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“BOBBIE”



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He leaned against the tree through utter weakness.
(See page 128)

“BOBBIE”



BY
KATE
CAIRNS

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KATE CAIRNS.

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IN MEMORY
OF
"THE DAYS THAT ARE NO MORE."





"You see dis?" she said.
(See page 15)



"BOBBIE"

CHAPTER I.

HE always said he never knew which was worse, his name or his nose ; but, as he could get rid of neither, he accepted both in his own bright, happy way, and that ended the matter with him.

Peter Black had given him the name of Mars' Bobbie to distinguish him from Mars' Robert, his father, and it seemed to fit so exactly and suit so well his cheery, lovable little self as a baby, and later as a boy, and even on to young manhood, that no one thought of calling him anything else, or loved any other name half so well for him.

He was such a long time in coming, he used to say laughingly, that when he did get here his

“Bobbie.”

parents and friends and relatives, together with all the negroes on the plantation, thought he was going to be something extra ; and then to be called “*Bobbie*,” and to have a broken nose, was so hurtful to his vanity that, after thinking the matter over, he settled it by deciding that never again would he allow the subject to enter his mind, with the result that he became more lovable and loving than ever, and the secret of the charm all lay in the decision about his nose and name—he never thought of himself, but always of every one else first ; and that is why he was so loved—he was so brave and true and honest and glad always.

“White Point,” where he was born, was the centre of the Rockland district ; and while the neighborhood in that section of the country was tolerably well settled, still the “quality folks” were not very numerous, and in a radius of some twenty miles there were scarcely half a dozen families that kept up any kind of an establishment. Consequently, with the exception of “Grey

“Bobbie.”

Cliffs”—Dr. Trevillian’s place—“White Point” stood alone for a synonym of all that was grand and elegant, and as a gathering place for all the “bus heads” of the neighboring counties, as well as many cities.

Over two hundred slaves were owned by the master, and the stables were reckoned the finest in the State, for the stock included many animals of well-known and enviable records. There was a private race-track at one end of the plantation, and when at the spring and fall meets the neighbors from his own and adjoining counties met at Mars’ Robert Tayloe’s, there were times to be remembered, and good old times they were!

The gentlemen brought their own horses and dogs, and in the morning after breakfast it was no unusual sight to see fifty or more blooded animals brought out by the stable boys and walked up and down for the inspection and discussion of the gentlemen who had come down to see their favorites; and it was owing to one of these occasions that Bobbie made his nose immortal.

“Bobbie.”

Though his eighth birthday had not yet been reached, he knew every detail of stable matters to what his mother thought an alarming degree, and the ambition of his life was to get astride a race horse. Never had he been allowed that privilege, though he had ridden bareback everything else on the place; and when he heard his father discussing, the night before the big race, the relative merits of his special pride—Dare Devil—as compared with Major Dalrymple’s Lady Virginia, he could stand it no longer, and he crept out to look for Peter Black.

Had Bobbie known what an *alter ego* was, he would have said that Peter Black was it; for one was the substance, the other the shadow; and when Bobbie was wanted Peter Black was generally called.

By right of birth he really belonged to Sallie Tom, Bobbie’s mammy; but for all other intents and purposes he was owned body and soul by little Mars’ Bobbie, to whom Mars’ Robert had given him on the morning of the great day when the

“Bobbie.”

little master “done come.” The big master had made him creep softly in the missus’ beautiful room, and had shown him the new wonder, and told him that he was to belong to him hereafter, and that he must always be very careful, and never let any harm come to him ; and Peter Black had promised solemnly, and walked out of the room as one one would come out of a holy place, and no king on his coronation day was ever half so proud as he.

Sallie Tom, his mother, was present at this installation into office, and she tried hard to conceal the pride she felt at the selection of the little marsa’s body servant. She said no word at the time, but when she got down to her cabin she put Peter Black on a chair and had a conversation with him.

Peter was her one and only offspring, and though she loved him very much in her own peculiar way, it was something very different from the absolute idolatry she had for her master and mistress, and now for the little stranger that for ten

“Bobbie.”

long years she had hoped and prayed would come to fill the sore need of a child up in the big house.

There was a strain of Indian blood somewhere in Sallie Tom, it was thought, and the rest of the negroes were far more afraid than fond of her. They declared she “cungered” them, and some would have nothing to do with her; and for that reason, though the best worker on the place, she had been put in the house by her mistress. At the birth of the baby she had been installed as nurse-in-chief, and from that hour she ruled as despot of the nursery kingdom.

In more ways than one did she assert her Indian peculiarities. No one knew for certain that she possessed a drop of such blood; but her hate once aroused was implacable, and her devotion once given was as intense as it was enduring and genuine.

After the birth of the baby Sallie Tom moved up into the house altogether, but she was still allowed to retain her cabin, and there Peter Black

“ Bobbie ”

slept at night, and there in her hours of recreation or investigation she went to look after her private matters and to see that all things continued in their usual spotless condition.

On the afternoon of the day that made Peter Black henceforth the property of the few-hours-old heir, Sallie Tom interviewed her offspring as to the responsibilities and obligations now resting upon him as a body servant ; and if at the end of the interview Peter Black failed to understand what he was to be and to do, it was because he was only six years old, and not yet equal to taking life altogether seriously.

One thing, however, he fully appreciated, and that was the old horsehair whip that hung near the chimney corner. Sallie Tom took it down and shook it out in the air.

“ You see dis ? ” she said, as she arose from her seat to go back to the house. “ You see dis heah, Peter Black ? Mars’ Robert told you to-day dat you b’long to de little marsa, now, and so you does. Yo’ foots is to run for him, yo’ han’s is to

“Bobbie.”

work for him, yo' tongue is to talk up for him, yo' eyes is to look out for him ; but you b'long to me, too, Peter Black, and when yo' foots don't run, and yo' hands don't work, and yo' eyes don't see, and you gets to any foolin', den me and dis heah frien' of yourn will hav suppin' to say to you, Peter Black, and now go long wid you,” and Sallie Tom turned and threw her arms around him and hugged him passionately, and then sent him out to play.

From the day of his induction into office Peter Black never gave cause for any regret as to his selection. His idolatry of his little master was almost pathetically absurd. It was he who called him Mars' Bobbie, the day he crowed so lustily in his face, and the name seemed to fit so well the rollicking, laughing, happy little soul that it just stayed, and no one wanted it changed. When he first began to crawl, it was over Peter Black's back, and Peter's was the only hand he would touch when he tried to make his first steps, and almost before he could call his mother he would

“Bobbie.”

cry for “B’ Bac,” and “B’ Bac” was always there.

On up through the days of infancy the comradeship continued to grow, and though Bobbie’s was the imperious one of babyhood, he loved Peter Black better than anything on earth, and shared faithfully every piece of cake or candy that was given him, and it was due to this absolute and complete submission to his will that Peter Black let his young master have his way about the horses, an indulgence which resulted in Bobbie’s broken nose. When the latter crept out of his room the night before the big race he made Peter Black promise to wake him up the next morning at 4 o’clock. “I’m not going to tell you what for,” said Bobbie, “but you wake me up;” and Peter Black did as he was bidden.

Together they crept through the house and down to the stables, and then Bobbie told his plans. “Major Dalrymple said last night he know’d Lady Virginia was a-going to beat the whole place, and I know there ain’t a horse in the

“Bobbie.”

world that can beat my father's Dare Devil, and I just want to tell him so, and I'm going to try and see. You must get on Lady Virginia and I will ride Dare Devil; and don't let's have any saddles, 'cause my feet don't touch.”

They almost ran as they talked, and it was in vain that Peter Black protested and begged his little master not to do so dreadful a thing; but Bobbie's blood was up, and words had no effect. They opened the stable and led out their favorites to the track, and slipped up on their backs. “Now, when I count three you let her go, and you make her *go*, 'cause I don't want to win easy. If I come back here first, *I* beat; if *you* first, then I'll tell father it's no use. Now, listen. One, two.”—Bobbie's voice trembled with excitement—“three!”—and they were off.

CHAPTER II.



THEY said afterward that the big race wasn't half so exciting as this one, witnessed by an unexpected audience. They had hardly mounted their horses and gotten under way before several of the stable boys and the visiting grooms were rushing wildly to the track. The horses had been missed at once, and already up to the house the message had been sent that Mars' Bobbie and Peter Black were racing.

Hardly waiting to slip on their clothes, down came Mr. Tayloe and Dr. Trevillian, followed by some three or four of the gentlemen guests and numerous servants, all making madly for the race track.

Both children could be distinctly seen, though now half way round the bend, and breathlessly the men stood and watched. Mr. Tayloe's face

“Bobbie.”

was deathly white, and his hands shook as he grasped the gate-post at the entrance to the track. The rest, however, had forgotten who were on the horses. It was a race that they were watching, and so intense was the interest that they almost held their breath as again the children appeared in sight, for neck and neck they were going now. Both horses were being ridden at break-neck speed. All sense of servant and master was forgotten in Peter Black's and Bobbie's minds; it was a race to win, and all else save winning was driven out. Nearer and nearer they came, and up through the stillness of the early morning could be heard the ringing of the horses' hoofs upon the hard-packed track; and now they could see that each was stretched almost flat upon the back of his horse, holding on in some mysterious way known only to himself.

Neck and neck they still held, and though Major Dalrymple felt afraid of an accident, he mentally determined if Tayloe wanted to get rid of Peter Black after this escapade, he would

“Bobbie.”

buy him and have him trained for a jockey. He had the making of one in him, and Lady Virginia was doing well, even as it was.

On they came, and instinctively the men and stable hands breathed hard. For the life of them not one could say which he thought would come in ahead. Louder and louder sounded the hoof-beats on the hard earth; and though his heart was beating almost out of his bosom, even Mr. Tayloe could scarce repress a smile when he saw the eager excitement on his little son's face as he neared the stretch that would decide the race. Peter Black was losing his head, but Bobbie leaned still lower and touched Dare Devil on the forehead, as he was accustomed to do in the stables, and then he saw the crowd at the gate and his father's white face among them. “Dare Devil, we *must!*” he cried, almost frantically. “Don't you see father? We *must!*” and he bent his feet against his flanks, and Dare Devil gave a great leap—and Peter Black was behind!

The men set up a shout, and Dare Devil,

“Bobbie.”

almost maddened, kept up her wonderful speed, and in a moment it was over—the goal was reached, and Bobbie had loosened his hold and was shouting wildly to his father, when Dare Devil gave another spurt—and Bobbie lay on the ground, flung against the fence. Every man rushed quickly to the spot; but already his father had him in his arms, and Dr. Trevillian was bending over him. Peter Black was there, too, and they said afterward that he was as white as Bobbie. It was quite five minutes before they brought him to, and his first words caused a great cheer to break the awful stillness that had followed his fall. “We beat him, father! tell him so; tell him that Dare Devil can beat them all!” he cried; and then he lifted his hand to his face and saw the blood with which it was stained.

“What is it?” he asked, trying to rise, and looking at it again wonderingly. “Oh, father,” he pleaded, “don’t tell mother ’bout the blood—take me down to Sallie Tom’s cabin—don’t let mother see it—you can do anything you want with me,

“Bobbie.”

father,” he continued, and he tried hard to look up bravely in the latter’s face, “only don’t let mother know I’m hurt, and don’t punish Peter Black. I made him do it—he didn’t want to, and he’s mine, you know, father, and you haven’t the right.” He watched his father’s face eagerly. “Promise me,” he cried, “promise me.” And though his father had an intense desire to see Peter Black soundly thrashed, he knew he had no right to do it, for he had simply obeyed his little master, as he himself had ordered him to do.

