The VALIANTS of VIRGINIA

By HALLIE ERMINIE RIVES

ILLUSTRATIONS by LAUREN STOUT

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SYNOPSIS.

John Valiant, a rich society favorite, suddenly discovers that the Valiant corporation, which his father founded and which was the principal source of his wealth, had failed. He voluntarily turns over his private fortune to the receiver for the corporation. His entire remaining possessions consist of an old motor car, a white bull dog and Damory court, a neglected estate in Virginia. On the way to Damory court he meets Shirley Dandridge, an auburn-haired beauty, and decides that he is going to like Virginia immensely. Shirley's mother, Mrs. Dandridge, and Major Bristow exchange reminiscences during which it is revealed that the major, Valiant's father, and a man named Sassoon were rivals for the hand of Mrs. Dandridge in her youth. Sassoon and Valiant fought a duel on her account in which the former was killed. Valiant finds Damory court overgrown with weeds and creepers and decides to rehabilitate the place. Valiant saves Shirley from the bite of a snake, which bites him. Knowing the deadliness of the bite, Shirley sucks the poison from the wound and saves his life. Valiant learns for the first time that his father left Virginia on account of a duel in which Doctor Southall and Major Bristow acted as his father's seconds. Valiant and Shirley become good friends. Mrs. Dandridge faints when she meets Valiant for the first time. Valiant discovers that he has a fortune in old walnut trees. The yearly tournament, a survival of the jousting of feudal times, is held at Damory court. At the last moment Valiant takes the place of one of the knights, who is sick, and enters the lists. He wins and chooses Shirley Dandridge as queen of beauty to the dismay of Katherine Fargo, a former sweetheart, who is visiting in Virginia. The tournament ball at Damory court draws the elite of the countryside. Shirley is crowned by Valiant as queen of beauty. Valiant tells Shirley of his love and they become engaged. Katherine Fargo, determining not to give up Valiant without a struggle, points out to Shirley how terrible it would be for the woman who caused the duel to meet Valiant, who looks so much like his father.

CHAPTER XXVIII.—Continued.

"Young mars' feel 'way up in de clouds dis day," he said to Aunt Daphne. "He wake up ez glad ez ef he done 'fessed 'ligion las' night. Well, all de folkses cert'n'y 'joyed deyselves. Ol' Mistah Fargo done eat 'bout forty uh dem jumbles. Ah heah him talkin' ter Mars' John. 'Reck'n yo' mus' hab er crackahjack cook down heah,' he say. Hyuh, hyuh!"

"G'way wid yo' blackyardin'!—" sniffed Aunt Daphne, delighted. "Don' need ter come eroun' honey-caffuddlin' me!"

"Dat's whut he say," insisted Uncle Jefferson; "he did fo' er fac'!"

She drew her hands from the suds and looked at him anxiously. "Jeff'son, yo' reck'n Mars' John gwineter fotch dat Yankee 'ooman heah ter Dam'ry Co'ot, ter be ouah mistis?"

"Humph!" scoffed her spouse. "Dat highfalutin' gal whut done swaller de ramrod? No suh-ree-bob-tail! De oldah yo' gits, de mo' foolishah yo' citations is! Don' yo' tek no mo' trouble on yo' back den yo' kin keek off'n yo' heels! She ain' gwineter run dis place, er ol' Devil-John tuhn ovah in he grave!"

Sunset found Valiant sitting in the music-room before the old square piano. In the shadowy chamber the keys of mother-of-pearl gleamed with dull colors under his fingers. He struck at first only broken chords, that became finally the haunting barcarole of "Tales of Hoffmann." It was the air that had drifted across the garden when he had stood with Shirley by the sun-dial, in the moment of their first kiss. Over and over he played it, improvising dreamy variations, till the tender melody seemed the dear ghost of that embrace. At length he

For an Instant He Stared Unbelievingly.

went into the library and in the crimsoning light sat down at the desk, and began to write:

"Dear Bluebird of Mine:

"I can't wait any longer to talk to you. Less than a day has passed since we were together, but it might have been eons, if one measured time by heart-beats. What have you been doing and thinking, I wonder? I have spent those eons in the garden, just wandering about, dreaming over those wonderful, wonderful moments by the sun-dial. Ah, dear little wild heart born of the flowers, with the soul of a bird (yet you are woman, too!) that old disk is marking happy hours now for me!

