service there are traitors. In some mysterious manner the enemy becomes aware of all our plans. Therefore we have tried and trusted men who are our go betweens. On some occasions we have employed boys because they could pass through the lines of the armies without being suspected of carrying important information. But as it is a hazardous business we use the boys only when there is no one else to send. Just at present our men are all out, and even the few boys who are ordinarily available are not on hand. That is why I spoke as I did.”

“Where would the boy have to go?” queried Jeanne, who had listened

attentively.

“To New Orleans, dear. It is a long distance, and would be a perilous journey. You see, Jeanne, how I am trusting you. You will be careful not to repeat anything I say.”

“I understand perfectly, father. You need not fear when you tell me anything. You could not be useful if others knew of your affairs.”

“That is it precisely, my daughter.”

“Is the errand important, father?”

“Very.” Mr. Vance thought she saw the impossibility of going and therefore spoke more freely than he otherwise would have done. “I ought to send a messenger not later than day after to-morrow with the documents, but I fear that I shall have to let the matter rest until some of the men come in, and then it may be too late.”

“Father, doesn’t Uncle Ben live in New Orleans?”

“Yes, Jeanne; why?”

“Why couldn’t I go down to see him, and carry these papers hidden about me? The trains are still running, aren’t they?”

“Yes,” said her father thoughtfully; “but those in the Southern States are under Confederate control, you know.”

“Well, suppose I were to take the train from here to St. Louis,” mapping the route on her lap, “then from there I could go down the Mississippi on a steamboat. St. Louis is for the Union, and New Orleans belongs to us now too. I don’t see much danger in that, father.”

“It sounds all right, little girl. The only flaw lies in the fact that Vicksburg is not ours. If it were then the matter could be easily arranged.”

“Don’t you think that it will be ours soon, father?”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Mr. Vance with conviction. “With Farragut and Porter on the river and this new man Grant who is making such a record in charge of the land forces it will not be long before Vicksburg will share the fate of Forts Henry and Donelson and Island No. 10. Indeed,” added he, for Mr. Vance in common with many others held the view that the war could not be of long duration, “I feel sure that McClellan will soon enter Richmond and that will virtually close the war. It is only a question of days now before we shall see the end of this

rebellion. The administration is of the same opinion, because it has ceased to enlist men for the army."

"Then, father, it seems to me that there would be no risk in performing this service for you. I feel sure that I could carry your papers safely to New Orleans. It is not as if the country all belonged to the rebels. There would be only one place to pass that is theirs: Vicksburg. I know that our men can easily go by one place," she added confidently.

"Your manner of taking hold of the matter almost persuades me to let you try it, Jeanne," and Mr. Vance regarded his daughter with a new light in his eyes.

"Do," said Jeanne as calmly as she could, realizing that if she would carry her point she must be very matter-of-fact. "You see, father, no one would suspect a girl of carrying papers."

"I don't know but that you are right, Jeanne. Still, I would not consider the thing for an instant if my need were not so great. Should the papers fall into the rebels' hands, not only would they secure important information but they would also get the names of men whose death would pay the penalty of discovery."

"I understand," said the girl gravely. "But the rebels shall never get them, father. I will destroy them first. They must be concealed about my clothing in such a manner that even if I were searched they could not be discovered. Not that I think that I shall be," she added hastily as a look of alarm flitted over her father's face, "but it is just as well to be prepared for emergencies."

"What are you two plotting?" asked Mrs. Vance entering the room. "You have been talking so earnestly that I thought that you were settling the affairs of the nation."

"We have been," answered Jeanne gaily. "I am going to New Orleans on business for father."

"Oh, Richard," came from Mrs. Vance in a wailing cry. "Not my girl too! I have given my boy! Leave me my daughter."

"Mother!" Jeanne sprang to her outstretched arms where she was folded close to the mother's heart. "You don't understand. There is no danger. Who would harm a girl like me?"

"She shall not go, Dora, if you do not consent," spoke Mr. Vance comfortingly. "My need for a messenger was so urgent that I spoke of it before Jeanne, and the little witch has beguiled me into thinking that she is the very one for the business."

“Why of course I am,” cried Jeanne in decided tones. “Let’s sit down and talk it over.”

“I don’t like it,” said Mrs. Vance after the matter had been explained. “I am afraid that something will happen to you.”

“But, mother, what could happen? Even if I were to fall into the hands of the Confederates what could they do to me? Men don’t make war on girls.”

“I know that the Southern people are counted chivalrous,” answered Mrs. Vance, “but soldiers are usually rough fellows, and I would not like you to be brought into contact with them even though they were our own boys.”

“Dick is a soldier, and he isn’t a bit rough. They are all somebody’s sons, mother. I thought that you liked soldiers.”

“I do,” assented Mrs. Vance wearily, “but I don’t like the thought of sending you where there is a chance of fighting. No one knows what might happen.”

“Dick has to take a great many chances, and why should not I risk a little for my country? Wouldn’t you be willing to give your life for it, mother?”

“Yes; but—” began the mother.

“And I am your child,” cried Jeanne, kissing her. “I can’t help it, mother. It’s in the blood, and blood will tell, you know. Haven’t I heard you and father many a time relate what great things our ancestors did in the Revolution? Well, you really can’t expect anything else from their descendants.”

“I suppose not,” and Mrs. Vance stifled a sigh. “If it really would help you, Richard.”

“It really would, Dora. If Jeanne can carry these papers to New Orleans she is not only worth her weight in gold but she will do the government a great service. She is energetic, resourceful and self-reliant. I believe that she can get through without injury to herself or I should not consider the thing a moment. As she says, why should harm come to a girl? She would not be suspected where older people would be subjected to the most searching scrutiny. The more that I think of it, the more favorably does the idea strike me.”

“Then I must consent,” Mrs. Vance smiled faintly though her face was very white. “My country demands much of me, Richard.”

“It does, Dora. But please God when this rebellion is put down we shall have such peace as the country has never enjoyed. Let us hope for the best, dear.”

“When do I start, father?” broke in Jeanne.

“I think to-morrow night. The sooner the better. I will see about your transportation in the morning, and try to arrange to send you straight through. Now, little girl, you must say good-night because we must be up bright and early. There is a great deal to be done to-morrow.”

“Good-night,” said Jeanne obediently, and kissing each tenderly she retired to her room.

CHAPTER III
STARTING FOR DIXIE

THE next day passed all too quickly for the parents, but not for Jeanne. She went about her preparations with an uplifted mien and a solemnity of manner that at another time would have been amusing, but which under the circumstances went to her mother's heart.

"In this petticoat, dear, I have quilted the documents," said Mrs. Vance as she dressed her for her departure. "It may be a little heavy, but you need not wear so many skirts as you otherwise would, and perhaps it will not be too warm. See how nicely it holds out your dress. It almost answers the purpose of a pair of hoops."

"Am I not to wear my hoops, mother?"

"No, child. They are sometimes in the way, and as you have not yet learned to manage them well, it would be best not. Your frock hangs out in quite the approved style as it is."

Jeanne glanced down at her attire complacently.

"It does look stylish," she admitted. "I wonder if the rebel girls wear hoops."

"I dare say they do," answered the mother rather absently. Then overcome by a rush of emotion she caught the girl to her. "Oh, Jeanne, I wonder if I am doing right to let you go! What if some harm should come to you?"

"Don't worry, mother," and Jeanne soothed her gently. "I feel sure that I will get through safely."

"I shall not be easy until I hold you in my arms again," said Mrs. Vance mournfully. "But I must not make it hard for you to go, dear. You will be careful, Jeanne."

"Yes, mother."

"And, child, you are loyal, I know, but you are very young. You are going into the enemy's country, where disloyalty to the Union will be the common utterance. Are you strong enough to bear all that you will hear and still retain

that fidelity unimpaired?”

“Mother!” Jeanne spoke reproachfully.

“Yes; I know that your heart is devoted to your country, but older ones than you have been drawn from their allegiance. I only give this as a caution because you have always been where nothing but the Union has been talked. Now you are apt to hear just as much on the other side, and there may be trials that will test your strength severely. I cannot but fear that all will not go so smoothly as your father thinks. But, Jeanne, whatever comes, bear yourself as a true American. Swerve not from the allegiance due to your country. Let come what will, even death itself, suffer it rather than for one moment to be false to your country. They are my last words to you, my daughter. Be true to your country. Will you remember?”

“Yes,” replied the girl solemnly. “Whatever comes I will be true to my country.”

“I have made you this flag,” continued Mrs. Vance, drawing a small United States flag from the folds of her dress. “I began it some time ago as a surprise for your birthday, but finished it last night for you to take with you. Keep it about your person, and each night look upon it and pray for the success of the Union.”

“And it is really my own,” exclaimed Jeanne, delightedly, pressing the silken folds to her lips. “It makes me so happy to have it, mother. I never had one before that was all mine. See,” folding it and placing it in the bosom of her dress, “I will wear it over my heart that no disloyal thought may find entrance there. I will bring it back to you unsullied.”

Her mother pressed her again to her breast.

“I believe it, dear. Now kiss me, Jeanne. I hear your father coming for you. Oh, ’tis hard to let you go!” She clasped her convulsively to her, and caressed her repeatedly.

“Are you ready, Jeanne?” asked Mr. Vance entering. “We have not much time left.”

“I am all ready, father,” answered Jeanne quickly catching up her satchel. “Aren’t you coming with us, mother?”

“No, dear;” Mrs. Vance struggled bravely with her emotion. “I am going to let your father have you for the last few moments alone. I have had you all day, you know.”

Jeanne ran back to her for another embrace.

“My child! My child!” whispered the mother passionately. “There! Go while I can bear it.”

Unable to speak Jeanne followed her father to the carriage.

“I am afraid that I have acted hastily in letting you undertake this matter,” said her father, drawing her to him. “In one way the fates are propitious. The papers to-day announce the fall of Vicksburg. That leaves the Mississippi entirely open and reduces the danger. Still it may be exposing you to some risk, and it now seems to me unwise to saddle so great a responsibility upon so young a girl. I wish there was some one else to send.”

“Father, I am glad to be of service. I am so proud to think that you have so trusted me. Now I am really doing something for the country. And I will not betray your trust.”

“I know that you will be as true as steel,” answered Mr. Vance tenderly. “I do not fear that you will betray my confidence, but let me caution you for yourself. Where have you concealed the papers?”

“Mother quilted them in my petticoat,” answered Jeanne.

“Then try to forget where they are. I was once on the train where a girl was traveling alone. She had evidently been warned against pickpockets, for ever and anon she would start up and clap her hand to her pocket. Do you see the point, daughter?”

“It showed plainly where she kept her money,” replied Jeanne promptly.

“Exactly. If you keep fingering the petticoat it will show to every one that there is something concealed there. Therefore forget all about the papers if you can. Act as naturally as a little girl would going to visit her uncle. There must of course be a reason for your going and I have provided for that in this way. Quinine is a contraband article and highly prized in the South. This basket has a false bottom. Above is a lunch for your journey and underneath a quantity of quinine. You may get through without falling into the Confederates’ hands but it is just as well to be prepared for emergencies, as you remarked last night. Should you happen to be taken by them and they question you too closely, finally confess about the quinine. It will be a point in your favor that you have smuggled it through the Union lines. Should they take it no matter. Do you understand?”

“Perfectly.”

“I have secured transportation to Memphis, Tennessee,” continued Mr. Vance. “It

brings you closer to New Orleans and leaves a shorter distance to be traversed by water. You will have to change cars twice. Once at Washington City which you can do easily as you have been there a number of times. The other is at Cincinnati, Ohio. Do you think you can manage it?”

“Why, of course I can,” said Jeanne proudly. “It isn’t as if I had never been anywhere.”

“Yes, that makes a difference,” assented her father. “Yet, my child, remember that before you have been accompanied by either your mother or me. Now you will have to rely entirely upon yourself. This is a letter for Commodore Porter who is a friend of mine, and who is somewhere on the Mississippi. Ask for him as soon as you reach Memphis. If he is not there there will be others on our side who will carry you down the river after reading the letter. If at any time you are in doubt what to do go to the hospitals. There are always women there who will gladly give whatever aid you may need. And here is money.”

“Mother gave me some,” interrupted Jeanne who had listened with the closest attention.

“Yes; that is in your purse, which is in the satchel, is it not?”

“Yes.”

“Well, take this also. I had this bag made to hold it.” He put a roll of bills into an oilskin bag and drew the cord so that the opening closed tightly together. “Wear that about your neck, child, and keep it hidden under your dress,” he said. “Keep that always about you as a reserve fund. So long as you have money you can get along pretty well. Take out what you need from time to time, carrying only a small amount in your purse. Above all beware of talking too freely to strangers. Now for the final instructions: you are going to New Orleans to visit your Uncle Ben. When you reach there ask him to direct you to Mr. ——,” here he whispered in her ear. “Speak that name to no person. When you have delivered the papers into his hands your duty is done. Stay with your uncle until you hear from me. I will write you how to come home. Now, Jeanne, I think that this is all I have to say. If anything should happen that these arrangements fail, don’t run any danger but return home. You see that I am leaving a great deal to your judgment. Can you remember everything that I have said?”

“Yes. And you may be sure that I will do just as you tell me. It seems to me that everything has been thought of and that there is no chance of failing.”

“Sometimes the best laid plans are thwarted,” said her father gravely. “It may not

be a very wise thing to send my daughter on such an errand, but you are such a sensible little thing that I feel as if you would succeed."

"I will," said Jeanne determinedly. "I want to be worthy of my name, father. Did not another Jeanne not much older than I lead the Dauphin of France to a crown? Surely then I can do this thing which is small in comparison."

"I am afraid we did wrong in giving you such a name," remarked her father smilingly. "How full of the martial spirit you are, Jeanne. I believe that you would undertake the capture of Jeff Davis if I asked you to."

"I would," exclaimed the girl with a look that boded ill for the rebel president. "Perhaps we will try it yet."

"We will get through this affair first, my dear. Here we are at the station. We'll have to make a run for that train."

They had taken a ferry during the conversation and by this time had reached Jersey City. Running through the gates they boarded the train just as the signal was given to pull out.

"My little girl, good-bye," murmured Mr. Vance, clasping her to him for a brief second. "God bless and keep you, Jeanne. May He bring you safely back. Be brave," he added, as he saw Jeanne's lips quivering.

"I will," sobbed Jeanne, breaking down completely as her father started away. "Oh, father, kiss me just once more."

"Is it too much for you, my little girl?" Mr. Vance held her closely. "You need not go, Jeanne."

"I want to. I am all right," gasped Jeanne, controlling herself by an effort. "Now go, father, dear. See how brave I am."

She smiled up at him through her tears. Mr. Vance regarded her anxiously.

"Go," whispered Jeanne as the train began to move. Hastily her father left her. Jeanne leaned from the window and waved her hand as long as she could see him. But soon the train rounded a curve and he was lost to view. Then leaning back in her seat she gave herself up to her tears.

CHAPTER IV
A TIMELY RENEWAL OF ACQUAINTANCE

JEANNE sobbed unrestrainedly for some time. A sense of forlornness oppressed her, and the magnitude of the task she had undertaken weighed upon her spirits. As Mr. Vance had said she had never traveled alone before, and now that she had actually started upon the journey a thousand fears assailed her. The idea of being engaged upon a mission that involved something of risk had seemed a noble thing, and easy of accomplishment in her own home. Here, lacking the sustaining presence of her parents, and the relaxation after the excitement of the day, made the enterprise seem formidable indeed. So absorbed was she in her meditations that she had not noticed the other occupants of the coach, but presently there was borne in upon her senses the sound of singing.

“Oh, what is it?” she exclaimed with a nervous start.

“Some soldiers on their way to Washington,” answered a lady who sat behind her.

Jeanne’s interest was aroused at once, and she looked about her. In the rear of the car were a number of soldiers clad in blue. They seemed in high spirits and were singing lustily:

“‘Yes, we’ll rally round the flag, boys,
We’ll rally once again,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom;
We will rally from the hillside,
We will rally from the plain,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.’”

“They are going to the war with a song upon their lips, perhaps to be killed, while I am afraid because I am alone,” mused Jeanne, her lip curling in self-contempt. “I don’t believe that girls amount to much after all.”

“‘We are marching to the field, boys,
Going to the fight,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom!
And we’ll bear the glorious Stars
Of the Union and the Right,
Shouting the battle cry of freedom.’”

“I will be brave,” and the girl sat up very straight. “I will not be afraid any more, for I, too, am battling for the right. I am just as truly serving my country as they are, and I will be just as brave. Besides, father would be sorry if he knew that I felt so bad.”

Drying her eyes she listened attentively to the soldiers as they sang, one after another, the martial airs that had become so popular since the breaking out of the war. After a little time they struck up “The Star Spangled Banner,” and then there followed a scene that the girl never forgot. Men, women and children caught the enthusiasm and, rising to their feet, joined in the song. Jeanne sang too, as she had never sung before. The words held a new meaning for her. She felt once more an exaltation of spirit and a kinship with these brave fellows who were willing to give their lives for their country. What was danger, disease or life itself, if she could be of service in ever so small a way?

“‘’Tis the Star Spangled Banner,
O long may it wave
O’er the land of the free
And the home of the brave.’”

A mighty shout went up as the final chorus was rendered, and three cheers for the flag were given with a vim that mingled musically with the rush and roar of the train. Flushed and breathless Jeanne sank back into her seat, her eyes shining,

her cheeks glowing, her whole being thrilled with patriotic fervor. She was no longer fearful and lonely, but eager and ready to do and dare all things needful for the success of her mission.

And so when Washington was reached the girl took up her satchel with quite the air of an old traveler and, accosting an official, asked about her train with the utmost self-possession.

She had but a short time to wait before she was once more flying across the country en route for Cincinnati. The night passed without incident. The journey was tiresome but so uneventful that she became imbued with confidence in her ability to travel alone and made her change to the Memphis and Charleston Railroad for Memphis at Cincinnati without trouble.

The day had been very warm and as Jeanne took her seat in the coach she heaved a sigh of relief as she saw the sun sinking to his rest.

“It will be cooler now,” she said to herself, settling comfortably back in the cushions. “I am glad that I have the seat to myself.”

But to her dismay at the next station a rough-looking man entered the car and took possession of the seat beside her. The girl looked intently out of the window, after her first glance at the fellow, inwardly hoping that his journey would not be a long one. For some time the man did not pay any attention to her, then he turned abruptly and said:

“Do you want that window down?”

“No; thank you,” returned Jeanne adopting the manner she had seen her mother use towards people of whom she did not approve.

The man eyed her narrowly, but the girl preserved her composure under his scrutiny.

“What’s yer got in yer basket?” he demanded presently.

A look of indignation flashed over Jeanne’s face. She opened her lips to reply. “None of your business,” as some of the girls she knew would have done, but something that her mother had once said came into her mind just as she was about to make the retort.

“My dear,” her mother had said, “no matter how rudely others may behave, be a lady. Because some one else has been impolite does not excuse it in you.”

As this came to Jeanne she closed her lips resolutely and, turning her back very decidedly, looked out of the window.

“Yer needn’t put on any of yer airs with me,” growled the fellow, who was evidently in a surly humor. “Can’t yer answer a civil question?”

Still Jeanne made no reply, and the man reached out to take hold of her basket. But the girl was too quick for him, and lifting it into her lap held on to it tightly while she placed her feet upon her satchel.

“Yer needn’t be so spunky,” said the fellow sheepishly. “I jest wanted to see if yer didn’t have somethin’ to eat.”

“If you are hungry, you should have said so,” said Jeanne, relaxing instantly, for her warm heart was always open to appeals of this nature. She opened her basket and took out some dainty sandwiches. “You are quite welcome to what you wish to eat,” she said graciously, “but you were not very nice about asking for it.”

“A feller don’t stop fer manners,” said the man nibbling at the sandwiches gingerly, “when he’s as hungry as I am. Is that all ye’ve got in there?”

“I have some more lunch,” said Jeanne rather indignantly, for the fellow did not seem very ravenous for a hungry man. “I shall keep that for the rest of my journey.”

“Whar yer goin’? Ain’t yer got nobody with yer?” queried the man a gleam coming into his eyes.

“Don’t you think that you are rather inquisitive?” questioned Jeanne boldly. “Why should you want to know where I am going?”

“Because folks have to be keerful in times like these,” said the other brusquely. “Haven’t yer got some money too?”

“I have none to give you,” answered Jeanne. “And I would rather that you would not sit by me any longer. Will you please go away?”

“Not if I knows myself and I think I do,” laughed the man. “See here! I’ll go away if you will give me your purse. I know that it’s in that there basket. You take too much care of it fer it only ter hold yer food. Now give it to me quick.”

“I won’t,” said Jeanne determinedly clinging to the basket, for she had put her purse there after buying some fruit. “If you touch this basket I’ll scream and the people will know what you are doing.”

“Pooh! I’ll tell them that you are my crazy sister that I’m taking to an asylum,” said the fellow easily. “Now you’d better give me that money.”

“People would know that I was not your sister,” exclaimed the girl scornfully.

“You don’t look in the least like my brother. Now, sir, go away.”

“Not without that money. Sit down,” he commanded gruffly as the girl half rose from her seat.

Jeanne cast a wild, imploring look about her for help and sank back in her seat despairingly, for the passengers seemed intent upon other concerns, and the noise of the train prevented the conversation from being overheard.

“Are you going to hand out that money?”

“Ye-es,” faltered Jeanne, reaching for her purse.

“What do you mean by frightening this girl?” demanded a voice, and a hand was laid upon the ruffian’s shoulder. “Get out of my seat, you rascal, or I’ll have you thrown off the car.”

A cry of delight escaped Jeanne’s lips as she saw that the man who had come to her assistance was the old gentleman who had bought the handkerchiefs from her during the fair.

“I–I did not mean any harm,” stammered the fellow, resigning the seat with alacrity. “I was jest trying ter scare the girl a little.”

“Well, let me catch you ‘jest trying ter scare her,’ any more, and it will be the worse for you,” cried the old gentleman threateningly. “Now clear out, and let me see no more of you.”

The fellow slunk off and her friend in need took the seat by Jeanne’s side.

“That fellow was annoying you terribly, was he not?”

“Yes, sir; I was very much frightened, especially when he demanded my money.”

“What! Did he do that? Why the scamp! This is worse than I thought. I’ll get the conductor after him.”

“Oh, let him go,” pleaded Jeanne, who was quite a little upset by the episode. “Please stay with me.”

“Very well.” The old man saw her nervousness and acquiesced willingly. “He can’t get off the train so long as this rate of speed is kept up, and I’ll see about getting him later. Now tell me all about it.”

Jeanne gave him a succinct account of what the man had said and done. “And I was so glad when you came up as you did,” she said in finishing. “But I did not expect to see you here, sir, and I thank you so much for your assistance.”

“Tut, tut! It is every American’s duty to look after women folks when they travel alone. I had just come from the smoker and saw as I entered the door that something was wrong. As the ruffian had my seat I came up at once and demanded it of him. But you are not more surprised to see me than I was to recognize the little patriot of the handkerchiefs. Aren’t you a long way from home?”

“Yes, sir; I am, but I am going to visit my Uncle Ben in New Orleans.”

“Rather a troublesome time for a visit,” remarked the other musingly. Then as a deep flush suffused the girl’s cheek, he added keenly, “I know that there are sometimes reasons why visits should be made even though the times be perilous. There! I am not going to ask any questions, so don’t look at me like that. My name is Emanuel Huntsworth, and I live near Corinth, Mississippi. I was formerly a New Englander but settled in the South a number of years ago. My Union sentiments having made me obnoxious to my neighbors I feared for the safety of my family and am returning from moving them North. I am going back now to wind up my business, when I shall go North once more to do what I can for the government. If you have no friends with you, perhaps you have no objections to my company as far as our ways lie together.”

“I should be pleased to be with you,” said Jeanne sweetly. “I am all alone, Mr. Huntsworth. My name is Jeanne Vance, and I live in New York City. I was all right until I got on this train, but now I can’t help but be a little uneasy since that man acted so.”

“The rascal! I had forgotten him. Conductor,” as that individual came by. “I think there is a man on this train that will bear watching.” Thereupon he related the incident to the official.

“I will look after the fellow,” said the conductor.

But search failed to reveal the presence of the man on the train and soon Mr. Huntsworth and Jeanne were convinced that, fearing the consequences of his actions, he had jumped from the train.

CHAPTER V
CASTING BREAD UPON THE WATERS

"YOU must be very tired," remarked Mr. Huntsworth, as the train drew in at the Memphis station. "It has been a long hard trip, and if you'll take my advice you will stay here for a day or two before trying to go farther on your journey."

"Oh, I must not," exclaimed Jeanne quickly. "I must get to New Orleans just as soon as I can. It is very necessary."

"Necessary, eh?" The old gentleman regarded her with a quizzical expression on his face. "Why should you be so anxious to see your uncle? You must be very fond of him. Have you visited him often?"

"No, sir," answered Jeanne in some confusion. "I never saw him in my life. He went to New Orleans and engaged in business there long before I was born. Father hasn't heard from him for a number of years."

"Then isn't it rather queer for your father to choose such a time as this for you to pay him a visit?" queried Mr. Huntsworth keenly. "Now don't be alarmed, child," he added hastily as Jeanne looked up in a startled manner while the color mounted to cheek and brow. "I do not wish you to tell me any of your secrets if you have any. I presume that there are just and sufficient reasons for you to go or you would not be going. I merely wished to show you that over anxiety to reach your destination might subject you to suspicion. Also tell no one else that you have never seen your uncle. If you do, others beside myself will wonder why you have been sent to him at a time like this. You don't mind my telling you this, little girl, do you?"

"No, indeed," returned Jeanne warmly. "I am very glad that you did so. Father says that one way to learn things is to listen to older people. But I will be truly glad to see Uncle Ben. Father has told me so much about him. He was his favorite brother, and my brother, Dick, is named for him and for father too. Richard Benjamin Vance."

Mr. Huntsworth's eyes twinkled, and he gave a low chuckle of appreciation.

"My dear," said he, "just answer every one who asks you questions in the way you have me, and you'll come out all right. Of course you would want to see

your uncle under those circumstances." Again he chuckled and looked at her approvingly. "She knows that I am her friend," he mused, "yet she will not tell me why she is sent down here. That there is some reason for it I am convinced. A very remarkable girl!" Aloud he continued, "Here we are at Memphis, child. What shall you do now?"

"It is so near night that I guess that I'd better go to a hotel," said Jeanne. "That is what father always does first. Then to-morrow morning I want to find Commodore Porter. I have a letter for him."

"Porter is down the river with Farragut. I doubt if you will be able to find him. But we'll see in the morning. The thing to do is to get a good night's rest after this journey. Here is a cab for the Gayoso House. I always stop there. It is a good place, and overlooks the river. Have you ever seen the Mississippi before?"

"No," answered Jeanne trying to look about in the gathering darkness. "It's a great river, isn't it?"

"None greater," answered Mr. Huntsworth enthusiastically. "Whichever side of this struggle holds it will be the winning side. It is the backbone of the rebellion, and the key to the whole situation."

"But we hold it, sir," said Jeanne earnestly. "My father says that now that Vicksburg is taken it will not be long before Richmond will fall and then the rebellion will be over."

"Pray God that your father may be right," said Mr. Huntsworth. "But I fear that he is mistaken. These Southerners are not so easily whipped. Every inch of the Confederacy will have to be conquered before they will acknowledge themselves beaten. The North makes the same mistake as the South does. Each forgets that both are of the same Anglo-Saxon blood that never knows defeat. I fear the struggle will be a long and bloody one, all the more bitter for being waged between brothers."

"I hope that it will not be long," sighed Jeanne. "I shouldn't like for Dick to have to be away much longer."

"Is your brother in the army, my dear?"

"Yes, sir. Father works for the government, mother belongs to The Woman's Central Relief Association, and I make socks and hem handkerchiefs for the soldiers, and—" she paused suddenly, conscious that she was about to speak of the object of her journey.

"And you hold fairs to tempt the shekels from the unwary, eh?" completed Mr.

Huntsworth. “Well, you are certainly a patriotic family. This is the Gayoso House, child. It has been the resort of all the noted Southerners. It is too dark for you to see the river, but you can hear its murmurings.”

Jeanne leaned forward eagerly. The soft lapping of the water, as it beat against the foot of the bluff upon which the city stood, came gently to her ears.

“I wish I could see it,” she exclaimed.

“You can in the morning. Meantime, let’s get some supper. Here, boy,” to a porter, “don’t you see that we are waiting to be shown to the dining-room?”

“Yes, sah. Right dis way, sah,” responded the negro, his ivories relaxing into a broad grin. “Glad ter see yer back, sah. We all’s mighty sorry ter heah dat you is gwine ter go norf, sah.”

“Who told you that I was going North, you black rascal?” demanded Mr. Huntsworth. “I’ve been North. Have just gotten back. Here, take this, and tell that waiter to hurry up with that supper.”

“Yes, sah. Thank ye, sah,” answered the black pocketing the shinplaster slipped into his hand, with alacrity.

“I think I never saw so many negroes before,” remarked Jeanne, looking about the dining-room. “Where do they all come from?”

“You’ll see a great many more before you go back to New York,” responded Mr. Huntsworth. “The South literally teems with them. If the race only knew its power it would not leave its battles to be fought by the North. A while ago I said the Mississippi was the key to the rebellion. I was mistaken. It is dar-key.”

Jeanne laughed merrily.

“My dear child, did you see the point?” cried the old gentleman delightedly. “That is indeed an accomplishment! Now my daughter, Anne, is a good girl. An excellent girl, but she not only cannot make a pun, but neither can she see one when it is made. I have a little weakness that way myself.”

“We used to, Dick, father and I, to make them at home. But we did it so much that mother stopped us. She said that it wasn’t refined–I am sure that I beg your pardon,” she broke off in great distress.

“There! Don’t take it so to heart,” laughed Mr. Huntsworth good-naturedly. “I know that it isn’t just the thing to pun, but

> “‘A little nonsense now and then

Is relished by the best of men.’

“Then, too, we have the example of the immortal Shakespeare. But I won’t indulge again before you, my dear.”

“Oh, but I like them,” cried Jeanne. “I think mother stopped us because we did nothing else for a time. But she used to laugh at some of them herself. She did, truly.”

“Well, well, of course if you enjoy them that is another thing. Perhaps you can tell when a boy is not a boy.”

“I can beat any sort of a drum but a conundrum,” was Jeanne’s quick reply.

“My, my, but I shall have to look to my laurels,” exclaimed Mr. Huntsworth in mock alarm. “That was very bright.”

“It’s Dick’s,” confessed Jeanne blushing. “He is so clever. He could always think of something good to say.”

“You think a great deal of Dick, don’t you?”

“Yes, sir; we are very proud of him. And his Colonel has complimented him twice for bravery,” and Jeanne’s eyes lighted up with pride. “He went at the first call for troops. I’ll never forget the day he asked father if he might go. ‘It’s our country’s need, father,’ he said, standing there so brave and handsome. ‘No Vance has ever turned a deaf ear to that, sir.’ And father said, ‘My son, if you feel it your duty, go, and God be with you.’ O, you should see Dick, sir,” she continued, enthusiastically. “There is no one quite like him.”

“Perhaps I may some day. I should like to very much. I do not wonder at his bravery since every one of you are so devoted to the cause. Now, my little girl, you had best retire. I am sure that you must be tired.”

Jeanne rose instantly and, bidding him good-night, was shown to her room. She was up bright and early the next morning, and, dressing quickly ran down the stairs and out on the gallery eager to take a look at the city.

The Gayoso House fronted upon a wide esplanade which extended along the bluff in front of the town. Blocks of large warehouses and public buildings bordered the esplanade on the same side as the hotel. The city was beautifully situated on the Mississippi River just below the mouth of the Wolf River, and located upon what was known as the fourth Chickasaw Bluff, an elevation about forty feet high.

Below the bluff ran the river, and far to the right was what had been a naval

depot established by the United States but used until the recent capitulation of Memphis by the Confederates for the purpose of building vessels of their own. To Jeanne, accustomed to New York City, Memphis seemed very small indeed. It was in reality a place of about twelve thousand inhabitants and considered a flourishing little city, being the port of entry for Shelby County, Tennessee. At one time it was the most important town on the river between St. Louis and New Orleans.

But if the girl was disappointed in the size of the place, the beauty of the surroundings made up for it. She gave an ecstatic “Oh,” at the sight of the broad esplanade with the noble river washing the base of the bluff which jutted out into a bed of sandstone that formed a natural landing for boats. Several steamboats lay at anchor and Jeanne’s attention was drawn to them by the singing of the blacks as they hurried to and from the wharf loading the steamers with freight. It was a weird plantation refrain in the minor key. Jeanne had never heard anything like it, and she listened intently as the song grew louder and louder as the enthusiasm of the blacks increased:

> “Ma sistah, done you want to get religin?
> Go down in de lonesum valley,
> Go down in de lonesum valley,
> Go down in de lonesum valley, ma Lohd,
> To meet ma Jesus dar.”

Over and over they sang the refrain, and the girl was so interested that she did not hear Mr. Huntsworth’s approach.

“Well, what do you think of the South?” he asked.

“I like it. Mr. Huntsworth, just listen to those negroes sing. Isn’t it musical?”

“They call them niggers here,” said Mr. Huntsworth smiling. “Yes; their singing is melodious. I have always liked to listen to it. Sometime in the future, I fancy, more will be made of those melodies than we dream of now. When you go down the river you will hear more of it. Some of their songs are very quaint. Do you know that we will have to see General Wallace to obtain a permit to go into the enemy’s country?”

“General Wallace?” repeated Jeanne. “Why?”

“The town is under martial law with General Wallace in command. I have been wondering what will be the best for you to do. To come with me to Corinth, for we can go there without difficulty, or for you to stick to the river route as you

had intended. I have learned that Vicksburg is not in our hands after all. Its capitulation was a false report. Farragut is waiting for Halleck to send troops to occupy it and is still keeping up the bombardment."

