MOLLY McDONALD

A TALE OF THE OLD FRONTIER

By

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SYNOPSIS.

Major McDonald, commanding an army post near Fort Dodge, seeks a man to intercept his daughter, Molly, who is headed for the post. An Indian outbreak is threatened. "Brick" Hamlin, a sergeant who has just arrived with messages to McDonald, volunteers for the mission. Molly arrives at Fort Ripley two days ahead of schedule. She decides to push on to Fort Dodge by stage in company with "Sutler Bill" Moylan. Gonzales, a rambler, is also a passenger. Hamlin meets the stage with stories of depredations committed by the Indians. The driver deserts the stage when Indians appear. The Indians are repulsed in attacks on the stage. Moylan and Gonzales are killed. Hamlin and Molly plan to escape in the darkness by way of a gully. Molly is wounded and Hamlin carries her. They cross a river and go into hiding. The Indians discover their escape and start pursuit, but go in the wrong direction.

CHAPTER XI.

A Remembrance of the Past.

Moylan must have had Miss McDonald in mind when he had stocked up with food at Fort Dodge, and had therefore chosen all the delicacies to be found at that frontier post. These were not extensive, consisting largely of canned goods, which, nevertheless, made a brave show, and were clearly enough not the ordinary fare of the border. Hamlin had to smile at the array, but Molly handled each article almost with reverence, tears dimming her eyes in memory.

"He—he bought these for me," she said softly, and looking across reproachfully at the sergeant. "It was the best he could do."

"I was not laughing at poor Moylan; only, I fear, he had a wrong conception of a girl's needs on the trail. But I reckon our combined appetites are equal to it."

"I do not feel as though I could swallow a mouthful."

"Under orders you will try. We have a hard day before us, young lady, and some tramping to do afoot. I wish I knew where that horse I turned loose last night has drifted to; into the bluffs, probably, where the grass is green. He would be of some help just now. Try this, Miss McDonald, for lack of something better. I yearn for ham and coffee, but hardly dare build a fire yet. The smoke would be seen for miles away."

"If we were across the river we could use the stage fire."

"Yes, but there is a wide river flowing between. Don't be afraid of that trip," noting the expression of her face. "It will be easy enough to cross back by daylight, now that I know where the danger spots are."

"I was not so terribly afraid last night; I hardly had time to realize what was being done, did you?"

"Well, yes; it was risky business. Awfully treacherous bottom and I was trusting to good luck."

The sergeant ate heartily, speaking occasionally so as to divert her mind, but for the most part, busily thinking and endeavoring to decide his next move. He sat facing the river, continually lifting his head to scan the opposite shore. There was probably a scouting detail somewhere near at hand, either approaching from the east, alarmed by the report of the fleeing stage crew, or else a detachment tracking Roman Nose's warriors across those plains extending into the north. The latter contingency was the more probable, judging from the Indians' flight, and his own knowledge of the small reserve force left at Dodge. Besides, ride as they might those two fleeing cowards of yesterday could hardly have yet reached that shelter of safety and might not confess the truth of their desertion even when they did arrive. A pursuing force was the only real hope for escaping the necessity of a hard tramp back over the trail. Well, the girl looked fit, and he glanced toward her appreciatively.

In spite of the sad experiences of the past night she was a pleasant spectacle, her eyes bright with excitement, her cheeks flushed under the morning sun which flecked her dark, disordered hair with odd color. Here was a winsome face, with smiling lips, and frank good nature in its contour. He was surprised to note how fresh and well she looked.

"Are you tired?"

"Not very. It seems more as though I had dreamed all this than actually passed through the experience. Perhaps when I do realize, the reaction will set in. But now I am strong, and—and not at all frightened."

"Nor hungry?"

"It is hard to eat, but I am often that way." Her hand strayed to the emptied haversack, and she turned it carelessly over, where it lay beside her on the sand. "Why, this is an old Confederate sack, isn't it? I hadn't noticed before; see, 'C. S. A.' is on the flap."

