THE GRIP OF HONOR

... By ...

Cyrus Townsend Brady,

Author of "The Southerners," "In the Wasp's Nest," Etc.

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SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Chapter I.—While cruising in the ship Ranger Paul Jones chases the English ship Maidstone upon the reefs. A beautiful woman seen upon the wreck. II.—Lieutenant Barry O'Neill (Marquis of Richemont), an officer of the Ranger, boards the wreck and rescues a girl and her aged companion. III.—The helpless maiden is Elizabeth Howard, ward of Admiral Lord Westbrooke of Scarborough castle. She thinks her rescuers are pirates. Jones gives up a cabin to her use and promises to land her at Liverpool. O'Neill smitten by the charms of the fair captive. IV.—Miss Howard is betrothed to Major Edward Coventry of the English army, son of her guardian. O'Neill takes her ashore in a boat. They are met by an armed officer. V.—O'Neill has words with Major Coventry about Paul Jones. They fight a duel and O'Neill spares the life of the Englishman. VI.—Some English soldiers capture O'Neill. Suddenly Paul Jones appears on the scene with a cutter loaded with armed men. Elizabeth prevents a fight. After explanations all around the Yankees put to sea. O'Neill whispers to Elizabeth to wait for him one year. VII.—Disguised as a Frenchman, O'Neill visits Scarborough castle and is at once made prisoner by Admiral Westbrooke. Jones about to attack the English fleet. VIII.—Meeting with Elizabeth. Approaching wedding with Major Coventry, who greets O'Neill as a friend. IX.—Elizabeth betrays her love for O'Neill. The admiral learns how he saved her life and spared Coventry's. The prisoner becomes a guest as Marquis de Richemont of France. X.—O'Neill and Elizabeth in a secret interview. Coventry goes away. The admiral conceives a plan to solve the love entanglement. Paul Jones is coming. XI.—The admiral offers fortune and honor to O'Neill, with the hand of Elizabeth, if he will betray Paul Jones' fleet. Elizabeth overhears the plot. O'Neill scorns the offer.

CHAPTER XII.

GENTLEMEN ALL.

"LOOK, you fool!" said the admiral roughly, furious with rage at being balked in this way, though, in spite of himself, his heart exulted in the nobility of the man. "Look, you beggarly Irishman!" he exclaimed, turning the surprised young man about before he could recover himself. "Look on the picture of her whom you reject! Gaze upon it! If you love her, say whether or no your high flown sentiments of honor can stand against that prospect." It was his final appeal, win or lose. He had staked all upon the throw.

There in the great frame stood the most beautiful picture that the eyes of either man had ever seen. Elizabeth was standing. One tiny hand clutched tightly her heaving bosom; the other arm was stretched out with upraised palm like a goddess in command. The light of the flickering candles cast subtle shadows upon her face. The dusk of the room intensified the illusion and spiritualized her beauty. O'Neill looked at her with all his life in his gaze. So glorious, so splendid, so perfect a creature would shake the very soul of honor itself!

The admiral had played his last card. This was the end of his resource, and he watched the Irishman with all the intensity of a tiger about to spring on its prey. The moments fled. He knew that he had lost. Elizabeth had risen in the stress of her anxiety. The strain had been too much for her. She had been about to intervene between them when the glances of the two men arrested her step. She waited, one little foot outstretched, her body leaning forward slightly, a picture of triumph, her eyes as two lambent flames playing upon her lover. He watched her in awestruck silence, sank on his knees, stretched out his arms, murmuring softly:

"Thou knowest that I love thee! I have dreamed sometimes that in happier days thou mightest have given me thy heart, but I could not take it with a bar sinister of shame between us! No"— Was she moving? Was that some trick of the wavering light?

"Good heavens!" cried O'Neill fearfully, rising. "See—is it a spirit? She shakes her head! Look you, my lord, she is alive. The picture fell last night, you remember— 'Tis herself! Elizabeth, Elizabeth, you have heard and seen—have I not decided well?"

