

THE NIGHTINGALE.

Sole singer in the world of dreams. Whose voice, outraging clear and far into the empty darkness, seems an echo from a distant star.

STORY OF SHELL ANNIE.

An Incident of Sherman's March to the Sea.

Nobody expected Gen. Sherman to come into Atlanta from the south. Oh, no, in the natural course of events he must have certainly shouldered his way right straight on from the north, and accordingly the grim and grimy, frayed out fragments of Lee's confederate army wallowed in the stifling trenches all along the best semi-circular line of outworks that faced the valley of the Chattahoochee and commanded the approaches from the Allatoona hills beyond.

But he of the eagle eye was a strategist. He wanted to cut off and cordon the gray jackets in the city, and for that reason he quietly marched the upper part of his army up the western bank of the river eight or ten miles, flung them across the river, and with a mighty swing of that ponderous trip-hammer of war he struck them from the south, thus cutting off their lines of supplies by the Georgia railroad. Then followed those terrible days which wound up with the fierce onslaught of July 22, when the hope-starved, half-starved southern men, the gallant men of the west, met in a mighty gladiatorial contest which resulted in the fall of Atlanta.

These are matters for the historian, but what I am going to recount is one of those wild, weird romances with which this terrible conflict was so fraught, and here is the strange story: "To the sea," was the watchword of Sherman's armies, and the sudden, dogged retreat of the confederates from Jonesboro was the first movement of the defeated and despairing confederates.

Jonesboro was a little inland town, nestled amid field and forest, interspersed with beautiful undulating hills and grassy valleys green with the tones of the harvest, but little suited as a defensive point for the bruised and prostrate legions who were recoiling slowly toward the southern sea.

Breastworks had been hastily thrown up flanking the line of the Central railroad, and in the ditches behind them the straggling remnants of obstinate confederates were entrenched. It was a gloriously beautiful summer day when the skirmish line of the northern hosts debouched from the north and took up position in front of these breastworks.

Amazed by surprise after relying in vain on the ability of the southern troops to check the onflow of the legions of the conquering hosts, the women and children, led by the lame and the halt and the aged men of the country, were fleeing for life, panic-stricken and utterly demoralized.

As the sun rose over the swelling ridges the eyes of the soldiers of either army caught the gleam of a little white tent, half hidden in a wood just a little to the left of the line of attack, and above it fluttered a tiny white flag, no bigger than a man's hand.

It was a woman's handkerchief, and all the chivalrous feelings of the American soldier were aroused as the grim veterans caught sight of that little appealing bit of cambrie floating there through the uprising mists of war. The order was passed to respect that flag, and when the great guns began their work and shot and shell were hurled blazing and crashing across field and wood from either direction, never a gunner trained his piece toward a point near that little white house.

The battle was fiercely fought, but the combat was of short duration, and as the shadows lengthened eastward the southern troops were seen in full retreat, leaving the field to the triumphant victors.

As they swept forward a drummer boy, Otto Barden, of a Pennsylvania regiment, passed by the little white tent in the wood.

Guards in blue uniform surrounded him and while the smoke of battle curled above and around there was a plaintive cry from the tent, and the stalwart surgeon lifted the flap of the little tent and emerged followed by an old negro, bearing in her arms a tiny, white bundle.

"Please God, marse, is you gwinter take us off ter de north?" wailed she, with the big tears coursing down her withered face. "It'll sho' kill Miss Annie of yo' does."

"Not a bit of it, old lady, not a bit of it," replied the good-natured surgeon, with a smile.

"Hello, Otto, you're the very boy I want. This is your prize, as you are nearest her age, and we are going to detail you to take charge of this wee prisoner and see that the little rec don't escape."

The rough soldiers came crowding around for a peep at the prisoner, and many eyes filled with tears of tenderness as they gazed on the baby that had first seen the light in such dreary surroundings.

"Ain't it a wonder that she and the mother were not blown to pieces?" said the sergeant.

"It is, indeed," replied the corporal, "for look there where a stray shell cut its way through the bushes as clean as a knife."

"Well, boys, she is our prize. Let us christen her, for time is up, and the Johnnies are waiting for us behind some bush heap down the road. Come, Otto, speak up. You shall have the honor of naming the little miss," said the surgeon.

"Call her Shell Annie," said the boy, as his mind reverted to his own orphaned days, "because she was saved from that shell."

"Good!" cried the surgeon. "Shell Annie," chorused the sergeant and the corporal in a breath.

"Here, give me your canteen, Otto," said the surgeon. "Hold her head up, and, sprinkling a few drops on the tiny head, he continued: "Shell Annie, I baptize thee in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Ghost, and may They ever protect thee as has the God of battle to-day. Now, Otto, the sergeant will remain with a file of men until morning, and you may remain with them, for you look tired and worn out, my boy."

At the word of command the other soldiers took up the line of march, and faint and fainter grew the roar and rumble of departing legions, rolling on irresistibly to match their blue billows with the blue waves of the distant sea.

