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Miscellaneous

MICHAEL ALLSCOT.

—OR—

THE SHOT IN TIME.

A STORY OF MARION'S MEN.

BY J. W. IRVIN.

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER II.

"Oh that we,
In those blest woods where first you won my soul,
Had passed our gentle days far from the toil
And din of war! Such is the wish of love,
Of love that with delighted weakness
Knows no bliss and no ambition but itself."

The evening repast was over, when Dora Singleton immediately retired to her apartment but not to sleep. Her pathway had ceased to wind among roses, and care and anxiety were heavy at her heart.

The old family mansion, where she still dwelt with her step-father—a man of moody and sullen temper, whose treatment was not always tempered by that kindness and consideration which should have been the lot of one so tender and young—was one of those picturesque buildings of that style so pleasing to our ancestors some few generations ago, but which have altogether disappeared in this utilitarian age. It was a quiet and dignified looking old mansion, somewhat quaint indeed in its appearance and style, yet sufficiently capacious to have sheltered under its pyramidal roof some two or three generations of those prolific days. Antiquated cupboards, with shelves well hidden by neatly panelled doors that reached even up to the ceiling, filled up here and there the corner of an apartment, while doors innumerable opened into mysterious closets on every side.

Dora had retired into her bed chamber in the second story of the building, the walls of which were decorated with portraits of her father and mother, that seemed to look down fondly upon the beautiful and unfriended orphan. A small silver lamp of exquisite workmanship shed its clear light over her beautiful features, pale indeed, yet wondrously fair, so that she scarcely seemed a being of earth. Her glance had in it that strangely fascinating power that belongs only to beauty of a rare and high order of perfection. It was only such as could belong to a proud, and generous, and sensitive nature, that seemed without an effort to reach the heart of all others, while it betrayed not even in a moment the secrets of its own. All the magic grace of nature lived with her and seemed to dwell in the air she breathed.

Her hair of a very dark shade, yet not wholly black, was tastefully bound up in the becoming Grecian knot, and where it was gathered from her neck it formed a lovely contrast with the dazzling white skin beneath.—Her arms, left bare to the elbow, or but slightly concealed from view by undersleeves of a most delicate texture, were full and most temptingly rounded, and her small hand, on the fingers of which glittered a single ring bearing a gem of the first water, was of aristocratic loveliness.

Dora had not lingered long over the trifle on which she was sewing, when she cast it aside with a sigh, blew out her lamp, glided across the apartment, and throwing open the casement, stood upon the balcony on the front of the mansion. There, leaning upon the slender railing which encompassed it, with her cheek upon her palm, she looked abroad upon the dim landscape which spread out before her.

All was now peaceful and serene. The howling storm, which had hovered above but a few hours before with wings of appalling blackness, had passed away with all his host of sulphurous clouds, and the bright stars were shining calmly in the sky, while the bright moon, rapidly ascending the eastern horizon, poured down a mellow flood of light upon forest and field, making the rain drops upon each blade and leaf to glisten like burnished silver.

The prospect before the maiden was beautiful indeed. The house, which was situated upon a gently sloping hill, commanded a fine view of the surrounding country, and on every side, but one, lay extended fields with nothing to impede the view. To the left of the avenue, which led off directly from the noble mansion; was an uncultivated forest, which extended to the east and the north as far as the eye could reach, where the pine and the oak mingled their foliage together, and where many a gentle stream purdied on over snowy sands under the impenetrable shade. The landscape that spread out before the maiden was quiet and lovely. A flood of yellow light rested upon the broad scene, and was reflected back from field and forest in soft lights and shadows.

It was one of those calm and glorious nights of oriental brightness, when every sound is still, and every voice hushed to repose—when the beauty of Eden seems to revisit the earth, and banish for a season its corroding causes and consuming sorrows.

Dora had a heart to feel all the beauty of the hour. The poetry of love was with her, and her thoughts were away with the young soldier of his country, who had been content to turn away even from her, and undergo the toils and privations of the camp for the noble cause of Independence. She loved him with that generous and uncalculating devotion, that in one of her temperament and blood amounted almost to idolatry. Though meeting but rarely, and laterly only by stealth, yet his image was continually present to her mind.