"But a boat could get through, could it not?"

"Yes; I think so. Davis guards the stream above Vicksburg while the Commodore holds the lower part. I'll talk with General Wallace about it. Meantime after we have had breakfast you can walk along this esplanade, and see something of the place. You will not get lost, will you?"

"No, indeed," laughed Jeanne. "I came from New York, you know. I should be able to get around a little place like this."

"Very well, then."

Jeanne donned her hat and wandered along the wide esplanade viewing the city, the river and the surrounding country. She walked on and on until finally she had wandered some distance from the hotel and the buildings were growing farther and farther apart when she was startled by a groan.

Looking about her she beheld a young fellow of about twenty-one years clad in the blue uniform of the United States lying upon the ground. Without a thought but that one of the soldiers was suffering Jeanne sprang to his side and knelt beside him.

"What is it?" she cried. "Are you hurt?"

"Just faint," murmured the young man in a weak voice, and the girl noted with surprise the Southern accent. "I'll be all right in a moment."

"Smell this." Jeanne thrust her bottle of smelling salts under his nose, and began to chafe his forehead vigorously. "There! You're better now, aren't you?"

"Much better." The young fellow struggled to a sitting posture and smiled wanly. "What a good little thing you are!"

"Well, I like soldiers," said Jeanne. "My brother, Dick, is one, and whenever I see a soldier suffering I always want to do something for him. You are fighting for us, you know. Are you sick?"

"No; but I have been. I just came out of the hospital a few days ago, and I am not so strong as I thought."

"You should go home and stay until you get well," said the girl with a quaint assumption of maternal authority.

“Home! I have none.” The young man’s brow darkened. “If I were to go to my home, I would be spurned from its doors.”

“But why?” cried Jeanne.

“Listen, and you shall hear, child. I am a native of the state of Louisiana. I was educated at West Point, and when the war broke out had just graduated. You know the conditions under which we are entered, do you not?”

Jeanne shook her head.

“We are to serve the country four years for the education given, so when the war came I felt it my duty to give those four years. I went to my father and told him so briefly. ‘Never darken my door again while you wear that uniform,’ he said. ‘You are no son of mine if you side in with a horde of miscreants sent to invade the sacred soil of the South.’ I told him that it was my duty. That I had but just graduated and that my honor demanded that I should repay my debt to the government, but he would not listen. So I left him.”

“But have you no friends?” asked Jeanne, her face aglow with compassion.

“Friends? No; they fight on the other side,” was the bitter reply. “And what do these Yankees care for me? They don’t realize what I have given up.”

“But we do care,” cried the girl. “My father and mother just love soldiers. Oh, if you would only go to them they would care for you. Do go. Will you?”

A smile lighted up the young man’s face as he noted her warmth.

“I wish all your people were like you,” he said. “It would not be so hard to do my duty then.”

“We are all just alike,” said Jeanne. “My father would be proud to have you honor his house. And you are an officer, too,” she added, glancing at his epaulets.

“Only a lieutenant.”

“Well, it doesn’t matter what you are since you are a soldier. Have you a pencil and paper?”

“Yes; why?”

“I want to give you my father’s address. You will go there, won’t you?”

“My little girl,” the young man’s voice was husky. “I couldn’t do that, you know. Why, it would be monstrous to intrude upon them.”

“No; it would not,” declared Jeanne. “I wish I were going home. I’d make you go with me. But won’t you go? Truly they would welcome you as if you were Dick, my brother. And if you don’t go, I’ll always feel as if something had happened to you just because you had no place to go. You have done a great deal for our side, you know.”

“Well, I’ll promise,” said the soldier a little wearily, as if it were beyond his strength to prolong the argument. “Where do they live?”

“In New York City,” and Jeanne rapidly penciled the address.

“Then it is utterly out of the question. I can’t promise you.”

“I know,” said Jeanne quickly. “You haven’t any money.”

A flush passed over the Lieutenant’s face.

“Soldiers never do have, Dick says,” went on the girl, taking out her purse in a matter-of-fact way.

“No–no, I–I can’t do that,” groaned the soldier. “Merciful goodness, has it come to this? That I should receive charity from a child!”

“It isn’t charity,” cried Jeanne hotly. “You can pay it back to my father if you like. I want you to get good and strong so that you can fight for us again.”

“I’ll do it,” exclaimed the young fellow impulsively. “A few weeks’ rest would put new life in me. And I’ll be your soldier, little girl.”

“Will you?” cried Jeanne delightedly. “That will be most as good as if I could fight myself, won’t it?”

“Every bit,” declared the Lieutenant rising. “God bless you, child. Such warm hearts as yours make life seem worth the living after all.”

He raised her hand to his lips. Then as if afraid to trust himself to speak further left her abruptly. Excited and happy Jeanne ran back to the hotel where she found Mr. Huntsworth waiting for her.

CHAPTER VI
IN DIXIE LAND

“Oh, Mr. Huntsworth,” she cried, “I have something to tell you,” and she rapidly related the incident of the young Lieutenant.

“Are you sure the fellow was telling the truth?” queried the old man smiling at her enthusiasm. “Sometimes rascals tell all sorts of stories in order to get money.”

“This man was a gentleman and I know he was truthful. He didn’t want to take the money at all. I had to plead with him to get him to do it. Besides he did not speak to me until I had spoken to him first. He was not strong enough for duty and he showed it.”

“Then, my dear, you have done a noble thing. If the young man told the truth his position is indeed a sad one. His rebel kinsmen would turn from him if he espoused the cause of the Union and his duty is doubly hard that he must fight against father, home, neighbors and friends. I am afraid that we do not appreciate all that a man gives up when, a Southerner by birth, he throws his lot in with ours. Many high-minded men have gone with the South because their state went that way, and it takes nobleness indeed to rise above the call of one’s own state when the government demands the sacrifice. I should like to have seen the young fellow. Did he give his name?”

“Why, I did not think to ask it,” exclaimed Jeanne. “But father will know of course.”

“So you really believe that he will go to your father’s.”

“Certainly I do.”

“Oh, for the faith of childhood,” exclaimed Mr. Huntsworth. “But whether he does or not you seemed to have infused new life into him and that is what a man needs most when he is discouraged. You are a true patriot, child. But now, my little Quixote, let’s go to General Wallace. I have explained everything to him, but he desires to see you personally.”

The headquarters of Gen. Lewis Wallace who was at this time in charge of the

city of Memphis were soon reached, and Jeanne and her friend were ushered into his presence. A man of medium height, rather slender in build, stern of feature but whose eyes beamed with kindness, serious of mien and visage and habited in a plain suit of blue flannel with two stars upon his shoulders denoting a Major-General in the United States Army, rose to greet them. Full of chivalric dash, possessing a cool head with a capacity for large plans and the steady nerve to execute whatever he conceived, the young General was an interesting figure and Jeanne gazed at him with some curiosity.

“So, my little maid,” said the General. “You wish to go to New Orleans?”

“Yes, sir,” answered Jeanne returning his scrutiny modestly.

“Do you not know that it will be a difficult matter to do so? Farragut is still storming the batteries of Vicksburg and while a transport goes this morning to take supplies to Captain Davis, and you could go down that far on it, still it is scarcely the time for a girl to make a visit.”

“I must go, General,” said Jeanne firmly.

“Will you tell me why, my child?”

“I cannot, sir.”

“But I cannot let you subject yourself to danger unless there is some necessity for it. It seems to me that a mere visit could be postponed until a safer season. Now unless there are urgent reasons for it I feel compelled to forbid your going.”

“Sir,” said Jeanne blushing at her temerity yet speaking boldly notwithstanding, “there are urgent reasons for my going. I do not wish to tell them because they concern the government. But my father would not have let me come had there not been necessity.”

“You surely do not mean that you are an emissary of the government?” exclaimed the General in surprise. “Why, you are but a little girl.”

“But exceedingly patriotic, General,” interrupted Mr. Huntsworth. “She has given a fair to raise money for the soldiers, made I don’t know how many shirts, socks and handkerchiefs and just now emptied her purse to send a soldier home to her parents to be taken care of. Best of all she can relish a pun when she hears one which you will agree is a rare accomplishment for a girl or even a woman. Oh, she is capable of anything.”

“I believe it,” laughed the General. “I fear that I shall have to give up before such a formidable array of accomplishments. Have you really done all those

things?”

“All but the shirts,” answered Jeanne shyly, “mother makes those. You see father works for the government, mother is in the Women’s Relief Association and Dick is in the army, so I just had to do something to help too.”

“I see,” said the General. “What is your father’s name?”

“Richard Vance, sir.”

“Richard Vance!” exclaimed the General. “Oh! I understand everything now. You shall go to New Orleans, child, if our boats can get you there. The transport will start in an hour. Can you be ready to go by that time?”

“I am ready now, sir.”

“That is the bearing of a true soldier,” approved the General. “I will give you a letter to Farragut—”

“I have one to Commodore Porter, sir,” interrupted Jeanne, producing the missive. “He is my father’s friend.”

“That is all right,” General Wallace hastily scanned the letter. “But I will add a few lines to Farragut. Success to you, my child.”

“Thank you, sir,” answered Jeanne gratefully.

“Now we will amuse ourselves by walking about a little until the transport starts,” said Mr. Huntsworth as they left the room. “My train goes this afternoon.”

“Then I shall have to tell you good-bye soon,” said the girl regretfully. “I am sorry, Mr. Huntsworth. You have been very kind to me. My journey would not have been so easy had it not been for you.”

“Tut, tut, I have done nothing,” said the old gentleman. “I have pleased myself in helping you. I was glad to have such a bright little companion. And we shall meet again, my dear. I promise you that. I am not going to lose sight of my little comrade easily. I want to bring my daughter, Anne, to see you when you get home.”

“I wish you would,” replied Jeanne. “I should like to know her. Mr. Huntsworth, don’t you think I might send a telegram to my father from here to let him know that I am all right and about to start for New Orleans?”

“Why, bless my soul, child! That is the very thing to do! What a head you have! There is the office on the other side of the street.”

“Yes; that was what made me think of it.”

The telegram dispatched, the two wended their way to Jackson Park.

The statue of the old hero of New Orleans stood in the centre of the green. It was inclosed by a circular iron fence and ornamented by carefully trained shrubbery. The bust of the hero was placed on the top of a plain shaft of marble about eight feet high. On the north side of the shaft was an inscription.

“Look!” exclaimed Mr. Huntsworth. “Some rampant rebel has marred that inscription.”

Jeanne looked and saw the writing which read “The Federal Union: It Must be Preserved”–the words Federal and Union had been chipped out, presenting an appearance as if a small hammer had been struck across them.

“The villain!” continued the old gentleman irascibly. “He ought to be hung who ever he is!”

“It is a pity,” said Jeanne. “Isn’t this a cruel war, Mr. Huntsworth, that the things both the North and South have been so proud of now become hateful to one part of the country? I never thought so much about it until since I met that young man this morning.”

“It is a terrible thing for brothers to be arrayed against each other as we are,” assented Mr. Huntsworth. “But don’t think about it too much. It is a pity that your young life should be clouded by the knowledge. You think too much for your age.”

“I am better for it,” said Jeanne. “Wouldn’t it be dreadful for me to laugh and play and be glad all day when the country is in peril? Every one ought to think.”

“Perhaps you are right. But sometimes I have heard you say things that made me think you a bit uncanny, as the Scotch say. I am going to advise your father to turn you out to grass when the war is over. I suppose it would be useless to urge such a thing so long as the war continues.”

“‘To turn me out to grass,’” laughed Jeanne. “What a funny expression. Do you mean for me to live in the fields like the cows and the horses?”

“Well, something on that order,” smiled Mr. Huntsworth. “Your father will understand what I mean. See, there is your steamer, child. I will see you aboard and then I must say good-bye.”

The steamer which had been a passenger packet plying her trade between St. Louis and New Orleans before the war had been converted into a transport for

carrying men and supplies for the government. As Mr. Huntsworth and Jeanne ascended the gangplank they were met by the Captain.

“Is this the young lady who is to be our guest down the river?” he asked in such a hearty way that Jeanne’s heart warmed to him immediately. “General Wallace advised me that I was to expect one.”

“This is the girl, Captain,” replied Mr. Huntsworth. “And I hope for your sake that you and your crew are thoroughly Union, otherwise it would be better for you to meet with a rebel ram. I don’t believe that the Johnnies could make it any warmer for you than she could.”

“This is just the place for her then,” declared the Captain smilingly. “We are Union to the core, Miss Vance. I believe that is your name.”

“Yes, sir; my name is Jeanne Vance, but please do not call me ‘Miss Vance.’ It makes me feel so strange.”

“All right, my little girl. I will do as you say. I am glad that you have no grown-up notions about you. I foresee that we shall get along famously. This is the way to the cabin, and that room is where you will bunk. It is next to mine. You can call on me or Tennessee for anything you need.”

“Tennessee!” ejaculated Jeanne with a puzzled look.

“Yes; our cook. We call her Tenny for short, and she is about the jolliest old darky that ever trod a deck. A good motherly woman with a white soul if she is black. Now make yourself comfortable. I will send Tenny to you to help you. I have some things to attend to on deck.”

“Isn’t he kind?” exclaimed Jeanne. “How good people are to girls traveling alone!”

“It is because they are Americans,” said Mr. Huntsworth. “You should be proud of such a country. I am glad that you have fallen into such pleasant hands. I will tell your father if I see him before you do. Will you stay in New Orleans long?”

“I don’t know. I will have to hear from my father about that. But how easy it has been to get there!”

“The most difficult part is to come,” said the old gentleman gravely. “Once the Vicksburg batteries are passed you will be safe. I do not think that this boat will try to make the run. She is hardly in fighting shape. Of course you will be transferred to a gun boat. Well, well, I hope that you will get through all right and that we will soon meet again. Good-bye, little girl.”

“Good-bye, sir,” and Jeanne shook hands with him cordially. “Thank you so much for all your kindness. I hope that I will see you again. Good-bye.”

Another hand shake and the old gentleman left the cabin slowly, and went on shore.

“Done you feel bad, honey,” and a fat negress came up to her as she sat down on the side of her berth feeling rather forlorn. “Wus dat yer par?”

“No,” and Jeanne looked up quickly with a smile. “Are you Tennessee? I am glad to see you. The Captain told me about you.”

“Yes; I’se Tennessee, honey, but lawsie! Dey doesn’t call me nuffin but Tenny. But ef yer want ter see the las’ ob de ole gem’muns jest foller yer aunty ter de deck.”

Jeanne followed the negress, and stood on the deck watching the preparations for departure. Mr. Huntsworth saw her and waved his hand. Jeanne waved hers in response, and as the transport backed out into the river and steamed southward, she gazed at him until his figure grew to be a tiny speck and then disappeared in the distance.

“Now, missy, I’se got ter ten’ ter de dinner, but you can kum wid me ef yer likes, elsen you can stay hyar and watch de ribber. Most folks likes ter do dat. I ’spect mebbe dats de best thing fer yer.”

“Well, then I will stay, Mrs. Tenny,” smiled Jeanne.

“Mrs. Tenny! Huh! Who is yer talkin’ to, honey? I’se jest Tenny or aunty jest as yer likes. But done go ter puttin’ no missis on to it. White folks done do dat down hyar.”

“Then I will call you Tenny,” said Jeanne, recoiling just a little from calling the woman aunty. “But it doesn’t seem right not to say Mrs.”

“Yes, missy, it’s all right. Now I’ll get up a good dinner. ’Specks you is powerful hungry, ain’t yer? Ole Tenny gwine ter do her bes’ fer de little missy,” and the good creature hurried below.

CHAPTER VII
THE EXAMPLE OF A GIRL

SLOWLY the transport, which was called The Gem, steamed down the river and Jeanne stayed on deck long hours to watch the scenery, which was new and strange to her. The river was full of devious windings and the girl was amazed at its great bends and loops, and sometimes it seemed to her that the turns must bring them back to Memphis. The eastern shore bounded by the lofty plains of Tennessee and Mississippi terminating at times in precipitous bluffs afforded a great contrast to the flat lands of the western bank. The dense forests of cottonwood, sweet gum, magnolia, sycamore and tulip trees festooned with long gray streamers of moss were interspersed with cypress swamps and a network of bayous.

“Whar you bin dat you ain’t nebber seed no ’nolias befo’?” queried Tennessee as she listened to Jeanne’s expressions of admiration as a particularly handsome clump of magnolias came into view on the western bank. The channel of the river at this point ran so close to the shore that the perfume of the creamy blossoms was very perceptible.

“I’ve always lived in New York City,” replied Jeanne. “I saw some magnolia trees once in Maryland, but I never saw them in blossom. Aren’t they beautiful?”

“Yes, honey. Dey is purty fer a fac’,” replied the negress. “I allers laked de ’nolias myself, and dat wuz de reason dat I named my darter so, but we called her Snowball fer short.”

“You did?” laughed Jeanne. “Why, Tenny, Snowball isn’t any shorter than Magnolia. Why didn’t you call her ‘Nolia,’ if you wished to shorten the name?”

“My ole marster, he done it,” was the reply. “Ole marster say, ‘Tenny, dat li’l pickaninny too white ter be named anything so yaller as a magnolia. Better call her Snowball.’ Ole marster allers would hab his joke, and dat gal of mine wuz jist as brack as de nex’ one. I didn’t want my chile called Snowball. It wuzn’t stylish nohow, but would you b’lebe me, chile? De fust thing I knowed, white and culled wuz a callin’ her Snowball, an’ den I did, too.”

“Where is she now, Tenny? I should think you would want her with you on these

trips.”

“Chile, chile, dat’s de thing dat tears dis hyar old heart ob mine,” said the woman, her eyes filling with tears. “Ole marster say she was a ‘likely gal’ an’ she wuz, ef she wuz mine. Dey made much ob her and would hab her roun’ dem all de time. Seem laik nobody could do for ’em laik Snowball. Den ole marster tuk sick and died an’ ole missus she say she hab ter sell us all, kase she didn’t hab no money any mo’. An’ Massa Cap’n he bought me but ’nother man bought Snowball an’ tuk her down to Loosyanny.”

“Why, that is awful!” cried Jeanne, her eyes overflowing, her heart full of sympathy for the darky. She had often heard tales of this kind but this was the first time that this phase of slavery had been brought home to her. A child torn from its mother appealed to her, so many miles from her own dear mother, as nothing else could have done. “Why didn’t Captain Leathers buy her too?” she asked. “He seems like a kind man.”

“He is, honey. ’Deed he is,” replied Tenny wiping her eyes, “an’ he did try, but the yudder man had bought her fust an’ he wouldn’t gib her up. I can’t blame him fer she wuz a likely gal. Lawsie, chile, dat gal wuz smarter’n a whip!”

“How long has she been gone, Tenny?”

“’Twas befo’ de wah broke out. Massa Cap’n he wanted a good cook, an’ I sutinly am dat, so he tuk me. He say dat I’se ter hab my freedum too, but shucks! what’s freedum ter me? I’d rudder hab my gal dan all de freedum in de world.”

“Yes; I suppose so,” said Jeanne dreamily. “Still, Tenny, if you had your freedom you could go to look for Snowball.”

“Now, missy, what could Tenny do? A pore ole nigger can’t do nuffin nohow. S’pose I did fin’ her, what’s I gwine ter do ’bout it? I couldn’t buy her. ’Sides, ef dey cot an ole ’ooman a foolin’ roun’ dat didn’t seem ter ’long ter nobody dey lock me up, suah. Mebbe dey’d whip me. An’, chile, once you had de whip ter yer back you doesn’t want it no mo’. No; I’se gwine ter stay right with Massa Cap’n. He’s a good marster, an’ he’ll take good keer ob Tenny.”

Jeanne sat silently thinking over what she had heard. Her heart ached for the helpless mother and she chafed at her inability to aid her. The darkness of the great slavery evil fell upon her spirit. Was this the land of the free and the home of the brave? she mused. How could she ever sing “The Star Spangled Banner” again so long as it waved over a country a portion of whose inhabitants groaned under a yoke of bondage!

“’Spect I ortern’t ter hab tole yer dis, chile,” said Tenny, becoming alarmed at her silence. “A nigga’s trubbles nuffin nohow. Done you bodder yer purty haid ober it. I’se sorry I tole yer.”

“I am glad, Tenny, but I do feel so sorry for you. I wish I could help you. If I knew where the man was that bought your child I’d buy her back and give her to you. Then if Captain Leathers would set you free you could both go North and nobody could ever separate you again.”

“Bress yer good haht, honey!” exclaimed Tenny, clapping her hands. “I wish I knowed his name. He wus an horsifer. I heerd dem call him Kuhnel.”

“And don’t you remember his name?”

“No, missy; I doesn’t. Nebber heerd him called nuffin but Kuhnel nohow. Wait a minnit! Chile, chile, ’pears ter me I did hyar it. Lemme think. My ole haid no ’count no mo’.” She placed her hands to her head and looked with troubled eyes at Jeanne. “Why can’t I ’member? ’Twuzn’t Massa Benson? No; ’twuzn’t. Think, nigga! Why done yer ’zert yersef? Nebber did hab no sense nohow.”

Thus she rambled on, muttering to herself until presently she sprang to her feet exclaiming:

“I’se got it, missy. ’Twuz Kuhnel Peyton. Massa Kuhnel Peyton! I ’members it now ’zactly. Massa Kuhnel Peyton! Dat’s it. Dat’s it.”

“Colonel Peyton!” said Jeanne. “I’ll remember that name, Tenny. How much do you suppose the Colonel would want for her?”

“’Bout a tousand dollahs, I reckon,” answered Tenny.

“A thousand dollars,” echoed Jeanne in dismay. “Oh, Tenny, I haven’t near that much. I didn’t suppose that it would be so much as that.”

“Niggas wuth heaps ob money,” said Tenny proudly. “My gal wuz smaht, I tell yer. Dat’s why she brung so much. Can’t you buy her, missy? Tenny’ll lub yer all yer life ef yer will.”

“I’ll write to my father,” decided Jeanne. “I’ll get him to buy her for me. He will know just what to do, and you shall have your child again, Tenny, I’ll promise you that.”

“Ef yer’ll jest do that, missy, ole Tenny’ll do anything in de wohld fer yer,” sobbing in her eagerness. “To think ob habin’ my babby ergain. She wuz my babby, missy. I had ten befo’ her but ’peared laik none ob dem tuk sich a hole on ma haht de way she did. Ef I kin hab her ergain I’ll brack yer shoes, an’ scrub yer

floors er do anything all de res' ob ma life. Yer won't need ter lift yer purty white han's ter do er a lick er wuk nebber no mo'."

"I'll do it if it is possible," said Jeanne. "It may take some time to find the Colonel, Tenny. You know that the war has disturbed everything so, but my father will know just what to do. If anybody can find him I know that he can. Just hope and pray that it will all come right yet."

"I'll do dat, honey. I'se been prayin' fer dis long time, but I didn't do no hopin' kase it didn't seem no use. But bress yer! De Lohd seems 'bout ter lead me outen de valley ob de shadder. Massa Cap'n say sumtime we all be free, but dat's too much ter hope fer."

"No; it isn't, Tenny. The people up North are talking about it all the time and working for it. I should not be surprised if it were to happen any time."

"Glory!" shouted the old woman rapturously. "Den dere wouldn't be no mo' whippin's, ner chilluns sold frum der mammies, ner hidin's in de swamp wid de dogs arter yer, ner put in jail ef yer does run away. Oh, chile, it'll be de bressed day ef it do happen! But it can't be true."

"Hope for it, Tenny. That is what we are doing, but it grows late and I believe that I am tired. Would you mind going with me to the cabin while I go to bed? Someway I feel lonesome to-night."

"'Course yer lonesum. Way offen yer folks laik dis. Suttinly I'll go an' only too glad. Ole Tenny'll put yer ter bed laik she wuz yer own mammy." She bustled about the girl when they reached the latter's stateroom and soon had Jeanne snugly in bed. "Dis hyar winda'll gib yer air," she said opening it. "Yer needn't be afeerd kase it opens on de ribba, and nobody can't git in. Now shet dem eyes ob yourn, and go ter sleep."

She sat by the girl's side and began crooning weirdly. The wild barbaric melody rising and falling in a sort of rhythm with the motion of the boat. Jeanne listened fascinated by the music and presently her eyes became heavy and soon she was fast asleep.

On and on down the tortuous curves of the river The Gem wended her way until at last she came in sight of the flotilla under the command of Commodore Davis. A shout went up from the fleet as the men caught sight of the transport, and there was a scramble for her sides as she hove to alongside of the flagship of the Commodore.

Jeanne kept herself in readiness to be transferred to one of the gunboats, for

Captain Leathers had told her that he did not expect to go farther. Soon he returned from a visit to the flagship.

“Commodore Davis says that it will not be advisable for you to come aboard any one of his ships as there are many cases of fever among the men,” he said, coming at once to the waiting girl. “Both Commodore Farragut’s force and his own are down with it. They intend withdrawing from the assault on Vicksburg as they have received orders to that effect from Washington. Therefore Davis will retire to Helena and Farragut to New Orleans until they can have the coöperation of the army.”

“But—” began Jeanne.

“You see the thing is to get you to Farragut,” interrupted the Captain. “Davis and I have decided that some of these supplies ought to be carried to the Commodore directly. He knows his need; so that I am going to him with the transport. Davis will send a gunboat with me for protection. It is fair to tell you that there will be great danger. The ram Arkansas is anchored just below the city and will do all she can to injure us. Now the question is, what will you do? The best thing to my way of thinking would be for you to stay right here with old Tenny either on one of the gunboats, fever stricken though they be, or to land somewhere until my return.”

“There is no question at all about it,” said Jeanne decidedly. “I will go with you.”

“But you understand that there is danger, child? Great danger! We may all of us be killed.”

“Yes; I know,” replied Jeanne quietly, “but I started for New Orleans, Captain, and I am going if I can get there.”

“Then there is nothing more to be said,” and the Captain heaved a sigh. “I will not attempt to combat your decision, child, but I wish you would not go. However I must see the men now, and place the matter before them. You may go with me if you like.”

Jeanne followed him and stood by his side as he called all hands aft.

“My men,” said the captain in clear tones, “I have called you together to put a plain statement of facts before you. You know that we were sent here with supplies for the two fleets of Commodores Farragut and Davis. Both squadrons have many cases of fever which has seriously depleted their strength. Farragut needs the drugs that we have immediately. Of course he can get supplies by the outside route, but that takes too long. The poor fellows are in urgent want of

what we have. Now, men, it was not the intention to go farther when we started than Davis's flotilla, but my heart bleeds for those suffering sailors. I want to run by Vicksburg to-night in the darkness. I will not disguise the danger. The ram Arkansas lies at anchor under the city as a further menace besides the batteries. I want no man to accompany the expedition who does not go willingly. All who wish to remain with the fleet may do so without the least stigma of cowardice attaching to them. Who will go with me?"

There was dead silence. Jeanne looked with surprise at the grave faces before her. She had thought that men were always ready to lay down their lives in a good cause. She had not dreamed that any one would hesitate for a moment. Her amazed look gave place to one of scorn as the time passed and no one spoke. Stepping close to the Captain's side she slipped her little hand into his and said clearly:

"I will go with you, Captain."

CHAPTER VIII
THROUGH SHOT AND SHELL

A RINGING cheer went up from the men and they stepped forward with one accord.

“I’ll go with you, Captain,” cried one. “With you and the little girl to the death.”

“Ay! to the death,” shouted the others in chorus.

The Captain smiled down into Jeanne’s face.

“You see what you have done,” he said. “They did not care to follow me, but will go anywhere with you. I believe that we shall have to turn over the boat to your charge.”

“I think they would have gone,” said Jeanne, rather abashed at so much notice. “Perhaps they were just thinking it over.”

“True for you, my beauty,” cried the first mate. “That’s what we were doing, Captain. We’d a gone all right.”

“Now, men,” said the Captain seriously, still retaining Jeanne’s hand, “you fully realize what you are doing, do you? Think well, because there can be no backing out when we have started. Any one who does not wish to join us may go forward. We have no means of fighting and must take whatever the ‘rebs’ choose to give us. You see that I am not mincing matters with you, boys. Move forward any of you who do not wish to go.”

He paused and waited for a few moments, but not a man stirred from his place.

“Then listen,” he went on briskly. “We’ll finish giving the Commodore his supplies, and then barricade the boat with bales of cotton. Under the protection of one of Davis’s gunboats we will try to run the batteries under cover of the darkness. Now fall to, my hearties. There is much to be done.”

There was another cheer and the men sprang to their tasks. The Captain looked down at the girl by his side. Jeanne’s eyes were like stars, and her cheeks were red as roses. The blood of her Revolutionary ancestors was up and she showed no sign of fear.

“What will your father say if I do not bring you safely through this?” asked the Captain.

“It is a risk that we must run,” said Jeanne. “There is no more danger for me than for you and the men.”

“True, child; yet we are men, and you are only a girl. I don’t know just where you ought to stay through this affair. One part of the boat will be just as safe as another.”

“Don’t mind me, Captain. You will have your duties to attend to, and I will not bother if I am ‘only a girl.’”

“Ah! that touched you, did it?” laughed the Captain. “But I do mind you, child. I don’t half like this idea of your going. You are sure that you won’t stay here?”

“Sure, Captain. Indeed, I must get to New Orleans, and there is no other way, is there?”

“No; to try to make it by land on either side the river would be through the enemy’s country with every chance in favor of capture. This is a desperate risk but sometimes desperate chances stand the best show of success. Once past Vicksburg and the rest is easy.”

“Then please don’t say anything more about my staying,” pleaded Jeanne. “I will try not to be the least bit in the way.”

And so it came about that the transport made ready to run the batteries of Vicksburg with Jeanne on board. The girl watched the men as they worked, and waited impatiently for the time to come for them to start. At last night fell. There was no moon, and a little before midnight a gunboat drifted out of Miliken’s Bend where the fleet lay, and, showing no light from its chimney, moved like some great bird down the noiseless current, while the transport, hugging the western shore under the cover of the friendly darkness, followed close in the rear.

No sound could be heard from the heights of Vicksburg, nor could any lights be seen. The city lay in the brooding darkness as calmly quiet as though no dread batteries lay at her feet waiting but the word of command to belch forth their terrible fire. An hour passed, and Jeanne, sitting in the darkness of the cabin listening with strained ears to catch the least sound, began to believe that they would get safely past the city undiscovered.

Suddenly there came a flash followed by a crash that shook the shores. Lights danced along the heights. Thunder answered thunder and the roar of batteries

from land and water rent the air. Presently a blaze flickered, flashed and then sprang up in a great sheet of flame upon the heights throwing the gunboat and the transport into a strong light, and turning the gloom of the black midnight into the brilliancy of day. The Confederates had fired a mass of combustibles with which to spy out the whereabouts of their enemies.

With the first burst of the artillery Jeanne ran up on deck.

“Back to the cabin, girl,” shouted the Captain hoarsely. “This is no place for you.”

But as Jeanne turned to obey him a shot tore through the cabin and fell hissing into the water beyond. The girl paused. Captain Leathers caught her arm and drew her behind a bale of cotton.

“Stay there!” he panted. “You will be as safe as anywhere.”

At this moment a terrible shape loomed out of the darkness making straight for the gunboat. A shout went up from the crews of the gunboat and the transport as the rebel ram Arkansas was recognized. Determined to make a grand effort to escape, Captain Leathers ordered all steam to be crowded on, thinking to run down the river while the gunboat engaged the ram.

The Gem responded nobly to the appeal and her prow cut the waters until they rolled from her in one mass of foam. But the Captain’s design was penetrated instantly by the enemy, and shot and shell sizzed through the air like hail. It seemed miraculous that the transport escaped being riddled.

Meantime the gunboat saw that the ram designed to run her down, and swinging round, welcomed the visitor with a full broadside. As the sound of the guns and their tremendous reverberations ran along the shore, the answer came in a terrific onslaught from the batteries above. Pandemonium seemed to have broken loose. Shot and shell whistled and sang through the air carrying death and desolation in their wake. Shouts and cries added to the confusion of the moment.

The ram, foiled in her first attempt to run down the Yankee, withdrew a short distance and turned again upon the boat. This time she got her sharp bow full in upon the heavy iron sides of the gunboat but her headway was not sufficient to cause any very serious damage. Before she could get away the Captain of the Yankee vessel rushed upon the hurricane deck and seizing a pistol shot the rebel pilot dead. The rebel crew retaliated by shooting him down. In the meantime the ram prepared for another blow, withdrawing for a terrific onslaught.

Just at this moment a shell struck the magazine of the plucky gunboat. There was

an instantaneous explosion and the boat was blown to atoms, her gallant crew perishing with her.

“We are doomed,” groaned Captain Leathers. “Nothing can save us now. Are you ready to die, little girl?”

“Ready, Captain,” came from Jeanne’s pale lips, and she arose from her place behind the cotton. “But I want to die standing. I wish we could shoot, Captain.”

“So do I. But we are at their mercy. It would be a relief to do something, but to die without a chance for a shot. Ah!”

The exclamation was caused by the fact that the light of the bonfires was dying down, and the transport was nearing the turn of the lower bend. The shadows grew deeper and longer, and soon only a pale flickering flame remained of the brilliant light of a short time before. Then the blackness of night settled once more upon the river and a cheer broke from the crew as the transport rounded the lower bend of the great loop upon which Vicksburg stood, and passed out from under the batteries of the modern Gibraltar.

“Will that terrible vessel come after us?” asked Jeanne hardly realizing that the danger was over.

“No, child. We are safe. The ram knows that Farragut is somewhere near here, and she will not venture out to-night. We are safe; thank God!”

“Thank God!” echoed the girl faintly. “Safe! Oh, Captain, Captain!” and she burst into a passion of weeping.