Up at the house there was great excitement when it was known that Bobbie’s nose was broken, and more than ever was his sway over the household absolute and entire, as he lay for a few days a prisoner in his little bed, waiting for the great surgeon from the North to come down and make it all straight and well again.

That night his mother knelt by his bed and held him passionately to her heart and thanked God that he was still her own, and then she asked him what he most wanted to play with while he

“Bobbie.”

was waiting to get well, and his answer brought the first tiny twinge of jealousy of which she had ever been conscious. “I want Dorothy, mother,” he said, putting his arms around her neck in his old sweet, baby way. “I want Dorothy most of all. I’m sorry she ain’t a boy as big as me—but maybe I’ll be glad she is a girl when she gets bigger—for I’ll have to have a sweetheart, won’t I, mother?” But before she could answer he was fast asleep in her arms. The seed, however, had fallen on fruitful ground, and with a sigh of which she was half ashamed, his mother began to think it would not be so very long before her realm in her boy’s heart would be invaded, and she no longer reign supreme.

The same night she told her husband of Bobbie’s wish, and also what he had said, and together they laughed at the way he regarded the inevitability of a sweetheart, and though neither said anything more, it seemed too absurd to discuss children scarce seven and three years old—still the idea took root, and the hope was born that

“Bobbie.”

some day Bobbie and Dorothy would keep up the life in the big house when they were growing old, or when, perchance, they had passed away.

Dorothy came the next day, Dr. Trevillian bringing her over himself in answer to the urgent note sent him by Bobbie's father, and for a week the two were blissfully happy. At the end of that time Dorothy was taken back, the promise that she should come again being the only way of stopping her sobs at parting. Bobbie was standing in the doorway with his hands clutched closely together, trying hard to keep back the tears; but when the carriage was lost sight of by a turn in the road, he ran to his mother and buried his head in her lap. “He can take her from me now, 'cause I'm little and can't help it,” he blurted out, gulpingly, “but when we get bigger I won't let any man, not even her father, take her from me; for, mother,” and he slipped up into her lap and locked his arms around her neck, “if I tell you something, will you promise not to tell—not even father?” and he whispered something solemnly in

“Bobbie.”

her ear, and his mother laughed and kissed him, and held him a little closer to her heart.

When Dr. Trevillian put his little daughter into the carriage and started off for home, he wondered why he had been fool enough to let her stay away from him and her own home for seven long days, and then when he saw the beautiful baby eyes, with their wondrously beautiful lashes all filled with tears, and heard the little catch in her voice because she was leaving her playfellow, he felt himself a selfish brute, and his heart smote him at the thought of the loneliness of his motherless child.

The Tayloes and Trevillians had been friends loyal and true for generations back, but only of late had the Doctor begun again to visit “White Point.” After the terrible shock of his wife’s death he had refused to go among his former friends or take up his old life as before, and not until Dorothy was nearly three years old did he realize the error of his way, or the injustice to his child that such a life entailed. He began gradually to resume his practice and to visit a



Dare-Devil gave a great leap, and Peter Bluck was behind.

(See page 20)

“Bobbie.”

little, and when he yielded to Mr. Tayloe's request that Dorothy should come and pay them a visit, it was only after a severe struggle and the urgent pleading of his maiden sister that the child should have this pleasure, that he finally gave in, and the pain it cost him to let her go was known only to himself.

And that was the way it went on. Year in and year out they grew up, seeing each other so constantly that no thought of either was ever kept from the other ; and while over everybody else in the house and neighborhood Bobbie reigned supreme, to Dorothy alone did he succumb, and mercilessly she tyrannized over him with all the inconsistency of the woman nature that was in her.

CHAPTER III.



BOBBIE was sixteen when his father finally made up his mind to send him to college. It nearly broke his mother's heart, to say nothing of the terrible blow it was to Peter Black and Sallie Tom, who still kept up their passionate love for the boy; yet it was admitted by all that the going was a necessity. Bobbie simply would not study at home. By dawn of the day he was off on his horse, and every inch of ground for miles around was as familiar as the lawn in front of the house. Every bend of the river with all its fish, every bird that flew, every insect that hummed, and every kind of game in the woods, were as near and dear to Bobbie and Peter Black as old and tried friends; and though his progress with his tutors was not always as great as it might have been, his tall, straight body, his supple limbs, and his

“Bobbie.”

clear eyes and bright, clever face more than repaid for the neglect of his books.

His father had a serious talk with him before he left, and Bobbie's face took on a new expression while he listened. “All right, father,” he said, when he left him, “I know it's time for me to study now, and you shan't be ashamed of me when I come back,” and his father was satisfied, for Bobbie's word, once given, he knew would never fail.

Such a time there was the day he left! Had the sun been in an eclipse, and all the world in total darkness, there could not have been greater gloom than that which pervaded the entire household, with all the cabin contingent, on the morning he was to leave. Bobbie's heart was out of its accustomed place, and stuck so persistently in his throat that he found talking difficult. The remembrance of his mother's face he felt would go with him through life, and the intense dolefulness of Peter Black was oppressive. Sallie Tom was a kind of night-mare. So heartily did she

“Bobbie.”

disapprove of this move of the master that she had kept away as long as possible, but now that her idol, her pride, was leaving, she could hold out no longer. Like a cyclone she rushed through the line of darkies, all drawn up by the big gate waiting to see the young master off, and in a minute she had him in her arms and almost off his feet. “Gord A’mighty tek care of my chile!” she sobbed, rocking him backwards and forwards in a way highly uncomfortable to poor Bobbie, who yet had not the heart to rebuff her. “Gord A’mighty tek care of my po’ chile, gwine out alone, all by hissef, and bring him back to his old mammy!” and she strained him passionately to her heart, and with a cry of real anguish she let him go and rushed wildly down to her cabin, and for two days nobody saw Sallie Tom.

At last all the partings were over and Bobbie and his father had waved as long as they could see them, to the waiting crowd, and then a silence long and oppressive fell upon both. Bobbie dared not trust himself to speak, and his father was

“Bobbie.”

watching solicitously one of the back wheels of the carriage, and only the hoarse, choky “Git up dar, Jonah, git up, you Whale, you,” of Uncle Lias as he jerked the horses, trying to make out there was nothing unusual in the trip they were taking, broke the stillness of the air. A turn in the road, however, made Bobbie start, and caused his heart to give an extra leap. There, waiting under the big willow down by the river road, were Dr. Trevillian and Dorothy, and the former called cheerily that they were waiting to ride part of the way as escort, and to his dying day Bobbie never forgot this gracious act of letting him see Dorothy once more before leaving. He had left her the night before just at twilight, but a new feeling possessed him as he saw her now sitting so quietly, yet so firmly on the little pony he had broken and trained for her until safe for her to ride.

Ever since the day his nose was broken, and she had come over to play with him, she had possessed him absolutely and entirely, and no tree was ever too high to climb for birds' eggs for

“Bobbie.”

Dorothy ; no briars ever too sharp to hunt for the berries and flowers and nuts she liked the best, and no trouble ever too great to take, if only she were pleased, but it was simply as comrades, as boy and girl, that they had played and quarreled and made up again, but to-day it was different. Bobbie felt it, but did not understand—he only had a fierce desire to take that gawk of a fellow, John Coxe, away with him—he would be finding all the flowers that Dorothy loved, and would get all the chinquapins and chestnuts from Pebble Hollow now, and he would be far, far away. They had both been shy and unlike themselves last night. Bobbie had slipped over early to tell her good-bye, and they had stayed down at the spring until almost dark and talked over all the foolish little nothings that neither was interested in, and Bobbie had almost kicked out the toe of his boot against the pebbles trying to appear natural. “I’m awfully sorry you’re going,” said Dorothy, at last, making a desperate effort, however, to look as if she did not mind much.

“Bobbie.”

“There won't be anything to do now except to think about Christmas, and after Christmas the summer, and that seems like a hundred years off,” and as the blankness all came over her, she threw herself down in the grass and forgot to make believe anything except that she was lonely and miserable, and didn't want Bobbie to go, and in a minute he was down there beside her, and both were fighting desperately hard to keep back the tears, and Bobbie tried to say something to her and he couldn't—he could only choke and then get angry with himself, and then he told her he must go, and he put his arms around her and kissed her.

And now when he saw her sitting so easily on her horse, waiting for him, his heart gave a great leap. They merely nodded to each other, and Dr. Trevillian became actually merry and jolly in his efforts to keep up the spirits of the party. He would miss the lad sorely. He knew how his old friend's heart ached at the thought of sending his boy out into the world, and he felt keenly for

“Bobbie.”

him, but it would never do to show it now. Dorothy and Bobbie talked but little, and soon they reached the point where they must separate. Bobbie took off his hat and shook hands with Dr. Trevillian. “I have a favor to ask of you, Doctor,” he said in his frank, fearless way, “Will you let Dorothy write to me sometimes, and will you object to my telling her about the college, and the boys, etc.? I wouldn’t expect her to do it often,” he went on, trying to repress the eagerness in his voice, “but I would thank you very much.” Dr. Trevillian looked a little taken back at this modest request, and he hesitated a moment, and then he saw Bobbie’s eager face and Dorothy’s flushed one, and he thought it would be no harm. “Very well,” he said, “I will make it a reward of merit, if you make a certain average with your studies, of which your father will tell me, and Dorothy makes the same with hers, once a month you shall each send a letter—is that satisfactory?” and the Doctor wrung the boy’s hand until it almost hurt.

“Perfectly,” answered Bobbie, returning the

“ **Bobbie.**”

pressure gratefully, “and I thank you very much. I promise you my letters will always come—will you promise also, Dorothy?”

And Dorothy nodded, and without waiting to say good-bye, touched her horse with her whip, and was far down the road before her father had finished shaking hands with Mr. Tayloe.

CHAPTER IV.



IT was five years before the coming home, and the going away of Bobbie ceased to be the principal event of the year, both at "White Point" and "Grey Cliffs," and in fact to the whole neighborhood, and from the date of one arrival until the next all events and happenings were reckoned, for a truly royal time was made of these home-comings; and merry-makings such as never will be the same again, were indulged in to an unlimited degree. From morn till night was one continual round of pleasure, and nothing was ever too much trouble if it contributed to the young people's enjoyment.

"He works so hard all during the session," said Bobbie's mother, when his father was mildly remonstrating on the unceasing frolicking. "You know how splendidly he has done at school, how

“Bobbie.”

he never fails at anything, and now we must let him have all the relaxation he needs, poor dear, and there can possibly be no harm, for Dorothy is always along.”

Her husband smiled a little as he stooped to fasten his stirrup straps. “Yes, fortunately there is Dorothy, and if it were not for her I wouldn’t be quite so sure of all those good reports we’ve been getting. He knows there would be no letter without them, and no letter would be Bobbie’s worse punishment.”

They looked at each other and laughed softly, and then he stooped over and kissed her.

It was his fourth Christmas holiday that Bobbie noticed a great change in Dorothy. He was greatly changed himself—stronger, taller, and straighter than ever, yet with more grace and ease, and the polish that comes with constant contact with gentlemen of his own class, and through it all ran the old, sweet charm that made all who came near him love him. The strong will of which he was possessed was evidenced more

“Bobbie.”

than ever in the firm lines about his mouth, but Bobbie himself did not realize this, he saw only the change in Dorothy.