Of late there had been many causes at work to diminish the peace and happiness of the maiden. The country was overrun by prowling bands of tories, and nowhere throughout the whole State was there a band of patriots sufficiently formidable to stand against the invader, or to appear openly in arms. The body under Marion, which still refused to disband, could scarcely be called an exception to this rule; for pent up in the fastness of the swamp, it lay hidden from the enemy, while its locality was a mystery even to the most undoubted patriots of his own party.

As the maiden leaned over the balustrade, the full light of the moon shining down softly upon her beautiful figure, that seemed still more voluptous as she stood exposed to the influence of that bewitching light that softens even the downy cheek of beauty, and gives perfection to its loveliness, one might almost observe the tear-drops flashing across her bright eyes, while she mused alone on her young hopes, the fruition of which seemed yet so distant. Around her, throughout the whole land, the foot of the invader trod triumphantly upon the soil, and even the most hopeful of the patriots began to tremble at the prospect of subjugation. Well did she know the fate that awaited her lover should the invader finally triumph over a prostrate country. Her hopes would then be but a delusive dream, and her heart, widowed in its affection, break with its burden, or beat on through a sad existence, maddened by its bereavement.

Besides these anticipations of evils, as yet distant and only conjectural, there were more immediate causes of anxiety and annoyance which harrassed her peace, and were fruitful of much uneasiness and distress, from which she determined to free herself, even though it should be necessary to resort to the most energetic measures. Her home had of late been frequently visited by the leaders of the royalists—mostly, if not altogether, men of abandoned characters and dissolute habits—who could now with impunity venture abroad, and boldly, too in a country where there was no longer power to keep them in wholesome awe, and more than one of these military free-booters had cast glances of admiration and covetous expectations upon the rich heiress of Sumter.

Foremost among these, and especially detested by Dora, was the tory leader Harrison, who regarded her as a prize well won by his unscrupulous devotion to the cause of the mother country. Patiently had he borne her indignant contempt, her withering scorn and her freely manifested detestation of his character, in the presumptous hope that the final hour of triumph would wring from her however reluctantly, a consent to wed him. He had become a frequent guest at her father's house, who courted the society of the bloody and wicked man whom his more courageous daughter abhorred.

The gentle Dora was leaning over the balustrade and musing upon the mournful circumstances that darkened the sunshine of her happiness, and bitter were her meditations as she called to mind her unfriended and desolate situation since she stood isolated from the world, and with scarcely one friend to whom she could unburden herself with a hope of sympathy. As she stood looking out upon the scene before her, suddenly the neighing of a horse reached her ears from the road which passed along at right angles to the avenue, about half a mile distant. Again the sharp shrill neigh rose upon the air like the clear blast of a clarion, and Dora imagined that she could almost hear the tramp of her lover's steed along the firm and well trodden highway. She gazed intently down the long avenue, taxing her eyes to the utmost to distinguish the horse or rider through the gloom as he passed the point where the avenue intersected the highway.

"It is the day he should have come," murmured the maiden, as with her hand she shaded her eyes from the strong glare of the moon, and gazed intently down the avenue. A moment more and she beheld the moonlight glisten upon the sleek coat of a powerful animal, as he turned off from the highway, and entered the avenue leading to the house.

"God be praised, it is indeed he," she exclaimed, as she recognized the well known steed of her lover. "Michael comes," and retiring to her chamber, she re-lighted her lamp, and waved it thrice joyfully at her window, to tell her lover that she had watched for and discovered his coming. Then casting herself upon her knees and burying her face in her hands, wept tears of thankfulness and joy for the safe return of one who was dearer to her heart than life itself.

Some ten or fifteen minutes had elapsed and this beautiful woman still knelt with her face buried in her hands; when suddenly a rustling was heard among the leaves of the oak that grew near her window to the right of the portico, and a slight jarring among its boughs, and a grating against its trunk, such as would be caused by one climbing it from below. She rose to her feet, and a glance through the open window served to reveal to her the figure of a handsome man, who had ascended the tree to the height of her window, and was now making his way along a bough that projected to within a few inches of one of the corner pillars of the balcony.

