CHAPTER VIL

TANGLING THE SKEIN. The musicale had broken up early, and the Gilmor Gray mansion was tightly closed. Not one light shone from its tall, brown front, and the very servants quarters were dark and still, as the clock of the church hard by clanged out twice upon the night. Bessie Westchester had soon left her

bidden guest, to mingle brightly again with those below; but never had the cordial hospitality of that fair maidenof her whole household, in fact-really found so "sweet" that proverbially much standered "old word, good-by!" Necessary sequelæ of a feast properly looker to, though in unusual haste for a notable housekeeper, Mrs. Gray had dismissed her willing servants to rest;

and, a little later, her husband had quietly locked the door leading from their wing to the family section of the dwelling.

I may disappoint some colored lodge,

for once," he had remarked to his wife, even our own eyes and ears are dangerous to trust to." And now Bessie Westchester, her be-

coming ball-dress changed for a loose, but equally becoming wrapper, again nestled on the floor, close to Carolyn Clay, who waited, calm and resolute, as the minutes sped on with feet that seemed leaden-shod to her anxious suspense. And below, her mother and sister moved noiselessly about the pantry, packing, as compactly as deft hands might, an ample luncheon into the flat tin case.

"She will probably get wet, poor child? the matron said, removing a layer of thin sandwiches to wedge in slices of fruit cake. "The tin is the safest, but, dear me, how little it holdsi

"But these must go in, mamma;" answered Miss Westchester. "Dear Caro! No telling when she'll see fruit cake again! How dreadful it all is, mamma! Only think what she tells us about sorghum and corn-bread! Wait; press on the sandwiches while I wedge in

"Really, wife," interposed the late bachelor club man, "you must expect her to realize that green colonel's orders issued to his men, to 'cook and eat five days' rations immediately!"

"I wish they all could over there!" the wife retorted, her wanting logic condoned by a deep sigh. "Just think of your poor brother Llowndes, Gilmor, starving on bacon and hard tack!" "It is good for his liver, my dear,"

Mr. Gray replied, with a lightness be-lied by his eyes. "My brother Llowndes has so far in his life eaten pate and ter-rapin enough to bring camp-fare for the next ten years up to a pretty luxurious But away up in the attic hiding-place

no badinage was spoken. Carolyn Clay had several times gone over the details of her perilous trip across. Each time she had spoken with naive freedom of her fears, her suspense and her joyat rescue all without reserve. But one thing she had never told-approaching it with ready purpose, only to find her lips close and a throbbing something just beneath her throat which she could

She had never explained that the man who had saved her, at risk of instant traitor's doom, was himself a renegade doubly a traitor to the cause that made him so, by that very act. Fariless had she been able to frame the two words of his name, once sweetly familiar to her lips, now bitter as Dead sea fruit

Often-after Bessie had listened with conscience for this half-confidence to friends so tender and so loyal, even now risking so much for her. And then her conscience would argue, not without a quibble, that it was so unnecessarythose true ones who bore it so wellthat this one exposure could do no good. So the girl - reassuring herself, in woman's way, that no lingering thought of his past, no pity for herself, mixed with the resolve-accepted her wish as her duty, and was silent. And Bessie Westchester had accepted as true her own brain-built little romance that the self-sacrifice and grave peril had been incurred by some federal officer for sake of her friend's helplessness in danger— perhaps, she told herself, for sake of her fair face.



AND NOT EVEN TO KNOW HIS NAME!"

rapidly under the loose folds of the wrapper, as she heard the twice-told tale for the last time, as she believedfollowed the night escape through the driving snow, welcomed the slow-coming dawn, and thrilled at the first sight of Rosser's advance.

"What a noble, selfless hero!" the younger girl cried, after a long-drawn sigh of relief. "And not even to know his name! I would have had more curlosity, even then. But he must be a gentleman, Caro! Base blood would never have risked so much-been so 'tender

and trewe'-even for your eyes!" Miss Clay's eyes were studying the pictures in the fire. A half sigh trembled to her lips; but she stifled it as she answered, sadly:

"He was a gentleman - before he joined Virginia's enemies."