Twenty years after the furling of the flag the battlefield of Jonesboro was a corn field, and the rustling rows of the crested corn hid from view the almost obliterated traces of strife. Peace and plenty reigned, and the one-armed veteran of the north was hobnobbing with the peg-legged veteran of the south as they laughingly recounted the experiences of the war.

Asheville has become a great resort for summer visitors from all sections on account of its quietude, its healthful air and water and its splendid scenic surroundings.

As the train slowed up at the little station a man, apparently blessed with all the activity of youth, but bearing about him that unmistakable air of maturity that indicates intimate knowledge of and rough experience with life, stepped on the platform and strolled up the hill toward the hotel.

The dusky twilight of the dying summer day softened the rugged outlines of the gloomy mountains, and the tinkle of a crystal stream made music in the thickets below.

Suddenly the stranger was startled by a wild cry, and around a turn of the road came a horse at full speed, and in the buggy, swaying to and fro at his heels, there was a flutter of white.

Springing forward and dropping his belongings, the stranger clutched the reins of the frightened animal and arrested his mad career, but the shock was so sudden that the occupant of the buggy was tossed into the bushes by the roadside.

Releasing the horse, which stood trembling with fear and excitement, the stranger lifted the prostrate form, and as he moved from the hotel came rushing to the spot she opened her eyes in a dazed and startled way.

"Are you hurt ma'am?" asked the stranger.

"No, thank you; I was only frightened. I had just gotten into the buggy and was going for a ride when he became frightened and ran away. Oh, how can I ever thank you?"

"Best by not mentioning it again," said the stranger, brusquely, handing her his card as he resigned her to her friends and walked away.

On the following morning the stranger arose late after his fatiguing journey, and when he went down to breakfast beside his plate was a little perfumed note, and he opened it and read it, half amused and half in wonder.

"OTTO BARDEN: Permit me to thank you and to convey to you the grateful feelings of my friends for your brave action in rescuing me from my perilous position yesterday. As a partial recognition of your kindness, I wish to extend to you an invitation to enjoy a picnic excursion with us to-day. It is my birthday. Please do not fail to come. Gratefully, "ANNA FONTAINE."

On a blank leaf from his notebook Barden wrote a line accepting the invitation, and then leisurely finished his breakfast.

The day was perfect, and, as the special guest of the heroine of the day, he thought he had never felt quite so near at peace with himself and all mankind as he did while lounging on the green grass beneath the shadow of the tall hemlocks at the foot of the mountain with pretty Annie Fontaine.

Chatting in a desultory way, Barden suddenly recalled the day and the drama of twenty years ago.

"I don't know," said he, "that I was one of those Yanks that marched with Sherman to the sea?"

"Indeed? Why, you must have been a very youthful soldier."

"I was a drummer boy, and this day twenty years ago I was in the battle of Jonesboro."

"And so was I," said she with a saucy smile, "for that was my birthday and the place of my nativity."

"What?" he cried, springing to his feet excitedly. "Then you are, you must be—"

"Shell Annie," she replied.

There are some stories that ought to be concluded before they are begun, but this, which is as true—yes, truer than most history—reached its natural conclusion then and there, and the Pennsylvania drummer boy now owns one of the finest fruit farms around Jonesboro, and the mistress of that southern home is "Shell Annie." —Atlanta Journal.

She Was a Biddacious Old Goose.

A goose with remarkable maternal instinct has been found near Berry, in Harrison county, Ky. Her brood was recently drowned and an old sow, with a litter of twelve pigs, died about the same time. The old mother goose had adopted the little orphan pigs and pecked in her attention toward them. —The Daily is doing well.

PONY PENNING.

A Favorite Sport of the People of Chincoteague Island.

How Hundreds of the Little Animals are Rounded Up and Captured by the Men and Boys—a Gale Occasion.

Chincoteague and Assateague have had their hundredth annual pony penning. Chincoteague is a small island in the Atlantic close to the shore of Accomack county, Va. Assateague is a long, narrow peninsula lying outside of Chincoteague and protecting it from the assaults of the Atlantic. Chincoteague is a glittering little island, brilliant with sand and salt water, densely peopled, well wooded and haunted by mocking birds. There is neither poverty nor crime there, drunkenness is almost unknown, and doors are always unlocked. It is the boast of Chincoteague that no slave ever lived upon its soil, and that the island remained true to the union throughout the war. There are no better sailors anywhere than the people of Chincoteague, and there are no stancher little boats than the Chincoteague canoe with double leg-of-mutton sails.

Nobody knows positively the origin of the Chincoteague ponies. It is only known that they have roamed the marshy pastures of the islands for at least a century, and there is a tradition that the ancestors of the ponies came ashore from a wrecked ship in the eighteenth century. These, doubtless, were full grown horses, and the Chincoteague pony of to-day is a degenerate, through froights in summer and exposure in the open pastures through long winters. But degenerate as he is, the Chincoteague pony is a fine, hardy, and often beautiful animal, with strength out of proportion to his size, and, when well reared, has strength, agility and speed. He is from ten to twelve hands high and from six to eight hundred pounds in weight. From two hundred and fifty to four hundred of these little creatures roam the island pastures. There are, perhaps, half as many on the outer end of Assateague.

