

My Lady of the North

THE LOVE STORY OF A GRAY JACKET

By Randall Parrish

Author of "When Wilderness Was King"

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ARTHUR B. WILLIAMSON

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I fairly held my breath as Craig rode forward. If one of them should chance to strike a match to light a pipe, or any false movement of Craig's should excite suspicion! If he should even speak, his soft southern drawl would mean instant betrayal. And how coolly he went at it; with a sharp touch of the spur, causing his faded horse to exhibit such sudden restlessness as to keep the escort well to one side, while I ranged close up to our unwelcome guest, and laying firm hand upon her horse's bit, let forth to where I waited. It was quickly, nobly done, and I could have hugged the fellow.

"Well, good luck to you, major, and a pleasant ride. Remember me to Brennan. Deuced queer, though, why he failed to show up on such an occasion as this."

"He was unfortunate enough to be sent out in the other direction with dispatches—goodnight, gentlemen."

It was sweet music to me to listen to their hoof-beats dying rapidly away behind us as we turned back down the dark road, the sergeant still riding with his one hand grasping the stranger's rein. I endeavored to scan her figure in the blackness, but found the effort useless, as little more than a shadow was visible. Yet it was impressed upon me that she sat straight and firm in the saddle, so I concluded she must be young.

"Madam," I began, seeking to feel my way with caution into her confidence, "I fear you must be quite wearied by your long ride."

She turned slightly at sound of my voice.

"Not at all, sir; I am merely eager to push on. Besides, my ride has not been a long one, as we merely came from General Sigel's headquarters."

The voice was pleasantly modulated and refined.

"Ah, yes, certainly," I stammered, fearful lest I had made a grave mistake. "But really I had supposed General Sigel was at Coulterville."

"He advanced to Bear creek yesterday," she returned quietly. "So you see we had covered scarcely more than three miles when we met. How much farther is it to where Major Brennan is stationed?"

"I fear I was guilty of hesitancy, but it was only for a moment."

"I am unable to tell exactly, for, as it chances, I have never yet been in the camp, but I should judge that two hours' riding will cover the distance."

"Why, in a tone of sudden surprise, 'Captain Hale certainly told me it was all of twenty miles!'"

"From Bear creek?" I questioned eagerly, for it was my turn to feel startled now. "The map barely makes it ten."

"It is but ten, and scarcely that, by the direct White Briar road; or, at least, so I heard some of the younger officers say; but it seems the Confederate pickets are posted so close to the White Briar that my friends decided it would be unsafe to proceed that way."

This was news indeed—news so unexpected and startling that I forgot all caution.

"Then what road do they call this?" She laughed at my evident ignorance, as well as the eagerness of my tone.

"Really, you are a most peculiar gulde," she exclaimed gayly. "You almost convince me that you are lost. Fortunately, sir, out of my vast knowledge of this mysterious region, I am able to enlighten you to some extent. We are now riding due southward along the Allentown pike."

Craig leaned forward so as to look across her horse's neck to where I rode on the opposite side.

"May I speak a word, sir?" he asked, cautiously.

"Certainly, sergeant; do you make anything out of all this?"

"Yes, sir," he answered eagerly. "I know now exactly how we missed it, and where we are. The cut-off to the White Briar I spoke to you about this afternoon cannot be more than a hundred yards below here."

lous was I to economize time that I was already urging our mounts forward when his shadow grew black in front, and he wheeled in at my side.

"No picket, sir."

"Very well, sergeant; when we come to the turn you are to ride a few rods in advance of us, and will set a good pace, for we must make up for all this lost time."

"Very well, sir; here is the turn—to your right."

I could dimly distinguish the opening designated, and as we wheeled into it he at once clapped spurs to his horse and forged ahead. In another moment he had totally disappeared, and as I urged our reluctant mounts to more rapid speed all sound of his progress was instantly lost in the pounding of our own hoofs on the hard road.

CHAPTER IV.

A Woman With a Temper.