"How have I deserved this thing that has come to me?—sad bungler that I have been! Sometimes it seems too glad and sweet, and I am suddenly desperately afraid I shall wake to find myself facing another dull morning in that old, useless, empty life of mine. I am very humble, dear, before your love.

"Shall I tell you when it began with me? Not last night—nor the day we planted the ramblers. (Do you know, when your little muddy boot went trampling down the earth about their roots, I wanted to stoop down and kiss it? So dear everything about you was!) Not that evening at Rosewood, with the arbor fragrance about us. (I think I shall always picture you with roses all about you. Red roses the color of your lips!) No, it was not then that it began—nor that dreadful hour when you fought with me to save my life—nor the morning you sat your horse in the box-rows in that yew-green habit that made your hair look like molten copper. No, it began the first afternoon, when I sat in my motor with your rose in my hand! It has never left me since, by day or by night. And yet there are people in this age of airships and honking highways and typewriters who think love-at-first-sight is as out-of-date as our little grandmothers' hoops rusting in the garret. Ah, sweetheart, I, for one, know better!

"Suppose I had not come to Virginia—and known you! My heart jumps when I think of it. It makes one believe in fate. Here at the Court I found an old leaf-calendar—it sits at my elbow now, just as I came on it. The date it shows is May 14th, and its motto is: 'Every man carries his fate upon a riband about his neck.' I like that.

"That first Sunday at St. Andrew's, I thought of a day—may it be soon!—when you and I might stand before that altar, with your people (my people, too, now) around us, and I shall hear you say: 'I, Shirley, take thee, John—' And to think it is really to come true! Do you remember the text the minister preached from? It was 'But all men perceive that they have riches, and that their faces shine as the faces of angels.' I think I shall go about henceforth with my face shining, so that all men will see that I have riches—your love for me, dear.

"I am so happy I can hardly see the words—or perhaps it is that the sun has set. I am sending this over by Uncle Jefferson. Send me back just a word by him, sweetheart, to say I may come to you tonight. And add the three short words I am so thirsty to hear over and over—one verb between two pronouns—so that I can kiss them all at once!"

He raised his head, a little flushed and with eyes brilliant, lighted a candle, sealed the letter with the ring he wore and dispatched it.

Thereafter he sat looking into the growing dusk, watching the pale lamps of the constellations deepen to green gilt against the lapis-lazuli of the sky, and listening to the insect noises dulling into the woven chorus of evening. Uncle Jefferson was long in returning, and he grew impatient finally and began to prowl through the dusty corridors like a leopard, then to the front porch and finally to the driveway, listening at every turn for the familiar slouching step.

When at length the old negro appeared, Valiant took the note he brought, his heart beating rapidly, and carried it hastily in to the candle-light. He did not open it at once, but sat for a full minute pressing it between his palms as though to extract from the delicate paper the beloved thrill of her touch. His hand shook slightly as he drew the folded leaves from the envelope. How would it begin? "My Knight of the Crimson Rose?" or "Dear Gardener?" (She had called him Gardener the day they had set out the roses) or perhaps even "Sweetheart?" It would not be long, only a mere "Yes" or "Come to me," perhaps; yet even the shortest missive had its beginning and its ending.

He opened and read.

For an instant he stared unbelievingly. Then the paper crackled to a ball in his clutched hand, and he made a hoarse sound which was half cry, then sat perfectly still, his whole face shuddering. What he crushed in his hand was no note of tender love-phrases; it was an abrupt dismissal. The staggering contretemps struck the color from his face and left every nerve raw and quivering. To be "nothing to her, as she could be nothing to him?" He felt a ghastly inclination to laugh. Nothing to her!

Presently, his brows frowning heavily, he spread out the crumpled paper and reread it with bitter slowness, weighing each phrase. "Something which she had learned since she last saw him, which lay between them." She had not known it, then, last night, when they had kissed beside the sun-dial! She had loved him then! What could there be that thrust them irrevocably apart?

