

The Battle-Cry

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She stood there a long while, and finally she saw, where for a space the road ran near the brick house, unshaded by the woods, a straggling little cortege.

It may have been three hours later that Good Anse Talbott rode up to the Widow Everson's.

"Anse Havey 'lows," the preacher was saying, "that he has done fetched home ther body of little Nash Watt, an' ther ther boy was shot ter death a layin' in ther la'rel a hundred paces from ther winder whar Cal Douglas was a standin'!"

"I've done already acknowledged that," declared Milt in a voice into which crept a trace of truculent sullenness.

The missionary nodded. "I hain't quite through yet, Milt," he went on evenly, and the girl who stood leaning against the door-frame, caught for an instant a sparkle of zealot earnestness in his weary eyes.

"Anse is willin' ter take yore hand on this truce. He's willin' ter stand pledge ther ther Haveys keeps faith. But I'm a preacher of the Gawselp of God, Milt, and I don't low ter be no go-between without both of you men does keep faith."

Milt McBriar stiffened resentfully, and his dark brows drew together under his hat brim.

"Does ye doubt that I'll do what I says?" he inquired in a voice too soft for sincerity.

The missionary did not drop his steady and compelling eyes from the gaze direct. It was as if he were reading through the pupils of the other and searching the dark heart.

"I aims ter see that ye both starts out fair, Milt," he said, still quietly. "An' ter ther end I aims ter admonish ye both on ther terms of this meetin' atween ye."

For an instant Milt McBriar's semblance of calm reflectiveness slipped from him and his voice rose raspingly. "Did Anse Havey learn ye that speech?"

Good Anse Talbott shook his head patiently.

"No, I told Anse ther same thing I'm a-tellin' you. Neither Anse ner ther four men that fetches ther body will hev any sort of weapon about 'em when they comes across ther stile. Ye've got ter give me yore hand ther none of yore men hain't a goin' ter be armed. I'm a servant of ther Most High God." For an instant fire blazed in the preacher's eyes and his voice mounted with fervor.

The dark giant stood for a time silent, then he gravely nodded his head. "Them terms suits me," he said briefly.

The two men walked down to the fence and separated there, going in opposite directions.

A few minutes later Juanita, still standing fascinatedly in the doorway, was looking out across the shoulder of the missionary. He presided at the threshold with grave eyes, and, even after these peaceful years, there was something of familiar caress in the way his brown hand lay on his rifle-lock. Then the girl saw a strange and primitive ratification of treaty.

On either side of the little porch stood a group of solemn men, mostly bearded, mostly coatless, and all unarmed. In front of those, at the right stood Anse Havey, his eyes still the dominant feature of the picture.

Over across from him was the taller and older chieftain of the other clan. They stood there gravely, with a courtesy that cloaked their hatred. Out in the road was the "jolt-wagon," and in its deep bed the girl could see the canvas that covered its burden.

As Bad Anse took his place at the front of his escort his gaze met that of Juanita. He did not speak, but for an instant she saw his face harden, his eyes narrow, and his lips set themselves. It was the glance of one who has been lashed across the face and who cannot strike back, but who will not soon forget.

This time the girl's eyes did not drop, and certainly they held no hint of relenting or plea for forgiveness.

But at that moment the head of the Haveys turned from her and began speaking.

"I got your message, Milt," he said casually, "an' I reckon you got my answer. I've brought back Little Nash."

"I'm obleeged ter ye." The McBriar paused, then volunteered: "Ef ther boy had took counsel of me, this thing wouldn't never hev happened."

Bad Anse Havey stood looking at the other, then he nodded.

"Milt," he carelessly announced at the end of his scrutiny, while the ghost of an ironical smile glinted in his eyes, though it left his lips level. "I've got several hosses an' mules down ther in my barn that we found hitched out in ther timber when Nash an' his friends took to the la'rel."