It was Christmas-eve, and the night of the annual big party given in his and his friends' honor. He had not seen her since he had gotten home. He had ridden over early in the morning and later, in the afternoon, and each time he had been told she was too sick to see him, but was trying to get well enough to come over at night, and now, as he stood watching the different people enter, he was full of miserable uncertainty as to her coming ; and if she didn't, why, what was the use of all this to do? He had brought home six of his college chums for the holidays, and a finer looking set of young men would be hard to find, thought Mr. Tayloe, as he watched them grouped together near the huge fire-places in the big parlors now a blaze of light, and filled, in every niche and corner, with Christmas greens. Over the doors and on the walls, and banked about the mantels were great festoons of holly,

“Bobbie.”

while a mass of foliage out in the beautiful old hall hid completely from sight the musicians stationed behind it. Through the opened doors could be seen the people going up the wide stairs to leave their wraps, and now they were coming in, and Bobbie and the boys had to take their positions by Mrs. Tayloe for awhile, and very soon the rooms were crowded with all the country folks and many strangers besides, and still no sign of Dorothy. Bobbie was beginning to get restless. He had a cordial, merry greeting for all, but his eyes were constantly watching the staircase. What if, after all, she did not come! Presently his heart gave a great bound—nobody but Dorothy held her head like that, though all he could see was a mass of soft, white, fluffy stuff that enveloped from head to foot the figure trying hard to get up the stairs, but who at every step was stopped and spoken to by others coming or going.

Presently she was in the room, and Bobbie wanted to push everybody aside and go to her

“Bobbie.”

and take her away—away from all this noise and music and crowd, and have her to himself; but, instead, he never moved an inch, only his face grew white, and he was ashamed of the furious beating of his heart. She was trying to come with her father, whose arm she held, to speak to his mother and the rest; but immediately she was surrounded and almost hopelessly entangled as she laughingly tried to make her way through the crowd. Bobbie leaned carelessly against the mantel and awaited her coming with apparent quiet. She was a revelation to him to-night. Surely it must be another Dorothy! The one he had left in the early fall was a girl—this one was a woman. Bobbie did not know where the charm lay; he saw it all in a flash—the long dress, the different arrangement of the hair, and the manner that comes with the wearing, filled him with entirely new sensations. Was she going to be changed too? On she came, with her father and numerous followers, and soon she stood near enough for Bobbie to see her in her quaint, short-

“Bobbie.”

waisted gown of sheerest, daintiest white, over its satin slip, cut low in the neck, and with great puffs for sleeves. Surely no head was ever poised like Dorothy's, and no hair was ever so soft, or curled so bewitchingly around a forehead and neck as did that which escaped from the loose coil at the back of her head. She wore no jewels or ornaments of any kind, but in her hands she carried the huge bouquet of violets he had ordered from the city and sent to her during the day. How exactly they matched her eyes, he thought, as he watched her—those wondrously beautiful eyes, with their wondrously beautiful lashes! She had spoken to his mother, and now she turned to Bobbie: “I've had to fight my way up here,” she said laughingly, holding out her hand to him in the sweet, frank way of old, “but I suppose no penalty is too great to pay for the privilege of speaking to so many college men;” and Bobbie, bending low over the hand he held in his own, had scarce time for a word before she was speaking to his chum next to him, and in a minute all the boys

“Bobbie.”

were crowding around and holding out their hands to grasp hers. A moment more and she would be gone. Bobbie slipped out of the line and touched her arm. “Dorothy,” he whispered, “give me your card ; these fellows will get every dance before I have a chance.”

His tone was the old imperious one he used as a child when determined to have his way. Dorothy looked in his face for a moment, hesitated, smiled, and then handed her card to him, and recklessly he scribbled here and there, until she protested, and made him give it back. Now she was gone, and he could see her dancing down the long room, while dozens of eyes watched her eagerly, for Dorothy was fair to look upon to-night.

She afterwards called it her “coming-out party,” and in truth it could in reason be so called. She was a woman now—a very young one, it is true, but full of all a woman’s witchery and grace, and Bobbie was by no means the only one who loved her.

“Bobbie.”

The last year and a half at college was a restless time for Bobbie, for his ambition admitted of nothing less than first honors, that she might be proud of him, and through it all he was possessed by a nameless dread. Suppose she should not give him now the old love she bore him in their childhood days ! Their letters were always friendly and kind in tone, but after awhile there was a formality in them which both tried to overlook, yet neither succeeded in banishing, and they wrote of everything else but the one thing dearest to their hearts.

The night Bobbie took his degree was a very proud and happy one, for he was given the blissful surprise of knowing Dorothy was there with his father and mother. “At the last moment father allowed me to come,” she had managed to whisper, and then she had to leave him ; and before the evening was done, he almost angrily wished she had not come. Scarce a word could he have with her before she was literally taken away from him by a score of men, who were wait-

“Bobbie.”

ing to claim a dance in the ball that followed the closing exercises of the year. It was late, very late, before he got her away from them all. She was standing in a corner of the room, as usual, surrounded by a gay group, when he walked up and placed her hand upon his arm, and led her away from the crowd. “I’m sorry to break you up,” he said, nodding to the others, standing stock still with amazement at his nerve, “but I believe this dance is mine,” and he walked off with Dorothy, quite as if she already belonged entirely to him.

“We are spoiling you to-night, Bobbie,” she said, laughing indulgently; “even I am letting you do as you choose, but I just wonder if you expect to keep it up—if you think that we are always going simply to follow your lead?”

“No,” he answered, “no; after to-night you will lead, and I suppose I will do the following; but to-night—we do not want to dance—I want to get you away from all this crowd.”

He led her through the door, and down

“Bobbie.”

the length of the veranda, until they came to a quiet corner, far removed from the ball-room and the gay company within. There was a seat way back in the shadow, and he pushed her gently in it, while he stood leaning against the railing, tearing the blossoms off the vine that made so beautiful a drapery from the floor quite to the top above. The moon was gloriously bright, but only in faint glints could it be seen through the mass of leaves, and as Dorothy leaned back its glimmer shone upon her hair, and for a moment rested lovingly there, and then danced wickedly and distractingly up and down, until it was all Bobbie could do to keep from kissing it, to make it still. He had loved Dorothy all his life, and now that he wanted to tell her so, as man to woman, his courage failed him. Faint strains of the rhythmic waltz reached them, and Dorothy leaned back, with her hands loosely clasped in her lap, and turned her face so that he could not see it well.

“What is it—are you tired?” he asked,

“Bobbie.”

uneasily, sitting beside her. “Ah, Dorothy, you know it so well already!—know that always I have loved you—and yet you make it so hard for me to tell you. You have held me off and made me afraid to speak, but to-night”—“but to-night you must tell me, Dorothy. Will you let the others go, and will you marry me, now I am through college? Answer me, Dorothy, don’t make me wait.” He had his arms around her, and he drew her face again to his, while his breath came fast and hard, and he could distinctly hear the beating of his heart.

Dorothy looked at him for just a moment, and then she tried to free herself from his arms. “Not until you answer me,” he said, holding her tighter. “What is it?”

“I wonder why men are so stupid,” she said, laughing a little unsteadily, “you take so long to find out what women know so soon. I like the others, but—ah, Bobbie, you know”—and she looked up in his face and touched it shyly with her hand.

“Bobbie.”

And Bobbie knew, knew that of all men on earth *he* was the most supremely blessed, and he could not speak for the wonderful happiness that filled him. He could only hold her in his arms and kiss the quivering, trembling lips, and the beautiful violet eyes and the moon glints in her hair.

CHAPTER V.



ALLIE TOM and Peter Black had a conversation a night or two after the return of the "white folks from the college," and the announcement of Dorothy's and Bobbie's engagement was of course its topic-in-chief.

"Dey do say," said Sallie Tom, taking her pipe surreptitiously from the depth of her bottomless pocket, and lighting it with a coal from the hearth, "dey do say dat de Doctor done walk de flo' all night long when Mars' Bobbie come over and axed fur Miss Dorothy, jis as if he didn't kno' dat it had to come; every nigger on de place know'd it was gwine to end dat way, and tain't no use fur de Doctor to say he didn't spec it so suddin'; 'taint nothin' suddin' bout it. Dey been a lovin' one another ever sence dey bin born, ever sence his nose got broke. Miss Dorothy is



She was a woman now—a very young one, it is true.

(See page 44)



“Bobbie.”

mighty nice, but she ought to thank her Gord A'mighty every day dat our Mars' Bobbie luv her,” and Sallie Tom kicked the ashes together on the hearth and gave a little grunt, puffing vigorously at her pipe meanwhile.

“He sutny do luv her,” said Peter Black, leaning back in his chair and clasping his knees between his hands, “ain't no mistake 'bout dat, and dere ain't goin' to be no foolin' 'bout gittin' married if he kin hep it, but de Doctor say he cayn't let Miss Dorothy go way from home yit. She ain't quite turn eighteen, and Mars' Bobbie he ain't been long cum twenty-one, and de Doctor say dere's plenty time yit. It don't mek much difference to me,” he went on after a pause, “jis so dey stay home and don't go flyin' all roun' de worl' eny mo'. I'm glad dey is gwine to git married, but I do want de marsa to be home a little bit by hissef fust. 'Pears like I aint seen him good yit.”

“You're right,” grunted Sallie Tom, between the puffs, “ain't hardly cotch a good look at him

“Bobbie.”

myself, do' he did come heah de night he got home an ax me fur his buttermilk and hoecake, same ez what he use' to do, and sat over dere in de corner, like what he allus bin a doin' sence he wuz a baby ; de Lord a-bless him !” And Sallie Tom wrapped her head up in her big apron and rocked back and forth, quite overcome by the flood of recollections called up by his presence at home again. It had been the sorest trial in the lives of Sallie Tom and Peter Black, this going away of Bobbie, and now that he was back, unspeakable joy reigned supreme in the breasts of each. During the years at college, Peter Black had acted as dining-room boy, helping the butler, who was getting rather old, but he had been immediately reinstalled in his old position on Bobbie's return, and his love and allegiance to his young master was greater than ever before.

It was in the summer of sixty ('60) that Bobbie got his degree at college and the promise of Dorothy to be his wife, and while much gayety and pleasure filled up the measure of many days,

“Bobbie.”

other and more weighty subjects began to fill the air, and caused many long and serious discussions among the men of the neighborhood, old and young alike, and by the fall the one absorbing topic among all classes was the terrible possibility of war.

It was a clear, cool October night that Dorothy and Bobbie had their first serious talk about it. His horse was hitched to the post waiting for him, and Dorothy had come out on the porch to say good-bye. The moon shone clear and bright, softening the shadows cast by the great trees on the lawn, and all the air was full of the sweet, fall fragrance which belongs to that season of the year.

Bobbie was holding his hat in his hand, idly twirling it as he talked, to hide the excitement he could scarce repress. “Father says,” and they began to walk up and down the veranda, “father says if the State secedes, he will organize a troop of cavalry at once, and I will of course join him. Your father will be our surgeon, and you—has your father said anything about it to you,

“Bobbie.”

Dorothy?” he asked, abruptly, taking her hand and drawing it through his arm and holding it there tightly. “Has he mentioned any of his possible plans to you?”

“Yes,” she answered, slowly, “yes, he has talked with me of every possibility. I am to go to your mother in case there is any necessity. Auntie will go to the city, so as to be near the hospitals, and you—and father—and everybody I love will be in that horrible, cruel thing! Ah, Bobbie, why must it happen—why cannot it be stopped?” and she shivered in dread apprehension of the days that were awaiting her. Bobbie answered her seriously and solemnly, “I would to Heaven it could, but if not, you would not have me stay?”

“No,” she said, raising her head quickly. “I would not have you stay even if it broke my heart to have you go. I did not know how much I loved my South until now, when I must give up all I love most for it. I pray God to help me—to make me brave—but sometimes I’m afraid I’m

“Bobbie.”

a coward ; but of course you must go, and who knows but I may yet have a major, or a colonel, or a brigadier-general for a husband?” and she tried to laugh bravely at the thought.

