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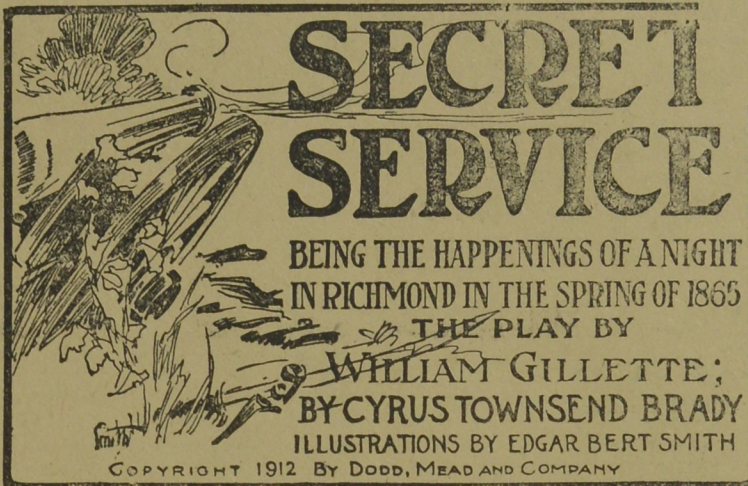
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IN RICHMOND IN THE SPRING OF 1865

THE PLAY BY

WILLIAM GILLETTE;

BY CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY

ILLUSTRATIONS BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Mrs. Varney, wife of a Confederate general, has lost one son and has another dying from wounds. She reluctantly gives her consent for Wilfred, the youngest, to join the army if his father consents. The federals are making their last assault in an effort to capture Richmond.

CHAPTER II—Edith Varney secures from President Davis a commission for Capt. Thorne, who is just recovering from wounds, as chief of the telegraph at Richmond.

CHAPTER III—Capt. Thorne tells Edith he has been ordered away. She declares he must not go and tells him of the commission from the president. He is strangely agitated and declares he cannot accept.

CHAPTER IV—Thorne decides to escape while Edith leaves the room to get the commission, but is prevented by the arrival of Caroline Milford, Wilfred's sweetheart.

CHAPTER V—Mr. Arrelsford of the Confederate secret service, a rejected suitor of Edith's, detects Jonas, Mrs. Varney's butler, carrying a note from a prisoner in Libby prison. Arrelsford suspects it is intended for Thorne. The note reads: "Attack tonight. Plan 3. Use Telegraph."

CHAPTER VI—Edith is indignant when Arrelsford tells her of his suspicions regarding Thorne. He declares the latter is Lewis Dumont of the Federal secret service and that his brother Henry is a prisoner in Libby. Edith refuses to believe and suggests that Thorne be confronted with the prisoner as a test.

CHAPTER VII—Edith detains Thorne while the prisoner is sent for. An order comes from General Varney for Wilfred to report to the front at once.

CHAPTER VIII—Edith is forced to carry out her part in the test of Thorne. She gives him the message taken from Jonas, which he reads without betraying himself. He suspects that he is being watched.

CHAPTER IX—The prisoner is thrust into the room alone with Thorne, who recognizes him as his elder brother, Henry Dumont. They put up a fake fight. Henry implores his brother to shoot him in the leg. Thorne refuses and Henry accidentally kills himself. Arrelsford rushes into the room with the guard. Thorne nonchalantly says: "Corporal here is your prisoner, we had a fight and I shot him."

CHAPTER X—Caroline goes to the war department telegraph office to send a message.

CHAPTER XI—Arrelsford refuses to let Caroline's message go through. It is a telegram to Wilfred simply asking forgiveness, but Arrelsford suspects a double meaning. He and Edith secretly themselves to watch Thorne, whose arrival Arrelsford expects.

CHAPTER XII—Thorne takes charge of the telegraph office and after satisfying himself that he is alone attempts to send a message. Arrelsford protests the arrival of a messenger from the secretary of war with a dispatch.

CHAPTER XIII—Arrelsford and Edith see Thorne after the secretary's dispatch. Thorne is shot in the wrist by Arrelsford when he attempts to send it. Arrelsford calls the guard, and when they appear Thorne turns the tables by ordering the arrest of Arrelsford.

CHAPTER XIV—The removal of Arrelsford is stopped by the arrival of General Randolph. Thorne again begins sending the dispatch. Arrelsford protests, declaring Thorne is sending a forced order to weaken the lines of defense. Randolph demands upon what authority Thorne has assumed command of the telegraph office. Miss Varney appears.