Again he paused and studied the faces of the McBriar men before he went on. "One of 'em is your own roan mare, Milt. One of 'em b'longs ter Sam thar, and one is Bob's thar." He pointed out each man as he spoke. "Ye can get 'em any time ye send down for 'em."

The girl caught her breath and, despite her dislike, acknowledged the cool insolence with which Anse had answered Milt's plea of innocence. Milt replied only with a scowl, so Anse contemptively continued, as though to himself:

"Milt's right smart pity for a feller to go out shootin' in the night-time



"I Gives Ye My Hand, Milt McBriar," an' to take a kinsman's horse—with-out takin' his counsel. It might lead to some misunderstandin'."

A baleful glare flashed deep in the eyes of the taller man, and from the henchmen at his back came an uneasy shuffle of brogans.

But the voice of Good Anse Talbott relieved the tension.

"Stiddy, thar, meen," he quietly cautioned. "Ye didn't hardly meet ter talk 'bout hosses. I'll lead them nags back myself, Milt."

Then Anse Havey stepped forward and held out his hand.

"I gives ye my hand, Milt McBriar," he said, "that ther truce goes on."

"An' I gives ye mine," rejoined the other. After a perfunctory shake the two turned together and went down the steps. The girl saw both squads lifting the covered burden from the wagon and carrying it around the road, where the other wagon waited. She believed that the feud was ended, but it is doubtful if either of the principals whose hands had joined parted with great trust in the integrity of the other's intentions. It is certain that one of them at least was already making plans for the future, not at all in accordance with that compact of peace.

CHAPTER VIII.

As days grew into weeks Bad Anse Havey heard nothing of the establishing of a school at the head of Tribulation, though all the gossip of the countryside which might interest a dictator filtered through the valleys to his house.

He smiled a little over the copy of Plutarch's "Lives," which was the companion of his leisure moments, and held his counsel. While he thought of Juanita herself with a resentment which sprang from hurt pride, he felt for her, as a menace to his power, only contempt.

But Juanita's resolve had in no wise weakened. She had seen that her original ideas had all been chaff and born of ignorance, so she occupied herself, like a good and patient general, in pulling all the pins out of her little war map and drafting a completely new plan of campaign.

With Good Anse Talbott she rode up dwindling watercourses to the havelys of the "branch-water folks" and across hills wheresoever the cry of sickness or distress called him, and since his introduction was an open sesame, she found welcomes where she went.

And soon this figure, that walked with an almost lyric grace, yet with a boyish strength and litheness, became familiar along the roads and trails.

Instead of asking, "Who brought ther be?" mountaineers nodded and said: "That's her," and some women added: "God bless ther child!"

She had been into many gloomy cabins that repelled the brightness of the summer sun, and she had been more like sunlight than anything that had ever come through their narrow doors before.

She sometimes rode over to the cabin of Fletch McNash and brought little Dawn back with her to spend a day or two. The "furrin' girl and the

mountain girl wandered together in the woods, and Dawn's diffidence gave way and her adoration grew. Twice Juanita found another visitor at the McNash cabin—Bad Anse Havey. He recognized her only with a haughty nod, like that of an Indian chief, and she gave him in return a slight inclination of her head, accompanied by a glance of starchy contempt in her violet eyes. Yet, in the attitude of the mountaineers to the man, she saw such hero-worship as might have been accorded to some democratic young monarch walking freely among his subjects.

Once Fletch said: "Ma'am, how's yore school a-comin' on? Air ye gittin' things started ter suit ye?"

Juanita flushed. "Not yet," she answered. "I'm trying to get acquainted first. When I do start, I hope to make up for lost time."

"I reckon ther school will be a right good thing over thar; don't ye low so, Anse?" Fletch's good-natured density had not recognized the hostility between his two guests.

Anse laughed quietly. "I reckon," he said, "so long as the lady just keeps on sayin' 'not yet' thar won't be no harm done. I don't quarrel with dreams."

