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WAS IT A GHOST?

By F. A. MITCHEL

Any boy who has studied United States history knows the story of Benedict Arnold's treachery in his intention to surrender West Point to the British, how Major Andre of the British army was captured at Tarrytown with the papers in the case in his boots, the horror of General Washington and the execution of Andre as a spy.

Andre was executed on the banks of the Hudson not far from where he was captured. The place where the execution occurred is of no importance except as to its connection with this historical event.

Mind you, I'm not going to vouch for this story. It came to me from different sources, and there are certain discrepancies. What I'm going to tell is what I surmised from the whole without luging in any proofs or organ.

A certain Mrs. Meriweather of New York city, prominent in the D. A. R., had a daughter, Abigail, the name being handed down through half a dozen generations from a Revolutionary ancestress, who was an incorrigible coquette. The mother endeavored vainly to persuade her daughter to marry some one of her many suitors, to settle down and behave herself. George Van West was the only one of them whom Abigail fancied. Him she really loved, but owing to one of those inconsistencies of women for which no man can account the more she loved him the worse she treated him. Indeed, a certain Ambrose Constable, whom she did not like and her mother detested, was to all appearances her favorite.

One spring when Abigail was receiving marked attention from Constable her mother took her to a farmhouse in the country, hoping that by separating her from Constable the affair would blow over. Abigail was much pained at leaving Van West, but that contrary trait in her character prevented her from telling the truth as to her preference, and she accompanied her mother to the farmhouse unwillingly.

Independence day that year was a beautiful one. The air was cool, the sky cloudless. Abigail sat on the porch of the farmhouse watching the country people dressed in holiday costumes going to a church where exercises appropriate to the day were to be held.

Presently a young man came along whose appearance at once arrested Abigail's attention. He was handsome, but very pale. Seeing the girl on the porch—she seemed unable to keep her eyes off him—he bowed in a very courteous manner, taking off his hat at the same time with something of the flourish of a gentleman of the old school.

"May I ask," he said to Abigail, "whether all these country bumpkins are going?"

"To the church where the Declaration of Independence is to be read."

"Why today?"

"This is the anniversary of the day it was adopted."

"By the rebels?"

Abigail was so puzzled by this reference to the signers of the Declaration as rebels that she made no reply, continuing to gaze on the man with a sort of fascinated wonder. Meanwhile he began looking about him like one who was visiting a place with which he had once been familiar. His gaze lighting on a building farther down the road, he shuddered. Then, seeming to grow faint, he caught at the fence inclosing the farmhouse for support.

Abigail arose, hurried toward him and was about to put out her arms to support him when he turned and smiled at her. She afterward described that smile as the most beautiful she had ever beheld. It seemed to be the smile of a martyr who had suffered his martyrdom and had passed to his reward.

From this point the information I gathered about Abigail's meeting with this stranger is contradictory. Some say that he spent only the day with her on the farmhouse porch, some that he lingered in the neighborhood all summer. The testimony for the former statement predominated, but I am at a loss to understand how he could have produced the marvelous effect he did on Abigail in a single day. As to how or where they spent that day accounts vary.

Of one thing I received positive testimony, that from that Independence day Abigail was greatly changed. While before it she had been the gayest of the gay, after it no one ever saw her smile. George Van West tried to bring back the smile to her lips, but signally failed. Indeed, the sight of him seemed to fill her with a sort of horror. As for Constable, she no longer cared to conceal her real feelings toward him.

Mrs. Meriweather did everything she could think of to break the spell that had been cast over her daughter. She endeavored to make Abigail forget the stranger in a social whirl. She took her on travels, all to no purpose. The poor girl was gradually sinking into the grave. Six months after that memorable Independence day she died.

Who was the stranger? I am going to give certain points that indicate who he might be, but as I said in the beginning I only give the facts and have no desire to influence opinion. In the first place the farmhouse where Abigail spent that Independence day was in sight of the house in which Major Andre was tried for his life and of the place where he was hanged; secondly, George Van West was a descendant of one of the three men who captured Andre at Tarrytown with the papers on him incriminating Benedict Arnold.

