

YANKEE

CHIN GRAY

BY CHARLES B. LEWIS (M. QUAD.)

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CHAPTER XIX.

As the Federals poured into the Shenandoah valley and regained lost ground the quartermaster and commissary were left by Jackson under the guard of a few more men at Harrisonburg. They were made ready to be forwarded to Richmond. While Royal Kenton fully believed that his being left behind was only a matter of time, he was not at all sure that he was not to be sent to the front. He was not at all sure that he was not to be sent to the front. He was not at all sure that he was not to be sent to the front.

Expected difficulties arose about getting transportation, and though reports of a Federal advance were daily received the major hung on in hopes of getting the stores. One morning at sunrise the pickets were driven in by troops in blue, and 10 minutes later he received a summons from General Custer's headquarters. He had only about 200 men left, while it was plain to be seen that he was fairly surrounded by the force opposed. He asked for 15 minutes to consider and at the end of that time returned a refusal. His little force almost to a man had agreed to fight to the last. Three or four cartridges had been thrown up to protect the supply depot, but they were without effect. The force was divided so that some men all, and Royal Kenton and Steve Brayton found themselves with about 20 other men in a work without even a noncommissioned officer among them. As they were already under fire, Kenton was by common consent given command.

We are in gone up this time for sure," observed Steve as Custer posted his brigade and then opened fire with a battery, "but I reckon we might sorter

"I believe that honor was left to you, sir," quietly replied Kenton. "Hear ye, hear ye, three cheers for Kenton!" shouted the excitable Steve. And they were given by the whole force of Confederates with great enthusiasm. "I fully understand your motive, sir!" exclaimed the major when the cheering had ceased. "You simply wanted to reap a little glory—to stand well in the estimation of your friends. You have accomplished it, but there will be a heavier. The minute I am exchanged I shall prefer charges and have you court-martialed. If you don't conclude to remain among your Yankee friends, I shall."

"Hear he talk like a fool!" interrupted Steve, trading army discipline under foot in his excitement. "If the major hadn't surrendered before a man was hit, these Yanks couldn't 'a' got us in all day!"

"That's so! That's so!" shouted a hundred men. And the entire lot began cheering for Steve Brayton.

"And who are you, sir?" demanded the major, now pale with passion. "Private Steve Brayton, sir, of Captain Wyle's critic company, and I was left behind here because I was a friend of Kenton's."

"Oh, I see! Well, I'll see to your case at the same time." "Yes, and tell 'em that 15 dead and wounded men to show what we did before we surrendered," replied Steve. "Rush him! Rush him!" shouted the crowd, overcome by excitement and forgetting the respect due an officer.

The major backed away, but in an instant he was carried off his feet and rushed to the sentry line, and when he picked himself up off the grass he was bruised and battered and his uniform in a very dilapidated condition. Groans and hisses followed him as he walked away, and the laughter of the Federal troops was in no sense a balm for his ruffled pride.

It was noon before the stores were destroyed and the list of prisoners completed. Then came an alarm. Colonel Mosby, who has been dubbed "The Bandit of the Potomac," but who was as regularly commissioned as any officer in the Confederate army, appeared in the neighborhood with about 200 men, and before he was driven off and the prisoners were ready to start down the valley under guard it was mid-afternoon.

"Yank, I've been thinking this thing over," said Steve Brayton to Kenton as they moved off, "and I jest tell you we ar' in a fix. We hain't neither Federals nor Confeds any mo'!"

"How do you mean?" "Why, if we uns stay yere, we'll be hold prisoners for goodness knows how long, and if we git back to the Confederacy the major will make it hot for us. Say, yo'! I don't know what yo' think of jest this very mint, but I want to ask yo' a straight question."

of surrender. Their captors were men who could appreciate bravery, no matter by whom displayed. As the surrender was made 4,000 troops waved their hats and cheered.

"I am not an officer, and I therefore have no sword to surrender," said Kenton as General Custer rode to the head of the short line and seemed somewhat astonished to find only private soldiers.

"But who commanded in there?" asked the general.

"I gave what orders were given, sir."

"Well, the southern confederacy made a mess of it in not making you a captain long ago. Had the other forts held out as pluckily as you did we should have had a hard fight to get at the stores."

While a list of the prisoners was being made out and the arms collected the troops turned their attention to the stores. The idea was not to remove but to destroy them. The quickest way to do it was to apply the torch, and in the course of an hour everything was in flames. The Confederate major had, as stated, surrendered the fort he occupied with about 80 of the men without firing a shot. A court martial would have promptly exonerated him from the charge of cowardice had it been made, for the situation was almost hopeless.

That one of the forts should have held out and that the high private in command of it should have been complimented for his bravery rankled in the major's heart. He received permission to enter the field where the rank and file were surrounded by a Federal guard, and searching out Royal Kenton he angrily demanded:

"By what authority do you presume to hold that fort after my surrender of the post?"

