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PART II.
CHAPTER I.

Night at last, and the stir and tumult of a great night over. Even the excitement that had swept this portion of the battlefield—only a small section of a vast area of struggle—into which a brigade had marched held its own, been beaten back, recovered its ground, and pursuing, had passed out of it forever, leaving only its dead behind and knowing nothing more of that struggle than its own impact and momentum—even this wild excitement had long since evaporated with the stinging smoke of gunpowder, the acid smell of burning rags from the clothing of a dead soldier fired by a bursting shell, or the heated reek of sweat and leather. A cool breath, that seemed to bring back once more the odor of the upturned earthworks along the now dumb line of battle, began to move from the suggestive darkness beyond.

But into that awful penitentials of death and silence there was now no invasion—there had been no retreat. A few of the wounded had been brought out, under fire, but the others had been left with the dead for the morning light and succor. For it was known that in that horrible obscurity riderless horses, frantic with the smell of blood, galloped wildly here and there, or, maddened by wounds, plunged furiously at the intruder, that the wounded soldier, still armed, could not always distinguish friend from foe or from the ghoul of camp followers who stripped the dead in the darkness, and struggled with the dying. A shot or two heard somewhere in that obscurity counted as nothing with the long fusillade that had swept it in the daytime; the passing of a single life, more or less, amounted to little in the long rollcall of the day's slaughter.

But with the first beams of the morning sun—and the slowly moving "relief detail" from the camp—came a weird half resurrection of that ghastly field. Then it was that the long rays of sunlight, streaming many a mile beyond the battle line, first pointed out the harvest of the dead where the reserves had been posted. There they lay in heaps and piles, killed by solid shot or bursting shells that had leaped the battle line to plunge into the waiting ranks beyond. As the sun lifted higher its beams fell within the range of musketry fire where the dead lay thicker—

even as they had fallen when killed outright—with arms extended, and feet at all angles to the field. As it touched these dead upturned faces, strangely enough it brought out no expression of pain nor anguish, but rather as if death had arrested them only with surprise and awe. It revealed on the lips of those who had been mortally wounded and had turned upon their side the relief which death had brought their suffering, sometimes even with a smile. Mounting higher, it glanced upon the actual battle line, curiously curving for the shelter of walls, fences and breastworks—and here the dead lay, even as when they had lain and died, their faces prone in the grass, but their muskets still resting across the breastworks. Exposed to grape and canister from the battery on the ridge, death had come to them mercifully also—through the head and throat. And now the whole field lay bare in the sunlight—broken with grotesque shadows cast from sitting, crouching, half-recumbent, but always rigid, figures, that might have been effigies of their own monuments. One half-kneeling soldier, with head bowed between his stiffened hands, might have stood for a carved figure of grief at the feet of his dead comrade. A captain shot through the brain in the act of mounting a wall lay sideways half across it, his lips parted with the word of command, and the sword still pointing over the barrier the way that they should go.

But it was not until the sun had mounted higher that it struck the central horror of the field and seemed to linger there in dazzling persistence, now and then returning to it in startling flashes, that it might be seen of men and those who brought succor. A tiny brook had run obliquely near the battle line. It was here that the night before the battle friend and foe had filled their canteens side by side with soldierly recklessness, or perhaps a higher instinct, purposely ignoring each other's presence; it was here that the wounded had afterwards crept, crawled and dragged themselves, here they had pushed, wrangled, striven and fought for a draft of that precious fluid which assuaged the thirst of their wounds—or happily put them out of their misery forever; here, overborne, crushed, suffocated by numbers, pouring their own blood into the flood and tumbling after it with their helpless bodies, they dimmed the stream, until, recoiling, red and angry, it had burst its banks and overflowed the cotten field in a brave pool now sparkling in the sunlight. But below this human dam—a mile away—where the brook still crept sluggishly, the ambulance horses sniffed and snorted from it.

The detail moved on slowly, doing their work expeditiously and apparently enthusiastically, but really only with that mechanical movement that saves emotion. Only once were they moved to an outbreak of indignation—the discovery of the body of an officer whose position

was in the darkness, but whose hand was still tightly grasped on his buttoned waistcoat, as if resisting the outrage that had been done while still in life. As the men disengaged the stiffened hand, something slipped from the waistcoat to the ground. The corporals picked it up and handed it to his officer. It was a sealed packet. The officer received it with the carelessness which his experience of those pathetic sacrifices from the dying to their living relations had induced, and dropped it in the pocket of his tunic, with the half dozen others that he had picked up that morning, and moved on with the detail. A little further on they halted in the attitude of attention as a mounted officer appeared riding slowly down the line.

There was something more than the habitual respect of their superior in their faces as he came forward. For it was the general who had commanded the brigade the day before—the man who leaped with one bound into the forward rank of military leaders. It was his invincible spirit that had led the advance, held back defeat against overwhelming numbers, sustained the rally, impressed his subordinate officers with his own undeviating purpose, and even impressed among them an almost superstitious belief in his destiny of success. It was this man who had done what was deemed impossible to do—what even at this time it was thought unwise and unstrategic to do—who had held a weak position, of apparently no importance, under the mandate of an incomprehensible order from his superior—which at best only asked for a sacrifice and was rewarded with a victory. He had decimated his brigade, but the wounded and dying had cheered him as he passed, and the survivors had pursued the enemy until the hawk called them back. For such a record he looked still too young and even effeminate, albeit his handsome face was dark and serious and his manner taciturn.