Fighting in the Air.

"Before an aviator is prepared to engage another flyer in battle he should know how to loop the loop, do a nose or vertical dive, execute a tail spin, a fall glide or any other of the so-called stunts," said Miss Ruth Law.

"Fighting in the air is fighting for position. Consequently it is largely a business of dodging. The man who is the better dodger, who has the most tricks up his sleeve, is the man who is going to win. I have seen men stop controlling their machines altogether and simply fall through space for several thousand feet.

"The point of this, of course, is to give the opposing flyer the idea that the plane has been struck. The opposing aviator, thinking he has put his enemy out of commission, will start away. Then the plunging air man will switch on his power, regain control of his machine and overtake his enemy without the latter knowing he is approaching. Such tactics naturally are used at great altitudes."—New York Tribune.

Haydn's Ox Minuet.

Hadyn one day received a visit from a butcher who said that himself and his daughters were admirers of Haydn's music, and as the young woman was soon to be married he made bold to ask that the composer write a minuet for her wedding. Kland "Papa Haydn" consented, and in a few days the man of meat obtained his music. Not long afterward Haydn was surprised to hear this same minuet played under his window. On looking out he saw a band of musicians forming a ring around a large ox tastefully decorated with flowers. Soon the butcher came up and presented the ox to Haydn, saying that for such excellent music he thought he ought to make the composer a present of the best ox in his possession. Ever after this little composition was called the "Ox" minuet.—W. Francis Gates in "Anecdotes of Great Musicians."

For Chess Players.

The Swedish monarch, Charles XII., found himself besieged by the Turks and virtually a prisoner. To while away the tedium of his captivity he would indulge in an occasional game at chess—even when Turkish bullets were flying around—with his friend Grothusen. The position beneath had been reached when Charles exclaimed, "I have a pretty mate in three."

"White-K on K B 3, B on K Kt 7, Kt on K 2, pawns K R 4, K R 7."

"Black-K on K R 4, B on K B 7, pawns K R 3, K K 6."

But even as he spoke a flying bullet sent the knight to smithereens. The king, undismayed, merely remarked, "Now I mate in four." Before Grothusen had solved the position another bullet sent White's rook's pawns spinning off the board. Charles' only comment was, "I can now give mate in five!"

Strangled the Tree.

A Victoria clergyman had an orange and a blue tree in his garden. One spring it was noticed that the orange tree was drooping, and on digging down he found that the roots of the blue, which stood at some distance, had twisted around the taproot of the orange tree and were strangling it to death. The offending roots were untwisted and cut away, and the drooping plant revived. The tree eventually died. Then on digging down at a greater depth the clergyman found the pine had attacked the orange root lower down and accomplished its murderous end.—London Graphic.

The Fertile Rock.

Gibraltar is often called a barren rock, yet it has 456 species of indigenous flowering plants. Castor oil plants, daturas and daphnes attain the dignity of trees and geraniums and heliotropes the proportions of hedges. These floral delights often conceal canons and other ornaments. The few snakes that are found are small and harmless. Lizards several inches long are often seen.

Licorice Root.

Several thousands of tons of licorice root, which is considered a pest and worse than worthless by the natives generally, are annually gathered in Turkey for exportation to this country for use in the manufacture of chewing and smoking tobacco as well as for flavoring confectionery and beer.

Vocalization.

"You must enjoy hearing your prima donna sing."

"I do," replied the impresario. "You don't know what a relief it is to have her get out and throw those high notes around to the audience instead of yearning at me about her salary."—Washington Star.

Rue.

The Talmud enumerates rue among the kitchen herbs and regards it as free of tithes as being a plant not cultivated in gardens. The name rue occurs in the Bible only in Luke xi, 42.

Foxy Customer.

MILLNER (coatingly)—The white feather on the hat makes madam look about twenty-one. Customer (eagerly)—Yes, yes! Why not put on two or three more?—Exchange.

Acquired.

