

How SHE saved the General

BY EVELYN MAGRUDER and JARNETTE.



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ES: I did save the general's life— saved it twice. Just let me tell you. First, there was pa—a perfect prisoner!

I said, "Oh, my poor pa! Do you think they will cut you in four pieces and hang them over the gate posts and horse rack, like King Edward done Sir William Wallace?"

"Say did, Virginia. Oh, no, child; who cares to murder an old, gray-headed preacher like me? I am under guard; that is all. You poor little fitter-head sparrow!"

Pa tried to smile, but he did not deceive me in the least.

I knew he was held a prisoner of the deepest, darkest dye—a prisoner of war in his own very house. Yankees with guns and weapons at both doors and pa pacing up and down, backward and forward, up and down the long hall with that pitiful look on his face, like a bug on a log and both ends burning, and hands clasped behind over his coat tails.

They let me run about, free as a house cat, and I was excited. Me and Paul, we're not afraid of any Yankees. I felt brave and heroic, and I dared them (not out loud) to slay me or chain me in iron!

I know a great deal from Paul's reading so much. I hate books myself, but Paul gloats on them and tells me the tales till my head is stuffed full as an egg with schemes, stratagems and all sorts of expedients.

Four pa never pays the last attention to my advice, and is too good and poke-easy to make any effort for himself, or I would have whispered:

"Pa, make a sudden dash and butt the gently off the back porch and escape, while I fly to the front door and lock it!"

Instead, I just held his dear hand and tried to amuse and cheer him up with a riddle.

"Pa," I said, "yard full, porch full, can't get a dishfull"—meaning enemies, of course, though the true answer is smoke.

Pa never even heard me. He kept on looking sorrowful. He darstn't get himself a drink, so I brought him the gourd, and his dear hand quivered till he split the water. I began to feel uneasy they would behead pa, so I hurried back to the porch to watch.

I made up my mind they should trample over my dead body before they hit pa a lick.

I counted between thirteen and fourteen troopers. They moved about continually and orderlies held spirited horses that champed and looked splendid.

I did hope and trust they had not captured Firefly, Paul's colt. He and I had hid her in the old Mine Pit, back of Hazel Spring, in the woods.

Whenever we heard talk of Yankees coming, me and Paul hid our valuables safe and sound. The woods back of the spring is full of old pits where they dug for gold about a thousand years ago. There's mighty little in these old Spottsylvania wilds me and Paul don't know.

Our poor ma had been enjoying herself up with the angels ever and ever so long, and pa, preaching every which-away, left me and Paul to raise ourselves to suit ourselves—we are twins, you know.

The servants managed some sort of shakily way, but we all kept care of pa and loved each other very dearly.

Paul is more honorable and toptofy than me, but I have got a great deal the highest temper.

Well, I sat in the porch corner and watched. I knew one of the officers was a general by his straps and buttons skipping.

He looked very fiery and noble and wrote notes occasionally, which splendid couriers would take after saluting and dash away galloping. There was not any battle going on, but some kind of a skirmish, I think.

I know all about battles, and the little puffs of smoke now and then were just to let folk know they were about, I suppose. There was not near so much uproar as our Colonel Carter had kicked up when he camped on Raccoon Branch and let Paul have the skins from the beaves.

And Unc' Black Dan made pa lovely preaching boots out of Paul's skins, with criers that would screech all the way from the door to the pulpit, and Unc' Dan—he could do anything. He made me and Paul little cowskin shoes. Not very pretty, and stumpy, but comfortable.

And pa was always sending a servant to "see what the children were doing and tell them to stop." Of course, me and Paul did not pay much attention to messages, but when we heard those boots come a-creaking we stopped.

For we love him dearly and do not like to fret him.

Well, this general was dressed in pistols and a gold-hilted sword, like Ex Calibur.

When I thought of pa's suffering I had a great mind to snatch a pistol and clap it to his fifth rib and exclaim:

"Die, Vandal!"

That's what Paul called them. "Vandals and Despot-heels." Or, better still, I'd swirl the gold-hilted sword and with one fell swoop send his proud head skipping nine eels into our front yard.

I didn't really snatch either, but my arm shot out in a terrible manner, and I hissed:

a bunch of ivory toothpicks that opened like a little fan, and a knife. A knife with two good blades and a corkscrew. I never was so astonished.

"Thank you," I said. "I'll do you a favor some day."

He smiled at me again. "A mouse saved a lion's life," I said, very dignified.

He dropped his notes on the porch floor to dry. I pressed up to his shoulder to see him write.

It was my ink, and I certainly had a right.

"Can you read it, little rebel?" he asked quizzically; for he was not a bit in any hurry.

"No, sir," I answered; "but I expect Paul can."