His quick eye had already caught sight of the rifled body of the officer and contracted. As the captain of the detail saluted him he said curtly:

"I thought the orders were to fire upon anyone desecrating the dead?"

"They are, general, but the hyenas don't give us a chance. That's all your poor fellow saved from their claws," replied the officer as he held up the sealed packet. "It has no address."

The general took it, examined the envelope, thrust it into his belt and said: "I will take charge of it."

The sound of horses' hoofs came from the rocky roadside beyond the bush. Both men turned. A number of field officers were approaching. "The division staff," said the captain in a lower voice, falling back.

They came slowly forward, a central figure on a gray horse leading here, or in history. A short, thick-set man with a grizzled beard closely cropped around an inscrutable mouth, and the serious formality of a respectable country deacon in his aspect, which even the single star on the shoulder-strap of his loose tunic and his soldierly seat in the saddle could not entirely obliterate. He had evidently perceived the general of the brigade and quickened his horse as the latter drew up. The staff followed more leisurely, but still with some curiosity to witness the meeting of the first general of the army with the latest. The division general saluted, but almost instantly withdrew his leather gauntlets, and offered his bare hand to the brigadier. The words of the heroes are scant. The drawn-up details, the waiting staff listened. This was all they heard.

"Hallock tells me you're from California!"

"Yes, general."

"Ah! I lived there too in the early days. Wonderful country. Developed greatly since my time, I suppose."

"Great resources. Finest wheat-growing country in the world, sir. You don't happen to know what the actual crop was this year?"

"Hardly general, but something enormous."

"Yes, I always said it would be. Have a cigar?"

He handed his cigar case to the brigadier. Then he took one himself, lighted it at the smoldering end of the one he had taken from his mouth, was about to throw the stump carelessly down, but suddenly recollecting himself leaned over his horse and dropped it carefully a few inches from the face of a dead soldier. Then straightening himself in the saddle he shoved his horse against the brigadier, moving him a little farther on, while a slight movement of his hand kept the staff from following.

"A heavy loss here!"

"I'm afraid so, general."

"It couldn't be helped. We had to rush in your brigade to gain time, and occupy the enemy until we could change front."

The young general looked at the shrewd, cold eyes of his chief. "Change front?" he echoed.

"Yes. Before a gun was fired it appeared that the enemy was in complete possession of all our plans, and knew every detail of our formed movements. All had to be changed."

The younger man now instantly understood the incomprehensible order of the day before. The general of the division continued, with his first touch of em-

cial formality: "You understand, therefore, Gen. Brent, that in the face of this extraordinary treachery the utmost vigilance is required, and a complete surveillance of your camp followers and civilians to detect the actual spy within our lines or the traitor we are harboring who has become possessed of this information. You will overhaul your brigade, and weed out all suspects, and in the position which you are to take to-morrow and the plantation you will occupy, you will see that your private quarters, as well as your lines, are cleared of all but those you care to keep." He reined in his horse, again extended his hand, saluted and rejoined his staff.

Brig. Gen. Clarence Brent remained for a moment with his head bent in admiring contemplation of the coolness of his veteran chief, under this exciting disclosure, and the strategy with which he had frustrated the traitors' success.

Then his eye caught the sealed packet in his belt. He mechanically drew it out and broke the seal. The envelope was filled with paper and memorandums. As he glanced at them his face darkened and his brow knit. He glanced quickly around him. The staff had retreated away; the captain and his detail were continuing their work at a little distance. He took a long breath, he was holding in his hand a tracing of their position, even of the position he was to occupy to-morrow, and a detailed account of the movements, plans and force of the whole division, as had been arranged in council of war the day before the battle, but there was no indication of the writer or his intentions.

He thrust the paper hurriedly back into the envelope, and placed it, this time, in his breast. He galloped towards the captain:

"Let me see the officer from whom you took that packet?"

The captain led him to where the body lay, with others, extended more decently on the grass awaiting removal. Gen. Brent with difficulty repressed an ejaculation.

"Why, it's one of our own men!" he said quickly.

"Yes, general. They say it's Lieut. Wainwright, a regular of the division supply department."

"Then what was he doing here?" asked Gen. Brent, sternly.

"I can't make out, sir, unless he went into the last advance as a volunteer. Wanted to see the fight, I reckon. He was a dashing fellow, a West Pointer—and a southerner, too—a Virginian."

"A Virginian!" echoed Brent, quickly.

"Yes, sir."

"Search him again," said Brent quietly. He had recovered his usual coolness, and as the captain again examined the body, he took out his tablets and wrote a few lines. It was an order to search the quarters of Lieut. Wainwright, and bring all papers, letters and documents to him. He then beckoned one of the detail toward him. "Take that to the provost marshal at once. Well, captain," he added calmly, as the officer again approached him, "what do you find?"

