

A Veteran of the Light Brigade

A War Story

By F. A. MITCHEL

During the war between the states an Englishman named Larkins, who had been a sergeant in the British army, came over to America to seek service with the Federal army. If he failed he would try the Confederacy. A soldier of fortune, he had no preference, though in England the people were overwhelmingly in favor of the North.

Larkins had papers to prove his British citizenship, which enabled him to sojourn either in the north or in the south, as he pleased. He came over in a blockade runner to Charleston, S. C., and, going to Richmond, Va., made application for a commission. He was offered one, but by this time exhaustion had begun to show itself in the Confederacy, especially in a financial way, and Larkins was not pleased with the want of prospect of emolument in its service. So he concluded to try for a commission in the Federal army.

Having declined the southern offer, he asked for a pass to go through the lines to Washington, telling the authorities to Richmond that he had been called home to England. It was refused him, and he left for the Army of Northern Virginia, at that time engaged between the two capitals, intending, after having been passed through the lines, to work his way northward. The route he desired to take lay through Fredericksburg, and descended upon the road was a division commanded by a general whom he would call Beaumont. When Larkins presented his pass to the officer, telling him at the same time that he was a British subject, he was treated with consideration for the reason that the authorities were constantly hoping that the British government would interfere in their behalf, and they were always ready to show attention to such English persons as came among them.

General Beaumont showed great interest in John Larkins, regretting that he could not go to England had deprived the south of his services. The general told him that if he would remain and accept a commission he would appoint him to a position on his staff. The Englishman was tempted, but, knowing that he must take his pay in depreciated Confederate currency, he adhered to his resolution, assuring the general that his recall was imperative.

A number of officers were introduced to Larkins, who looked upon him with considerable interest. This he attributed to the fact that he had told the general that he had fought in the Crimean war and took part in the celebrated charge of the Light brigade, of which he gave a vivid description. Whatever the cause, the ex-British soldier was much pleased with his treatment, and when he was urged not to hurry away he felt disposed to linger in his pleasant surroundings. Every one had heard of the charge that had terrified the world and had been commemorated by the British poet laureate Alfred Tennyson, so that one who had taken part in it was especially interesting to soldiers.

Larkins had reached General Beaumont's headquarters in time for luncheon and was invited by the general to lunch with him and his staff. During the afternoon Beaumont invited the Englishman to ride with him on a tour of inspection of his division, and in the evening the chief of staff, Captain Carter, asked the visitor if he would not like to call upon a southern family living in the vicinity. Larkins was not what would be considered in England, a gentleman and demurred at the invitation, but the general urged him to make the acquaintance of at least one household of southern ladies while in America, and he consented.

Larkins that evening met Caroline Fletcher, a captivating southern girl, who had only to smile upon him to make him fancy that she had been smitten with him. When he told her that he was simply passing through the lines and would go north the next day she pouted and insisted on a promise that he would call upon her the next evening. Gallantly Larkins gave his promise, and she left her not quite knowing whether he was standing on his heels or his head.

The next day he was shown more attentions by the officers and in the evening called on Miss Fletcher. She received him on a veranda rich with the perfume of flowers. She was carefully attired and looked bewitching. She flirted with Larkins for awhile, then began to ask him on which side of the American conflict his sympathies were enlisted. He assured her that he had no preference, whereupon she coquettishly asked him if he would do her a service. Having declared that he would be glad to accommodate her, she told him that she belonged to a Union family and was bound up in the defense of the Union arms. She concluded to him that she was sending information to Washington and ended by asking him if he would carry a written communication for her to President Lincoln.

Larkins knew well that if caught by the Confederates with such information on his person his British citizenship would not save him from the gallows. He declined to be the bearer

of the message. The lady looked much disappointed, but forebore to press the matter and begged that he would not betray her. Larkins promised, and that ended the episode.