"How dare you, my lord!" exclaimed the girl, coming down from the dais and stepping swiftly toward the astonished admiral, who shrank back from her. "How dare you make my hand the reward of treachery, my person the bait for dishonor? And by what right do you dispose of me without consulting me? Am I a slave, that you force me upon this gentleman? My word is given to your son; you yourself insisted upon it. You would play the traitor double and would fain make him do the same. And for what? To compass the death of one poor man to whom I owe life and honor, who is only fighting for what he calls his freedom! Shame upon your gray hairs, sir! Oh, the insult to my modesty, to be thus bandied about between two men— And you, sir!" she cried in tempestuous passion, turning to O'Neill. "You do me the honor to refuse me—to reject me—me—me—Elizabeth Howard—look at me—you would have none of me"—

"My honor"— cried O'Neill, amazed at her sudden change and inconsistency.

"Your honor. Have I any honor, sir! Would you have left me a shadow of it between you? Stand back, sir! My lord, is it thus you discharge the trust committed to you by my mother—to give this gentleman opportunity to return to France and say that he has refused my hand?"

"He shall not go back to France, Lady Elizabeth," said the admiral sternly.

"Why not, pray?" asked Elizabeth, faltering, her passionate anger checked by the admiral's word and look.

"Because he shall be tried and hanged tomorrow as an American spy or a captured traitor, whichever he may elect."

She stood as if petrified at these cruel words.

"It is right, sir," said O'Neill. "I submit, and if you would make me die happy say that the hideous proposition I have had from you was but the test of my honor."

"Oh, sir," cried Elizabeth in agony, throwing herself upon her knees before the admiral, "forgive me for my wild, intemperate speech! I know not what I say. You have been a father to me from the beginning, and I have ever loved you as one! I have turned to you for everything. Unsay your cruel words! Retract this order! You cannot condemn this honest gentleman! Dispose of me as you will. I love him—I love him—aye, let the truth be heard—even for his rejection of me! Nay, had he not done so I would have hated him! Spare his life! I will marry Edward, do anything you wish! Grant me this boon!"

"I cannot," said the admiral slowly. "I pity you, from my soul I do, and him as well, but I dare not. There is but one thing that would excuse my clemency to his majesty—there is the alternative he has nobly rejected. Die he must or give up his captain!"

"A thousand deaths rather than that!" answered O'Neill. "Rise, Lady Elizabeth; your appeal is vain. Rejoicing in your approval of my action, thankful to God that I have heard you say, 'I love you,' I shall die happy."

"No, no!" said the girl, spreading her arms protectingly before him and then throwing herself upon his breast, "you cannot die—you shall not die! Oh, my love, my love, I knew not until I heard you speak what this feeling was! I cannot let you go! Surely, you would never be so cruel as to part us now?" she cried brokenly, looking back at the impassive old man. His hands were steady enough now. They never trembled but from shame. "What has he done? He came here to see me—me alone—to take me in his arms as he holds me now, and you condemn him to death for that! Did you never love when you were young? They whispered that it was my mother who had your heart. They told me that she was unhappy because they forced you apart. 'Twas to you she confided me. Have pity, in her name, have mercy!"

"Enough!" said the admiral. "It is not that I will not, but I cannot. He has chosen; he must die."

"Then may death come to me," said Elizabeth, "because, for all eternity, I love him!"

"And this," broke in the cold, stern voice of Major Coventry, who had entered the room at that moment, "is the welcome I receive from my bride of tomorrow, and this is the reward of the efforts I have made to secure the release of the Marquis de Richemont, my friend! May God have pity on me—my sweetheart and my friend!"

"Sir," said O'Neill brokenly, "I crave your forgiveness. I knew that she was yours—I do not understand how we got into this position," passing his hand over his forehead in bewilderment—"but this I know—I am to die! There is no choice. She will yet be yours."

"Never—never!" cried Elizabeth, turning to him. "Edward, if you have truly loved me—if I have rightly estimated you, your nobility of soul, your generosity of heart—you will plead for us with your father. You will give me up. You are too proud to take an unwilling bride and one who in spite of herself—for I have fought against it for your sake—confesses that she loves another. You will intercede with your father. I will bless you all the days of my life. Edward, Edward, the companion of my childhood's hours, my friend, my brother, my only hope is in you! Speak!" She fell at his feet and clasped his hand, which she covered with kisses. There was another silence. Coventry covered his face with his other hand. The sweat of agony bedewed his brow.

"Rise, Elizabeth. You shall not put your trust in me in vain," he cried hoarsely at last. "Father, can nothing be done? I will not stand in the way."