"So it is; perhaps Moylan served in the south."

"I think not. I am sure this was never his, for he bought it at Dodge. I remember he told me he would have to find something to carry our lunch in." She pushed the flap farther back, then held it up to the sunlight. "There are some other letters, but they are hardly decipherable. I cannot read the first line at all, but the second is somewhat plainer—'Fourth Texas Infantry.'"

[illegible] reached out his hand suddenly, and grasped the haversack, forgetting everything else in suddenly aroused interest. The girl, surprised, looked up into his face, as he closely studied the faded inscription, his face [illegible] with concentrated amusement.

"[illegible] Look!" he ejaculated breathlessly. "It was Gene's. What can this mean?"

"[illegible] know the soldier?"

"[illegible] Yes, well enough, almost [illegible] eyes [illegible] through [illegible]

ful it might vanish. "That man was either my best friend, or my worst enemy; under heaven, I know not which. Why, it is like a miracle, the finding of this bag out here in the desert. It is the clue I have been searching after for nearly five years." He seemed to pull himself together with an effort, realizing her presence. "Excuse me, Miss McDonald, but this thing knocked me silly. I hardly knew what I was saying."

"It means much to you? To your life?"

"Everything, if I can only trace it back, and thus discover the present whereabouts of the original owner."

"Was that your regiment, then—the Fourth Texas Infantry?"

He bowed his head, now looking frankly at her.

"Would you mind telling me your rank?"

"I became Captain of 'B' Company after the fight at Chancellorsville; we served in Virginia under Massa Robert, and lost every commissioned officer in that affair." He hesitated to go on, but she prompted him by a question:

"And then what? What was it that happened? Don't be afraid to tell me."

"Nothing until the day we fought at Fisher's Hill," he said slowly. "Then I was dismissed from the service—for cowardice."

"Cowardice!" repeating the word in quick protest. "Why, how could that be? Surely your courage had been sufficiently tested before?"

"Cowardice, and disobedience of orders," he repeated dully, "after I had been under fire almost night and day for three years; after I had risen from the ranks and commanded the regiment."

"And you had no defence?"

"No; at least, none I could use; this man might have saved me, but he did not, and I never knew why."

"Who was he?"

"My senior captain, detailed on

"What the Hell (Begging Your Pardon, Ma'am) Has Happened Here?"

Early's staff; he brought me the orders verbally I was afterwards accused of disobeying. I was temporarily in command of the regiment that day with rank as major. There was a mistake somewhere, and we were horribly cut up, and a number taken prisoners. It was my word against his, and—and he lied."

She took the haversack from him, studying the scarcely legible inscription.

"'E. L. F.' Are those the letters?"

"Yes; they stand for Eugene Le Fevre; he was of French descent, his home in New Orleans."

"You knew him well?"

"I thought so; we were at school together and afterwards in the army."

She looked across at him again, touched by the tender echo of his voice; then leaned forward and placed one hand upon his.

"You have not spoken about this for a long while, have you?"

"No," his eyes lighting up pleasantly, "hardly thought of it, except sometimes alone at night. The memory made me savage, and all my efforts to ascertain the truth have proven useless."

"That is why you enlisted?"

"Largely; there is no better place to hide one's past than in the ranks out here on the plains. I—I could not remain at home with that disgrace hanging over me."

"You must tell me all about it."

Her head lifted suddenly as she gazed out across the river, shading her eyes. "Why, what are those?" she exclaimed eagerly, "there, moving on the bluffs opposite?"

His glance swept to the northward, and he was as instantly the soldier again. Far away on the upper plateau, clearly outlined against the blue of the distant sky, appeared a number of dark figures. For a moment he believed them buffaloes, but in another instant decided instead they were horsemen riding two by two.

"Get down lower, Miss McDonald," he commanded. "Now we can see, and not be seen. They must be cavalrymen, the way they ride, but we can take no chances."