"We did not know that your surrender included more than the fort you were holding," replied Kenton.

"Captain Wyle told me something about you before he left," continued the major. "He regarded you with the greatest suspicion. It would not have surprised me had you surrendered first of all."

"I believe that honor was left to you, sir," quietly replied Kenton.

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"Go ahead."

"Yo' won't git mad?"

"No."

"Waal, then, don't yo' come purty nigh bein' soft in the head? We uns don't want yo' on our side, and the Yanks hanker to shoot at yo' every show they git. If we uns don't want yo', what do yo' want to stay for? If yo' don't want to fight agin us, why don't yo' sorter drop out of the hull bizness and let go like a coon fallin' from a limb?"

CHAPTER XX.

Kenton made no reply to Steve Brayton's inquiry, but the latter noticed a look on the young man's face he had never seen there before. The Virginian by adoption had pursued the course he thought was right. He had done his duty under all circumstances and had been thoroughly loyal to the cause which he espoused. Those beside whom he fought had made every attempt to degrade and disgrace him and drive him out of the service. If he had not enlisted, he would have been called a traitor and driven away from his home with bodily injury. He had joined the ranks to be suspected and denounced.

As the case now stood he could not leave the southern cause without being returned on the rolls as a deserter. If exchanged, he would be put on trial, and he realized that enough influence could be brought to bear to further disgrace him.

"Look yere, Yank, what's botherin' yo' head?" asked Steve after a few minutes of silence.

"A good many things," was the reply.

"I've been figgerin' a bit. Both Captain Wyle and the major are now down yo'."

"If yo' ever gits back to the Confederacy, they'll shut yo' up or shoot yo'." Can't yo' see it?"

"It looks that way to me."

"The Yanks may keep us six months, and doarin' that time that's goin' to be a heap of lyin' about yo' to that gal. She'll be told that yo' deserted or maybe that yo' are dead. Yo' kin bet Captain Wyle won't let no grass grow under his feet. I've heard that she was over in the mountains."

"Yes."

"Reg'lar live Yankee sogers?"

"Yes."

"And yo' got away alive?"

"Of co'se."

"Waal, I wouldn't 'a' believed it! Mrs. Sam Duncan don't tote me them Yanks killed everybody with tomahawks as soon as they got holt of 'em! Yo' uns must hev bin powerful cote to git away."

Breakfast had been finished when there came a knock at the door, and next moment a man in the uniform of a Confederate cavalry sergeant entered the cabin. He had been sent back by Colonel Mosby, he said, to ask for the loan of a horse and equipments. He used the term "loan," but it was pretty plain that he meant to take no refusal.

The woman replied that her husband had set out for Woodstock the night before on horseback, and therefore it was impossible to grant the colonel's request. The sergeant was going away without a word to our two friends, but after reaching his horse he returned and asked:

"What command do you fellows belong to?"

"To Captain Wyle's cavalry company," replied Kenton.

"Where is it?"

"I don't know."

"Humph! What yo' goin'?"

"None of yo' business," answered Steve, who had been rolled by the sergeant's supercilious airs and lofty tone.

"Oh, it hain't, eh? Mebbe yo've got a pass in yo' pocket to allow of yo' rambling around the kentry? If so, I'll take a look at it."

"Yo' hain't big enough!"

"What! Now you uns either show a pass, or I'll take yo' along to Kurnel Mosby! He'll mighty soon find out whar yo' belong!"

"You see," began Kenton, who, realizing that it was foolish to arouse the man's anger and suspicion, "we were guarding the stores at Harrisonburg, and the Federal cavalry came in yesterday and—"

"Whar's yo' pass?" interrupted the sergeant.

"Whar's yo' pass, or I'll take yo' to the kurnel!"

"I should like to explain the case to you," said Kenton, motioning to Steve not to interrupt him. "We are Confederate soldiers. We were captured at Harrisonburg by the Federals yesterday forenoon, but escaped at dark last night. Therefore we have no pass and do not need a pass."

"Yo' may be all right, and yo' may be a couple of Yankee spies!" replied the sergeant. "If yo' are straight, yo'll come along with me and explain to the kurnel. Dead, but yo've got to come, straight or crooked!"

He had left his revolver and carbine on the saddle. He started for his horse, but Steve was there before him. He had stepped softly out while Kenton was explaining and was now in possession of both firearms and a supply of ammunition. Even as the trooper reached the gate Steve gave his horse a slap and sent him galloping away and then turned and asked:

"Whar's takin' anybody to see the kurnel? Sorter 'pears to me that yo've dun stumbl'd yo' toe and fell down?"

The sergeant very quietly asked what he was going to do, and his manner betrayed his anxiety.