In her surprise, her first impulse was to scream aloud, but the voice of her lover, whose quick eyes had already discovered her, disarmed her fears for herself, and she now began to feel seriously alarmed for the peril in which his seeming rashness had involved himself.

The limb upon which he was slowly making his way to the balcony was nearly thirty feet from the gravelly court beneath and seemed quite too frail to support even the weight of a slender stripling, much less of one of the robust of Michael; but while she stood petrified by astonishment and terror, her lover was gradually nearing the column, then casting his arm around it, and finally releasing his hold of the bough, leap lightly to the balustrade, and at length stood safe and secure upon the balcony. With a cry of joy she flew through the open door, and falling into his arms, relieved her overwrought feelings by a flood of tears.

"I have come," were the first words of her lover, as he pressed her to his bosom, "but as seldom as we meet, dear Dora, I find the country so unsafe for me, that we must meet to part almost in one breath."

"Not so soon, I trust, Michael," answered Dora hastily; "I have so much to say to you, and am so unhappy here, that I would follow you to the camp, and be even your servant there, rather than we should part again."

"I hope dear Dora," answered Michael as he led her from the balcony into her chamber "that Isaac Wharton has not forgotten the kindness due you?"

"Not that, Michael, not that," she responded quickly, as she marked the flush of anger and surprise that flashed over the earnest features of her lover, "but our neighborhood is no longer what it once was; but five miles distant from this very spot, the tories are to have a grand meeting on the day after to-morrow."

"Ha! say you so!" replied Michael eagerly, while a gleam of joy flashed from his eyes.—"Where meet they, and how heard you news so important and welcome as this?"

"Welcome? indeed, to me it is far otherwise!" responded the fair woman, while her cheek grew a shade paler. "I myself heard their leaders under this very roof when they boastingly told of the preparations they had made for the rendezvous of their ragged followers at the field on Tarcote. A grand supper is to be prepared for their traitorous guests. New weapons are to be distributed to their followers with an unsparing hand, and provisions, clothing and money bestowed upon all who will join them. The whole country is astir, and the notorious Tynes who is to take command is already in the neighborhood with a number of active and audacious followers."

"On my soul, Dora," exclaimed Michael, with an animated gesture, this will be noble news for my commander. But has the rascally tories no fear that Marion would hear of their gathering, and be an unbidden guest!"

"Indeed they do not," replied she. "Nor do they dream of danger now. Marion is believed to be far distant, and too feeble even if aware of their purpose, to venture abroad to oppose them."

"On my soul they are fools as well as cravens!" muttered Michael, disdainfully. "No longer since than morning I left my brave general with two hundred as gallant soldiers as ever fought under the banner of freedom.—Convers panting for the fight, is in the camp with a full troop, and we are ready at a word to rush down upon the enemy like a thunderbolt. But I am astonished beyond measure that our scouts ever wont to be prompt and vigilant, failed to gather and transmit to Marion intelligence of this gathering."

"Perhaps they may have been among those good and reliable whigs who were captured and sent off under guard to Camden," answered Dora. "Before a word was whispered abroad of the intended gathering every man even suspected of being friendly to his country was at once sent off to prison."

"If all have indeed fallen into the power of the tories, there is an epauletted traitor in our camp," answered Michael sternly.—"Marion has scouts abroad that you would scarcely dream of and such as the tories could never suspect, unless they are betrayed.—None but officers are permitted to know the names of his scouts and they are only trusted with the secret when the good of the public service requires it. I must know what fate has befallen his scouts, and to do so, I must trust you with their names, which otherwise torture could not wring from my lips. I trust you but let the silence of the grave forever after rest on their names."

"Speak on Michael," answered the maiden "I would die sooner than betray them."

Michael drew yet nigher to her, and sinking his voice to a whisper, as though he feared the walls had ears, spoke slowly and solemnly—"Richbourg, Jamison, Ames—can you tell me ought of *them*? they are our scouts, loyal and trusted. God grant they may be safe!"

"No wonder that you failed to hear from them," replied Dora; "Jamison and Ames have been sent in irons to Camden; but Richbourg preferred a better fate, he died at his own door, battling like a lion with those who were sent to arrest him.

