The VALIANTS of VIRGINIA

By HALLIE ERMINIE RIVES (MRS. POST WHEELER)

ILLUSTRATED BY LAUREN STOUT

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The major blinked, suddenly startled. It was out, the one name neither had spoken to the other for thirty years! He looked at her a little guiltily; but her eyes had turned away. "Everything changed then," she continued dreamily, "everything."

The major's fingers strayed across his waistcoat, fumbling uncertainly for his eye-glasses. For an instant he, too, was back in the long-ago past, when he and Valiant had been comrades. It had been a curious three sided affair—he, and Valiant and Sassoon. Sassoon with his dissipated flair and ungovernable temper and strange fits of recklessness; clean, high-idealed, straight-away Valiant; and he—a Bristow, neither better nor worse than the rest of his name. He remembered that mad strained season when he had grimly recognized his own cause as hopeless, and with burning eyes had watched Sassoon and Valiant racing abreast. He remembered that glittering prodigal dance when he had come upon Valiant and Judith standing in the shrubbery, the candle-light from some open door engoldening their faces: hers smiling, a little flippant perhaps, and conscious of her spell; his grave and earnest, yet wistful.

"You promise, John?"

"I give my sacred word. Whatever the provocation, I will not lift my hand against him. Never, never!" Then the same voice, vibrant, appealing. "Judith! It isn't because—because—you care for him?"

He had plunged away in the darkness before her answer came. What had it mattered then to him what she had replied? And that very night had befallen the fatal quarrel!

The major started. How that name had blown away the dust! "That's a long time ago, Judith."

"Thirty years ago tomorrow they fought," she said softly, "Valiant and Sassoon. Evey woman has her one anniversary, I suppose, and tomorrow's mine. Do you know what I do, every fourteenth of May, Monty? I keep my room and spend the day always the same way. There's a little book I read. And there's an old haircloth trunk that I've had since I was a girl. Down in the bottom of it are some—things, that I take out and set round the room * * * and there is a handful of old letters I go over from first to last. They're almost worn out now, but I could repeat them all with my eyes shut. Then there's a tiny old straw basket with a yellow wisp in it that once was a bunch of cape jessamines. I wore them to that last ball—the night before it happened. The fourteenth of May used to be sad, but now, do you know, I look forward to it! I always have a lot of jessamines that particular day—I'll have Shirley get me some tomorrow—and in the evening, when I go downstairs, the house is full of the scent of them. All summer long it's roses, but on the fourteenth of May it has to be jessamines. Shirley must think me a whimsical old woman, but I insist on being humored."

He smiled, a little bleakly, and cleared his throat.

"Isn't it strange for me to be talking this way now!" she said presently. "Another proof that I'm getting old. But the date brings it very close; it seems, somehow, closer than ever this year.—Monty, weren't you tremendously surprised when I married Tom Dandridge?"

"I certainly was."

"I'll tell you a secret. I was, too. I suppose I did it because of a sneaking feeling that some people were feeling sorry for me, which I never could stand. Well, he was a man any one might honor. I've always thought a woman ought to have two husbands: one to love and cherish, and the other to honor and obey. I had the latter, at any rate."

"And you've lived, Judith," he said.

"Yes," she agreed, with a little sigh, "I've lived. I've had Shirley, and she's twenty and adorable. And I've had people enough, and books to read, and plenty of pretty things to look at, and old lace to wear, and I've kept my figure and my vanity—I'm not too old yet to thank the Lord for that! So don't talk to me about worsted shawls and horrible arctics. For I won't wear 'em. Not if I know myself! Here comes Shirley. She's made two juleps, and if you're a gentleman, you'll distract her attention till I've got rid of mine in my usual way."

* * * * * * * *

The major, at the foot of the cherry-bordered lane, looked back across the box-hedge to where the two figures sat under the rose-arbor, the mother's face turned lovingly down to Shirley's at her knee. He stood a moment watching them from under his slouched hat-brim.

"You never looked at me that way, Judith, did you!" he sighed to himself. "It's been a long time, too, since I began to want you to—'most forty years. When it came to the showdown, I wasn't even as fit as Tom Dandridge!"