Wife—I can't understand why I didn't see those faults in you before we were married. Hub—That's easily explained. I didn't possess them then.—Boston Transcript.

The man who thinks he knows a woman like a book usually discovers many uncut leaves.

My Guardian

By RUTH GRAHAM

Mother died when I was still a girl. I think I had just turned seventeen. During her last illness she worried a great deal as to what was to become of me after being deprived of her care. "I wish you were a few years older," she said to me one day. "I would pick out a husband for you. Then there would be no need for me to be anxious about your future."

"Would you expect me to marry a man without love, mother?"

"I should rely on his good qualities to win your confidence and respect, which would be better than a romantic attachment. Certainly it would be more enduring."

Mother had often told me that she had been engaged before she married my father, but gave me nothing more than the bare fact. I often wondered why she had not married this person instead of father. I knew that he was several years younger than she, and since a woman prefers a man older than herself I fancied that this might be the reason of her breaking her first engagement.

When mother died and her will was opened I learned that her property had been left to a certain Horace Ogilvie in trust for me till I should reach the age of twenty-one, when it was to be paid to me. My guardian was to have the legal care of me during my minority, to provide a home for me and direct my education. I remember that a few days after the opening of the will a very pleasant-looking gentleman, about thirty-five years old came to see me and announced himself as my guardian. He told me that he lived with his mother in another city and I was to go with him and make my home with them.

He seemed to take such a kindly interest in me and was so sympathetic with me in my bereaved condition that I felt greatly comforted. I accompanied him to his home, where I was received by his mother, an old lady who was as cordial as if I were her own.

During this first day I spent with my guardian I constantly found him looking at me with a very singular expression. It was as though I was connected with something beyond myself. I fancied that there was tenderness in his gaze. Could it be that he felt that he was placed toward me in the position of a father? I certainly did not have for him a corresponding feeling. I thought him a very interesting man.

Why my mother had appointed him my guardian I did not know, and I was not informed. Somehow since neither he nor his mother said anything about the matter I rather abstained from asking. Mrs. Ogilvie took entire charge of me, and I soon came to look upon her as my second mother. Mr. Ogilvie from the day he assumed my legal guardianship treated me with a certain reserve, which I did not relish. I wished that he would not keep a barrier constantly between him and me. At twenty I left school and was certainly not the half child, half woman, that I had been when I came to live in my second home.

The difference between a man of thirty-eight and a woman of twenty is not what it is between a man of thirty-five and a girl of seventeen. When I came home from school for the last time my relations with my guardian had changed. His treatment of me was more reserved than ever. I had no acquaintances among young men near my own age, and this seemed to trouble him. He hunted up several youngsters and brought them to the house for my companionship. They seemed very boyish to me.

One day one of these youngsters invited me to go to a play with him that evening. Mr. Ogilvie came home to dinner tired and despondent about something that had gone wrong during the day. His mother suggested that he go to some place of amusement. He demurred on the ground that it would not benefit him to go alone.

"Why not take me?" I suggested.

"I thought that you had an engagement," was his reply.

"I'll break it."

He looked at me, surprised, and said he would not have me do that on any account.

I assured him that I preferred to go with him, but could not make him understand that I would choose to spend an evening in company with an old fellow like himself to a young man near my own age.

Half an hour afterward I received two tickets with a note from the donor stating that he was unavoidably prevented from escorting me to the theater and hoped I would find some one to take his place. I went merrily to Mr. Ogilvie, waving the tickets over my head, and asked him to be the substitute.

That broke the ice between us. Mr. Ogilvie permitted himself to show me some attention, which I received so cordially that it was rapidly increased. To make a long story short, there were a courtship, an engagement and a marriage. I wedded my guardian.

It was not till I had been married some time that I discovered that my husband had been engaged to my mother. He considered me the counterpart of what she was when he had loved her, and from the moment we first met he renewed that love in me. I have spent many an hour wondering why my mother should have arranged a probable match between me and the man she disappointed. I have never found a solution.

Which Shall It Be?

