Heppner

TENTH YEAR

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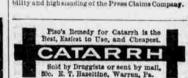
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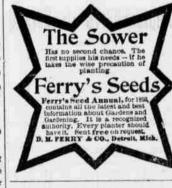
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CHAPTER IL A CHANGE OF UNIFORM The soldier followed her, leading his orse, till they came upon her own pony tied to a sapling. Mark offered to help her mount, but she was not used to such civility, and leading her horse to the trunk of a fallen tree mounted by her-

Crossing the road the two entered a wood on the other side. The girl kept a straight course till she came to a creek. which she forded below and near a log that had been felled across it to be used for a footbridge. On the farther side she struck an old road, abandoned, at least, for wheels. Mark rode up alongride of her. She was a wild looking thing, with hardly a trace of civilization about her except her calico dress and

owhide shoes. "Where are you taking me to?" asked

"Hum.

country.

"Where's home?" "T'other side o' th' Sequatchie river." "How far is it to the river?"

"Bout a mile from the creek we jest "And how far from the river to your

"'Bout another mile. We live on a oad ez runs from the Chattenoogy pike to Anderson." "That's well: I want to reach the

"Waal, y'll only hev ter go a couple o' mile from our house t' git thar." "You seem to know all about this

"Reckon I do. I was born hyar, I done a heap o' hunten in these hyar I toted a gun all over 'em."



It was the only bit of finery she possessed. "Tell me something about yourself. "Souri."

"Souri what?" "Slack."

"Oh, yes! You're one of the Slacks rou told me. Isn't Souri a singular name for a girl?" "Waal, dad, he kem from Missouri.

So that's what he named me.' "Have you a mother?" "Brothers and sisters?" "Henery and Jakey."

in Jim Brown's company o' east Tennessee cavalry. "What? Union cavalry?" "Yas." "You mean regiment, not company. I know Brown well. How old is your other brother?" "Jakey, he's thirteen."



"At home?" "What are you going to do with me when you get me to your home?"
"Take y' to the barn, I reckon."

"How old are they?

"Why not to the house? Aren't your folks all right? I thought you said they "Oh, they're all Union. But mebbe they mought suspect at the tavern

(seein I'm gone 'thout sayen goodby and knowen I'm Union) that I've put y' up to somep'n or tuk y' hum." "Souri," said Mark meditatively, "do



you know that since I met you I as

"Doen a job o' thinken?

"You've hit it exactly." "What 'bout?"

"I've been thinking that you're no-The girl laughed, or rather chuckled.

She enjoyed the compliment and was too They soon struck a dirt road leading directly south, which they followed till they came to the Sequatchie river, striking a ford at the same time. Souri led the way into the ford, Mark following.

Her pony was used to such crossings this one in particular, while Mark's horse preferred to feel his way slowly; conse quently Souri reached the opposite bank before Mark had got half way over.

It was now night, but it was clear, and half moon cast its faint light upon the land and the river. Mark suddenly looked up from the water and saw Souri

on the bank watching him. Had he been near enough he would have seen anxiety depicted on every feature of her

"Keep up the stream!" she called, pointing at the same time.

He turned his horse's head as she directed, but soon lowering his eyes to the

water began to go down stream again.
"Look at me," she called; "don't look at the water. Its runnen makes it seem sif y' war goen straight when yer s-on crocked. Thar's a ledge o' rocks below thar and deep water beyond." Mark fixed his eyes on his guide, and

turning his horse's head toward her urged her forward. She picked her way slowly, as if conscious of danger, and at last coming to the brink stepped quickly out of the water and shook herself. "What makes you tremble so?" he

asked of Souri. "I ain't," she said, coloring. 'Is that a dangerous ford?' "Ef y'd a-tumbled offen the ledge y'd a' drownded."