"May he rest in peace," responded Michael solemnly "he was a brave soldier and an honest man. But we have one scout yet left, a brave and loyal old man as true as steel to the cause of his adopted country. What bad tidings have you to tell me of old Archy Kerr."

"Old Archy Kerr!" asked Dora, with a start of surprise; that taciturn moody and selfish old man whom no whig will trust and whom tory as he is, even his own party avoid and dislike? You jest in speaking thus of that misanthropic recluse."

"On my word I do not," responded her lover gravely. "Old Archie Kerr, for reasons that do honor to his heart has been content to endure the ill-will and contempt of those whose devotion to their country does not equal his own. Too proud, indeed too much of a christian to practice imposition or deceit, even for the promotion of a righteous cause he would sooner tear his tongue from his throat than suffer it to belie his conviction. Thus his honesty kept him aloof from the tories though reputed as such himself. And he will not consort with our own party, lest he may draw the suspicion of the royalist party upon himself, and thus diminish his opportunity of rendering assistance to Marion. The leading whigs of the district have a hundred times denounced him to Marion as one well worthy of the halter but our general has only smiled in the quiet way peculiar to him, and talked of moderation and lenity to our enemies. Oh! believe me one of the noblest hearts that ever beat one the most stern and unyielding in its integrity, throbs under the coarse jerkin of that devoted patriot. Tell me Dory, has he too fallen into the power of the tory party?"

"No, Michael, no!" answered she. "Archy Kerr is so cordially detested by the whigs, that he would be the last man the tories would suspect. Three weeks since he was taken down by a fever and now lies dangerously sick, and so unpopular is his name, that I believe—nay *now I fear*—he is left to die almost companionless.

"God forbid!" ejaculated Michael fervently, "he is too firm a friend of his country to merit such a fate. Were it not what you have told renders it necessary that I should return to the camp without the loss of an hour, I would even hasten to his bedside this night. I conjure you by all that is sacred, suffer not that noble servant of his country to feel that he is neglected; visit him yourself; tell him that like himself you live but for your country. He is the friend, the confidant and the scout of Marion and never does our General change his camp, without directly informing Kerr by a trusty messenger of his change of quarters. He would part with his last morsel of bread to feed a suffering soldier, and as his means are scanty, the old hero may even now feel the pinchings of actual want. You should go provided with such things as a sick man may actually need, and whisper this in his ear, that in forty-eight hours Marion himself will stand by his side. Ah! Dora, devotion like his should not go unrewarded."

"Indeed it *shall not*," answered she with much emotion. "For the love he has borne his country, I myself will watch over him as a daughter, and see that all his wants are supplied."

"And now, Dora, said Michael rising from his seat, "we must part once more, and sooner than I had anticipated. I must retrace my steps with all convenient speed, and inform Marion of the varied news I have heard from your lips. In two days at most we shall meet again, that is so soon as we have routed this band of ruffians, of whose rendezvous you have told me. Marion will be on his route before to-morrow's sun has set, and I trust such a lesson may be taught to the tories on Black river that they will never again appoint another rendezvous here."

"May heaven grant it," ejaculated the maiden. "But, Michael, I know you must indeed be wearied with your long travel. Occupy this chamber until morning—and," she added with a blush—"as for myself I will retire below. Indeed I will see to it you are not discovered, and have you awakened and put on the road before the family are astir.—Rest beneath our roof at least until morning."

I must answer you my dear Dora, as a certain noble but unfortunate soldier answered his king, when he returned home from an unfinished campaign, while his countrymen were still abroad engaged in the toils of war—"The ARK and Israel and Judah abide in tents and the servants of my Lord are encamped in the open field," thus it is with me. I must even deny myself, weary as I am, the luxury of sleep." The cheek and neck of the young maiden who well remembered the story to which innocent allusion was made were crimsoned with blushes which she sought vainly to conceal.

"No, Dora," continued her lover in the same grave tone—"no bed of down for me, I must hasten back to inform Marion of this glorious news. Were he not a man of more than ordinary activity, it would even now be too late to convey him the tidings in season. Remember when I am gone, I pray you, honest, and loyal old Kerr. He is an unshaken friend of his country, and no doubt needs kindness and care at this time. And now time constrains me to leave you."