I think we must have been fully an hour at it, riding at no mean pace, and with utter disregard of danger. Although I knew little of where we were, and nothing as to the condition of the path we traversed, yet so complete was my confidence in Craig that I felt no hesitancy in blindly following the pace he set. Then a black shape loomed up before us so suddenly that it was only by a quick effort I prevented a collision. Even as I held my horse poised half in air, I perceived it was Craig himself who blocked the way.

"What is it, sergeant?"

"A picket, sir, at the end of the road," he said, quietly. "I kinder reckoned they'd hev some sort o' guard thar, so I crept up on the quiet ter be sure. The feller helped me out a bit by strikin' a match ter see what time 'twas, or I reckon I'd a walked over him in ther dark."

"Had we better ride him down?" I asked, thinking only how rapidly the night hours were speeding and of the importance of the duty pressing upon us.

"Not with ther woman, sir," he answered in a low, reproachful voice. "Besides we never could git through without a shot, an' if by any dern luck it should turn out to be a cavalry outpost—an' I sorter reckon that's what it is—why, our horses are in no shape fer a hard run. You uns better wait here, sir, an' let me tend ter that soger man quiet like, an' then 'prape we uns kin all slip by without a stirrin' up ther patrol."

"Well," I said, reluctantly, yielding to what I felt was doubtless the wiser course, and mechanically grasping the rein he held out to me, "go ahead. But be careful, and don't waste any time. If we hear the sound of a shot we shall ride forward under spur."

"All right, sir, but there'll be no fuss, fer I know just whar ther feller is."

Time seems criminally long when one is compelled to wait in helpless uncertainty, every nerve on strain.

"Hold yourself ready for a sudden start," I said, warningly to my companion. "If there is any noise of a struggle yonder I shall drive in the spurs."

As I spoke I swung the sergeant's horse around to my side, where I could control him more readily.

There was no reply from the woman, but I noticed she endeavored to draw together the flapping cape of her cloak, as though she felt chilled by the wind and her figure seemed to stiffen in the saddle.

It came at last—not the sharp flash of a musket cleaving the night in twain, but merely the tall figure of the sergeant, stealing silently out of the gloom like a black ghost, and standing at our very horses' heads.

"All clear, sir," he reported in a matter-of-fact tone. "But we shall hev ter move mighty quiet, fer ther main picket post ain't more nor a hundred yards ter ther right o' ther crossin'."

He did not remount, but, with reins flung loosely over his arm, led the way slowly forward, and carefully we followed him.

What had become of the sentinel I did not know, respecting Craig's evident desire for silence; but as we drew nearer the White Briar road I sought in vain to pierce the dense gloom and note some sign of a struggle, some darker shadow where a body might be lying. There was nothing visible to tell the story.

The sergeant walked without the least hesitation across the open space, directly into the deep shadows opposite, where the cross-road continued to hold way. Crouching low in the saddle, we followed him as silently as though we were but spirits of the night. Up the road I caught the red gleam of a fire almost spent, and a black figure crossed us, casting an odd shadow against the face of the rock where it was lit by the flickering red blaze. It was all over in a moment, a mere glimpse, but it formed one of those sudden pictures which paint themselves on the brain and can never after be effaced. I recall yet the long shade cast by the man's gun, the grotesque shape of his flapping army overcoat, the quick change in the silhouette as he wheeled to retrace his beat. But there was no noise, not even the sound of his foot-steps, reaching us. Even as I gazed, lying open at full length upon my horse, we had crossed the open, and a perfect tangle of low bushes hid us as completely as if we had entered the yawning mouth of a cavern.

A hundred yards or more of sharply curving road densely lined with shrubbery on either hand, and then Craig swung into saddle and again gave spur to his horse.

"We must ride for it now," he said,

tersely. "When ther patrol makes their round, them fellers will be after us hot."

I urged my tired horse to a gallop, pressing upon Craig's heels as closely as I dared; nor did I glance back, for I knew well that a dead picket was lying somewhere by the cross-roads, and that his comrades would be heard from before dawn. We were moving bravely now; for the road under foot grew better as we advanced, and gave back the dull thud of soft earth instead of the rattling clang of the rocks we had been so long accustomed to. Then, suddenly, my horse was jerked almost to a standstill, the hand upon his bit seemingly as hard as my own, and I wheeled in the saddle, pressing my knees tightly to prevent being thrown, only to perceive the woman tugging desperately at the lines.