but I see now that I haven't learned to cross a current till today. Next time I'll look out for something on shore to steer by. Anotier ten minutes brought them home. They came upon the house from its rear It fronted on the road running northwird and faced east. Souri led the waj to a rickety barn, where both horses vere stabled. She left Mark in

the ban while she went into the house to infoin the inmates of his presence. Presutly she came out. "Dad'lows y' mought come in fur a spell 'thut much resk. They won't know ein hyar yet awhile. Least aways far's no hurry. But dad reckons severely. y' mount sleep in the barn with one

eye opel."
"I shill not sleep anywhere tonight. I must o on. But I'll go in with you for awile." A mn met them at the door with

white, nocky hair and a stubble beard. He lookd sixty, though he was ten or fifteen sars younger. He walked as if he werfollowing the plow. His trousers we drawn nearly up to his armpits, a onble breasted waistcoat served in lieuof a coat, and an old woolen hat coved his head to the back of his "Henery, he's bout twenty-two. He's

"The bag clother looks kinder peart to we use dow hyar ez ain't seen nothen out gree aid the man. "I lowed hen you use went up ter Chattenoog last june and fired them big guns i the sown y' was goen to hold

onto tess hyar parts." "Phaps it was a mistake," said Mark but I never criticise the acts of

my periors."
"One inter th' house." Ti dwelling was composed of two squp log houses, some ten feet apart, und one roof, w.b. a floor between thevo. The man 1 1 Mark into one parts or houses. The articles in that struck the soldier's eye were a ry high bedstead, heightened furthiby a feather bed; a chest of draw erland a clock on the mantle that tied loud enough to be heard out in tipbarn. There were some pieces of racarpet on the floor, two or three

ha seated chairs and a rocker. What y' got fur supper?" the old m asked as his wife entered. I don't want any supper," said the

ier. "I only ate an hour or two ie woman, who was bent down ough some nervous disease, went to chest of drawers, took therefrom a pipe and some tobacco and began to

'Much shaken among the sojers, anger?" she asked. 'At the beginning of a fight there's a od deal," replied Mark, "but after ey're once in they get on without much

"Don't mean that kind of shaken-

"Oh, ague. No, I don't think there's

"Fever" "There's always more or less camp ever. It seems as if every man who ampaigns in this country must have a lose of typhoid to get acclimated."

"Thar's a powerful lot o' fevers bout hyar. Thar's the typhoid, the broken one, the intermitten and the remitten, and onct en awhile we git yaller jack when it comes up the Mississippi from

"That's a good deal of fever," re-plied Mark; "but, to come down to business, I want to say a few words to you people. You're sure you're Union?"

"Sarten," said the old man.
"Got a young'un in Jim Brown's company of east Tenneeseeans," said the old woman. "I hearn th' all had the mea-

sles in th' spring. Henery hed it." "Yes, that regiment was nearly all down at one time. Now, I'm going on a very dangerous mission. May I rely

A boy about thirteen years of age had come into the room, and squaring himself before Mark began to stare at him.
"Jake," replied the intruder, "I have something of importance to say to your father and mother." Then to the par-ents, "Won't you please send him out?" "Jest's y' like, stranger," answered the father, "but mebbe Jake mought show

y' th' way or somep'n. He's purty Jake's appearance did not bear witness

"Well, let him stay. I would like to rely on this house as a place of refuge in case I have to get back here rapidly. I want you to take care of my horse, and unsophisticated to pretend that she did if I never come you can keep him. If I do come I'll pay you more liberally for

horse fodder than you ever were paid besojer.

"Don't fear for that. I have money and Mark showed a roll of bills that astonished his host. "Do you agree?"
"Sarten, but the money don't make

no differ. I'm a Union man to the back-"Have you any citizen's clothes?" "Thar's Henery's store clothes ez he

left when he went to jine th' army." "Will they fit me?" "Reckon so. Henery's bout your size." Slack took the soldier into the twin log cabin and there gave him a suit of clothes which were intended for best wear, but they had evidently been so intended for years, with frequent deviations from the intention. Mark took off his uniform, which, with his rifle and pistol and other accouterments, he put under the bed. Then he drew off his boots (so loose that he could easily remove them

without unbuckling his spurs) and put on a pair or shoes. A felt hat completed "What is that for, Souri?" asked Mark. "La sakes!" said Souri, raising her hands as she met him passing between

the cabins, thus arrayed for secret serv-As Mark entered the room where he had left Mrs. Slack and Jakey their eyes stood out wonderingly. Jakey's admira-tion for the soldier in uniform had been great, but one who could suddenly transform himself was an object of curiosity. Mr. Slack followed Mark into the room. "I've done some scouting before this,

> Mark "Whar?"