They watched the black specks pass east to where the bluff circled in toward the river. It was from there those distant riders first observed the dim spiral of smoke still curling up from the burning stage, for they halted, bunching together, and then disappeared slowly down a gash in the side of the hill. Emerging on the lower flat they turned in the direction of the fire, spurring their horses into a swift trot. There was no longer any doubt of their being troopers, and Hamlin stood upright on the sand hummock waving his hat. They were gathered about the fire, a few dismounted beside the dead bodies, before his signal was observed. Then a field glass flashed in the sunlight, and three or four of the party rode down to the bank of the river. One of these, the glasses still held in his hand, his horses, hoofs in the water, shouted across the stream.

"Who are you over there?"

"White people," answered Hamlin, using his hands for a trumpet. "We escaped from the stage last night. I am a sergeant, Seventh Cavalry, and the lady with me is the daughter of Major McDonald at Fort Devere."

"How did you get across?"

"Waded in the dark; there is good bottom. Send a man over with a couple of horses."

The officer turned and spoke to the others grouped beside him; then raised his voice again.

"Are you sure there is no quicksand?"

"None to hurt; come straight over the end of that sand spit, and then swerve about a dozen feet to the right to keep out of a hole. The water won't go to a horse's belly. Try it, Wasson, you ought to know me."

"You're 'Brick' Hamlin, ain't you?"

"A good guess, Sam; come on."

Two troopers left their saddles, and the third man, the one answering the last hail, gathered the reins in one hand, and spurred his horse confidently into the brown water. Following the Sergeant's shouted directions, the three animals plunged forward and came dripping up the low sand bank. The rider, a sallow-faced man clad in rough corduroy, patched and colorless, leaned over and held out his hand.

"Dern yer o' skin," he said solemnly, but with a twinkle in his eyes, "ye're sure got the luck of it. Ain't see ye afore fer two years."

"That's right, Sam; down on the Cowskin, wasn't it? Who's over ther?"

"Leftenant Gaskins, an' some o' the Fourth Cavalry, scoutin' out o' Dodge; ben plum to ther mountings, an' goin' home ag'in. Whut the hell (beggin' yer pardin, mam) has happened yere?"

"I'll explain when we get across," and Hamlin swung the haversack to his shoulder, and turned to the girl. "This is Sam Wasson, Miss McDonald, a scout I have been out with before; let me help you into the saddle."

CHAPTER XII.

The Parting.

They recrossed the stream carefully, the horses restless and hard to control in the current, the men riding on either side, grasping the bit of the girl's mount. Others had joined the little squad of troopers on the bank, and welcomed her with a cheer. The lieutenant dismounted. At sight of the girl's face he whipped off his hat, and came forward.

"Miss McDonald," he said, pleasantly greeting her, "I am Lieutenant Gaskins, and I have met your father—of the Sixth Infantry, is he not? So glad to be of service, you know. You were in the stage, I understand; a most remarkable escape."

"I owe it all to Sergeant Hamlin," she replied, turning to glance toward the latter. "He bore me away unconscious in his arms. Indeed, I scarcely realized what happened. Do you know anything regarding my father?"

"Oh, yes, I can put your mind at ease so far as he is concerned. I presume you were endeavoring to reach his post when this unfortunate affair occurred."

"Yes."

"Sheridan has ordered Devere abandoned for the present, and the major's troops are to return to Dodge. No doubt we shall be in the field within a week or two. But we can cultivate acquaintance later; now I must straighten out this affair." He bowed again, and turned stiffly toward Hamlin, who had dismounted, his manner instantly changing. He was a short, heavily built man, cleanly shaven, with dark, arrogant eyes, and prominent chin.

"You are a sergeant of the Seventh, you said," he began brusquely. "What were you doing here?"

"My troop is stationed at Fort Union," was the quiet response. I carried despatches to Devere, and while there was requested by Major McDonald to intercept his daughter and turn her back."