Without stopping to think of the darkness or that the friendly doors of the edifice would be closed, he caught up his hat and went swiftly down the drive to the road, along which he plunged breathlessly. The blue star-spangled sky was now streaked with clouds like faded orchids, and the shadows on the uneven ground under his hurried feet made him giddy. Through the din and hurly-burly of his thoughts he was conscious of dimly-moving shapes across fences, the sweet breath of cows, and a negro pedestrian who greeted him in passing. He was stricken suddenly with the thought that Shirley was suffering, too. It seemed incredible that he should now be raging along a country road at nightfall to find something that so horribly hurt them both.

It was almost dark—save for the starlight—when he saw the shadow of the square ivy-grown spire rearing stark from its huddle of foliage against the blurred background. He pushed open the gate and went slowly up the worn path toward the great iron-bound and hooded door. Under the larches on either hand the outlines of the gravestones loomed pallidly, and from the bell tower came the faint inquiring cry of a small owl. Valiant stood looking about him. What could he learn here? He read no answer to the riddle. A little to one side of the path something showed snow-like on the ground, and he went toward it. Nearer, he saw that it was a mass of flowers, staring up whitely from the

He Bent Over, Suddenly Noting the Scent; It Was Cape Jessamine.

semi-obscurity from within an iron railing. He bent over, suddenly noting the scent; it was cape jessamine.

With the curious sensation of almost prescience plucking at him, he took a box of vestas from his pocket and struck one. It flared up illuminating a flat granite slab in which was cut a name and inscription:

EDWARD SASSOON.
"Forgive us our trespasses."

The silence seemed to crash to earth like a great looking-glass and shiver into a million pieces. The wax dropped from his fingers and in the supervening darkness a numb fright gripped him by the throat. Shirley had laid these there, on the grave of the man his father had killed—the cape jessamines she had wanted that day, for her mother! He understood.

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It came to him at last that there was a chill mist groping among the trees and that he was very cold.

He went back along the Red Road stumblingly. Was this to be the end of the dream, which he had fancied would last forever? Could it be that she was not for him? Was it no hoary lie that the sins of the fathers were visited upon the third and fourth generation?

When he re-entered the library the candle was guttering in the burned wings of a night-moth. The place looked all at once gaunt and desolate and despoiled. What could Virginia, what could Damory Court, be to him without her? The wrinkled note lay on the desk and he bent suddenly with a sharp catching breath and kissed it. There welled over him a wave of rebellious longing. The candle spread to a hazy yellow blur. The walls fell away. He stood under the moonlight, with his arms about her, his lips on hers and his heart beating to the sound of the violins behind them.

He laughed—a harsh wild laugh that rang through the gloomy room. Then he threw himself on the couch and buried his face in his hands. He was still lying there when the misty rain-wet dawn came through the shutters.

CHAPTER XXIX.

The Coming of Greef King.

It was Sunday afternoon, and under the hemlocks, Rickey Snyder had gathered her minions—a dozen children from the near-by houses with the usual sprinkling of little blacks from the kitchens. There were parents, of course, to whom this mingling of color and degree was a matter of conventional prohibition, but since the advent of Rickey, in whose soul lay a Napoleonic instinct of leadership, this was more honored in the breach than in the observance.

"My! Ain't it scrumptious here now!" said Cozy Cabell, hanging yellow lady-slippers over her ears. "I wish we could play here always."

"Mr. Valiant will let us," said Rickey. "I asked him."

"Oh, he will," responded Cozy gloomily, "but he'll probably go and marry somebody who'll be mean about it."

"Everybody doesn't get married," said one of the Byloe twins, with masculine assurance. "Maybe he won't."

"Much a boy knows about it!" retorted Cozy scornfully. "Women have to, and some one of them will make him. (Greenville Female Seminary Simms, if you slap that little nigger again, I'll slap you!)"

Greenie rolled over on the grass and tittered. "Miss Mattie Sue didn'," she said. "Ah heah huh say de yuddah day et wuz er moughty good feelin' ter go ter baid Mistis en git up Marstah!"

"Well," said Cozy, tossing her head till the flower earrings danced, "I'm going to get married if the man hasn't got anything but a character and a red mustache. Married women don't have to prove they could have got a husband if they had wanted to."

