

A MUSICAL COMEDY

By LOUIS JOSEPH VANCE

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The night was still and sultry, blinding of rain. In the east a low moon swung blood red above the hills. Its rays crisscrossed a path across the sluggish and silent waters of the Black River.

Upon a slight rise some distance from its western bank Colonel Prentice of the Ninth Mississippi, C. S. A., gazed longingly at the dim, misty lights of Tuscaloosa far back upon the opposite shore. The body of the young man was neatly incased in a new gray uniform, and the soul of the colonel was with the Confederate cause, but the heart of him was within the Union lines, and he was sorely distressed for the Federal troops held Tuscaloosa, and Tuscaloosa held many northern officers and the person of Miss Betty Taylor, and, further, Miss Betty held the affections of Colonel Prentice.

Now, Randolph Prentice had fought the oppressors and bested them and had been defeated by them. He hated them right heartily as abolitionists, and he admired them beyond expression as gallant foes. Therefore he mis-



"Ah ah doo—music," he drawled, trusted their abilities in the way of love-making. A man who fights generously and chivalrously is not, as a rule, excessively bashful or unduly tongue-tied in the presence of ladies.

Presently the colonel stamped his booted foot and swore beneath his breath. The quiet air carried sound far and clear, and to his ears there came faint strains of music, the hum of a guitar and an enormous baritone raised in song. Then the colonel retired within the grove of trees to reappear shortly with two of his men. They cautiously embarked in a small flatboat which had been concealed by a clump of undergrowth. The obliging moon had retreated behind a cloud bank.

In the parlor of the Taylor mansion the lights were low—seven candles were dear in the south toward the close of the year—but their dim rays could not

Sun

Stroke Shattered My Nerves.

Gave Up Preaching For Two Years.

Dr. Miles' Nervine Put Me On Active List.

Are you well? Do you sleep well? Do you get up rested, fresh and vigorous? Is your mind clear and active? If not read the following. See what another has suffered and how he recovered.

"Some years ago I was afflicted with sun stroke which left me with a shattered nervous system and exceedingly poor health. I suffered terribly with pain in my head, the top of my head would feel hot. I could not study, and after striving for two years to wear the trouble off, I was compelled to give up my pastoral labor and retire to my farm where I spent nearly two years trying to recuperate. It was all of no avail. Physicians' treatment and patent medicines failed to relieve me. I was exceedingly nervous and irritable and sometimes would have a terrible I could not bear any noise. A slight excitement on the blood would cause a pain in face and head. Two years ago I was induced to try Dr. Miles' Restorative Nervine. After using one bottle I could see improvement in my condition so I continued taking it for nearly a year. I am happy to say I no longer have those pains in my head or nervous spells. My appetite is good and I am able to preach three times on Sunday without fatigue. I consider Dr. Miles' Nervine the most wonderful medicine ever discovered."—Rev. D. Alex. Homan, Pastor U. B. Church, Marion, Ind.

All druggists sell and guarantee first bottle Dr. Miles' Remedies. Send for free book on Nervous and Heart Diseases. Address Dr. Miles Medical Co., Elkhart, Ind.

conceal the beauty of two girls who sat lovingly upon a sofa, each with an arm about the other. Though they were sisters, one was dark and mischievous—the younger, Alice Taylor—while the other was tall and fair and serious. Both were very good for a soldier man to look upon.

To them came a song from the night without. Dick Amyas, captain of the Nineteenth Ohio, and Lieutenant Henry were of a mind that no time more than the present was auspicious for the wooing of a maid of two. The guitar buzzed resonantly under the deft fingers of the captain and their commingled voices warbled a melting serenade. Simultaneously the four eyes of them were steadfastly observing the vine twined parlor casement. They were expectant of an invitation to enter. This was not their first duet beneath the window. Indeed, it is to be suspected that Miss Alice was in no way averse to the conquest of the north bloodlessly and by units.

Three gray shadows stole up behind the window and gazed with interest into the muskles of a couple of navy revolver. Prentice recognized Captain Amyas.

"Ah ah doo—music," he drawled.

"Prentice!"

"Ye' huckleberry soul!"

"How many men have you, confound you?"

"Several, gentlemen—a sufficient number. Ah repeat, can I persuade yeh?"

"You can!" replied Lieutenant Henry promptly. They obliged con amore.

"Ye' fair," commented the colonel when they had finished. "And once moah, if yeh please."