“You shall have one who is every inch a Southern soldier,” he said, taking the upturned face in his hands. “And I can have nothing greater than that,” she added proudly, and the moon rested lovingly for a moment on their bent heads, and only the winds heard the vows they made to be true to their cause—come what may, come what might.

CHAPTER VI.



MUCH a short, hurried time, it seemed afterwards, before everything was decided, all preparations made, and all the great changes, which at first they thought would only prove temporary, settled down to a permanent thing. The neighborhood, once so gay and bright and full of all that makes life worth the living, was turned into a kind of camping ground or recruiting station, and "White Point" was the nucleus around which everything centered.

Mr. Tayloe was the leading spirit of the place, and no better-drilled body of cavalry entered the service than the "Rockland Home Guards" under his command, with Bobbie as his first lieutenant and Dr. Trevillian as surgeon. "Grey Cliffs" was to be closed, with only the servants in their quarters, to take charge of the place as

“Bobbie.”

long as they proved faithful, and Dorothy was established with Bobbie's mother. Her aunt had left for the city, where, she said sadly, she knew there would be plenty to do after awhile, and soon the beautiful old home had a dreary, deserted look, for the shadow of coming sorrow was hovering over it.

Bobbie had begged hard to be married before he should start for what might perhaps be an interminable absence, but Dr. Trevillian was firm in his refusal for a year longer at least.

“I am giving you the light of my life, Bobbie,” he said, putting his hand on the young man's shoulder, as he stood pleading his cause, just two days before they received orders to join H.'s regiment at C—, “and you must wait, my man, until she is a little older—she is so young yet! Perhaps”—he cleared his throat and went on after a minute—“perhaps after I leave here, I may never come back; but remember always, that my daughter's happiness is in your power, and that I put into your hands the most sacred trust one

“Bobbie.”

man can give another. I charge you to guard it well.”

Bobbie bared his head as a knight of old. “So help me God,” he said reverently, “I shall be worthy of it.” They shook hands in silence and separated.

It was the night before they were to start. Mr. Tayloe and his wife were shut in their room. The Doctor was in the library writing some final directions to be sent over to “Grey Cliffs,” and Bobbie and Dorothy were out on the lawn, under the old wishing-tree down by the gate. Every preparation for departure had been made, and the start was to occur at five the next morning. Peter Black was in an ecstasy of delight because he was to accompany his young master as his body-servant, and Sallie Tom was in the depths of stern and silent indignation and despair at the turn affairs had taken.

She now had her son down in the cabin for final admonitions as to the duties and obligations resting upon him, and for renewed charges that no

“Bobbie.”

matter where they might be, in case anything happened to the young master, he was to bring him home, if possible ; if not, he was to come himself, and tell her that she might go to him.

Bobbie and Dorothy were silent for a long time, down under the old wishing-tree, for neither could trust themselves to speak of the things nearest their hearts, but after awhile Bobbie began to talk of the orders received the day before. “If it were not for leaving you and mother,” he said, “if it weren’t for that continual nightmare hanging over me, I think I should enjoy going more than anything on earth. We have talked, and argued, and discussed all this so long that I am glad the time has come to fight it out ; it is the only way to settle it, and the sooner begun the sooner ended.”

Dorothy answered slowly, and after a long pause : “Yes, I know it is the only way to settle it, but it is a horrible price that must be paid for the final decision. Ah, I understand how you feel, but you are going into it, into the danger, into work, into action—and—I know—into death, too,

“Bobbie.”

perhaps,” and her voice shook a little, “but it is so much harder for us—we who have to stay here—who must sit day after day—waiting to hear. Of course, I can knit socks, and tear strips, and make bandages to send to the city; but what can I do to make myself forget for one single moment that you may be needing me—or father?”—and she broke down in a genuine sob, and then in a minute she slipped away from him. “You will think me a coward—and I know I am not that—see, I have brought you something—you must keep it, and read it, and be the man it can make you,” and she put in his hands a tiny pocket Testament, on the inside of which she had pasted a small picture of herself.

“That will be my talisman,” he said, kissing it reverently, and putting it in his inner pocket, “and will keep me from harm, please God.”

They talked until the night grew late and chill, and then he put his arms around her for a last good-bye. The winds shivered in the tops of the trees, and the whip-poor-wills ’way down by the

“Bobbie.”

brook were calling plaintively to each other, and the moon slipped under a cloud, and only the stars looked down and saw the sorrow that filled their brave young hearts.

They were gone, and Dorothy and Bobbie's mother turned from the porch, from which they had watched as long as possible, and went inside, not daring to speak, lest all the long-controlled feeling they had been struggling to conceal should reveal itself at last.

They took up their new life courageously, and the influence of each was great, both in the home and in the neighborhood; but it was not long before trouble began to appear among the servants, and, as time went on, greater and greater discontent became evident.

It was not until news of the first battle reached them that the horror of it all made itself felt in full force to Dorothy. She had heard that a battle must take place soon; and when Bobbie's letter came, telling her he hoped and prayed his regiment would have the honor of being allowed to

“Bobbie.”

go into the first fight, her heart sank in miserable misgivings.

She wrote him, however, that if he were sent into this battle she knew the honor of old Rockland would be safe, and not by a single word did she tell him how torturing was the anxiety, or how, all night long, she had knelt at her window and prayed God to protect and keep him safe.

Not for ten days did she hear again, and then came such a battered and soiled old envelope that the address was almost unreadable. It was very short, and written in pencil on a scrap of paper torn from a note-book, and ran as follows :

“DEAR DOROTHY—We are drawn up in line of battle, facing the enemy, and waiting the signal to charge. I am using my cap to write on. I don't know how it is going to be. I only know we are going to fight like our women expect us ; and now, before it begins, I am trying to send you a word to tell you that the thought of you makes me dare all things. I am going to put this in my pocket. Peter Black knows what I want done in case I don't send it myself. Tell mother she shall

“Bobbie.”

not be ashamed of her son. My love to her, and for you, little sweetheart, God bless you, and make me worthy of you!

“BOBBIE.”

Peter Black found it in his pocket, where he had been directed to look; and though Bobbie declared it was only a scratch, it kept him close for a week, and Peter Black's powers as a nurse were tested pretty well in that time.

It was shortly after this that Bobbie was appointed General H.'s special scout. His well-known absence of fear, his reckless daring, together with his wonderful ability to ferret his way through any section of country, and his marvelous endurance, had already attracted the attention of his regiment, and soon it became a common matter to send for him when the situation demanded unusual haste and caution.

CHAPTER VII.



THE first year of the war passed with comparatively little change at "White Point," but towards the middle of the second year the trouble which had been brewing among the negroes for some time gave way to open rebellion; and had it not been for Sallie Tom's wonderful and conjuring influence over them, they would have left long before they did. Under Mrs. Tayloe's and Dorothy's oversight, much of the farming had been kept up; but towards the second harvesting it became evident that trouble was ahead. A negro agitator and so-called preacher had appeared in the village near by, and so great was the effect of his haranguing that the entire neighborhood was demoralized, and nightly meetings were held down at the cross-roads. Sallie Tom was constable-in-chief of the "White Point" con-

“Bobbie.”

tingent, and every night she stationed herself in the road usually taken by the servants and hands on their way to the meetings, a gun in one hand and a pistol in the other, ready to shoot the first one who passed. Every negro on the place believed in her conjuring power, and they would no sooner have thought of passing than of trying to ride the moon. Things were beginning to look desperate. Even the loyal and good servants showed signs of dissatisfaction under the influence of the agitators, until finally only Dorothy's old mammy Rachel, Jessie, the dining-room servant, Uncle Lias, the carriage driver, and Sallie Tom remained deaf to the promises of good fortune and prosperity advanced by the younger element.

It was on a clear, bright October morning, that the result of all their meetings and plannings were realized. Mrs. Tayloe and Dorothy came down as usual, and found Sallie Tom and the three other servants drawn up in line outside the dining-room door. Sallie Tom was almost

“Bobbie.”

wild with excitement and anger. “They’re gone!” she cried, waving her hand violently in the direction of the quarters, her voice trembling and her whole body quivering. “They’re gone,” every one of them—gone like thieves in the night. They have took all their things, and six of the horses, mos’ all the corn, and Gord A’mighty knows what else. Oh, Lordy!” she went on, “to think of all the trouble what’s come to us ’count of dat monstrous inturfurence bizness of them Yankees! To think I uver should er lived to see my missus done treated so by niggers! Oh, Lord A’mighty, what we gwine to do anyhow?” And Sallie Tom for the moment lost her courage in the face of the dread possibilities of the future.

Mrs. Tayloe turned white to the lips, and Dorothy caught her hands and held them in her own strong, tender ones.

“I suppose it had to come,” she said presently, nervously pressing Dorothy’s hands in her own. “I am thankful it is no worse. We must do the best we can, and not let the gentlemen know.

“Bobbie.”

Ah, no, we must not let the gentlemen know!” Her voice broke, and she hurried back to her room, and they left her there, for they knew it was best that she should be alone for awhile.

It was Dorothy’s turn to advise and lead now. With all the courage and hope of youth she began to take charge of the place. With the help of the others she managed to keep up part of the farm, and from one end to the other she rode daily on her horse, sometimes with saddle, sometimes bareback. A new fear was beginning to grow in her heart. Every dollar on earth possessed by both her father and Mr. Tayloe had been invested in Confederate bonds, and she knew that very soon their purchasing value would be of little account.

That they should ever suffer she did not allow herself to think ; but it was necessary to husband every resource, and every energy must be bent toward keeping from Bobbie’s mother as long as possible the seriousness of the situation. Life was by no means now a thing of ease or pleasure

“Bobbie.”

to Dorothy. The days became weeks, and the weeks months, and the months were becoming years, and the clouds which at first they thought would be but temporary, were continually growing blacker and heavier, with never a sign of lifting. It was not until the Christmas of '63 that any real alarm, however, was actually felt as to the outlook. By a long-planned and well-timed scheme Mr. Tayloe, who now through successive ranks had been promoted to that of colonel, and Dr. Trevillian, now a surgeon-in-chief, had managed to get leave for a two days' visit home, the first they had been able to make together since they entered the service. Bobbie's movements were uncertain. He would be there, he wrote, were it a matter of possibility, but he might be kept for some special duty. He had managed to run in for a day or so at intervals of every few months, and consequently was better prepared for the present condition of things than were the others.

All through the three long years there never had been a time when it was possible for him and

“Bobbie.”

Dorothy to be married. When he was at home, her father and his were away, and he could never induce her to marry him unless all were there.

Every effort was made to make this Christmas a memorable one. Mrs. Tayloe's happiness at having her husband home once more gave her a fresh measure of strength, and the very best that had been carefully saved and hoarded for many months past was now made into the good things of former Christmas times ; and though Dorothy knew they would have to stint for months to come, yet she never let any one but Sallie Tom realize how reckless it all was.

Sallie Tom's joy at having once more a pretence of Christmas festivities made itself known by her own peculiar way of snorting as she prepared the various dishes that were best liked by the master and the Doctor, to say nothing of those she surreptitiously made for Bobbie, in case he should come. That he would come, she never doubted, and all day long on Christmas-eve she had her ears, as well as her eyes, open to catch the first

“Bobbie.”

sound of his horse's hoofs on the frozen ground outside.