“Why, my little heroine, what does this mean?” cried Captain Leathers dismayed. “You were cool enough through that fire of grape and canister. ‘Ready to die,’ you said; ‘just so that you could die standing.’ It was enough to frighten the bravest man, yet you were not afraid. And now you break down?”

“Leab her ter me, massa,” said old Tenny coming up on deck. “Jest you leab dat chile ter ole Tenny. Ef dis night ain’t been enuff ter make an angel weep den I dunno nuffin. Lawsie, massa! I’se been suah dat I wuz daid fer de las’ hour. Fiah an’ brimstone nebber scare me no mo’. De bad man ain’t got no wuss ter gib dan dis has been, an’ I knows it. Come, chile! Come, honey! Ole Tenny’ll put yer ter bed now.”

“Yes; that is the best place for her,” said the Captain as the girl continued to sob uncontrollably. “I’ll carry her down, Tenny, and you see to her.”

He lifted Jeanne up bodily in his arms, and bore her into the cabin picking his

way carefully through the débris scattered about.

“I–I can’t help but cry,” sobbed Jeanne with an effort at self-control.

“It’s all right, my little girl. Cry all you want to. You are nervous and overwrought. I feel as if I’d like to do the same if I wasn’t a man. Sleep well because you are safe now, and you won’t have any more of this to go through. Good-night.”

“Good-night,” murmured Jeanne and presently she grew calm under Tenny’s soothing ministrations.

CHAPTER IX
JEANNE MEETS THE HERO OF NEW ORLEANS

It was late before Jeanne awoke the next morning. The sun was shining brightly and she lay idly watching the dancing of the sunbeams upon the wall scarcely realizing where she was. Presently it all came back to her, and a convulsive shudder shook her frame as she seemed to hear again the whistle of shot and shell, the cries of the wounded and the shrieks of the unhappy crew of the gunboat as it blew to atoms.

“How can the sun shine after all that has happened?” asked the girl with that wonder that comes to all of us when, after some great calamity, nature presents the same undisturbed aspect. “Oh, how can I ever laugh again!”

“Is you ’wake, honey?” queried old Tenny peering in at the door. “Massa Cap’n say when it’s ’venient fer yer he laik ter hab yer kum ter see ’Miral Farragut.”

“What! have we reached Commodore Farragut? He said ‘Commodore’ didn’t he, Tenny?” inquired Jeanne, who did not know that Farragut had been recently made a rear admiral.

“No, honey; he said ’Miral, I’se suah,” returned the negress.

Jeanne dressed quickly and then hastened to Captain Leathers.

“How are you this morning, Jeanne?” was the Captain’s salutation. “Pretty thankful to be on earth, aren’t you? Admiral,” turning to a slight, modest looking middle aged man with gray hair, “this is the girl I was telling you about. She stood fire last night like a veteran.”

“You have shown yourself to be a true heroine,” said Admiral Farragut taking her hand. “It is not often that we meet such courage in one so young.”

“I never heard that you were deficient in this quality,” said the Captain. “Seems to me that I’ve heard of a number of your exploits when you were a lad.”

“I was a boy, Captain. One expects such things from a lad but a tender, delicate little girl,”–and he smiled such a winning smile at Jeanne that she involuntarily drew closer to him,–“that is decidedly different. Boys take to such things naturally unless they are molly coddles. Were you not afraid, little girl?”

“Not until it was over,” answered Jeanne shyly. “But it was a dreadful time. I can’t help thinking of those poor men on the gunboat—” Her voice faltered and her eyes filled with tears.

“Yes, child.” The Admiral pressed her hand warmly. “That is the worst part of it. To lose such gallant fellows is one of the hard things of war. And yet–there is no nobler death than to fall in defense of one’s country. But the Captain tells me that you have a message for me.”

“Yes, sir. I have a letter from my father to Commodore Porter, and General Wallace added a few lines for you. I will get it.”

She ran to her stateroom and soon returned with the letter. “It is for any one on our side to read,” she said, as Farragut hesitated slightly.

“In that case,” smiled the Admiral. “I will read it. So, my little one, it is very necessary for you to get to New Orleans? You are young to be sent on business for the government. Tell me what led you to undertake such a thing.”

“Because I love my country and wished to do something for her,” replied Jeanne so fervently that Farragut’s face kindled in response.

“Well said,” he exclaimed enthusiastically. “That’s the stuff I wish that all Americans were made of. But have you no mother?”

“I have a dear mother,” answered Jeanne quickly. “She was quite willing for me to come as it was necessary. She made me this flag,” drawing it from her bosom, “and told me that not even for life itself must I betray it. I have kissed it every night,” continued the girl caressing its folds fondly, “and I keep it right over my heart that no traitorous thought may enter there.”

“My dear child,” a tear glistened in the Admiral’s eye, “you are a brave girl and have a noble mother. So long as America can produce such women there will be no fear for the Union. You shall get to New Orleans as quickly as possible. If it were needful I would clear a passage with my guns. But that will not be necessary. You will soon see the end of your journey. Would that all messengers were as brave as you have shown yourself.”

“Perhaps they would be if they could meet with such treatment as I have, sir. Some of them are very bold and daring, and run fearful risks. I have heard my father tell of their narrow escapes. And some of them,” and her eyes grew sorrowful, “never get back. I have done nothing compared with what many of them have done.”

“It is a great deal,” said Farragut kindly. “More than most girls could do.”

And so petted and made much of by officers and men the girl made the rest of her journey down the river without incident. The entire fleet of Farragut was brought to New Orleans because the Admiral realized the futility of taking Vicksburg without troops to hold it. General Butler at New Orleans had none to send him, and Halleck dawdled at Corinth most inexplicably. Many of the men were prostrated by fever and rest was a necessity.

Into the crescent shaped harbor upon which the city stood the fleet came to anchor, and Jeanne, full of anticipation at the thought of seeing her uncle and the successful termination of her mission, stood ready to go ashore. Captain Leathers came to her side.

“You are to go with Admiral Farragut,” he said. “He will take you to General Butler who will know just where to find your uncle.”

“Thank you,” said Jeanne gratefully. “How kind you have been to me, Captain Leathers. I will never forget you.”

“And I will never forget you,” said the Captain heartily. “When people brave death together it always makes them feel a sort of kinship, don’t you think? And at any time you want to go back I’ll carry you if I am here.”

“Thank you,” said the girl again. They shook hands and the Captain started to lead her ashore when Tenny ran after them.

“Shorely you ain’t gwine ter leab without tellin’ ole Tenny good-bye, is yer?” she panted.

“No, no, Tenny. I hope to see you soon again,” said Jeanne warmly for she had conceived a real regard for the faithful creature. “And I won’t forget about Snowball.”

“Bress yer haht, I knows yer won’t. Ole Tenny nebber cease ter gib thanks dat she hab met yer. Good-bye, honey.”

“Good-bye,” said Jeanne again and then she followed the Captain down the cotton platform, which was raised above the levee for the convenient loading of cotton, to the levee itself, and along the banks to DeLord Street where they were joined by Admiral Farragut. Jeanne bade the Captain adieu and then walked slowly by the Admiral’s side through the busy streets en route for the St. Charles Hotel where General Butler had his headquarters. The city had recovered something of its former activity, and wore its accustomed garb of careless gaiety and business bustle.

The markets were bright once more with red bandannas and noisy with the

many-tongued chatter of the hucksters: Creole, Spanish, French, German and English. A perfect babel of tongues, and louder, more obstreperous and broader mouthed than all others rose the gleeful negro laughter.

The day was warm and bright, and the mulatto women with baskets of cakes, figs, pomegranates, bananas, crape myrtles and oleanders, filled the air with their musical negro cries as they vended their wares. Nurses with children wearing Madras kerchiefs of bright colors, wrinkled negro mammies, Creoles with French or Spanish descent plainly delineated upon their features and soldiers, clad in the United States uniform, thronged the banquettes and streets.

Jeanne looked about her with curiosity, for the quaint old city presented a thoroughly different aspect to the cities of the North. Many of the people were of sullen countenance, some of them taking no pains to conceal their dislike to their conquerors. The stars and stripes hung everywhere. Hundreds of flags hung over the banquettes and in some places ropes of them were stretched across the streets. To her amazement Jeanne saw a well dressed woman go out into the street to avoid walking under a flag which hung over the banquette. A soldier seized her unceremoniously and forced her to pass under the emblem. With freezing hauteur the woman raised her parasol and interposed its shelter between her and the offending flag.

“Verily, Butler hath his hands full,” quoth the Admiral, and then he added: “You wished to find your uncle, did you not?”

“Yes, sir,” replied Jeanne, trying to overcome her astonishment at what she saw. “And yet I don’t know whether I should find him first or not.”

“Why?” asked the Admiral in surprise.

“You know, sir, that I came down here on business,” and as he nodded assent she continued. “My father sent some papers to be given to a man here in the service of the government. I have always said that I was going to Uncle Ben, but he is not the man. Father told me not to mention the name until I reached New Orleans and then only to some one I could trust. The man’s name is John Archer. Now do you think I should go to him or to Uncle Ben first? I suppose Uncle Ben would help me find him.”

“I should find the man, child. In every case when performing a duty finish that first before doing anything else. You have shown great prudence in not mentioning the name before. General Butler will of course know this Archer, and will see that you see him. Then I know that he will gladly find your uncle for you.”

“I will do just as you say for you know best. How glad father will be when he learns how you have helped me.”

“Ought you not to send him some word?”

“I will just as soon as I can say that I have delivered the papers to Mr. Archer. He will be so pleased. Then I will visit Uncle Ben until father says for me to come home. Isn’t it queer, Admiral, I have never seen my uncle?”

“You have not? But you have heard from him?”

“No, sir; he came South years ago. Long before I was born, but my father always thought so much of him that I will be glad to see him.”

“In that case the very wisest thing to do is to find John Archer,” said Farragut emphatically. “This is the St. Charles, child.”

They paused before the famous structure. A broad piazza supported by pillars overarched with stone ran along the front, making an imposing entrance. The building was a handsome one, and famed at one time as the finest hotel in the States.

Admiral Farragut and his charge were soon admitted to General Butler’s presence. The General had chosen the ladies’ parlor as his official headquarters. The room was filled with orderlies and sergeants each intent upon the performance of some duty. In the midst of them sat General Butler. He received his visitors courteously. His name familiar to every American, spoken of by some in terms of highest praise, and by others with opprobrium, made Jeanne shrink a little closer to Farragut’s side as the General greeted them. He was of imposing presence. Not tall, but of well-developed form and fine massive head; not graceful in movement but of firm solid aspect; self-possessed and slow of speech.

“This is a great pleasure, Admiral,” he exclaimed with heartiness. “Welcome back to New Orleans.”

“Thank you, General,” returned Farragut. “I should be glad to be here could I feel that I have not left unfinished my work behind me.”

“Vicksburg then is still untaken?”

“I regret to answer, yes. But you are making progress here. You have begun a good work. I notice that the streets are being cleaned.”

“The condition of things demanded it,” returned Butler. “The quality of the climate is pernicious and wasting enough without having to brave the terror of

yellow fever. It has been in self-defense."

"It takes a strong hand to rule the city, does it not?"

"A strong hand? Yes. I am subjected to all sorts of abuse for my tyranny, as they call it; but this one measure the strongest rebel among them must approve. In time perhaps they will see the need of all. My administration may be vigorous, but of one thing rest assured: So long as Benjamin F. Butler stays in New Orleans the city shall acknowledge the absolute and unquestioned supremacy of the United States."

"There is no doubt but that she will with you at the helm," said the Admiral. "General, do you know a man by the name of Archer?"

"John Archer?" asked the General, giving a quick glance at him. "Well, to any one else, Admiral, I should dissemble; but to you I will say, yes. Why?"

"This girl," pushing Jeanne forward, "has brought messages, papers, or something of that nature for him from New York City: I thought that perhaps you could arrange a meeting with him for her. After that she has an uncle in the city whom she wishes to find."

"This girl?" General Butler eyed Jeanne keenly. "Rather young for a messenger, isn't she?"

"In years, perhaps; but she ran the fire of the Vicksburg batteries in order to reach here."

"Indeed!" General Butler looked at her more closely. "Do you know John Archer, child?"

"No, sir."

"Orderly, bring in the man Archer," commanded the General.

A look of surprise passed over Farragut's face, but he made no remark. Presently the orderly returned with a man.

"Archer," said the General quietly, "this girl has brought some papers for you."

There was a startled expression on the man's face, and he looked at Jeanne with something like apprehension. General Butler turned his attention to Admiral Farragut, and Jeanne was left face to face with the man whom she had come so far to see.

CHAPTER X
AN UNFORESEEN RESULT

He was not an agreeable looking man and Jeanne felt an instinctive distrust of him instantly. For a few moments she hesitated, and the thought came to her that she would not give him the papers. But was it not for this very thing that she had come to New Orleans? What would her father say if she did not fulfil her trust?

“You wished to see me?” said John Archer, and it seemed to Jeanne that he was trying to make signs to her.

“If you are Mr. John Archer?” and Jeanne looked at him steadily. “I came from Mr. Richard Vance.”

“Vance? Richard Vance?” repeated the other as if the name conveyed nothing of importance to his mind. “What Vance?”

“Why Richard Vance of New York City,” answered Jeanne in astonishment. She had inferred from what her father had said that John Archer would be well acquainted with the name. “He is my father, and he has sent me to you with some papers. If you are Mr. John Archer?”

“I am he,” answered the man, “but I know nothing about any papers.”

“I thought that you would,” murmured Jeanne. There seemed something strange to her in the way the man was acting. “My mother sewed them into my petticoat,” she continued with a growing reluctance against parting with them. “If there is any place where I could go I would get them. It seemed the best way to carry them.”

“Orderly,” interposed General Butler turning to them, “take the young lady to Mrs. Butler. My wife will gladly assist you,” he added to Jeanne.

“Thank you,” said Jeanne, gratefully hurrying after the Orderly. They soon reached the apartments set aside for the use of General Butler’s wife, and she herself opened the door in answer to the Orderly’s knock.

“Come right in,” she said cordially in response to Jeanne’s rapid explanation. “You are young to be sent on such an errand, my dear. But the times are such that we cannot always choose our messengers. Very often the young prove more

reliable than older persons. You say that they are in your petticoat, my child?"

"Yes, ma'am," returned Jeanne. "You see it made my frock stand out like crinoline and no one would think it was anything else."

"And a good place it is too," replied the lady busy with her scissors. "You have a thoughtful mother."

"Mrs. Butler," said the little girl suddenly after she and the lady had finished their task and the papers lay before them, "do you know John Archer?"

"No, child. Why?"

"He is the man to whom my father sent these papers," said the girl thoughtfully. "Someway I do not like him. I wish he were not the man."

"My dear," reproved the lady gently, "we ought not to let our fancies dominate us. If the man came to the General's rooms and was received there, rest assured that he is all right. The General has means of knowing whether a man is to be trusted or not."

"True," replied Jeanne, and feeling that it would be ungracious to give further expression to her distrust she went slowly back to the parlor. Why should she, a mere child, presume to doubt a man whom the General and even her own father trusted? "But I do wish," sighed she as she opened the door of the apartment. "I do wish that he were not the man."

"Here are the papers," she said, going straight to Mr. Archer.

"Thank you." Archer took the papers mechanically and without another word or look at her turned to the Orderly, and was conducted from the room.

Jeanne stood looking after him somewhat dismayed. Was this all? Some way she had thought, had expected it to be so different. Mr. Huntsworth, Captain Leathers, even the great Farragut had seemed to consider that she had done wonders in carrying the papers but this man thought nothing of her action. Tears of disappointment welled to her eyes.

"Never mind, child," said Farragut seeing her distress. "Some people are so matter of fact that they suppose the whole world is of the same way of thinking. Besides, the consciousness of a good action is its own reward."

"Ye-es," said Jeanne, "I know that it ought to be. It says so in my copy-book. But I thought that it would be so different."

"It would be a fine thing if all our acts would receive approbation," remarked

General Butler. “Brass bands and calcium lights are things that human nature craves for deeds well done, but they are seldom given. That is, until one dies.”

“Don’t be cynical, General,” laughed Farragut. “The child will find it out soon enough.”

“Yes; I suppose so,” replied Butler. “Didn’t you say something about an uncle, Admiral?”

“Yes; that is the next thing in order. She is to stay with him until her father tells her to return. Her uncle is Benjamin Vance.”

“Whe-ew,” whistled the General an expression of blank amazement on his face. “Did you say Benjamin Vance?”

“Certainly. Do you know him?”

“I do,” replied the General emphatically. “And this girl is his niece, and she brings papers down here to Archer? It is about the boldest thing I ever heard of!”

“Why! What do you mean?”

“I’ll tell you presently. Come here, girl. Do you hear often from your uncle?” he asked as Jeanne approached.

“No, sir. Father has not heard from him in years. He came South long before I was born, but I remembered that he lived here when I was getting father to let me bring the papers.”

“Isn’t it strange that you should have remembered it just at that time?” questioned Butler sharply.

“Why, no,” answered the girl regarding him with wide open eyes. “I have heard my father speak of Uncle Ben all my life, and when New Orleans was mentioned I always thought of him. So I said that I was coming to see Uncle Ben when I was truly bringing the papers to Mr. Archer. Father thought it was best.”

“I see. What is in the papers?”

“I don’t know, sir.” Jeanne looked at him so innocently that he was compelled to believe her.

“Well, you at least, are innocent, I do believe. Now, child, what else did you bring? Anything for your uncle?”

“I brought him some quinine,” answered Jeanne half laughing. “Father had it fixed for me in my lunch basket. He said if I should fall in with the rebels and they questioned me too closely I was to own up about it. See! here is the basket.

The quinine is right down in this place."

"I don't understand about the thing," said the General in a low tone to the Admiral. "The girl is either the most innocent person in the world and everything is exactly as she says, or she is a consummate actress, young as she is."

"General, what in the world do you mean?" queried Farragut.

"I mean," said General Butler sternly, "that it looks very much to me as if some mischief were afloat. John Archer is under arrest for disloyalty to the government. Naturally this makes it bad for the girl."

"Then," said Farragut gravely, "why did you permit him to have those papers?"

"He will not have them long. Did you not notice an Orderly go out after him?"

"I saw a man go out, but I thought nothing of it," was the response.

"That man has his orders. Archer was relieved of the papers as soon as he left the room. I wanted to get all the evidence against him that I could hence I did not tell you about the matter at first. I thought that he might recognize the girl or she him."

"I believe that you are wrong," said Farragut earnestly. "I know nothing of course about Archer, but I would stake my life that what the girl says is true. It would be bold indeed to deliver documents serviceable to the enemy under our very noses."

"The very boldness of the scheme would make it successful. Besides, the fellow's arrest is recent. His accomplices in the North cannot possibly have heard of it as yet. He has been in the service of the Union until suspected of furnishing information to the enemy. You can see why the girl would deliver the papers before us. Another thing, her uncle, Benjamin Vance, is one of the worst rebels in the city."

"What!" cried Farragut.

"Yes."

"But she is too young to enter into any such scheme."

"Ah! you do not know these people as I do. They are perfectly unscrupulous as regards ways and means when it comes to carrying a point. Do you know the girl's father? I judged not from what you told me of meeting with her."

"No," admitted Farragut. "But she carried a letter to Commodore Porter with a few lines from Wallace at Memphis to me. Really you must be mistaken."

“Letters can be forged,” said Butler sententiously. “And sometimes wheedled from officers, as we know to our sorrow. She may be but a tool of persons who hope that her youth will protect her from the consequences. You must confess that it looks bad. Ah, Johnson,” as his Orderly made his appearance, “did you get them?”

“Yes, sir.”

Jeanne started forward with a cry of amazement as the Orderly laid upon the table the very papers which she had given John Archer but a short time before.

General Butler spread them before him for inspection.

“You can see for yourself that they contain important information,” he said to Farragut. “This thing would be all right if Archer were loyal; otherwise it may show how it happens that the enemy obtains so much information that it should not. The girl is certainly an emissary of the Confederates.”

“A what?” cried Jeanne starting forward indignantly, for the General had raised his voice and she had overheard the last words. “What did you say, sir?”

“I said,” and the General turned to her abruptly and spoke sternly, “that unless you can prove otherwise, that you are sent with these papers to Archer for the rebels.”

“Why, my father sent me,” cried the girl blankly. “He is in the employ of the government and so is Mr. Archer.”

“Archer was until quite recently, but he is now under arrest on strong suspicion of giving information to the enemy. You see everything is known, child. Tell the truth. Who sent you here?”

“My father,” said Jeanne again, looking piteously from one to the other. “Oh, what does he mean, Admiral? What does he mean?”

“Child,” Farragut took her hand kindly. “Tell me truly. What is your father?”

“He is in the employ of the government,” reiterated Jeanne vehemently. “He sends communications all over the states, because he told me so. He said that telegraphs were not to be trusted, nor the mails either. For that reason people were sent to the different cities with information about the government.”

“That proves nothing,” said the General, “unless it can be substantiated. Why then do you want to visit your uncle–if you are loyal–when he is such a rebel?”

“A rebel?” cried Jeanne recoiling in horror. “Is my uncle a rebel?”

CHAPTER XI
CLEARED OF SUSPICION

THE girl stared at them as if unable to believe the evidence of her senses.

“A rebel!” she repeated wildly. “My uncle a rebel? It cannot be!”

Her consternation was so apparent that General Butler almost believed in her. Farragut’s clouded face cleared instantly, and he turned to the other quickly.

“Whatever scheme is afoot that girl knows nothing of it,” he said. “Why, Butler, she carries a United States flag in her breast, and you should hear her talk. I am sure that she is as loyal to the Union as either you or I.”

“It may be, Admiral. One thing in her favor is the fact that you believe in her. Let me see! How was it that you said she came from Vicksburg?”

“Did I not tell you? She came with Captain Leathers from Memphis. The transport, The Gem, joined us just below Vicksburg. He brought us supplies, and there is absolutely no question with regard to his sentiments. They have been proved over and over again.”

“Of course the girl may be all right and everything be just as she says,” said General Butler again. “As I say the thing in her favor is that she came here to ask for Archer. I suppose it was because she knew no one. Had she sought her uncle first—”

“I advised her to come here,” said Farragut in a low tone. “I told her to find Archer first, and then to seek for her uncle, and she acquiesced without hesitation.”

“I am afraid that she is deep. Of course the whole thing was concocted in New York City. They could not know that Archer had been arrested, and this information would have been sent to the Confederates as other plans have been. I tremble to think of the consequences had these papers fallen into their hands. Really, traitors are everywhere. I had hoped that the government had gotten rid of them by this time.”

Meantime Jeanne was just recovering from the shock of learning that her uncle was a rebel. She had not heard the conversation of the two officers, and now she

came to Admiral Farragut turning to him instinctively in her distress.

“What shall I do?” she asked. “I can’t go to Uncle Ben if he is a rebel. Oh, what will father say!”

“I don’t know, child. What shall be done, General? You command here.”

“The girl must go to her uncle,” said the General decidedly. “There to remain until I sift this thing to the bottom. Meantime she must take the oath of allegiance to the United States.”

“The oath?” cried Jeanne. “Why should I take the oath, General Butler? I thought that it was only for those whose loyalty to the Union was doubted.”

“That is it precisely,” returned General Butler coldly. “If you are sincere in your avowed devotion to your country, the oath won’t hurt you. If you are not then you will either perjure yourself or else be registered as an open enemy to the United States.”

Jeanne was dumb with anguish. She, Jeanne Vance, an open enemy of the United States! Of the country for which she was ready to give her life! She gave one stricken glance at the austere man before her, and burst into tears.

“Come, come, General,” said Farragut laying a kindly hand on the girl’s bowed head, “you are too severe, aren’t you?”

“Not at all. Every man, woman and child in this city must take this oath, or be known as an enemy of the Union. It works no hardship if one is loyal, and acts as a restraining power on those who are not. The authority of the Union must be recognized while the city is under my charge.”

“Take the oath, child. That is, if you can do so conscientiously. But whatever be the consequences accept them as a brave girl, and perjure yourself for no man,” advised Farragut.

“I will,” said Jeanne chokingly. “It isn’t because of the oath that I feel bad, Admiral. It is because my loyalty to the Union has been doubted. Do you think that I would carry this,” and she drew the flag from the bosom of her dress, “if I were not for the Union? I kiss its folds each night, and with it before me, I pray for the success of my country.” She kissed it passionately as she spoke.

“That action speaks for itself,” remarked General Butler with such a change of tone that Jeanne looked up hastily. “No rebel woman or girl that I have ever known would kiss that flag. I have hard work to make them even walk under it. Forgive me, child, for doubting you, but treachery lurks under so many different

forms that I am forced to suspect even children."

"Suppose," suggested the Admiral, relieved that the General had come to his way of thinking, "suppose you begin at the beginning and tell us all about this business. How many have you in the family?"

"Four," answered Jeanne promptly, a little comfort creeping into her heart at the change in the General's manner. "Father who works for the government, mother who is in the Monarch Relief Association, and Dick who is in the army."

"Your brother is in the Union army?" queried the General.

"Yes, sir."

"That is easily verified," said the General, making a note of the fact. "Now how did you come to be sent down here?"

Jeanne recounted the circumstances of the affair rapidly not even omitting her mother's parting words of counsel. Both men listened with close attention.

"And you knew nothing whatever of your Uncle Ben?" asked Butler when she had finished.

"No, sir; father has not heard from him in many years. He will be grieved to learn that he is a rebel," and her eyes filled with tears.

"I have no doubt of it. Now, my little girl, I am going to send you to your uncle until I can look up the truth of your story."

"Couldn't you send me home?" asked the girl wistfully, a sudden yearning possessing her for the refuge of her mother's arms.

"I will soon. There are dangers by land and by sea, and, as your father told you to wait until you heard from him, I think that it would be wise to do so. It will be best for you to see for yourself what manner of man your uncle is so that you can tell your father. Good-bye," and he held out his hand. "Come in to see me sometimes while you are here."

"Good-bye," said Jeanne, shaking hands with him as in duty bound. She gave him a look of reproach and then turned to Farragut.

"This has been a hard trial for you, child," said the Admiral. "You have come through with colors flying though. I believe that you always will."

"It has taught me," said the girl with quivering lips, "that there are worse things than cannon balls and grape shot. I would rather face Vicksburg a dozen times than to go through this again."

“Don’t take it too much to heart.” Farragut patted her hand with great gentleness. “It was a severe ordeal, but truth will always prevail. Just think what it would have been had you really been guilty. Your conscience at least was clear.”

“I did not like Mr. Archer,” said Jeanne musingly, loth to leave this friend. “I told Mrs. Butler so. I did not want to give him the papers.”

“Why didn’t you say so?” cried the General.

“Because you had received him here and I thought that of course he was all right. It would have been presumption on my part to have spoken against him when my father sent me to him, and I did not know anything against him really. Besides, I did not dream that any one could doubt my loyalty.”

“You must forgive me,” said the General humbly, seeing how deeply the girl was hurt. “You don’t know what I have to put up with or you would. When you have been here a short time you will realize the situation better than you do now. When you do, will you come to me and be friends?”

“Yes;” and Jeanne smiled a little for the first time.

“Good-bye,” and the Admiral extended his hand as the girl prepared to accompany the Orderly detailed by the General to conduct her to her uncle’s house. “I hope to see you again soon.”

“I hope so too,” answered Jeanne. Then as she clasped his hand she cried half hysterically. “Oh, Admiral, I am afraid to go. I am afraid!”

“No, you’re not, child. You are tired and nervous. Be brave. Meet your uncle as if nothing had happened. I dare say that you will find him kind and good.”

“But he is a rebel,” sobbed Jeanne in such heartrending tones that both men smiled involuntarily.

“Well, some of them are very good men,” said Farragut. “They are mistaken in their views and need teaching a great many things, but otherwise they are a warm-hearted people. I am from the South myself, you know.”

“Are you?” asked the girl surprised, yet she had wondered at his soft Southern voice.

“Yes; a Tennesseean. You seem to think that I am all right.”

“You are,” replied Jeanne so heartily that Farragut laughed outright. “But Uncle Ben didn’t take New Orleans.”

“Perhaps you can get his services for us yet, and he may do something better

than to take New Orleans. That may be your work here."

"I doubt it," spoke General Butler emphatically. "There is no rebel so unregenerate as a renegade Yankee. There may be some excuse for those born in this section of the country, but for a Yankee who embraces the pernicious doctrine of secession there is none. The Orderly waits, my child."

Farewells were again exchanged, and Jeanne followed reluctantly after her guide.

CHAPTER XII
AN UNEXPECTED GREETING

THE Orderly called a cab and assisted Jeanne into it, putting her satchel and basket beside her. Then springing in he gave the order and they were off.

Past Lafayette Square with its city hall, churches and Odd Fellows Hall which were grouped round it with fine effect they went, and on into that portion of the city that was known as the Faubourg Marigny whose residences were built with more architectural generosity, broader spaces, longer vistas, ampler gardens and with more sacrifices to the picturesque than the part of the city through which they had just passed.

At last the cab turned into the courtyard of a massive brick building. It was a true Spanish building with broad doorways and windows, the roof of which was a solid terrace surrounded by a stone balustrade. The establishment had all the privacy of isolation and seclusion and was a charming spot. The gardens were very large and spacious, and fragrant with the blossoms from the magnolia groves. The avenue to the house was shaded with orange trees that later would be redolent with perfume and beautiful beyond description. Fruit trees were everywhere. Pomegranate, peach, banana, fig, pear interspersed with rose trees and jasmine whose odors ravished the senses.

The cab swept in an extensive circle round the courtyard to the carriage step before the broad doorway. A tall gentleman, elegantly appareled, stood leaning in an easy attitude against one of the pillars of the broad piazza smoking a cigar. He advanced to meet the arrivals as the Orderly threw open the door of the cab and handed out the girl.

“General Butler presents his compliments to Mr. and Madame Vance,” he said, with a deep bow, “and begs to introduce to them their niece, Miss Vance of New York.”

“My niece!” exclaimed the gentleman giving Jeanne a look of astonishment. “I have none unless my brother has a daughter. Are you Dick’s child?”

“Yes,” replied Jeanne, her heart beating quickly. “You are Uncle Ben, aren’t you?” with a trace of wistfulness in her voice.

“I am Benjamin Vance at least,” was the answer. “Come in. I don’t know your name, but you are welcome if you are Dick’s daughter.”

“I am Richard Vance’s daughter,” replied Jeanne with some dignity.

“Then you are certainly my niece, though what in the world you are doing here is more than I can see. Dick is well, is he? But come in. You shall tell me all about it later.”

He kissed her lightly on the forehead, and without a glance or word for the Orderly drew her up the brick stairs and through the hall, whose stairway was beautiful enough for a palace with its elaborate, fantastic, hand-wrought iron railing, and on to the door of a salon. A beautiful woman swept graciously forward to meet them. She was very dark with brilliant black eyes and silky hair of raven hue. Her manner was easy, graceful and rather impassioned, and her features showed unmistakably her French descent.

“Clarisse,” said the gentleman, “this is my niece who has honored us with a visit. I think that I have told you of my brother, Richard. She is his daughter and is from New York City.”

“Mais!” exclaimed the lady, with a laugh and speaking with a decidedly French accent. “You surprise me! I knew not that you had a niece. Why did you not tell me? It is one bad husband you are not to tell me of the dear demoiselle. You are welcome, child. She resembles you, mon ami,” taking Jeanne’s face between her hands and giving her a long look. “We shall be great friends, my dear. Is it not so?”

“Yes;” Jeanne’s lips quivered and her eyes filled suddenly with tears at this unexpected greeting. Her mission had ended so differently from the way she had anticipated;–the doubt of her loyalty and the knowledge that her uncle was a rebel had filled her heart with misgivings so that this welcome was almost more than she could bear. But as this gleam of sunshine comforted her, she steeled herself against its influence and drew herself up bravely.

“I must tell you something,” she said, “before you welcome me too warmly. I am for the Union.”

She did not dare to look at them as she spoke. Her thought was that they must know her principles before going further. She was homesick and longing for love and tenderness, but not for one moment would she receive them under false pretenses. A glance flashed from husband to wife and then a clear, silvery laugh rang out as the lady caught her to her.

“You dear little Yankee! you are too ridiculous for anything! Did you think we would turn you out because you were not a rebel? Well, we are rebels, my dear, but as we have to stand that odious, uncouth General Butler of yours I think we won’t mind a little thing like you. Come now, and I will take you to your room and you shall rest. Then you shall tell us why you have come all this way to see us at such a time.”

Jeanne returned her caresses with fervor, and abandoned herself to the delight of being fondled and petted again as only children can do who have been deprived of endearments after being accustomed to them.

“They are nice people,” she whispered as the lady left her in a cool quiet room. “I wonder if it is wrong to like them? But it is father’s brother, and I ought to love them. Oh, I do wish they were not rebels! How can they be traitors when they are so good!”

After she had rested her uncle’s wife came for her.

“You are not weary now, are you?” she asked in her soft, caressing voice. “You looked so fatigued, child. Tell me, what is your name?”

“Jeanne.”

“Jeanne? Oh, you darling! That is French, isn’t it? I did not know that the Americans ever named their children so. Jeanne! It is delightful.”

“And you are Aunt Clarisse?”

“Ma foi, Jeanne! Do not call me anything so prim. Call me ‘Cherie.’ Aunt Clarisse indeed!” She laughed gaily.

“Cherie! what does it mean?” asked the girl wonderingly, gazing at the bright face above her with delight. “It should be something brilliant and sweet to suit you, I think. Something like rich red roses heavy with perfume and sweetness.”

“You little flatterer! And you call yourself a Yankee? No, no; Yankees do not make speeches like that. You are French as your name is.”

“But I like to be a Yankee,” cried Jeanne.

“Be what you like, little one, so long as you are as sweet as you are. But now let us go down to your uncle, after you take one little cup of coffee. So! Now we are ready.”