He wrote awful bad. Just then a scheme flew into my head to send one of these notes to our men by Paul, for the rescue of pa. Paul says, "All is fair in love and war."

So I brought a gourd of ice water to the general, and he drained it and said: "That is fine."

I dropped the empty gourd on purpose, and picked up a note along with it.

Then I flew to find Paul, who was down in the thickets about his traps; and I knew he was brooding schemes, too, for we both knew pa takes mighty poor care of himself, and we look after him.

He was on his knees and I thought in great despair or at prayer.

But Paul was scratching eggs out of the guinea nest. I flew at him.

"It's my nest," I cried.

"I found it!" he said.

"I watched the guinea, sir!"

"You watched the guinea rooster; you can't tell them apart, miss!"

I sprang and pulled his hair. He squirmed round and pulled mine, which was cut short and exactly like his. We tussled and rolled and scrambled till every guinea egg was smashed. I could not boss Paul and he could not boss me, for we were twins, and the very same age.

Then we sat up and glared. I tore my handkerchief and threw him half to mop his bloody nose, and bound up my skint wrist with the rest.

"Paul," I said, "I am perfectly ashamed of ourselves. To waste at this good fighting that might have slain a Yankee!"

"Virginia," sneered Paul, "you are not such a great fighter. You can make a fellow's nose bleed, and that's about all."

"What's the matter with my flying at the big general's nose then, while you stab his back in the fifth rib?"

"I'm too honorable!" said Paul haughtily. "Stab even an enemy in the back—never!"

My conscience hurt me for planning the death of that good, kind general. I felt that I must have a mean heart.

"Paul," I said, "you are noble. You ought to go along with the Prince of Wales and Ivanhoe and Richard Cure-the-Lion."

That flattered Paul, and he smiled.

Then I said eagerly: "The job of rescuing our poor pa, pacing like a—like a wounded bison, would suit them exactly. If we could only send word to them I know they would come with their vas-sals."

"Virginia, they are dead," said Paul, quite solemn. "You seem to get things mixed half the time."

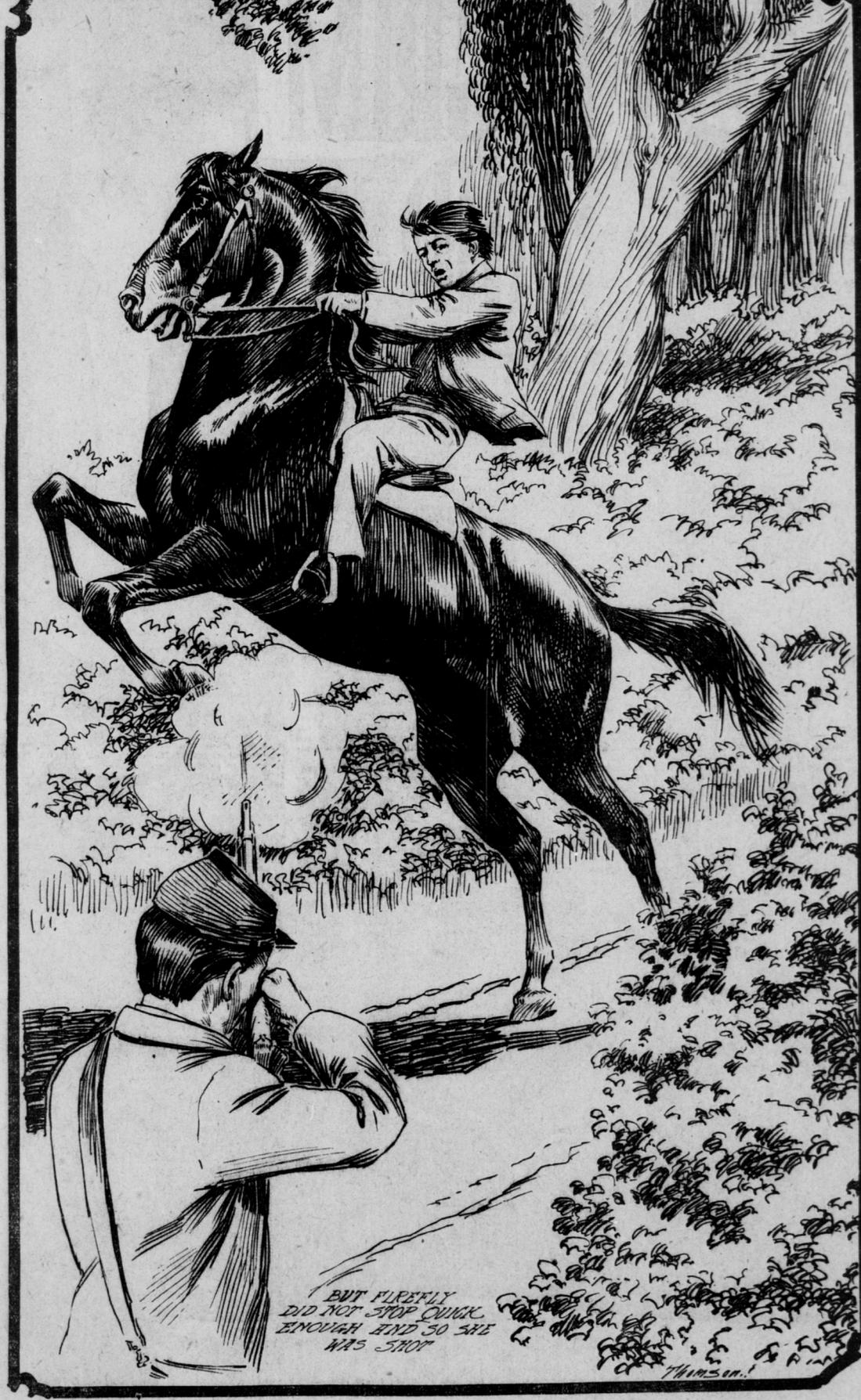
He shook his head in great botherment.