"My son, Lady Elizabeth, Lieutenant O'Neill, there is nothing that can be done. My duty is perfectly clear. The only possible salvation of the prisoner would be in the action which he has refused even to consider, and, sir, if it were my duty to effect, if possible, the capture of your captain and his ship through you I can only say that I am glad that I have failed. I apologize to you. You are a man of honor indeed, sir. I know few who would have resisted such a plea as this. Say no more, Elizabeth. It is not that I will not. I cannot! Edward, here is my seal. Make out the warrant for an order for a court martial tomorrow morning. It is a necessary form, of course. The execution of Lieutenant O'Neill will follow at once." Elizabeth did not faint—no, not yet. There would be time for that later. She clung to O'Neill and listened.

"What shall be the manner of my death, sir?" queried the latter.

"Hanging, sir. 'Tis the penalty prescribed by the law."

"It is a poor death for a man, my lord, but 'twill serve. A last request, sir. I am a sailor—may I be hanged upon a ship?" he asked again, pressing the trembling woman to his breast.

"I grant that—would that I could grant more! Major Coventry, you will direct Captain Pearson of the Serapis to execute the sentence of the court which will meet on his ship, the prisoner to be confined there meanwhile. You will find the papers in the library. Here is my seal. Hasten and get the painful matter over." Coventry left the room at once in obedience to his orders.

"And at what time, sir, will the sentence be carried out?" asked O'Neill, Elizabeth still clinging to him, covering him with incoherent caresses and fighting against despair.

"Tomorrow evening at half after 6 o'clock."

"Very well, my lord."

At this moment the old sergeant entered the room and saluted the admiral.

"A French officer, wich he says he's from the American Continental squadron, has come ashore in a small cutter, under a flag of truce, an' desires to speak with your lordship. He asks for a safe conduct."

"Tell him he shall return as freely as he came, on the word of a British officer, and admit him."

A slender, dapper little man in the brilliant uniform of a French marine officer, his head covered with a powdered wig, entered the room a moment later and bowed profoundly. Elizabeth started violently as she beheld him.

"Whom have I the honor of addressing?" asked the admiral.

"The Vicomte de Chamillard, a colonel of marines in the navy of France, serving as a volunteer in the American squadron," was the reply.

"And you come on behalf of"—

"Captain John Paul Jones, to protest against your unlawful detention of another French officer, the Marquis de Richemont, my lord."

"He is a spy, caught in the very act; he has admitted it, and, if that were not enough, I find he is an attainted traitor. A court is ordered for tomorrow morning on the Serapis; his execution, which will be inevitable, is set for half after 6 o'clock in the evening; he shall hang from one of the frigate's yardarms."

"De Chamillard," said O'Neill, "you can do nothing."

"The laws of war"— persisted the Frenchman.

"It is in accordance with those laws that I do what I do," replied the admiral shortly, "and you may say to your captain that if I catch him he shall swing from the first yardarm that comes in the harbor."

"I am answered, then. Very good; I shall remember your courteous words, my lord. And now I enter my formal protest against this unwarranted action on your part concerning the Marquis de Richemont. The king of France will have something to say about it. I bid you farewell."

"Farewell, sir," said the admiral, indifferently turning away.

"De Richemont, goodby; embrace me." As the two men came together the Frenchman whispered, "This woman—is she your friend?"

"Yes," replied O'Neill quickly.

"Mademoiselle," said De Chamillard, turning to Elizabeth with a keen look in his eyes. Recognizing him at last, she stretched out her hand to him. He murmured as he bent low over it, "Delay the execution for at least six hours, and I will save him." Elizabeth sank down in her chair, a gleam of hope in her heart.

"I salute you," he said, turning away.

"Sergeant," cried the admiral, "attend the Vicomte de Chamillard and see him safely bestowed on his vessel."

As the Frenchman turned toward the door he came face to face with Major Coventry returning with the orders he had prepared.

"Paul Jones, by heaven!" shouted the latter.

"At your service," said the supposed Frenchman, promptly tearing off his wig and laying his hand on his sword.

"Ha!" cried the admiral. "Have you dared to come here? I have you now! Call the guard! Sergeant, arrest this rebel, this traitor, this pirate! Disarm him! You shall never leave this castle but for the ship, sir. The yardarm is there."

"Stop, my lord," answered Jones calmly as the men crowded toward

"Thou knowest that I love thee!"

him. "Stand back, sergeant! Back, men! You cannot touch me. I have that which will protect me wherever flies the English flag."