"Were you subject to Major McDonald's orders?"

"It was not an order, but a request."

"Oh, indeed; a mere pleasure excursion."

"It has hardly turned out that way, sir, and conditions seemed to justify my action."

"That is for others to determine. When was the attack made?"

"Just before sundown last evening. The driver and guard escaped on the lead horses, and the wheelers ran away, wrecking the coach."

"There were four passengers?"

"Yes; we fought them off until after dark, although the Mexican was killed by the first fire. I don't know when the other man got his."

"Who were they?"

"Gonzales ran a high-ball game at Santa Fe; the other, Moylan, was post-sutler at Fort Mercy."

"How many Indians? Who were they?"

"About thirty; we must have killed five or six. It was hardly more than daylight when they left, and I could not tell just how many bodies they strapped on the ponies. They were a mixed bunch of young bucks, principally Arapahoes, led by Roman Nose."

"Went west, hey?"

"Yes, sir."

The lieutenant turned his gaze up the river, and then looked at Wasson, who remained seated in the saddle.

"Must be the same lot Maxwell told us about up on Pawnee Fork, Sam," he said at last. "He will be likely to cut their trail some time today. We knew a bunch had headed south, but didn't suppose they had got as far as this already. Better leave Maxwell to run them in, I 'suppose? Our orders are to return to Dodge."

"They haven't three hours the start," ventured Hamlin in surprise, "and cannot travel fast with so many of their ponies doubly loaded."

"That is for me to decide," staring insolently, "and I understand my duty without any advice. Is there any damage done west of here?"

"The station at the crossing is burned; two dead men there; I don't know what became of the third."

"Then it is just as I thought; those fellows will turn north before they get that far, and will run straight into Maxwell. What do you say, Sam?"

The scout lolled carelessly in the saddle, his eyes on the river, his lean, brown face expressionless.

"I reckon as how it don't make no great difference what I say," he answered soberly. "Yer ain't taken no advice frum me yit, fur as I remember. But if yer really want ter know, this time, my notion is them bucks will most likely hide in the bluffs till night, an' then sneak past Maxwell after it gits good an' dark. If this yere wus my outfit now, I'd just naturally light on to the trail fast, orders er no orders. I reckon it's Injuns we cum out after, an' I don't suppose the war department would find any fault if we found a few."

The blood surged into the lieutenant's face, but opposition only served to increase his obstinacy.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Explosion of an ammunition caisson during the Battle of Gettsburg, by which a number of soldiers of the Twenty-eighth Infantry were killed.

HIGH TIDE OF WAR

BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG WAS TURNING POINT OF GREAT CIVIL CONFLICT.

BOTH SIDES FOUGHT BRAVELY

Three Days of Fighting That Resulted in Total Losses of Over 50,000 and Put Confederate Forces on the Defensive.

Bravely fought by two great armies of Americans, bravely won by the Federals and bravely lost by the Confederates the battle of Gettysburg proved to be the turning point of the Civil war. Before that the victories of the south were frequent and its armies were aggressive. After the bloody battle of July 1, 2 and 3, 1863, the forces of the Confederacy were generally on the defensive. Lee's invasion of the north, undertaken in the hope that it would bring foreign aid to the southern cause, was brought to a sudden and disastrous end.

General Lee's army at Gettysburg numbered approximately 84,000, while the Federal forces, under command of Gen. George G. Meade, aggregated about 80,000 officers and men. Lee's corps commanders were Generals Longstreet, Ewell and A. P. Hill. Commanders of the Union corps were Generals John F. Reynolds, W. S. Hancock, D. E. Sickles, Sykes, Sedgwick, O. O. Howard and Slocum.