"Not in the same manner in which you came, however, Michael. Allow me to step below, and if I find all quiet I will return and conduct you out by the lower door."

Dora hastily descended the staircase and after a short absence returned to the door and beckoned to Michael to follow. Michael had already drawn off his boots and stood ready to follow his fair guide, who immediately led the way down the staircase to the lower apartment and opened the door for his exit.

Drawing her close to his bosom and imprinting a kiss upon her cheek, he whispered in her ear as they parted, "fear not Dora, we shall meet again."

The maiden gently closed the door, and pausing for a moment to listen to her receeding footsteps, the young dragoon drew on his boots, and hastened to the copse where his horse stood tied. As he passed out by the gateway he glanced back toward the house, and Dora who was again on the balcony awaiting a parting glance, waved him a last adieu in answer to his own, and retired once more to her chamber.

Hastily then the young trooper strode along, and soon was seated firmly in his saddle, retracing his steps, to bear his general the important information he had received.

Although the silent moon above sent down a flood of light upon the scenery through which he passed, making it yet more beautiful than day, yet the attention of the trooper was not aroused by the visible objects around him.—Moodily pressing the rowel into the flanks of his already jaded steed, he abstractly continued his journey in that meditative mood that leaves the outer senses to slumber and repose. He had already retraced some ten miles of the road, over which he had so lately passed, when suddenly awakening from his reverey, and finding that his good steed had fallen into a slower pace than the urgency of the case and the short time before him permitted, he quickened his pace into a gallop and with new life his horse dashed gallantly onward. Before him the road turned off abruptly to the right, and as at a rapid pace he turned the corner, Michael found himself, unexpectedly, face to face with a body of horsemen, some twenty-five or thirty in number who had halted in the road, and before he could check his fiery and impetuous steed he was borne into their very midst.

"Hallo! who the deuce have we here?" exclaimed the leader of the band, suddenly wheeling upon Michael, who found himself in an instant hemmed in by the armed horsemen who closed around him, rendering resistance or escape alike impossible.

"Some d——d rebel, colonel, I'll stake my life on it," replied one of their number.

"Who are you," again demanded their leader in an authorative tone, "Your name—your business? answer briefly and to the point we have no time to lose in idle questions.

"Hang him up? shouted one of their number who was scarcely able to sit on his horse, brandishing at the same time a sabre above his head. "Hang him up, and let's on to old Wharton's before the rebel we are after makes his escape."

"Put up your sword Randall" interposed another of the band. "Put up your sword, and let's hear what the fellow has to say.

In an instant Michael comprehended the full peril of his situation. He at once understood from the language that met his ears, that the party before him were at that time in pursuit of himself, as he correctly divined at the instigation of the bloody Harrison. Knowing well that they were bent upon his destruction, he scorned to attempt to deceive them by falsehood. As dearly as he loved life, he set a still higher value upon truth.

"What have you to say?" again asked their leader in an irritated tone. "Our time is precious—speak—your name!"

"Were your time ten times as precious," answered Michael boldly, "you should tarry here a long while before I should answer questions of such a character upon the common highway."

"Da-arn me kernel," squeaked a voice in the crowd, "if this ain't rank treason against you. Ef it was left to me, I'd say swing him up on a grape vine."

"Move," shouted a harsh, but commanding voice from the outer circle of the crowd, and the speaker, a tall and stalwart man, whose face was bandaged up made his way into the midst of the circle, to get a better view of the prisoner.

Michael's heart began to beat quick and fast for in that fierce voice, and stout horseman, he recognized that vindictive tory whom his hand had that evening stricken to his feet, and who he well knew cherished feelings of the deadliest hatred against him. Knowing that to fall into his hands would be scarce less than instant death, with the anxious eagerness of despair he looked from side to side, with the desperate resolution of making an effort to break from the band of his captors.

"That's your man! seize him!" shouted Harrison—for it was he—the moment his glance rested on our hero.

With a desperate hope of escape, Michael tightened the rein of his good steed, planted himself firmly in his stirrups, and driving the rowel home in the flanks of his high mettled charger, gave him the reins and attempted to rush by Harrison.