"But, Caro, they were not his ene-"No, seemingly not; only Virginia's,"

the other answered, with sudden fierce-"But it is odd he never told you his name. It would have taken but an in-

stant; and if you two ever med

again-"God forbid that!" Carolyn Clay rose to her feet, towering taller in the flickering firelight. "I hope never to took

upon his face again!" "How uncompromising you are!" her friend persisted. "Yet you owe him so deep a debt-your life, perhaps."

"Yes; I owe him that-God help me!" She turned away abruptly, as a deep surge of color swept her pale face. "Yes; I owe him a debt I can never pay -never! I owe him escape from a spy's death! I owe him-oh, Bess, I never realized half how much until I rode in sight of those dear gray jackets, St. Andrew's cross fluttering so gayly over them!" She gazed absently into the fire a moment, the color still warm on her face. "And, Bess, when I told Col. Randolph every word the tr-the man had said, he called me a 'little Hero,' sald I had put Rosser under deepest obligation, that he could strike the Yankees in the rear and the road to

the river was open to me." i'm'I wish I knew who he was," the younger girl persisted, looking intently into the coals at a dimlysketched procession with background white lace and orange blossoms. "Caro, after all these dreadful days are over, when peace comes again, you two will meet again. Maybe this may bring

"Never! I will never look upon his face again!" The words were low and slowly spoken, but they had the solemn cadence of a dirge.

"You cannot tell," Bessie urged. "We may all be one people again some day. No girl can read her own fate, dear, unless—they used to say, now I remember, that your willful heart had found its master-"

"Hush! Oh! if you only knew, Bess!" There was a world of self-pity, nearly as much of self-contempt, in the woman's low tone. "Dear child, living as



PICTURE IN THE PIRE.

you live, seeing only what you see, it is hard indeed to understand us. Amid the privations, the suffering, the danger around me, I should be worse than base to think of such light things. Once, perhaps, I was very different"-the red glow burned on her face once more, the firm lips trembled an instant, ere she went on gravely-"but, even then,

"Forgive me, dear, I believe Oh! Caro, I forgot; serious things drove it out of my head; but who do you suppose

as here to-night?" "How should I guess?" There was sighs and tears of sympathy, then left more of weariness than of interest in instant still and cold, only heaving her-Carolyn Clay would upbraid her Miss Clay's reply; but inborn courtesy bosom and deep breath telling of sore forced the addition: "I am such a

stranger-an exile-now.' "An old friend of yours; and a very good one, too, they said. Frankly, I do Then, leaning her head upon the low not like him, though it may be 'Dr. | mantel, covered by one hand, she held that it could but disgrace his name for Fell. I think he should be in the army the note to Bessie with the other; and

> splendid. Guess." "It would be useless," Miss Clay answered, absently, glancing at the clock. "Thank Heaven, it is two o'clock." "No, you could never guess," Bessie

Peyton-" "Peyton Fitzhugh!"

sitting girl, towering over her with eyes that blazed in equal anger and amazement. "Here? To-night? In with herself for the mastery. "Why not, dear? He is an old friend

with both sets.'

"Why not? Do they not know that-Why, Bess, he was the-" With blazing eyes, clinched hands, and laboring bosom, Miss Clay stopped suddenly. What it was she herself could not have told; but again that inner somethingstronger than her impulse and indignation, dominating her helpless willwhispered: "Peace: be still!" She stood silent, rooted to the spot, staring at her friend.

"I knew you would be surprised," the other went on. "And really, Caro, you do seem to recollect very well, considering your denial just now. If a mere name carries such talisman, I do not wonder so much at your unfeminine curiosity as to that unselfish hero who saved you at risk of a halter."

death once more, swept thoughts too swift and complicated for translation by the inexperience that watched it. But, seeing them, the younger woman ceased badinage, and, rising quickly, passed loving arms about the tall form, nestling her head upon its tumult-tossed

"Forgive me, darling," she whispered, softly. "I was silly, thoughtless. I, too, know what it is to care for some one. Were I separated from Willie-" Abruptly, almost roughly, Miss Clay ignored the caress and repudiated the

"You are wrong-utterly wrong, child!" she cried. "I do not care for writer of the warning, save to say, that-that man. On the contrary, I | finally: hate—despise him. He is not fit to let your feet spurn him-far less to touch your hand. Does not your mother know

"What?" Bessie's eyes grew wide with wonder, as the other paused suddenly. "Why, Caro! I never saw you so excited—so worked up. It must, inplease!"