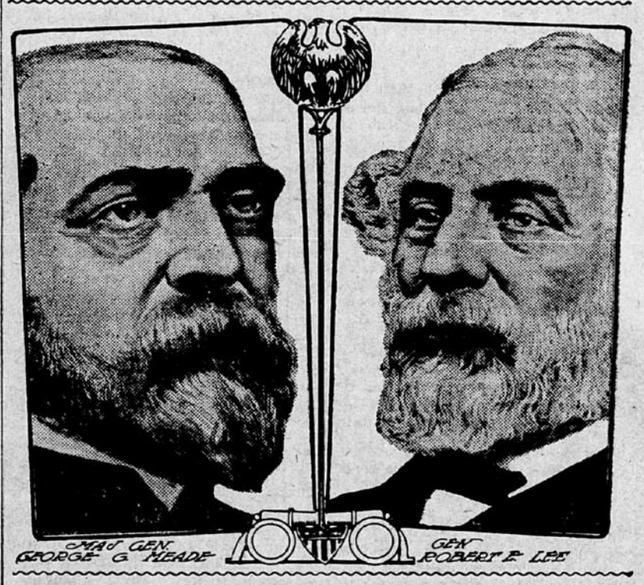
Reynolds, sent ahead to feel out the enemy, arrived at Gettysburg the evening of June 31, and in the fighting which began early the next day, was killed. Gen. Abner Doubleday, who succeeded him, was forced back to Seminary Ridge, after hard fighting, and then had to abandon that position, so that the first day of the battle was in reality a Confederate victory. That night Meade ordered the entire Union army to Gettysburg, and by next morning the two armies were confronting each other along a ten-mile line of battle.

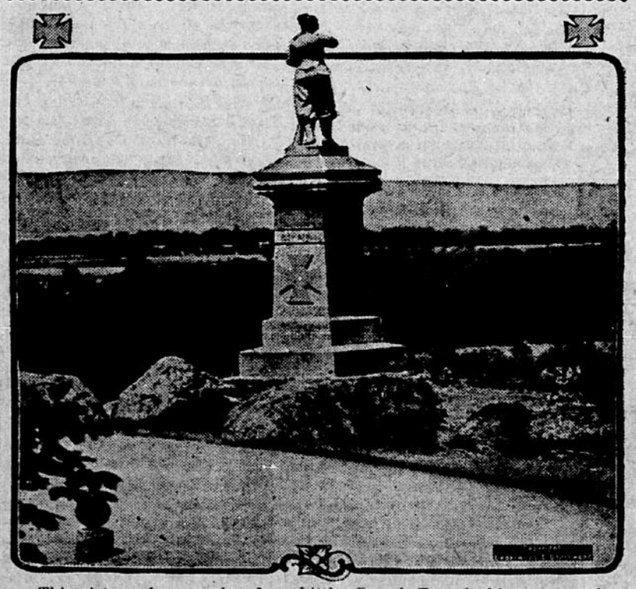
Lee ordered Longstreet to turn the left flank of the Federal army by taking Little Round Top, but Sickles defended that position so stubbornly that Longstreet's movement was checked, Peach Orchard, Cemetery Hill, Culp's Hill and The Devil's Den were the scenes of desperate fighting, and Little Round Top was saved to the Federals by the arrival of a brigade under General Weed. His men dragged the guns of a battery to the summit by hand.

The third day opened with a wonderful artillery duel, the greatest of the entire war, and then came Pickett's charge, which has gone into history as one of the most heroic assaults of all time. The men of Pickett's division formed in brigade columns, move dsteadily across open fields which were swept by such a storm of shrapnel and rifle fire as had never before been seen, and though they fell like grain before the reapers, some of them reaching the Union lines, only to be speedily overcome.

That ended the mighty battle, and there was nothing left for Lee to do but get back into Virginia.

Gettysburg cost the Union army the lives of a number of generals, and the loss of nearly 24,000 men. On the Confederate side five generals were killed and nearly 30,000 men killed or wounded.





This picture shows a view from Little Round Top, looking over the wheat field where the second day's battle fiercely surged.

GOOD YEAR FOR HEDGEHOGS

Extraordinary Multiplication of the Animals Something of a Puzzle to the English.