A stallion leads upon the pastures a group of from ten to twenty-five mares and colts. The leader is on the constant lookout for danger, and at his nod his whole polygamist family take to their heels. The ponies are really far from wild, and one may easily approach within fifty or twenty yards of a group at pasture. The older stallions become fierce and quarrelsome, and have to be removed from the pastures from time to time, lest they should destroy one another or the younger stallions. They are all excellent swimmers, and when the pastures become bare on Chincoteague they frequently swim to the neighboring islets, where the salt grass is still green. It is not uncommon to see from the top of Assateague light a group of horses bathing in the surf. The colts are born and nurtured in the open pastures, and the annual pony penning is for the double purpose of branding these colts and selling some of the older horses.

Pony-penning day is still a fete day on Chincoteague. The pen for the horses is built near the center of the village, and on the morning of the pony penning men and boys mounted on swift and well-broken ponies ride out to the pastures to drive in the wild creatures. The groups of ponies are slowly driven together on the pasture and then started toward it. As the pen is reached the guards thicken, and the whole band is easily driven into the enclosure. Branding irons are used; men with rope nooses on the end of long poles leap into the pen. The colts are thrown to the ground and held there while the iron is applied. The branding done, the auction follows. Unbroken horses fetch from twenty-five to forty dollars each. Others, broken to harness, fetch as high as sixty dollars. Well-matched pairs sometimes fetch one hundred and fifty dollars. The ponies have long been the pets of children of well-to-do families on the mainland, and of late years have been sold over a large part of the United States. They are larger than inland ponies and more beautiful. —N. Y. Press.

STRANGE AND CURIOUS.

THERE is a doctor by the name of Miller in nearly every town in Missouri.

The Fresno county (Cal.) jail is said to be invaded by spiders, who keep up a noise of a row and rapping at night.

JERRY WALLACE, a farmer of Riverdale, Ga., was carrying a sack of apples from his wagon to a store, when the sack overbalanced and broke his neck, killing him instantly.

The baya bird of India ingeniously illuminates its nest. It catches fire-flies and, without killing them, with moist clay sticks them to its nest. On a dark night the baya's nest is like a bright beacon.

In the reform school at Jamesburg, N. J., there is a phenomenon, in the person of a six-year-old boy named Herman Hoffer, who has a heavy moustache, and is so strong that he can lift two hundred pounds.

A whole bottle of wine was drunk, just before an important race, at Kempton Park, Eng., by Greywell, a horse which therefore had not a good mouthful of wine. It was the race, badly beating several crack ones, etc.

Twenty-four postmen, mounted on bicycles, daily collect the mails in Washington, D. C. They are on duty from 8 a. m. to 9 p. m., in phalanxes of twelve, so that no man has to work more than eight hours a day.

A return upon the English language has predicted that before long English grand opera will be permanently established in this country. It says that the English language can be sung without in any way disturbing the sustained legato flow of voice and the beauty of tone.

THE YOUNG QUEEN VICTORIA.

Her Majesty's Actions on Being Notified of the King's Death.

William IV was dead. The archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham were dispatched to inform the Princess Victoria of the fact. It was a warm night in June. The princess was sleeping in her mother's room, her custom from childhood, and had to be summoned out of her sleep. The messengers awaited her in the long, solitary room, separated only by folding doors from that which was inhabited by the Duchess of Kent and her daughter. The young girl entered alone, in her night-dress, with some loose wrap thrown hastily about her. The moment she was addressed as "Your majesty" she put out her hand, intimating that the lords who addressed her were to kiss it and thereby do homage. Her schooling and her instincts were admirable from the first. Self-possession combined with perfect modesty came naturally to her.

A few hours later, at 11 o'clock in the morning, the child queen met her council. In the corridor at Windsor there is a picture which commemorates the event. Never, it has been said by an eyewitness, was anything like the first impression she produced or the chorus of praise and admiration which was raised about her manner and behavior, certainly not without justice. Her extreme youth and inexperience and the ignorance of the world concerning her—for she had lived in complete seclusion—excited interest and curiosity.

Asked whether she would enter the room accompanied by the great officers of state, she said she would come in alone. Accordingly when all the lords of the privy council were assembled the folding doors were thrown open, and the queen entered, quite plainly dressed and in mourning, and took her seat for the first time, a young girl among a crowd of men, including at the most famous and powerful of her subjects. She bowed and read her speech, handed to her by the prime minister, Lord Melbourne, in a clear and firm voice and then took the oath for the security of the Church of Scotland.

Immediately the privy councilors were sworn, the royal Dukes of Cumberland and Sussex first by themselves. It was observed that as these two old men, her uncles, knelt before her, swearing allegiance, she blushed up to the eyes, as if she felt the contrast between their civil and natural relations. Her manner was very graceful and engaging, and she kissed them both, and rising from her chair moved toward the Duke of Sussex, who was too infirm to reach her. —Fortnightly Review.

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