CHAPTER IX.

Damory Court.

"Dar's Dam'ry Co'ot smack-dab ahaid, suh."

John Valiant looked up. Facing them at an elbow of the broad road, was an old gateway of time-nicked stone, clasping an iron gate that was quaint and heavy and red with rust. He put out his hand.

"Wait a moment," he said in a low voice, and as the creaking conveyance stopped, he turned and looked about him.

Facing the entrance the land fell away sharply to a miniature valley through which rambled a willow-bordered brook, in whose shallows short-horned cows stood lazily. Beyond, whither wound the Red Road, he could see a drowsy village, with a spire and a cupolaed court-house; and farther yet a yellow gorge with a wisp of white smoke curling above it marked the course of a crawling far-away railway.

"Et's er moughty fine ol' place, suh, mid dat big revenue ob trees," said Uncle Jefferson. "But Ah reck'n et ain' got none ob de modern conniv-ances."

As Valiant jumped down he was possessed by an odd sensation of old acquaintance—as if he had seen those tall white columns before—an illusory half-vision into some shadowy, fourth-dimensional landscape that belonged to his subconscious self, or that, glimpsed in some immaterial dream-picture, had left a faint-etched memory. Then, on a sudden, the vista vibrated and widened, the white columns expanded and shot up into the clouds, and from every bush seemed to peer a friendly black savage with woolly white hair!

"Wishing-House!" he whispered. The hidden country which his father's thoughts, sadly recurring, had painted to the little child that once he was, in the guise of an endless wonder-tale! His eyes misted over, and it seemed to him that moment that his father was very near.

Leaving the negro to unload his belongings, he traversed an overgrown path of mossed gravel, between box rows frowsled like the manes of lions gone mad and smothered in an accumulation of matted roots and debris of rotting foliage, and presently, the bulldog at his heels, found himself in the rear of the house.

"Mine!" he said aloud with a rueful pride. "And for general run-downness, it's up to the advertisement." He looked musingly at the piteous wreck and ruin, his gaze sweeping down across the bared fields and unkempt forest. "Mine!" he repeated. "All that, I suppose, for it has the same earmarks of neglect. Between those cultivated stretches it looks like a wedge of Sahara gone astray." His gaze returned to the house. "Yet what a place it must have been in its time!" He went slowly back to where his conductor sat on the lichened horse-block.

"We's heah," called Uncle Jefferson cheerfully. "Whut we gwinter do nex', suh? Reck'n Ah better go ovah ter Miss Dandridge's place fer er crowbah. Lawd!" he added, "ef he ain' got de key! Whut yo' think ob dat now?"

John Valiant was looking closely at the big key; for there were words, which he had not noted before engraved in the massive flange. "Friends all hours." He smiled. The sentiment sent a warm current of pleasure to his finger-tips. Here was the very text of hospitality!

A Lilliputian spider-web was stretched over the preempted keyhole, and he fetched a grass-stem and poked out its tiny gray-striped denizen before he inserted the key in the rusted lock. He turned it with a curious sense of timidity. All the strength of his fingers was necessary before the massive door swung open and the leveling sun sent its late red rays into the gloomy interior.

He stood in a spacious hall, his nostrils filled with a curious but not unpleasant aromatic odor with which the place was strongly impregnated. The hall ran the full length of the building, and in its center a wide, balustraded double staircase led to upper darkness. The floor, where his footprints had disturbed the even gray film of dust, was of fine close parquetry and had been generously strewn everywhere with a mica-like powder. He stooped and took up a pinch in his fingers, noting that it gave forth the curious spicy scent. Dim paintings in tarnished frames hung on the walls. From a niche on the break of the stairway looked down the face of a tall Dutch clock, and on one side protruded a huge bulging something draped with a yellowed linen sheet. From its shape he guessed this to be an elk's head. Dust, undisturbed, lay thickly on everything, ghostly floating cobwebs crawled across his face, and a bat flitted out of a fireplace and vanished squeaking over his head. With Uncle Jefferson's help he opened the rear doors and windows, knocked up the rusted bolts of the shutters and flung them wide.