"And that is"— said the admiral, smiling contemptuously

"Your word, sir—the word of an English officer."

The old man bit his lip in chagrined silence. He struggled with himself, looking at the easy, insouciant Scotsman before him.

"In seventy years it has not been broken," he said at last. "Well for you that you secured it. Go! You are free! You are a bold man, sir; but, I warn you, do not cross my path again."

"I am proud to have met so true a gentleman. Will you honor me?" said Paul Jones, presenting his snuffbox to the admiral. The old man hesitated, laughed in spite of himself and finally helped himself to a pinch.

"The insolence of the man!" he exclaimed. "I'd like to have met you in my young days, yardarm to yardarm."

"I would have endeavored to occupy you, sir," said Jones coolly. "And now I bid you farewell."

He shot one meaning glance at Elizabeth, and his lips seemed to form the words "six hours" as he departed from the room.

"Here is the warrant, sir," said Coventry. "Again I ask, and this time I ask my father, can nothing be done?"

"Nothing, sir; less as a father than in any other capacity. Sergeant, take your prisoner. Major Coventry, you will conduct him on the Serapis and remain there as my representative until the execution is over. Sir, you have borne yourself well this day. I would shake you by the hand. Goodby."

O'Neill clasped the proffered hand warmly and then looked from Coventry, standing erect, immovable, white faced, to Elizabeth, who was still sitting with bowed head, a world of entreaty in his glance. Coventry nodded and turned away. O'Neill stepped quickly to the girl's side, took her hand in his, bowed low over it, pressed a long kiss upon it.

"May you be happy!" he said. "Farewell!" She looked at him in dazed silence.

"Sir," he continued, turning back to Coventry and saluting him, "I am ready. Lead on."

"Forward, march, sergeant!" commanded the officer hoarsely, and with no backward look the little cortege moved from the room. The girl rose to her feet as if to start after them, but the old man restrained her.

"O'Neill, O'Neill!" rang through the hall—a wild, despairing cry—and then Lady Elizabeth sank down white and still at the feet of the admiral.

"And this is love!" he murmured, shaking his old head. "I had forgotten it."

(To be Continued.)

Buttermilk a Liquor Cure.

A buyer for one of the largest importing liquor houses in New York, who is compelled to sample enough wine and spirits every day to put an ordinary man out of business, says that buttermilk is his salvation. "I not only buy five or six glasses a day at the dairy restaurants or street stands," he says, "but I drink it all the time at home, instead of tea or coffee. I never touch beer or anything like that. I keep a stone crock of buttermilk in the cellar and let it get just a little stale. It is better then than if taken fresh. A man who insists on drinking liquor will find very little trouble if he takes plenty of buttermilk. If he wants to swear off, buttermilk will help him. It is a splendid stomachic. Two quarts of good buttermilk a day will cure any case of nervous indigestion.

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The farmers and business men of Walla Walla are arranging to hold a Farmers' Institute at that place early in January.

Two Painters.

During a holiday ramble Sir Frederick Leighton came across a little roadside inn, the signboard of which was being somewhat coarsely painted by a local artist. For some little time Sir Frederick watched the progress of the painting, till the rural artist, glancing down, remarked, "It be a foine day, masther?"

Leighton assented, adding that a figure on the signboard was out of proportion.

"Wheer be it out?" asked the aggrieved artist. "I'm thinkin yer've summer wrong in yer soight."

"If you get off that ladder, I'll put it right for you," replied the R. A. good humoredly.

"Eh, boot can ye paint?" queried the other doubtfully. "Ye ken I dinna want my work spiled."

"It's all right; I've done a little painting in my time," answered Leighton, as the other clambered down the ladder. Then, taking the palette, he climbed up and commenced to paint and did not desist until he had completed the signboard.

"Er, boot tha's nae so bad," was the rural artist's comment. "Art is nae so paying now; still if ye like to do mair work for me, I'll gie ye mair siller than I do as a rule."

"Thanks," replied Sir Frederick dryly. "My name is Leighton."

"Verra pleased to ken ye, Mr. Leighton," replied the man, ignorant of what the name meant. "My name is Tam."—St. James Gazette.

One of Webster's Drinks.