The two descended to the drawing-room arm in arm, and there Jeanne related all the circumstances that led to her coming to New Orleans, concealing nothing.

Her deep love and attachment to her country glowed through the narrative like a golden thread. The lady and gentleman listened in silence until she related General Butler's doubt of herself, when her uncle sprang to his feet with an exclamation.

"The scoundrel!" he cried. "To subject you to such treatment. And we are helpless. Yes; we are helpless. Day after day some new act of injustice comes to our ears and we must submit. But our time is coming, and I fancy that Butler won't relish what his high handed proceedings will bring him."

"He is truly a beast without the instincts of a gentleman," cried Madame Vance, excitedly. "That is our name for him, Jeanne. 'Beast' Butler, and well he deserves it."

Jeanne moved uneasily.

"It wasn't pleasant," she said, "and it was a new thing to me to have my loyalty questioned, but I think he must have to do that way. You are so against him, you know, that if he were not careful you might rise up and drive him out. And the Union must have New Orleans. Father says that the rebellion can never be put down unless the Mississippi River is in our possession."

"True for you, my little Yankee. And that is just where the Union will fail. They did take New Orleans through the cowardice of its defenders, but they'll never get Vicksburg. And so long as we can hold that the Confederacy is safe. But you say that you ran past the Vicksburg batteries. Tell that again."

Jeanne retold that portion of her story to please him.

"I am glad that you are here, child," remarked Mr. Vance when she had finished. "But I am surprised at Brother Dick's sending you to face such dangers. He always was an enthusiast in anything that he undertook, and undervalued life if it stood in the way of accomplishing his object."

"Father did not know that it was so risky," said Jeanne unwilling to hear aught against her father. "He would not have sent me if he had. Besides I wanted to come, and I am glad that I did come, now that I have met you and Cherie."

"Yes; I am glad for you to know her too," said Uncle Ben, his Yankee tones sounding in flat contrast with his wife's sibilant ones. "I always intended taking her North to see Dick's folks, but just as we were ready to go this war came on and here we are now at the mercy of that Yankee."

"But you are a Yankee too, Uncle Ben," said Jeanne bluntly.

“Ages ago, little one. He has gotten over all that now,” said Madame Vance softly. “After you have been with us awhile you will get over your rank Unionism too.”

Jeanne shook her head decidedly.

“Dear Cherie,” she said, “nothing could ever make me disloyal to my flag. See! I always carry it with me.”

She drew the flag from her bosom and waved it proudly before her. Madame Vance gasped, and her husband’s face darkened perceptibly.

“Little one, you will not carry it while here, will you? To please me, dear, never take it out again.”

“Oh, but I must,” said Jeanne. “I promised my own dear mother that I would look at it every night and I must keep my promise. I wish I could please you, Cherie, but I cannot. But I will do this much. I will not take it out before you any more. I ought to respect your feelings, I know.”

“So much gained,” murmured the lady aside to her husband. To Jeanne she only said quietly:

“Thank you, dear. You are an amiable little thing, and you shall have my favorite darky for your maid while you are here. I will call Snowball and she will help you to dress for dinner.”

“Snowball,” echoed Jeanne.

CHAPTER XIII
UNDER EVERY FLOWER THERE LURKS A SERPENT

“YES; Snowball,” repeated Madame. “A quaint name, is it not? She is so black that I fancy that was the reason it was given her. She bore it when your uncle bought her. She is very bright, and a master hand at waiting upon one.”

Jeanne made no further remark but eagerly scanned the face of the darky as she entered. She was indeed very black, and her shining ivories were always visible in a smile. Good nature was written all over her countenance, but Jeanne could see no resemblance to Tenny.

“She may not be the one after all,” she mused.

“Snowball,” said Madame. “Miss Jeanne will be your young lady now. Your duty will be to attend to her and to look after her clothes while she is here.”

“Yes’m;” Snowball dropped a curtsy. “Does yer want me ter do anything now, little missy?”

“Yes; help her to dress for dinner,” replied Madame Vance speaking for Jeanne. “We dine at eight, my dear.”

Jeanne followed the black to the room which had been given her, and Snowball proceeded to brush her hair.

“Snowball,” said the girl suddenly, “was your mother named Tennessee? And did they call her Tenny for short?”

“Bress yer soul, honey, yes,” cried Snowball letting the brush fall in her astonishment. “How kum yer ter know dat?”

“She was on the boat with me when I came from Memphis,” replied Jeanne. “She told me all about losing you and how much she thought of you, but she thought that Colonel Peyton bought you.”

“Yes’m, he did. But de Kuhnel went to de wah an’ he say he hab too many darkies, so he sell off all but de ones he hab de longes’, an’ Massa Vance bought me. What my ole mammy say?”

“She loves you very much, and she misses you greatly, Snowball. I wish I could

buy you and set you free. Then you could go North to live with her."

"Wish yer could. I'd laik dat. An' I'd laik de bes' in de wohld ter see my ole mammy ergain. How'd she look, missy?"

Jeanne told the girl all that she could recall about Tenny. How she looked and what she had said. Snowball's eyes glistened as she talked.

"Yer got a good heart, little missy," she said as Jeanne paused for breath. "You is de bestest lill' lady dat I eber seed. Snowball'll lub ter wait on yer."

And Jeanne soon found that it was really a labor of love to the girl, and they grew to be fast friends despite the difference in color and condition. In fact she soon found that she felt more at home with the colored girl than she did with her aunt in spite of the caresses which the latter lavished upon her.

The days passed into weeks, and the weeks into months until two had rolled by and Jeanne was still in New Orleans. She had grown pale and thin and worn. She had no illness but suffered the bad effects of the wasting climate. In all the time she had been there no word had come to her from her parents, and a great longing for home possessed her.

"Why does not my father write for me?" she murmured one morning as she sat listlessly before the window. "What can have happened? Something is wrong I know, or he would have sent for me."

"Why so triste, my love?" asked her aunt entering the room.

"Cherie," and Jeanne returned the caress that Madame bestowed upon her. "I am wishing for my mother and home. I wonder why I have not heard from my father."

"It is strange," admitted the lady. "And yet, child, when one considers the state of the country and how the Yankees seize mails and telegrams, and exercise such a rigorous espionage over them one cannot wonder after all. I have no doubt that he has written, but that his letters are being detained for some reason by 'Beast' Butler."

Jeanne made no reply. She had ceased for some time saying anything when her aunt launched forth in a tirade against the Yankees. She was as staunch a patriot as ever, but, without words, it had been borne in upon her mind that her sentiments were unwelcome to her uncle and aunt, and that it would be better for her not to give utterance to them.

"Where is Snowball?" asked Madame Vance presently. "I wish to take you for a

drive, and you are not dressed. That darky gets more shiftless every day. Where is she?"

"Hyar I is, missus." Snowball started up from behind a huge brocaded chair so quickly that she overturned a low table upon which stood a ewer that had contained orangeade. A crash followed, and the culprit stood looking at the fragments of the pitcher with consternation written over her face.

"Come here," and Madame's tone was so stern that Jeanne looked at her startled. "Forty lashes you shall have for this."

"Please'm, missus, lemme off dis time. Clar ter goodness I didn't go ter do it."

"Please, please," said Jeanne tearfully. She had heard the sound of whippings once or twice, but her aunt had always taken her away from the sound immediately, and her soul sickened at the thought of them. "I could not bear to have Snowball whipped, Cherie."

"She must be punished," said the lady harshly. "Such carelessness cannot be tolerated for a moment."

"But isn't there some other way?" cried Jeanne. "Do, do, dear Cherie, use some other way of punishment."

"Jeanne, I beg you to say no more. Am I not capable of administering the affairs of my own household? I want no Yankee notions down here. I understand what she needs."

Jeanne did not dare to reply. She had never before seen her aunt angry although she knew that the blacks were very much afraid of her. Snowball was taken down into the yard, and soon Jeanne heard the most fearful screams as if a human being was suffering the utmost that a mortal could endure of agony.

She could not bear the cries. She ran down the stairs and out into the yard where she beheld the girl stretched upon the ground on her face, her feet tied to a stake, her hands held by a black man, her back uncovered from her head to her heels. Her aunt was standing by directing a burly negro in his task of applying the lash.

The girl's back was covered with blood. Every stroke of the instrument of torture tore up the flesh in long dark ridges. With a cry of horror Jeanne caught the man's arm as it was about to descend for another stroke.

"Stop," she cried. "For the love of mercy, stop!"

"Go into the house, girl," commanded Madame Vance in terrible tones. "Who are you that you should interfere with my bidding? Have I not the right to do

with my own slave as I wish? I want none of your abolitionism here."

"But she has been whipped enough," cried Jeanne. "Surely it is enough. I cannot bear it."

She burst into tears. For a moment Madame's face was convulsed with fury, and then a wonderful change came over it. She was once again the smiling, affectionate lady that had greeted the girl on her arrival.

"There!" she said going to Jeanne and putting her arms about her. "You shall have your way. You see that 'Cherie' can refuse you nothing. Put up your strap, Jeff. I will let the girl off this time because Miss Jeanne wishes it. But see that you are more careful next time, Snowball. You might not get off so easily."

"Yes, missus," responded the sobbing creature as she was helped upon her feet.

"Now come, Jeanne, and we will go for our drive. You have no idea how troublesome these blacks are, my dear. One has to keep an iron hand upon them to hold them in subjection. But of course you are not used to them."

"No," said Jeanne shrinking a little from her caresses. "We don't have slavery at the North. I never felt so thankful of it before. Poor things! Poor things!"

Madame Vance's brow darkened, but she smoothed the girl's hair softly.

"And aren't you going to forgive your poor 'Cherie'? Are you going to turn against her because of a little whipping? You are unjust, Jeanne. We who have the blacks to deal with know more of this matter than you do. Besides did I not give it up when you asked me?"

"Forgive me," answered Jeanne trying to feel the same toward the beautiful woman as she had before, but too full of the recent horror to do so. "I am not used to such things, Cherie, and it will take some time for me to get over them."

"We will say no more about it, you quaint one, but go for our drive."

And soon they were out in the bright sunshine, the lady pointing out places of interest as she had often done before, but it seemed to the girl that she was trying to impress upon her mind the location of some of the streets particularly.

"Now," said Madame after they had returned to the villa and were partaking of refreshments, "now you shall show me again the lunch basket with its curious hiding-place. How clever your father must be, child! I long to know him."

"I wish we could go to him," sighed Jeanne as she obediently brought the basket and showed once more the place where the quinine had been concealed.

“Perhaps we may soon, who knows?” said the lady gaily, examining the basket closely notwithstanding her liveliness. “I would tell you a secret–but no; not now.”

“What, Cherie?” cried the girl with eagerness. “Is it about my father?”

“Now, now, curious one!” madame shook her finger playfully at her. “Well then, I will tell. I can refuse you nothing, petite. You wind yourself about my heart so. Listen, and you shall hear the grand news. Your uncle and I wonder too why your father does not write. We know that you have a great desire for your home, and so we are going to take you there.”

“Home! Oh, Cherie!” Jeanne sprang to the lady and embraced her rapturously, “Home! I am so glad! so glad!”

“Is it not grand, little one? And we go together to see your clever father and your beautiful mother. But your uncle has much to do first. I will tell you more. He has deeded you all his property. His houses, his carriages, his slaves, his horses, his money, in fact everything which he possesses. Is he not kind?”

“To me?” and Jeanne looked at her in bewilderment. “But why, Cherie?”

“Because he thinks so much of you, and then too you are for the Union, and the ‘Beast’ will not take them from you as he would from us.”

“But why should General Butler wish to take your property from you?” asked the girl, who knew nothing of the Confiscation Act. In fact knowledge of any kind had been carefully kept from her except such as reflected upon the North.

“I do not know, child. Who does?” shrugging her shoulders. “The vagaries of the ‘Beast’ are not to be kept up with. But it does not matter. You will have them and we will be pleased. We have no children, you know.”

“I know,” said Jeanne kissing her. She could not understand the matter. Her uncle had never shown any particular fondness for her, and in fact seemed to shun her. “You are very kind to me, Cherie.”

“So kind that you would do one little thing for ‘Cherie’?” asked the lady, flashing a quick glance at her.

“Certainly, I would,” replied the girl unwarily.

“Then listen, petite, and you shall hear how you can do a great service for your uncle and me. Draw closer, my pet. None must hear what I would tell you.”

Jeanne came close to her side and waited to hear what her aunt had to say.

CHAPTER XIV
A VICTIM OF DECEIT

“I DO not know,” began Madame in her soft voice, “whether I have told you that I have a brother. Have I?”

“No, Cherie.”

“I have, petite, in the Confederate Army. He is very dear to me. A few days ago I learned that he was wounded and ill. He is not far from the city, and he lies in a rude hospital tent without clothing or the necessary food and medicine. Is it not hard, little one, to think of being in the midst of plenty while my only brother is destitute?”

“Yes,” answered Jeanne with ready sympathy, “it is.”

“I thought that you would think so,” and the lady smoothed her hair gently. “Suppose that it were your own brother, Dick. I know that you would do almost anything to help him, and I feel the same about Auguste. I tried vainly to get a pass to go to him to take him some necessities, but ma foi! That beast of a Yankee General will not give me one. I am distressed. I suffer, but of what avail is it? I come to you, my little one, for aid.”

“To me?” Jeanne looked her surprise. “What can I do, Cherie?”

“You are so brave. You have so much cleverness. Could I do it I would not ask it of you. But what would you! I am a coward. I faint at the least noise. I lose my wits; and so, child, I want you to take some medicine and food to my Auguste.”

“I to take it? Why how could I do it?”

“’Tis easy to one who has the courage, petite. I would send Feliciane with you. ’Tis only to elude the sentinels some dark night and once beyond them the rest is nothing. Feliciane knows where a boat is hidden on Lake Ponchartrain, and she would row you to the other side where you would be met by one of my brother’s comrades who would receive the things. Then you step once more into the boat, and Mais! there you are safe and sound in the city again.”

“Why could not Feliciane go alone?” questioned Jeanne.

“My child, she has not the intelligence. One must demand nothing of these creatures that calls for the exercise of reason. Will you go, my pet?”

“Would it be wrong, Cherie?”

“Wrong to carry food to a wounded soldier? Why should you think so, child?”

“Then it is nothing against the government?”

“No; I would not ask it of you if it were. Will you please me, Jeanne? Your uncle would like it too.”

“Yes, Cherie, I will,” said Jeanne after a moment’s thought. “If it is only to take some food to a poor soldier it cannot be wrong. When do you wish me to go?”

“Dearest, to-night. There is no moon and it will be easier to elude the guards. I may use your basket, may I not? It will not be so heavy to carry.”

“If you wish,” assented Jeanne. “But it will not hold much.”

“I only want to send a few, a very few things. Just what he needs most to put heart into him, poor fellow! And then when you come back, we will plan our journey to your home. Oh, we will have the grand time!”

The day wore away. Madame Vance talked volubly about the girl’s home and asked her so many questions concerning it that Jeanne was wrought up to the highest pitch. At last the darkness fell. With it came a drizzling rain and to the tenderly nurtured girl it seemed that this would put a stop to the enterprise; but no.

“Could anything be more fortunate,” cried Madame who was in the highest spirits. “Nothing could be better for our purpose. Ah, petite, you will outwit the Yankee soldiers yet.”

Jeanne looked troubled. The matter had not presented itself in that light before.

“I am not doing wrong, am I, Cherie?” she asked dubiously. “It is nothing against the government, is it?”

“To be sure not. How quaint you are to ask that again! Would I have you to do wrong?”

The preparations were finally completed. Robed in dark waterproof garments Jeanne took the basket given her by her father and, accompanied by Feliciane, a mulatto woman, set forth, again upon a mission. But this time the girl was downcast in spirit, and had not the lofty exaltation of an approving conscience.

The two walked in silence through the dark streets of the city. The woman glided

swiftly along as if accustomed to the journey, making many devious windings and turnings. Jeanne's progress was slower and the mulatto often had to pause to wait until she could catch up with her.

"Missy be keerful hyar," whispered the woman, when at length the outskirts of the city were reached. "Keep close ter de trees."

Jeanne obeyed. The sentinel's lonely figure could scarcely be discerned in the darkness. Unconscious of their proximity the man was singing softly to himself as he patrolled his post steadily. To the girl it seemed as though her heart beats must betray their presence. The black touched her hand gently and, as the guard turned to retrace his steps, they glided silently past him, and were lost in the darkness. The skiff was found, and the strong steady strokes of the woman soon pulled them out upon the waters of Lake Ponchartrain.

"We got by all right, lill' missy, didn't we?" chuckled she.

"Yes," assented Jeanne. "Is it far, Feliciane?"

"A long way," was the response. "We won't git back 'tel de mohnin'."

"Until morning?" echoed Jeanne in dismay. "Will we have to be out in this rain all that time?"

"Yes, honey. It's bes' fer it ter rain. De Yanks can't see yer den. Missus she laikes fer it ter rain when she go."

"Does she ever go?" asked Jeanne sitting up very straight. "I thought that she was afraid to go."

"De Madame ain't 'fraid ob nuffin," was the emphatic reply. "She usen ter go often. She done carried heaps ob things ter de rebs."

"But it has been because of her brother, Feliciane," said Jeanne, gently trying not to condemn her aunt too severely.

"Huh brudder? What brudder? She ain't got no brudder. What you talkin' 'bout?"

"Oh, Feliciane, aren't we carrying food and medicine to her poor wounded brother, Auguste?"

"What makes you think dat, chile? Massa Auguste killed long time ago when de wah fust beginned. 'Couhse we ain't takin' things ter huh brudder. We's carryin' news ter de Massa Gin'ral dat de Yanks gwine ter 'tack him."

"Then," said Jeanne bitterly. "I have been fooled. I will give no aid to the enemy.

Turn this boat back, Feliciane."

"Not ef I knows myself, honey. I done want no whoppin'. Madame Vance sent me, an' I'se gwine ter do what she say. What'd yer kum fer ef yer didn't want ter holpe dem?"

"Because I did not know what I was doing. Madame told me it was to take food to her wounded brother."

"She's a great one fer pullin' de wool ober de eyes," chuckled the negress. "Missus kum nigh gittin' ketched de las' time she kummed, so den she sent you."

"Oh!" Jeanne sat very still, her heart heavy with what she had heard. Truthful herself, the knowledge that her aunt could stoop to such duplicity filled her with anguish. Her eyes were fast opening to the fact that the sweetness of the lady and her honeyed words masked a cruel, treacherous nature, and unaccustomed as she was to deceit of any sort she was weighed down by the discovery.

"Feliciane," she said coaxingly. "I will give you more money than you ever had in all your life before if you will turn this boat back."

"No, missy. Yer can't hiah me ter do nuffin ob dat kine," came the relentless tones of the darky. "Feliciane knows what's good fer huh, an' she's gwine ter do it."

"Well, my basket shall not go at any rate," cried Jeanne and she caught it up to throw it overboard. But the darky seized her arm in a strong grip and took the basket from her.

"Be quiet, missy," she said, "er I'll hab ter settle yer. An' missus won't keer nuther. She done laik yer nohow."

Jeanne could do nothing in the woman's powerful clasp, and was compelled to relinquish her hold on the basket. Placing it behind her the negress took the oars again and resumed her rowing. Silence fell between the two and steadily they drew nearer to the farther shore. At last after what seemed hours to Jeanne the keel of the boat grated upon the sand and the woman sprang out and drew the skiff upon the bank.

"Come," she said to Jeanne and the girl mechanically followed her.

"Halt! who goes there?" came the challenge.

"A frien'," responded Feliciane. "Done yer know me, sah?"

"Feliciane," exclaimed a voice joyfully. "You are a jewel. Have you anything for

us? Who is with you?”

“Yes, sah; heah in dis basket missus sent. It’s all erbout a ’tack what de Yanks is a-gwine ter make on you folks. Missus kum moughty nigh bein’ kotched de las’ time, an’ so she sent de lill’ missy with me.”

“Well, here are some letters. You won’t be more than able to get back by daylight. Are you too tired to make it to-night, Feliciane?”

“No, sah. Missus ’spects me ter do it.”

“Well, good-bye. Thank your mistress for us, and tell her the boys in gray will soon drive the Yankees out of the city, and she won’t have this to do much longer.”

“I’ll tell huh, sah.”

Jeanne still silent went back to the boat. Every hope that she had held that there was really a wounded brother of Madame’s had died during the interview, and the lady was meeting with that fierce arraignment in the mind of the girl that youth always gives when for the first time the mask of hypocrisy is torn from a loved face.

The dawn was streaking the gray sky with crimson when they reached the city again. The rain had ceased and the stormy night was to be succeeded by a fair day. Jeanne’s face showed white and stern in the gray of the morning as she walked slowly by the black’s side. Her lips were compressed together in a straight line for she had determined that Madame Vance should render an account of her duplicity to her.

Presently Feliciane uttered an exclamation of alarm, and thrust the package that the rebel had given her into Jeanne’s hands.

“Run, missy, run,” she cried. “De Yanks am a-kumin’.”

Involuntarily the girl quickened her steps, but she had gone but a short distance when she was caught by the shoulder, and brought to a standstill.

“You are under arrest,” said the gruff voice of a soldier. “Give me that package you have.”

CHAPTER XV
BEFORE GENERAL BUTLER AGAIN

JEANNE handed the package to the soldier without a word. The man took it and then said in a harsh manner:

“Follow me. It seems to me that you are beginning mighty young.”

Still silent the girl trudged wearily along beside him. She was very tired and the way to the Custom-House was long. But she uttered no complaint. Far bitterer to bear than fatigue was the thought that she, Jeanne Vance, had carried information to the enemies of her country.

The Custom-House where General Butler had established his permanent official headquarters was finally reached, and she was conducted through the court-room where Major Bell was dispensing justice to a smaller room adjoining the office of the Commander. A number of persons were in the apartment awaiting the coming of the General.

“Has the General come in yet?” asked her captor of an Orderly.

“No; but we expect him every moment. Is it anything of importance?”

“I think so. I captured a young girl who has been beyond the lines, and has returned with a package of letters from the Johnnies. The other boys gave chase to the negro woman who was with her, but this is the main one, I guess. I think the General ought to see the letters immediately.”

“By all means. I will tell him as soon as he comes, so that he will attend to you at once. There are a number waiting this morning.”

Faint and weary Jeanne sank into the seat assigned her, and waited apathetically the summons which were to lead her to the General’s presence. It came soon and she was led into the office where the General sat behind a long table on which lay a pistol.

This was the man’s sole precaution against assassination, and was used only after the discovery of one or two plots to kill him. There were several of his staff with him in the room, but the girl saw only the stern face of the Commander. He gave a start of surprise as his eyes fell upon her.

“You?” he exclaimed. “Are you the girl who has been caught bringing contraband letters into the city? Child, child, I am surprised.”

Jeanne’s lips quivered and she turned very pale, but she only said:

“Yes, sir; I did it.”

“And you are the girl who professed such devotion to the cause of your country? You, who carried the flag upon your person, and kissed it to show your patriotism? I am more than surprised! I am grieved!”

“Don’t,” exclaimed Jeanne, her utterance choked with sobs. “Oh, sir, I do love my country, but I am not worthy to carry its flag any longer. Take it.” She drew the flag from her dress and laid it before him.

Her distress was so evident, so real that General Butler’s glance softened.

“If you feel like that,” he said not unkindly, “perhaps you will tell me the truth about the matter.”

“Gladly,” cried Jeanne eagerly. “I will tell you anything that you ask.”

“These letters prove that there has been communication exchanged before. Have you ever been on a like expedition?”

“No, sir; I do not know that you will believe me when I say that I did not know what I was doing when I went on this errand. But I did not. I would rather have died than to have given aid to the enemies of the Union; and yet I did it.”

“Suppose you tell me just how it happened,” suggested the General. “I will gladly hear any extenuating circumstances that you may give, for I am loth to believe that you are guilty of treachery.”

With many tears Jeanne related her story. “I can never forgive myself,” she concluded mournfully. “I deserve to be punished.”

“What was in the basket that you carried over?”

“There was some medicine, quinine, I think, jellies, and other delicacies.”

“There were no documents of any kind? Think well, child.”

“I did not see any, but Feliciane told me, and the rebel soldier also, that there was news of an attack to be made upon General Thompson. I am convinced that the intelligence was concealed in the false bottom of my basket. You remember where I carried the quinine, sir?” Then she told how her aunt had examined the basket and suggested its use.

“Beyond doubt it carried the information,” remarked Butler. “General Thompson with his men is just beyond our lines. I have known for some time that communication had been going on between the citizens and the soldiers, and have been keeping a sharp lookout. Still they managed to elude my vigilance some way. The Vances are among the ring leaders. Why have you remained here so long?” he asked, suddenly. “Why have you not returned to your father?”

“I have not heard from him,” said Jeanne, her tears flowing afresh. “In all this long time I have not heard one word.”

“That is very strange!” The General looked thoughtful. “Of course in the vicinity surrounding us, and in all the country between here and Richmond the telegraphs and mails are in the hands of the Confederates. But a letter could come safely by the sea route. I am in communication with Washington continually. There must be something wrong. Have you written to him?”

“Often and often. Uncle Ben mailed the letters for me. My aunt told me yesterday that they were going to take me home soon.”

“After hoodwinking you the way she has, do you believe it? There is something here that I do not understand. I believe that you are truthful, child, and have been victimized for some purpose. I will have to watch those people more closely.”

“But how could I consent to do what I have?” cried Jeanne. “Oh, I will never forgive myself.”

“Older ones than you might have been deceived,” comforted the General. “I have read that ‘under every flower there lurks a serpent’; and where there is so much sweetness and amiability there is ground for the suspicion that the reptile will sooner or later make his appearance. You must guard against such seductive measures, my child. They are more to be feared than the most violent opposition. Your uncle has a great deal of property, has he not?”

“Why, yes,” said Jeanne. “But do you know, General, that the queer part of it is that he has given it all to me?”

“Ha, ha!” roared the General. “Another attempt to evade the Confiscation Act, eh? And you did not know the reason?”

“My aunt said that you would take it from them because they were rebels, and that as I was a Unionist you would not touch it if it were mine.”

“I think that I’ll make that a boomerang that shall rebound on their own heads,” remarked the General with a twinkle in his eye. “Now, child, what are you going to do?”

“I do not know, sir. I wish I could go home.”

“Would you feel very badly if I sent you back to your uncle’s?”

“Must I go there?” Jeanne uttered a cry of dismay. “I don’t believe that I can, General Butler. I don’t feel as if I ever wanted to see either of them again.”

“But if you could help me?” suggested the General. “You might, Jeanne.”

“If I could be of any service,” said Jeanne bravely though every feature showed her dislike to the suggestion. “I will go.”

“You are a brave little girl,” said the Commander with appreciation. “I believe in you thoroughly, child, else I would not ask this of you.”

“I am glad that you trust me,” said Jeanne gratefully, her last fear of him vanishing. “I had begun to believe that I could never trust myself again.”

“Our truest strength lies in knowing our weaknesses,” said the General sententiously. “Truth is written on your face, and you are earnest and thoughtful beyond your years. The thing I wish you to do is this: go back to your uncle’s and conduct yourself as far as possible as you have done. I am convinced that another attempt will soon be made to carry information to Thompson. I want you to let me know when the time will be. You can find out by keeping your eyes and ears open. Show that you are indignant at the part you have been made to play for that will be expected. Send me word the moment you suspect that the attempt will be made. Can you do this?”

“I will try, General. I will do it if only to redeem myself in your eyes. If I can find out the time I will.”

“Then you may go now. I think you can understand why it is that I am so suspicious of every one, do you not, child? By the way, I found that everything was just as you said it was when you were here before. That has made it easy for you this time. Am I forgiven for the way I treated you then?”

“I forgave you long ago,” said the girl sweetly. “I had been here but a short time when I realized that you must have hard work to hold these people down. And you have been good to believe me, General Butler. You are not nearly so bad as people think you are. They don’t know how kind you are.”

The General laughed and then sighed.

“I am afraid that there are not many who will agree with you,” he said. “But there, child! I must attend to business. I will write to your father myself and just as soon as I hear from him you shall know it.”

“Will you?” cried Jeanne. “And oh, do tell him to send for me soon.”

“Yes, you poor child! Or if I see an opportunity to send you safely home you shall go. I think that I can send you by one of the steamers. If I had known of this you should have returned with Mrs. Butler.”

“I wish I could have done so,” said the girl wistfully.

“Well, you shall go soon, I promise you. Keep a brave heart, and remember that it will not be long before you shall go. Good-bye.”

He shook hands with her warmly, and then stopped her as she was leaving the room.

“Your flag, my little girl. We had forgotten your flag.”

“I am not worthy,” whispered the girl looking longingly at it.

“My dear, so long as your heart is as loyal as it is there is no one more worthy. Take it and keep it unsullied as you have done.”

Jeanne took it joyfully and then departed. Full of misgiving she reluctantly wended her way toward her uncle’s house.

CHAPTER XVI
THE VELVET GLOVE CONCEALS THE IRON HAND

THERE was an unusual stir in the villa when Jeanne arrived. Madame Vance greeted her with some eagerness.

“What has become of the letters?” she cried. “Surely you did not permit the Yankees to take them?”

“I could not help it, Cherie,” answered Jeanne noting with her newly acquired insight into the lady’s character that her own well-being was of no importance. “I did not know that the soldiers were near until Feliciane gave the alarm and thrust the papers into my hand. She should have kept them. Did she escape?”

“She did. Of course she thought that you would make an effort to do the same. What did the ‘Beast’ say when he found that a Yankee girl was working against him? It is very droll.” And she laughed maliciously. “I am surprised that you got away from him at all.”

“I would not have done so had he not believed that I was but a tool in your hands,” answered the girl bluntly. “I will never forgive you, Cherie, for the way you deceived me. You told me that your brother was wounded, and that it was only to take him some medicine and food, and you have no brother at all. Was the information that you sent concealed in my basket?”

“Certainly it was,” returned Madame lightly. “Was it not for that purpose that you showed me the hiding-place yesterday? Thanks to your cleverness General Thompson is aware of an attack by which Butler meant to surprise him. That basket of yours is a jewel for hiding contraband articles. It will be used again.”

“It shall never again be so used if I can help it,” cried Jeanne goaded beyond endurance by the knowledge of how she had been tricked. “I would not have believed that you would have been guilty of telling an untruth. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.”

“Everything is fair in love and war,” said the other mockingly. “It is not wrong to falsify to Yankees.”

“I will never forgive you. Never!” cried the girl passionately. “I told General

Butler just how you deceived me, and I never can trust you again. To think that such a woman is the wife of my uncle!”

“Be careful of your words, my little Yankee,” and the black eyes of the lady glittered balefully. “I have treated you well heretofore, but I may repent of my soft usage. If gentle means will not convince you of the error of your ways we will try other means.”

“What do you mean? You dare not use me otherwise than well. I would not submit to anything else, and Uncle Ben would not allow you to ill treat me.”

“Your uncle will permit anything that I choose to do,” retorted Madame angrily, and the girl knew that she spoke truly. Mr. Vance yielded to his wife in everything. “And listen, girl! I dare anything that I choose to do. I am sick of your puritanical ways, and I have resolved to change them. Why did you return if you were not of our way of thinking? Why did you not stay with ‘Beast’ Butler since you agree so well? Speak, girl! why did you come back?”

“I–I–because—” Jeanne was unable to proceed. The question was so unexpected that she was not prepared to answer it.

“Aha!” and Madame regarded her keenly. “I see. You came back to spy upon us. Deny it if you can.”

Then as the girl made no reply she called:

“Feliciane, Feliciane!” The woman entered the room. “Take this girl to the strong room,” she commanded.

“Don’t dare to touch me,” cried Jeanne springing away from the woman. “I will tell General Butler of this.”

“So?” and Madame’s face became purple with rage. “You admit it. I thought as much. You have returned as a spy. Oh, he boasts of having his creatures in every household, but he has a de la Chaise to deal with in me. Away with her, Feliciane!”

In vain Jeanne struggled and cried out against the indignity. She was helpless in the hands of the muscular negress, and was soon carried struggling and screaming to the top floor of the house, and pushed unceremoniously into a room, the door closed and locked upon her.

“Foh de land sake, lill’ missy, what you doin’ heah?” came in a hoarse whisper and Jeanne turned to see the face of Snowball peering at her.

“Snowball, are you here?” she cried stifling her sobs and trying to penetrate the

gloom of the darkened chamber.

“Yes, missy, I is. Dey allers puts us in heah aftah we’s whipped. But how kum you heah? You wuzn’t whipped, wuz yer?”

“No;” and Jeanne seated herself by the prostrate form of the girl and took her hand. “I would rather have been than to do what I did yesterday.” She told the darky how Madame had beguiled her into taking the trip to the Confederates, and of her subsequent arrest and discharge.

“I hopes dis Butler will help yer ef de missus got a grudge agin yer,” muttered Snowball. “An’ she sut’n’ly hab got one elsen she wouldn’t put yer in dis place whar we niggas is put. Why, missy, dis ain’t no place foh yer.”

“But you have to stay here, Snowball. I ought to stand it if you do. I wish there was some way to get word to General Butler. He would take me from here I know.”

“Dere won’t be no way, missy,” said Snowball with melancholy conviction as Jeanne sprang to her feet and began a hurried inspection of the room. “Missus wouldn’t leab a mouse hole ef she thought it could be used.”

And Jeanne found her words true. It was a small low room without furniture of any kind. A pile of straw upon which the darky lay was the only thing in it. There were iron shutters at the windows so strong that it would require the strength of a man to open them. The door was bolted and Jeanne resumed her seat by the girl in a hopeless manner.

“What can we do, Snowball?”

“Nuffin. Can’t do a bressed thing tell de missus ready ter let us out. ’Tain’t so bad when yer gits usen ter de dahk.”