Miss Clay's face darken d, and her breath came hard and Tick. She clinched her hands fiercely; but still she did not speak, only staring at the other. Then, with a great effort, she turned a of that broken-off warning about Fitzdeadly white face, lit by gleaming eyes, hugh, even while, woman-like, she was

"Bessie, that man is- He it was who-" Memory, gratitude-whatever stronger feeling it may have been-was too much for her. Again she broke down, sinking in her chair and covering an remained silent, wondering sorely. her face, with the piteous moan:

Wondering more still, but still deepwoman who had been her model of fearlessness and strength.

she was kneeling by her side, her arms close about the heaving bosom, her lips pressed upon the glorious, bowed head: "Forgive me, dear! Please forgive me! I was silly even to mention himworse than silly to press you so. I think understand-

Once more Miss Clay broke roughly from the circling arms. Once more she stood erect with raised head and blazing eyes; no weakness on her face nowonly resolve so fixed as to make its lines seem hard and cruel.

"Bessie Westchester," she said, in cold, metallic tone, "you do not understand me, but-you shall! Not for base, selfish reason, not to protect myself from silly suspicion, but to protect you and yours, so good to me, I will speak! That man, whose name I have sworn shall never pass my lips-that man, who has my just contempt and

The door opened quickly and Mrs. Gray stood in it, panting from hasty ascent and with troubled face.

"Caro, Willie is here." "Thank God! I am ready!" The fight of battle on her face melted into tender longing: hope to be realized swept away thought of right and justice as the words brought plainly before her the wide, dark river, the yearning loved ones far beyond.

"Stop, dear," the matron said, stopping with a gesture the quick grasp for hat and gloves, the careful, instinctive touch for precious packages sewed into the skirt. "Willie must see you first. Some difficulty has-" "Difficulty? Oh, do not say he comes

to disappoint me!" The color hope had driven to the girl's face dropped out, leaving it ashen, her lips quivering soundlessly. "Not so bad as that, I hope," Mrs. Gray answered, gently; and, stepping

to the door, she called softly, and Wil-

lie McKee tiptoed into the room. His face was grave and troubled, his manner wholly changed from the boyish exquisite who had lounged from that house two hours before. Those were days that made many men play strange parts; and Willie McKee was a natural actor.

"It disappoints me, Miss Clay, almost as much as yourself," he said, quietly. "I had set my heart on getting you across to-night; and I believe you know that to do so I would risk anything, save one-your capture."

"I must always risk that," the girl cried, impatiently. "I have no fear. Come, let us start!" "Not until you know all," the man

gravest suspicion

careful!-seen to one. None could "Your presence in Baltimore is

known," McKee answered, gently. 'How, or by whom, God only knows." "Known!" On! the one word from

leave to-night, by what route, and that

flashed into Bessie's with a blaze of accusing query in them. Then, still staring at her, the firm will mastered emotion so far that she whispered,

"Are you sure! You saw-him?" "Saw whom? Ressie, what do you know?" Mrs. Gray cried. But Carolyn Cls r stopped her with a

gesture imperious seyond question, and, turning to McKe said, hoarsely: "Go on. Tell as all." "I know no more," he answered. "On-

ly this note was left forme by unknown hand ten minutes since." The woman seized the crumpled note eagerly, bending over the firelight and reading rapidly. Then, pressing her hand hard over her eyes, she stood an

struggle to be calm. Again she bent down, scanning the paper closely, her eyes burning each word into her brain. -our army! But otherwise he's just she, understanding the command, read in tremulous voice the fateful mes-

"Do not start to-night. South bank swarms with stragglers. Rosser struck. Show her this and wait advice. She ran on, full of her romance. "It was should obey warning from one who prayed her to pray for his soul."