"Let's play something," proposed Rosebud Meredith, on whom the discussion palled. "Let's play King. King Katiko."

"It's Sunday!"—this from her smaller and more righteous sister. "We're forbidden to play anything but Bible games on Sunday, and if Rosebud does, I'll tell."

"Jay-bird tattle-tale!" sang Rosebud derisively. "Don't care if you do!"

"Well," decreed Rickey. "We'll play Sunday school then. It would take a saint to object to that. I'm superintendent and this stump's my desk. All you children sit down under that tree."

They ranged themselves in two rows, the white children, in clean Sabbath pinafores and go-to-meeting knickerbockers, in front and the colored ones, in ginghams and cotton-prints, in the rear—the habitual expression of a differing social station. "Oh!" shrieked Miss Cabell, "and I'll be Mrs. Merryweather Mason and teach the infants' class."

"There isn't any infant class," said Rickey. "How could there be when there aren't any infants? The lesson is over and I've just rung the bell for silence. Children, this is Missionary Sunday, and I'm glad to see so many happy faces here today. Cozy," she said relenting, "you can be the organist if you want to."

"I won't," said Cozy sullenly. "If I can't be table-cloth I won't be dish-rag."

"All right, you needn't," retorted Rickey freezingly. "Sit up, Greenie. People don't lie on their backs in Sunday-school."

Greenie yawned dismally, and righted herself with injured slowness. "Ah diffuses ter 'cep' yo' insult, Rickey Snydah," she said. "Ah'd ruthah lose mah 'ligion dan mah laz'ness. En Ah 'spises yo' spissable dissisition!"

"Let us all rise," continued Rickey, unmoved, "and sing 'Kingdom Coming.'" And she struck up lustily, beating time on the stump with a stick, and the rows of children joined in with unction, the colored contingent coming out strong on the chorus:

De yerf shall be full ob de wunduhful story
As watahs dat covah de sea!

The clear voices in the quiet air startled the fluttering birds and sent a squirrel to the tip-top of an oak, from which he looked down, flirting his brush. They roused a man, too, who had lain in a sodden sleep under a bush at a little distance. He was ragged and soiled and his heavy brutal face, covered with a dark stubble of some days' growth, had an ugly scar slanting back from cheek to hair. Without getting up, he rolled over to command a better view, and set his eyes, blinking from their slumber, on the children.

"We will now take up the collection," said Rickey. ("You can do it, June. Use a flat piece of bark.) Remember that what we give today is for the poor heathen in—in Alabama."

The bark-slab made its rounds, receiving leaves, acorns, and an occasional pin. Midway, however, there arose a shrill shriek from the bearer and the collection was scattered broadcast. "Rosebud Meredith," said Rickey witheringly, "it would serve you right for putting that toad in the plate if your hand would get all over warts! I'm sure I hope it will." She rescued the fallen piece of bark and announced: "The collection this afternoon has amounted to a hundred dollars and seven cents. And now, children, we will skip the catechism and I will tell you a story."

Her auditors hunched themselves nearer, a double row of attentive white and black faces, as Rickey with a preliminary bass cough, began in a drawling tone whose mimicry called forth giggles of esctasy.

"There were once two little sisters who went to Sunday-school and loved their teacher ve-e-ery much. They were always good and attentive—not like that little nigger over there! The one with his thumb in his mouth! One was little Mary and the other was little Susy. They had a mighty rich uncle who lived in Richmond, and once he came to see them and gave them each a dollar. And they were ve-e-ery glad. It wasn't a mean old paper dollar, all dirt and creases; nor a battered whitey silver dollar; but it was a bright round gold dollar, right out of the mint. Little Mary and little Susy could hardly sleep that night for thinking of what they could buy with those gold dollars.

"Early next morning they went down-town, hand in hand, to the store, and little Susy bought a bag of goober-peas, and sticks and sticks of striped candy, and a limber jack, and a gold ring, and a wax doll with a silk dress on that could open and shut its eyes—"

"Huh!" said the captious Cozy. "You can't buy a wax doll for a dollar. My littlest, littlest one cost three, and she didn't have a stitch to her back!"