Colonel Tayloe and his wife had stayed much in their room, talking over matters of minutest detail as to the new life of each, while Dorothy and her father had a long talk after the latter's return from “Grey Cliffs,” where he had spent most of the day. He had brought back her mother's portrait, and told her he wanted it put in her room. “There is no telling what may happen,” he said, trying, however, to speak cheerfully. “There may be trouble around here yet. The negroes seem to be going crazy. Only two are over there now—old Israel and his wife. I have buried all the silver and a few other things,” and he told her where he had hidden them. “I want you to understand about everything, Dorothy. You know it will all be yours some day, and there is no telling”—he stopped abruptly at the sight of the sad, pained face. “Don't look that way, Dorothy, daughter,” he went on, softly stroking the hand he held in both of his. “When the end

“Bobbie.”

comes to me don't grieve, but be glad, glad for me ; for I've wanted to go for a long time, except for leaving you, and I know that is all right now. Bobbie has proven himself to be a soldier worthy of the cause for which he fights, and I have been proud of him—very proud. I have made you both wait much longer than I intended, but I did it to be satisfied, and I am satisfied at last. I have lived for so many years with only the memory of a past and the hope of a future that I am longing for the NOW of her presence.” He paused for a moment, and Dorothy dared not trust herself to speak ; she could only cling to him in mute understanding of the loneliness of his life. He stroked her hair softly, and after awhile continued : “ You have been the comfort of my life, my daughter—my dear little daughter—but you will understand some day, and I only want you not to grieve should the fate of some of those poor lads come to me. You know I am on the field sometimes—you will remember, child—and go now and see that everything is ready for Bobbie's

“ **Bobbie.**”

coming, for I am sure he will be here, and when he comes I want to have a talk with him.”

She kissed her father in silence again and again, and then she left the room ; but the awful possibilities which his words suggested filled her with unutterable sorrow and loneliness, and, like a child that longs for warmth and cheer and comforting, she sank down on the rug in front of the big blazing fire, and her lips quivered in her great longing for Bobbie. She clasped her knees loosely with her hands, and the flames danced merrily up and down before her blurred eyes. The corners of the room were lost in shadows, and the flicker of the firelight played upon the walls. It would be such a relief to give way and have a good cry. She bit her lip to keep it back ; and then she heard a little noise, and somebody had his arms about her and was down on his knees beside her, and outside she could hear Sallie Tom snorting, and Bobbie was telling her, almost out of breath, that he had ridden like the wind all day and all night just to spend a few hours with her, and

“Bobbie.”

why didn't she speak to him and tell him she was glad to see him? And all she could do at first was to cling to him, and let all the pent-up feeling and anxiety of the months past come out between the laughter and tears; and Bobbie understood it all, and soothed and quieted her as only he could do, and in a little while she was her own brave self, and was making him answer a dozen questions at once. She might have kept it up indefinitely had he not told her he was starving, and that sent her flying for Sallie Tom.

It promised to be such a happy Christmas, after all. The knowledge that this brief return of other days could last but a short while made every moment precious, and such old-time doings as Bobbie insisted upon keeping up made them forget, for a few hours, at least, the serious outlook for the future. It was just before dinner on Christmas-Day that Bobbie came to Dorothy with a face full of intensely repressed feeling. She was standing by the big window in the library watching the

“Bobbie.”

snow, now fast falling and thickly covering the ground, and he went up to her and took both of her hands in his. “Dorothy,” he said quietly, “has your father said anything to you to-day about our marriage?”

“Not a word,” she answered, turning quickly and searching his face for the meaning of the new light there. “We must not worry him about it, Bobbie; he has had so much sorrow in his life that I dare not ask him to give me entirely to you. We can afford to wait.”

“But if he says he wishes it now, to-day, would you be willing?” He drew her down on the sofa by him. “I have just had a long talk with your father,” he continued, “and he told me that he would like us to be married at once, while he is at home and we are all together.” He almost crushed her hands in his as he waited her answer, controlling by a great effort, his old boyish and imperious impatience.

“Dear father,” she said, and her eyes were full of tears, “I must see him first, and then I will



Annie touched Dorothy on the arm and pointed to a sheet near by.

(See page 106)

“Bobbie.”

tell you, Bobbie. It is so sudden ; and to be married in such a hurry don't seem just right somehow.” His look of disappointment reproached her. She put her hand upon his face in the quaint way peculiar to herself for just a moment, and then she drew herself away.

She would not let him go with her, and it was fully half an hour before she came back, bringing her father with her. Both showed the traces of how tender had been the talk between them, and both were very quiet. Dr. Trevillian led her to Bobbie, and put her hands in his. “She agrees to our plans, my son,” he said, trying to speak brightly, and then he turned abruptly and left them alone.

“You are not marrying your general, Dorothy,” said Bobbie, presently. “What are you going to do about it?”

“Send off his scout to-night to report to *his* general for new orders,” she answered, trying to speak bravely, “but now we must hurry,” and her face colored richly as she ran out of the room.

CHAPTER VIII.



HAD a bomb been exploded at "White Point," the excitement could hardly have been greater than that caused by Bobbie's announcement that the marriage would occur that night. Such hurrying and scurrying for the numberless preparations which Sallie Tom insisted should be made had not been seen since the war began. Peter Black could hardly saddle the horse, in such a tremor was he over the great news, and Colonel and Mrs. Tayloe were gratefully pleased that the marriage should be consummated even in such an unexpected way.

And now, while Bobbie was riding like mad through the fast-falling snow and gathering darkness, Dorothy and his mother were deep in the mysteries of certain old trunks, which in the be-

“Bobbie.”

ginning of the war had been brought over from “Grey Cliffs,” and in one of which lay her mother’s wedding gown and veil.

It was a good five miles to the court-house, near which, fortunately, was the minister’s home ; and though it was bitterly cold, and the snow cut like ice in his face, Bobbie knew and felt nothing save the unutterable happiness that filled his heart. He had made Peter Black stay at home to help the women folks, and on he rode madly. He stopped only long enough at the Rev. Dr. Miles’s house to tell the dear old gentleman that his services would be needed at once, and to get his promise to go over with all the family to the wedding. “Bundle them up in the sleigh, and take the whole business over,” he called, as he rode off, scarcely waiting to take breath. “We can’t have much of a frolic, but you all must be there.”

It took quite a long time to get through at the court-house. The old clerk was indulging in his one and only dissipation of the year, and fully

“Bobbie.”

an hour was lost in finding him and one or two others, and getting the license ready. The Reverend Doctor and his family had already started when Bobbie passed his way again. He stopped for a moment to find out, and then decided to make a short cut for home.

The wedding had been fixed for nine o'clock, Sallie Tom declaring it was “monstrous” to talk of “gettin’ up a weddin’ supper in ten minutes,” and they had laughingly agreed to the hour she set. From the time Bobbie left, Sallie Tom began bossing the whole affair, and soon everybody in the house was running at her command. Uncle Lias’s rheumatism was pretty bad, but she showed him no mercy, and gave the parlors to him to fix up right. Every stick of wood she knew it was necessary to watch, but this “was Mars’ Bobbie’s weddin’ night, and they should have as much fire as they wanted, if they friz for it the rest of their lives,” she thundered to Uncle Lias, who ventured to remonstrate on her reckless prodigality in heaping up the logs in the great fire-places in the par-

“Bobbie.”

lors. Peter Black was piling the mantels and pictures with beautiful holly and mistletoe ; and between the windows where the ceremony was to take place he had placed the white silken cushions on which his young master's father and mother had knelt when they were married so many years ago. Fortunately, Anne Carter had come over just after Bobbie left—pretty Anne Carter, Dorothy's dear friend and almost sister—and under her fingers the rooms began to wear the festive look of other days. The great wax candles sputtered for a moment, and then flared up bravely in the beautiful old silver candlesticks, and soon the rooms were a flood of warm, rich light. Anne surveyed them for a moment, then ran up-stairs to report the progress made to Dorothy. “Sallie Tom is snorting like an old porpoise,” she declared, sitting down for a moment, and fingering almost reverently the beautiful old lace veil lying on the bed, and stroking softly the quaint, old-fashioned wedding gown. “She seems on the eve of spontaneous combus-

“Bobbie.”

tion, but the dining room is a sight to behold! Where in the name of reason she has raked up all those good things to eat will ever be one of the mysteries of life to me. It looks so much like old times,” she went on, still handling the soft, pretty things composing the bridal outfit, “that it makes me positively sick to think of the awful change. You know we’ve been on half rations for months, and how we’re going to hold out is beyond my ken. Sallie Tom always was an uncanny old animal, anyhow, and I believe she’s conjured those things from the man in the moon; but the very smell has made me disgracefully hungry, and I wish Bobbie would make haste and come, so we can begin on the supper.” Dorothy laughed a little, and looked up at the clock. “He ought to be here now,” she said; “it’s seven, and he’s had plenty of time to get back.” “Perhaps the Yanks have nabbed him,” suggested Anne, getting up and giving a last touch to the silk stockings. “Father wrote us, some time ago, he thought our section would be

“Bobbie.”

visited soon, and to look out for the raiders, as he called them.”

Dorothy turned white to her lips, and caught hold of the chair nearest to her, while her voice died away in her throat; and Anne, turning, saw at once the effect of her thoughtless words. “Why, Dorothy,” she cried, going straight to her and putting her hands on her shoulders, “you didn’t think I was in earnest—I was joking, of course. You know there’s no danger way off here, and Bobbie is as safe as I am. For heaven’s sake, don’t look like that!” Dorothy smiled faintly, and the color came slowly back to her face. “I don’t know what is the matter, but I have the most curious feeling that something is going to happen—what—what was that?” she cried nervously, catching Anne by the arm. “I’m sure I don’t know,” answered Anne; “but I must say going to get married is having a curious effect on you; now do hurry and get into the wedding garments,” she went on, kissing her hurriedly, “while I go and see who’s arrived. I don’t doubt

“Bobbie.”

Bobbie has “hollered” at every house in the neighborhood as he passed by—now hurry, do,” and Anne ran hastily down-stairs, her heart beating a little faster than usual at the noises she heard outside. It was only the Rev. Dr. Miles and family, however, and Colonel and Mrs. Tayloe, with Dr. Trevillian, were welcoming them in hearty, hospitable fashion when she reached the door. “Where is Bobbie?” she called out, almost before speaking; “Didn’t he come with you?” “No; he went on to the court-house,” answered Mrs. Miles, brushing the snow carefully from her best silk gown; “and if poor old Mr. Turpin is in his usual Christmas condition it will take some time to make out what Bobbie wants.” Anne saw the uneasiness Mrs. Tayloe was trying so hard to conceal, and knew that to keep everybody from crying everybody must laugh, and she began in her own inimitable way to start the ball rolling. The Rutherfoords had gotten over, Bobbie having called to them, they said, also Mrs. Trent and her daughter; and Colonel

“Bobbie.”

Taylor and the Doctor were besieged by the women for news of the war. Every household in the county had one or more members in the army, and every item of the life, with all its hardships and its every exciting detail, was eagerly sought after.

Dorothy was still up in her room, now fully dressed for the ceremony. Like a quaint, sweet picture of a day gone by, she stood in her mother's wedding gown waiting for Bobbie.

Anne Carter held her off at arm's length and surveyed her critically, from the two provoking little curls that wouldn't lie smooth under the beautiful veil to the tiny satin slippers that restlessly slipped out now and then under the gown, and then she kissed her hastily. “I never knew before exactly how wickedly good-looking you were, Dorothy Trevillian—it's a shame to be married with nobody but dear old Dr. Miles and his family, and old Mrs. Rutherford and her maidens three, and pious Mrs. Trent and that proper daughter of hers, to see you. Not a man

“Bobbie.”

down-stairs except the two fathers. “Heigho! what’s that?” In a flash she was gone, and Dorothy, left standing at the open door, listened.