"Goin' to git shot of yo' about the fast thing!" answered Steve. "Left face! Forward march! Keep goin' right down the road till yo' find the kurnel and then give him our love!"

The trooper marched away without a backward look, and when he was lost to sight by a turn in the road Kenton said:

"Steve, yo' did a bad thing for us. That whole crowd will be after us inside of a hour."

"Don't bother befo' yo' hit, Yank!" laughed Steve. "If we uns hadn't taken him, he'd hev taken us, and besides that it suddenly occurred to me that we'd got to hev something to shoot with. Now, then, let's be-a-gettin' straight up the mountain."

CHAPTER XXI.

We have made no note of time. A year of war seems to fly more swiftly by than a month of peace. The minutes of war are made up of battles, its hours of campaigns which move a nation, its months of black figures relating the number of widows and orphans and the

tens of millions of dollars expended, its years of despair and desolation crying to heaven.

Winter had fallen upon mountain and valley, upon the blackened ruins of once happy homes, upon blood spot and burial ground. While things had gone very quietly at Rest Haven they had not gone well. Now and then a detachment of Federals or Confederates had galloped past on the stony road, but they had left the family in peace. Letters no longer came and went. The country was in the hands of the Federals, and many of the inhabitants had fled away. The Percys would have gone before winter set in but for the state of the mother's health. They were waiting and hoping that she would so mend that she could be moved, but she did not.

One autumn night a party of raiders had taken away the horses, and after that Uncle Ben had to make his trips on foot as he scoured the country in search of provisions to keep the family going. In spite of the high prices and general scarcity of all necessities he managed so well that nearly every want was supplied in some way. On two occasions beyond the one mentioned Federal reconnoitering parties left supplies at the house, and once Captain Wyle sent a store of articles which could have only been gathered at considerable cost and trouble. Both sides pitied the unhappy and defenseless situation of the family, which was only one of hundreds. The sufferings of the southern women during the war have found no historian, and the heroism displayed by them in the face of peril and adversity has not gone down to their children on printed pages. Who could write it? Where would he begin or end? In no epoch of history were mothers, wives and daughters called upon for greater sacrifices, nor were sacrifices ever so cheerfully made. Brave, patriotic, enduring, and yet no state or community has reared a marble shaft on which is engraved the words of praise and commendation so justly their due.

When Marian became convinced that if Mrs. Baxter had any plan afoot it was to play the spy and forward the cause of Captain Wyle, she did not let the matter worry her. A sort of truce was declared between the woman and Uncle Ben, and yet he did not cease to suspect and to watch her. He found out that she had been exchanged and had rejoined his company, and on two occasions he had good reasons to believe that the man secretly met her in the neighborhood of the house. Owing to the interruption of the mails, it was only at long intervals that Marian heard from Royal Kenton. For a month previous to the battle in which he was captured she had heard no word from him. When news came, it was from Captain Wyle himself on his second visit to the Haven. His company was acting as a guard for a wagon train of forage gathered in the valley, and his stay was brief. While his welcome was fairly cordial, he realized that circumstances were not propitious for any approach to the subject nearest his heart, and he forced himself to be content with generalities. Incidentally, as if the matter was of little or no moment to her, he mentioned the fact of General Jackson having become suspicious of Kenton and suggesting the detail which was made and of his having heard only a day or two before that the Federals had descended on the post and captured the entire Confederate command. What he added was both false and cruel—viz., that it was rumored that Kenton was among the Confederate killed.

If the captain hoped that Marian would betray her real feeling, he was not disappointed. As she received his information every vestige of color fled from her face, and she seemed about to faint.

"You—you say it is so rumored?" she gasped.

"Only rumored, but"—

"But you believe the rumor will be confirmed?"

"I must say that I do. Mr. Kenton was, I believe, a friend of yours, and of course the news of his death will shock and grieve you. He and I would have been friends but for his, to say the least, disloyal conduct toward the cause he for some reason best known to himself espoused."

"Captain Wyle, you wrong him, living or dead!" exclaimed Marian as she braced herself against the shock caused by report of the rumors. "He enlisted because he was imbued with the same feeling I hope you were—a feeling that he owed allegiance to Virginia first of all."

"He has acted very strangely for a Virginia patriot, I must declare," said the captain.

"How strangely?" she demanded as the color began to return to her cheeks and her eyes to flash.

"Every one in my company firmly believes he joined us that the Yanks might have a spy within our lines."

"And who made them believe it? Royal Kenton has periled his life in the cause oftener than any man in your company or regiment! Tell me of one single instance where an honest, unbiassed man could have questioned his loyalty!"

"Why was he left behind, detailed to guard stores, and that at General Jackson's suggestion?" asked the captain.

"You are already possessed of that knowledge!" she scathingly replied. "There has been a conspiracy against him from the very outset, and it is not the fault of the conspirators that he was not assassinated before a battle had been fought!"