The next day the Britisher said he would take his departure. He was informed that he must be sent through the lines with a flag of truce, and the situation was not just then fitted for the dispatching of such a flag. The enemy was restless, and there might be fighting at any moment. So Larkins was obliged to content himself at headquarters, which were not so agreeable as before the attentions that had been showered on him were discontinued—that is to say, he did not seem to excite the same interest as formerly.

During that day one of the officers brought up to him a citizen whom he introduced, expatiating on the ex-servant's experience in the Crimea. The man looked at him closely, made some commonplace remarks and withdrew. From that time Larkins began to realize that he was under surveillance. He had been furnished with a tent, which he occupied alone, and during the night was awakened by men talking outside. Curious to know what was going on, he got off his cot and looked out. Several privates were sitting on the ground close by his tent, smoking. He was surely under guard. What could it mean?

He lay awake the greater part of the night wondering what object the general could possibly have in treating him, a British subject, as a guest, but really depriving him of his liberty.

The next morning when he awoke the men had gone. An officer came in and told him that a breakfast would be sent in to him. During the day he noticed that this same officer, never lost sight of him. To kill time he thought he would go and call on Miss Fletcher.

"Where are you going?" asked his shadow.

"I'm going to pay a visit at the Fletchers. I expect to be going as soon as the general will send me through, and I think I'll say goodbye to them."

"You won't find the Fletchers at home today."

"This was said in a half commanding tone, as if meaning, 'Stay where you are.' Larkins said nothing, but turned and retraced his steps.

He was sitting in a camp chair that afternoon near General Beaumont's tent when an officer rode up, threw himself from his horse and went in to see the general. There being nothing but canvas to intercept the sound, Larkins could hear a part of what was said. After some talk that he could not make out:

"He's the man," the inferior officer said.

"Are you sure?" asked the general.

"Yes, general; the same fellow, playing a different game."

"When will he be here?"

"Within an hour."

"Very well. We'll be ready for him."

This was Greek to Larkins, but the treatment he had received and the fact of his being under surveillance, taken with the words "playing the same game," made him uneasy. As soon as the officer had left the general Larkins went into his tent and said:

"See here, general. I wish to go through the lines at once. If I am purposely detained I desire to know the cause."

"I'll send you through tomorrow morning," said the general, speaking in a tone to indicate that he meant to do what he said.

"Am I detained in your camp?"

"No. Go where you like."

"Very well. I'll wait till tomorrow. If I am detained longer I shall telegraph the British consul at Richmond to come out here at once."

"You'll not be detained—that is, unless a battle opens."

The next morning at daylight Larkins was awakened by General Beaumont's orderly, who said that the general would like to see him in his tent. Still uneasy, he arose and went to the general. An officer was there waiting. "This is Major Clayton, Mr. Larkins. If you will go with him he will show you something to explain our reception and treatment of you since you have been with us. On your return I will be pleased to have you breakfast with me, and a flag of truce is ordered for 10 o'clock to escort you through the lines."

Larkins went with Major Clayton, walking down the road till they came to a clearing. A file of soldiers were standing, resting on their arms. Seeing the major approach, an officer went to a tent surrounded by a guard, led forth a man pale as death in civilian dress and placed him before the soldiers.

He looked enough like Larkins to be his brother.

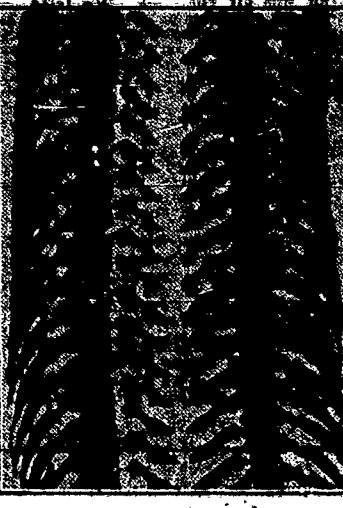
The Britisher knew at once that a spy was to be executed. Turning, he walked back to the general's headquarters.