Depend upon it, my boy, the only possession of real value you have is time. In time, improved, you can accomplish anything. You can leave the dull grind of mere existence and enter into the growing activities of life. You can make your work a joy by striving in it and above it. You can free yourself forever from the Nemesis of poverty and crown your early manhood with garlands of success.

Time is neither an angel that serves nor a demon that destroys. It is neutral, always active. Him who values it justly it will exalt above the stars. Him who holds it lightly it will crush.

Time—what are you doing with it? What of those precious hours which, unsold to an employer, must inevitably be the medium of your elevation or fall? Before you are the mountains of success and the abyss of failure. You can—may, you must—soar to the top or sink into the other.

Choose while there is yet time.—Ambition.

Writing on an Egg.

Hand a friend a hard boiled egg with the request that it be minutely examined. After he has satisfied himself that the egg is of the ordinary kind you tell him to break off the shell, and, much to his astonishment, he will discover his name plainly written on the white of the egg.

There is a previous preparation, but it is very simple. Dissolve one ounce of alum in a half pint of vinegar. Take a small pointed brush and cut-bene whatever you desire on the shell of the egg. Let it dry thoroughly and then boil the egg for about fifteen minutes. If these directions are carried out all tracings of the writing will have disappeared from the outside of the shell, but when the shell is cracked open it will plainly show on the white of the egg.—Popular Science Monthly.

Plant Strength.

Plant strength is wonderful. If the roots of the delicate maidenhair fern have not sufficient room they will break the pot in which the plant grows. Blades of grass will force the carbonates between which they spring up out of their place, and in a single night a crop of small mushrooms has been known to lift a large stone. Indeed, plants are on record as having broken the hardest rocks. The island of Aldabra, to the northwest of Madagascar, is becoming smaller through the action of the mangroves that grow along the foot of the cliffs. They set their way into the rock in all directions, and into the gaps thus formed the waves force their way. In time they will probably reduce the island to pieces.—Scientific American.

Jared the Rainbow.

It is usually supposed that the down-pour of rain that sometimes follows a flash of lightning is due to the coalescence of fine drops on losing their electrical charge, but a Finnish observer concludes that the thunder jar the drops together. Near Van a heavy thunderstorm came up from the east late one afternoon, and as the sun was unclouded, a brilliant double rainbow appeared in the east for half an hour, arching from horizon to horizon. At each roll of thunder the rainbows seemed to be much shaken, the wedge being displaced and the colors blurred. This could not be due to the lightning, and it seemed that the same cause might enlarge the raindrops and disturb the rainbow.

Buttermilk.

Buttermilk is more wholesome than ordinary milk for the reason that it is already curdled, and the curds taken in the stomach are broken into minute particles, whereas ordinary milk taken in the stomach and it forms large, hard curds, which often escape digestion. The acid forming bacteria of buttermilk combat the growth of putrefactive poison forming bacteria in the colon.—Philadelphia Press.

High Cost of Battleships.

A modern giant battle cruiser will cost approximately \$20,000,000, a superdreadnaught can be built for \$12,000,000, a scout cruiser for \$6,000,000, a destroyer for \$1,300,000, while ordinary submarines cost \$900,000 each for the smaller type and from \$1,000,000 to \$1,200,000 each for the larger boats.

No Discount.

"You ought to cut my hair cheaper," said the baldheaded man to the barber, "because there's nothing much to cut."

"H'm! In your case we don't charge for cutting the hair; we charge for having to search for it."—Harper's Magazine.

The Doones of Exmoor.

It was long contended that the story of "Lorna Doone," by Blackmore, had no foundation in fact, but now it is declared that the picturesque region of Exmoor really contained a family of Doones, the originals in romance, if not of disgrace, of the people described in the book.

His Ambition.

Glady—And what is the height of your ambition, Dick (after a careful survey of her)—Well, dearie, I should say that it was about five feet three.—Puck.

Home Discipline.

Mrs. Pintz—Is she good to the children? Mrs. Quinn—Very. She lets them do everything their father doesn't want them to do!

Self-indulgence deprives a man of everything that might make him great.