The lady flushed, and a hot retort rose to her lips, but she only smiled. "I'm biding my time, Fletch," she assured him. "My dream will come true."

But for this dream's fulfillment she must have land. There must be dormitories for boys and girls, and playgrounds where muscles and brains, grown slow from heavy harness, could be quickened. She fancied herself listening to the laughter of children who had not before learned to laugh.

But as she made inquiries of land-holders whom a price might tempt to sell, she was met everywhere with a reserve which puzzled her until a bare-footed and slouching farmer gave her a cue to its cause.

This man rubbed his brown toe in the dust and spoke in a lowered voice.

"I don't mind tellin' ye that I'd be plumb willin' ter sell out an' move." His eyes shone greedily as he added: "Ef a fair figger, but I moughtn't live ter move of I sold out."

"What do you mean?" she asked, much puzzled.

"Wall, I wouldn't hardly like ter hev this travel back ter Bad Anse, but I've done been admonished not ter make no trades with strangers."

"Oh!" she exclaimed in a low voice, and her face flushed wrathfully. "Whom does your land belong to?" she demanded after a moment's silence. "Are you a handman to Bad Anse Havey? Isn't your property your own?"

He looked away and rummaged in his pockets for a few crumbs of leaf tobacco, then he commented with the dreary philosophy of hopelessness: "Hit's a God's blessed truth that a feller hyarabouts is plumb lucky es long as his life's his own."

So, she told herself, Bad Anse had begun his war with boycott! She could not even buy a foothold on which to begin her fight. Back there in the Philadelphia banks lay enough money, she bitterly reflected, to buy the country at an inflated price, to bribe its courts, to hire assassins and snuff out human lives, yet, since the edict of one man carried the force of terror, she could not purchase a few acres to teach little children and care for the sick. At least it was a confession that, for all his fine pretense of scorn, the man recognized and feared the potentiality of her efforts.

As the bright greens of June were scorched into the dustier hues of July and the little spears of corn grew taller, she began to feel conscious of a certain drawing back, even of those who had been her warm admirers, and to notice scowls on strange faces as they eyed her.

Somewhere a poison squad was at work. Of that she felt sure, and her eyes flashed as she thought of its authorship. Each day brought her new warnings offered under the semblance of kindness and friendship.

"Folks hereabouts liked her powerful well, but hit warn't hardly likely that Bad Anse, ner Milt McBriar, would suffer her to go forward with ther projects. They'd done beeh holdin' off 'cause she war a woman, an' she'd better quit of her own behest."

So they were willing to let her surrender with the honors of war! Her lips tightened.

In answer to detailed questioning her informant would shake his head vaguely and suspect that "hit warn't rightly none of his business now; he just 'lowed hit war a kindly act ter give her timely warnin'."

CHAPTER IX.

One afternoon, while old Milt McBriar was sitting on the porch of his house, a horseman rode up and "lighted." The horseman was not of pleasant expression, but he knew his mission and was sure of his welcome.

"Evenin', Luke," welcomed the McBriar chief, and as the visitor sank into a chair with a nod, he laconically announced:

"I've done found out who kilt Nash Watt."

Old Milt never showed surprise. It was his pride that his features had banished all register of emotion. Now he merely leaned over and knocked the ash from his pipe against the railing.

"Wall," he commanded curtly, "let's hev yore tale."

"They picked out a man fer ther job that hain't been mixed up in no feudin' heretofore," pursued the other with unabated calmness. "He's a feller ther nobody wouldn't suspect; hin bein' peaceable an' mostly sober. But

he shoots his squirrels through the head every time he throws up his gun. Ther war ther kind of man they wanted."

Milt McBriar shifted his position a little. He seemed bored.

"Who war this feller?"

The bearer of tidings was reserving his climax and refused to be hurried. "I reckon ye'll be right smart astonished when I names his name, but thar hain't no chanst of bein' mistook. I've done run ther thing down."

