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D'ri and I

By IRVING BACHELER

Author of "Eben Holden," "Darrel of the Blessed Isles," Etc.

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CHAPTER XXV.

How empty and weak are my words that try to tell of that day! I doubt if there is in them anywhere what may suggest, even feebly, the height and depth of the experience or one ray of the light of her face. There are the words nearly as we said them; there are the sighs, the glances, the tears; but everywhere there is much missing—that fair young face and a thousand things irrefragable that drift in with every tide of high feeling. My history there is not much more to write, albeit some say the best is untold.

I had never such a heart of lead as went with me to my work that afternoon. What came of it I cared not a straw then, for I knew my love was hopeless. D'ri met me as I got off my horse at the harbor. His keen eyes saw my trouble quickly—saw near to the bottom of it.

"Be a bit," said he, his great hand on my shoulder.

"With trouble," I answered. "To me up a little inside."

"Thought so," he remarked soberly. "Judas Priest! ye luk es of a shell 'ad bu' a'n' yer cockpit. Ain' nuttin' 'il' spile a man quicker. Sheer off a leetle an' git out of 'er. Ain' member, D'ri, don't never say nothin' to the ship. That's 'er what Perry tol' us."

I said nothing and walked away, but have always remembered his counsel, there was so much of his big heart in it. The army was to move immediately, in that foolish campaign of Wilkinson that ended with disaster at Chrysler's Farm. They were making the boats, small craft with cars, of which three hundred or more would be needed to carry us. We were to go eastward on the river and join Hampton, whose corps was to march overland to Plattsburg, at some point on the north shore. Word came, while I was away, that down among the islands our enemy had been mounting cannon. It looked as if our plan had been spoiled, for there was good chance of our being blown out of water the first day of our journey. So, before the army started, I was to take D'ri and eleven others, with four boats, and go down to reconnoiter.

We got away before sundown that day, and as dark came, were passing the south-west end of Wolf Island. I was leading the little fleet, and got ashore, intending to creep along the edge and rejoin them at the foot of 't' Island. I had a cow-bell, muffled with cork, and was to clang it for a signal in case of need. Well, I was a bit more reckless that night than ever I had been. Before I had gone twenty rods, I started to see and leave me. I heard a move in the brush, and was backing off, when a light flashed on me, and I felt the touch of a bayonet. Then quickly I saw there was no help for me, and gave the signal, for I was walled in. Well, I am not going to tell the story of my capture. My sabre could serve me well, but I was no maverick, and such as one may take in the story-books. I knew then it would serve me best in the scabbing. There were few words and no fighting in the ceremony. I gave up, and let them bind my arms. In two hours they had me in jail, I knew not where. In the morning they let me send a note to Lord Ronley, who was now barely two days out of his own island. A spy, I was to be tried for. Suddenly, a morning when my ropes were gone, I heard the voice of his lordship in the little corridor. A keeper came with him to the door of my cell, and opened it.

"The doctor," said he.

"Well, old fellow," said D'ri, clapping me on the shoulder, "you are ill, I fear."

"Really do not wish to alarm you," I said, smiling, "but—but it does look serious."

He asked me to show my tongue, and I did so.

"Cheer up," said he, presently; "I have brought you this pill. It is an excellent remedy."

He had taken from his pocket a brown pill of the size of a large pea, and sat rolling it in his palm. Had he brought me poison?

"It's no better than—"

He shot a glance at me as if to command silence, then he put the pill in my palm. I saw it was of brown tissue rolled tightly.

"Don't take it now," said he; "too soon after breakfast. Wait half an hour. A cup of water." He added, turning to the guard, "let us have a moment."

He leaned to my ear and whispered—

"Remember," said he, "2 is a, and 3 is b, and so on. Be careful until the guard changes."

He handed me a small watch as he was leaving.

"It may be good company," he remarked.

I unrolled the tissue as soon as I was alone. It was covered with these figures—

21-16-10-8-2-21 4-13-10-16-16-19-22-15-16-14-12-18-5 12-10-17-21 20-14-13-24-15-16-24-10-15-16-19-19-10-15-16-19-12-21-15-24-2-12-13-16-19-10-8-2-21 21-16-10-8-2-21 17-2-4-6-20-21 17-2-21-9-13-6-7-21 21-16-10-8-2-21 19-10-8-2-21 21-24-6-10-21-26-11-21-21-10-8-2-21 21-24-6-10-21-26-11-21-21-10-8-2-21

I made out the reading shortly as follows:

"Twelve-to-night cell door unlocked. Lift small window in corridor. Back to wall going to roof. Leave two hundred yards to path. Left to river. Right twenty to thicket."