But for the dust and cobwebs and the strange odor, mingled with the faint musty smell that pervades a sun-



He Inserted the Key in the Rusted Lock.

less interior, the former owner of the house might have deserted it a week ago. On a wall-rack lay two walking-sticks and a gold mounted hunting-crop, and on a great carved chest below it had been flung an opened book bound in tooled leather. John Valiant picked this up curiously. It was "Lucile." He noted that here and there passages were marked with pencilled lines—some light and femininely delicate, some heavier, as though two had been reading it together, noting their individual preferences.

He laid it back musingly, and opening a door, entered the large room it disclosed. This had been the dining-room. At one end stood a crystal-knobbed mahogany sideboard, holding glass candlesticks in the shape of Ionic columns—above it a quaint portrait of a lady in hoops and love-curls—and at the other end was a huge fireplace with rust-red fire-dogs and tarnished brass fender. All these, with the round centipede table and the Chippendale chairs set in order against the walls, were dimmed and grayed with a thick powdering of dust.

The next room that he entered was big and wide, a place of dark colors, nobly smutched of time. It had been at once library and living-room. A great leather settee was drawn near the desk and beside this stood a reading-stand with a small china dog and a squat bronze lamp upon it. In contrast to the orderly dining-room there was about this chamber a sense of untouched disorder—a desk-drawer jerked half-open, a yellowed newspaper torn across and flung into a corner, books tossed on desk and lounge, and in the fireplace a little heap of whitened ashes in which charred fragments told of letters and papers burned in haste.

Suddenly he lifted his eyes. Above the desk hung a life-size portrait of a man, in the high soft stock and velvet collar of half a century before. The right eye, strangely, had been cut from the canvas. He stood straight and tall, one hand holding an eager hound in leash, his face proud and florid, his single, cold, steel-blue eye staring down through its dusty curtain with a certain malicious arrogance, and his lips set in a sardonic curve that seemed about to sneer. It was for an instant as if the pictured figure confronted the young man who stood there, mutely challenging his entrance into that tomb-like and secret-keeping quiet; and he gazed back as fixedly, repelled by the craft of the face, yet subtly attracted. "I wonder who you were," he said. "You were cruel. Perhaps you were wicked. But you were strong, too."

He returned to the outer hall to find that the negro had carried in his trunk, and he bade him place it, with the portmanteau, in the room he had just left. Dusk was falling.

"Uncle Jefferson," said Valiant abruptly, "have you a family?"

"No, suh. Jes' me en mah ol' 'ooman."

"Can she cook?"

"Cook!" The genial titter again captured his dusky escort. "When she got de fixens, Ah reck'n she de beaten'es cook in his heah county."

"How would you both like to live here with me for a while? She could cook and you could take care of me."

Uncle Jefferson's eyes seemed to turn inward with mingled surprise and introspection. He shifted from one foot to the other, swallowed difficultly several times, and said, "Ah ain' nebbah seed yo' befo', suh."

"Well, I haven't seen you either, have I?"

"Dat's de trufe, suh, 'deed et is! Hyuh, hyuh! Whut Ah means ter say is dat de ol' 'ooman kain' cook no fancy didoes like what dey eats up Norf. She kin jes' cook de Ferginey style."

"That sounds good to me," quoth Valiant. "I'll risk it. Now as to wages—"

"Ah ain' specticulous as ter de wages," said Uncle Jefferson. "Ah knows er gemman when Ah sees one."

"Then it's a bargain," responded Valiant with alacrity. "Can you come at once?"

"Yas, suh, me en Daph gwineter come ovah fus' thing in de mawnin'. Whut yo'-all gwineter do fo' yo' supbah?"

"I'll get along," Valiant assured him cheerfully. "Here is five dollars. You can buy some food and things to cook with, and bring them with you. Do you think there's a stove in the kitchen?"

"Ah reck'n," replied Uncle Jefferson. "En ef dar ain' Daph kin cook er Chris'mus dinnah wid fo' stones en er tin skillet. Yas, suh!"

