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Features

# The Advocate

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Stories

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## PRETTY BROWN HATTIE HAWKS, the Unsung HEROINE of the CIVIL WAR

An unknown colored girl, who possessed the rare combination of beauty and brains, made the supreme sacrifice, which saved a regiment of

soldiers and perhaps helped to decide the turning point of the Civil War—then accidentally met death at the hands of her faithful lover.

By DONN BRYAN

Hattie Hawks wore red calico dresses and her blue-black hair down over her shapely shoulders. Men in Missouri laid innumerable presents at her shapely feet.

ly be connected with reason. She did things on the spur of the moment without anticipating the cost. Always she set down the figures in her moments of leisure which, because of her popularity with both white

about her a Bible and a small testament. She managed eventually to print her name on the flyleaf of the Bible. It took her many days to acquire the ability to do this, but she kept to the task she had set for herself of metallic splendor. The biggest and strongest of men who hoed corn and sweet potatoes in the Fillmore fields could not hold her with their powerful hands if she wished to be free.



Hattie Hawks Fleeing Her Captors

It was not uncommon for her to entertain a beau, sometimes two on the same evening. Naturally she was popular with a magnetic charm which today would carry her to dazzling heights. She was different from all other women in everything except ability. She possessed a sweetness of voice, a tenderness of eye, a gentleness of hand which, when she applied herself to the business of love-making, caused her prettiest rival no insignificant amount of grief. Love making in those days was a business, as it is now.

At her work—she was a valuable maid in the household of Captain Joseph Fillmore of Maryville, Missouri—she excelled, performed her duties with a mastery which was complete, left nothing half-accomplished, finished everything she undertook.

She wore her cheap calico dresses tight about the hips—and what hips they were—and, although it was the custom of the times she never allowed the hem of her skirt to touch the ground. She never wore any other color except red, which set her off to a noticeable advantage. Her voice was splendid, too, and she was, upon more than one occasion, called upon to sing at various exclusive gatherings.

In the big house on Buchanan Street her room was a large affair; there was a wide chimney with a cheerful fireplace; curtains at the windows were always spotless. There was a comfortable chair and a sewing table; red blankets covered the bed and her two dogs, both greyhounds given to her by Captain Fillmore at her first Christmas in his charge, were always stretched out lazily in the full glare of the fire. By nature she was gay, with moments of depression which were like punctuation marks in a beautiful poem.

Hattie Hawks, in her relationship with men, was like Cleopatra, the Siren of the Nile, and she took from them more than she gave them; but in her love-making she was both tender and impulsive. All misunderstandings hurt her deeply, and most generally left her utterly unresponsive.

In this she was wrong because frequently she left the impression that she did not care. Misunderstandings made her actually miserable; but where her position was concerned, where her housework was the subject, nothing daunted her and she carried on with a vigor that was as fresh and sweeping as a sea breeze.

Her courage was beyond question; it was recklessness that could hard-

and colored, were few. Her heart bore many a scar brought on during skirmishes of love. She saw, she understood, she wept and she conquered.

By and large, pretty Hattie Hawks took more from life than she gave to it.

She was not unusually tall; rather her frame was of medium build and thin, capable of graceful movements which were like unmatched gems. She had a broad high forehead, instinct coupling with it imagination, a heavy nose with large delicate nostrils. An emphatic chin, more like that of a fighter than a poet, gave her face an attractive strength and at the same time pointed out unmistakably her determination.

Her mind was active, bristling with electric thought; her tastes and preferences those of a born lady rather than a servant. She could neither read nor write, but she always had

self until she accomplished her purpose.

Her perceptions were flawless jewels, she was never known to make a serious mistake in her work. Her decisions were formed instantly without the least show of hesitation. Even in her love making she was as quick to accept as she was to reject. At times, however, nothing but her concrete resolutions saved her from utter extinction.

Often she had to depend on her sparkling wit to save her from a trap that fate had set, and she enormously desired a risk now and then which kept her fine nerves keyed up and in tune like the strings of an expensive violin. She would have deceived the best judges of women today and they would be unable to ascertain whether she preferred "to walk back" or to ride.

From such positions she extracted herself with polished dignity, a sort

Hattie Hawks bartered for her freedom, paying the one price she could pay; she was allowed to slip out of the tent, catch her horse and make her escape. The guard, however, with his rifle, fired three shots at her, pretending she caught him napping, and fled to freedom. The slightest treachery on his part would have cost her her life, as he could have shot her from the horse with ease.

After so many months she began to care for Feeler, a priceless man, whose strength and intelligence made him an outstanding figure and brought him endless praise. Hattie Hawks was never out of the presence of Feeler. He walked with her, played with her and succeeded in holding her love where countless others had failed.

Feeler, despite all his strength which was like that of a giant tractor, despite his gigantic frame, his huge paws was as gentle as a woman. Often he would accompany her on long horseback rides to purchase things that were needed by the three Fillmore ladies.

The pleasures preferred by Hattie and Feeler transcended the understanding of the other men and women on the Fillmore place. There was nothing uncouth, unkempt, unsavory in their love affair which continued

Continued on Page 2