"Randolph, I'll be even with you for this!" Amyas threatened hotly.

"Oh, sing something else if yeh prefer," indifferently.

They sang.

At the window there had been a breathless surprise at the repetition of the song. Now, surmising that something was amiss, Miss Betty stepped out upon the veranda. She shaded her eyes, peering down upon the group.

"Randolph Prentice!" she cried. "Is it truly you?"

"Yes, Miss Taylor," he made answer humbly.

"What do you mean by this?"

His eyes shone, twinkling. "Ah ah doo—music."

"But you have no right!"

"Does it offend yeh, ma'am? Ah'm so thoughtless. Shall Ah make 'em stop?"

"But—but what do you propose to do with them?"

"Hang 'em, Miss Taylor. Gentlemen, please don't sing so far off the key. But don't stop. Sing something moah sentimental." He beckoned to his men. "Ah'm going in," he announced.

"See that the gentlemen continue to ab—sing. If they stop or try to escape—well, discourage 'em."

It was Miss Alice Taylor who greeted him at the door—and deserted him basely on the threshold of the parlor. The colonel paused, awkwardly fingering his cap, his supreme assurance quite gone. He hardly dared to lift his eyes to Betty, but when he summoned up the courage he saw her shoulders shaking. Without, "Rosalie, the Prairie Flower" was in spirited execution. The colonel grew more bold, advancing fully three paces.

"Now, sir," cried Miss Betty, facing him suddenly, "what have you to say for yourself?"

"Ye' little, Ah'm afraid, Miss Betty. Ah—Ah was hoping yeh'd consent to be mah excuse."

"And for what, sir?"

"Foh mah dahling!"

"Your dahling?"

"To approach yeh," he added hastily. "You've no excuse for risking your life, sir. The south needs you."

"Yes, ma'am. He twisted his cap helplessly. He felt anything at all but bold, and words choked in his throat most unaccountably. "But Ah—Miss Betty, Ah need yeh moah'n the south needs me!" He was utterly abashed by his temerity. He could say no more, but his eyes spoke for him.

"Betty!"

"Randolph Prentice!"

"Could you, what?"

"Could I what, Colonel Prentice?"

"Forgive me?"

"Rah—Randolph, there is nothing to forgive." Her eyes were downcast. The long lashes trembled moist upon her cheek.

A long quarter of an hour passed. Colonel Prentice reappeared upon the veranda.

"Cease firing, gentlemen," he said gaily. "Ah'm infinitely obliged to yeh."

"Hang you, Prentice! I call this very unhandsome of you!"

"The end"—firmly—"Justifies the means, gentlemen. Now, will yeh promise to make no disturbance while we are within the lines? Ah don't

want to gag you."

"We promise," said Amyas sullenly. "We are your prisoners."

"Then thank yeh and good night." He leaped lightly to the ground and, calling to his men, started away.

"But, Prentice!" cried Amyas, amazed.

"Yeh promised to make no noise," he warned them.

"But—"

"Ah'm taking no prisoners tonight, gentlemen—leastways no moah than one. Will yeh congratulate me upon winning the hand of the sweetest girl in the land?"

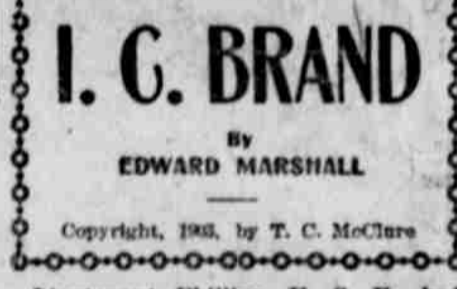
"Which?" demanded both in a breath.

"That, gentlemen, I must leave to yehselves to find out. But, believe me, Ah thank you. Good night."

A Story of Governor Washburn.

Governor Washburn was a thorough gentleman through and through, courteous, well bred and with an entirely sufficient sense of his own dignity. But he had little respect for any false notions of gentility and had a habit of going straight at any difficulty himself. To this habit he owed much of his success in life. A very amusing story was told by Mrs. Washburn long after her husband's death.

Her story was that one time when Judge Washburn was governor the members of his staff came to Worcester on some public occasion and were all invited to his house to spend the night. When he got up in the morning he found to his consternation that the man who was in the habit of doing such services at his house was sick or for some other reason had failed to put in an appearance and none of the boots of the young gentlemen was blocked. The governor was master of



Lieutenant Phillips, U. S. V., had been inspecting government property out in the corral, but the heat had driven him into his tent, which was pitched just on the edge of a coffee plantation.