"What now?" I asked sharply, and in sudden anger I forced her to release her grasp. "We must ride, and ride hard, madam, to be out of this cordon by daylight."

"Ride where?"

She faced me stiffly, and there was a slight sting in her voice, I felt.

"Where?" I repeated; then partially gathering my scattered wits: "Why, to the camp we are seeking, of course."

I was conscious that her eyes were striving anxiously to see my face in the darkness—that her suspicions were now fully aroused; yet her quick retort surprised me.

"You lie!" she said, coldly. "That was a Federal picket he killed."

It was no time for argument, and I knew it. Craig, noting our pause, had ridden back, and reined in beside us without a word.

"You are right," I said, tersely. "In one sense of the word you are a prisoner, for the time being, at least, but not through any wish of mine. We do not make war on women, and your being in this situation is altogether an accident. However, be that as it may, we must, first of all, protect ourselves. I would very gladly leave you with your friends, if possible, but as things have shaped themselves there remains but one alternative—you must ride as I order."

"You—you are not Major Brennan's friend then? You were not sent by Frank to meet me?" The questions burst from her lips so rapidly that I scarcely caught their import.

"I am Captain Phillip Wayne, —th Virginia cavalry, at your service, madam," I said, calmly, "and to the best of my knowledge I have not the pleasure of Major Brennan's acquaintance."

She suddenly lifted the heavy riding whip that was clenched in her right hand, struck me with it full across the face, and then, as I quickly flung up my own arm to ward off a second blow, she sent the lash swirling down upon the spot of her horse. With one bound the maddened animal wrenched the reins from out my hands, nearly dragging me from the saddle, and swerving sharply to the left. There was a shock, a smothered oath, a moment's fierce struggle in the darkness, the sharp ping of the whip as it came down once, twice—then silence, broken only by deep breathing.

"I've got her, captain," chuckled the sergeant, softly, "but dog-gone if I know what to do ther."

There was small sentiment of mercy in my heart as I drew up toward them, for my cheek burned where the lash had struck as though scorched with fire; but when I saw her leaning helplessly forward on her horse's neck, all bravado gone, her hands pinned behind her in the iron grasp of the sergeant, my fierce resentment died away within me.

"Let her hands go, Craig," I commanded, briefly.

She lifted her body slightly from its cramped, uncomfortable posture, but her head remained bowed.

"Madam," I spoke sternly, for moments were of value now—"listen to what I say. We are Confederate soldiers passing through the Federal lines with dispatches. In order to save ourselves from discovery and capture we were compelled to take you in charge. It was the fortune of war. If now we could honorably leave you here we would most gladly do so, for having you with us adds vastly to our own danger; but these mountains are simply overrun with wandering guerrillas who would show you neither respect nor mercy. We simply dare not, as honorable men, leave you here unprotected, and consequently you must continue to ride in our company. Now answer me plainly, will you proceed quietly, or shall we be compelled to tie you to your horse?"

I knew she was crying; but with an effort she succeeded in steadying her voice sufficient to reply:

"I will go," she said.

"Thank you," and I gravely lifted my hat as I spoke. "You have saved me a most unpleasant duty. You may ride on, sergeant; this lady and I will follow, as before."

She scarcely changed her posture as I spurred forward, riding now so close to her side that I could feel the flap of her saddle rise and fall against my knee. Whatever of evil she may have thought of us, I felt that she was sorry enough now for her hasty action, and I forgot the pain that yet stung me, and loathed, without well knowing how, to tell her so.

CHAPTER V.

A Disaster on the Road.