Among the curiosities of natural history that last year produced is to be noted the extraordinary multiplication of the hedgehog. On some of the heavy lands of the midlands they have been found hibernating in such numbers as no native has imagined possible.

This is the more curious, as other mammals, especially rabbits, are singularly scarce. The rabbits were drowned in hundreds. Their bodies were seen floating down the brooks, and a certain number of leveretts were also killed by the wet. What should make these rather obscure animals flourish is mysterious, but both they and the rat seem to multiply in wet years.

In the places where these hedgehogs are so numerous there is a great dearth of partridges, and the two facts are by some connected. It is not unlikely that the number of these animals has forced them into a rather less vegetarian diet than is usual, and some nests were rifled. But it is only when the numbers are excessive that any English animal is out of place in the economy of the country. There is room even for the wildcat, which has recently been rediscovered in the north, where it was held to be extinct.—London Mail.

Wisdom Worth Heeding.

What is true of men can be true of women. The realm of achievement is sexless. The brain is not at its best until you are forty or past. A bishop in a play cried: "Oh, that we were born old and could die young!" You are fulfilling in business the bishop's wish. He longed to start the race with experience. That is what you can do, may do, must do. Start the real race. Count fourteen years a the first half, as the learning time, as the warming up time. Begin again. Get your second wind. No man is whipped until he takes the count. No woman has failed until she tells her soul she will no longer try. Work and earn an old lady's home that shall not be the old ladies' home.—Exchange.

Have No Country.

While at supper one evening a member of the family asked: "Say, what are the Blanks?" The discussion on nationality and religion following, was wound up by the youngest son inquiring earnestly: "Papa, what country do the bachelors come from?"

Guard Against Bores.

Lord Rothschild's father, Baron Nathan, guarded himself against timewasters by allowing no chairs in his private room in the city save the one occupied by himself. From a passage in the "Reminiscences of Charles Gavard," who was for many years first secretary at the French embassy in London, it appears that this precaution did not always prove effective. Gavard frequently had occasion to visit St. Swithins lane in connection with the payment of the indemnity exacted after the Franco-German war. As his business was often complicated he declined to hurry over it, and used to find as comfortable a seat as he could on the baron's writing table.—London Chronicle.

Cigars.

Cigars are like women. Many times you can't tell by the wrapper what the filler is. They are of many kinds, sizes and shapes, and when on display in their rainbow raiment few sights so tickle the eyes or flurry the fancies. Some look so good that you would willingly spend your last dime for one, but after the match you go outdoors to air your clothing and your opinions. Another time you pick one with a homely exterior and it radiates such peace and contentment that you wouldn't exchange the brand for a million. After all, much lies with the chooser. Some prefer them slender and some prefer them fat; some like them mild and some like them strong. Still others go much on shape, forgetting that shape is only molded.

Old Fraud.

Victor Grayson, the English parliamentarian who was expelled from the house of commons for obstruction, said in New York the other day:

"Your multimillionaires are the glibbest lot of hypocrites that history has ever seen. With one hand they make the gestures for a Sunday school address and with the other hand they pick the people's pockets.

"These men, preaching good and doing evil so piously, remind me of the old fraud who said:

"'I believe in putting by something for a rainy day.'

"And, so saying, he stole his neighbor's mackintosh."

He Owned the Place.

Little Tommy was inclined to be wicked, and when the minister found him with rod and line fishing near the road one Sunday morning the good man asked:

"Don't you know it is wrong to fish on Sunday, Tommy?"

"I don't care if it is," Tommy replied. "I'm going to fish when I can get a chance, Sunday or any other day."

"Are you not afraid that you will go to the bad place when you die?" the good man asked.

"I don't care if I do," Tommy replied sullenly. "I own that place. It's mine."

"What do you mean by saying that you own the bad place, Tommy?" the minister asked, astonished.

"I ran away last Sunday and went fishing, and when I got home pa gave it to me."