The Veteran's Story

A Southern Girl Tricked Him, and the Result

By JAMES D. MOREHOUSE.

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My meeting with my wife is a curious story in itself, and illustrates the fact that there is no rule whatever for love.

When I was in the service, with that force which was opposing Stonewall Jackson in the Shenandoah valley, I was sent down to an outpost stationed at a little town some twenty miles south of our main army with a message to the colonel commanding there. While waiting for some written communications the colonel was getting ready for me to take back a young girl came into his headquarters and asked for a pass. She was as trim a little body as I ever saw, bright red cheeks and auburn hair—something she seldom sees in the south. She struck my fancy the moment I looked at her. I was standing behind the colonel, who was writing at a pine table. The girl said she wished to go north to relatives in Harrisburg, Pa. The colonel wouldn't give her a pass to do so. She was about to turn away disappointed when I tipped her a wink.

You must forget I'm an old duffer and picture me as a boy of twenty, full of the old scratch. I thought what a rousing episode it would be for me to escort the girl north. When I winked at her it was to convey information of a plan I had conceived to help her out. Then I rushed forward and throwing my arms about her neck gave her a smack. She didn't resent it.

"Why, Mag!" I cried. "How in the world came you here?"

She caught on at once. "I came down just before the war opened, and have been trying to get back north ever since."

"How's the folks?"

"Pretty well. Mother's in poor health."

"Why do you wish to go north?"

"To do something to make a living. A girl can't earn anything down here."

"Colonel," I said, "I wish to introduce my cousin, Maggie Allen."

Luckily she had not given any name. The colonel shook her hand and told her that since she was my cousin he could most certainly give her a pass. I thanked for her. I told him that we had been brought up together as children, and I knew that every member of her family were strong Union sympathizers. He wrote the pass and in a little while gave me the dispatches, then the girl and I started northward on a twenty mile ride on horseback.

She was the most delighted girl at the trick I had played you ever saw. Her eyes fairly glistened with mischief. She couldn't talk about anything else. We rode along for a matter of ten miles, when, coming to a fork in the road, she said that if I didn't mind waiting for her she would like to go and say goodby to an aunt of hers who lived half a mile up the diverging road. I had been riding twenty miles south and still had ten miles to go on my return. So I told her that if she would promise me I would wait for her under a big tree at the fork. She said she wouldn't be gone long and started. I dismounted, lay down at the foot of the tree, lit my pipe and pretty soon fell asleep.

When I awoke I looked into the face of my cousin standing in the midst of a dozen or more Confederate soldiers. She smiled at me and said:

"I'm sorry to return evil for good, but the truth is I'd been trying for some time to get up into this region with certain information. I'd been detailing about your army movements for General Jackson. These gentlemen have been waiting for me while here and I also rode over to deliver my information and tell them that you were here with some others of the same kind. Please let me have your dispatches."

I never was so completely done up in my life. I couldn't do anything but ask for the documents, which she handed to an officer. They conferred a little to one side and finally concluded that as a furlough I would only be disadvantaged, so after kidding me for a while they let me go.

I left them, vowing inwardly that some day I would make that girl pay for the way she had treated me. That some day, after the war, I was reckoned in the service and in Virginia for a while, in fact, and one day, getting a letter of introduction from a friend, I went over into the Shenandoah valley to make the acquaintance of her family. I had been riding twenty miles and still had ten miles to go on my return. So I told her that if she would promise me I would wait for her under a big tree at the fork. She said she wouldn't be gone long and started. I dismounted, lay down at the foot of the tree, lit my pipe and pretty soon fell asleep.

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