"Daniel Webster," said a Boston man, "as all the world knows, had a penchant for looking on wine when it glowed rosy red. At one time he was driving to Cambridge from Boston. He was billed to make a speech at the home of Harvard, and his companion in the old fashioned gig was a member of the reception committee and a resident of the town.

"On the way to Cambridge Mr. Webster turned to his fellow traveler with an inquiry whether there was not some place in the neighborhood where they could obtain a drink. 'If you will drive a short distance out of your way to my house,' was the courteous response, 'I think I can promise you as good a drink of Jamaica rum as you ever tasted.'

"To the house the twain accordingly journeyed, and once there the host, true to his promise, set before the statesman a decanter of extremely fine rum. The great Massachusetts senator poured out a brimming beaker and quaffed it off without wincing. His host tentatively pushed toward him the water jug, but Senator Webster after eying it a moment said: 'Thank you, no. I wanted a drink, but I am not thirsty.' He then went on to Cambridge and delivered one of his masterly efforts."

Won by His Retort.

At one of their joint discussions which took place in Kentucky some years ago Tom Stuart, then editor of the Winchester Democrat, gave his opponent, I. N. Boone, a descendant of the great Daniel, a blow that fairly knocked him out of the race for the legislature.

Boone was making his regular speech, and at the proper place in it he referred to the matter of his relation to the toiling masses. "My friends," said he, holding up a pair of hands that looked as if they had not been washed in a week, "to let you see for yourself that I am a horny handed son of toil, I ask you to look at these hands, and," turning to Stuart, "I would ask my pale faced young friend from the city what he thinks of them?"

Stuart was on his feet in a minute. "I do not desire to embarrass my distinguished opponent, ladies and gentlemen," he said, with a bow, "but I would say that I think that they need soap and water."

It was such an apparent case that the crowd took hold at once with a shout, and Boone was completely floored, and later Stuart was elected.—Argonaut.

A Mean Interruption.

"Don't trifle with me, Miss McCurdy!" pleaded the young man desperately. "Wait till I have finished. Do I need to tell you, after all these weeks, how completely and absolutely your image fills my heart? Have you not seen? Do you not know? Have I not betrayed myself by my looks, by the tones of my voice, by the eager joy that lights up my features whenever you appear? Must I put in words the feelings I can no more disguise than I can"—

"Mr. Whitgood," interrupted the young woman, "are you in earnest?"

"Glycerine McCurdy," he said, drawing himself up with injured dignity, "do you think I'm doing this on a bet?"—Chicago Tribune.

Bad Manners.

An old gentleman, walking up Cork Hill, Dublin, overtook a coal cart heavily loaded and drawn by a wretched quadruped with its legs bending under it, its bones sticking through its skin.

"How can you ill treat your horse so?" he cried, addressing the driver. "It is quite exhausted. Look at the way its tongue is hanging out."

"Exhausted, is it?" answered the boy. "Why, 'tis the bad manners of him. He's putting it out at you!"—London Tit-Bits.

A Kind Hearted Lady.

A Mrs. Abigail Vaughan left a legacy of 4 shillings per annum with which to buy fagots to burn heretics. She left it to St. Martin Outwich, now demolished. Mrs. Vaughan's remains were among those removed to Irford from the Church of St. Martin Outwich. The facts are given in a history of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, by a late rector.—Notes and Queries.

Water.

Boiled water or distilled water should not be used either by grown people or children unless there is danger from contamination from the water in ordinary use. Pure cold water is preferable. A child may be given a glass of cool (never ice) water the first thing in the morning—say half an hour before breakfast, and may also take a glass on retiring.

Guessed Wrongly.

"What do you expect to do with all your money?" asked the multimillionaire's spiritual adviser. "You can't take it with you where you are going."

"Yes, but I can," answered the multimillionaire. "I am going to Europe."—Chicago Tribune.

Don't allow yourself to become melancholy. Laugh once in awhile, whether you are tickled or not.—Chicago News.

Minorities lead and save the world and the world knows them not till long afterward.—John Burroughs.

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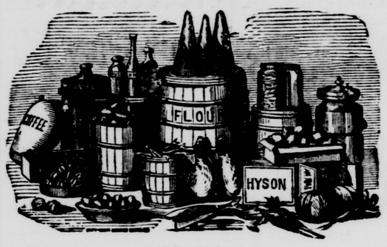

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