"Your schemes are always flighty, Virginia. You nearly killed me once. That time you tied my aching tooth to the string and an apple to the other end and made the old sow run away with it."

But when I showed Paul the dispatch his eyes glowed like lightning bugs.

"If Stogewell Jackson gets this, Virginia, he'll come. I know he'll come. He is out on the rampage now. Unc' Black Dan says so. He is here to-day and there to-morrow; swift as a weaver's shuttle. He is on the old Furnace road now on the rampage."

"How does Unc' Black Dan know, Paul?"



WHEN the old philosopher admitted that he was unable to explain all the ramifications and subtleties of the ways of a man with a maid he confessed to a condition of ignorance that would have brought the blush of shame to the cheek of any member in good standing in the philosophers' union. A man who had lived as long as he did without finding out the solution to such a simple problem might have been justified in assuming that he had lived in vain or less in vain. Of course there are many men, and approximately as many maids, and they all have different ways, but in the last analysis they all proceed on the same fundamental principles. It is with the pious intention of spreading a large quantity of expert knowledge before the world in general and particularly before the aforesaid old philosopher ament the ways of men with maids that we proceed to tell what happened to Alphonse and Marie.

Marie was a coy maid and exceedingly hard to keep in sight of. For more years than it would be polite or safe to mention she had had a number of callow youths trailing around after her, Alphonse being among these trailers. It was not that Marie was fickle or that she didn't know her own mind. The man who thinks that a woman doesn't know her own mind is in possession of a vast amount of high-class ignorance of the sex.

The settled principle by which Marie regulated her conduct was that men never value any article that is held too cheaply. Therefore she proposed to give a long chase to the man who presumed to entice her into the matrimonial corral. Furthermore, she argued, matrimony is an uncertain condition, especially since the South Dakota divorce have begun to lose caste with the Supreme Court. Liberty is sweet, especially after you have lost it, and Marie didn't banker to deprive herself of any of the sweets of freedom until she could make a contract that would guarantee her all the rights

novels of the latest pattern and boxes of chocolate ad libitum were part of the regimen to which Alphonse was subjected by the evanescent Marie.

Lest it be supposed that Alphonse was lacking in some of the qualities of true manhood, it should be stated that he was something more than four years old and that he thought he knew a few things about the game himself. He was content to wait on the bench because he was reasonably sure that in the course of time and feminine events he would come to

she was to continue in her condition of singularity indefinitely or was to send out a flag of truce and invite Alphonse into the camp to discuss terms of peace. Since all but him had died, she must make the best terms possible and capitulate with the honors of war. When the case was stated to Alphonse in diplomatic language no particular mention was made of the causes that had inspired Marie to her determination, but he was allowed to believe that his superior charms had at last made a

breach in the walls of the fair one's heart, and that all he had to do was to march in and take possession. But Alphonse had been around a little himself, and some of the things that had struck terror to the heart of Marie were not lost upon him. He knew that he was a sort of Hobson's choice, but he also knew that that fact relieved him of some of his obligations in the matter.

In the next act the wedding bells had ceased ringing, and Marie had settled down to the quiet joys of domestic life—at least Marie had. Alphonse, however, seemed to be

ready to do everything but settle down. The nights that he wasn't at his club he went to sleep in his chair before 9 o'clock, and when he was awake he was unable to find any more cheerful subject of conversation than the size of the last month's bills for military and dressmaker's supplies and the advantages of a single life as compared with his present condition. He never seemed to find time to take his wife out in his automobile any more, although it was rumored that Doty Higball of the Thirty-four Jolly Maids Company was not unacquainted with the number and speed capacity of his machine. Roses and chocolates never found their way now to Marie, and when she remonstrated with him on the subject he reminded her that she had had her innings some time previous.