"Private Kenton, if alive, should feel grateful for such championship!"

"It is my duty to champion him! I am his promised wife!"

While Captain Wyle felt pretty certain that there was more than friendship between them he had hoped that things had not gone that far. As she stood before him and looked into his eyes and spoke the words which made his heart fall like lead he was dumb for a moment. Her face was set and hard, and he realized that his fate was sealed forever.

There was but one thing for him to do, and he did it. Though rage and despair filled his heart, he did not forget the fact that he was a born southerner. It required all his nerve to take his leave gracefully, but he accomplished the feat, and it was only when he was in the saddle that curses passed his lips and his smiles were replaced by wicked frowns.

"Southern chivalry" has been held up to ridicule and scorn, but only by the ignorant or by those who had a purpose to accomplish. Chivalry was born in the heart of the true southerner; it came down to him legitimately in the blood. Now and then he may forget himself in the presence of a woman, but never in the presence of a woman.

Had all been well at Rest Haven, Marian Percy would have given way to her grief and mourned as women do. But the mother's condition was still regarded as dangerous, and she must not even suspect the sad blow which had fallen on the daughter. Uncle Ben suspected some calamity from the grief in Marian's face, and from the fact that Mrs. Baxter dodged out and had a word with Captain Wyle at the gate before he rode away. He must have repeated the canonical about the death of Kenton, for the woman's face betrayed great satisfaction as she returned to the house. There was a smaller house to lodge the "help," but just then Uncle Ben had it all to himself. About an hour after the captain's departure Marian appeared in the old man's quarters to find him clobbering one of his brogans.

"Look yere, honey," he began as she entered and before she could say a word, "I knowed when I saw yo' at de doah an hour ago dat sunthin had dun happened. Am de good missus gwine to die, or did dat Captain Wyle say sunthin to make yo' feel bad?"

"Uncle Ben, I have heard sorrowful news!" she answered as her tears began

to fall. "Captain Wyle told me he had heard that Mr. Kenton was dead—killed over at Harrisonburg a day or two ago."

"I shall nebber dun believe it!" he exclaimed. "Dat Mars Kenton he doan't write no mo', but dat hain't 'cause he was dead. It's 'cause de possiblis was all turned upside down."

"But they had a battle a day or two ago, Uncle Ben, and Mr. Kenton was killed then."

"Whar was dat battle?"

"Near Harrisonburg."

"Dat's a right smart step from yere, an we didn't heah de guns. Mebbe dey dun had a battle, but dat doan't disqualify dat Mars Kenton was killed. Shoo, now, honey, but doan' yo' believe any sich story!"

"But I'm—I'm afraid it's true!" she sobbed, breaking down at last.

"See yere, chile," said the old man after a bit, with tears in his own eyes, "yo' jiss keep quiet till we find out all about it. I'll hev dis shoe fixed in 'bout 10 minutes, an den I'll start fur Harrisonburg. When I git dar, I kin find out if Mars Kenton was killed."

"But it's almost dark now, Uncle Ben."

"Makes no difference, honey. I know de road an am feelin' purty good. By dis time to-morrow I'll be back wid de news."

"But what if you should discover that—that?"

"Dat Mars Kenton was rally killed? Nobody can't disker what hain't so, kin dey? I ze gwine older dar jest to prove dat he wasn't dun killed."

"Uncle Ben," said Marian as she placed a hand on either shoulder and looked into his eyes, "if you can bring me news that Mr. Kenton is alive, I'll make you a free man before the week is out!"

"Hu! What I want to leave yo' an de missus an becum free nigger fur? Reckon I wants to go to de porchouse or jail? Hain't I alius bin like one o' de family? Could de family git along widout Uncle Ben? Whar would yo' be right now but fur me?"

"That's true, Uncle Ben. You were born on the place, and you know how much we all think of you. It would break our hearts to have you go, slave though you are and always have been in the eyes of the law. But you shall be rewarded, Uncle Ben. Only bring me good news, and your reward shall be great!"

"Hush up dat noise, honey!" he chided as he made ready to depart. "If yo' let de ole man lib right on in de family, dat'll be reward 'nuff. I'll be back by foah o'clock to-morrow, and I'll bring yo' de news dat Mars Kenton am all right."

Marian watched him as he strode bravely down the frozen highway and vanished into the dusk of evening, and as she turned away fresh tears came to her eyes, and she murmured:

"Brave and unselfish old slave! God grant that he may bring a message to relieve my anxieties!"

(To be continued.)

Mrs. W. J. Fahey, of Le Roy, N. Y., says: "Have tried 50 cough cures. Parks' Cough Syrup is the only one that helped me. I know it is the best cough remedy." Sold by Hartz & Ulmeyer.

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