The parlor doors were thrown wide open, and Sallie Tom rushed wildly in. “Gord A’mighty!” she cried hoarsely, clutching first at the Colonel and then at the Doctor, “Gord A’mighty, get out o’ heah, Mars’ Robert, and tek de Doctor wid you—dey done come. Peter Black seen six of ’em down de road whar he gone to look fur Mars’ Bobbie; dey on dere way heah—he heah’d dem talkin’ ’bout how to git heah. For Gord’s sake, hurry up in de loft, top o’ de garrer, and I’ll manage so dey won’t fine you. Dey got orders to ’rest you all, and mos’ special Mars’ Bobbie, whar got some papers. Peter Black heah’d ’em say so. Move ’long, all o’ you, and help put out dese lights and shet dese rooms up, so dey won’t ketch on to nothin’ special. You mus’ tell ’em,” she said, turning to Mrs. Tayloe, who, white as a sheet, was sitting perfectly limp in her chair, “you mus’ tell ’em de parson is a goin’ to tek his

“Bobbie.”

Christmas supper wid you, and dese heah friends, too. Go 'long in de libr'y and shet up dis heah part de house.”

Every hand was instantly at work, and in a minute or two only the smoldering fires gave evidence of the rooms having been used. Colonel Tayloe and the Doctor had exchanged a few hurried words. They mortally hated to hide in the loft, but it was their only resource. If found, it would mean new anxiety and disaster to the women. They must take Sallie Tom's advice.

It took but a minute to reach the garret, and there through an opening she thrust them into a side loft and closed the door, drawing a line filled with old and long-disused garments across it, so that, unless closely inspected, the door was not apt to be seen.

Down-stairs the utmost confusion reigned supreme. Mrs. Tayloe's chief thought was Bobbie, but by a superhuman effort she managed to conquer herself, and think what was best to be done. The Miles children were crying, but were ordered

“Bobbie.”

by Anne to keep quiet, and if they dared speak a word the soldiers would eat them alive.

Quickly the dining room was dispossessed of all the wedding paraphernalia, and only the necessities of a ministerial tea remained.

Dorothy had heard the confusion, and before Anne could reach her the wedding garments were off, and she, in her usual quiet dress, was hurriedly putting them back in the trunks. “They will search the entire house,” she said in answer to Anne’s look of astonishment, “and they must see nothing that would give them an idea of anything unusual going on.”

Dorothy was herself now, quiet and brave, and ready for whatever might await her. The last thing had hardly been put away, the room straightened and the lights lowered, before they heard the muffled sound of horses’ hoofs upon the snow outside, and soon a thunderous knock at the door. Through the blinds they had seen several horsemen, one of whom seemed to be giving directions to the others.

“Bobbie.”

Dorothy slipped down the stairs, and for a moment looked into the library. “Please do not look so frightened,” she called to the others, “Sallie Tom and I will manage.” Then she went on to the door. A furious gust of wind blew wildly around the corner of the house, and a voice outside called out: “There is no use in resisting, you might as well open at once.” Dorothy pushed Sallie Tom aside, and threw open the door. Two officers stood without with pistols in hand, and as the light fell full upon the slight, girlish figure standing in the doorway, they drew back, as if startled themselves. For a moment no one spoke, then the taller of the two stepped forward and lifted his cap. “I am sorry to trouble you,” he said courteously, putting his pistol in his belt as he spoke, “but I understand General H.’s scout, Robert F. Taylor, is here, and we are under orders to search the house, and produce him, if possible, and also any other soldiers who may be found here.”

Sallie Tom gave a most vicious snort, and

“Bobbie.”

Dorothy laid her hands upon her. “You are at perfect liberty to search the house, gentlemen,” she said quietly, trying hard to control her voice, as she motioned them to enter that she might close the door, “but I am afraid you will have your trouble for nothing, you are just a little too late; the gentleman you are looking for did take his Christmas dinner with us, but that was five hours ago; he left immediately afterwards.” She looked up almost provokingly into their faces, and the least bit of a smile quivered on her lips, as the officers exchanged glances.

It was impossible that this slip of a girl, this beautiful thing, could be fooling them. They must search the house anyhow—could they be allowed at once?

“Certainly,” she answered promptly, “Sallie Tom will show you every inch of it.” “It is terribly cold,” she continued, seeing them rub their hands together, “won’t you let the rest of the men come in also? they can at least get warm while waiting.”

“Bobbie.”

“Oh, they don’t mind,” one of them smilingly rejoined, “they are accustomed to waiting, and cold, too, and besides I would not care to fill your whole house.”

“I hardly think half a dozen men would do that,” she answered gravely. “I suppose you would like to begin your search at once, however,” she continued as she threw open the parlor door. “You can walk in and examine at your leisure. You will pardon my leaving you, we have friends to tea. Sallie Tom will show you every inch of space in the house.” She bowed to them courteously and left.

The two men looked at each other blankly for a moment, and then the younger one began to laugh at the expression on the other man’s face. “This beats my time,” he said softly to the one in command—a lieutenant, evidently, from his uniform. They lowered their voices so that Sallie Tom couldn’t hear. ‘I’ll bet an even hundred that fellow’s about here somewhere, and that girl’s determined to save him. She’s the

“Bobbie.”

coolest thing I've struck since I entered the service, and by long odds the prettiest. Did you notice her eyes?” “Hush,” said the other, “that old woman's a regular hawk, she's pretending not to notice. Come, we must search the house thoroughly, though it's a nasty piece of business. I wish that girl hadn't been so polite. The two men began to walk around the room, looking more at the many old and elegant things it contained, than with any expectation of finding a clue here to the hiding place of any rebels that might be in the house. Their looks and bearing gave evidence that they were gentlemen, who, while they disliked their invasion of private property, were determined to obey to the letter the orders they had undertaken to fill. These orders were to capture the daring scout of General H—— and bring him to where their company was camping temporarily, some five miles below “White Point.”

A scouting party of some six or seven men, under their young lieutenant, had volunteered to

“Bobbie.”

make this capture, if possible, having heard that young Taylor, as they thought the name was, would no doubt spend his Christmas at home. They knew very well the importance attached to this holiday by the Southern people, and what a time for home-coming it was, and were confident of springing a trap and catching their unwary victim in it. So confident of success had they been, that they would take only some six or seven in their party, and now to be met in this coolly prepared-for manner, and by such a demoralizing pretty girl, was upsetting to their soldierly dignity and calculations. They moved slowly round the room for a minute or two, talking in an undertone. Sallie Tom, snorting in a suppressed kind of way, was walking about moving chairs and sofas, shaking out curtains, and opening the doors of cabinets full of bric-a-brac, but still not a word did she utter. How on earth was she going to keep Bobbie away, and give him the signal of danger, was what she was turning over in her mind. Her cabin was a good

“Bobbie.”

distance from the house. If she could only get there without exciting suspicion, or if Peter Black had already gotten there with Dorothy's message, all might yet be well. She lifted herself up straight and changed her tactics—that is, she ceased to snort; she would do the amiable act. It was Christmas night; perhaps she could make the whole crowd drunk; and, if so, the Colonel and Doctor could slip off with Bobbie.

CHAPTER IX.



AS you gent'men seen everything in dis heah room what you would like to?" She gave a low, cheerful, seductive kind of laugh as she asked the question, resting her hands on her hips and looking at first one and then the other, "'cause we've got a pow'ful lot of rooms in dis heah house, and if you wants to get back to your Christmas-tree I reckon we'd better be a movin'."

The two men looked at her as a fresh kind of curiosity and laughed. "Oh, I guess there isn't much use in hurrying," one answered; "it's right uncomfortable to be hidden somewhere, and you all might as well make up your minds to give up the young gentleman; he can't possibly escape, you know. We've got men all outside the house. It would be dangerous for him to try; he might get shot."

“Bobbie.”

Sallie Tom clutched her hands angrily together under her apron. She had an intense desire to wring their necks, the little whippersnappers, she muttered under her breath. Give up Mars' Bobbie? Not as long as a drop of blood was in her veins; but outwardly she gave no sign. “Yes, I seen you is got a pow'ful lot of men outside,” she said, chuckling as if highly amused. “I counted you when you comed up, an' dere's six of you; you two is in heah, an' de other fo' is at de fo' corner's of de house. Lordy, gent'mens, you all sutny don't know nothin' 'bout dis heah place when you comes up wid six men to frighten a lot of women folks. Dis heah place is ‘White Point,’ an' we all is jes ez used to seein' men 'round heah ez flies in summer. Why, our Mars' Tayloe didn't think nothin' o' callin' up a hundred head o' niggers at a time an' givin' 'em eggnog an' sich on Christmas. You all oughter bringed up suppin' what would a-looked like suppin' when you was a-comin'; but I don't s'pose you all is frum anywhar near dese heah parts, an' cose

“Bobbie.”

you didn't kno' no better.” Sallie Tom's cheerfully condescending tone was irresistible.

The two men laughed in spite of themselves. “We acknowledge our ignorance, old woman,” the Lieutenant answered, “and now, as I don't think our friend is in any of these chairs or sofas, we would like to move on.” Sallie Tom opened the door and they walked into the hall. A cheerful light from the library streamed out, and the laughing and talking sounded as if the inmates were entirely uninterested in the search being made through the house. The two men stopped instinctively at the door and bowed politely. Dorothy sprang from her chair and came toward them, also Anne Carter, and whatever was in their hearts, they concealed it well.

“You wish to search these rooms?” said Dorothy, pleasantly. “Don't hesitate to do so. Our pastor is taking his Christmas tea with us, also a few other friends, and that is why I cannot go with you over the house—unless they will excuse

“Bobbie.”

me. Let's go anyhow, Anne," she added, turning quickly to her friend. "I've told you it would be useless, however," she went on. "Mr. Tayloe left here five hours ago; but of course you must go through the house, and we might show you some nooks and corners Sallie Tom would possibly leave out." The two men glanced at each other, then accepted Dorothy's offer with thanks. It would certainly do no harm to have two pretty girls go along. They looked around the comfortable, homelike rooms a little longingly; how cosy everything was, and how good that coffee smelt! One of them involuntarily sniffed it and Mrs. Tayloe saw it, and her hospitable soul forgot for a moment they were soldiers hunting for her boy. They were some other mother's boys, and she came forward in her sweet, gracious way, full of such quiet dignity that the rudest boor would have felt its power. "It is very cold," she said, interrupting them as they stood talking together at the door; "will not you gentlemen have a cup of coffee?" The Lieutenant

“Bobbie.”

and his Sergeant drew back a little, as if they had not heard aright. They had read a great deal about Southern hospitality, but it quite upset them to be offered it under such circumstances. Sallie Tom had drawn Dorothy aside, and was saying something in an undertone ; but the latter had heard Mrs. Tayloe's question, and she answered it for them.

“Of course they will,” she broke in. “I'm sure they are hungry and thirsty too, and I know they will have some supper after we get through the search ; but we must do that first. Sallie Tom will lead the way, the gentlemen will follow, and Anne and I will bring up the rear.”

Laughingly they left the room, and faithfully did Sallie Tom pilot them into every nook and corner. Every closet was opened and every big box explored. Those left down-stairs in the library listened with beating hearts and strained ears to every step, and when at last they were heard mounting the garret stairs Mrs. Tayloe sank helplessly in her chair and buried her face

“Bobbie.”

in her hands. Down through the halls sounded the apparently merry laughter of the girls, joined in now and then by the two young officers, who were becoming momentarily more and more impressed that they were making guys of themselves, and were being laughed at good-naturedly for their pains. Notwithstanding all this, however, very faithfully they performed their part, and not a nook lacked investigation. When they reached the garret stairs Sallie Tom began to mount as unconcernedly as she had shown every other part of the house. She held her lamp high in hand and clattered noisily up the steps, as if to give fair warning to the men hidden in the loft that their very breath must be held during the search. The men followed a little indifferently. It was evident they were having their trouble for nothing, and they were anxious to get through. Anne and Dorothy, following behind, looked at each other with white faces. Surely the beating of their hearts would be heard if they stopped



Navigation was a treacherous thing for some of the boys in blue.