"Permit me to offer my apologies," said the latter. "The man you saw taken out for execution is a northern man who was spying on us under cover of forged papers of British citizenship. This coincidence and the fact that he resembles you caused us to believe we had got one we have been looking for. Our catching him is a blessing to you, for we had about made up our minds to try you by drumhead court martial and shoot you."

Larkins now saw through all that had occurred. The most mortifying circumstance was his realization that the southern beauty had been set upon him to endeavor to tempt him to betray himself as a spy if he really was one. Satisfied with his experience, he returned to England without service, either the Federal or Confederate laws. He declined to be the bearer

For the Children

A Section of a Child's Tongue



This queer looking picture is that of a section of the tongue of a snail. The tongue is greatly magnified to show the rasping teeth.

A small cat by rasping off small particles with the tongue. This tongue is a narrow band or ribbon with pointed teeth set in rows across it. The common slug, often found in damp places, has more than 25,000 teeth on the tongue, which set like the ridges on a file and scrape the food into the mouth. I once watched with a magnifying lens, says a writer in the *Nicholas Magazine*, a small water snail feeding as it slowly crawled up the side of an aquarium, and, although I made no very accurate count, the tongue seemed to be pressed against the glass about forty times a minute.

Man and Object

Two persons go out of the room and, after agreeing together as to what they shall represent, come back again and sit down side by side in front of the company. One of the two takes the part of some well known person, and the other represents an object which is closely connected with that person. For instance, George Washington and the hatchet of Roosevelt and the stick, the king of England and his crown, etc.

After the two take their seats the other players in turn ask each of them a question, to which both the man and the object must answer only "Yes" or "No" until the right person and the right article have been guessed. The first player may perhaps ask the man, "Are you alive?" The man will answer "Yes" or "No" according to the character he represents. Then the object may be asked, "Are you made of wood?" "No." Then the second player in order asks a question of each, and so on along the line until all have had a turn at questioning or until the person and object have been rightly guessed.

A Giant Baby

The world's astronomers are now much interested in the planet Jupiter. This planet is the largest in our system, but is said by the scientists to be an infant in swaddling clothes so far as development is concerned. In volume Jupiter is 1,270 times greater than our own globe. But we are now full grown and, as some astronomers declare, on the downhill slide of life. In other words, our little earth is in middle age and will soon be growing old. Great Jupiter, the king of the heavens as far as our planetary system is concerned, is not yet fit for life. From the latest observations of Jupiter it is supposed to be in the act of building of solidifying. One astronomer says: "I have not the slightest doubt that we are assisting at the creation of a world. Under our dazed eyes a new world is being created in the infinity, and in Jupiter we hail the world of the future."—Chicago News.

Conundrums

What is the difference between a photographer and the whooping cough? One makes facemasks, the other sick families.

What French word contains every vowel and but one consonant? Oiseau.

When is an altered dress like a secret? When it is let out.

How do eggs show their anger on being called "hags"? By becoming egg-aspirated.

What part of speech are shopkeepers most anxious to dispose of? Articles.

Why are sick persons like unto wheels? Because the are tired.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Cupid's Target—A Game

In the game Cupid's darts are shot from a small bow by each child in turn at a heart shaped target of white with a smaller red heart for a bullseye. The one whose dart comes nearest the middle of the bullseye may receive a gayly beribboned bow and arrow for a prize.

The Two Echoes

Two echoes, each with mouth and ears, lived peacefully for many years. One said: "Let me hear your voice, my friend. I know my voice is very fine. But which is finer, yours or mine?" "Mine," said the other, loud and clear. "Mine," said the first in tones severe. "Mine," said the other who next. "Mine," said the first one, rather vexed. And "mine" was all that they would say. For, though most echoes can be hated, if spoken to they will dispute, and I am sure these always will, for there they are disputing still. —Youth's Companion.

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PERILOUS BOATING

A New Zealand Stream That Yields a Series of Thrills

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