"I hain't pover astonished," retorted McBriar. "Who war he?"

Very cautiously the second man looked around and then bent over and whispered a name. There was a short pause, after which the chief commented: "Wall, I reckon I don't need ter tell yer what ter do now."

"I reckon I knows," confessed Luke with a somewhat surly expression.

But Milt McBriar was paying no attention. His face was darkening.

"I wish I could afford ter git the real man!" he exclaimed abruptly. "I wish I durst hev Anse Havey kilt."

"Wall"—this time it was the underling who spoke casually—"I reckon I mought as well die fer a sheep as a lamb. Shell I kilt Anse Havey fer ye?"

The chieftain looked at him during a long pause, then slowly shook his head.

"No, Luke," he said quietly. "I hain't quite ready ter die myself yet. I reckon if I hed ye ter kilt Bad Anse thar's 'bout what'd happen. Jest git ther lamb this trip an' let ther old ram live a spell."

So, one unspeakably sultry morning, a few days after that informal session, Good Anse Talbott arrived at the Widow Everson's house. As Juanita Holland appeared at the door to greet him he came at once to the point.

"Fletch McNash has done been kilt," he said. "Eout twilight last night, es he war a-comin' in from ther barn somebody shot one shoot from ther la'rel. I reckon hit'd be right smart comfort ter his woman an' little Dawn of ye could ride over thar an' help 'tend ther buryn'." Kin ye start now?"

Go! Juanita would go if it were necessary, to run a gantlet of all the combined forces of the Haveys and McBriars. Her heart ached for the widow and the boys, but for Dawn the ache was as deeply poignant as it could have been for a little sister of her own. So with set face and hot indignation Juanita mounted for the journey.

At last they reached the McNash cabin and found gathered about it a score of figures with sullen and scowling faces.

From the barn came the screech of saw and rat-tat of hammer, where those whose knack ran into carpentry were fashioning the box which was to serve in lieu of a casket.

There was no fire now, and the cabin was very dark. In a deeply shadowed corner lay Fletch McNash, made visible by the white sheet that covered him.

Juanita had come in silently, and for a moment thought that no one else was there. The younger children had been sent away, and the neighbors remained outside with rough sense of consideration.

There, in a squat chair near the cold hearth, sat Mrs. McNash, her back turned to the room. She was leaning forward and gazing ahead with unseeing eyes. Dawn was kneeling



"Are You a Bondsman to Bad Anse Havey?"

ing at her side with both arms about her mother's drooping shoulders.

Juanita bent and impulsively kissed the withered face, but the woman only stirred a little, like a half-wakened sleeper, and looked stolidly up. After a while she spoke in the lifeless, far-away tone of utter lethargy.

"Ef ye'd like ter see him, jest hit up ther sheet. He's a-layin' thar." Then once more she sank back into the coma of her staring at the hearth with its dead ashes.

Then the door opened, letting in two men, and in them Juanita recognized Jeb McNash and Bad Anse Havey.

As they coming Dawn looked up, drawing away from the embrace of the older girl, and retreated silently to a corner, as though ashamed of having been discovered in tears. For a few moments there was silence in the room, complete except for the rap of Jeb's pipe when he knocked out its ashes against the chimney.

Bad Anse stood with folded arms in the dim light and gave no sign that he

had recognized the presence of the "furrin' woman."

The boy jerked his head toward the hearth and said in a strained, hard voice: "Set ye a cheer, Anse," and after that no one spoke. Jeb's thin but muscular chest rose and fell to the swell of heavy breathing and his face was wrapped black in a scowl that made his eyes smolder and his lips snarl. Juanita had dropped back to one of the beds with Dawn's face buried in her lap.

Then, as if rousing from a long dream, Mrs. McNash looked up, and for the first time appeared to realize that her son and his companion had entered the place.