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“Bobbie.”

laughing and talking. The farce must be kept up a little longer.

“I suppose this is where the family ghosts are kept,” said the younger of the two men, as they began to mount the steps. “I should think, however, they would soon be pretty well frozen out up here.”

“Not a bit of it,” answered Dorothy, laughing a little recklessly, “we have some most interesting cases in the family, and this is their principal scene of action. This is my first visit up here after dark since I was so frightened when a child. It always gives me the creeps to think of the place at night.”

“Then we feel highly honored at your presence with us,” answered the Lieutenant, making a profound bow, as they reached the landing at the top of the steps. “I wish I knew some of these wonderful ghost stories that I hear are peculiar to this part of the country, and I would give something pretty to see one of your ghosts.”

Sallie Tom pushed open the door, and they all

“Bobbie.”

entered. The long, low-pitched room with its four dormer windows, stretched out into huge weird dimensions as they stood silently for a moment looking around, and then the men slipped farther in. Sallie Tom followed and held her lamp high in hand, and the light fell so as to cause the opening to the loft to be cast in such a shadow that it could not be distinguished from the rest of the wall. All around the room were great packing-trunks and cases, and from ropes stretched from side to side hung various pieces of old clothing and bed covering. The room was completely dark save for the stream of light cast by the lamp, and a gruesome, uncanny feeling crept over them all, as the men wandered around the room, poking behind this and that, and turning over old broken chairs and odd bits of furniture. Anne touched Dorothy on the arm and pointed to a sheet near by.

“Let’s frighten them,” she whispered. “I’m positive that little yellow-haired thing smells a rat ; he’ll find that hole in the wall yet.”

“Bobbie.”

Dorothy nodded and clutched Sallie Tom by the dress. She pointed to Anne, who was softly drawing the sheet towards her. “Playing ghost!” she muttered under her breath; “you shriek and run with lamp.”

Dorothy walked over to the two officers and began to talk. “This used to be our happy hunting-ground when we were children,” she began; “we always played up here on rainy days, and such dressing in antique garments I am sure you have never seen—unless,” she added, politely, “you had a similar garret to play in.” They were getting dangerously near the entrance to the loft. “We got frightened by what we thought was a ghost once, and we never cared to play here again. What—what, oh, what is that!” she cried, clutching the sleeve of one of the men. A terrific shriek from Sallie Tom, as she rushed wildly down the steps with the lamp, made their blood run cold. “Oh, Lordy, Lord Gord A’mighty!” she yelled, pitching like something wild, on, down, down,

“Bobbie.”

until she reached the library. “De ghostes done come like de trumpet bin a’blowed,” she shrieked. “Oh, Lord, don’t mix us up wid dem inturferin’ Yankees. Lord A’mighty, hab mercy on us, dey come a’meddlin’ fust. Oh, Lordy, Lordy!” they could hear her shriek, but fainter and fainter as she neared the room below. The two men turned quickly at the terrific sound of Sallie Tom’s voice, and though the room was inky black save for the dim rays that came from the dormer windows, they saw creeping towards them a flapping, white-winged object. Both of them caught Dorothy with one hand, while with the other they grasped their pistols. A muffled laugh broke from under the sheet, and in a second it was dropped and Anne shook it off gaily. “Now confess you were frightened,” she cried, merrily. “I do believe you were going to shoot me. “I didn’t think of that when I put the sheet on, but that is why I dropped it in such a hurry. Did you ever hear such a shriek as Sallie Tom gave? She’ll never forgive me for

“Bobbie.”

this—she’s such a firm believer in ‘ghostes.’ I wish she had left the lamp behind ; it’s as dark as Egypt up here, and I’m almost frozen.” Dorothy had dropped down on the top of a chest, and apparently was quivering in every limb. The men broke into a relieved laugh as they put their pistols back into their belts.

“It was pretty cold up here before the ghost appeared,” said the Lieutenant, “but it makes me hot all over to think how near I came to shooting you. Great heaven! suppose I had!” The man’s voice shook in spite of himself, and he wiped his face with his handkerchief.

“You’re a plucky ghost,” said the Sergeant, still trying to get his pistol fixed in his belt, “and I’m honest enough to acknowledge you frightened me silly. His blood was still tingling from the touch of Dorothy’s hands—he wanted to get down to the light where he could see her face again, and he made a move towards the door. Dorothy was laughing now, a little foolishly.

“It was stupid in me to think it was really a

“Bobbie.”

ghost,” she said, rather apologetically, “but Anne ought not to have frightened us like that. Are you gentlemen through?” she added, “or shall I call Sallie Tom to bring back the lamp?”

“I don’t think she would come if you called,” answered the Lieutenant. “I guess we have taxed your patience quite long enough. Can I help you down the steps?” He turned to Anne as he spoke and held out his hand to lead her down. The Sergeant did the same for Dorothy, and soon they were back in the library, where amidst much laughter they explained the cause of Sallie Tom’s flight. “She is out in the kitchen now, trying to get supper,” said Mrs. Tayloe, breathing freely once more; “but I don’t believe you can persuade her you are not the genuine article, my dear.” She pressed Anne by the hand, and the latter understood the signal. “Poor old Sallie Tom,” she answered, getting up, “I must go and make peace with her, or we won’t have anything much for supper, I’m afraid, and I’m simply, absolutely starving.” She went

“Bobbie.”

out of the room with a mock courtesy, and they heard her calling to Sallie Tom to “look out ! the ‘ghostes’ were coming !” And then the kitchen door banged.

CHAPTER X.



IT was not a difficult matter to persuade the men to stay to supper. Old Uncle Lias kept piling up the fire, and the scene was so home-like—and then it was Christmas night !

“ You thought you were going to frighten us with your armed force,” said Dorothy to the Sergeant, who managed to keep near her, “ but I know you have only four men outside, and it’s a shame to keep them on their horses on such a bitter night.” She walked over to the window and looked out. “ It is snowing furiously ! Why don’t you let them come in and have some supper ? I should hate to have any of our men outside of warmth and shelter to-night,” she added, wondering miserably where Bobbie then was. “ Ask the Lieutenant to let them come in.” The Sergeant looked at her curiously ; surely she

“Bobbie.”

could not be scheming. He walked over to the Lieutenant and repeated Dorothy's request. They talked it over for awhile, and then the Lieutenant accepted the invitation with thanks. The men outside were men of his own class, and at least would appreciate the courtesy of being asked in, and the superior officer had made up his mind to stay and see something more of that ghost, if possible.

Women are nearly always good actors, and even the prim Misses Rutherford and the proper Miss Trent nervously tried to appear in sympathy with the reckless gayety of Dorothy and Anne, who, when the other four young men came in, received them as they would have done the acquaintances of old friends, and the dining-room became a scene of genuine Christmas cheer. Dorothy's hands shook as she handed first one and then another dainty cup to their very much mixed-up guests ; and if at times her laughter was a little unusually gay for her, it was the only way she could keep back the tears which treacherously

“Bobbie.”

hung under her lashes. This was to have been her wedding night, she thought bitterly, between the sharp, witty sayings which kept them all convulsively laughing, and under the table she would press her hands together in an agony of terror, as the thought of what might possibly have happened came over her. She was doing all this to save him. Peter Black she knew was hidden down in the woods by the road Bobbie must pass. They were to go to Sallie Tom's cabin and stay there until they heard from her. That was the message she had sent, and now every moment was precious, yet she could not hurry lest suspicions be aroused. Sallie Tom was still snorting over the fright of the ghost, nevertheless her supper was in no wise injured, and when she finally brought in a huge punch bowl filled to the brim with luscious, foaming eggnog, she was greeted by a clapping of hands.

“Dis heah is suppin' what you ain't seen of 'en, I reckon,” she said to one of the soldiers, as she put it down on the table with an air

“Bobbie.”

of supreme satisfaction, “dis heah am de genuine artickle itsef, ain’t no mek-believe ’bout dis,” she continued, stirring the contents with a handsome old silver ladle. “Dis am de stuff what de quality folks all drink in de Souf at Christmus times, and de missus she low’d we mus’ all hav some to-night, even if all de men folks am away.” She added the last mournfully, and as Dorothy took the ladle out of her hands, she pressed Sallie Tom’s fingers in such a way that the latter understood, and shortly afterwards left the room.

If the Yankee soldiers had never tried it before, they made up for lost opportunities, and though the reverend parson walked restlessly up and down the room, holding his only partly touched glass in his hand, he dared not utter the protest that his conscience told him under other circumstances he should, and Dorothy and Anne, with a silent prayer for forgiveness, filled again and again the glasses of the men with the foamy, seductive stuff, and good cheer was being widely disseminated when Sallie Tom entered again.

“Bobbie.”

She touched Dorothy's dress in passing, and began to break some more eggs to show the strangers how it was made, but Anne had them now at the piano, and song after song she struck up and led. Her clear soprano voice was joined in hilariously by every soldier in the room, and even timidly by the Misses Rutherford and the Miles children. Presently Uncle Lias, sent by Sallie Tom, came in with his old banjo and began a jig, and such an uproariously gay time they were having that they did not hear the soft click of the door or notice that Dorothy was back in the room, her face flushed and lips quivering, or that Mrs. Tayloe was missing. Sallie Tom's cordial had done its work well. The men were gloriously happy and magnanimously inclined towards the whole Southern army much more these charming Southern women, and the good old parson with his two pair of twins. Anne caught Dorothy's eye and banged louder and louder, then some one proposed the Virginia Reel. Miss Trent took Anne's place at the piano, and though

“Bobbie.”

navigation was a treacherous thing for some of the boys in blue, still they bravely stood up and went through it heroically, making a terrible clatter with their feet and hands to the music, and through all Anne and Dorothy were the wildest, gayest in the crowd. Romping, noisy games followed each other in quick succession, during which Dorothy managed repeatedly to slip by one of the windows and stealthily look out. Finally she was satisfied, and then she declared herself worn out, and the Rev. Doctor Miles, with whom every now and then she had contrived to catch a few words, understood it was time to go, and the soldiers immediately took the hint. They were gentlemen, and by no means inclined to presume upon the privileges of war ; and when he asked them in his nervous, timid way if it would be safe for him to venture home with so many ladies in charge, they gallantly offered their services as escort, though assuring him the road was perfectly safe so far as their men were concerned.

“Bobbie.”

“There is not apt to be much prying around on such a night as this,” the Lieutenant added, shivering a little as he went out in the hall, “but I know it is one we shall never forget,” and he bowed low over the hand Mrs. Tayloe held out to him. “We have all heard of Southern hospitality, of course, but we hardly expected to enjoy it under the present condition of things. I can only assure you, madam, you will never regret it.” He looked at Anne as he spoke, and held out his hand to her. “When all this is over,” he whispered, “this beastly war, I mean, will you scorn to know a man who fought on the other side?”

“I never scorn an honest man,” she answered, “even if he is a Yankee soldier,” she added, laughing. “Good-bye.” She touched his hand lightly, and drew back into the room. The horses pawed the ground and turned restlessly round and round. The Mileses and Rutherfoords and Trents piled hastily in their sleighs, and only the Sergeant stood at the door, telling Dorothy

“Bobbie.”

again and again good-bye. The eggnog had been too much for him, and his tone took a sentimental air as he held her hand for a second.

“I say,” he whispered. “don’t tell the Lieutenant, but I’m damned glad we didn’t catch that fellow, and if I ever run across him I’ll—I’ll be damned if I’ll know him! Good bye, good-bye, you little Southern witch, good-bye.”