"To Chattanooga." "Waal, y' mought go right up the road in front 'n the house fur 'bout a mile. Then y'll come ter a road leaden sort o southeast like. Ef y' go down this ar road it'll take y' ter th' Chattenoogy pike. Jakey, you mought go along show 'm th' way."

"Do you know the road your father speaks of, leading to the Chattanooga pike?" asked Mark of the boy. "Does I know, Souri?" "None o' them sideaways talken, Jake. Answer straight," said Mr. Slack

"Recken I does. I knows all th' roads bout hyar. Mark looked at the boy and thought a few moments without speaking. He through their plan of co-operative bankwas a stapid looking child, but Mark ing, to loan upon six years time, small thought that if he could get him to go or large sums of money at the rate of with him it might avert suspicion. Were he brighter he might be perhaps. At any rate, he would doubt-less serve some purpose.

"Jakey," he asked, "how would you like to go with me on—a trip?"
"How would I like to shoot squirrels?" "You, Jake! Didn't I tell y' t' answer straight?" from the father. "Yas, I'd like ter go."

"I've a mind to take you, if your father will let you go," said Mark meditatively. "Many fevers bout Chattenoogy

her mouth and casting an anxious glance their selection, for these young men are "What y' goen ter do with him?" asked Slack.

"I only want him for a companion to divert suspicion—and—well, I can't tell exactly what-for an emergency.

perhaps. "What's a 'mergency?" asked Jakey. "Well, if I should learn something of importance I might want to send you

back with the news, or if I should be caught in a-in a"--

dorg below," supplied Jakey.

"That's it exactly. I might want to send word about that." "I'm afeard he's too little ter be of any use that a-way," said his father,
"Oh, Jakey can't go. He's got ter

stay right hyar 'n do heen," chimed his "What do you say, Jakey? Do you

want to go?" asked Mark.

"You, Jake!" again shouted his father, "Course I want ter go." "I'll tell you what I'll do. If you will

let him go I'll bring him or send him back safely and leave a twenty dollar greenback here with you for him on his return." "Souri! Souri!" called Slack.

Souri came in so quickly as to argue that she had not been out of hearing of all that had passed.

"Snack fur these two uns," said her Souri departed, and presently returned with a bundle containing cold eatables, "Now, Jakey," said his father as they all stood at the front gate before the departure of the two travelers, "remem-

ber yer a Unioner 'n treat the stranger "Oh, I ain' no slouch, 'f I am little," replied the boy, with a shrug and a scowl, indicating that he regarded the

injunction entirely uncalled for. "'N, Jakey," called his mother, "don't yer go 'n sleep out nights 'n git th'

"Never yer mind, maw. I ain't goen ter git no ager." The two started off up the road. The air was pleasant, and it was not too warm for tramping. They passed out of the clearing, and were about entering the wood into which the road took them

when they heard a step behind them. Turning, there was Souri. "How long d' y' 'low y' mought be gone down thar?" she asked.

Mark looked into her face, and she lowered her eyes. "Why do you want to know, Souri?"

"Waal, maw, she'll worrit 'bout

Jakey. "I can't tell you. "How fur y' goen?" "To Chattanooga. Perhaps farther,

but not likely." "What'll th' do t' y' ef they ketch y'?" "They'll probably lift me off my feet with a hemp cord,"
"They won't, will they? Don't talk

that a-way.' She looked at him with her black eyes and shivered. "I guess I can get through all right,"

said Mark reassuringly. "I've done it before. The girl stood for a few moments irresolute. Then she drew a red silk hand-kerchief from her bosom and handed it

affected in spite of himself.

"Waal, ef I don't see y' no more, y' mought keep et ter—ter— Mebbe ef y' git inter trouble y' mought find a chance ter send it ter me-Jakey mought tote it-'n I'll go down 'n-'n" - She turned It was evident she could not

clearly express her meaning, and her voice was getting husky. "Goodby, my little girl," said Mark, going up to her and taking her hand. "I have a notion that if it is necessary to the Union cause for my life to be "Now how about the road?" asked saved again you will be on hand to save it."

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