The attempt, desperate as it was, had nearly succeeded. Two of the horsemen who stood in his path were borne before him to the earth, and staggered by the shock, his horse for a moment faltered. Time was thus afforded to Harrison, who was mounted upon an iron grey of surpassing activity, to wheel his horse suddenly around, and raising a heavily loaded whip which he carried in his hand, he dealt Michael a blow that felled him to the earth. In an instant a dozen of the companions of Harrison were upon him, and stunned by the shock, before he recovered from his momentary stupor, his arms were pinioned and he lay at their mercy.

When Michael was fully restored to consciousness, his captors were dismounted and standing around him. The hum of voices sounded confusedly in his ears; but he distinctly perceived it was the desire of the greater number to hang him up literally to the nearest tree. The greater portion of them, led on by Harrison, were clamorous for his instant execution, while he who appeared their leader seemed desirous to postpone it to some more fitting time. He also ascertained that the party into whose hands he had so unfortunately fallen, had been collected by Harrison for the purpose of following him to Isaac Wharton's, whither Harrison had learned he was wont to go whenever he obtained leave of absence from the camp of Marion.

Stung with mortification jealousy and long-cherished hatred, Harrison and his followers urged the immediate execution of Allscot, but he who seemed their chief and who was treated with marked defference and respect by all, firmly refused to sanction their cruel and horrid design.

"Colonel Tynes," exclaimed Harrison pointing with drawn saber to Michael, who bore himself unmoved and proudly in his trying situation, "that man you know to be an active and dangerous rebel."

I could scarcely consider him such at present," returned Tynes, with a cynical smile, and seemingly indifferent to the ill humor and impatience of his second in command.

Harrison ground his teeth with rage, while he continued.

"Am I then to understand, Colonel Tynes, that faithful, and tried, and active servants of the king, are to sit down patiently and bear the injuries and indignities of such rebels as he?"

"Yes!" piped in little Bill Stoker from the outskirts of the crowd; "is we that's allers fout and bled and died for the king, to be knocked down with our own cheers in our own houses, and never be allowed the privilege to hollow—that's the question!"

A general laugh from the crowd followed this earnest pathetic statement of the state of affairs. Harrison bit his lip with vexation, and looked daggers at his late fellow-sufferer, while Tynes strove in vain to suppress a smile.

"No, major!" said he, laying his hand kindly upon the shoulder of Harrison, and speaking in a tone at once courteous and resolute. "I do not intend that this rebel or any other that may fall into my hands, shall escape the fate due to the crime of treason. But holding as we do the commission of a christian king, we must not act with disgraceful precipitation. Besides, we thus give the enemy the right to retaliate, and God keep them from that!" he added with a shudder. "On to-morrow we will give, him a trial, and on the next day he shall hang! And now to your horses!—You, Applejohn and Stoker, put the prisoner on his horse between you, and see you be watchful that he has no opportunity of escape. Should he attempt it shoot him on the spot!"

Thus saying, Tynes received his horse from an attendant, and put his foot in the stirrup. In a couple of minutes the whole cavalcade was again in motion, having Michael bound and placed on his horse between two of their number. Thus he found himself unexpectedly turned back, and carried a prisoner along the road he had already twice travelled since set of sun. The party having secured their prisoner, wended their way slowly, and in cautious silence toward the camp upon Tarcote. Those of the party conversed with each other in whispers, for the name of Marion—a name associated with midnight surprises, and terrible from the suddenness with which he at times pounced down upon the enemy who deemed him far distant—was a spell of terror which followed the tory in all his evil deeds, and sleeping or waking, by day and by night, followed him like the whisperings of an evil disquieted conscience.

CHAPTER III.

There is a strength
Deep buried in our hearts, of which we reck
But little, till the shafts of heaven have pierced
Its fragile dwelling. Must not earth be vent,
Before her gems are found?

"I myself will save him!" cried Dora, suddenly arousing from her deep dejection, while her eye flashed with new born energy; "I will appeal no more to the mercy of savage men, but to the sword of his country. They live by the sword, and wo unto them, by the sword they shall perish!"