To me she was merely a woman whom it had become my duty to protect, and whatever of chivalrous feeling I may have held toward her was based upon nothing deeper than this knowledge. She had come to us un-



I Quickly Flung Up My Arm to Ward Off a Second Blow.

sired and in darkness, her form enveloped in a cavalry cloak, her face shrouded by the night. As to whether she was young or old I had scarce means of knowing, saving only that the tone of her voice and the graceful manner of her riding made me confident that she had not lost the agility of youth. But beyond this vague impression (it was little more), and a fleeting gleam of the starlight in her eyes as she faced me in anger, I was as totally unaware of how she really looked as though we had never met. Her very name was unknown to me. Who was this Major Brennan? Was he father, brother or husband? and was her name Brennan also? For some reason this last possibility was repugnant to me. Yet I knew not why.

"You ride as though born to the saddle," I said pleasantly; and although I spoke low, we were so close together that my voice carried distinctly to her ears. "We have been sufficiently conceited to suppose that to be an accomplishment peculiar to our Southern women."

"I have been accustomed to ride since childhood," she replied rather shortly, and I was conscious of a restraint in her manner far from pleasing. Yet I ventured upon one more effort at conversation.

"Is Major Brennan an officer on Sheridan's staff?"

"I was not aware"—and I could not mistake the accent of vindictiveness in her voice—"that prisoners were obliged to converse against their will."

"I ask your pardon, I am sure," I returned soberly. "But my question was not altogether an idle one. I have chanced to meet several of General Sheridan's staff and thought possibly Major Brennan might have been one of their number. Seeing that we must associate for a time, I naturally felt it would prove pleasant for both of us if we might discover some mutual tie."

There was no response.

The road we were following here took a sudden trend downward, and we could tell from the sharper ring of the hoofs, and the spitting of flinty sparks beneath us, that we were among rocks once more. Then our horses suddenly splashed into water, and I held them up long enough to drink. I felt thirst strongly myself, and slipping out of the saddle filled my canteen.

"Would you care for a drink?" I asked, stemming the stream to reach her side, and holding the vessel within easy grasp of her hand.

I actually believe her first impulse was to refuse haughtily this proffered civility from an enemy of her country, but the deep sense of need conquered her to accept the offering. Another hill followed, and then another, and finally we swept swiftly down a long slope densely bordered by trees and with irregular piles of rock up-rearing ugly heads on either hand. I caught a swift glimpse of a rough log house on the right, so set back among trees that I half doubted its real existence, when—there was a slip, the crunching of a stone, a long stumble forward that fairly wrenched my hand loose from the woman's rein, and then, hopelessly struggling to regain his feet, my horse went down with a crash, head under, and I was hurled heavily forward upon my face. Craig, startled at the sudden crash behind him, spurred back to learn the full extent of my disaster. By this time I had regained my feet.

"I'm all right, I think, sergeant," I said hastily, "but the sorrel has broken her neck."

He began to swear at our ill luck, but I stopped him with a gesture he knew better than to ignore.

"Enough of that," I commanded, sternly. "Bad fortune is seldom bettered by hard words. First of all, help me to drag this dead body out of sight."

On one side of us the bank fell away with such precipitancy that when we once succeeded in dragging our load to the edge, we experienced no difficulty in sending it crashing downward. The body plunged through the thick underbrush at the bottom of the ogre, where I knew it would be completely hidden, even in the glare of daylight, from the spying eyes of any troopers riding hard upon our track. As we rapidly worked on this disagreeable task, I thought and planned; two horses and three riders—one of these a woman in need of protection—a difficult proposition, and I saw only a single possible solution. One of our number must press on; two of us must remain behind. Which one? what two? If I rode with the dispatch (and how eagerly I logged to

do so!) and succeeded in bringing Lee's message safe to Longstreet, it meant much to me—promotion, distinction, honor. On the other hand, if I remained behind, and Craig successfully carried out the duty which had been especially intrusted to me, I should be fortunate indeed to escape with a reprimand instead of more serious consequences. If failure resulted, it meant certain and deserved disgrace. Yet I could absolutely trust him with the dispatch; he was a soldier, and would faithfully perform a soldier's duty. More, he would carry the message with even greater certainty than I, for he knew the roads much better, and—I write the words hesitatingly—I do not trust him there alone with the woman.