The dead blankness left her pupils, and into them leaped a hateful fire. Her voice came in shrill and high-pitched questioning: "Wall, Jeb, hev ye got him yet?"

The boy only shook his head and glowered at the wall, while his mother's voice rose almost to a scream.

"Hain't ye a goin' ter do nothin'? Thar lays yore pap what niver harmed no man, shot down cold-blooded. Don't ye hear him a-callin' on yer ter settle his blood score? Air ye skeered? Ther spirit of him ther fathered ye's a-pleadin' with ye—an' ye sets still in yore cheer!"

Juanita felt the slender figure in her embrace shudder at the lashing invective that fell from the mother's lips. She saw the boy's face whiten; saw him rise and turn to Bad Anse Havey, half in ferocity, half in pleading.

"Maw's right, Anse," he doggedly declared. "I kaint tarry hyar no longer. He b'longs ter me. I've got ter go out an' kill him. Thar hain't but one thing a-stoppin' me now," he added helplessly. "I don't know who did it; I hain't got no notion."

He stood before the clan chief, and the latter rose and laid one hand on the shoulder which had begun to tremble. "Man and boy looked at each other, eye to eye, then the elder of the two began to speak.

"Jeb, I don't want ye to think I don't feel for ye, but ye don't know who the feller is, an' ye can't hardly go shootin' permiscuous. Ye've got to bide your time."

"But," interrupted the boy tensely, "you knows. You knows everything hyarabouts. In heaven's name, Anse, I hain't askin' nothin' out of ye but jest one word. Jest speak one name, that's all I needs."

The mother had dropped back into her stupor again, and her son stood there, his brogans feet wide apart and his whole body rigid and tense with passion.

Anse Havey once more shook his head.

"No, Jeb," he said quietly; "I don't know—not yet. The McBriars acted on suspicion—an' they killed the wrong man. Ye ain't seekin' to do likewise, be ye? Ye ain't quite twenty-one, Jeb, an' I'm the head of the family. I reckon ye'd better take counsel of me, boy. I ain't bent on deludin' ye, an' ye can trust me. Ye've got to give me your hand, Jeb, that until ye're plumb, everlastingly sartin who got your pa, ye won't raise your gun against any man."

The boy sank down into his chair and bowed his head in his hands, while his finger-nails bit into his temples. Even Juanita Holland had felt the effect of Havey's wonderfully quieting voice. Finally Jeb McNash raised his face.

"An' will ye give me yore hand, Anse Havey, ther if ye finds hit out afore I do, ye'll tell me ther man's name?"

"I ain't never turned my back on a kinsman yet, Jeb," said Anse gravely.

The boy nodded his acquiescence and hurriedly left the room. Juanita gently lifted Dawn's head from her lap and went forward to the hearth.

She had listened in silence, outraged at this callous talk and this private usurpation of powers of life and death. Now it seemed to her that to remain silent longer was almost to become an accomplice.

Something in her grew rigid. She saw the bent and lethargic figure of the bereaved wife and the stark, sheeted body of the feud's last victim. Before her stood the man more than anyone else responsible for such conditions.

"Mr. Havey," she said, as her voice grew coldly purposeful with the ring of challenge, "I have been told that you did not mean to let me stay here; that you did not intend to give these poor children the chance to grow straight and decent."

She paused, because so much was struggling indignantly for utterance, that she found composure very difficult. And as she paused she heard him inquire in an ironically quiet voice: "Who told ye that?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Evidently Built to Last.

What is believed to be the oldest inhabited residence in the world is a mansion in Germany that was built in 700.

In the Police Court.

Wm. McDaniels and Willie Williams; disorderly and cursing, as to McDaniels, and drunk and cursing as to Williams, bonds of \$15 each forfeited.

Amanda Epperson, disorderly conduct, continued.

Moses Screven, disorderly; bond of \$10 forfeited.