Dead silence was on the little group. Carolyn Clay wheeled round upon the No one spoke, nor moved, and the stillness grew almost unbearable as the disappointed woman struggled fiercely

At length she raised her head, turning full to them a face pale and deepof mamma's, and very popular here lined, but firm and hard as the hollow voice that said:

"I will obey. He were viler than Satan did-he lie now-to me -" The effort of the soul was too great for the tried flesh. Suddenly she swayed,

staggered forward a step, and would have fallen had not Willie McKee caught her, dead fainting, in his arms. CHAPTER VIIL "A3 THEY MARCHED THROUGH THE TOWN."

The Sabbath morning broke clear, but piercing cold, the garish sunlight giving little warmth in the teeth of the fierce east wind.

Two days had passed, heavy, leadenfooted days to all inmates of the Gray mansion; and to one of them expectancy became almost torture, as no word came from Carolyn Clay's unnamed Over Carolyn Clay's face, now pale as | watcher on the shore. Willie McKee stopped daily, to talk with his cousins but he only shook his head gloomily in answer to eager queries, and avoided all suspicious mounting to the hidden visitor above. And she, cheered by the sympathy and love of trusted, tender women, recovered from the shock of surprise and disappointment. She seemed rlmost her old self again-quiet, patient, almost hopeful outwardly, even

if well-nigh despairing at heart. Of the cause of her fainting fit she spoke little, calling it mere reaction from too high hope; but not even to Bessie-her special pet and favoritefid she once allude to the mysterious

"I can say nothing, dear. In these days, when a man's life may pay forfeit for one chance word, I dare not speak." And the strong woman shuddered, as she added: "Besides, God only knows! I may be wrong. Later news has proved the truth of that warning. It was surely well meant and-timely. But by deed, be something terrible! Tell me, this time the Virginia bank must be clear." She finished with almost a groan: "Oh, when will I get away?"

And Bessie Westchester, with the delicate tact of her race, forebore all question; nor did she ever hint for the finish gnawed by curiosity, which had, in this case at least, good basis of right to question. Yet, as her guest's lips remained sealed, and no allusion to him escaped them more, the younger wom-

brought McKee very early, and with ly sympathetic, Bessie Westchester him anxiety and activity to all the watched this unwonted weakness of the household. At breakfast when he came the family rose promptly from the unfinished meal at the news he brought, Only one instant, though. The next and rapidly all viands within reach, all contents of the ample pantry, that was Mrs. Gray's prideful boast, were parceled out and put in portable shape. Great tins of boiling coffee soon hissed in the kitchen; a passing baker's cart was captured by McKee and its entire contents quickly went beneath long knives in nimble hands.

For that morning was one of those dies irae which made every sympathetic heart in Baltimore beat with heavier throb-days which made firm lips tremble and strong hands clinch hard, while they forced tears to tender eyes of all true women, southern or union in their

Rebel prisoners were to march through those streets, a spectacle and a warning, not wantonly, perhaps, "to make a Roman holiday," but because McHenry, the Old Capitol and other border prisons overflowed; and these men, unexchanged, must go to prison-pens farther from chance of escape or recapture by sudden raid.

In almost every residence along that fashionable street—nearest route of march to the northern depot-now showed activity and bustle unwonted at such an hour or on such day, and many window-shutters bowed, then closed, as eager-watching eyes saw no approaching column, and their owners

went back to the work of love. Then, after anxious waiting, the sad procession wheeled into view from a street below, the guard that encircled it moving slowly, as at a funeral, to fit the worn and painful step of many a one who followed. And a long, dreary line it was; pitiful to see, in its evidences of wrecked manhood, often; of broken spirit, sometimes; of wasted hopes and longings, everywhere.