I glanced aside at him as I thus turned the perplexing situation over in my mind—a tall, gaunt mountaineer, whose sole discipline of mind and body had been the army; hardened by service until every muscle in his lean, sinewy frame was like steel, a cavalryman who would follow his leader into the very jaws of hell, but whose morals were those of the camp, and whose face revealed audacious deviltry such as no man would care to see in one to whom he intrusted the welfare of sister or wife.

"Sergeant," I asked, flinging aside the improvised brush, "how far do you suppose we are from Longstreet's picket line?"

"Ten miles at the very best, sir," he answered promptly, "an' I reckon with another Yankee outpost atween."

"With fair luck and good riding it might be made by daylight?"

"I reckon as how it might, captain, if we only hed sum fresh hosses," he said glumly; "but it's bin mighty hard on my nag; I've looked fer him to roll over like yer sorrel did fer the las' w mile."

"Well, Craig, you shall have both horses. Ride the woman's. It is the fresher of the two; but you are to get through if you kill them both and then walk."

His face brightened, and he raised his hand in salute.

"And you?" he asked, wonderingly.

"I remain with the woman; there is no other way. Wait here a moment while I speak with her."

I left him standing there, and moved back to where she waited. As I came up she faced me, and for the first time (for the night had lightened somewhat) I could see her eyes and discern some faint outline of her face where the night wind flung back the upturned cape. It was a winsome sight to soldier vision, but with a certain semblance of pride and reserve about it that caused a hesitancy in my speech strange to me.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Deafness Cannot Be Cured by local applications, as they cannot reach the diseased portion of the ear. There is only one way to cure deafness, and that is by constitutional remedies. Deafness is caused by an inflamed condition of the mucous lining of the Eustachian Tube. When his tube is inflamed you have a rumbling sound or imperfect hearing, and when it is entirely closed, Deafness is the result, and unless the inflammation can be taken out and this tube restored to its normal condition, hearing will be destroyed forever; nine cases out of ten are caused by Catarrh, which is nothing but an inflamed condition of the mucous surfaces.

We will give One Hundred Dollars for any case of Deafness (caused by catarrh) that cannot be cured by Hall's Catarrh Cure. Send for circulars, free.

F. J. Cheney & Co., Toledo, Ohio.

Sold by druggists, 75c. Take Hall's Family Pills for constipation.

SUMTER PROOF.

Should Convince Every Sumter Reader.

The frank statement of a neighbor, telling the merits of a remedy.

Bids you pause and believe.

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By some stranger far away.

Commands no belief at all.

Here's a Sumter case.

A Sumter citizen testifies.

Read and be convinced.

E. T. Windham, grocer, 20 E. Calhoun Street, Sumter, S. C., says: "My kidneys did not do their work regularly and I was annoyed by too frequent passages of the kidney secretion. There was lameness, soreness and pain in the small of my back and I had other symptoms of kidney complaint. Doan's Kidney Pills, which I got at China's Drug Store, entirely relieved me and acted as a tonic to my system."

For sale by all dealers. Price 50 cents. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, New York, sole agents for the United States.

Remember the name—Doan's—and take no other.

Best Medicine for Colds.

When a druggist recommends a remedy for colds, throat and lung troubles, you can feel sure that he knows what he is talking about. C. Lower, Druggist, of Marion, Ohio, writes of Dr. King's New Discovery: "I know Dr. King's New Discovery is the best throat and lung medicine I sell. It cured my wife of a severe bronchial cold after all other remedies failed." It will do the same for you if you are suffering with a cold or any bronchial, throat or lung cough. Keep a bottle on hand all the time for everyone in the family to use. It is a home doctor. Price 50c and \$1.00. Guaranteed by your druggist.—Adv't.

Real Estate Transfers.

H. J. Harby, A. D. Harby, J. M. Harby and H. Harby, trustees, to Anna Williams, lot on Bee Street, \$500.

Most Prompt and Effectual Cure for Bad Colds.

When you have a bad cold you want a remedy that will not only give relief, but effect a prompt and permanent cure, a remedy that is pleasant to take, a remedy that contains nothing injurious. Chamberlain's Cough Remedy meets all these requirements. It acts on nature's plan, relieves the lungs, aids expectoration, opens the secretions and restores the system to a healthy condition. This remedy has a world-wide sale and use and can always be depended upon. Sold by all dealers.—Adv't.