“Does your back hurt much?”

“Not now, honey. It did huht awful when dey pouhed de brine on tho’.”

“The brine! Not salt water, Snowball?”

“Yes’m. It did huht shore nuff when dey pouhed dat on. Dey does it kase dey think de whip won’t make no scahs when dey heal. But it do huht awful.”

This new horror held Jeanne silent, and her tears fell fast. A fierce indignation foreign to her usually gentle nature shook her from head to foot. “And father used to say that abolitionists were extremists,” she thought. “Oh, if ever I get home again I’ll cry out on the streets against slavery.”

“Is yer cryin’, lill’ missy?” exclaimed Snowball, as the warm drops fell upon her hands. “Done yer do it. It done mattah ’bout a pore nigga laik me. Heah you is tiahed mos’ ter def, I reckon. Can’t yer sleep?”

“I’ll try, Snowball,” and Jeanne crept beside the girl on her straw. “I am tired. I almost wish I could die.”

“Done yer be downhahted, missy. Dey’ll take me outen heah soon. Jes’ as soon as ma back gits well, kase dey can’t ’ford ter lose a val’able nigga laik me, and ef dey doesn’t take you outen dis ’fore den I’ll run away ter de Gin’ral. Heaps of de cullah folks go ter him.”

“Will you, Snowball?” A gleam of hope stole into Jeanne’s heart. She snuggled down into the straw and soon fell into a deep sleep.

When she awakened she was alone in the room. During her slumber Snowball had been taken away, and Jeanne missed her companionship sorely. A pitcher of water and some bread had been placed by her side, and the girl ate ravenously for she had taken no food since the day before. Then once more she wandered about the room trying to find some means of escape. Realizing that her efforts were useless she sank back on the straw and gave herself up to thoughts of home and her dear parents.

How little any of them thought that her journey would turn out as it had. She pictured her father’s indignation when she should tell him of the treatment she had received and her mother’s anxiety concerning her. Well, even if Snowball did not get to see General Butler he would seek her just as soon as he heard from her father. Perhaps when he found that he did not hear from her he would come to see what the matter was. And so the hours passed drearily by.

No one came to the room and no sound reached her from below. By the deepening of the gloom she knew that it was drawing near night, and she looked forward with some dread to spending the long hours of darkness in that cheerless place. But summoning all her fortitude she composed herself for slumber.

“I have the flag,” she said to herself and took it from her bosom. “I am so glad that the General gave it back to me. How is our side doing, I wonder? Why didn’t I think to ask him? It has been so long since I heard. So long!”

With the flag clasped to her breast she fell asleep once more. As before, while she slept food and drink were placed beside her, and it began to look as if she was to be condemned to solitude. In this manner two days passed. On the morning of the third day she was rudely awakened by some one shaking her.

“Get up,” cried Madame, who stood by her side. “Get up! We are going.”

“Going? Going where?” cried Jeanne, dazedly.

“We are going to your home,” answered Madame Vance. “Get up and come with me if you care to go too.”

“Home!” repeated Jeanne thinking that she still slept. “Home!”

“Yes; don’t sit there like a silly, but come at once. That Yankee beast has ordered that all of the registered enemies of the United States shall leave the city. And we must go.”

“Are you really going to take me home?” asked the girl now thoroughly awake. “Oh, if you will, I will forgive everything!”

“Then get ready quickly,” said Madame, a cruel light in her eyes which the girl unfortunately did not see. “We must go at once. The ‘Beast’ will only permit us to take what we can carry with us. The rest of the property must go to enrich him and his brother. Oh, they are a nice pair, but ma foi! what can one expect of Yankees?”

Jeanne made no reply, but followed her to her own room where Snowball was waiting to dress her.

“Mus’ you go, lill’ missy?” whispered the girl as Madame left them for the moment alone. “I’se ’feerd foh yer ter go.”

“Are you going too, Snowball?”

“Missus say I is, an’, ob couhse, I long ter huh I’se got ter ef she say so. But I done want ter.”

An hour later Mr. and Madame Vance, Jeanne, Feliciane, Snowball and Jeff left the city in company with a number of others. General Butler, wearied with the intrigues of these avowed enemies of the government, had ordered that they should leave his lines for the Confederacy, and imposed the condition that they should not return.

In all the throng that waited to see the Confederates depart Jeanne saw no sign of the General. There were plenty of aids and members of his staff who looked closely after the articles carried away by the departing people, but of the General himself she saw nothing. And so the girl was allowed to depart with the refugees without a word from the Unionists. Blinded by her desire to get home, she left freedom and the protection of the flag and went without question into the heart of Secessia.

CHAPTER XVII
AGAIN DECEIVED

THE party of Secessionists of which Mr. and Madame Vance were members embarked on board the boat, Ceres, which steamed up the narrow winding river, Tangipaho, to Manchac bridge, the terminus of a railroad that led to Ponchatoula ten miles distant from which was the headquarters of General Thompson; the main body of Confederates being nine miles further on.

The shores of the river presented to view nothing but desolation. Many of the houses were deserted and every garden and field lay waste. Gaunt, yellow, silent figures stood looking at the disembarking refugees, images of despair. The people there had been small farmers, market gardeners, fishermen and shell diggers; all of them absolutely dependent upon the market of New Orleans from which they had been cut off for more than five months. Roving bands of Guerillas and the march of the regiments had robbed them of the last pig, the last chicken, the last egg and even of their half grown vegetables. In all that region there was nothing to eat but corn on the cob, and of that only a few pecks in each house.

A locomotive with a train of platform cars stood on the track and the party soon were gliding swiftly to the village.

Jeanne's eyes brightened when she saw that the place contained a post and telegraph office.

"Uncle Ben," she said timidly for none of the party were in good spirits. The men were sullen and the women bewailing their fate at being obliged to leave their belongings behind them.

"Uncle Ben," said Jeanne again as her uncle did not answer her.

"Well, what is it?" he asked ungraciously.

"Could I not telegraph to my father that we are coming? There is a telegraph office here."

"What made you think that we were going to Dick's?" he asked after a broad stare of amazement.

“Cherie told me,” answered Jeanne her heart sinking at his expression. “Aren’t we going, dear uncle?”

“Well, I rather guess not,” said Mr. Vance emphatically. “I think we’ve had enough of the Yankees without going where they are. Enough to last us a lifetime.”

“Why did you tell me such a thing?” burst from Jeanne turning upon her aunt with indignation.

“Because, my dear little Yankee, I wanted the pleasure of your company, of course,” replied Madame mockingly.

“That is not true,” said Jeanne boldly. “You do not like me, Aunt Clarisse,” dropping the Cherie which she seldom afterward used.

“No? you want the truth then?” said the woman suddenly. “Because I hate you for being a Yankee.”

“But you did like me at first and I was a Yankee then,” and the girl shrank from the light in the other’s eyes.

“Yes; for a time, but I soon tired of you. You were too independent, and had views that were tiresome to me. I might have loved you had you yielded your will to mine. But you would not. You, a mere girl, set your judgment up against mine, although I granted your lightest wish. Then you told that Yankee General that your uncle had given you all the property and he seized it in your name. Think you that I would let you stay to enjoy our property when we were driven from the city? Oh, I saw through your artfulness! But you shall not have the property if that Beast does!”

“I did not want your property,” replied Jeanne, her face becoming very pale as she heard her aunt’s words. “Why should I care for it? I want only to go to my home. Please let me go back, Aunt Clarisse. I will beg General Butler to let you have your property again and to send me home. Truly, I do not want anything of yours. Let me go back.”

“Never,” cried the other angrily. “Who would think that a puny faced thing like you could be so sly!”

Jeanne made no reply but sank into bitter thought. The rebel general, Jefferson Thompson, received the refugees courteously and promised to help them to reach friends and relatives in other parts of the South. Meantime he gave them such refreshment as was at his disposal, resigning to the Vances his own headquarters. For a few days they stayed here, being joined by others from the

city. Then they broke up into small parties and scattered, each bent upon reaching his own objective point.

To her consternation Jeanne was told that her uncle and aunt were bound for Alabama, the very midst of Secession. The girl's heart died within her when she found that this was their destination. With no friends near how could she, a mere girl, hope to reach her own people surrounded as she would be on all sides by rebels? She was almost in despair.

At Waynesboro, they left the train and Mr. Vance, securing a carriage with two good horses, announced his intention of driving through the rest of the way. Madame Vance received the intelligence with demonstrations of joy but Jeanne said nothing. In spite of her depression, however, she could not but feel a sense of pleasure as they bowled along over the public road.

It was a pleasing ride, ennobling to the soul as a series of beautiful scenes were unrolled to the view. Far in the azure blue the great banks of white clouds seemed to lie at anchor, so slow of sail were they. The gloom of the dense forest gently waving its boughs to the breeze greeted the eye. Ever and anon the dulcet murmur of gurgling streams broke gently on the ear. Quiet cottages surrounded by flowers and fruits, the abodes of peace and content, were passed; grass green marshes with here and there a tall pine or sombre cypress standing as sentinels of the rich mead; song birds caroling their sweet lays as they flitted from bough to bough, or lightly soared in space; fields of deadened trees, all draped with the long gray Spanish moss, were silhouetted against the sky; groups of great oaks, with clusters of the mistletoe pendent. On past plantations, busy with slaves whose merry songs floated far on the gentle zephyrs.

But as the day wore away proofs that grim-visaged war was raging in the land came more and more into evidence.

Want and desolation mark the track of soldiers. Armies must be fed and hungry men respect neither friend nor foe when it comes to satisfying their wants, and ravaged plantations and desolated homes marred the beauty of the peaceful landscape.

It was a long hard day's ride and Jeanne was glad when at last just as the brief twilight was deepening, Mr. Vance descried a large house in the distance and directed Jeff to drive them there so that they might have shelter for the night.

"Dar's nobody ter hum," was Jeff's announcement after knocking at all the doors.

“Go to the quarters and find out where the people are,” commanded his master, but the darky soon returned with the information that the cabins were empty also.

“Strange,” said the gentleman. “What do you think we would better do, Clarisse?”

“Can you not open the doors in some way?” asked the lady pettishly. “I am tired, mon ami, and if no one is there we might just as well take possession. Private property doesn’t seem to be respected these times.”

Without another word Mr. Vance gave the order, and the two men soon succeeded in forcing an entrance. The fast falling darkness gave weird glimpses of the interior of the residence.

“Remain without,” said her husband hastily, “until I get a light.”

Presently the cheering flash of a fire dispelled the gloom of the dwelling and after being assured that everything was all right within, the lady entered followed by Jeanne and the blacks. The October air was chilly and the warmth of the pine knots was very acceptable.

Jeanne crept into a corner where she could enjoy the blaze and fell into a reverie. The poor child was very miserable. Her aunt and uncle scarcely noticed her or when they did speak to her it was in such great contrast to their former affectionate address that her heart was heavy indeed.

The brightness of the pine knots in the vast fireplace lighted up the room vividly. The apartment seemed to have been the living-room of the family, and its disarrangement showed that the inmates had left its sheltering walls hurriedly. At one end of the room were great spinning wheels with the thread still hanging.

Mr. Vance had drawn up an easy chair to one side of the odorous fire and leaned silently back in its depths apparently lost in thought. His wife was seated near him, the firelight glancing almost caressing on the rich sheen of her hair and the vivid crimson of her cheek and lip. Snowball’s dusky figure flitted back and forth supplying the fire with the rich pine knots as they were required while Jeff and Feliciane were busied in the kitchen trying to get up something for a meal.

Jeanne fell to studying the fair face of the woman before her wondering over and over how one so beautiful could be so cruel.

“Well! Have you finished staring at me?” demanded Madame suddenly. “Have done with your impudence, girl. You make me nervous.”

“I beg your pardon,” murmured Jeanne shrinking from the light in her aunt’s eyes. “I do not wish to make you nervous. I was just thinking—”

“I don’t care what you are doing,” said the other sharply. “I do not wish to be stared at.” She sat back in her chair, and relapsed into silence. Jeanne withdrew her gaze, but it wandered unconsciously to her uncle’s face. He moved uneasily, but made no comment.

Presently Madame gave utterance to a harsh laugh, and looked at the girl strangely.

“How would you like this for a home?” she asked abruptly.

“What do you mean?” cried Jeanne.

“Just what I say. How would you like to live here?”

“I would not like it,” replied the girl decidedly. “I like my own home best. There is no place like New York.”

“Perhaps you may change your mind,” and Madame gave vent to a peal of unpleasant laughter. “I believe that you will have the opportunity.”

“What do you mean?” asked Jeanne again, but the lady’s only answer was a shrug of her shoulders.

A vague uneasiness filled Jeanne’s mind at her strange demeanor. She kept looking at the girl with a curious, half triumphant expression, while ever and anon she laughed in that strange way that made the girl’s blood chill with apprehension. She was glad when at last Mr. Vance ordered them all to retire.

“There are plenty of rooms and good beds,” he said. “Very likely the people left hurriedly else they would have taken them with them, or perhaps they left them because they will soon return. However it may be, we must get a good night’s rest for to-morrow we have a long day’s ride before us.”

Jeanne chose a room at the end of the upstairs hall and entering it closed the door securely. Tired as she was from her long ride she could not sleep but lay thinking deeply about her aunt’s strange behavior. She had become so accustomed to the lady’s vagaries that she knew that some new idea had suggested itself to her and she felt that it related to herself.

At last her eyes grew heavy, and soon she fell into the deep untroubled sleep of youth.

CHAPTER XVIII
IN THE ENEMY'S CAMP

It was late when Jeanne awoke, and springing up she dressed hastily and went downstairs. There was no one in the living-room. The fire had died down and a few glowing coals gleamed red in the ashes. Full of a vague alarm and fearing she knew not what, Jeanne ran into the kitchen but there was no one there. Quickly she ran from one room to another but all were empty. The apartments appeared larger and more desolate than ever in their emptiness. Again and again the now frightened girl ran through the rooms and out upon the galleries, but the echo of her own voice was all the answer that came to her cries. At last the truth dawned upon her. She had been abandoned by her uncle and aunt.

This then was the meaning of Madame's laughter. She, Jeanne, a Union girl, had been left to get along as best she could on a lonely, deserted plantation in the very midst of rebeldom; to live or die as the case might be.

With a cry the girl flung herself upon the floor and let the flood of her anguish sweep over her. A great fear was upon her. The fear of the unknown. Never before had she been so utterly, so entirely alone. It was long before she could control herself, and when at last she sat up, and tried to think calmly, she seemed to have grown older.

"I must be brave," she thought. "Perhaps it is better so after all. I am no worse off than I was with them. May be I can make my way back to New Orleans and General Butler will send me home. But where am I? I don't know whether it is Alabama or Mississippi, but whichever it is, I must try to get back to Louisiana. Oh, my money!"

Hastily she searched for it and, to her great joy, found the bills safely hidden in the lining of her dress. Long ago her aunt had complained of the thieving of the blacks, and cautioned Jeanne to hide securely whatever she had of value.

"Aunt Clarisse must have forgotten it," she exulted, "or she would have taken it from me. 'One can always get along if one has money,' father said. This will help me to get home. I wonder if my flag is safe!"

Full of anxiety lest the beloved emblem might have been taken she thrust her

hand into the folds of her dress, and to her great delight, found it still there. Drawing it forth she gazed at it lovingly, and then shook it out straight. As she did so her eye was caught by a piece of paper pinned to one corner of it. With an exclamation Jeanne caught at it eagerly.

“My dear little Yankee,” it ran. “We leave you in possession. There is not much to eat in the house, but ma foi! what care you? Have you not your flag? Knowing your penchant for appropriating other people’s property we have given you an opportunity to acquire more belongings. Are we not kind?

“Should you see your honored parents again (which I very much doubt) present my truest affection to them. Hoping that your solitude will give you time to repent of your past misdeeds, believe me,

”As ever,
“CHERIE.”

Jeanne’s eyes blazed in sudden anger, and she clenched her hands determinedly.

“I will see my parents again,” she cried, passionately. “I will, I will! All the rebels in the world shall not keep me from it! I’ll start right back for New Orleans.”

Full of this resolution she arose and went into the house in search of something to eat! As Madame Vance had written there was very little food in the dwelling. A thin slice of bacon and a small hoe cake was all that Jeanne could find, but she ate them, then started forth on her journey back to New Orleans.

Taking what she believed was the road over which they had come the girl trudged bravely along although it wound through a deep forest. On and on through the dark green gloom of the woodland she walked, knowing nothing of the vegetation of the South, and afraid to touch herbs or the wild fruit.

“I did not think the forest went so far,” she murmured, as the day wore away and the shadowy vista of woods still opened before her. “And there was a house just beyond the trees. I ought to get to it soon. Then I will ask to stay for the night.”

But the woods grew denser, and the road became but a narrow bridle path. The afternoon drew to a close, and the brief twilight came suddenly upon her in the depths of the forest.

Jeanne stopped dismayed, and then sank down at the foot of a tall pine. A feeling of homesick desolation crept over her, filling her with vague, undefined forebodings. The tall long-leaved pines and funereal cypress trees rose on either side. The twilight deepened into night and the hum of Nature’s wildwood insects

came to her ear. From the deeper forest came the plaintive cry of the whippoorwill. As the darkness deepened the hooting of the owls could be heard and the croaking of some frogs from a near-by swamp.

Jeanne felt cold chills creep up and down her back as the tall trees festooned with gray moss, almost reaching to the ground, swayed to and fro as a shiver of moaning wind stirred the air.

“I cannot stay here,” she exclaimed springing to her feet. “It is better to keep on walking. Surely there must be a house somewhere near!”

And so, though she was faint from hunger and weary from walking, she trudged on. Presently the moon came up and deluged the forest with a shining flood of light. The dark pines, half in shadow, half in sheen, loomed vast and giant-like on either side of the gleaming path beneath.

Afraid to stop and rest, Jeanne walked on and on. All at once she heard singing. The sound filled her with new life and she hastened eagerly in its direction. Louder and louder came the melody to her ears until presently she was able to distinguish the words:

“‘Do they miss me at home,
Do they miss me?
’Twould be an assurance most dear,
To know at this moment some lov’d one
Were saying, “I wish he were here”;
To feel that the group at the fireside
Were thinking of me as I roam;
Oh, yes, ’twould be joy beyond measure
To know that they miss me at home,
To know that they miss me at home.’”

Tears rushed into the girl’s eyes and a sob broke from her lips. “Do they miss me, I wonder?” she said brokenly. “Oh, mother, mother! How little do you think that I am wandering about in the woods without a place to lay my head. Mother, mother!”

“‘Do they set me a chair near the table,
When evening’s home pleasures are nigh,
When the candles are lit in the parlor,
And the stars in the calm, azure sky?
And when the good-nights are repeated,
And all lay them down to their sleep,
Do they think of the absent and waft me
A whisper’d “good-night” while they weep?
A whisper’d “good-night” while they weep?’”

Jeanne looked up as the singer came toward her. The bright moonlight fell full upon him as he paused for a moment to examine the lock of his gun, and she saw that he was a Confederate soldier on picket duty. He resumed the song as he swung the gun back to his shoulder.

“He is like Dick,” thought the lonely girl. “I am sure that he has a kind heart, or he would not sing that song. Maybe he has a sister too.”

Summoning all her courage she spoke timidly. “Sir,” she said.

“Who goes there?” cried the startled picket with an ominous click of his weapon.

“Just a little girl,” answered Jeanne, coming forward into the moonlight. “I’m lost, and I don’t know where to go.”

“A girl! It’s true I do declare!” burst from the sentinel’s lips as he lowered his

gun. “How do you come to be here in the woods at this time of night?”

“I am trying to get back to New Orleans, and I must have taken the wrong road.” Jeanne was trembling but she tried to control herself. “Oh, could you tell me where I could get something to eat and a place to sleep? I–I am afraid.”

Her voice broke and despite her efforts at self-command she burst into tears.

“There! Never mind! I’ll take you to Miss Bob,” said the soldier with rough kindness. “The woods ain’t no place fur a girl at night. Just come with me.”

Jeanne followed him gladly. A brisk walk of fifteen minutes brought them to a camp. The tents gleamed white among the trees and it seemed to the girl as though she had never seen so many in all her life before. Some men lounged lazily about one of the many fires that dotted the place, talking in subdued tones. They stared at the girl as the sentinel came in with her but made no remark. The soldier paused before a small tent and called softly:

“Miss Bob! Miss Bob! are you asleep?”

“What is it, Johnson?” came the reply in the soft sleepy tones of a girl.

“Here is a girl out here who is lost. She is hungry and wants a place to sleep. Will you see to her? I am on duty.”

“Certainly. Go back to your post, Johnson. I will be out in a minute.”

“All right.” The soldier saluted and walked off leaving Jeanne a prey to conflicting emotions.

In a few moments the flap of the tent was pushed aside, and the slight figure of a girl about Jeanne’s own age emerged from it.

“You are lost?” she asked advancing toward Jeanne and speaking quickly. “And hungry, I think Johnson said. Come, we’ll have something to eat, and then go to bed. Are you tired?”

Jeanne nodded, unable to speak.

“Sit here by the fire while I fix things. Jim,” to one of the men, “this girl is hungry. Will you help me get something for her to eat?”

“’Course I will, Miss Bob.” The man sprang to his feet and walked briskly away disappearing into what Jeanne afterward learned was the commissary department.

“We’ll have something in a jiffy,” remarked the girl encouragingly, beginning to poke up the fire.

“See here, Miss Bob, let me do that,” and another of the men ran to her side. “I reckon Jim and me can fix things. ’Tain’t no work for you.”

Soon cold chicken, bread, and hot coffee were placed before the hungry girl and she ate ravenously.

“I didn’t know that soldiers had chickens to eat,” she remarked with a sigh of satisfaction as she finished the last morsel.

The girl called Bob laughed merrily, the men joining in heartily.

“We don’t usually,” and Bob controlled her risibles with difficulty, “but you see a whole heap of them walked right into camp, and so of course we ate them.”

“Wasn’t it queer that they should come right into camp?” said serious Jeanne. “I always thought that you had to run after them to catch them.”

Again the girl and the men laughed.

“Of course they didn’t exactly come here,” said Bob comfortably, “but we’ve got the smartest regiment in the whole Confederate army. I verily believe that it could catch and skin a hog without a man leaving the ranks. Oh, they are fine foragers!”

“Forager?” Jeanne looked mystified. “I wonder if Dick is a forager!”

“Who is Dick?”

“Dick is my brother in the army,” said Jeanne proudly.

“Well, if he is a soldier you can depend upon it that he is a forager,” said Bob with decision. “Which side is your brother on?”

“The Union.”

The smile died away from the girl’s lips at the reply, and she looked at Jeanne with coldness.

“I did not think that you were a Southerner when you spoke,” she said. “What are you doing here? We are Confederates.”

“Yes, I know,” answered Jeanne. “My aunt and uncle left me on a deserted plantation because I was a Yankee, and I started back to New Orleans hoping that General Butler would send me home. I must have taken the wrong road, and so gotten lost. You won’t turn me away, will you, just because I am a Yankee?”

“No; not for to-night anyway. I just hate Yankees, but I reckon you don’t count as you are a girl. Come on to bed now, and we’ll talk it over in the morning.”

And Jeanne went into the tent content to let the morrow take care of itself now that she was sheltered for the night.

CHAPTER XIX
“BOB”

At daybreak the roll of martial drums startled Jeanne into wakefulness.

“What is it?” she cried, springing from the couch.

“The drummers are beating the reveille,” answered the calm voice of Bob who was already up. “That means that it is time to get up. You needn’t be in a hurry, however. There are two hours yet until breakfast.”

“But you are dressing,” said Jeanne. “I will too.”

“I always get up when the regiment does,” answered Bob. “But you are different. You are a guest.”

“What are you?” asked Jeanne curiously.

“The Colonel’s daughter, and the child of the regiment. What is your name?”

“Jeanne Vance. I live in New York city.”

“That is a long way from here,” said Bob. “Do you mind telling me why you came down here?”

“I think I should like to,” replied Jeanne gazing at the trim figure of the girl admiringly. She was clad in a suit of gray cloth consisting of a skirt and close fitting jacket with epaulets upon the shoulders. A cap of the same material was perched jauntily upon her raven black hair. Her face, piquant and sparkling, was tanned a healthy brown through which the red of her cheeks glowed brightly. Jeanne thought that she had never seen a more charming girl, and, rebel though she knew she was, she felt her heart drawn toward her.

“Yes, I think that I should like to tell you,” she repeated, and then as rapidly as possible she told of her mission and the events that had followed its execution.

Bob listened attentively.

“It was awfully mean in your aunt to treat you the way she did,” she commented as Jeanne finished her story. “You are a brave girl even if you are a Yankee, and I like you. Father says there are some nice ones, but I reckon that they haven’t so awfully many brave ones among them, or we wouldn’t be whipping them so.”

“Whipping them?” cried Jeanne aghast. “What do you mean by whipping them? We were doing all the whipping the last I knew anything about it.”

“Well, you certainly haven’t heard the news lately then,” rejoined Bob. “If you had, you would have learned that General Bragg had invaded Tennessee and Kentucky and that the Confederates have both those states back again. I tell you the Yankees are just ‘skedaddling’ before him.”

“It can’t be true,” wailed Jeanne. “Kentucky and Tennessee both taken from us when we fought so hard to get them? Surely it is not true!”

“But it is,” asserted Bob positively. “And that is not the greatest news: General Lee has not only driven McClellan from in front of Richmond, but he has invaded Maryland and we expect to hear at any time that Washington has fallen into our hands.”

“Is it true?” asked Jeanne again turning so pale that Bob thought she was going to faint.

“Here, drink this!” Bob tipped up her canteen of water to Jeanne’s lips. “I did not know that Yankees cared so much for such things.”

“Cared for such things,” echoed Jeanne indignantly. “Of course we care. How could any one hear that the Capital is menaced and not care? But the traitors will never succeed in taking it. Never! I know our people. They will defend it with their lives, and drive the treacherous miscreants, who would dare profane by their touch, back to where they belong.”

“We are not traitors,” flashed Bob. “We have a right to secede if we want to. The Capital belongs as much to us as it does to you, anyway.”

“It doesn’t,” cried Jeanne angrily. “It belongs to the North because the North is trying to uphold the Government left to us by our great and good Washington.”

“Your great and good Washington,” sneered Bob. “Washington belonged to us, I’d have you know. He was a Virginian, and let me tell you, that if it hadn’t been for Southerners there never would have been any United States anyway.”

“There would too,” flashed back Jeanne. “My great-grandfather fought in the Revolution, and there were plenty who fought that were not Southerners.”

“And who led them, pray?” demanded Bob. “Why, George Washington, a Southerner. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence? Thomas Jefferson, a Southerner. Who got up the Constitution? Why James Madison, a Southerner. And mind you, Jeanne Vance, this country couldn’t be run at first except by

Southerners. Out of the first five presidents, four were Southerners."

"Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe," and Jeanne counted them on her fingers. "John Adams was a Massachusetts man."

"Phew!" and Bob's lips curled scornfully. "And the people were so sick of him that they only let him stay in four years. They were glad enough to get back to us. I am sure that I don't wonder. I don't see how they could stand a New Englander."

"I'm afraid that you'll have to," said Jeanne, wrathfully. "They are the best people in the world. One of them is worth a dozen Southerners."

"He isn't," blazed Bob. "He—"

"Why, what does this mean?" cried a voice from without the tent. "Bob, is that the way you treat a guest? I am surprised."

"It's dad!" exclaimed Bob, rapidly untying the flap of the tent. "Come in."

To Jeanne's surprise she saluted her father military fashion instead of kissing him. The gentleman entered–a tall, black-haired, black-eyed man of splendid military bearing and courtly mien. His eyes were twinkling, but he spoke to his daughter in rather a stern tone.

"Is this the way to entertain a guest, my child? I suppose that this is the young lady that Johnson brought in last night."

"Yes," answered Bob, in a shamefaced way. "She is a Yankee, and we were quarreling. I don't know how it began. Do you?" to Jeanne.

"No," answered Jeanne. "I don't."

"I am ashamed of myself," said Bob, impulsively. "I ought to have remembered that you were my guest. If you will forgive me this time I won't do it any more."

"I was wrong too," said Jeanne, humbly. "We'll forgive each other."

Bob hesitated a moment and then leaned toward her.

"There!" said the Colonel, as the girls kissed. "That's better. Leave it to the men to settle the differences of the country. It is not pleasant to see girls quarrel. Introduce the little lady to me, Bob."

"Jeanne, this is my father, Colonel Peyton," said Bob. "Dad, this is Jeanne Vance, from New York city. And she is a brave girl, if she is a Yankee. You must get her to tell you all about her adventures."

“I am sure that I shall be pleased to hear them,” said the Colonel, affecting not to notice Jeanne’s start of surprise as she heard his name. “Do you girls know that it is breakfast time?”

“Mercy!” cried Bob. “Have the drums beaten the call? I did not hear them. Did you ever! We’ve been two hours talking and–quarreling,” she added, in a lower tone.

“Yes; there was a time when I thought that it would be coffee and pistols for two,” laughed the father. “Come, let us have breakfast. I will hear the little lady’s story while we eat.”

Jeanne looked about her with curious eyes as they emerged from the tent. Everywhere there were tents that were arranged with military precision back of a parade-ground which formed the front. First were the tents of the men arranged by companies. Next after the tents of the men came those of the commissioned officers of the companies. These faced on streets which ran at right angles with the company streets. Still back of these were the tents of the Colonel and his staff. The flag-staff at the edge of the parade-ground, and immediately in front of the Colonel’s tent, sported a Confederate flag that waved gaily in the breeze. In the rear of all were found the Quartermaster’s and Sutler’s departments. Dick had often written about the soldiers doing their own cooking but here the camp seemed filled with negroes who bustled about cooking and waiting upon the soldiers as if they had been in their own dining-rooms.

“We are here awaiting orders,” said the Colonel, when Jeanne had told him her story, “but we expect to leave soon for Jackson. There are a number of Federals in that vicinity. It seems to me that your best plan would be to remain with us until we reach Jackson where I will try to get you to your own side. They will assist you to get home. That is where you ought to be.”

“And where I wish to be,” said Jeanne. “You are very kind, Colonel Peyton. Kinder than my own people were, and yet you know that I am a Yankee.”

“I am treating you as I would wish my own daughter treated under like circumstances,” replied the Colonel gravely. “I don’t war on girls, and it seems to me that you have had rather a hard time of it. Well, we’ll get you out of it as soon as possible unless you and Bob destroy each other in your quarrels.” And he looked at them with a humorous twinkle in his eye.

“We won’t quarrel any more,” decided Bob. “We have had our say and we feel better. Don’t we, Jeanne?”

“Ye-es,” said Jeanne hesitatingly. “Only I didn’t say all I wanted to.”

“Never mind,” laughed Colonel Peyton. “I’ve no doubt but that you will have the opportunity yet. Did Bob tell you how she came to be with me?”

“No; how was it?”

“I ran away,” said Bob, her mouth full of chicken. “I have no mother. Nobody but dad. So when the war broke out, and he went into it I made up my mind that I would go too. Dad sold off our darkies and sent me to stay with Aunt Betty in Mobile. I stood it just as long as I could, then I took Jack, my horse, and struck out for dad. I found him finally, and now I’ve been with him for six months. And I am going to stay too. Am I not, dad?”

“Until we get to Jackson,” answered her father, regarding her fondly. “Then I shall send you on to Vicksburg to stay with sister Sally. That is the safest place in the Confederacy. Once there my mind will be easy about you. A camp is no place for a girl.”

The breakfast was finished and Colonel Peyton was about to leave them when he turned to Bob abruptly.

“By the way,” he said, “wasn’t it Mr. Vance who bought Snowball?”

“Yes; it was, dad. I wonder how Madame treats her! It seems to me that I’ve heard some awful stories about the way she uses her darkies.”

“When she whips them she does whip dreadfully,” said Jeanne. “But I only know of once that she had Snowball whipped. And you are the Colonel Peyton who bought her?” Then she told them of Tenny, Snowball’s mother.

“That was why you started when you heard my name, was it not?” asked the Colonel.

“Yes, sir.”

“I wondered just a little at the cause of it,” remarked the officer as he left them. “Now, girls, be good.”

“I don’t want to go to Vicksburg a bit,” confided Bob to Jeanne as they reëntered the former’s tent. “I just love soldiering. Besides I want to be near dad. Suppose he should be wounded. He’d die if I was not right there to look after him. I’m not going to say anything, but it will take a regular guard to keep me with Aunt Sally.”

“But if he wishes it,” said Jeanne to whom her father’s lightest wish was law.

“You will have to stay then. He knows best.”

“It won’t be best for me to be away from him,” said Bob, rebelliously. “I should imagine all sorts of things were happening to him.”

“Everybody who has a father or a brother in the army does that,” said Jeanne sadly as she thought of Dick. “But we have to stand it, Bob, when the men and the boys will go to the war. I could not if I didn’t think it was right. If Dick should be killed—” her voice faltered a little–“it would be a noble death. Admiral Farragut said that there was no nobler one than to die for one’s country, and I should try not to grieve too much if he were to fall doing his duty.”

“I do wish you were a Southerner,” said Bob impulsively. “You feel just like we do about those things. But, Jeanne, what if your brother had thought that we were right and had gone to our side? What would you do then?”

“Dick couldn’t do that,” cried Jeanne. “Why the place where he was born and the way he was brought up would be against it. No; Dick couldn’t be a rebel.”

“That’s what I thought about Frank,” said Bob, with bitterness. “That’s one reason that I stick so close to dad. I have, or rather had, a brother too, Jeanne. But he broke dad’s heart and mine by going to fight with the Yankees. Yet his place of birth and his raising were both against it. I will never forgive him,” and the tears rolled down her cheeks. “And dad never will either.”

“But he is your brother,” said Jeanne, pressing her hand. “If he thinks he is right, even if he does differ with you, he is still your brother.”

