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MacMahon's Spy

By RYLAND BEALE

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When the Prussians invaded France Marshal MacMahon sent out Lieutenant Boyer, a member of his staff, to secure information of the enemy's numbers, his equipment, routes of march, etc. Young Boyer was just nineteen years old, possessed a peachy complexion, not even the downiest beard and was chosen from a number of volunteers because he could be successfully disguised as a girl. When he was made up to represent a demoielle of the middle class all the officers of the staff declared that he made the prettiest woman they had ever seen.

Soon after his departure Lucille Demorest (young Boyer) stopped one day at a house on a road that the Prussian army was expected to pass and said that she had started to go to visit a married sister who lived farther eastward; but, hearing of the coming troops, she was afraid to go any farther. She begged that she might be taken in till the army had passed and the road would be clear. Her request was granted, and she was temporarily received into the family.

There was in this house Jules Poucher, a lout of a fellow, who must needs fall desperately in love with the so called Lucille. Lieutenant Boyer, instead of being pleased with the young man's attentions, was in dread of them, fearing they would betray him. But the more he snubbed the fellow the more he persisted. Then came the Prussians, and a general of division made his headquarters for a couple of days, waiting for that portion of the army to which he belonged to come up, in the very house where Boyer was stopping.

Boyer desired to secure some place where he could overhear any conversation that might take place in the general's room. There was no adjoining apartment to which the spy could gain access, but the cellar offered a very convenient method. Watching till the general's quarters were temporarily vacant, having procured an auger, he bored a hole in the floor.

As luck would have it, that very evening the general called his brigade commanders to his headquarters for instructions. Boyer saw them coming in and went down into the cellar, taking care that he was not seen to go there. He was standing on a box with his ear near the hole he had made when the cellar door opened and down came Jules Poucher with a candle for an armful of firewood. There were but two rooms in the cellar, and Boyer could not effect a hiding. Being in the room under the general's quarters and fearing to be heard by those above, he advanced to meet Jules.

"Why, what are you doing down here alone in the dark?" asked the latter.

Boyer, thinking the young man sympathized with the French cause, concluded to tell him that "she" was there to learn Prussian war secrets.

Now, it happened that Jules that very day had offered the Prussian general some information concerning the French army for a consideration. He didn't care if Lucille gave information of the Prussians to the French; but, seeing a good opportunity to press his suit, he resolutely set to work to do so.

"Give me a kiss," he said.

"Wait a moment and I will," replied Boyer. The lieutenant looked about till he found a bit of wood about two inches long. Then, returning to Jules, who had set down the candle, Boyer let drive a blow, taking Jules under the chin—a boxing feat he had learned in the army athletic training school—and landed him on the floor. Before Jules knew what had transformed a beautiful girl into such a fury Boyer sat on him, pulled open his jaws and inserted the stick he had secured for a gag. There was a clothesline in the cellar, and before Jules had time to recover from his surprise Boyer seized it and got it around his captive's body outside his arms. Having secured these, to tie his legs was a comparatively easy matter.

Jules was now in a position where he could neither interfere with the spy's movements nor make a noise. The latter mounted his box, put his ear to the auger hole and listened. He heard enough to learn the route that would be taken by the Prussians in the advance and the dates of their probable arrival at Metz, which was principally what Marshal MacMahon wanted.

Meanwhile Jules sat on the floor looking at the object of his love with increasing wonder. He still had no suspicion that his Lucille was a man, but he considered her a mighty strong woman. As soon as Boyer had learned all he cared to know from above he got down from his perch. He had feared that, wood being needed, some one would come down for it. So he gathered an armful, and as he was about to pass out, remembering how Jules had bothered him with his attentions, bade him adieu with a few sturdy kicks, which the fellow could neither resent nor complain of.

Boyer went upstairs, put the wood down in the kitchen, walked out of the door and was not seen again in those parts. He reached Marshal MacMahon's headquarters, donned his uniform and reported the information he had gathered.

Then at the mess he made a good story of how he had served the man who would be his lover.

Gems In Verse

OLD FAVORITES.

SISTERS OF MUSIC.