He trudged away into the shadows, but presently as the new master of Damory Court stood in the gloomy hall, he heard the shambling step again behind him. "Ah done neglectuated ter ax yo' name, suh. Ah did, fo' er fac'."

"My name is Valiant. John Valiant."

Uncle Jefferson's eyes turned upward and rolled out of orbit. "Mah Lawd!" he ejaculated soundlessly. And with his wide lips still framed about the last word, he backed out of the doorway and disappeared.

Alone in the ebbing twilight, John Valiant found his hamper, spread a napkin on the broad stone steps and took out a glass, a spoon and part of a loaf of bread. The thermos flask was filled with milk. It was not a splendid banquet, yet he ate it with a great content as the bulldog at his feet gnawed his share of the crust. He broke his bread into the milk as he had not done since he was a child, and ate the luscious pulp with a keen relish bred of the long outdoor day.

It was almost dark when the meal was done and, depleted hamper in hand, he reentered the empty echoing house. He went into the library, lighted the great brass lamp from the motor and began to rummage. The drawers of the dining-room sideboard yielded nothing; on a shelf of the butler's pantry, however, was a tin box which proved to be half full of wax candles, perfectly preserved.

"The very thing!" he said triumphantly. Carrying them back, he fixed several in the glass-candlesticks and set them, lighted, all about the somber room till the soft glow flooded its every corner. "There," he said, "that is as it should be. No big blatant search-light here! And no glare of modern electricity would suit that old wainscoting, either.

He dragged the leather settee to the porch and by the light of the motor-lamp dusted it thoroughly, and wheeling it back, set it under the portrait which had so attracted him. He washed the glass from which he had dined and filled it at the cup of the garden fountain, put into it the rose from his hat and set it on the reading-stand. The small china dog caught his eye and he picked it up casually. The head came off in his hands. It had been a bon-bon box and was empty save for a narrow strip of yellowed paper, on which were written some meaningless figures: 17-28-94-0. He pondered this a moment, then thrust it into one of the empty pigeonholes of the desk. On the latter stood an old-fashioned leaf-calendar; the date it exposed was May 14th. Curiously enough the same date would recur tomorrow. The page bore a quotation: "Every man carries his fate on a riband about his neck." The line had been quoted in his father's letter. May 14th—how much that date and that motto may have meant for him!

He rose to push the shutter wider and in the movement his elbow sent a



He Shuddered as He Stooped to Pick Up the Weapon.

shallow case of morocco leather that had lain on the desk crashing to the floor. It opened and a heavy metallic object rolled almost to his feet. He saw at a glance that it was an old-fashioned rusted dueling-pistol.

The box had originally held two pistols. He shuddered as he stooped to pick up the weapon, and with the crawling repugnance mingled a panging anger and humiliation. From his very babyhood it had always been so—that unconquerable aversion to the touch of firearm. There had been moments in his youth when this unreasoning shrinking had filled him with a blind fury, had driven him to strange self-tests of courage. He had never been able to overcome it. Analyzation had told him that his peculiar abhorrence was no mere outgrowth of this. It lay far deeper. He had rarely, of recent years, met the test. Now, as he stood in these unaccustomed surroundings, with the cold touch of the metal the old shuddering held him, and the sweat broke in beads on his forehead. Setting his teeth hard, he crossed the room, slipped the box with its pistol between the volumes of the bookcase, and returned to his seat.

The bulldog, aroused from a nap, thrust a warm muzzle between his knees. "It's uncanny, Chum!" he said, as his hand caressed the velvety head. "Why should the touch of that fool thing chill my spine and make my flesh tiptoe over my bones? Why should I hate a pistol? Do you suppose I was shot in one of my previous existences?"