“Never,” cried Bob, dashing the tears from her eyes. “I have no brother. Come, let’s go to see the men drill.”

CHAPTER XX
THE ARREST OF A SPY

JEANNE soon accustomed herself to the life of the camp, but she did not grow fond of it as Bob was. By her gentle way and pleasant manners she became quite a favorite with Colonel Peyton, but Bob reigned supreme in the hearts of the men. She petted and scolded them as if they were her brothers, and Jeanne wondered when she saw how the strong men submitted to her least command. But the secret lay in the fact that the Southern girl adored the soldiers and they knew it.

“It’s the smartest regiment in the whole Confederacy,” declared Bob with shining eyes to Jeanne one day. “I don’t believe that there is another like it in the world.”

“Dick’s regiment is very gallant,” said Jeanne, a trifle wistfully. “It has been complimented publicly on account of its bravery.”

“Well, it can’t beat the ‘Die No Mores,’” said Bob. “The boys have been specially good this week. Dad said last night that not a man had been under arrest for five days. I always sing to them when that happens.”

“Do you sing, Bob?”

“Yes; I have quite a good voice,” said Bob in such a matter-of-fact way that the other girl smiled. “Do you?”

“A little,” acknowledged Jeanne. “Father used to like to hear me.”

“Then we will give the boys a good time to-night. They like singing and dad thinks it helps to keep them cheerful. They often sing themselves.”

“I have heard them in the evening, and I like it when they do not sing rebel songs,” said honest Jeanne.

“Well, you can hardly expect them to sing any other, can you?” demanded Bob. “I don’t suppose that you do like it. I shouldn’t want to hear the Federal songs if I were in one of their camps. But the spirits of the men must be kept up for we expect to meet the enemy soon.”

“Do you?” cried Jeanne. “Oh, Bob, do you think that I could go to my side?”

“I don’t know, Jeanne. Dad said, you know, that it would be best to go to Jackson with us and then he would send you to the Federals. You wouldn’t be any nearer getting home with a party of skirmishers than you are with us.”

“I suppose not,” sighed Jeanne, “but it would be something to be with my own people.”

“We’ll see,” replied Bob. “Although I don’t like to have you leave, Jeanne. It is a great deal nicer with you here. Dad likes it too, I know, for he said to me yesterday: ‘Barbara,’ he always calls me Barbara when he is serious, ‘I like that little lady. You would please me if you would model your manners after hers. You are a bit hoydenish in your ways, and it grieves me. Fine manners are to a girl as the perfume is to a flower.’ I said, copy-book style: ‘Honored and respected parent, after having brought me up according to military regulations, don’t you think it is a little unjust to twit me with my manners? If they are lacking, blame the code, not me.’ And then I saluted, and retired, gracefully, I hope. At any rate the shot told for I heard him laughing as I went out. Now, Miss Vance, let me have a lesson. I suppose it’s proper to begin with prunes and prisms. There! do I say that right?”

“Oh, Bob,” cried Jeanne laughing as Bob perked up her mouth in a funny little grimace. “What a girl you are!”

“I hope you are well,” went on Bob with a fine affectation of young ladyism. “Beautiful weather we’re having, aren’t we? There! Do you think dad will like that?”

“I like you better your own natural self, and I think that he does too,” said Jeanne. “My ways don’t suit you, Bob, and yours would not suit me. But I am sure that you could have a fine manner without modeling after me. I like you best just as you are.”

“So do I,” said Bob, tucking her arm comfortably within Jeanne’s. “And so does dad but he doesn’t know it. I don’t want him to get too fond of you.”

Night came and as usual the soldiers gathered around the fires to sing songs and to tell stories. Presently Bob came among them to fulfill her promise to sing to them. Jeanne accompanied her, and the Northern girl wondered at the self-possession and ease with which the Colonel’s daughter stood before so many men and sang. But the Southern girl was so accustomed to the soldiers that she thought nothing of it. Song after song she sang responding with the utmost good

nature to the repeated requests for more. At last she cried:

“Just one more, boys, and I must stop, for I am tired. What shall it be?”

“The Bonnie Blue Flag,” cried several voices.

“Very well,” and Bob began instantly:

> “‘We are a band of brothers, and natives to the soil,
> Fighting for the property we gained by honest toil;
> And when our rights were threatened, the cry rose near and far,
> Hurrah for the bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star!
>
> * * * * * * *
>
> “‘Then here’s to our Confederacy; strong we are and brave;
> Like patriots of old we’ll fight our heritage to save;
> And rather than submit to shame, to die we would prefer;
> So cheer for the bonnie Blue Flag that bears a single star.
>
> “‘Then cheer, boys, cheer; raise the joyous shout,
> For Arkansas and North Carolina now have both gone out;
> And let another rousing cheer for Tennessee be given.
> The single star of the bonnie Blue Flag has grown to be eleven.’”

“Three cheers for the bonnie Blue Flag,” called a voice and with a shout the soldiers responded.

“Now three for our beloved president, Jefferson Davis! And three for the Confederacy!” The men responded lustily.

“And three cheers and a tiger for Miss Bob, the child of the regiment,” shouted another enthusiastically.

These had scarcely died away when some one called. “Why can’t the ‘Little Yank’ give us a song?”

“Yes, yes; the ‘Little Yank,’” came from all sides.

For a moment Jeanne hesitated, and then she stepped forward into the place which Bob had vacated. Her heart beat fast as she looked into the expectant faces before her.

“I will sing of a flag too,” she said in clear thrilling tones. With a quick motion she drew the stars and stripes from her bosom and shaking out its folds began earnestly:

“‘Oh! say can you see by the dawn’s early light,
What so proudly we hail’d at the twilight’s last gleaming,
Whose stripes and bright stars, thro’ the perilous fight,
O’er the ramparts we watch’d were so gallantly streaming;
And the rockets, red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof thro’ the night that our flag was still there!’”

For a few moments every one was still amazed at the girl’s audacity, but as the last strain of the first stanza came from her lips a hoarse, angry murmur went up from the soldiers, and there was a movement toward her. But Jeanne heeded it not and in triumphant tones began the chorus:

“‘Oh! say, does that star spangled banner yet wave,
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave!’”

“Chuck that!” growled one of the men.

“Stow it, or it will be the worst for you,” called another.

“You asked me to sing,” said the girl undauntedly. “And I will choose my own song.”

“She is right,” and Colonel Peyton pushed his way to her side. “You asked her, boys, and she can sing what she chooses. Take your medicine like men.”

Sullenly the soldiers settled back into their places while Jeanne courageously finished her song.

“It wasn’t right,” said Bob angrily as Jeanne joined her. “You didn’t treat the boys right. If dad hadn’t been there they wouldn’t have stood it.”

“If they don’t want to hear such things they must not ask me to sing,” cried Jeanne, her eyes blazing. “I am compelled to hear treason every day.”

“You don’t need to stay here,” flashed Bob.

“I am sure that I don’t want to,” answered Jeanne. “I want to go to my own people and I will go to-morrow if your father will let me. I don’t stay because I want to.”

“Well, you needn’t be so glad to be rid of us,” and the tears welled up into Bob’s eyes. “I am sure that we are good to you.”

“Yes; you are,” and Jeanne went to her quickly. “I shall be sorry to leave you, Bob, but I do want to see my father and my mother. It has been so long, so long.” She turned away to hide her tears.

“Yes, it has;” and Bob put her arm within Jeanne’s affectionately. “I am sure that I don’t blame you for wanting to see them. I don’t know why I say such mean things, Jeanne. I wish we didn’t quarrel.”

“Maybe we can’t help it,” answered Jeanne, pressing her arm.

“No; I suppose you can’t help being a Yankee,” said Bob, so dolefully that Jeanne laughed.

“I don’t want to,” she said. “I am not sorry that you are a Southerner, but I wish you were for the Union.”

“Well, I don’t, and so there we are! I suppose that there is just one thing to do,” and Bob nodded her head sagely, “and that is not to quarrel any more than we can help. When we do we’ll make up, won’t we?”

“Yes,” answered Jeanne. “We will.”

Once more the two were friends, and thus the days passed. October waned and soon rested with the other months of the dying year, and chill November reigned supreme. Still the order to move did not come. There was an uneasiness in the Colonel’s manner as his scouts brought in news each day that the country surrounding Jackson was filling up with Federals.

One morning a number of the companies of the regiment left the camp, and Bob confided to Jeanne the news that they expected to be in an engagement before they returned.

Jeanne, thrilled by the intelligence that she was so near to her own people, sat thoughtfully in front of the tent devoted to the use of the girls.

“Would it not be possible,” she wondered, “for me to join them? These people are kind and good, but would it not be much better for me to be with those of my own side? If I were with them they could send me to some place where it would be safe for me to take the cars for home. Father and mother must be so worried. I will see Colonel Peyton and ask him what he thinks of it,” she cried, springing to her feet.

She hastened toward the tent of the commander, reaching it at the same time as a number of soldiers did. A man was in their midst who, although he wore a suit of butternut, seemed to be a prisoner. Jeanne paused as the men stopped directly in front of her, and gave a cry of amazement at sight of the man.

“You,” she cried, in agitated tones. “Oh, I thought that you were on our side!”

A loud burst of laughter came from the soldiers, and the prisoner became very

pale.

“I reckon the ‘Little Yank’ has called your death sentence, pardner,” said one of the Confederates, roughly. “That shows that you are a spy all right enough.”

“A spy,” cried Jeanne, a light flooding her mind. “Oh, what have I done? What have I done?”

“Do not grieve,” said the young man, who was none other than the officer whom she had aided in Memphis. “They strongly suspected it any way, and were taking me to their Commanding officer for examination.”

“There doesn’t need to be much examination,” said a Confederate, bluntly. “Colonel Peyton will make short work of you.”

“Whom did you say?” cried the young man in such agonized tones that all turned to look at him.

“Colonel Peyton,” was the reply. “Here he is now.”

“What does this mean, boys?” asked Colonel Peyton, appearing in the door of his tent. “What is the disturbance?”

“A feller that we caught sneaking round the camp,” answered the leader, gruffly. “He claims to be a Southerner, and I reckon he is one all right, but his actions are decidedly suspicious. We were bringing him to you when this girl recognized him, and called the turn on him as belonging to the Federals.”

“He is that worst of men, a Southerner who has turned against the State that gave him birth and who takes up arms against her,” said the Colonel sternly, yet with emotion. “I know him, men, personally. He is an officer in the Federal army. If he was prowling about here in those clothes he is without doubt a spy. Unhappy man,” he continued, turning to the prisoner, “what have you to say for yourself?”

“Nothing,” and the young fellow bowed his head upon his breast.

“You know the penalty of being caught as a spy,” went on the pitiless voice of the Colonel. “A spy is one of the most dishonorable of men, and deserves any death given him. We have not much time for such. You die at sunrise. Take him, men, and guard him well. I believe him to be a dangerous man.”

He turned back into his tent, and the soldiers started away with him, when Jeanne darted to the young man’s side, and caught his hand between her own.

“Forgive me,” she sobbed. “I did not know what I was doing. Forgive me.”

“Never mind, child,” said the young officer, drearily. “It would have happened

any way. He knew me. I would rather have died in battle, but after all I have been doing my duty. It is not death I fear, but—”

“But what?” asked Jeanne, as he paused.

“It breaks my heart to be condemned to death by my own father,” came the agonized reply.

CHAPTER XXI
A SURPRISE AND AN ESCAPE

"YOUR father?" cried Jeanne, in amazement. "Is Colonel Peyton your father?"

The young man bowed in assent.

"And he condemns you to death?" went on the girl, a horrified expression on her face. "How could he do such a thing? Oh, how could he?"

"By George," broke from one of the Confederates. "This is a pretty mess! Boys, the old man has sentenced his own son to death as a spy."

The soldiers crowded about the prisoner. Jeanne drew close to him and laid her hand pityingly upon his arm.

"I will tell Bob," she said. "Perhaps she can persuade your father not to do this monstrous thing."

"Bob! Is Bob here?" The Lieutenant looked up eagerly and then shook his head. "No," he said, "she must not know. It would break her heart. After all what has he done but what is just? Had it been any other Federal we would commend him for doing his duty. He could not do other than he has done. But say nothing to Bob. Add this to your other kindness, Miss Jeanne. And, as this will probably be the last opportunity I shall ever have, let me thank you also for sending me to your home."

"Then you really went there," cried Jeanne. "You saw my father and my mother? How did they look? Were they well? When did you leave them? Oh, Lieutenant Peyton, do tell me all about them."

"They are all well, or were when I left them which was two months ago. They were as kind to me as if I had been their own son. I shall never forget them. But they were worried because they had not heard from you. After you left Memphis no word came to them. Child, why do you treat such parents so? Why are you here in place of being at home? It is wrong to subject them to so much uneasiness. They cannot think what has happened to you?"

"But I have written," cried Jeanne, tearfully. "And I want to get home. I don't want to stay here one bit. I want—"

“Men, why do you dally here with your prisoner?” came in stern tones from Colonel Peyton who had approached the group unobserved. “I desire that no further communication be allowed between this man and that girl. Are they not both Federals?”

“Being as he was your son, Colonel,” said the leader, saluting, “we thought—”

“Your business is to obey orders, not to think,” interrupted the officer brusquely. “He is no son of mine. My son died to me long ago.”

“Dad,” cried the cheery voice of Bob as she came toward him. “They say that you have caught a spy. Where is he? Why—” Her gaze fell upon the prisoner and she stopped short. “Frank,” she cried, shrilly, “it’s Frank! Oh, dad, what does it mean?”

“It means,” said the Colonel, trying to draw her away, “that you have no brother, Bob. This man is nothing to you. He is a spy and as such dies at sunrise.”

“At sunrise!” shrieked Bob. “No, no!”

“Away with that fellow,” ordered the Colonel, harshly. “And mind! I shall hold each one of you personally responsible for his safety. Bob,” as the soldiers bore his son away, “you are under arrest. Go to your quarters and stay there until I release you. And you also,” to Jeanne.

“You have no right to arrest me, Colonel Peyton,” said Jeanne coldly. “I refuse to obey any man who sentences his own son to death.”

“You refuse to obey me?” cried the Colonel, loth to believe his ears. “Me?”

“Yes, sir, you. I do not consider myself under arrest. You have no right to put me there. I am neither your daughter nor your slave,” and Jeanne put her arm around Bob and faced him defiantly.

“There are ways of enforcing obedience, young lady,” said the Colonel. “Bob, to your quarters.”

“But, dad,—”

“To your quarters,” commanded her father sternly. “Johnson,” to a soldier, “see that these girls are well-guarded until I give other orders.”

And so it came about that a guard was placed about their tent and the girls found themselves as closely watched as if they were indeed prisoners. In the afternoon as they sat disconsolately together a confusion without told that something unusual was going on. Jeanne went to the aperture in the front of the tent and

looked out.

“What is it?” she asked of the sentry.

“Our men coming back,” was the answer. “They have a number of prisoners and have captured some fine horses.”

Jeanne reported the news to Bob, but she received it apathetically. So overcome by grief was she that she appeared to no longer care for anything.

“Bob,” said Jeanne suddenly, “can’t we do something to help your brother?”

“I am afraid not,” answered Bob in heartbroken accents. “What can we do? We are only girls. What can we do?”

“Well, we can make an effort. I will never forgive myself if I don’t do something for him.”

“Why should you care?” asked Bob listlessly. “He is not your brother.”

“No, Bob, he isn’t. But he is one of our officers, and I intend to help him get away. It would be an awful thing for him to die by the hand of his father.”

“What are you going to do?” asked Bob looking at her with a gleam of interest.

“I don’t know. I have been thinking all day and I don’t know,” said Jeanne. “But we must do something. I did not think that your father could be so cruel.”

“He is doing his duty,” said Bob with pale lips. “Poor dad! Jeanne, you think him hard-hearted, but I know that this will kill him. Poor, poor dad!”

“Then if he cares why does he condemn his son to death?” asked Jeanne in surprise.

“Because he came here as a spy, and dad could not overlook that fact even if he is his son. Dad must regard Frank as a Federal, Jeanne. He is bound to as a Confederate officer.”

“But you are not bound. Surely you are not going to let your brother die without trying to save him?”

“Dad will never forgive me,” said Bob weakly. “And yet I can’t let Frank die.”

“Of course not,” answered Jeanne. “Now, Bob, let’s think hard. Maybe between us we can get some plan.”

But the time passed, and darkness found them still with no plan matured.

“We will save our rations,” said Bob as their supper was handed in to them.

“Frank ought to have them to take with him if he succeeds in escaping. If he doesn’t we won’t care to eat.”

So they carefully put up the food into a small package, and again fell to discussing ways and means for the escape of Lieutenant Peyton.

“Bob,” exclaimed Jeanne presently, “do you know that I have not heard the guard patrol our tent for a long time?”

Bob listened intently, and then sprang to her feet.

“It’s true,” she exclaimed excitedly. “I wonder what the reason is?”

They ran to the door of the tent and peered out cautiously. There seemed to be a commotion of some kind in camp. Men were hurrying to and fro; bayonets rattled, and the subdued murmur of many voices plainly told that an unusual movement was on foot. The girls looked on breathlessly and presently they heard the order given for the men to fall in line. Then “Forward, March!” came the command and the ranks filed out of the camp on the double quick, the Colonel at their head.

“Something’s up,” said Bob with conviction. “Let’s go down to where the prisoners are, Jeanne, and see how the land lies. Then maybe we will know what to do.”

Silently Jeanne signified her assent and the two stole quietly through the long rows of tents to where the prisoners were.

“There is but one guard,” whispered Bob in delight. “See, Jeanne! Frank lies the closest to the fire. He is bound too, hand and foot.”

“I see,” whispered Jeanne. “Let’s get closer, Bob.”

Cautiously they approached nearer to the men. Presently Jeanne uttered an exclamation and stopped stock still.

“What is it?” asked Bob quickly. “Did you hurt yourself?”

“Bob,” whispered Jeanne in great agitation, “do you see that young fellow just beyond Frank? The one with the yellow hair, I mean.”

“Yes, Jeanne. Why?”

“That is my brother Dick. They shan’t have Dick, Bob. Not if I had to face the whole Confederate army myself.”

“Jeanne, is it truly Dick? Aren’t you mistaken? Maybe it’s only some one who looks like him.”

“It’s Dick,” said Jeanne positively. “Watch him. He will know my voice.” Regardless of caution she began singing softly the then popular melody:

“‘Will you come with me, my Phillis dear,
To yon blue mountain free,
Where the blossoms smell the sweetest,
Come rove along with me.
It’s every Sunday morning,
When I am by your side,
We’ll jump into the wagon,
And all take a ride.’”

Bob watched the young fellow as Jeanne’s voice floated out upon the night air. The boy, he was scarcely more than that, raised himself to a sitting posture instantly, a blank look of amazement upon his face.

“Miss Bob,” came from the guard, “it’s against orders for either you or the ‘Little Yank’ to be about the prisoners. I’m mighty sorry, but you’ll have to go.”

“Johnson,” said Bob coaxingly, “haven’t I always been good to you?”

“Yes, Miss Bob.”

“Who looked after you when you were wounded, and cooked for you, and wrote your letters to your wife?”

“Miss Bob, for goodness sake don’t tell me any of those things now. The Colonel’s away, and there are just a few of us left to guard the prisoners and the camp. ’Tain’t right, Miss Bob.”

“You said that there was nothing that you would not do for me,” went on Bob inexorably.

“And I meant it,” said the poor fellow. “I know what you mean. I know that’s your brother. But you must not ask it of me. Please, Miss Bob.”

“I’m only going to ask you to turn your back for ten minutes,” said Bob.

“And his knife,” whispered Jeanne tremblingly. “Get his knife, Bob.”

“Turn your back for ten minutes,” repeated Bob, “and lend me your knife.”

“For the love of mercy, Miss Bob,” pleaded Johnson, “don’t ask this of me. It means worse than death to me. It is a betrayal of trust.”

“Your knife, Johnson,” and Bob held out her hand. “What would your wife think of your refusing me anything?”

“Take it,” said the man with the resignation of despair. “The Colonel will have

me shot like a dog, but take it. I cannot refuse."

He handed her the knife and then turned his back full upon the prisoners.

"Quick," whispered Jeanne. "Cut your brother's bonds first, and then let me have the knife."

She ran to her brother's side as she spoke and threw her arms about him.

"Dick, Dick," she said kissing him repeatedly. "I am going to cut the cords that bind you. Then you must run for your life."

"Jeanne," came the amazed voice of the lad, "how in the name of all that's wonderful, did you come here?"

"I am well and happy," cried Jeanne hurriedly. "I cannot tell you more now, but I am going home soon. Don't mind about me. Bob, hurry, hurry, before Johnson turns."

"There!" said Bob flinging her the knife. Rising to her feet triumphantly she called to her friend. "Be quick, Jeanne! Johnson is looking at his watch."

"Run, boys," panted Jeanne as the keen edge of the blade severed the cord that bound her brother's feet. "If you value your lives, run like the wind."

Frank Peyton needed no second bidding. He was off but Dick Vance hesitated as he glanced at his sister.

"She is safe," cried Bob, reading his glance aright. "I will answer for her with my life. Go! Go! Don't look yet, Johnson. One minute more in pity!"

"No;" and Johnson wheeled round. "Your brother is gone, but not another prisoner goes. I am not beholden to any Federal." He swung his gun to his shoulder just as Dick darted away.

With a scream of terror Jeanne threw herself upon him while Bob caught hold of the musket.

"It's my brother," shrieked Jeanne. "You must not, you shall not shoot!"

"Well, I'll be switched," growled Johnson in disgusted tones. "Does the whole Federal army happen to be related to you two girls? This is a pretty affair! But that Yank doesn't get away if the Colonel's son does."

Shaking himself free from their clinging hands he fired two shots in the direction that Dick Vance had taken. As other men came running up they gave chase to the fugitives.

“They dare not follow far,” comforted Bob, as Jeanne gave vent to a flood of tears. “They won’t dare to leave the camp long.”

“Come then,” and Jeanne dashed away her tears as an idea flashed into her mind. “Let’s call them back.”

She took Bob’s hand and ran with her to another part of the camp.

CHAPTER XXII
DICK TO THE FORE

JEANNE uttered an exclamation of joy as she stumbled upon a musket that for some reason had been thrown aside.

“This is the very thing,” she cried.

“What are you going to do?” asked Bob.

“I am going to make the guards think that we are attacked,” answered Jeanne, swinging the gun to her shoulder as she had seen the men do. Before the other could stop her she had pulled the trigger. There was a flash followed by a loud report, and with a groan Jeanne fell prone upon the earth.

“Jeanne,” shrieked Bob, falling beside her. “Jeanne, are you hurt? Oh, she’s shot! She’s shot!”

“Miss Bob! Miss Bob, where are you?” shouted the voices of the soldiers, and a number of those who had been left to guard the camp ran hither and thither in confusion.

“To arms!” came the hoarse command of an officer. “We are attacked.”

“Here! Oh, come here!” called Bob as Jeanne lay groaning upon the ground. “Captain Dallas, come here!”

In a few moments the soldiers were about them. Captain Dallas raised the fallen girl carefully.

“Where are you hurt?” he asked gently. “Which way did the shot come?”

“It was the gun,” moaned Jeanne, feebly finding herself able to talk. “It went off at the wrong end.”

“Well, by George,” cried the Captain bursting into a laugh, “we’re nicely fooled, boys. The girl isn’t shot. She fired the gun herself. The musket kicked. That’s all. Now you girls go to bed,” he ordered sternly, “and let’s have no more nonsense.”

“But Dick,” said Jeanne, getting upon her feet. “You haven’t caught Dick, have you?”

“If you mean the fellow that left with the Colonel’s son, no,” answered the Captain. “We can’t spare the men to give chase, but there will be a reckoning for somebody when Colonel Peyton gets back. Now go to bed. You’ll let us keep the rest of our prisoners, I reckon,” he added with sarcasm.

“Oh, yes,” said Bob, laughing a little hysterically. “It was just our brothers that we were after.”

“Better go to the surgeon and get something for that shoulder,” called the Captain as they started off. “It’s liable to be pretty lame for a few days.”

Bob profited by his advice and sought the surgeon who gave her some liniment to rub on it, but the morning found it still so lame that Jeanne retained her bed.

On the morning of the third day the Colonel and his men returned, worn and jaded looking. There were no prisoners, and from the spiritless condition of the soldiers it looked as though they had been on a fruitless enterprise.

“And if that is the case,” remarked Bob to Jeanne, “dad will be in an awful humor, and we’ll catch it.”

It was afternoon before Colonel Peyton sought their presence. Bob’s face blanched as her father entered the tent, but Jeanne, strong in the belief that Dick was safe, faced him boldly.

“I want to hear the whole of this affair,” said Colonel Peyton quietly ignoring his daughter’s greeting. “Barbara, tell me just what happened.”

Briefly Bob related the facts of the night’s occurrence. Her father listened attentively.

“And you threw up to Johnson the benefits conferred upon him,” he said as Bob finished her narrative. “I would not have believed it of you, Barbara. Johnson has been court-martialed and sentenced to the guard house for one month. The officers were merciful because that unhappy boy was my son. But I cannot risk a second offense of this nature. Hereafter, you will occupy quarters next to my own. I did not dream that my daughter would so far forget what was due to herself as to aid in the escape of the enemies of her country. I cannot but think it owing to the companionship of the past few weeks. That you may not be influenced further I forbid you to have any further communication with this girl. As for you,” turning to Jeanne and speaking sternly, “as I have passed my word to you that you shall be sent to the Federal lines it shall be done. We leave for Jackson to-morrow. At the first opportunity I will send you to your people. Meantime, may I ask that you refrain from any intercourse whatever with my

daughter? It is the smallest return that you can make, in view of your conduct of the last few days."

"I have no desire to do other than you wish, Colonel Peyton," said Jeanne proudly. "I am not sorry for anything I have done. Were it to do over, I would not hesitate for a moment to do anything I could to restore either my brother or your son to liberty. I am very sorry if my conduct has not pleased you. I should think that you would be glad to be saved from being the slayer of your son."

"We will not discuss the matter," said the Colonel coldly. "Come, Barbara, I will take you to your quarters, and under pain of my severest displeasure, I expect that you will have no more to say to this young person."

Bob gave Jeanne a long sad look, and then silently gathering up her belongings, left the tent.

And now began a dreary time for Jeanne. Cold looks greeted her on every side. The old, pleasant, cheery companionship with Bob was no more. She missed even the tiffs they had had, and longed with a passionate yearning for home and friends. The march to Jackson would have been a pleasant one as it led through the autumn woods which shone through a silvery mist amid spicy breezes which blew cool and keen from the heart of the pines, had it not been for the manner in which she was treated.

No one paid the least attention to her comings and goings. Indeed it seemed to her that Colonel Peyton would gladly welcome the fact of her disappearance, and so she grew into the habit of riding a little apart from the others and sometimes of loitering considerably in the rear of the cavalcade. It had been the original intention that she go in the wagon with Bob, but under the altered conditions a horse had been given her while Bob rode in front with her father.

The afternoon of the second day out Jeanne dropped behind the regiment, for she was very tired, intending to wait for the wagons and to ask the drivers to let her rest for a while in one of them. A bend of the road hid the regiment from view. The wagons were far in the rear and for the time she was alone.

"Jeanne," came her name in low tones from the underbrush at the side of the road.

Jeanne drew rein quickly and looked wonderingly about her. She saw nothing and thinking that she had imagined the call, she started to go on, when it came again.

"Jeanne! Jeanne! Wait a moment."

Pale and trembling the girl stopped, and then to her astonishment Dick came breathlessly though the undergrowth.

“Dick!” she cried. “Oh, Dick!”

“I have waited and watched for this chance ever since I left the camp,” cried the lad. “Come with me, Jeanne. You have no business with these rebels.”

“But Colonel Peyton—” began Jeanne.

“Come,” cried Dick seizing the bridle of her horse. “I do not understand why you are here, but it is no place for you. I will take you home.”

“Will you, Dick?” asked the girl joyfully, preparing to dismount.

“Don’t get off the horse. We will need him. I don’t know just where our men are, and we may have a long distance to go.”

“But he is not ours,” objected Jeanne, whose residence among soldiers had not been long enough to render her conscience elastic on this point.

“Yes, he is,” answered Dick. “The Government confiscated all the property belonging to the Johnnies long ago, and I guess this horse comes under that act. I am only doing my duty in taking the animal.”

“Do you think so?” asked Jeanne, dubiously.

“Certainly, I do,” and the lad led the horse away from the road into the thicket. “I thought I was going to have lots of trouble to get you away from those people,” he said, when they were a safe distance.

“They don’t care anything about me,” said the girl, sadly. “O Dick, I’ve had such a time!”

“There! There!” Dick drew her head against his shoulder caressingly. “It’s all over now. I’ll take care of you. But tell me, Jeanne, how in the world did you come down here in this benighted country? I left you safe at home in New York and find you here. How did it happen?”

“I thought that perhaps father had written,” and Jeanne looked up through her tears.

“No; I have not heard from the folks for quite a while, but we have been on the march, and I was taken prisoner. I know that there are letters for me somewhere.”

“Then I will begin at the beginning,” said Jeanne, stroking his hair tenderly. “Oh, Dick, it is so good to be with some one who belongs to me!”

CHAPTER XXIII
RECAPTURE

“We must not stay here, Jeanne,” said Dick, after his sister had finished her narrative. “We must strike out for the Mississippi River. Once there we may see some of our boats. That will be our best show for getting to our lines.”

“Is it far to the river, Dick?”

“I don’t know, Jeanne. If I felt sure that Colonel Peyton would send you to our men, I would let you go on with him, but after the treatment given you, I don’t like to let you go back.”

“No; let me stay with you, Dick. I feel as if I never wanted to see a rebel again.”

“You are liable to see a good many of them before we are out of this,” remarked Dick. “The woods are full of them. I fear—”

“What?” asked Jeanne, as the lad paused.

“For you, sister. It will be a long, hard journey. I wish I had known just how matters stood and I would have left you where you were. You have shown yourself a brave girl, and it will take all your courage and resolution now to stand up under the perils we will have to encounter. I wish we had some money. The Johnnies aren’t averse to taking our money for all their devotion to their cause. It would help us wonderfully.”

“See here, Dick!” Jeanne took a roll of bills from her dress. “Will this be enough?”

“Where did you get it?” cried Dick in delight. “Why, this is fine!”

“Father gave it to me just before I left,” answered Jeanne. “He little thought that it would help us both to get back to him. I know Aunt Clarisse would have taken it if she had remembered telling me to hide it.”

“Father will have a settling with Uncle Ben and his wife,” cried the boy, his eyes flashing. “I’d just like to meet the lady myself. I don’t think she’d like what she would hear!”

“I know it,” and the girl looked at him admiringly. “I just feel as if my troubles

were all over. What a soldier you are, Dick!”

“You are a pretty good one yourself,” answered Dick. “I had no idea, Jeanne, that you could stand fire as you did on that transport. Why, I have known big men to be afraid in a battle.”

“It’s the blood,” observed the girl, sagely. “How could we be other than brave, when our ancestors fought in the Revolution? We just can’t help it.”

Dick laughed.

“Ancestors don’t seem to help some fellows I know,” he said. “You’d be surprised at some of the things they do. They play sick, fall in behind the rest of us, or do anything in the world to get out of the way of the bullets. The queer part of the whole thing is that those who expose themselves the most rarely get hurt while the shots seek the cowards.”

Thus conversing the two pursued their journey. Darkness came on, and Dick proposed a halt and rest for the night.

“There are so many swamps,” he said, “and so many of those things they call bayous that I like to see where I am going. You won’t be afraid to stay out all night, will you? There isn’t a house in sight, and it might not be safe for us to go to it if there were.”

“I am not afraid with you, Dick. But it does look rather ghost-like, doesn’t it, with all that moss hanging from the trees?”

“Yes; the forest is not so fine as our own Adirondacks. I don’t like this country anyway. There are cypress swamps and malaria every time you turn round. Malaria has killed more of the boys than all the shots the rebs ever fired. You won’t get sick, will you?”

“I stood New Orleans in the summertime,” said the girl, “and they said down there that anybody who could live there through the summer could live anywhere. But you have not told me how you came to be down here.”

“Our regiment was sent to Corinth,” answered Dick. “With a few others I was taken prisoner during the battle there. General Van Dorn sent us to Jackson, and from there we were to be taken by rail to Richmond, Virginia. For some reason the orders were changed, and we were marched on foot to your camp. What they intended to do with us is more than I know. I tell you, I was glad to be free again.”

“You are so pale,” said Jeanne, touching him gently. “Are you well, Dick?”

“Fine! Just need a good square meal to set me up all right,” answered the boy cheerily. “I haven’t had very much to eat since you girls set me free. Just what I could find in the woods. Herbs and wild grapes, and persimmons. I eat the green ones mostly.”

“But why?” asked Jeanne mystified. “The ripe ones are ever so much better. I like them now, although I didn’t at first.”

“The green ones are best if you don’t have much to eat,” rejoined Dick. “They are fine to draw the stomach up to fit the supply. Say, Jeanne, don’t you wish we had some of mother’s doughnuts?”

“You poor, poor boy,” cried Jeanne laughing, but there were tears in her eyes. “I wish we were where we could get them. Will the war last much longer, Dick?”

“I am afraid so,” was the lad’s reply. “The rebs have played the mischief this fall, and it looks as if all our work had to be done over again. Now, Jeanne, you go to sleep, or you won’t be fit to travel to-morrow.”

“And what will you do?”

“Watch while you sleep. Never mind me. I am used to it. I have often stood guard, and can do it just as well as not.”

“I don’t believe that anything will bother us, brother. I wish you would sleep too.”

“No,” said Dick sturdily, “not now.”