"WHO sings?" said the spirit of music
And smiled on her peers
"Sweet sorrow, sing thou!" E. now answered,
"I cannot for tears."

"RIGHT hope, give a tongue to the
I read in thine eyes.
Hope answered, "My thoughts are all
clouded
And lost in the skies."

"THEN, joy, put thy mouth to the bu-
you!
A note for my sake!"
Calm creature, she sleeps in the sunshine
And will not awake.

"BUT hush! A soft sound stealth on-
ward
Like the flight of a dove.
Ah, I find that song that is sweetest
Comes ever from love!"
—Barry Cornwall.

DIXIE.

SOUTHRONS, hear your country call
Up, lest worse than death befall
To arms! To arms! To arms in
Dixie!

Lo, all the beacon fires are lighted!
Let all hearts be now united!
To arms! To arms! To arms in Dixie!
Advance the flag of Dixie!
Hurrah! Hurrah!
For Dixie's land we take our stand
And live or die for Dixie!

To arms, to arms,
And conquer peace for Dixie!
For faith betrayed and pledges broken,
And conquer peace for Dixie!
Hear the northern thunders mutter,
Northern flags in south winds flutter!
Send them back your fierce defiance!
Stamp upon the accursed alliance!

Fear no danger! Shun no labor!
Lift up rifle, pike and saber!
Shoulder pressing close to shoulder,
Let the odds make each heart bolder!

How the south's great heart rejoices
At your cannon's ringing voices!
For faith betrayed and pledges broken,
Wrongs inflicted, insults spoken,
Strong as lions, swift as eagles,
Back to their kennels hunt these beagles!
Cut the unequal bonds asunder!
Let them hence each other plunder!

Swear upon your country's altar
Never to submit or falter
Till the spoilers are defeated,
Till the Lord's work is completed.

Halt not till our federation
Secures among earth's powers its station.
Then, at peace and crowned with glory,
Hear your children tell the story.
If the loved ones weep in sadness,
Victory soon shall bring them gladness.

OVER THE HILLS.

OVER the hills and far away
A little boy steals from his morning's
play.
And under the blossoming apple tree
He lies and he dreams of the things to be.
Of battles fought and victories won,
Of wrongs o'erthrown and of great deeds
done.
Of the valor that he shall prove some day
Over the hills and far away!

OVER the hills and far away
It's, oh, for the tolls the livelong day!
But it mattered not to the soul aflame
With a love for riches and power and
fame.
On, O man, while the sun is high—
On to the certain joy that lies
Yonder where blazeth the noon of day.
Over the hills and far away—
Over the hills and far away!

OVER the hills and far away
An old man lingers at close of day.
Now that his journey is almost done,
His battles fought and his victories won,
The old time honesty and truth,
The truthfulness and the friends of youth,
Home and mother—where are they?
Over the hills and far away—
Over the hills and far away!

THE VAST LANDS.

THEY saw the silences
Move by and beckon, saw the
forms,
The very beards, of burly storms
And heard them talk like sounding
seas.
They saw the snowy mountains rolled
And heaved along the nameless lands
Like mighty billows, saw the gold
Of awful sunsets, saw the bluish
Of sudden dawn and felt the hush
Of heaven when the day set down
And hid his face in dusky hands.
—Joaquin Miller.

THE LAND OF THE STORY BOOKS.

AT evening when the lamp is lit
Around the fire my parents sit,
They sit at home and talk and sing
And do not play at anything.

NOW, with my little gun, I crawl
All in the dark along the wall
And follow round the forest track
Away behind the sofa back.

THERE in the night, where none can
spy,
All in my hunter's camp I lie
And play at books that I have read
Till it is time to go to bed.

THESE are the hills, these are the
woods,
These are my starry solitudes,
And there is the river, by whose brink
The roaring lions come to drink.

I SEE the others far away,
As if in firelit camp they lay,
And I, like to an Indian scout,
Around their party prowled about.

SO when my nurse comes in for me
Home I return across the sea
And go to bed with backward looks
At my dear land of story books.
—Robert Louis Stevenson.

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