For a long while he sat there, his pipe dead, his eyes on the moon-lighted out-of-doors. The eery feeling that had gripped him had gone as quickly as it had come. At last he rose, stretching himself with a great boyish yawn, put out all save one of the candles and taking a bath-robe, sandals and a huge fuzzy towel from the steamer-trunk, stripped leisurely. He donned the bath-robe and sandals and went out through the window to the garden and down to where lay the little lake ruffling silverly under the moon. On its brink he stopped, and tossing back his head, tried to imitate one of the bird-calls but was unsuccessful. With a rueful laugh he threw off the bath-robe and stood an instant glistening, poised in the moonlight like a marble faun, before he dove, straight down out of sight.

Five minutes later he pulled himself up over the edge, his flesh tingling with the chill of the water, and threw the robe about his cool white shoulders. Then he thrust his feet into his sandals and sped quickly back. He rubbed himself to a glow, and blowing out the remaining candle, stretched himself luxuriously between the warm blankets on the couch. The dog sniffed inquiringly at his hand, then leaped up and snuggled down close to his feet.

John Valiant's thoughts had fled a thousand miles away, to the tall girl who all his life had seemed to stand out from his world, aloof and unsurpassed—Katharine Fargo. He tried to picture her, a perfect chatelaine, graceful and gracious as a tall, white, splendid lily, in this dead house that seemed still to throb with living passions. But the picture subtly eluded him and he stirred uneasily under the blanket.

After a time his hands stretched out to the reading-stand and drew the glass with its vivid blossom nearer, till, in his nostrils, its musky odor mingled with the dew-wet scent of the honeysuckle from the garden. At last his eyes closed. "Every man carries his fate * * * on a riband about his neck," he muttered drowsily, and then, "Roses * * * red roses * * * "

And so he fell asleep.

CHAPTER X.

The Hunt.

He awoke to a musical twittering and chirping, to find the sun pouring into the dusty room in a very glory. He rolled from the blanket and stood upright, filling his lungs with a long deep breath of satisfaction. He felt singularly light-hearted and alive. The bulldog came bounding through the window, dirty from the weeds, and flung himself upon his master in a canine rapture.

"Get out!" quoth the latter, laughing. "Stop licking my feet! How the dickens do you suppose I'm to get into my clothes with your ridiculous antics going on? Down, I say! Hark!" He broke off and listened. "Who's that singing?"

The sound drew nearer—a lugubrious chant, with the weirdest minor reflections, faintly suggestive of the rag-time ditties of the music-halls, yet with a plaintive cadence.

"Good morning, Uncle Jefferson."

The singer broke off, set down the twig-broom that he had been wielding and came toward him. "Mawnin', suh. Mawnin'," he said. "Hopes yo'-all slep' good. Ah reck'n dem ar birds woke yo' up; dey's makin' seh er 'miration."

"Thank you. Never slept better in my life. Am I laboring under a delusion when I imagine I smell coffee?"

Just then there came a voice from the open door of the kitchen: "Calls yo'se'f er man, yo' triflin' reconstructed niggah! W'en marstah gwineter git he brekfus' wid' yo' ramshacklin' eroun' wid dat dawg all his Gawd's-blessid mawnin'? Go fotch some mo' fiah-wood dis minute. Yo' heah?"

A turbaned head poked itself through the door, with a good-natured leaf-brown face beneath it, which broadened into a wide smile as its owner bobbed energetically at Valiant's greeting. "Fo' de Lawd!" she exclaimed, wiping floury hands on a gingham apron. "Yo' sho' is up early, but Ah got yo' brekfus' ready, suh."

"All right, Aunt Daphne. I'll be back directly."

He sped down to the lake to plunge his head into the cool water and thereby sharpen the edge of an appetite that needed no honing.

He came up the trail again to find the reading-stand transferred to the porch and laid with a white cloth on which was set a steaming coffee-pot, with fresh cream, saltless butter and crisp hot biscuit; and as he sat down, with a sigh of pure delight, in his dressing-gown — a crepy Japanese thing redeemed from womanishness by the bold green bamboo of its design—Uncle Jefferson planted before him a generous platter of bacon, eggs and potatoes. These he attacked with a surprising keenness. As he buttered his fifth biscuit he looked at the dog, rolling on his back in morning ecstasy, with a look of humorous surprise.