"Shut up!" said Rickey briefly. "Dolls were cheaper then." She looked at the row of little negroes, goggle-eyed at the vision of such largess. "What do you think little Mary did with her gold dollar? She loved dolls and candy, too, but she had heard about the poo-oo-r heathen. There was a tear in her eye, but she took the dollar home, and next day when she went to Sunday-school, she dropped it in the missionary-box.

"Little children, what do you reckon became of that dollar? It bought a big satchelful of tracts for a missionary. He had been a poor man with six children and a wife with a bone-felon on her right hand—not a child old enough to wash dishes and all of them young enough to fall in the fire—so he had to go and be a missionary. He was going to Alabam—to a cannibal island, and he took the tracts and sailed away in a ship that landed him on the shore. And when the heathen cannibals saw him they were ve-e-ery glad, for there hadn't been any ship wrecked sailors for a long time, and they were ve-e-ery hungry. So they tied up the missionary and gathered a lot of wood to make a fire and cook him.

"But is had rained and rained and rained for so long that the wood was all wet, and it wouldn't burn, and they all cried because they were so hungry. And then they happened to find the satchelful of tracts, and the tracts were ve-e-ery dry. They took them and stuck them under the wet wood, and the tracts burned and the wood caught fire and they cooked the missionary and ate him.

"Now, little children, which do you think did the most good with her dollar—little Susy or little Mary?"

The front row sniggered, and a sigh came from the colored ranks. "Dem ar' can'bals," gasped a dusky infant breathlessly. "—dey done eat up all dat candy and dem goober-peas, too!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

QUESTION RIGHT TO SWORD

Historic Relic Now in Possession of University of Pennsylvania Has Evoked Discussion.

The gold sword that Louis XVI presented to John Paul Jones in recognition of the fight he made with the Bon Homme Richard against the Serapis has been presented to the University of Pennsylvania by Edward C. Dale, son of the late Richard C. Dale, a former president of the Society of Cincinnati. The sword has been in the possession of the Dale family for more than a century.

This is the sword which Charles Henry Hart, a local historian, declares now should be in possession of Admiral Dewey. It had been generally accepted that the sword passed by will of Commodore Jones to Commodore Dale, a forbear of Richard C. Dale. Mr. Hart denied this. He declares that the sword was in possession of John Paul Jones when he died in Paris, in 1792, and that Jane Taylor of Dumfries, Scotland, a sister of Jones, went to Paris and took possession of everything left by the sea fighter. Later the sword was sent to Robert Morris.

According to Mr. Hart Mr. Morris later presented the sword to Commodore John Barry, senior officer of the American navy in 1795, but that the presentation was only a life legacy, and that it should have been handed down to Barry's successor as senior officer, eventnally reaching the possession of Admiral Dewey.—Philadelphia Press.

Bird Man Has Arrived.

On the day after Christmas a Russian aviator at St. Petersburg flew a new machine of his own making for hours, carrying ten passengers in addition to a heavy load of ballast. This establishes the aeroplane as a sure adjunct of modern transportation, including passengers and freight. A few days before this even we heard of the successful use of the flying machine by the French army operating in Morocco, which puts this new mode of warfare among the arms of military operations of our day, and hereafter when we use the expression "all arms" we shall have to include the flying machine.

Valuable Information.

A happy couple were on their way to Scotland. They had to change trains at Carlisle, and an obliging porter, while struggling with the luggage, noticed that the young lady's hair was dotted with rice. He approached the young man and, pulling a folded paper from his pocket, said: "A present for you, sir, with the company's compliments."

"Indeed," said the traveler; "what is it?"

"A railway map, sir."

"Oh, thank you; but what are these marks in blue pencil?"

"That's the beauty of it, sir; those marks show where the tunnels are and their length."—London Tit-Bits.

Modern Business Man.

"How was the game, Plimson?" asked Withersly.

"Don't ask me," growled Plimson. "Just as I was starting for the park a man came in and insisted on talking business to me the whole afternoon."

"That's tough. He took up your time and you got nothing."

"Oh, I made $1,000, confound the luck."

His Affiliations.

"Down with all organizations!"

"Sh! Not so loud before that police man."

"What has he got to do with it?"

"He belongs to the 'copper' trust."

The Reason.

"Why is it that young Rounder is such a slow pay?"

"Because he is so fast."