Thus spoke the noble woman, as with a firmer step she paced the floor of her chamber Tynes and Harrison had that very morning visited the house shortly after the dawn, and made no concealment of the fact that Allscot had been captured by them but a few hours before and they were equally unreserved in proclaiming their intentions to have him publicly executed on the day succeeding that of their visit. Shocked and overwhelmed by the distressing information, Dora forgot her maiden delicacy, and throwing herself at the feet of his captors, plead in tears for her lover's life. Tynes was cold and inexorable, and though Harrison preserved a decent and cautious silence, there was a lurking triumph in his eyes more significant and sinistrous than the impassive humanity of Tynes. As these two worthies left the house, Harrison found an opportunity of whispering in her ear a few words of seeming interest and kindness.

"Come, Miss Singleton," said he, "to our camp on Tarcote, on to-morrow' and I will join with you in an attempt to obtain for this young man pardon from the colonel. Accept my offer in the spirit in which it is made, and our joint efforts will perhaps save him."

Dora's first thoughts were to spurn his proffer or services, which only cloaked premeditated wrong, with the honest indignation it justly deserved; but knowing that such conduct would only hasten the fate of Michael, and feeling that it was due to him to take no course which might render his danger still more eminent she turned toward Harrison with a brighter eye, and answerd:

"I thank you, Mr. Harrison,"—Harrison who was a major in the royalist service bit his lip with indignation—"I thank you, sir, for your offer, and and do indeed accept it in the spirit in which it was made. Perhaps my visit to your camp may be delayed until a late hour on to-morrow, but as sure as the sun rises I will visit your camp."

Harrison with his superior officer, departed—thoroughly deceived by the honest frankness of the maiden.

"She has fallen into my snare," was the self congratulatory thought of the tory major as he left the house.

"Fool that he is, to think that I believed or trusted one so bloody and faithless!" was the soliloquy of he fair Dora, as she ascended the staircase and entered her chamber. All the heroism of her nature was aroused, and with the determination to save Michael there was awakened within her an energy and self dependence of which until that hour she did not believe herself possessed. Her spirit rose with the occasion that called forth her latent energies, and she determined to lose not an hour in irresolute delay.

Summoning a servant by a bell that stood upon the mantle board, she bade her seek out and send to her, without delay, Nero, a valuable and trusty servant, who had been in childhood the playmate, and in maturer years the body servant of her father. Like all servants in his station, he was devotedly attached to his young mistress. She was the beau ideal of all that was good and excellent, and however he might feel it necessary to differ from her opinion, still whenever she commanded he was ready to lay down his life in her service. In short, Nero was in his own estimation one of the most important and dignified personages; yet, when his young mistress was in question, a most humble and unobstrusive individual.

In a very few moments Dora's maid servant, Jane returned, preceeded by Nero, cap in hand who halted at the door, and stood respectfully awaiting the commands of his young mistress. There was on his face an expression of curiosity and expectation that provoked a smile from Dora, despite her distress. The wrinkles on the old man's brow and the twinkle in his eye said as plainly as words—"Ki, missy! what now?"

"Good morning, missy," said the old man with a smile expressive of wonder.

"Good morning, daddy Nero," returned Dora with a sigh, "I have sent to you to know if Fearnought is in proper plight for a long and rapid journey."

"Yes, missy!" answered the old man opening his eyes wide; "Fearnought travel like de wind."

"Has he been well fed this morning?" asked she.

"Yes, ma'am—bin well fed—feed um myself," was the reply.

"Is he a safe and sure horse!" again asked his young mistress.

"Ki, ma'am, he be as wild as de tiger," answered Nero.

"I mean daddy Nero," asked Dora, "is he sure-footed, and will he go through all difficulties?"

"Sure footed for true!" replied Nero opening his eyes wider and wider, "and he'll go to the debbil if you'll only gib him line enough. Fearnought's a mighty sperited horse for true."

"Well, then, Nero, he is just the horse I want," replied his mistress. "I wish you to saddle him for me at once; and here's a valise I wish you to attach to the saddle for me."

"Saddle Fearnought for you, missy!" replied the old man with an incredulous frown and smile. "Why, there ain't a nigger massa Wharton got, what dare for to ride him!"