"Chum," he said, "what do you think of that? All my life a single roll and a cup of coffee have been the most I could ever negotiate for breakfast, and then it was apt to taste like chips and whet-stones. And now look at this plate!" The dog ceased winnowing his ear with a hind foot and looked back at his master with much the same expression. Clearly his own needs had not been forgotten.

"Reck'n Ah bettah go ter git dat ar machine thing," said Uncle Jefferson behind him. "Ol' 'ooman, heah, she 'low ter fix up de kitchen dis mawnin' en we begin on de house dis evenin'."

"Right-o," said Valiant. "It's all uphill, so the motor won't run away with you. Aunt Daphne, can you get some help with the cleaning?"

"He'p?" that worthy responded with fine scorn. "No, suh. Moughty few, in de town 'cep'n low-down yaller new-issue trash det ain' wu'f killin'! Ah gwineter go fo' dat house mahse'f 'fo' long, hammah en tongs, en git it fix' up!"

"Splendid! My destiny is in your hands. You might take the dog with you, Uncle Jefferson; the run will do him good."

When the latter had disappeared and truculent sounds from the kitchen indicated that the era of strenuous cleaning had begun, he reentered the library, changed the water in the rose-glass and set it on the edge of the shady front porch, where its flaunting blossom made a dash of bright crimson against the grayed weather-beaten brick. This done, he opened the one large room on the ground-floor that he had not visited.

It was double the size of the library, a parlor hung in striped yellow silk vaguely and tenderly faded, with a tall plate mirror set over a marble-topped console at either side. In one corner stood a grand piano of Circassian walnut with keys of tinted mother-of-pearl and a slender music-rack inlaid with morning-glories in the same material. From the center of the ceiling, above an oval table, depended a great chandelier hung with glass prisms. The chairs and sofas were covered with dusty slip-covers of muslin. He lifted one of these. The tarnished gold furniture was Louis XV, the upholstery of yellow brocade with a pattern of pink roses. Two Japanese hawthorn vases sat on teak-wood stands and a corner held a glass cabinet containing a collection of small ivories and faience.

He went thoughtfully back to the great hall, where sat the big chest on which lay the volume of "Lucile." He pushed down the antique wrought-iron hasp and threw up the lid. It was filled to the brim with textures: heavy portieres of rose-damask, table covers of faded soft-toned tapestry, window-hangings of dull green—all with tobacco-leaves laid between the folds and sifted thickly over with the sparkling white powder. At the bottom, rolled in tarry-smelling paper, he found a half-dozen thin, Persian prayer-rugs.

"Phew!" he whistled. "I certainly ought to be grateful to that law firm that 'inspected' the place. Think of the things lying here all these years! And that powder everywhere! It's done the work, too, for there's not a sign of moth. If I'm not careful, I'll stumble over the family plate—it seems to be about the only thing wanting."

He thought a moment, then went quickly into the library and began to ransack the trunk. At length he found a small box containing keepsakes of various kinds. He poured the medley on to the table—an uncut moonstone, an amethyst-topped pencil that one of his tutors had given him as a boy, a tiger's claw, a compass and what-not. Among them was a man's seal-ring with a crest cut in a cornelian. He looked at it closely. It was the same device.

The ring had been his father's. Just when or how it had come into his possession he could never remember. It had lain among these keepsakes so many years that he had almost forgotten its existence. He had never worn a ring, but now, as he went back to the hall, he slipped it on his finger. The motto below the crest was worn away, but it showed clear in the marble of the hall-mantle: I clinge.

His eyes turned from the carven words and strayed to the pleasant sunny foliage outside. An arrogant boast, perhaps, yet in the event well justified. Valiants had held that selfsame slope when the encircling forests had rung with war-whoop and blazed with torture-fire. They had held on through Revolution and Civil War. Good and bad, abiding and lawless, every generation had cleaved stubbornly to its acres. I clinge. His father had clung through absence that seemed to have been almost exile, and now he, the last Valiant, has come to make good the boast.