Having read the figures, I rolled the tissue firmly, and hid it in my ear. It was a day of some excitement, I remember, for that very afternoon I was condemned to death. A priest, having heard of my plight, had been removed and buried in the sea," she added in a low tone.

"Ah, that was hard."

"Especially for the ladies," she went on, sighing. "Dien! they could only sit and hold their tongues and weep and feel very foolish. And the longer they were silent the more they had to say."

CHAPTER XXVI.

D'ri came soon with the horses, one the black thoroughbred of Louise which had brought her on this errand. We gave them free rein, heading for the chateau. Not far up the woods-pike we met M. de Lambert and the old count. The former was angry, albeit he held himself in hand as became a gentleman, save that he was a bit too cool with me.

"My girl, you have upset us terribly," said the learned doctor. "I should like to be honored with your confidence."

"And I with your kindness, dear father," said she, as they began falling. "I am much in need of it."

"She has saved my life, m'sieur," I said.

"Then go to your work," said he coolly. "And make the most of it."

"Good-by," said Louise, giving me her hand.

"An revoir," I said quickly, and wheeled my horse and rode away.

The boats were ready. The army was waiting for the order, now expected at any moment, to move. General Brown had not been at his quarters for some time.

"Judas Priest!" said D'ri, when we were alone together, "that air gal 'd go through fire an' water for you."

"You're mistaken," I said.

"No, I ain't nuther," said he. "Er! I be, I'm a reg'lar out-an-out fool, hand over fist."

He whittled a moment thoughtfully. "Ain' no use talkin'," he added, "as tall as those from a Jack-rabbit any day."

"Her father does not like me," I suggested.

"Don't hev to," said D'ri calmly.

He cut a deep slash in the stick he held, then added, "Don't make no odds, no difference one way er t' other. I did n't like th' measles, but I hed to hev 'em."

"He'll never permit a marriage with me," I said.

"T ain't n'cessary," he answered soberly. "In 'is 'ere country don't tek only tew 'em a bargain. One o' the blessin's o' liberty."

He squinted up at the sky, delivering his confidence in slowly measured phrases, to wit:

"Wou'dn't give ten cents fer no man 'at 'd git 'n up a gal less 'd order—'n' I was called out of bed at cocker in the morning. The barones and a footman were at the door."

"Ah, my captain, there is trouble," she whispered. "M. de Lambert has taken his daughters. They are going back to Paris, bag and baggage. Left in the evening."

"By what road?"

"The turnpike millaire."

"Thanks, and good morning," I said. "I shall overhaul them."

I called D'ri, and bade him feed the horses quickly. I went to see Gen. Brown, but he and Wilkinson were on the latter's fig, half a mile out in the harbor. I scribbled a note to the farm-general, and leaving it, ran to the stables. Our horses were soon ready, and D'ri and I were off at daylight, urging up hill and down at a swift gallop, and making the forest ring with hoof-beats. Far beyond the chateau we slackened pace and went along leisurely. Soon we passed the town where they had put overnight, and could see the tracks of horse and coach-wheel. D'ri got off and examined them presently.

"Furry furr," he remarked. "Can't be more 'd five mild or so farther on."

We rode awhile in silence.

"How ye goin' t' tackle 'em?" he inquired presently.

"Going to stop them somehow," said I, "and get a little information."

"An' maybe a gal?" he suggested.

"Don't care 's I can lassie or ye dew th' talkin'." I said as he rose, but my talk was mostly of the night and the rumus air, and leaving it, ran to the children's things. I saw, or thought I saw, the two great powers of good and evil. One was love, with the power of God, in it to lift up, to ennoble; the other, love's counterfeit, a cunning device of the devil, with all his power to wreck and destroy, deceiving him that has taken it until he finds at last he has neither gold nor silver, but only base metal hanging as a millstone to his neck."