"My father was a good horseman—was he not?" asked Dora.

"Yes, ma'am! he ride like the debbil!" responded Nero.

"Well, then, I think," replied she, "I'll prove myself his daughter. Saddle fearnought and I'll take a gallop upon him," she continued with a flashing eye, "for many a long mile, ay even if it cost me my neck."

"Let me go wid you den, missy?" asked Nero eagerly.

"I shall at all events need your service until I return," answered she evasively.

"Thank God for dat, anyhow," ejaculated Nero, receiving the valise, which she tossed him, and with a reverent bow the old man withdrew to fulfill her commands.

In a few minutes thereafter Dora appeared in her riding dress, descended from her apartment and found Nero with all things in readiness for her departure, a quiet but strong and serviceable animal for his own use being haltered at the rack while he with difficulty held by the reins the animal she had ordered to be saddled for her own.

In truth Fearnought was as wild and fierce a steed as ever paced the sultry plains of Arabin. Tall and of magnificient proportions, he stood restlessly pawing up the earth and plunging about as if to escape from the hands of his groom, his wild and nervous eye flashing with fire.

"You can't ride him, miss," observed old Nero, shaking his head doubtingly. "Better let me put him up and ketch old Fox."

"Never mind, daddy Nero," she said; "only bring him up to the steps so I can mount, and once within the saddle, I will answer for the rest."

The horse which Dora had chosen for her ride was indeed a high mettled and fiery animal. His glossy coat of a dark bay color, that glittered in the sun, as soft and as smooth as velvet; his eye that flashed widely, his high arched crest, slender form and faultless proportions, all proclaimed him one of that thorough-bred and pure blooded stock, at that day so justly the pride of Carolina.

The restive and fiery animal was led to the platform, and without a moment's hesitation Dora trusted herself to the saddle, and in low and gentle tones soothed him into quiet as she guided him down the avenue. Patiently he submitted to her control, and moved on as quietly as a lamb, as though proud of his gentle rider, and mindful of her safety.

"Ki, woman stronger dan one debbil," muttered old Nero, as he cantered on after her, on his more staid and sober animal, with a capacious basket containing comforts for the sick man on the saddle bow.

Dora was soon in a fast canter moving like a fleeing shadow along the bridle path that led to the Black River swamp, on the very margin of which was the dwelling of the long doubted, but faithful whig—old Archibald Kerr. The house, which was in a field of about two acres, stood on the brow of the hill at the foot of which, lay the oozy and pathless swamp. One might have stood in the door-way and tossed a filbert without an effort beyond its margin.

The bridle path that wound around the field to the front of the hut was so blocked up by brush wood, that it was passible only with some difficulty. In fact it seemed as if the owner had permitted it to be choked up, in order that at any time he might the more readily escape from any band of horsemen sent to arrest him.

(CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.)

Value of the Soul.

If the sun were a globe, and each star a diamond—the moon a ball of silver, and the earth a pearl of great value, one soul would be worth more than they all; and yet the sinner values his soul less than a few rusty silver dollars, or the transitory pleasure of sin for a season.

☞A darkey having been to California, thus speaks of his introduction to San Francisco:—"As soon as dey landed in de river, dar mouths begin to water to be on land; and as soon as dey waded to de shore, dey didn't see any goold, but dey found such a big supply of nuffiin to eat, dat dar gums cracked like baked clay in a brick-yard

Sambo's Criticism.

The pompous epitaph of a close fisted citizen closed with the following passage of Scripture: "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord"

"Dat may be so," soliloquized Sambo, "but w'en dat man died, de Lord *didn't owe 'im a red cent!*"

☞A gentleman was once walking in a street, when he met a stone cutter, and who he thus addressed:

"My good fellow if the devil was to come now which of us would he take?"

"After a little hesitation, the man replied, "me sir, because, yer honor, he would be glad to ketch meself—sure an' he'd have yer at any time."

A Rival.

Mrs Partington don't seem to be alone—listen how her rival talks after reading the account of a recent decent upon several doubtful establishments by the mayor who knew all about the houses of *destitution*."