His gaze wavered. The tail of his eye had caught through the window a spurt of something dashing and vivid, that grazed the corner of a far-off field. He craned his neck, but it had passed the line of his vision. The next moment, however, there came trailing on the satiny stillness the high-keyed ululation of a horn, and an instant later a long-drawn hallo-o-o! mixed with a pattering chorus of yelps.

He went close, and leaning from the sill, shaded his eyes with his hand. The noise swelled and rounded in volume; it was nearing rapidly. As he looked the hunt dashed into full view between the tree-boles—a galloping melee of khaki and scarlet, swarming across the fresh green of a wheat-field, behind a spotted swirl of hounds.

"Confound it!" said John Valiant belligerently; "they're on my land!"

They were near enough now for him to hear the voices of the men, calling encouragement to the dogs, and to see the white ribbons of foam across the flanks of the laboring horses. One scarlet-coated feminine rider, detached from the bunch, had spurred in advance and was leading by a clean hundred yards, bareheaded, her hat fallen back to the limit of its ribbon knotted under her chin, and her waving hair gleaming like tarnished gold.

"How she rides!" muttered the solitary watcher. "Cross-saddle, of course,—the sensible little sport! She'll never in the world do that wall!—Yes, by George!" John Valiant's admiration turned to delight. "Why," he said, "it's the Lady-of-the-Roses!"

He put his hands on the sill and vaulted to the porch.

CHAPTER XI.

Sanctuary.

The tawny scudding streak that led that long chase had shot into the yard,



He Craned His Neck, but It Had Passed the Line of His Vision.

turning for a last desperate double. It saw the man in the foreground and its bounding, agonized little wild heart that so prayed for life gave way. With a final effort, it gained the porch and crouched down in its corner, an abject, sweated, hunted morsel, at hopeless bay.

Like a flash, Valiant stooped, caught the shivering thing by the scruff, and as its snapping jaws grazed his thumb, dropped it through the open window behind him: "Sanctuary!" quoth he, and banged the shutter to.

At the same instant, as the place overflowed with a pandemonium of nosing leaping hounds, he saw the golden chestnut reined sharply down among the ragged box-rows, with a shamefaced though brazen knowledge that the girl who rode it had seen.

She sat moveless, her head high, one hand on the hunter's foam-flecked neck, and their glances met like crossed swords. The look stirred something vague and deep within him. For an unforgettable instant their eyes held each other, in a gaze rigid, challenging, almost defiant; then it broke and she turned to the rest of the party spurring in a galloping zig-zag: a genial-faced man of middle age in khaki who sat his horse like a cavalryman, a younger one with a reckless dark face and straight black hair, and following these a half-dozen youthful riders of both sexes, one of the lads heavily plastered with mud from a wet cropper, and the girls chiefly gasps and giggles.

The elder of the two men pulled up beside the leader, his astonished eyes sweeping the house-front, with its open blinds, the wisp of smoke curling from the kitchen chimney. He said something to her, and she nodded. The younger man, meanwhile, had flung himself from his horse, a wild-eyed roan, and with his arm thrust through its bridle, strode forward among the welter of hounds, where they scurried at fault, hither and thither, yelping and eager.

"What rotten luck!" he exclaimed. "Gone to ground after twelve miles! After him, Tawny! You mongrels! Do you imagine he's up a tree? After him, Bulger! Bring him here!"

(Continued next week)

It is believed that Madame Caillaux will be imprisoned for several days for the offence of shooting a Parisian editor.

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"The Locusts"

Fine Farm Situated in Freedom District For Sale.

I will sell privately the fine farm known as "The Locusts" owned by Mrs. A. P. Gordon-Cumming and containing about 208 acres. The Mansion House was burned this spring, the other improvements consist of tenant house, the servant house, shop, two barns, wagon shed, barrack, and all other necessary outbuildings. About 70 acres of it is meadow land. Water is pumped by gasoline engine to the buildings. Plenty of fruit, shrubbery &c. It is located about a mile from the new State Road and about four miles from Sykesville. Possession can be given at once.

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Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

No one should hire a dress suit to attend the Wilson-McAdoo wedding until it is certain that that event occurs in the evening.

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