At dawn we got ashore on Battle Point. We waited there, Louise and I, while D'ri went away to bring horses. The sun rose clear and bright; it was like a summer morning, but stiller, for the woods had lost their songful tinkling. We took the forest road, walking slowly. Some bugler near us had begun to play the song of Yankee Doodle. Its phrases traveled like waves in the sea, some high-crested, moirine with a mighty rustle, filling the valleys mounting the hills, tossing their spray aloft, flooding all the shores of silence. Far and near, the trees were singing in praise of my native land.

"Ramon," said Louise, looking up at me, a sweet and queenly dignity in her face. "I have come to love this country."

"And you could not have done so much for me unless you had loved—"

She looked up at me quickly, and put her finger to her lips. My tongue faltered, obeying the command. How sweet and beautiful she was then, her splendid form erect, the light of her eyes softened by long lashes! She looked down thoughtfully as she gave the bottom of her gown a shake.

"Once upon a time," she said, slowly, as our eyes met again, "there was a little country that had a cruel king. And he commanded that none of all his people should speak until—until—"

"He hesitated, stirring the dead leaves with her dainty foot.

"Until a great mountain had been removed and buried in the sea," she added in a low tone.

"Ah, that was hard."

"Especially for the ladies," she went on, sighing. "Dien! they could only sit and hold their tongues and weep and feel very foolish. And the longer they were silent the more they had to say."

"And those who broke the law?" I inquired.

"Were condemned to silence for their lives," she answered. "Come, we are both in danger; let us go."

A bit farther on we came to a log house where a veteran of the old war sat playing his bugle, and a motherly woman bade us sit awhile at the doorstep.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Don't resist her appeal, so sweetly spoken. There, under an elm by the wayside, with some score of witnesses, including Louise and the young Comte de Brovel, who came out of the coach and stood near, he made us man and wife. We were never so happy as when we stood there hand in hand, that sunny morning, and heard the prayer for God's blessing, and felt a mighty uplift of our hearts. As to my sweetheart, there was never such a glow in her cheeks, such a light in her large eyes, such a grace in her figure."

"Dear sister," said Louise, kissing me, "I wish I were as happy."

"And you shall be as soon as you get to Paris," said the young count.

"Oh, dear, I can hardly wait!" said the merry-hearted girl, looking proudly at her new lover.

"I admire you, my young man," said M. de Lambert, as we shook hands. "You Americans are a great people. I surrender; I am not going to be foolish. Turn your horses," said he, motioning to the driver. "We shall go back at once."

I helped Louise into the coach with her sister and the Comte de Brovel. D'ri and I rode on behind them, the village folk cheering and waving their hats.

"Ye done it skillful," said D'ri, smiling. "What 'd I tell ye?"

"I'm no answer, being too full of happiness at the moment."

"Tell ye one thing, Ray," he went on soberly: "of a boy an' a gal loves no nother, an' he 'as any grit in 'im, can't nuthin' keep 'em apart long."

He straightened the mane of his horse, and then added:

"Ner they can't nuthin' conquest 'em."

Soon after two o'clock we turned in at the chateau.

We were a merry company at lunch, the doctor drinking our health and happiness with sublime resignation. But I had to hurry back—that was the worst of it all. Louise walked with me to the big gate, where were my mother and the horses. We stopped a moment on the way.

"Again!" she whispered, her sweet face on my shoulder. "Yes, and as often as you like. No more now—there is D'ri. Remember, sweetheart, I shall look and pray for you day and night."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Sooner or later all things come to an end, including wars and histories—a God's mercy!—and even the lives of such lucky men as I. All things, did I say? Well, what wonder, for I am not writing of youth and far delights with a hand trembling of indelicacy. To things save one, I mean to turn, and that is love, the immortal vine, with its root in the green earth, that weathers every storm, and "growth not old," and climbs to paradise; and who eats of its fruit has in him ever a thought of Heaven—a hope immortal as itself.

This book of my life ends on a bright morning in the summer of '17, at the new home of James Donatien Le Ray, Comte de Chaumont, the chateau having burned the year before.

President Monroe is coming on the woods-pike, and veterans are drawn up in line to meet him. Here are men who fought at Chippewa and Land's End, and here are some old chaps who went long before at Plattsburg and Ticonderoga. Joseph Bonaparte, the ex-king of Spain, so like his mighty brother at St. Helena, is passing the line. He steps proudly, in ruffles and green velvet. Gondolas with liveried gondoliers, and filled with fair women, are floating on the still lake, now and then a burst of melody rings in the great harp of the woodland. In that trumpet peal, it seems a million voices sing:

Hail, Columbia, happy land!