It was at the time when our government was withdrawing from Porto Rico the vast number of horses, army wagons and other transportation paraphernalia which had been necessary during the war. Inspection duty is only given to men who are thoroughly trustworthy. Especially is this true in Porto Rico. There were large quantities of government property there after the surrender, most of it in good condition. The planters thereabouts, who had lost a season's crops through the war, were anxious to cheaply re-equip their plantations with wagons, harness and mules. It was because the honest gentlemen had a tendency to offer "inducements" to inspecting officers to condemn good property, which the planters could afterward buy for a song at the auction, that especial care was used in the selection of inspecting officers. Lieutenant Phillips was one of the elect.

On such government property as is condemned the "I. C." brand is placed. "I. C." means inspected and condemned. It is not wise for a civilian to have in his possession any property which bears the mark "I. C." and does not also bear the mark "I. C." Both are stamped in black paint on tentage canvas, blankets and such like, burned into the bodies of wagons and other wooden articles and branded on the flanks of horses and mules.

Lieutenant Phillips kept the trons in his own possession for fear they might be used unscrupulously. He carried them, with their brazer still half full of hot coals, to the rear of his tent so that what little breeze there was would blow the heat away from him. Then he removed his heavier garments.

It had been a hard day for the lieutenant. Early in the morning he had been chief witness at a court martial which had convicted an American soldier of having cruelly treated his wife, a beautiful Porto Rican girl. The accused, Luigi Armasado, was a swarthy fellow of Italian parentage.

Lieutenant Phillips remembered with discomfort the fierce look the man had thrown at him as, handcuffed, he had been led away to the guardhouse. But, although the lieutenant had the pink cheeks of a girl and never a suspicion of a mustache upon his upper lip, he had a reputation for fearlessness.

Before he settled down to sleep he released from the ventilated box a pair of little lizards. They are of the variety called chameleons and can be easily tamed by any one who will occasionally give them a sip of sugar and water, a few flies or some other dainties dear to the heart. Many of our soldiers in Porto Rico so tamed them, and Lieutenant Phillips was among their number.

When he finally lay down on his camp cot they took their stations, one upon his pillow, one upon his chest. They knew instinctively that he did not like to have them on his face, for whenever they trespassed on this territory he moved restlessly, but their presence near his face was quite suffi-

cient to keep most of the mes away.

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Containing 16 Statues.

Stiglmayer, a German goldsmith in the first part of the last century, having an ambition to attempt larger works than any he had accomplished, went to Naples in order to see the casting of Canova's statue of Charles III., but was denied the sight of certain secret technical processes. Stiglmayer found them out for himself nevertheless and as soon as he went home made his first experiment on a statuette of Venus. Many delays occurred, and the excitement increased as the end drew near. By some mistake one of his assistants poured his molten metal into the air hole. Then the casting came to a standstill.

"The crowd of lookers on," writes the poor founder in his diary, "stood first dumb about me and then slipped out one by one and left me with my pain."

In a month a second casting was begun and failed. With unbroken courage he began the third cast, and on Christmas eve the metal was again poured in. It ran into the mold and spurted joyfully out at the air hole.

"Our joy knew no bounds," he declares. "We raised a loud cry of joy and embraced and kissed each other. Pasquale, the helper, kissed the head of Phidias coming out of the broken form and burned his mouth, for it had not had time to cool."

Curry a Crime in Hungary.

It is a criminal offense in Hungary to lend money at usurious rates, and a Pressburg money lender was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for that offense recently.

Millions of Vegetarians.

In considering the practical side of the vegetarian question it should be remembered that at least seven-tenths of the population of the globe never eat flesh meat. In India, China, Japan and adjacent countries there are about 400,000,000 people—strong, active, healthy, long lived—who eat no flesh meat. In Europe are the peasants of Russia, the Corsican farmers, the Scotch highlanders and other vegetarian peoples, well developed physically and capable of great endurance.

Odd Epitaph.

On a newly erected memorial stone in Yarmouth, England, appears this inscription: "In memory of —, who died of disease contracted in South Africa. The Lord be praised." Where, in England, has this epitaph? Beneath this soil a lump of clay lies Arabella Young, who on the 24th of May began to hold her tongue."

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