

THE UNDOING OF A DOUBLE
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AUTHOR OF "WHO'S WHO'S WHO" LITERARY
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Continued from first page.

was under surveillance, and the vigilantes were gathered on the edge of Black Man's swamp. The discussion among the members had been long and angry, but it was ended at last, and Jim Dunagan was still the leader.

"At 11 o'clock tonight," he said, to his followers, "let every one of you be on hand at Tom Bullfinch's. Sam and Jake will keep watch of Colonel Mansley's house to make sure he doesn't slip away. We'll go together and wind up this business in good shape."

And with this understanding the vigilantes separated to their homes to await the decisive hour that had been announced by their leader.

CHAPTER XXV.

I found the home of Colonel Mansley better prepared for defense than would be suspected. Like most southerners, he was fond of hunting, and in his house were two fine rifles, a shotgun and a small revolver. The smaller rifle and pistol were the property of his daughter, who was an expert in their use as well as a horsewoman of consummate skill. The revolver belonging to the colonel had been taken by him when he rode off in quest of reinforcements, so that no cartridges were found of which I could make use. But his rifle was placed at my disposal, while Miss Mansley was similarly armed.

Our hope was that if the vigilantes arrived before the master of the house we could stand them off until he came. The real strength of this peculiar defense, as it seemed to me, lay in the personality of the young woman, who was well known and universally respected. It was hard to believe that a company of her neighbors would proceed to violence in which she was sure to become involved, but when I intimated such belief she shook her head, and since she knew them better than I her views were entitled to belief.

Erastus Brown was our main reliance among the servants. He expressed an eagerness to join in the defense, but since he refrained from doing so until after his mistress's announcement that he was to confine his services to watchman or scout it cannot be believed he was much disappointed. The other men, of whom there were several, were enjoined to scan the country in every direction and report promptly the discovery of anything suspicious.

Early in the afternoon, when everything appeared to be quiet, Miss Mansley and I ate a hasty lunch. We remained in the parlor, moving from window to window, talking together in low tones and continually on the alert. Nothing could be clearer to me than our powerlessness against a determined attack. If our assailants should confine their assault to the front of the house, where they would be in fair range, it is probable that we could have held them off indefinitely, but it was too much to expect them to butt their heads against a wall in that fashion.

It was about the middle of the afternoon that Erastus Brown, who was on the lookout at one of the upper windows, rushed down stairs in a state of excitement, with startling news.

"They're coming!" he gasped. "They'll be here in a few minutes!"

"When do you mean?" asked Miss Mansley, betraying less excitement than myself.

"Do biggerists, dat am gwine to tore de house down!"

"How many?"

"Two hundred and twenty-five; I counted 'em!"

Instead of replying to this astounding declaration, the young woman ran up stairs. She had hardly disappeared, when she uttered a glad cry.

"Father is returning!" she called.

Almost instantly she reappeared at the head of the stairs and hastened to my side, her face aglow with delighted excitement.

"Is he alone?" I asked.

"He brings re-enforcements. Isn't it grand?"

"How many?"

"Two—sufficient to repel 100."

Evidently the daughter held a good opinion of her parent's courage. Nevertheless her determination to meet for myself constituted a formidable force, to say nothing of the brave young woman.

A few minutes later the three horsemen dashed up and leaped from their saddles.

Erastus was on hand to take charge of their animals, and Esther opened the

most to get out of a section which he saw would soon become too hot to hold him. The sheriff promptly arrested the man and started for the county seat, a dozen miles distant. The sympathy and respect felt for Buyer's father led the party to drive to his home with a statement of the facts and with a view of allowing the parent an opportunity of giving bail if he chose for his son.

But Major Buyer had become convinced at last of his worthlessness and refused longer to acknowledge him or have anything further to do with the scapegrace.

"Take and do with him what you choose. I never wish to look upon his face again," said the old Roman, turning away.

It may as well be stated that the sheriff conducted his prisoner to the county seat without difficulty, and there in due time he was placed upon trial to answer several charges, was convicted and sent to the penitentiary for a long term of years.

And so it may be said at last that my double was undone.

"Mr. Kenmore," remarked Colonel Mansley after the first flurry was over, "I deeply regret that you should receive such an introduction to Mississippi, but if you wish to be here you are inhospitable we intend to prove to you that others know how to treat a gentleman. These bores are in need of the salutary lesson that awaits them."

"That was proved long since. It will always be a cause of deep regret to me that I should have brought this trouble upon you and!"

"Tut, tut, but None of that! We're doing a simple act of duty, which you and your friends in the north would be quick to appreciate were our situations reversed."

Before I could say more he called to Captains Warren and Vernon to join us in a council of war.

It was agreed that one of these officers should post himself on the roof of the house and the other on the right, though it was almost certain that the vigilantes would come from Aldine, lying to the west. The moment they were discovered Captain Warren was to give the signal, when he and his comrade would withdraw to the house. There they should defend themselves as the exigencies presented themselves. The request of Miss Mansley to assist us was firmly declined.

"Your place is in your room," her father said, putting her hand affectionately. You will be good enough to go to your room and remain until I send for you."

She knew better than to protest, and kissing him goodly for the time did as directed.

Night was closing in. Most of the servants had been sent to their quarters, but to show Colonel Mansley's contempt for the vigilantes the lights were lit through the lower part of the house, and when we ate our evening meal every one of us could have been picked off from the outside without risk to the sharpshooters. I confess I felt nervous when I glanced at the windows, whose curtains were raised and the shutters thrown back.

At the conclusion of the meal the captains repaired to their stations and the colonel and I went into the parlor, where all was darkness. Everything possible had been done, and we were in readiness for the attack that we were certain would soon be made. Sure enough, less than half an hour had passed when, through the stillness, we heard a whistle from Captain Warren.

"Our friends are prompt," remarked Colonel Mansley. "They will be here in 10 or 15 minutes."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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