"Only this, sir," returned the captain, with a half smile, producing a small

photograph. "I suppose it was overlooked, too." He handed it to Brent.

There was a sudden fixing of his commanding officer's eyes, but his face did not otherwise change.

"The usual kind, general. But this time rather a handsome woman."

"Very," said Clarence Brent, quietly. It was the portrait of his own wife!



He handed it to Brent.

CHAPTER II.

So complete was his control of voice and manner that as he galloped back to his quarters no one would have dreamed that Gen. Brent had just looked upon the likeness of the wife from whom he had parted in anger four years ago. Still less would they have suspected the singular fear that came upon him that in some vague way she was connected with the treachery he had just discovered. He had heard from her only once, and then through her late husband's lawyer in regard to her California property, and believed that she had gone to her relations in Alabama, where she had identified herself with the southern cause even to the sacrifice of her private fortune. He had heard her name mentioned in the southern press as a fascinating society leader, and even coadjutrix of southern politicians—but he had no reason to believe that she had taken so active or so desperate a part in the struggle. He tried to think that his unconscious sprang from his recollection of the previous treachery of Capt. Pinckney, and the part she had played in the California conspiracy—although he had long since acquitted her of the betrayal of another trust. But there was a fatal similarity in the two cases. There was no doubt that this Lieut. Wainwright was a traitor in the camp—that he had succumbed to the miserable sophistry of his class in regard to his superior allegiance to his native state. But was there the inducement of another emotion—or was the photograph only the souvenir of a fascinating priestess of rebellion whom the dead man had met? There was perhaps less of feeling than scorn in the first suggestion, but he was, nevertheless, relieved when the provost marshal found

the incriminating papers in Wainwright's effects. Nor did he reveal to the division general the finding of the photograph. It was sufficient to disclose the work of the traitor without adding what might be a clue to his wife's participation in it, near, or remote. There was risk enough in the former course—which his duty made imperative. He hardly dared to think of the past day's slaughter which—there was no doubt now—had been due to the previous work of the spy, and how his brigade had been selected by the irony of fate—to suffer for and yet retrieve it. If she had a hand in that selected plot, ought he to spare her? Or were his destiny and hers to be thus monstrously linked together?

Luckily, however, the explanation of the chief offender and the timely discovery of his papers enabled the division commander to keep the affair discreetly silent, and to enjoy equal secrecy on the part of Brent. The latter, however, did not relax his vigilance, and after the advance the next day he made a minute inspection of the ground he was to occupy, its approaches and connections with the existing country and the rebel lines, increased the strictness of picket and sentry regulations, and exercised a rigid surveillance of non-combatants and civilians within the lines—even to the lowest canteener or camp follower. Then he turned his attention to the house he was to occupy as his headquarters.

It was a fine specimen of the old colonial planter's house, with its broad verandas, its great detached offices and negro quarters, and had, thus far, escaped the ravages and pillaging of the war. It had been occupied by its owner up to a few days before the engagement, and so great had been the confidence of the enemy in their success that it had been used as the Confederate headquarters on the morning of the decisive battle. Jasmine and rose, unstained by the sulphur of gunpowder, twined around its ruined columns and half hid the recessed windows; the crocus flower garden was still in its bloom and untroubled. Lucubrations, forgotten before the stables also, dotted marks of the late military occupancy and was pulverized by the daily horsehoofs of the waiting staff and the mingled impress of husbandly profligacy with patriarchal simplicity. As all there in the domestic arrangements of a race who lived on equal terms with strangers and their own servants.

The negro servants still remained with a certain out-like fidelity to the place, and adapted themselves to the northern invaders with a childlike enjoyment of the novelty of the change. Brent, nevertheless, looked them over with an experienced eye, and noticed himself their trustworthiness; there were the usual number of "loaves" gray-haired and grizzled in body service, and the "mammys" and "annies" of the kitchen. There were two or three rooms in the wing which still contained private articles, pictures and souvenirs of the family, and a "young lady's" boudoir which Brent with characteristic delicacy kept carefully isolated and intact from the military household and accessible only to the family servants. The room he had selected for himself was nearest it—a small, plainly furnished apartment with an almost conventional simplicity in its end, white walls and draperies and the narrow, nun-like bed. It struck him that it might have belonged to some elder daughter or maiden aunt who had acted as housekeeper, as it commanded the wing and the servants' offices with easy access to the central hall.

There followed a week of inactivity, in which Brent felt a singular resemblance in this southern mansion to the old casa at Robles. The afternoon shadows of the deep verandas recalled the old monastic gloom of the Spanish house, which even the presence of a lounging officer or waiting orderly could not entirely dissipate, and the scent of the rose and jasmine from his windows overcame him with sad memories. He began to chafe under this inaction, and long again for the excitement of the march and bivouac—in which for the past four years he had buried himself.

(To be continued.)

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Summer excursion tickets, good to return until October 10th, to Yaquina Bay, are now on sale by the Oregon Central & Eastern R. R. at Albany and Corvallis at the usual reduced rates, viz:

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