Slowly the line begins to limp along. There are wooden legs and crutches and empty sleeves in that column. D'ri goes limping in front, his right leg gone at the knee since our last charge. Draped around him is that old battle-flag of the Lawrence. I march beside him, with only this long seam across my cheek to show that I had been with him that bloody day in a green field to the edge of the forest. There, in the cool shadow, are ladies in white, and long coats set for a feast. My dear wife, loved of all and more beautiful than ever, comes to meet us.

"Sweetheart," she whispers, "I was never so proud to be your wife."

"And an American," I suggest, kissing her.

"And an American," she answers.

A bugle sounds; the cavalcade is coming.

"The President!" they cry, and we all begin cheering.

He leads the escort on a black horse, a fine figure in military coat and white breeches, his cocked hat in hand, a white plume and a white plume. The count receives him and speaks our welcome. President Monroe looks down the war-scattered line a moment. His eyes fill with tears, and then he speaks to us.

"Sons of the woodsmen," says he, concluding his remarks, "you shall live in the history of a greater land than the United States, and the grateful gratitude of generations yet unborn shall long, long after we are turned to dust."

And then we all sing loudly with full hearts:

O land I love!—thou art my home,
O land I love!—thou art my home,
With sweat and blood and shattered bones,
I have defended thee, O land of mine,
That ever dost increase
The godly harvest of thy peace.

(THE END.)

LAW OF THE COTTON GROWERS

Big Organization Adopts Broad Constitution.

COVERS BUSINESS OF THE SOUTH.

Full Text of a Paper That is Widely Circulated—Cotton Growers Will Do What They Can to Benefit Themselves; But Will Also Seek to Promote the Welfare of All the Cotton Growing States.

The sub-committee of the executive committee of the Southern Cotton Association which was recently organized in New Orleans, met in Atlanta last week to draw up laws necessary to the government of the big organization. The work of the committee included a general constitution and constitutions and by-laws for the state and county organizations.

Those present at the sub-committee meeting were Harvie Jordan of Monticello, Ga., president of the Southern Cotton Growers' Association; John C. Gibson of Port Gibson, Miss.; J. A. Spivey of Chickasaw, N. C.; D. B. Brown of Magnolia, N. C.; H. Y. Brooks of Luerne, La.; R. D. Dancy of Dallas, Tex.

This sub-committee on last Wednesday completed the constitution for the government of the general organization. It is a long paper and consequently a severe tax on our space; but in view of its present and prospective importance, we see proper to give it in full as follows:

CONSTITUTION OF THE SOUTHERN COTTON ASSOCIATION.

We, the executive committee of the Southern Inter-State Cotton Convention, who assembled at the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, on the 24th day of January, A. D., 1905, by virtue of the power conferred on us by the several resolutions adopted by the Southern Inter-State Cotton Convention at its sessions, do hereby adopt this constitution. It may be called in addition to the present one, by its own name, and may be amended or altered in any particular by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the association.

PURPOSES OF ORGANIZATION.

Section 1. The purposes of this organization are: 1st. Systematic organization of cotton growers, cotton and agricultural interests of the cotton growing states and territories; 2d. To regulate all legal matters pertaining to cotton, including cotton, cotton production, distribution, fruit growing and all such matters as may be deemed by the association to be of interest to cotton growers and territories; 3d. To regulate the supply and cotton financing; 4th. To facilitate, extend and systematize the cotton trade in cotton; 5th. To have available means to secure broader and more extensive markets; and to limit production to demand at remunerative prices; 6th. To secure a minimum all expenses of handling and transporting cotton and its products; from the field to the consumer; 7th. To promote, stimulate and seek more varied uses for surplus cotton; 8th. To encourage, aid and secure building and operation of cotton and other manufacturing, through-out cotton growing states and territories; 9th. To bring together and in co-operation all the various cotton interests, cotton manufacturers, and growers; with a view to such regulations as will protect, stimulate and promote all; 10th. To use all agencies, means and methods which will perfect, enlarge and increase all southern ports and the bringing of cotton to the market; 11th. To use all legal means to secure establishment of docks in commodious and available places; 12th. To secure the shipping repairs and naval stations; 13th. To encourage and advance any and all measures, which will benefit the cotton trade between the United States, China, Japan and the entire eastern world, whereby American and foreign interests and new fields are opened to the production of the cotton growing states and territories; 14th. To further the cotton growing and the welfare of those of those countries; 15th. To formulate and advise upon all matters of interest to the great opportunities which will come to the cotton growing states and territories; 16th. To prepare and make operative closer business relations between cotton manufacturers and growers; 17th. To protect the interests of the cotton growers and territories; 18th. To prepare and make operative closer business relations between cotton manufacturers and growers; 19th. To protect the interests of the cotton growers and territories; 20th. To protect the interests of the cotton growers and territories.