Jeanne tried to obey him but sleep would not come to her. The dark pines were on all sides of them. The owls hooted dismally, and the chill wind sobbed and moaned fitfully in the pine trees. Presently Dick stooped over her.

“Are you cold, Jeanne?”

“Yes, Dick. And I can’t sleep a bit. Can’t we talk, or walk, or do something?”

“We will walk,” decided Dick. “I think that the horse must be rested by this time. What is his name?”

“Robert E. Lee,” answered Jeanne in a hesitating tone fearing that Dick might not like the animal to be so called. “Bob called him ‘Rel’ for short, and so do I because I don’t like the full name.”

“Lee is a fine general,” commented Dick. “If we had had him on our side to begin with, the war would have been over by this time. I hope the horse is worthy of his name. Take my hand, Jeanne, and we will start.”

Throwing the rein over his shoulder Dick guided himself by the stars and the brother and sister again took up their journey to the westward. Slowly they proceeded, stopping occasionally to rest and picking their way carefully through the forest. At last, just at the break of day, they came to a clearing in the woods in which stood a cabin. The blue smoke curled invitingly from the chimney, and in the open door stood a venerable darky.

“It’s darkies,” cried Dick joyfully. “They will give us something to eat.”

They hurried forward. The old man stared at them as they approached him.

“Could you give us some breakfast, sir?” asked Dick. “We are willing to pay well for it. We are Unionists.”

“’Meriky,” called the old man excitedly, “hyar’s two ob Massa Linkum’s folks wantin’ sumthing ter eat. Yes, suh; kum in, suh. We’ll gib yer what we’ve got. Kum in!”

Gladly they entered. A bright looking colored woman surrounded by half a dozen pickaninnies of all ages and sizes from two to fifteen was busily preparing the morning meal. She bustled forward bowing and courtesying as they entered.

“Kum in an’ welcome,” she said. “Lawsie, you is one ob Massa Linkum’s sojers sho’ nuff. Hain’t neber seed one befo’. We all jest lubs Fadder Abraham, suh.”

“And the horse?” said Dick suggestively.

“Dat’s all right, suh. Hyar, Geo’ge Washington! Done yer see de gem’man’s hoss a stan’ing dere? Gib him sum fodder.”

With homely but cheerful hospitality they pressed the viands upon them. It seemed to Jeanne that nothing had ever tasted so good before, and she could not but gaze in wonder at the quantity of hominy, molasses, cornbread and rye coffee that Dick managed to stow away.

“What would it have been if he hadn’t eaten the green persimmons,” she wondered.

“You all is a moughty long ways from your lines,” remarked the old man as Dick told them that he been taken prisoner and was making his escape. “Dere’s sojers all ’bout in dese hyar woods. ’Clar ter goodness I done see how yer gwine ter git away from ’em.”

“We’ll manage,” said Dick hopefully. He felt now that he could face all of Van Dorn’s brigade. “Take this, my friend, and tell us the best road to reach the Mississippi River.”

“Thankky kindly, massa,” said the old darky, taking the dollar bill that Dick gave him with the eagerness of a child. “See hyar, ’Meriky, it’s Linkum money. Good Linkum money!”

“Sho’ nuff it am,” cried ’Merica examining it. “Thankky, suh; and you too, missy. Ef yer eber sees Massa Linkum tell him how we all lubs him, an’ dat we am a lookin’ fohwa’d ter resting in his bosom.”

“I will,” said Jeanne with quick courtesy as a suspicious sound came from Dick’s direction. “Perhaps some day you will see him for yourself.”

“De Lohd grant it,” came from the negroes fervently. “De good buk done promised dat we shall lie in Fadder Abraham’s bosom, an’ we knows we will. Tell him we’s ’spectin’ it suah ter kum ter pass.”

“Though how Lincoln is going to take them all into his bosom passes my comprehension,” was Dick’s laughing comment as they went on their way.

“I think that he has done it already, Dick,” said the girl with truer insight than the boy. “They know it too, poor souls! I hope that they will get to see him. I think if I were a negro I would walk all the way to Washington to do it.”

They were fortunate enough to obtain some ears of corn from the home of a poor white, the woman being so suspicious of them that she would not permit them to enter her house. She gladly however took the money they offered and gave them the corn.

To all inquiries concerning the Mississippi River they were told that if they kept on in the same direction that they were going they would reach it in time.

“All of which is very specific,” growled Dick as he threw himself under a tree and declared a halt. “I wonder if any of them ever saw the river in their lives.”

“I don’t believe that they have,” said Jeanne. “I found out in New Orleans that these people that they call ‘poor whites’ are very ignorant. But we’ll reach it some way, Dick.”

“Yes; I begin to think that we will,” said Dick complacently. “I wish that I had a Confederate uniform though. These clothes are rather conspicuous.”

“Dick,” cried Jeanne in horrified tones, “you would not wear that uniform for a minute, would you?”

“Wouldn’t I?” chuckled Dick. “I wish I had a chance to try. Then we would not have to skulk along this way but would go boldly to the nearest town and board a train, and there we’d be!”

“I would not wear one,” declared Jeanne.

“It wouldn’t change my principles,” said Dick. “The clothes don’t make the man only in the eyes of other people, and that is what we want now. I would be just as true a Unionist as I am now, and it would be much safer for us both. A uniform and a gun are just what I need. I am going to get them!”

He rose determinedly as he spoke and helped Jeanne on the horse.

“Get on too, Dick,” she pleaded. “You have walked all the time and your shoes are in tatters. Please get up too.”

To please her Dick climbed up before her, and they started off at a brisk pace. Suddenly from a bend in the road before them a body of rebel cavalry cantered into view. Jeanne tittered a cry of alarm but Dick setting his teeth made a quick dash into the woods.

The rebels had seen them, however, and giving vent to their terrible yell, they dashed in pursuit.

“Surrender,” cried the leader as they drew near the hapless pair. “Surrender!”

“Never!” cried Dick, furiously urging his horse to greater speed. A shower of bullets fell about them. The horse stumbled and then swayed heavily. Dick leaped from the animal’s back and swung Jeanne to the ground just as the poor brute fell. Throwing his arms about his sister the boy faced the men defiantly.

“You are our prisoner, Yank,” yelled the leader as they surrounded them.

“My sister,” came from the lad’s lips. His face was very pale and a despairing look came into his eyes. He tottered and fell as he spoke.

“Dick!” shrieked Jeanne, frantically flinging herself beside him. “Dick, Dick!”

“Wounded,” was the terse remark of the Captain as he made a brief examination. “By George, but he showed pluck to face us as he did! Look here, boys.”

Turning back the lad’s shirt he showed a gaping wound in his chest. With a cry of agony at the sight, the world turned dark to Jeanne, and she fell prostrate across the form of her brother.

CHAPTER XXIV
VICKSBURG

WHEN Jeanne recovered consciousness she knew by the rumbling and roaring that she was on board a train. The riding was very rough, and hardly realizing where she was she began to feel about her for the cushions, weakly wondering where the lights were. It came to her with a sudden shock as her fingers touched nothing but wood that she was lying prone upon the floor of some sort of a car with not even a blanket under her.

The knowledge brought back the full remembrance of what had happened, and she sat up quickly and tried to peer about her.

“Dick,” she called. “Dick!”

A low moan was the answer. Guided by the sound Jeanne groped her way in its direction, and soon came in contact with the prostrate form of the boy.

“Dick,” she cried again. “Dick, is it you?”

“Jeanne,” came the reply, in weak tones, “are you safe? I called but you did not answer. I did not know you were here. What has happened? Were you asleep?”

“I think I must have fainted, Dick,” answered Jeanne, as steadily as she could, for the thought of Dick’s wound sickened her, and she was still weak from her swoon. “But I am all right. How do you feel, brother? Are you suffering much pain?”

“It is terrible,” groaned the boy. “It wouldn’t be so bad if it wasn’t for the jolting.”

“It must be dreadful,” said Jeanne, with aching heart. “Let me see if I can’t help that a little.”

She crawled close to his side, and seating herself with the side of the car for a brace, gently lifted his head and shoulders into her lap.

“Is that better?” she asked, as Dick settled back heavily.

“Yes, dear; but I am afraid that it will be hard on you.”

“Oh, no! It makes me feel so much better to be able to do something for you. It

breaks my heart to have you suffer. Didn't those people do anything for you?"

"The surgeon dressed my wound when they reached the station. Then they threw me into this box car. I felt worse because I didn't know what had become of you."

"Now you must rest," said Jeanne, holding him tenderly against her. "We are still together, Dick. You must sleep if you can."

And so through all the long dark night the girl held her wounded brother, and strove to break the jolting of the rough car. Her arms ached from their burden, and her limbs were numb, but she breathed no word of discomfort.

Sometimes Dick would fall into a fitful sleep in which he murmured feverishly and then he would awake with a start, but Jeanne was always awake to soothe him and to quiet his wandering fancy.

At last the long hours of darkness passed, as the longest and darkest must, and the sun rose lightening up even the gloomy box car with its rays. Pale and wan Dick looked in the morning light and Jeanne's heart was very full as she gazed at him.

"What would mother say if she could see him?" she thought. "Oh, if she were only here to take care of him! But she can't be and I must do my best. God help me!"

About nine o'clock the train slowed down and presently pulled into a station. After a long time the doors of the car opened and some Confederate soldiers appeared.

"All out for Vicksburg," called one facetiously.

"Shut up!" said another. "Don't you see that the boy is wounded and the girl doesn't look any better than he does."

"What are you going to do with him?" cried Jeanne in alarm as two of the men lifted Dick up.

"Take him to the provost marshal and then to the hospital. He is our prisoner, you know."

"Then you must take me right along with him," said Jeanne, decidedly, rising stiffly. "I suppose I am a prisoner too."

"I rather reckon so," was the dry reply.

Jeanne said no more but followed closely after the man as Dick was carried into

the station. The depot was thronged with soldiers waiting to go out to the batteries. She obtained her first glimpse of the “Gibraltar of the South” as she drove through its streets by Dick’s side, in an ambulance.

The city presented a fine appearance situated as it was on the wooded summits of the Walnut Hills. From these elevations the flat alluvial country around could be seen in every direction, which with its forests of oaks and cottonwood interspersed with extensive plantations, formed a picture of great panoramic beauty. The main portion of the city lay near the water front and above it the hills were crowned with elegant private residences, and made conspicuous by the high walls of the public buildings. The court-house, a large structure of light gray limestone, crowned the summit of one of the hills and was one of the first objects to catch the eye. The streets rose from the river with an abrupt difficult ascent and were cut through the bluffs and hills directly to the edge of the levee.

With something approaching awe Jeanne gazed at the formidable batteries which had been erected to dispute the advance of the Federals. The most of them were near the lower end of the town as if the greatest danger were to be apprehended from that point. One tier was near the top of the bluff, another about halfway down from the summit to the water. A single row of water batteries was located near the brink of the river to repel all attacks made at close range. The batteries on the hills causing more trouble to the Unionists than those lower down as none of the Federal guns could be elevated sufficiently to reach them while their shot could be made to plunge through the decks and disable whatever boats or vessels came within their range. As Jeanne gazed on these formidable defenses she could not but wonder how the transport had escaped destruction.

The provost marshal was reached at last and Dick’s name and regiment were duly registered. Then the provost turned to Jeanne.

“I don’t know what to do with you,” he said. “What were you doing?”

“Dick and I were trying to reach the Mississippi River hoping that we might get home,” said Jeanne.

“Were you carrying anything beyond the lines?”

“No, sir.”

“How came you within our lines?” persisted the officer, attracted by her youth and innocence, yet determined to probe the affair to the bottom.

“I came from New Orleans,” said Jeanne. “I was visiting my uncle. When they left the city they took me with them but left me at a deserted plantation. I started

back to New Orleans but fell in with Colonel Peyton's camp and he was bringing me to Jackson where he said that he would send me to our side. I met Dick and so went with him because he is my brother."

"But what was Dick doing here?" queried the man. "What business has a Union soldier in this part of the country?"

"I was a prisoner," answered Dick, speaking for himself. "I had escaped and when I knew that my sister was in the hands of you fellows I waited to take her away."

And Dick awaited the effect of his bold declaration anxiously for he was uneasy for his sister.

"I don't know what to do with you," said the provost again.

"Let me go with Dick," pleaded Jeanne eagerly. "He is wounded as you see, sir, and needs care and attention. Please let me go with him. I won't be a bit of trouble."

"I don't know but that that will be the best way out of the difficulty," remarked the officer musingly. "At least until I can investigate further. What was the name of your uncle?"

"Vance, sir. Benjamin Vance.".

"Benjamin Vance!" exclaimed the officer in amazement. "He is well-known in Vicksburg. Why, he and his wife are here now visiting relatives. I will send for him at once."

"What!" cried Jeanne. "Uncle Ben here?"

"Right here," responded the other. "Orderly, will you send word to the La Chaise manor that I would like Mr. Vance to come here?"

The Orderly saluted and left the room. The provost turned his attention to other matters while Dick and Jeanne waited with beating hearts the return of the man.

In about an hour's time the Orderly returned and with him came the well-known form of Mr. Vance. Behind him, her silken skirts rustling, her face wreathed in smiles, her manner full of smirks and graces, walked Madame Vance.

CHAPTER XXV
MADAME AGAIN

"YOU dear child," cried Madame embracing Jeanne rapturously. "You cannot imagine how desolate I have been at losing you. I was frantic when I learned you were left behind. We went back for you, but you had gone. Ma foi! You should have waited for our return."

"Your story being so amiably verified," said the provost beaming upon the girl, "I am happy to say there is no reason why you should not return to your relatives. I am charmed to have assisted in reuniting you to your honored family."

"We will never forget it," said the lady sweetly. "If we are ever so fortunate as to have the opportunity to repay the obligation, rest assured that we will gladly use it. My sweet child, is this your brother? The Orderly spoke of him as we came down."

"Yes," said Jeanne hesitatingly. She was not at all pleased at the turn affairs had taken, and did not relish the idea of being once more in the hands of Madame. "Yes, this is Dick, Uncle Ben. You know that he bears your name also: Richard Benjamin Vance."

She drew near Dick as she spoke, standing between Madame and her brother, and addressing herself to her uncle only.

"Richard, I am glad to see you," said Mr. Vance, seizing the boy's hand and speaking so heartily that Dick was bewildered. "A prisoner, they tell me. Come! this won't do. We must have you with us for Clarisse to take care of. She is a fine nurse!"

"I do not want to go," said Dick weakly. The long wait was beginning to tell upon him. "After the way that my sister has been treated I prefer to trust to the mercy of my enemies than to receive any benefits from you."

"My dear boy, has the little one been speaking of our differences? There were some, I believe. She is headstrong and self-willed, but what would you? I desire to admonish her for disobedience as a mother might, and she grieves me by thinking that I do not love her, but I adore her! You shall both come to us, and

you shall see for yourself."

"Yes," said Mr. Vance after a low conversation with the provost. "I have arranged with the officer here that you shall come with us to be taken care of. When you are well, then you must return to him. Orderly, can you get some one to assist me in lifting my nephew to the carriage?"

So in spite of themselves the brother and sister were placed in charge of their uncle and his wife. The carriage bowled rapidly over the rough streets and at last stopped before a large residence on the summit of one of the hills.

The building was long and low roofed, built after the Southern fashion with wide halls and broad galleries running the entire length of the house. It looked very inviting even to Jeanne who hovered protectingly over her brother.

"She shan't misuse Dick," she declared, over and over again. "She shan't harm him."

Dick was carried carefully into a large room and placed in a clean white bed. A bright fire blazed upon the hearth and its heat was very welcome after the ride in the chill November air.

The boy, exhausted from his suffering and weak from loss of blood, fainted as they placed him on the couch and Mr. Vance hurriedly summoned a physician. Jeanne found herself pushed to one side while Mr. and Madame Vance worked over the unconscious lad, but when she saw that their ministrations were for his benefit she was content that it should be so.

The most unremitting attention and constant care were what the boy required declared the physician when he had made an examination. The long ride in the rough car and exposure to chill, rendered the best of nursing imperative.

"If he does not have it he will die," he said. "Or if his wound breaks out afresh it will be fatal."

"He shall not die," cried Madame, with an adorable air of concern. "I will care for him myself, doctor. He shall have the best of care."

"I do not doubt it, Madame, with you for his attendant," said the physician, gallantly. "I leave him in good hands."

Jeanne saw with gratitude that Madame Vance did really give the best of care to her brother, and she gladly forgave the treatment to which she had been subjected. Occasionally she even forgot her intention of calling her aunt "Aunt Clarisse," and the old "Cherie," came to her lips.

“Ole missus done got huh claws on yer ergain,” Snowball said to Jeanne one morning. The negro girl had been enthusiastic in her greetings. “I wuz moughty sorry ter see yer kum back ter huh ergain.”

“I could not help it, Snowball. I know that she does not like me any better than she used to, but she is certainly kind to Dick and he needs that now. Even mother could not nurse him more tenderly.”

“She done got sum crotchet in huh haid,” grumbled Snowball. “Done yer be tuk in, lill’ missy. She up ter sumthing.”

The girl’s words filled Jeanne with alarm. She had sometimes had the same thought, but when she saw Madame’s devotion to her brother, she dismissed the idea from her mind.

One day she sat by Dick’s bedside alone. Madame had lain down for a little rest, although the boy was not yet out of danger.

“Jeanne,” said the weak voice of her brother presently.

“Yes, Dick,” and the girl hastened to his side. “What is it?”

“I wonder and wonder,” said the boy, in a far away voice, “why you told me what you did about Cherie. She is so good, so kind. The sweetest woman that I ever knew besides my mother! Why, why did you tell me such awful things of her, Jeanne? They are not true.”

Jeanne was aghast at the question. She stood, unable to answer, fearing to excite him by telling the truth and yet unwilling for him to be under the impression that her story was false.

“Tell me,” said Dick, weakly. “Why did you do it? I think of it always. It was not like you, Jeanne.”

“Don’t ask me, Dick,” pleaded Jeanne, falling on her knees beside him. “Wait until you are well and then we can talk it over.”

“You dally,” cried Dick, his eyes bright with fever. “I see how it is! You fibbed to me, Jeanne. I know you did.”

“No, Dick, I did not,” cried Jeanne, heartbroken at the thought that Dick could believe such a thing of her. “Listen, and I will tell you all about it. Snowball can tell you too, if you do not believe me. But you will be quiet, Dick, won’t you? You will be very, very quiet.”

“You are not taking a very good way to get your brother well,” exclaimed

Madame, entering abruptly. “I will have to forbid you the room if you excite him like this. Can’t you let your tales of me wait until he is strong enough to bear them?”

“Are they true?” asked Dick, looking up at her with eager eyes. “They are not, are they?”

“Yes,” cried Jeanne, indignantly. “They are true, Dick! As true as I live! Why should I tell you a falsehood?”

“Are they?” and Dick’s eyes lingered on his aunt’s questioningly.

“Dear boy,” said Madame, caressing him, “believe what the little one tells you. Is she not your sister? Poor Cherie would rather die than to say aught against her. Think what you like.”

“I knew it,” and Dick breathed a sigh of relief. “I knew that you could not be so wicked and cruel.”

“Dick, Dick,” cried his sister passionately. “You must believe me. It is true. All that I tell you and more. Oh, Dick, turn away from that wicked woman! Don’t let her touch you! I will take care of you.”

“I will leave you, Dick, my soldier boy,” said the lady holding him close to her. “Your sister can take care of you, as she says. There! I will go.”

“No; I want you, Cherie,” and the boy held her as tightly as his poor weak hands would allow. “I don’t want Jeanne, I want you.” Exhausted by the excitement he sank back unconscious on his pillow.

Madame’s eyes flashed triumphantly at the girl.

“Go,” she said in her honey sweet accents which to the sensitive ear of the girl were full of bitterness. “Go, and let me repair the mischief you have done. Blame yourself if this proves too much for him. His death will be upon your shoulders.”

With white face Jeanne crept from the room, and lay without the door while her aunt summoned aid. After a time the lady joined her.

“Unhappy girl,” she said, “you have almost killed your brother. It is due to my skill alone that he lives. I forbid you to enter his room again until he is beyond danger. If you try to see him I cannot answer for the consequences. Or perhaps you would rather he would die than to live and to care for me more than for you. Did you see how he turned from you to me? How did you like that?”

“Aunt Clarisse,” answered Jeanne, every word of the woman going to her heart like the stab of a knife, “save him, and I will ask nothing more. He may love you best—” her voice faltered. “Only save him.”

“I am going to,” said Madame with emphasis. “Do you want to know why, my dear? Because I took a fancy to Monsieur Dick when you used to talk so about him. I adore a soldier! Had you been a boy I might have loved you. When the Orderly told us that you were here with your brother I came down because I wanted to see him for myself. I saw him, petite. He is the picture of what my own boy would have been had he lived. I would not have come on your account, you little mudsill! You might have been sent to Libby prison for all I cared, but I wanted Dick. I want him for myself. He cares for me now. By the time he is well he will adore me. Nay; he will be so fond of me that he will give up father, mother and even that beloved Union of which you prate so much because I wish it. You shall see!”

“You will do this? Aunt Clarisse, you cannot. Dick believes in you now, but he will never love you better than he does mother. And he never will, no matter how much he likes you, give up his country.”

“We shall see,” and the lady laughed unpleasantly. “You would have said yesterday that he loved you better, wouldn’t you? Yet see! to-day he prefers me. He shall yet wear the gray of my own South.”

Shaking her finger at the girl with pretended playfulness she reëntered Dick’s room leaving Jeanne full of misery.

CHAPTER XXVI
JEANNE MEETS FRIENDS

AND so, fearful of exciting her brother, Jeanne refrained from visiting his chamber. But her heart was heavy and she grew pale and thin.

“Dick will not yield,” she said to herself over and over again. “He has fought for his country, and no man who has laid down his life upon his country’s altar could ever betray her. Why do I fear? He is father’s son.” But she stopped short as a sudden thought struck her. “Father’s son,” she whispered, “yet Uncle Ben is father’s brother. I will not think! I will wait until he is better, and then get him to go away.”

Thus trying to comfort herself she wandered through the house or stood disconsolately in the grounds watching the soldiers as they worked daily at the fortifications. December passed, and great were the public rejoicings over Sherman’s defeat in his attack on the city.

“Vicksburg can never be taken,” said Madame Vance with insolent triumph. “And so long as Vicksburg stands, stands the Confederacy.”

“Yes; it is such folly for them to waste ammunition in trying to take a city like this,” spoke Mrs. La Chaise, Madame’s relative. “Why its defenses and protection are stronger than any city they have in the United States.”

“I thought that Vicksburg was in the United States,” said Jeanne quickly.

“It is in the Confederacy,” responded Madame Vance sharply. “When will you learn, Jeanne, that the United States is a separate and distinct country.”

“Never,” replied the girl. “I think you will be convinced of your mistake some time.”

“When Vicksburg falls perhaps we may,” interposed Mrs. La Chaise. “I will be willing to acknowledge it then, won’t you, Clarisse?”

“Yes; will you come in and see my boy this morning, Adele? He is getting on finely.”

“I will come too,” said Jeanne determinedly. “I think Dick is strong enough to

see me if he can see the rest of the family."

"I forbid it," said Madame sternly. "He doesn't care to see you. The sight would be very unpleasant to him."

"The sight of me? His sister!" exclaimed the girl in amaze. "I do not believe it, Aunt Clarisse."

"You shall not go. He does not need you."

"I will go. I have stayed out quite long enough," and Jeanne rose from her seat and started for Dick's bedroom. But Madame was by her side instantly.

"If you do not do as I tell you, I will lock you up again," she said threateningly. "I think you had a taste of that once."

"You dare not," retorted Jeanne. "These people would not let you."

"Indeed, had I been in your aunt's place I would have done so long ago," declared Mrs. La Chaise who had always disliked the girl. Jeanne looked appealingly at her uncle but that gentleman only turned to Mr. La Chaise with some remark on the war. They were all against her, and as she gazed into their faces she realized how helpless she was.

"But I want to see my brother," she cried bursting into tears.

"You shall see him when I am ready for you to if you will be a good girl and obey me," said Madame Vance. "I do not choose that you shall to-day. Now run out in the yard or take a walk. It will do you good. Come, Adele, we will go to Dick."

With bursting heart Jeanne saw the two disappear into Dick's chamber. She sat looking longingly at the door for some time and then left the house and started for a walk, unable to sit still longer.

One of the hills of Vicksburg was called the Sky Parlor because of the extensive view that it commanded and also because it was a favorite resort of ladies in pleasant weather. Now, although the wind was cold and chill, Jeanne bent her steps toward it in the effort to find some distraction for her mind.

So intent was she on her own thoughts that she gazed on the surroundings with eyes that saw neither the hills nor the great bend of the river, nor indeed the two persons who were at a little distance from her. A sigh escaped her lips as she turned at length to retrace her steps. In so doing she was brought face to face with a man and a girl who were in the act of coming toward her. An exclamation of surprise burst from the girl's lips.

“Jeanne!”

“Bob,” cried Jeanne gladly and then stopped short as the remembrance came to her that Colonel Peyton had forbidden Bob to have any communication with her. Seemingly no such recollection occurred to Bob or, if it did she ignored it, for she flung herself upon Jeanne rapturously.

“You dear thing!” she cried kissing her. “How in the world did you get here? We did not know what had become of you, but father said you had left of your own accord. Did you?”

“Yes; I did, Bob. I went with Dick.” Tears came to her eyes at thought of him. “He had waited to take me after his escape.”

“Is he with you?” asked Bob, quickly.

“Oh, Bob,” she cried, breaking down completely. “I am in so much trouble.”

“Are you?” Bob hugged her close. “Tell me all about it, Jeanne.”

Jeanne looked up and started her story, but hesitated as she saw Bob’s companion.

“Don’t mind him,” said Bob, observing her look. “He’s a real nice old man who boards at Aunt Sally’s. We are great friends.”

“If I am not mistaken, this is a young lady with whom I am well acquainted,” said the old gentleman, looking at Jeanne quizzically. “Aren’t you the little girl who likes puns?”

“Mr. Huntsworth,” cried Jeanne, in astonishment, “how did you come here?”

“After I left you I went to Corinth on some business,” said Mr. Huntsworth. “To wind it up satisfactorily I was obliged to come on to Vicksburg. The good people here got it into their heads that I was in some sort of secret work and so detained me. As they have no proof I am permitted to have my freedom which is liberty only in a restricted sense as I am not permitted to leave the city. However, I am quite comfortable. I am boarding with this young lady’s aunt, who is a very fine woman. Very fine, indeed! And we have some rare times together, eh, Bob.”

“Indeed we do,” cried Bob, gaily. “And dad is stationed here, Jeanne, so that while I am at Aunt Sally’s I see him almost every day.”

“How do you live away from your regiment, Bob?”

“It was hard at first, but now I don’t mind it so much. And then I go to see them sometimes. Aunt Sally was horrified when she found I had been so long with the

soldiers. See, I don't wear my uniform any more. But I expect that if the war lasts much longer I'll have to go back to it. Goods are not being imported very fast into the Confederacy."

"You said you were in trouble, my little friend," said Mr. Huntsworth, who had been taking note of Jeanne's pale face and distressed air. "Tell us about it. We may be able to help you."

"Will your father care if I talk to you, Bob?" asked Jeanne, longing to confide in these friends and yet hesitating to do so.

"Dad was sorry after you left that he had been so unkind to you," said Bob. "Especially when he found how good you had been to send Frank to your home. He regretted his sternness. So we can be friends all right. Now tell us all about it."

"I will," and Jeanne told all that had occurred since she left the regiment and briefly sketched for Mr. Huntsworth's benefit the happenings in New Orleans.

"My dear," said the old gentleman, gravely, when she had finished, "you are indeed in trouble. I must think it over and see if I cannot help you."

"I think your aunt is just about the meanest person I ever heard of," declared Bob. "I am sorry that she is a Southerner. I didn't know that we had any one among us that could be like that."

"She is partly of foreign blood, Bob."

"To be sure! That explains everything," said Bob. "But what makes your uncle let her act so?"

"I don't know," said Jeanne, sadly, "he seems to have no will but hers. Sometimes I think that he is afraid of her, and yet why should a great big man be afraid of a slender woman?"

"I have known of such cases," observed Mr. Huntsworth. "There may be more in that than you dream, my dear. We must think over the matter and see what can be done. And remember, child, that you have friends. That you are no longer alone but that we will help you some way."

"Oh," said Jeanne, brokenly, "it is so good of you. I felt so forlorn. I thought that I was forsaken by every one. But I won't feel so any more. You are so good—" She burst into a flood of tears.

"There! there!" Bob comforted her with endearments while Mr. Huntsworth blew his nose vigorously. "I know just how you feel, Jeanne. It nearly killed me

when Frank went over to the Union instead of staying with his own people. I don't blame you for wanting to keep your brother on your side."

"You are generous, Bob. I did not sympathize with you before, but I do now. I don't believe that Dick will go, but I am so afraid of what Aunt Clarisse may do to him if he doesn't. No! Dick won't go. But I must return. They will wonder what has become of me."

"It is high time all of us were leaving," remarked Mr. Huntsworth. "This is rather a breezy place for a conversation."

Still conversing the three slowly descended the elevation, and then bidding them good-bye Jeanne returned to the La Chaise residence feeling more hopeful now that she knew that Bob and Mr. Huntsworth were in the city. As she entered the grounds Snowball dodged from behind one of the trees.

"Lill' missy," she said, "go down behind de smokehouse de fust chance yer git. I'se got sumpin' ter tell yer."

"All right, Snowball. I will go now," replied Jeanne rather startled.

"Not now, missy. Deys done seen yer kum in. Go on ter yer room and then slip down arter yer stays dere awhile."

Jeanne followed the girl's advice, and went on to the house. Madame Vance looked up as she entered. She gave a quick glance at the girl, and something in the latter's face caught her attention.

"You look brighter," she commented. "Whom did you see?"

"Many people, Madame," replied Jeanne somewhat shortly.

"It seems to have helped you then. Did anything happen?"

"Nothing," returned the girl drearily, her old look of hopelessness returning for she feared that Madame suspected something. "What could happen?"

"Don't give me any impudence, Jeanne. I am not in the mood for it. Go at once to your room," commanded her aunt and Jeanne gladly obeyed.

As soon as possible she crept softly downstairs and succeeded in getting out of the house unobserved by either Madame or Mrs. La Chaise and ran eagerly to the smokehouse.

Snowball was waiting for her.

"Missy," she said as soon as the girl reached her side, "hab yer seen yer brudder lately?"

“No, Snowball. They won’t let me,” said Jeanne sadly.

“Den yer had bettah see him as soon as yer can, fer dere’s a powerful lot of meanness gwine on.”

“What do you mean?” cried Jeanne apprehensively.

“Ole missus am a tryin’ ter make him leab Massa Linkum’s ahmy. I heerd Jeff tell Feliciane dat she was ’suadin’ him awful ha’d. Den too I heare ole missus tell him myself dis mohnin’ when dey sent me fer more wood and didn’t notice pertic’lar dat I had kum back, ole missus say ter him when he done axed fer you, ‘I done know what de mattah wid Jeanne,’ she say. ‘She done seem ter kyar ter see yer. I axed her ter kum dis mohnin’, an’ she say, ‘no, I’m gwine fer a walk.’ Den yer brudder say bery weak like, ‘I can’t understan’ it. I tought she lubed me.’”

“Did he say that?” cried Jeanne. “Oh, Snowball, what can I do? I must see him. Won’t you help me?”

“Yes, missy, I will. Eben ef dey kills me fer it,” declared the girl fervently.

CHAPTER XXVII
A PRISONER OF WAR

"BUT what can we do, Snowball?" asked Jeanne her voice trembling with emotion. "How can I see him?"

"De missus takes a nap ebery day," said the darky. "An' sumtimes she calls me ter set in de room s'posin' Massa Dick want anything. Sumtimes she tells Feliciane ter do it. We'll jest wait tell she tells me ter do it, an' den I'll let yer in. We'll hab ter watch sha'p elsen she'll ketch us."

"We will," said Jeanne. "I would not care for myself, but I would not like to get you into trouble."

"Nebber you mind me, lill' missy. You'se been moughty good ter me, an' I'll stan' anything ter help yer see yer brudder."

"Thank you, Snowball," and Jeanne's eyes filled with tears at this evidence of affection. "When I can I am going to help you to get back to your mother. I will never forget what you are doing for me."

"Dat's all right, missy. Jest you wait tell I does sumthin' an' den talk. Time nuff den! Now I mus' run back. Done want missus ter know dat I hab been talkin' ter yer."

"I'll go a different way, and she won't suspect us," said Jeanne and the two separated.

Two days, full of anxiety to Jeanne, passed before Snowball was called to attend Dick. Waiting only until she heard the door of Madame's chamber click, the darky sped to Jeanne's room and called her.

"Nuffin' couldn't a happened bettah," she said. "Missus Adele, she's gone ter town; an' tuk Feliciane with huh. Jeff's gwine huntin' wid marster an' Mistah La Chaise. I ain't afeerd ob de res' ob de niggas. Kum now, missy, an' yer'll hab a right smaht while wid yer brudder."

Jeanne started up eagerly and ran down the stairs to Dick's chamber. Her brother was lying fully dressed on a couch with his back toward her. He did not turn at her entrance and before she had time to address him, Snowball darted through

the door.

“Foh de land sake, missy, git outen heah quick,” she whispered. “Ole missus am a kumin’ back.”

Her terror communicated itself to Jeanne and the girl stopped stock still in the middle of the floor. The click, click of Madame’s shoes could be heard distinctly in the hall. To go out would be to meet her, and for the nonce the spirit of the girl quailed. Glancing quickly about her the heavily curtained window caught her eye and she sprang toward it. It was but the work of a moment to ensconce herself behind its voluminous folds. Scarcely had she done so when Madame entered.

“I thought I heard some one,” she said suspiciously. “Have you been attending to Master Dick, Snowball?”