Pete Metropole, Pete Funston and Angel Pshert, gambling, bonds of \$10 each forfeited.

John Krasnoy, Richard Gordia, Willie Gibbs, and J. Manderson, gambling, bonds of \$25 each forfeited.

BILL FOR RURAL CREDITS.

South Carolina Member Presents Measure to Permit Farm Loans by National Banks.

Washington, Dec. 6.—One of the most notable of the 2,000 bills introduced in the house of representatives today was that presented by Congressman Aiken of South Carolina to establish a system by which national banks may make loans on farm lands in the aid of agriculture.

When late tonight the last bill and resolution introduced in the house today was filed by the journal clerk's staff, the total was found to exceed 2,000, including about 1,500 private pension bills. All day the documents poured in until they overflowed the bill basket and covered the clerk's desk.

There were many national defense bills, setting forth mainly the personal views of representatives. Administration preparedness measures will come later, their introduction awaiting the organization of the military and naval affairs committees.

BEATING THE RAILROADS.

Complaint Made That Drummers Take Advantage of Sending Baggage.

Atlanta, Dec. 6.—Charging that it annually carries thousands of pounds of baggage for persons who buy tickets, then make their trips in automobiles and return the tickets for redemption, the Central of Georgia railway, on behalf of itself and other railroads, has petitioned the State railroad commission to fix a rate for carrying such baggage.

The petition alleges that in some instances traveling salesmen, with several hundred pounds of baggage, have purchased tickets, paid for the excess over 150 pounds at the rate of 20 cents per 100 pounds, took an automobile to their destination and later sent in the ticket for redemption. In many cases it is alleged automobile tourists ship baggage within the 150-pound limit and therefore pay nothing for the service.

The commission is requested to work out and put into effect a reasonable rate for baggage not accompanied by the owner.

MULE ATTACKS LAWYERS.

Causes Consternation When He Appears on Second Floor.

Bishopville, Dec. 6.—The Hon. Thos. G. McLeod, former lieutenant governor, who is a very able lawyer, had Saturday ago a new client, one that made him and his partner, the Hon. R. E. Dennis, and their stenographer, Miss Lena Bradley, leave their main office and make for the cloak room, where they locked themselves up until their unwelcome client had disappeared.

Messrs. McLeod and Dennis, T. H. Tatum and Dr. C. W. Harris occupy offices on the second floor over the Central Drug Company's store, on Main street. Saturday Mr. R. L. Hearon, who conducts a sales stable for the firm of R. L. & J. M. Hearon, on Church street, was trying to "break" a young mule, which became unruly, kicked a negro over, made down Church street, and on down Main street, until he arrived in front of the Central Drug Company's place of business, when he was headed off by a crowd. The mule then made to the sidewalk, dashed up the steps to the second floor and on back to Messrs. McLeod & Dennis' office, and came near jumping out a window. After he got a little quiet Mr. Hearon got a large rope, about fifty feet long, and tied the mule hard and fast and stretched it down the steps to the sidewalk below, where a crowd caught it and pulled him down, step by step, until he reached the sidewalk again, all without being hurt in the least.

POSTMASTER NOT NAMED.

Lever Has Made No Decision as to Recommendation for Place, He Says.

Washington, Dec. 7.—"You will please say for me through your paper," Congressman Lever stated today, "that there need not be any necessity for so much agitation in Columbia right now over the question of the appointment of a postmaster for that city. I have been literally swamped with work since I came here a month or two ago and expect to be for some time to come. I have not really given this appointment serious thought yet and with my regular duties here pressing me every hour I will not make any announcement for some time to come.

"As the term of the present postmaster, Mr. Huggins, will not expire for more than a month there need be no agitation over this matter, at least for a while yet."—Special in State.

Greenwood Rogers, one of the negroes sent up from Laurens county several months ago on the charge of arson, was one of the three negroes who escaped from the State Farm near Hagedood on last Friday night.