Old and young, the graybeard next the fresh and beardless boy, hardy, lank mountaineer and tender darling from city fireside—all sorts and conditions of men of the south were there, marching side by side to that doom more dreaded than sudden death-hopeless imprisonment! For the word had gone forth that the starving south, eager to exchange consuming captured mouths for useful fighting hands, was not to be recuperated in that way. "Robbing the cradle and the grave"

already-as the northern leader put itto hold her wide border, she was not to be given back those men she had trained, through privation, peril and hope deferred, to suffer and be strong. Piteous was the plight of many a

prisoner, weak, already prison-worn and as sick in body as at heart. Here, one who might be a grandsire, toiling answered, firmly. 'Ordinary danger along the stones with stockingless feet, would not deter me, of course. Every- scarce held to shreds of shoes by bits of thing is ready-medicines packed, twine; there, a mere stripling, bluepasses secured. But, remember, this faced in the blast and shivering in thin, time your capture would be more seri- buttonless jacket, blowing his numbed ous than ever be ore. You are under hands for warmth. Again, a bold, defiant figure a newer capture, doubtless-"Yes, I know. But, oh, I have been striding along with head erect and deep deflance smoldering in his eyes; and close to him, the limping, shattered remnant of a man, hollow-eyed, with sunken cheeks and narrow chest, racked with coughing under the bleak Decem-

In pairs, or fours, the prison-gang "Yes; and more than that," he went moved slowly forward, many scarce on, calmly. "Some one knows that you able to keep up even with the slow time of the guard. And, in the long line, few were more than half clad, The girl's face grew whiter still; her | scarcely one with an overcoat, but some lips moved without sound, but her eyes hugging the torn and filthy blanket, or the scrap of old carpet used in its stead, as a very luxury of prison lot!

Some men were hatless, or wholly barefoot, victims of prison wear, or, worse, of wanton theft, which not seldom escaped the vigilance of higher office and left those vile enough to prey upon the helpless creatures in their

On almost every face, grayish pallor, familiar to all who watched the prisoner of that time, a sickly, leaden ghastliness, as of ashes, which accentuated more the pinched features and seemed to sink most flery eyes deep back in their hollow sockets,-a hue not to be described, but born largely of bad fare and confinement, equally largely perhaps of despairing heart and of that scourge even of the busy camp, nos-

On every porch and door-step along that dismal route, often lining the curb as well, stood grave-faced men and women, many with trembling lips or tear-blurred vision, eagerly scanning the pitiful passers for chance of one familiar face. Almost every hand held something,-packages of solid food, dainties long unknown to those men, famishing on prison fare, warm wraps, such clothing as haste collected, and

sometimes even blankets. And, as the line moved slowly on, grave men and dainty women and bright-faced little children too, scarce comprehending, but thus love-laden also-left their homes, keeping abreast it, but ever repelled by bayonets of the guard, intervalled along the column. But suddenly, around the corner of the Gray residence, just beyond, rode an officer of rank, a sedate, kindly-faced veteran with stars upon his shoulder, and followed by a glittering staff.

"Halt!" rang out from the captain of the guard, a command gladly obeyed by the prisoners. Spite of the piercing wind sweeping down the broad street, many of them crouched down to rest, some lying prone upon the cold stones of the pavement, from sheer weakness. And it chanced the center of the line was directly opposite the residence. From the closed lattice of her attic, Carolyn Clay scanned the prisoners,



CARCLYN CLAY SCANNED THE PRISONERS

and a hot sigh coming, but never a tear, as some poor wretch tottered and sought the inhospitable couch of the roadway. But her pale lips quivered as they sent fervent supplication for these sufferers—strangers, yet brothers in their woe-up to the Throne's foot of

More than one face seemed familiar to her eyes, running swiftly down the line; some she had seen in camp, with more than one she had spoken, in the merry days of early war. Suddenly, as patiently as though resenting caress she looked, the woman gave a great gasp, the blood rushing to her ashen

MAIN STREET, OPPOSITE COURT HOUSE,

SUMTER,

face, burning on either cheek in great red disks. And her long taper hands clute. d the shutters flercely, as though to fling them wide.

For there coatless under the chilling wind, his prized thigh boots of camp dandyism replaced by ragged shoes, yet frank, defiant and with clear eyes flashing out of his cold-blued face stood Evan Fauntleroy.

"Merciful God! Why am I so helpless? Oh, if I but dared!" Miss Clay cried aloud, as her hands dropped listless from the lattice. "Oh, if Bessle were but here! Father, aid me now!" As though in answer to her prayer the door opened hastily, and the girl she longed for, running in panting, passed her arm about the other as she followed her gaze below.