At last they were gone. The muffled sound of their horses’ hoofs, together with their laughter, could be heard for a few moments only, and then came still, intense, impenetrable silence.

Dorothy was back in the library for one brief minute. “Keep the lights up, and the house just as it is, until I get back,” she said, hurriedly. “Thank God, they got out safely,” she added, turning to Mrs. Tayloe, and giving her a swift, tender kiss. “Did anybody miss me? I was wild with terror lest they would suspect something, but I knew their only chance was to get out during the noise and romping. I shall tell them good-bye for you all. No, no! No one

“Bobbie.”

must go.” She was hastily wrapping herself up as she talked, and when Sallie Tom appeared at the door, heavily muffled about the head and face, they crept out together into the bitter, bitter night.

It was a good half-mile down to the quarters, but already they could see through the darkness a tiny light, and they struggled on through the snow, almost falling in a drift, then up and on again. Neither spoke. The reaction was beginning to tell on Dorothy, and her strength was tested to the utmost. Much was yet to be done, however, and she bit her lips almost to the blood, lest she should give some sign of how she suffered. The snow muffled the sound of their coming, and while Sallie Tom knocked softly at the door, Dorothy leaned heavily against it. In a moment it was opened, and the men sprang forward to catch her, as she almost fell inside. “I’m all right,” she cried. “Shut the door quick, You have not a moment to lose. Are the horses ready?”

“Bobbie.”

Bobbie took her up in his arms, as if she were a little child, and put her in front of the fire. “Where is Dr. Miles?” he asked, hoarsely. “Didn’t you bring him? I have the license here in my pocket. We *must* be married before I leave you. Don’t tell me!”—The look on her face stopped him; and the reckless young soldier, who had faced death a hundred times without a quiver, turned away, lest she should see the bitter pain of this defeat. The two older men stood aside; this was too sacred even for them. Sallie Tom was outside, helping Peter Black with the horses, and only the sputtering of the logs broke the sorrowful stillness that fell upon them all. Presently Bobbie stooped over and kissed her. “I know all about it. We have been outwitted to-night; but I swear here, in the presence of you all, that, if it is not possible before, then on next Christmas night nothing but Almighty God himself shall keep me from claiming my wife! I shall keep this”—and he touched the license in his pocket—“whenever I come, will

“Bobbie.”

you be ready?” She nodded without speaking, and silently they each bent and kissed her good-bye, and through the stillness she heard the muffled sounds of their horses’ hoofs upon the snow, and upon her heart lay the despair of utter desolation.

CHAPTER XI.



THE days that followed were very dreary ones. Little by little the resources gave out, and actual, positive hunger began to be felt on every side. "White Point" reflected the life of the county; and while much of the real condition of things was kept from Mrs. Tayloe, lest her sorrowing heart could not bear the strain upon it, yet even she knew how necessary it was to count every mouthful eaten. Anne and Dorothy kept up the spirits of the people until in August, when the terrible sorrow came, and Dorothy sat like one stunned and crushed by its force. They brought his body home; and not until she knelt over it and saw the almost rapturous smile upon his face did she realize that to grieve would be selfish indeed; that he was at last "at home"—at last "with her!" The shock of her father's death

“Bobbie.”

for a while broke almost her brave spirit. It was a glorious death, Bobbie wrote her. It grieved him beyond words of telling that he could not be with her in her sorrow, but more than ever was he needed, and not for even one single day could he get leave.

After they buried him, right next to her mother, the old routine of life became almost unendurable. She could not leave “White Point,” her duty kept her there, and yet how she longed for work—hard, continuous, ceaseless work—that she might not think. Anne’s cheerful, buoyant nature was a helpful tonic, and Dorothy struggled hard to be brave. Always Anne had something funny to tell of that “good-looking Lieutenant,” with whose movements, in some mysterious way, she seemed to keep well posted; and she made Dorothy take hold of life again, and in doing for others, her own pain became a little dulled.

The weeks dragged into months, and still Bobbie had never gotten back. Way off in a distant part of the country he had been in active

“Bobbie.”

service, and his name had become a familiar one in the army, and they loved him there as they had loved him in his home as a boy, and over the camp-fires at night many a tale was told of his daring and skill as a soldier, and his gentle touch as a nurse when the day was done.

Ten days had gone by and no sign or word had Dorothy received, and Christmas-eve had come again. To no one had she ever spoken of the vow made down in Sallie Tom's cabin a year ago, but all through the dreary days she had cherished it in her heart. Anne Carter was to spend the holidays at “White Point,” and in obedience to her, and with the secret hope that he would yet come, she had helped with the old-time decorations of Christmas green. Her sorrow must not make the others sad, she thought, and with brave unselfishness she tried hard to forget herself in them. For the first time since the Christmas a year ago, when they had all been home, she made Uncle Lias make a big fire in the library. The dining-room was also bright

“Bobbie.”

with a cheery glow, and she walked from first one window to the other watching the scene outside. The snow lay cold and deep and white, but the night was beautifully clear. The moon was shining almost magically upon the frozen earth, touching the trees with mystic splendor in their crystal decorations, and all the air was still, so still that the faintest echo could be heard.

The time dragged on and still no sign came, or was given by Dorothy of what was so intensely filling her heart. Mrs. Tayloe sat in her accustomed place by the fire, but the weary hands failed to knit so rapidly as of old, and the sad, strained look upon her face told better than words of that of which she could not speak.

Anne worked hard to keep up the spirit of the season, and when to their intense surprise they heard the sound of bells outside and saw the Rev. Dr. Miles and family drive up, all felt a great relief. “I’ve come to bring good luck to you,” he said, shaking hands with Dorothy in his understanding, sympathetic way. “There’s no

“Bobbie.”

telling when these boys will turn up,” he added, trying to speak cheerfully, “so I thought I would come over and be on hand in case I was needed,” and the dear old parson patted her hands tenderly and softly. Everybody tried to be pleasant and look natural and easy, but it was a dismal failure, and when the clock struck ten Dorothy could stand it no longer. She slipped out on the long veranda at the back of the house, and leaned wearily upon one of its tall, straight columns. Down-stairs in the servants’ room Uncle Lias was playing softly on his old violin. The last notes of the “Suwannee River” died away upon the air, and then he began, low and soft and sad, the old, sweet song that almost broke her heart, “Home, Home, Home, Sweet Home,” quivered out upon the still frosty air, and such a longing for the old life that was gone, such a craving for the one she loved so well, came over her, that she slipped down in the snow, and leaning against the railing buried her face in her hands, and prayed Him who alone could understand, to give

“Bobbie.”

back her home to her—for Bobbie was her home, her life, her all. She felt something fall and touch her dress, and looked up hastily; no sound broke the air—only that longing cry, “Home, Home, Home, Sweet Home,” yet she strained her eyes in the darkness; surely that was a shadow moving under the trees—a little bullet fell at her feet—she jumped up hurriedly and in a flash she knew. Down through the snow she fled, and out upon the air sounded softer and fainter: “Be it ever so humble, there’s no place like home.” She reached the tree and staggered, and Bobbie caught her—caught her and held her close. “I swore I’d come if alive,” he said, brokenly, “and I’m here, though at the last minute I came near missing it. Is it all right at the house?” He leaned against the tree through utter weakness, and Dorothy could only nod affirmatively to his question—the sudden joy had checked the power of speech. “I’ve brought some one with me I didn’t intend,” Bobbie went on. “We came near putting an end to each

“Bobbie.”

other, but stopped in time.” He nodded at a man standing back in the shadow, and the latter came forward and held his cap in his hand.

“I know it is very presumptuous,” he said, looking straight in Dorothy’s face, “but I was bound to see that ghost again, and I risked it.”

In sheer excess of happiness she held out her hands. “It’s the Lieutenant,” she cried; “don’t you know it’s the one who wanted you last year—Oh, Bobbie! Bobbie!”

* * * * *

There was a wedding after all—the queerest, strangest, happiest wedding old Rockland county ever had recorded in its books. Bobbie was faint and weak from lack of food and rest, and like some strange wonder that had come into their midst, they hovered over and waited on him while he told of how for forty-eight hours he had ridden night and day to reach there in time. “Father is on the way,” he went on, while Sallie Tom held out “jis a little drap of suppin warm

“Bobbie.”

for him.” “I left him down by the old mill. He and Peter Black stopped for a few minutes to attend to something. It was after I left father that I met this gentleman,” and he nodded toward the Lieutenant, “and it’s lucky we’re both not out on the road. Both fired and missed, and something made me ask where he was going and who he was (Bobbie’s voice got a little husky), and I thought I’d better not fire again. And now when father comes you will marry me, Dorothy?” He asked the question before them all, looking steadfastly in her face, while he took the license out of his pocket and laid it on the table. “It came near being burnt up once,” he said, laughing. “It was a close call, but I told you this would save me,” and he held up the little Testament, which was deeply dented in the middle. “The ball glanced off, and I wasn’t hurt. Now, mother, what are you crying for?”

When the big master came Sallie Tom got to work. The Rev. Dr. Miles couldn’t stay all night, but not until Christmas-Day would they

“Bobbie.”

be married. When the clock struck twelve the ceremony would take place, and poor Uncle Lias couldn't make the fires quick enough in the big parlors, and Peter Black was called here and there, just as he had been a year ago.

“Bobbie must wear his uniform,” Dorothy said. She could marry him in nothing whose decorations would make her half so proud as would the torn and battered, the faded and worn old suit which told of honorable service. She whispered something to Bobbie, and the latter sprang to his feet. Anne and the Lieutenant were freezing away off in one of the big window seats, unconscious that they were cold, and evidently in a hot discussion. Bobbie walked over and saluted. “I believe you are to be Dorothy's bridesmaid, Anne,” he said, looking at her provokingly and in a way she didn't understand.

“Of course I am,” she answered, slipping off the seat, “and I've got to wear just what I have on. To my dying day it will be a mortification.

“Bobbie.”

It's the only decent gown I've got, and all on account of *this* man and his friends,” and she turned with a merry laugh to the Lieutenant, now standing and slightly leaning against the window.

“I have come to ask him a favor,” answered Bobbie, turning toward him also. “Will you do me the honor to be my best man, Lieutenant Hardwicke?” and he held out his hand to the man in blue.

The other grasped it warmly. “Tell them who I am, for God's sake, Bobbie. I am proud to be a ‘Yankee soldier,’ as she calls me, but tell them who else I am.” Anne had dropped into a chair, and Bobbie laughed at her look of blank astonishment.

“This is Dick Hardwicke, of Boston, Anne. He graduated two terms before I, and though he was older and we were not in the same classes, we were always good friends while at college.”

“Bobbie.”

“And did you come to search for your college friend as you would for a thief?” she cried, her voice ringing with unutterable scorn, as she rose to her feet.

“Not a bit of it,” he answered, fearlessly. “In open fight we would have had to take the chances of this beastly war, but that the Robert F. Taylor, as our order read, was our Bobbie Tayloe, I no more suspected than you did my identity. Do you believe me?” She looked at him a moment searchingly.

“Yes,” she answered, after a long pause. “I hate to do it—but I’m bound to.”

* * * * *

It was just after the clock struck the birth of another Christmas-Day that Bobbie led his bride into the beautiful parlors, and while they plighted their troth with only those around who knew and loved them most, Uncle Lias outside the door played softly on his old violin the sweet old Christmas carol of “Peace on Earth—Good

“Bobbie.”

Will to Men,” and after it was over the Blue and the Grey shook hands together, to the intense and unqualified disgust of loyal old Sallie Tom.





Uncle Lias outside the door played softly on his old violin.

(See page 133)





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