“Does yer want anyting now, Massa Dick?” asked Snowball going to the lad’s side, gladly ignoring the lady’s first remark.

“Give me a drink, please,” said Dick weakly.

“I will give it to him myself,” said Madame. “You may leave the room, Snowball. Master Dick and I want to have a little talk all by ourselves.”

“Yes’m,” acquiesced Snowball, but she lingered loth to leave Jeanne.

“At once,” commanded Madame sharply. “Why do you loiter when I tell you to go?”

“Yes’m; I’m a-gwine now,” and the girl left the room reluctantly.

“You feel much better, do you not, my boy?” and the lady stroked the lad’s hair gently.

“Yes, Cherie.”

“So well that we can have our little talk again? We will not be interrupted to-day as we were yesterday.”

“If you wish,” and it seemed to Jeanne that Dick spoke with great weariness. “But of what use is it? You have your views and I have mine. Why not let the subject drop when we cannot agree?”

“Because the old adage has it, ‘That constant dropping will wear away the hardest stone.’ By keeping continually at you I shall finally succeed in overcoming your scruples, and get your signature to the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy.”

“Never!” exclaimed Dick with so much resolution that his sister’s heart swelled with thankfulness and pride. “Though you were to talk to me forever you could not change my principles.”

“Listen to me, Dick.” Madame spoke in her sweetest tones. “You are but a boy. You cannot know which side is right in this war when great men have differed upon the matter. I have heard you say that you honored Robert E. Lee. That he was a noble man, a great general, and one of the finest gentlemen that you ever met. Think you that such a man would embrace our cause if he did not believe himself right?”

“I do not,” answered Dick at once. “There are many men on the side of the South who believe themselves to be in the right. But they are none the less mistaken for all that.”

“And you set up your feeble judgment against them?” cried Madame, a trace of anger in her voice. “It is presumption.”

Dick did not reply. Presently Madame spoke again, and Jeanne noted that her tones were once more caressingly soft.

“Dick, I have spoken to you of my own son, have I not?”

“Yes, Cherie.”

“He was so much like you. When I used to hear Jeanne talk of you I knew that you were what my boy would have been. When I saw you my heart yearned over you, for you were the image of him. Had he lived he would have fought to defend our South from the rank invaders.”

“I do not doubt it,” spoke the boy gently.

“Think how desolate I am,” went on the lady quick to note the lad’s sympathy for her. “I have no one, Dick. Be my boy, I will be so proud of you. You would be our heir, and have all the property. I have influence too, and it should be used to advance you quickly to a high rank. You should be a general, my boy. The handsomest and youngest in the service. Think what I can give you. And all just to sign one little paper! Why do you hesitate? Why throw away such advantages for the sake of a mere notion? Come, sign it.”

Dick was silent so long that Jeanne became alarmed and she pushed back the curtain and looked at the pair anxiously. Madame Vance was holding a paper before the boy pleadingly, while Dick was regarding it with a look of indifference.

“You will, my beautiful boy. You will, I know. You cannot refuse a mother’s prayer. Oh, I know that you will not refuse me.”

“But I do,” said Dick who showed signs that the interview was taxing his strength to the utmost. “I will die before I sign that paper.”

“You refuse?” cried Madame, losing control of herself. “Then hear me, Richard Vance. You shall not thwart me in my purpose. You shall sign that paper. I am stronger than you, and I say that you shall do it.”

She seized the lad’s hand and tried to force a pen into it. Dick struggled feebly. With a bound Jeanne was by his side, all her fear of the woman gone in the menace to her brother.

“What are you doing here, Jeanne Vance?” cried Madame starting back at sight of the girl. “How came you here?”

“I wanted to see my brother,” answered Jeanne, throwing her arms about him protectingly. “Have you no heart, no feeling, that you would take advantage of his weakness?”

“I am not so weak that she could make me sign that paper,” cried Dick, his pale face and shaking hands belying his assertion.

“We shall see,” cried Madame threateningly. “He shall sign it before you, my little Yankee.”

Jeanne watched her opportunity as her aunt tried to push her aside, and snatched the paper from her hand.

“There!” she cried as she tore it into shreds. “There, Aunt Clarisse! He cannot sign it now.”

“How dare you?” cried Madame, stamping her foot. “I will have you whipped.”

But as she started to call the servants a sharp peal of the door bell rang through the house. Instantly a most remarkable transformation took place in the lady. Her rage disappeared as if by magic, and, as one of the darkies opened the door to announce. “Colonel Peyton,” she presented a serene and smiling countenance to the gentleman.

“Colonel Peyton,” she exclaimed, sweeping forward gracefully, “this is indeed an honor. To what good fortune am I indebted for such a favor?”

“The exigencies of war, Madame,” answered the Colonel, bowing over her hand with courtly grace. “I am accompanied by some of my men. May I ask that they

be permitted to enter?”

“Certainly,” assented Madame sweetly, but there was a trace of uneasiness in her manner.

Into the room filed a squad of soldiers and with them, Jeanne could scarcely repress a cry of joy at sight of him, came Mr. Huntsworth.

“Madame,” said Colonel Peyton, pulling a paper from his pocket. “General Pemberton has sent a written order for a young man–a Federal prisoner–who was put in your charge to be taken care of until he should have recovered from his wound. As some time has elapsed he is convinced that he has sufficiently recovered to be turned over to us. I have come to take him and also the young girl who accompanied him. They are prisoners of war, you understand.”

Madame Vance bowed but her eyes glittered balefully.

“The girl is here, take her,” she said. “But the boy–ah, mon Colonel, you must not take him yet. He is not able to go. Besides, let me but have him a short time longer and who knows but that a full fledged Confederate may be the result? He is not able to go. Leave him with me, Colonel, I beseech you. I will see the General myself.”

“No; take him,” interposed Jeanne who feared that the Colonel might succumb to the lady’s blandishments. “She wants to force him to her wish, and you don’t want such soldiers, Colonel Peyton.”

“No,” said the Colonel sternly. “We want no recruits made in such a manner, Madame Vance. Men, take your prisoner.”

“Minx,” shrieked Madame, flying at Jeanne in a passion. “Is it thus you repay my kindness? Oh, I could kill you!”

“She is our prisoner,” said Colonel Peyton stepping before her. “You must not touch the girl, Madame.”

“I will report this indignity,” cried Madame. “I will see General Pemberton. I do not lack influence, sir. You shall repent this.”

“As you like, Madame.” The Colonel bowed gravely and, like the brave soldier that he was, remained with the lady while the men carried Dick out, followed by Jeanne and Mr. Huntsworth who had his arm around the girl protectingly.

“Oh,” cried the girl as they proceeded down the hill away from the place. “I am so glad that you came when you did. I fear that I could not have held out much longer.”

“Tell us what happened,” suggested Mr. Huntsworth, and Jeanne did so.

“I think I never saw such a tiger cat,” remarked the old gentleman when she had finished. “There was a time there when I thought that she was going to tear you to pieces. I fear that you are not through with her, my little friend.”

“I will see General Pemberton,” declared Colonel Peyton, “and prepare him for Madame’s onslaught. Meantime, I have his permission for you and your brother to stay at sister Sally’s until your brother fully recovers. But he is not at liberty, Jeanne, because he is a prisoner, you know.”

“Yes, I know,” said Jeanne, “and I will not say a word against it. Better a prisoner of the Confederates than to be in the hands of such a woman. There will at least be some chance to exchange him. You don’t dislike me any more, do you, Colonel Peyton? You won’t care if Bob and I are friends, will you?”

“No; you poor child! I have been sorry that I was so unkind to you. After all I was glad that you girls saved Frank. It would have broken my heart had he been shot. Ah!—”

There was a rushing, whizzing sound and a huge mortar shell passed over them, and, burying itself in the side of the hill beyond, exploded with a great report.

“What is it?” cried Jeanne affrightedly clinging to Mr. Huntsworth.

“The Federals have begun to shell the city,” said the Colonel calmly. “Their fleet has been gathering for several days. We have been expecting it.”

CHAPTER XXVIII
THE SIEGE BEGINS

"THEN we are safe, safe," cried Jeanne, forgetful of the presence of the soldiers. "Oh, Mr. Huntsworth, the Federals will soon have the city!"

"I wouldn't be too sure of that, my little lady," remarked Colonel Peyton dryly. "Vicksburg is impregnable, and I fear that it will be a waste of ammunition on the part of the Federals."

"I did not mean to be impolite, Colonel," said the girl contritely. "It wasn't very nice of me to make such a remark. I should be sorry for you if our men did take the city."

"You are a good little girl," said Colonel Peyton warmly. "I like a generous hearted foe."

"You must be careful not to express your feelings too openly," advised Mr. Huntsworth in a low tone. "These people are rebels but they are going to be our hosts and the Colonel has certainly interested himself in your behalf."

"He has," said Jeanne gratefully, "and I will be careful not to offend them."

Bob, rather pale and agitated on account of the shells, met them at the door.

"Dad, what will we do if they shell the city?" she cried before greeting Jeanne.

"I reckon we can't do anything," drawled the Colonel. "I thought you were a soldier, Bob? Soldiers don't mind a few shells."

"I suppose not," and Bob strove to regain her composure. "So you got Jeanne and her brother? Come in and tell me what else that woman has done. Here is Aunt Sally! Aunty, this is Jeanne and her brother, Dick Vance. They're Yankees but they are real nice anyway."

"I am glad to see you, my dear," said the lady, kissing Jeanne. "Any friend of Bob's is welcome be she Yankee or Confederate. And this is your brother? How pale he is! We must get him right to bed."

She bustled about Dick in a motherly fashion, her sympathies fully enlisted on his behalf by his illness. Dick was in truth much exhausted by his journey and

sank into slumber as soon as his head touched the pillow. Jeanne sat by him and told Bob and her aunt how Madame had tried to make him sign the paper.

“Rest and quiet are what he needs,” observed Mr. Huntsworth. “He will come out of this all right, I think, now that he is removed from your aunt’s ministrations. What a creature she is! She reminds me of the middle ages. Vindictive, passionate and cruel beyond measure as were the women of those times!”

The slow shelling of Vicksburg went on. The people gradually became indifferent and resumed their daily avocations. General Pemberton issued an order for all non-combatants to leave the city, but Bob and her aunt refused to pay any heed to it.

“Where could we go?” asked Bob when her father tried to combat her decision to stay. “You say the country is overrun with soldiers, and where is there a place safer than Vicksburg? The Yankees can never take it!”

“No; they cannot,” returned the Colonel. “I don’t know but that you are right, Bob. I will have a cave dug in the hill back of the house to-morrow, and you can retire to it when the shelling becomes too bad.”

And so it was arranged. Men began work the next day and soon dug a cave in the hillside back of them. Cave residence had become quite the thing since the shelling of the city had begun, and the hillsides were so honey-combed with excavations that the streets looked like avenues in a cemetery.

Bob and Jeanne settled themselves into a happy and quiet existence. They sewed in the morning and sometimes took excursions to Sky Parlor Hill to view the Federal fleet that lay on the river, and to look through a glass at the Federal encampment near the head of the abandoned canal. Rumors were rife in the city of the advance of the Federal troops. One night heavy cannonading was heard for an hour or two, ceasing and then commencing again early in the morning. All day the noise continued. That night the sky in the South was crimsoned by the light of a large fire.

The lurid glare fell in red and amber light upon the houses, lighting up the white magnolias, paling the pink crape myrtles, and bringing out in bright distinctness the railing of the terraces where drooped in fragrant wreaths the clustering passion vine. The next day the news came that the little village of Warrenton had been burned by shells thrown from the boats. Then followed the tidings that a battle was going on between the Federal troops and General Pemberton’s forces at Black River. And so the days passed full of rumors and excitement.

The seventeenth of May dawned, and Vicksburg was thrilled to the centre by the news of a battle and the tidings that the Confederates were beaten. Soon the streets were filled with bands of tired, worn-looking soldiers. Wan, hollow-eyed, ragged, footsore and bloody the men limped along unarmed but followed by siege guns, ambulances, gun carriages and wagons in aimless confusion. At twilight the bands began to play “Dixie,” “The Bonnie Blue Flag,” and other martial airs on the court-house hill to rally the scattered army.

“Mr. Huntsworth,” said Jeanne as they were for a few moments out of ear-shot of the lamenting Bob. “I heard a man say that the Yankees would be here before long. Do you think it can be true?”

“I don’t know, child. Let us hope so,” was the answer.

But the day passed and no Yankees made their appearance and the citizens settled once more into a semblance of quiet. But from that time the regular siege of Vicksburg began. Utterly cut off from the world and surrounded by a circle of fire, the fiery shower of shells went on day and night. Regular occupations were discontinued, and people did nothing but eat what they could get, sleep when they could and dodge the shells.

For some time Aunt Sally, Bob, Dick, Jeanne and Mr. Huntsworth, and the servants had been living in the commodious cave prepared for them. The girls no longer sewed or walked about. They were content if they could keep out of range of the shells. Once every day some one of them ran the gauntlet of shells to buy the meat and milk. Mule meat was the staple article of diet, but this Bob and Jeanne utterly refused to touch and confined themselves to rice and milk.

“It is not at all bad,” declared Mr. Huntsworth as he sat at the door of the cave one evening a piece of the meat in his hand. “Come here, girls, and let me show you the difference in the shells. There goes a Parrott. That’s a mortar shell that curls so beautifully down yon hillside. This”–as he dodged back into the cave to escape one–“is a rifle shell.”

“I don’t see what difference it makes,” said Bob retreating to the back of the cave, “what kind of a shell it is if it kills you. Do you, Jeanne?”

“I think not,” answered Jeanne tremblingly. “What a fearful thing war is! Oh!”

A shell fell just without the mouth of the cavern like a flame of fire, making the earth tremble, and with a low, singing sound the fragments sped on in their work of death.

“We seem to be within range this evening,” said Mr. Huntsworth as he came to

where the trembling girls crouched.

Shell after shell followed each other in quick succession, and our little party stood without speaking, awaiting the sudden death that seemed almost certain. Jeanne's heart stood still as she heard the reports from the guns and the rushing fearful sound as the shells came toward them. As the shells neared the cave the noise became more deafening; the air was full of the rushing sound; pains darted through her temples; her ears were full of the confusing noise; and, as one would explode, the report flashed through her head like an electric shock, leaving her in a state of terror, painful to be imagined.

The rest of the occupants of the cavern were not much better off. After this paroxysm of fear passed they strove for composure only to be again overcome as the fusillade was repeated.

Morning found them more dead than alive, with blanched faces and trembling lips, but as the time passed and they were still preserved, although the shells came as fast as ever, they took courage and at last regained a measure of calmness.

There was not much mental rest for the people of Vicksburg, and added to Jeanne's apprehensions for their safety was the anxiety over Dick. The lad had grown as strong as was possible considering the scarcity of nourishing food and, as the shelling grew worse, a sort of restlessness seized upon him and he would stand without the entrance of the cave careless of the shells falling about him, watching their progress intently.

"I am afraid that he will be killed," said Jeanne tearfully to Bob. "Why does he do it, Bob?"

"Mr. Huntsworth says that it is because he is a soldier," said Bob.

"I wish I could take him home. I must as soon as possible," said Jeanne.

Bob looked at her wonderingly. It was a surprise to her how Jeanne still kept the hope of getting home, and ignored the fact that she and Dick were prisoners. Opening her lips she was about to reply when the unmistakable whirring of a shell told her that the battery which they feared the most had turned their guns upon their hill. Running to the entrance she called Dick and the servants in. They had just obeyed her summons when a Parrott shell came whirring in at the entrance and fell in the centre of the cave before them all, lying there smoking.

Terrified they fastened their eyes upon it. Their fate seemed certain. For one moment they remained thus, and then Dick rushed forward, seized the shell and

threw it into the street, regaining the cave just as the shell exploded.

“Dick,” cried Jeanne running to him, “oh, how brave you are! But what if you had been killed!”

“It’s time I was throwing them,” said Dick emphatically. “I ought to have been at the other end of them long ago.”

“Oh, but what if you had been killed,” sobbed Jeanne. “What would mother say?”

“That I had but done my duty,” answered the lad.

“He is right,” said Mr. Huntsworth. “Besides had he not been so brave not only he but all the rest of us would have been killed also. Let us give thanks for our wonderful escape.”

CHAPTER XXIX
MADAME FOR THE LAST TIME

SINCE leaving the La Chaises' Jeanne had seen nothing of her uncle and aunt, so she supposed that they had withdrawn from the city when General Pemberton had issued the order for the non-combatants to leave. One afternoon amid the rush and explosion of the shells, cries and screams arose–the screams of women amid the shrieks of the falling shells. Their curiosity getting the better of their timidity, Jeanne and Bob resolved to find out what was the matter.

"Then I will go too," said Dick, "if you are resolved upon going, but I think it is foolhardy."

"Let's go," cried Bob. "I am so tired of this damp, ill-smelling, earthy home that I almost think I would welcome death as a change. Let's go."

The three started forth, dodging the shells as they walked. Presently they came to a cave in a side hill around which a number of people were gathered.

"What has happened?" asked Dick of a man.

"It's the cave of the Vances and the La Chaises," was the answer. "Some shells struck the ground above and it caved in burying them. We don't know whether they are dead or alive."

With an exclamation of horror Dick darted forward.

"A spade," he cried. "A spade, or a pick, or a shovel! Anything that will dig! Why do you stand here, men?"

"We can't work with the shells flying around us," growled a man.

"You are not any more likely to be hit while working than you are standing still," cried the boy. "Get something quick!"

Moved by his earnestness the men obtained picks, shovels, spades, and anything that would move the dirt, and in spite of the flying shells began to dig out the unfortunate persons. Pale as death Jeanne stood by, clinging to Bob, unwilling to leave the spot until she could learn their condition. Her resentment toward her uncle and aunt was overcome by the great catastrophe that had overtaken them.

Mr. Vance was found first. He was quite dead, as were also Mr. and Mrs. La Chaise. Madame Vance was alive but had sustained mortal injuries so that her death was but a question of a few moments. Her eyes lighted up when they fell upon Dick.

“My boy,” she cried feebly, “you did like me, didn’t you?”

“Indeed I did, Cherie,” and Dick took the poor crushed form into his arms.

“I knew it,” she whispered looking at him lovingly. “Forgive me, Dick, that I used you so. I wanted you to think as I did.”

“It is all forgiven,” said the boy tenderly. “Here is Jeanne, Cherie. Have you no word for her?”

“No,” said Madame. “I never liked her. She was a child, but she took you from me, my boy.

“There is the property,” said Madame suddenly to Jeanne. “That Yankee General seized it in your name and declared that he should hold it for you. It was to pay us for putting it in your name. It is yours, but I want Dick to have it. Will you give it to him?”

“Yes,” answered Jeanne her tender heart very full of sympathy for her aunt’s sufferings. “I will do whatever you desire, dear Cherie.”

“Then give him the property and leave me with him. I don’t want to die. It is so cold. So cold! Where are you, Dick?”

“Here,” and Dick held her tenderly.

“It is getting dark. My boy,–ah!” a gasp and all was over.

That night as the moon shed its softening rays over the besieged city, a little cortege consisting of Mr. Huntsworth, Dick, Aunt Sally, Jeanne, Bob and a few servants came forth from the cave to perform the last sad rites for all that remained of Mr. Vance, Madame and their relatives.

Even in the softening light of the moon the blighting hand of warfare was visible over the town. The closed and desolate houses, the gardens with gates half open in which were the loveliest flowers and verdure! The carelessness of appearance and evident haste of departure was visible everywhere, the inhabitants feeling only anxiety for their personal safety and the strength of their cave homes.

The guns were still and peace for a time reigned over the troubled city. The stars shone coldly down upon them, twinkling as brightly as though no great strife

was being waged beneath them.

Jeanne's tears were falling fast as she walked back by Dick's side in the cool fresh air of the morning.

"Dick," she whispered, detaining him as the others entered the cave, "you don't harbor any bitterness toward me, do you?"

"Toward you, Jeanne? No;" and Dick folded her in a close embrace. "Why did you think so?"

"You have been so still, so quiet since Aunt Clarisse died that I feared that you thought me to blame in some way."

"No, no, sister. I have been thinking of Cherie, and of what a mixture she was of tenderness and vindictiveness. I thought once that I should never forgive her for turning me against you, and for trying to wean me from my country."

"But you do forgive her, don't you, Dick? She is dead now and can never harm us any more."

"Yes; I forgave her when she was lying there in my arms," said Dick. "But I will never forget how good you have been, Jeanne. You stood by me as no sister ever stood by a brother before. Why, had it not been for you I might have been made to sign that paper."

"I do not believe that you ever would," cried Jeanne.

"And you saved me," and Dick kissed her tenderly. "How proud father and mother will be of you, Jeanne."

"Do you think that we shall ever see them again?" asked the girl mournfully.

"Yes, I do," said Dick positively. "I feel sure that the city will be taken soon. It cannot hold out much longer. The soldiers have only pea soup to live on now, and men can't fight on a diet like that. Oh, if I were only in it!" and the boy looked wistfully over at the Federal fleet as it lay on the broad bosom of the river. "My place is there, and yet here I am mewed up like a girl! If ever I do get out I'll pepper the rebs for this."

"If the Federals take the city you will soon be free," comforted Jeanne.

"Come, you must go to your rest," said Dick. "Isn't it fine the way we are giving it to them, Jeanne? I just stand and watch those shells in wonder. General Grant has worked for months for this and now the end is near."

"What makes you so positive, Dick?"

“Yesterday there were some people who tried to pass out,” answered the boy. “They sent a flag of truce to the Federals asking permission to enter their lines, and Grant sent back word to stay quietly in the city as he would be in possession the Fourth of July. And he will, Jeanne. Mark my words, if Grant says so, he will be here.”

“Oh, Dick,” and Jeanne clapped her hands for joy.

“Hush! not a word,” said Dick. “I am sorry for these people. They are nice folks, and Bob will never get over it. But of course we just had to win.”

“I wonder where Snowball is,” mused Jeanne, as she retired.

The morning brought the answer. As the shelling was resumed with more frequency than ever for the delay, a number of negroes rushed into the cave.

“We ’longs ter yer now,” said Snowball acting as spokesman for the others. “Hyar’s me, an’ Jeff, an’ Feliciane, lill’ missy. Missus Adele’s niggas done gone ter her folks, an’ we reckoned we ’longed ter yer an’ Massa Dick.”

“To me?” exclaimed Jeanne bewildered. “Why, what in the world will I do with you all?”

“Dunno. Yer’ll hab ter take keer ob us, I reckon,” and Snowball seated herself on the floor in happy unconsciousness of the fact that taking care of them implied any responsibility. “You won’t whip us nohow. Will yer, lill’ missy?”

“I certainly won’t do that,” answered Jeanne, “but it will be a problem to feed you.”

And so it proved. Supplies were running very low in the city. Starvation stared the inhabitants in the face. And yet, despite the privations and the constant play of artillery and musketry through every minute of the day, when Minie balls were accompanied by Parrott, Canister, solid shot and shrapnel shells, and projectiles of all kinds, the soldiers became almost indifferent to them, and frequently sang amid the pattering of the balls.

One evening as they sat in front of the cave a young officer passed them singing words to the air of the “Mocking Bird.” He seemed more concerned about the melody than he did about the shots that were flying through the air, and they watched him admiringly.

> “‘’Twas at the siege of Vicksburg,
> Of Vicksburg, of Vicksburg,
> ’Twas at the siege of Vicksburg,

When the Parrott shells were whistling thro’ the air.
  Listen to the Parrott shells,
  Listen to the Parrott shells;
The Parrott shells are whistling thro’ the air.

  “‘Oh! well will we remember,
  Remember, remember,
  Tough mule meat June sans November,
And the Minie balls that whistled thro’ the air
  Listen to the Minie balls,
  Listen to the Minie balls;
The Minie balls are singing in the air.’”

“Jeanne,” said Bob, “do you hear that? Do you think you have any Yankees that are as brave as our people?”

“As brave perhaps,” replied Jeanne, “but no braver, Bob. I think no people could be more courageous than your people have shown themselves through this siege. I am proud of them as Americans, but I am sorry that their courage is shown for such a cause.”

“Ah, we’ll win yet,” said Bob, her eyes shining, “and then we will show you that we can be as generous as we are brave.”

And the days passed by.

CHAPTER XXX
THE END OF THE SIEGE

It was the morning of the Fourth of July. Jeanne awoke from a deep sleep. Generally about four o'clock the shrapnel shells were thrown more furiously than at any other time of the day. She listened for a few moments and then turned to Bob excitedly.

"Bob, Bob," she cried, "wake up. The shells have stopped falling."

"What!" cried Bob, awake instantly. "Are you sure? Why it is true! How quiet it is! What can be the matter?"

The girls began to dress hurriedly and then went outside the cave to learn the cause of the cessation of the firing. People everywhere were running out of their caves to find the reason. A painful calm prevailed, and so long had the constant firing been kept up that the stillness was actually oppressive.

"What is the matter?" asked Bob as an old gray-headed soldier passed on the hillside near the cave. Stopping and touching his cap the man replied:

"It's all over. The white flag floats from our forts. Vicksburg has surrendered!"

With a cry that Jeanne never forgot Bob turned and passed into the cave. A feeling of gladness and thankfulness welled up into Jeanne's heart, succeeded by a great wave of pity for these people who had fought so long and well.

"Bob," she called, softly, following after the girl and putting her arms about her, "Bob, don't grieve so."

"Don't," cried Bob, throwing her off passionately. "You're glad! You know you are."

"Yes, Bob. Just as you would be if your side had won, but dear, dear Bob, I am sorry for you and for your brave people who have fought so well."

"If they cheer, I'll hate them," said Bob fiercely. "Oh, Jeanne, Jeanne, my heart is broken!"

Jeanne's own tears were falling fast, and Bob seeing that she did not triumph over her let her head fall upon her shoulder and thus Colonel Peyton found them.

His face was very pale and he seemed bent and broken. He took his daughter into his arms but he was more in need of comfort than capable of giving it.

“It is the beginning of the end,” he said brokenly. “When Vicksburg falls it is but the beginning of the end of the Confederacy. Our cause is doomed. We are fighting for a forlorn hope. Oh, my country, my country!”

He bowed his head upon his daughter’s and the great tears fell fast.

Jeanne stole from the cave and met Dick coming for her.

“See!” he exclaimed excitedly. “Those are Federal soldiers, Jeanne. We are in the United States once more. Look at the Court House Hill! What do you see?”

“The Stars and Stripes,” cried Jeanne, tears of gladness rolling down her cheeks. “Oh, Dick, how good it is to see our own flag once more!”

“Isn’t it? I could shout and sing for joy if it were not for these poor fellows who have fought and starved so long. It is a hard thing to be on the losing side.”

“True, for you, my boy,” said Colonel Peyton joining them with Bob on his arm. “We are fortunate in having so chivalrous a foe. There have been but few cheers and no exultation over our poor unsuccessful fellows. Not a jeer, nor a taunt from a Federal soldier.”

“And the river flows on as calmly as ever, and the sun still shines, yet Vicksburg has fallen,” said Bob bitterly.

“Bear up, daughter. A soldier must learn to accept defeat as heroically as victory,” said her father. “Look, what a grand sight it is to see those transports round the bend. See how serenely they draw up in the very teeth of those grim batteries that were dealing death but yesterday. Now they are silent, and their Conqueror comes boldly to their very sides.”

“What are all those people running down there for?” asked Bob. “Surely they are not welcoming their victors!”

“Bread, daughter. The Federal transports are full of supplies which are brought for the starving people. It is a magnanimous foe!”

“Transports,” cried Jeanne eagerly. “I wonder–where is Snowball?’”

“Hyar, missy,” cried the girl, running forward. “Oh, missy, Massa Linkum’s men done say we all’s free. Dat Fader Abe done set us niggas free way long las’ Jan’wry.”

“It may be so,” cried Jeanne delightedly. “I don’t know, but come and let us see

if the transport that your mother is on is down there."

With a howl of delight Snowball went scampering down the hill toward the boats, Jeanne following after her. The Gem City lay at anchor close to the shore. Captain Leathers was dealing out supplies to the starving people that surrounded the boat.

"Captain Leathers," cried Jeanne breathlessly as they reached his side.

"Why, bless my heart, if it isn't my little friend," cried the Captain in surprise. "What are you doing here? Yes; Tenny's right there on deck."

"I'll tell you all about it just as soon as I see Tenny," said Jeanne smiling at him brightly. "Come, Snowball."

She ran quickly to where old Tenny stood. "Tenny," she cried, "look here!"

The old woman turned and catching sight of Snowball gave a shriek of joy.

"It's my babby," she screamed. "Kum hyar ter yer mammy, yer bressed chile! Kum dis bery minnit!"

Laughing and crying she caught the girl to her capacious bosom.

"It's the lill' missy dat bringed me," cried Snowball. "Oh, mammy, dey says we's free!"

"'Course we is, honey chile. Whar you been dat you didn't know dat? Massa Linkum done say dat long ago. Whar you been?"

"Hyar in Vicksburg. Whar you bin, mammy?"

"Eberywhar, chile. Ef I hadn't er cooked fer de sojers dey couldn't a tuk de city. Cap'n Leathers say so. But hyar we is. Not mindin' our manners an' a thankin' de lill' missy fer brungin' yer ter me."

But with the first word of thanks Jeanne darted away. She stopped for a moment to talk to the Captain and explain her presence in the city, and then went back to the cave where Dick awaited her.

"Come," said the boy. "General Grant is expected in the city soon. The Confederates are coming from the camp to be registered and paroled."

"When can we go home, Dick?" asked the girl as they passed into the streets again.

"Any time now, Jeanne. I want to see the General about sending a message to father. How quiet it seems after the bombardment! Restful, isn't it?"

“It’s heavenly,” sighed Jeanne contentedly. “I am so happy, Dick, and the silence enfolds me like a garment. To think that I will really see father and mother once more! It has been a year lacking a few days since I saw them. How little I thought that so much would happen before I should see them again. How anxious they must be! But now! a few more days and I shall be with them.”

“There comes General Grant,” said Dick suddenly.

A glittering cavalcade of Federals and rebel officers at full gallop came down the Jackson road from the camp without. In the midst of the throng there appeared a man, small in stature, heavily set, a broad face covered with sandy beard, habited in a plain blue uniform of flannel with two stars of a major-general upon his shoulders. His face was impassive but there was the faintest gleam of satisfaction in his cold gray eyes.

“‘Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord,
He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword:
His truth is marching on!’”

sang a low voice beside them. “Children, this is a glorious day.” Mr. Huntsworth’s voice was tremulous with emotion and his eyes were misty. “It is a sad spectacle to see brave men humiliated and humbled, but aside from my sympathy for the Southerners it makes my old heart beat with joy to be under the Stars and Stripes once more. Let us greet the General.”

He stepped forward briskly. General Grant stopped his horse as they approached.

“We want to give you welcome, sir,” said Mr. Huntsworth extending his hand. “We are Unionists released only by your successful siege from ‘durance vile.’ Welcome, sir, welcome!”

“You must have found our shells pretty warm,” said Grant shaking his hands. “How did you live?”

“Sir,” replied the old gentleman whimsically, “you made us like the Southerners’ favorite bread: dodgers.”

Grant smiled, and then asked. “And are these Federals too?”

“One is a soldier, the other a–what shall I call you, Jeanne? A blockade runner or what?”

“I am a Union girl,” said Jeanne smiling into the gray eyes above her. “A Union girl longing for home.”

“Where is your home?” asked Grant. “Suppose you three come along with me and tell me the whole story.”

They did as he requested. The man of iron will heard them silently. Then he spoke.

“Get your dispatches ready,” he said. “I will send them with mine to Washington and then have them forwarded. You will take your sister home of course.”

“I ought to get back to my regiment as quick as I can, sir.”

“Nonsense! I will write your General concerning it. If you have been in ever since the war opened it’s high time you had a furlough. I will stand responsible. You shall all start to-morrow.”

It was a sad leave taking for Bob and Jeanne.

“I will see you again,” said Jeanne tearfully as she told Bob good-bye. “Something tells me that we will meet again. And when the war is over, Bob, we will have fine times together. Where do you go from here?”

“To Richmond,” answered Bob drearily. “You’re not leaving us much territory, Jeanne. We are being narrowed down. I fear, I fear—”

With a burst of tears she ran from them and it was many a long day before Jeanne saw her again. With saddened hearts they left the city of terraces behind them, and at last Jeanne was en route for home.

Home! One of the sweetest words in the English language. The brilliant verdure of the Southland receded from view, and the more sober vegetation of the Northland came in sight. To Jeanne’s longing eyes it had never appeared more beautiful. As they boarded a train they heard the newsboys crying–“Victory at Gettysburg! Grand victory at Gettysburg! Paper, sir? Paper?”

“Here!” called Dick and Mr. Huntsworth in one breath, and they were soon emersed in the details of the fight at Gettysburg.

“It’s the turning point of the war,” said Mr. Huntsworth. “It cannot be long surely before Lee will surrender.”

“It would seem so,” cried Dick with exultation. “But who can withstand us? We have freed the negroes! We have taken New Orleans, Vicksburg, the mighty, has fallen, and Lee’s army defeated in his invasion of free soil. Hurrah!

> “‘In the beauty of the lilies Christ was born across the sea,
> With a glory in his bosom that transfigures you and me:
> As he died to make men holy, let us die to make them free,
> While God is marching on!’”

he broke out boyishly. Mr. Huntsworth joined in and soon another and another took up the terrible Battle Hymn of the Republic until it rolled in one grand volume above the rush of the train.

“Jeanne, there’s father,” cried Dick as the train drew in at the Cincinnati station.

The girl looked out to see both Mr. and Mrs. Vance standing on the platform watching the outcoming people eagerly.

With a cry of thankfulness she darted forward and flung herself into her mother’s arms.

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