"I thought of you, Caro, so helpless up here!" she gasped. "There might be some one you knew; some friend-"

"There! Evan, my cousin!" Carolyn Clay cried, trembling in her eagerness. "Thank God that He sent you! See the tall boy-no, not that-the coatless one! Bess, he is Evan-the one captured that night for me! You must-

"All right! I know," the other answered, rapidly; and the warm kiss she paused to press on her friend's cheek told her that she was understood.

Down to the street at breakneck speed went the young girl, calling to a negro with coffee can as she snatched some bundles from the hall table and ran hatless into the cold air. For by this time the surging crowd-and in it some of the best and most noted blood of Maryland-was pressing close upon the guard, but still kept back by the barrier of rifles at "port."

Passing rapidly down the line, Bessie Westchester paused opposite Evan, working her way through the crowd close up to the barrier of steel. Then, watching eagerly, she managed to catch his eye, and—the natural gallantry of the Virginian aided by the evident interest in her expressive face-held it fixed upon her. A puzzled look stole across the young scout's features, as he wondered whether her intent regard meant that they had met before. Evidently he had been singled out; for though a deep-

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er tint dyed her soft cheeks, that gaze never left him, and to the query his Syebrows sent over the guard's shoulder came a scarce perceptible movement of her own, followed by the bare suspicion of a nodded assent. Not one bit a fop, Evan knew then that the girl had a message for him, or had possibly seen him before; and, standing coatless there under the biting wind, his elastic spirit carried him back to all scenes of his infrequent absences from home, and admiration for the pretty, graceful woman, so plainly interested in him, mingled with his wonderment sufficiently to make him forget his sorry plight and singular costume for the time.

"Can we not give the prisoners some coffee?" Bessie asked of the trim young lieutenant passing down the line: And she threw all the witchery of voice and

"Very sorry, miss," the officer answered, courteously, pausing to raise his cap, then halting in evident admiration. "But our orders are very strict. It is positively forbidden to allow any intercourse-Fall back, there; Clear the roadway!" he interrupted himself suddenly.

The old general was riding, slowly and alone, down the line, looking on the captives with eyes that held more of pity than of curiosity. At the lieutenant's tone the people instinctively fell back to the sidewalk, long inured to authority and well taught the necessity of obedience to its behests. Only Bessie Westchester stood her ground, now left entirely alone by rapid retreat of her friends, but perfectly quiet and at case. "I beg pardon, miss," again the young

lieutenant's hand went to his cap, the general now close upon them, but with face turned aside, "but I fear you did not "Oh, yes, I heard, thank you," she answered, with a smile and another

glance into the young man's face that brought the color to it. Then, calmly Fresh French Candy, Crystal and gracefully, as though waiting to receive a guest, the little figure remained perfectly still in the very path of the slow moving horse, until his muzzle almost touched her hair. Then the little hand was raised to stroke his Van Houten's Cocoa, Gelatine face; but the ungallant brute shied imand Mince Meat. from a stranger.

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Announce to their patrons in

SUMTER AND CLARENDON, That they are still prepared to meet competition and will give As Much Goods For \$1 as any Firm.

New No. 1, 2 and 3 Mackerel All we ask is that you Come and See what we show you and then we will be satisfied you will come again.

Dry Goods.

Olir Dry Goods Department is complete, and we can show you Cashmers From 10c. to \$1.25 per yd. Henrietta From 12c. to \$1.25 per yd. Cam. Hair From 30c. to 75c. per yard.

Shoës. 5 lb. cans pure Jelly for 50c. We can sell you Shoes anywhere From 25c. to \$6.00.

Clothing.

We have a very fine line of Clothing and invite your inspection,

Fancy Goods.

We still carry a large assortment of ZEPHYRS, SILKS, GER-MANTOWN AND SAXONY WOOL, and a great many fancy articles. We always keep this stock full and we inform our lady friends that they can get anything they need in this line. Call on us and see for yourselves,

Staple and Fancy Groceries.

We keep a full supply on hand all the time. Give us your orders and we will guarantee you First Class Goods. Respectfully,

Levi Bros. and sell Ties and Bagging, Samples sent on application,

We Buy Cotton

Sumter, S. C.