ARTICLE IV.

Section 4. The powers of this organization shall be distributed as follows: First, there shall be, in each cotton growing state and territory, a central organization known as (a) the Alabama organization, (b) the Arkansas organization, (c) the Florida organization, (d) the Georgia organization, (e) the Louisiana organization, (f) the Mississippi organization, (g) the Missouri organization, (h) the North Carolina organization, (i) the South Carolina organization, (j) the Tennessee organization, (k) the Texas organization, (l) the Virginia organization, (m) the Kentucky organization, (n) the Oklahoma-Territory organization, (o) the Indian Territory organization. All of said organizations to be composed of representatives, chosen in each cotton growing county or parish, but not less than one representative from each of said counties or parishes, and as many more, not exceeding three from each, as an said state or territory may determine for itself. All of said organizations to be organized and coordinated to the Southern Cotton Association. Second, there shall be, in each cotton county or parish, in each of said organizations, a sub-organization, to be known as the county or parish organization, and which shall be composed of not less than two representatives, from each civil sub-division, not exceeding five, as may be determined in each of said counties or parishes, to be known as the county or parish organization. There shall be in each cotton growing civil sub-division of each cotton growing county or parish, in each of said organizations, however, shall be subordinate to said state or territorial organization and to the Southern Cotton Association. There shall be in each cotton growing civil sub-division of each cotton growing county or parish, in each of said organizations, however, shall be subordinate to said state or territorial organization, who shall be appointed by the president. There shall be in each cotton growing civil sub-division of each cotton growing county or parish, in each of said organizations, however, shall be subordinate to said state or territorial organization, who shall be appointed by the president.

ARTICLE VIII.

Section 8. Each of all said organizations shall have uniform and subordinate to this. Such constitutions shall be the ones prepared and adopted by the committee on constitutions of the Southern Inter-State Cotton Convention, named by its resolutions adopted on the 24th day of January, A. D., 1905. Said resolutions are hereby made an appendix to this constitution. Any constitution may be changed or amended in any particular by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the association.

ARTICLE V.

Section 5. The Southern Cotton Association shall be composed of representatives from the following named states and territories on the following basis: (a) The state of Alabama, (b) The state of Arkansas, (c) The state of Florida, (d) The state of Georgia, (e) The state of Louisiana, (f) The state of Mississippi, (g) The state of Missouri, (h) The state of North Carolina, (i) The state of South Carolina, (j) The state of Tennessee, (k) The state of Texas, (l) The state of Virginia, (m) The state of Kentucky, (n) The Oklahoma Territory, (o) The Indian Territory. Said representatives shall be elected for the first time by the respective state and territorial organizations named in section 1, at the meeting of same to be held on the 21st of February, A. D., 1905. No state or territorial organization shall meet for the first time and at any other times at such places as may be determined by the constitution of each of such places as they respectively elect under the powers given each in its constitution. Said state and territorial representatives in said Southern Cotton Association shall be elected for the above named first time shall hold office until their successors are elected and qualified.

ARTICLE VI.

Section 6. Said Southern Cotton Association shall have the power to: 1. To elect, preside and such other officers as it deems necessary and proper for the management of the association; 2. To issue, in its name, any order, contract or discharge of business, which shall have the force and effect of a law; 3. To employ, discharge and pay the salaries of any and all officers, agents, employees or other persons whom it may employ; 4. To purchase, lease or otherwise acquire, for its use, any real estate, personal property, rights, franchises or other interests; 5. To execute any and all contracts, leases, licenses, permits, orders, contracts or other instruments, which may be necessary or proper for the management of the association; 6. To execute any and all contracts, leases, licenses, permits, orders, contracts or other instruments, which may be necessary or proper for the management of the association; 7. 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