As the Philadelphia Ledger puts it, it is against the law to carry a revolver, but anybody can fool with a motorcycle.

*A slight cold in a child or a grown person holds possibilities of a grave nature. Croup may come on suddenly, bronchitis or pneumonia may develop, severe catarrhal troubles and consumption are possible results. Foley's Honey and Tar Compound nips a cold at the outset, cures croup quickly, checks a deep-seated cough, and heals inflamed membranes. Sibert's Drug Store.—Adv't.

The Review of Reviews for May contains an interesting article on the development of efficiency in municipal government by the introduction of business methods under the Commission Form of Government. Nearly a page is devoted to the discussion and explanation of the Sumter Plan, which is characterized as a long step in the right direction.

For the Weak and Nervous.

Tired-out, weak, nervous men and women would feel ambitious, energetic, full of life and always have a good appetite, if they would do the sensible thing for health—take Electric Bitters. Nothing better for the stomach, liver or kidneys. Thousands say they owe their lives to this wonderful home remedy. Mrs. O. Rhine-vault, of Vestal Center, N. Y., says: "I regard Electric Bitters as one of the greatest of gifts. I can never forget what it has done for me." Get a bottle yourself and see what a difference it will make in your health. Only 50c and \$1.00. Recommended by your druggist.—Adv't.

The T. P. A. delegates to the Annual State Convention have returned to the city after a most delightful stay in Spartanburg.

*The spring months often find a woman tired out, with pain in back, hips and head, nervous and sleepless. Foley Kidney Pills will quickly prove their worth and value as a healer of all kidney and bladder ailments and irregularities. They are a splendid remedy for rheumatism, clearing the uric acid from the joints and system. Try them. Sibert's Drug Store.—Adv't.

Bowling Team Must Practice.

Florence Times.

The Florence bowling team is getting ready for another tilt with the boys in Sumter, who have gotten away with the games of most of the tournaments, and they want to give Sumter a wiggling. Florence won one game over Sumter last year, and she wants to put one more to her credit.

This Interests Every Woman.

*A family doctor said recently that women come to him, thinking that they have female trouble, but when he treats them for their kidneys and bladder, they soon recover. This is worth knowing, and also that Foley Kidney Pills are the best and safest medicine at such times. They are tonic in action, quick in results. They will help you.—Adv't.

Marriage License Record.

A license to marry was issued Thursday to Mr. R. D. Butler and Miss Lula Hodge of Sumter.

Constipation Cured.

Dr. King's New Life Pills will relieve constipation promptly and get your bowels in healthy condition again. John Supsic, of Sanbury, Pa., says: "They are the best pills I ever used, and I advise everyone to use them for constipation, indigestion and liver complaint." Will help you. Price 25c. Recommended by your druggist.—Adv't.

Fire Wednesday Afternoon.

Fire Wednesday afternoon destroyed a chicken house on the premises of Mrs. C. R. Gregg. For a while it looked as if the fire would spread to the residence, but the chemical being quickly applied by the firemen extinguished the blaze.

*Foley Kidney Pills repay your confidence in their healing and curative qualities. Any kidney or bladder disease not beyond the reach of medicine will yield to their use. Mrs. Cordelia Copeland, Ardeola, Mo., says: "I had kidney and bladder trouble for over a year and 5 bottles of Foley Kidney Pills cured me." It is the same story from every one who uses them. All say, "They cured me." Sibert's Drug Store.—Adv't.

One of the revisions now being made is a revision of the country's opinion, however, is not downward.

Wonderful Skin Salve.

Bucklen's Arnica Salve is known everywhere as the best remedy made for all diseases of the skin, and also for burns, bruises and boils. Reduces inflammation and is soothing and healing. J. T. Sossaman, publisher of News, of Cornelius, N. C., writes that one box helped his serious skin ailment after other remedies failed. Price 25c. Recommended by your druggist.—Adv't.