All in all, Marie was forced to the conclusion that whatever matrimony might be in the abstract did not incline her to think that she would respond with great alacrity to an encore if the chance ever came her way. As it is now, Alphonse spends most of his time between his office and his club, and Marie sits at home and wonders why marriage works such wonderful changes in men. The important fact which she overlooked in her plan of capitulation was that the harder a man runs to catch a train, the less inclined he is to active exercise afterward.

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He answered sorter slow: "What is good enough for angels is plenty good enough for me, but I don't see how you and pa could get on very well without me, Virginia."

Firefly rubbed up between us, and we all put our arms around one another's necks.

Paul said some of that piece we like so well:

To every man upon the land Death cometh soon or late, And How can man die better Than facing fearful odds? "What a little fellow you are, Paul," I said, noticing it all at once.

"I was just thinking what a little, small chap you are yourself, Virginia."

It was time now for me to be hurrying back, for I felt sure pa would get into some mischief without me.

I told Paul, "Be sure not to catch cold," and we kissed.

Then he climbed up in the little saddle pa had made for him Christmas, and I sat on the stump and watched him and Firefly trotting away through the pines and dogwood bushes, and realized he was just a little boy.

That was the last I saw of Paul for a long, long time.

The fat German eyed me very keen as I came back. I put my hands in my pockets and whistled to let him know I was a boy.

I was terribly afraid he would call for that pass again, but he did not.

He pointed to a bloody hide and said, "Dere ish your skin, leetle boy?"

And oh—oh—it was the skin of my own little Spotty heifer!

I burst out crying, "You are a thief! I'll report you! I'll tell the general. Oh! my dear cat! I raised myself!"

It does hurt anybody so awful to kill their heifer they raised themselves.

I drew her little front paws over my shoulder and dragged her skin sadly along.

I could not stop crying about Spotty, and dragged her poor skin halfway home, without being bothered, till in the edge of the thickets there came a puff of smoke, and my left arm stung and dropped the skin, and I began to hurt all over.

I had on Paul's coonskin cap and somebody must have taken me for a varmint. When I got near the house I felt very curious. I walked sorter oncesid.

A soldier came to meet me and pulled me along roughly.

"You pitiful little rascal!" he said. "Come and report your deviltry! Dressed up as a boy, are you?"

Just as I expected. No sooner was my back turned than poor pa got in trouble. With his back against the bell-pears tree stood pa, trembly as a ghost, between a line of soldiers, who stood at "ention."

The general was leaning against the white porch pillar and the officers stood near.

I do believe they were having a court-martial off my poor pa.

Just then I staggered into view, for I was in great pain.

Pa exclaimed: "Oh, Virginia, Virginia, have you come at last?"

I clasped my hands to the general and cried out:

"Oh, do not shoot my pa! He is innocent as you. I took the note. Shoot me, I am the guilty one—I!"

Then I toppled over and did not know anything more at all.

Now I have to tell the tale as pa told it later.

The general stooped down to lift me up and said:

"Poor little rebel! Poor little kid!"

At that moment a rifle ball tore a hole through the pillar where the general's head rested the instant before. He exclaimed:

"My God! The kid has saved my life!"

More bullets came flying out from the thickets; then a volley. Pa said it was pandemonium let loose. The rebel yell reverberated through the thickets.

"Y-y-yell-yell-yell! Y-y-yell-yell!" and all in a moment, like a swarm of bees, there were thousands of gray jackets.

Our premises were cleared of the enemy in a twinkling. The peach orchard, in full bloom that morning, had not a blossom left the next day. The trees were stripped of their branches by shot and shell.

Pa says "the battle was fought gloriously and we won the field."

My pass did not do Paul a bit of good. Before he had gone a mile a soldier halted him, but Firefly did not stop quick enough. Poor Firefly always would manage Paul, and so she was shot and rolled on him.

He was mashed some, but the soldier did not bother him when he saw what a small chap Paul was. So Paul limped along till he met one of Jackson's scouts and he carried him to Jackson. And Paul gave him the note and told him what I told him to tell him about our porch and yard full of Yankees.

Paul stayed in the camp-hospital till he got patched up and they sent him home. They praised him up, too. But nobody praised me at all. They said I came within the ace of spades of being the death of both pa and Paul with meddlesomeness.

Nobody gave me any horse or anything, except my dear, kind, sweet, good general.

How glad I am I saved his life. Saved it twice. First by not killing him with his own pistol and then when I fainted and made him swoop over to pick me up, just in time to dodge the minie ball aimed at his head.

It's a proud thing to save a fellow being's life, and I've got his toothpicks and the knife yet, though both blades are broke. The corkscrew is all right.