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Harry Burton.

TRUE FRIENDSHIP'S SACRIFICE A Romance of the War.

BY OTWELL. AUTHOR OF "BESSIE'S DIARY," ETC. All rights reserved.

CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED. "Oh my own! My Pearl!" he murmured.

"Pearl, what a beautiful name, and how lovely the jewel it represents. Oh, my own Pearl how can I, how can I leave you?"

"How long they would have remained in the garden—which to them seemed the land of bliss, and they the only inhabitants—

CHAPTER VII. Pearl watched the strong athletic form, with loving eyes, until the garden gate closed behind the retreating figure, and he was lost to her sight.

"Come, come, little girl, this will not do," cried her father laughing. "If you did not look so bright and gay, I would say you had been here before you had finished your nap, and were still dreaming."

"Pearl, how old are you, my dear? Almost eighteen, I will be eighteen next month."

"Oh, do not speak in that sad way papa. I hope I shall always be your own little girl—your own little pet, no matter how many years are added to my life."

said no, and equally of course you are sorry now, and if he should repeat the proposal it would need with quite a different result.

"O, papa, indeed, indeed, you are mistaken that I am sorry I said no. If he asked me now my answer would be the same. Always the same. I like the lieutenant as a friend; but never anything more."

"I know papa, and I have no objections in the world—only that I don't love him?"

"But what can you know of love? How do you know you do not love him? If you respect and like him that is sufficient. Don't get romantic notions into that little head of yours, and imagine that a Prince is to come, and that you will fall in love at sight, and live in a palace, and be happy ever after."

"Oh, papa yes, anything, anything, but this. But this is impossible papa darling, the prince has already come, and we have already fallen in love, and my heart, my word is already pledged to another."

"Perhaps you will kindly inform me who this man—I cannot say a gentleman—who has spoken in like a thief and stolen my daughter's heart. Pearl, astonishment does not express my feelings. I have always thought you the embodiment of sincerity and frankness. I did not think you capable of carrying on a clandestine courtship."

"I thought I was your confidant in every thing. Have I ever been so harsh to you, that you dare not tell me this, and ask my advice before pledging yourself to a man of whom you can know nothing?"

"No Pearl, no. Not now. So go to your room child; anywhere out of my sight. God knows I do not want to be harsh to you. But I cannot forgive you just yet. Give me time to recover from this blow. I would rather see you in your coffin than married to that penniless beggar."

CHAPTER VIII. Pearl went to her room to struggle alone with the first great sorrow of her life. They are the first harsh words her father has ever spoken to her and it seemed to her more than she can bear.

another and it would be wicked to separate us now."

"She goes down to dinner, but is disappointed in the hope of seeing her father. He sends his excuses that he is very busy, and does not wish to be disturbed. He will take a cup of tea in the library in an hour or so. She lingers by the library door on her way up stairs. How she longs to enter and upon bended knees, pray her father's forgiveness and his blessing. But all is silent within and she remembers his request, that he is not to be disturbed. Perhaps it would only make matters worse to go to him now. He will surely repeat his harshness to his little girl when he had time for sober reflection. And she returns to her room expecting to receive a summons to his presence, and to be taken into the dear old arms, and be comforted and forgiven. But no such summons ever comes to her—ever again."

"She waits sorrowfully alone until the hour of eight is changed forth from all the clocks in the great, old house. The hour she is to meet her lover at the boat house. She throws a light shawl over her brown head, and glides softly down stairs, wondering all the time if Harry has seen her father and what the result of their interview has been. She resolves to stop at the library and tell her father where she is going."

"The library door stands ajar and at first she thinks the room is unoccupied. 'Papa,' she calls softly as she advances and sees her father standing in the center of the room. At the sound of the voice the man turns, and she sees that it is not her father, but Harry Burton. He looks at her an instant as if stupefied then suddenly recollecting himself cries out, 'My God! Pearl this is no place for you. Go away, for God's sake do not come in here.' But the warning is too late. He eyes have grown accustomed to the semi darkness, and she sees in front of her father's desk prostrate upon the floor a rigid form with her father's cold ghastly face turned toward her."

"With one prolonged, heart-rendering cry she flings herself down by the stiffening form."

"O! papa speak to me. It is your own little pet—your own Pearl. O! my own father. My dear, dear, papa you are not dead. No! no dead without one forgiving word to your little girl!" Harry lifted her in his strong arms and carried her to a sofa.

"Oh, my darling," he said. "Ask God to give you strength to bear this."

Pearl's shriek brought all the servants to the scene. The gas was turned on a ghastly horrible sight. The dear old general whom every one loved, and who was not supposed to have an enemy at Fort Stevens on the floor in a pool of blood—his own blood which still continued to flow from a wound in the side. The whole house, from garret to cellar is in a general uproar. Servants rushing hither and thither. Cries of "murder," "fire," calls for the police, the guards, maid servants fainting and soldiers running in from all directions.

Mrs. Churchill comes in and leads Pearl unresistingly away to her own room where she undresses and places her tenderly in bed. The tears meanwhile streaming down her kind old face. Pearl neither faints nor sheds one tear. After that first wild outburst, she seems transformed into stone. Good, kind Mrs. Churchill watches by that bedside through all the long hours of that night, but Pearl never notices her, never speaks; but lies there perfectly motionless, with wide open eyes staring into vacancy. In the morning the doctor, the kind hearted old army surgeon is sent for. He tells Mrs. Churchill it is brain fever, that she must be watched constantly; must have every attention, and with a shake of the old gray head "We will leave the result in higher hands than mine Mrs. Churchill."

Mrs. Desmond, General Bedford's sister, the only remaining relative is telegraphed for, and arrives the next evening. Mr. Desmond kindly, and quietly carries out what she thinks would be Pearl's wishes in regard to the last sad duties to be performed for all that remains on earth of Gen Bedford and his body is laid to rest by the side of his wife and his mother's feet; in the little village churchyard near where he was born; followed all that long distance—two days by rail—by thousands of sad soldiers who mourn the loss of their commander, and who are ready to avenge his ignominious death.

During all this time Pearl is raving in delirium. Pearl calling piteously upon her father to forgive her, that she will always stay with him, that she will never leave him, if only he will not ask her to be false to Harry by marrying Lieutenant Warren. Then her mind goes back and she is a child again running by her father's side, gathering wild flowers in the old home meadows. But always re-

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