CHAPTER XV—She produces Thorne's commission as major in command of the government telegraph. She having seen enough to convince her he is a spy, she him not to send the forced order. After she leaves he tears it up.

CHAPTER XVI—Thorne plans to escape from Richmond.

CHAPTER XVII—Arrelsford calls at the Varney home and demands to see Mrs. Varney. She refuses to see him with an order to search the house for Thorne. Wilfred Varney returns from the front wounded.

(Continue.)

"But there are other charges upon which he could be tried," persisted Arrelsford. "He is a spy anyway, and—"

"I believe I gave you your orders, Mr. Arrelsford," interrupted the general, with suspicious politeness.

"But hadn't I better wait and see—"

"By God, sir," thundered Randolph, "do I have to explain my orders to the whole secret service of the Confederacy? Don't wait to see anything. Go at once, or I will have you escorted by a file of soldiers."

Arrelsford would have defied the general if there had been the least use in the world in doing it, but the game was clearly up for the present. He would try to arrange to have Thorne re-arrested and tried as a spy later. Now he could do nothing. He walked out of the room, pride enabling him to keep up a brave front, but with disappointment and resentment raging in his heart. He did not realize that his power over Thorne had been withdrawn. The great game that they had played, he had lost at all points. They all watched him go, not a single one in the room with sympathy, or even pity.

"Now, sergeant," said the general, as they heard the heavy hall door close; "I want to speak to the prisoner."

"Order arms!" cried the sergeant. "Parade rest!" As the squad assumed these positions in obedience to his commands, the sergeant continued, "Fall out, the prisoner."

Thorne stepped forward one pace from the ranks, and saluted the general. He kept his eyes fixed upon that

gentleman, and it was only the throbbing of his heart that made him aware that Edith Varney was by his side. She bent her head toward him; he felt her warm breath against his cheek as she whispered:

"Oh! Why didn't you tell me? I thought you sent it, I thought you—"

"Miss Varney!" exclaimed the general in surprise.

But Edith threw maidenly reserve to the winds. The suddenness of the revelation overwhelmed her.

"There is nothing against him, General Randolph, now; is there? He didn't send it. There's nothing to try him for!" she said.

General Randolph smiled grimly at her.

"You are very much mistaken, Miss Varney," he answered. "The fact of his being caught in our lines without his proper uniform is enough to hang him in ten minutes."

Edith caught her heart with her hand with a sharp exclamation, but General Randolph turned to speak to the prisoner.

"Captain Thorne," he said, "or Lewis Dumont, if that is your name; the president is fully informed regarding the circumstances of your case, and I needn't say that we look upon you as a cursed dangerous character. There isn't any doubt whatever that you ought to be shot right now, but, considering the damned peculiarity of your behavior, and that you refused to send out that dispatch when you might have done so, we've decided to keep you out of mischief some other way. You will be held a prisoner of war."

Captain Thorne was almost too dazed to realize the purport of the decree. He mechanically saluted, and from his lips broke a murmured:

"Thank you, sir."

The general looked at him severely, and then, seeing Edith Varney, turned away and engaged in conversation with his staff. His intention was obvious, and Edith immediately embraced the opportunity.

"Oh!" she said; "that isn't nearly so bad as death," and before them all she stretched out her hand to him.

"No?" queried Thorne in a low voice.

"No," she said, forcing herself to look at him. "After a while perhaps—some time—"

"Oh!" said Thorne. "Some time? If it's some time, that's enough."

Mrs. Varney, having succeeded in getting Howard quiet and composed had been in the room since the advent of General Randolph.

"Mamma," said Edith, "won't you speak to him, too?"

Mrs. Varney approached him, but Wilfred was quicker.

"I would like to shake hands with you," he said, with boyish enthusiasm.

As he said:

"What, again?" said Thorne, smiling. "Al right." He stretched out his hand. "Go ahead."

"And so would I," said Caroline, following the lead of her boy lover.

"Don't be afraid now," said Wilfred. "Everything will be all right. They will give you a parole, and—"

"A parole!" said Caroline. "Goodness gracious, they will give you hundreds of them, I am sure."

But General Randolph turned once more.

"One moment, please," said the officer. "As he came forward, the others fell back. Only Edith Varney kept her place close by Thorne's side."

"There is only one reason on earth why the president has set aside a certain verdict of death. You held up that false order and made a turn in our favor. You are not to be tried as a spy, but held as a prisoner of war. We expect you to make that turn complete and enter our service."

"Never!" replied Thorne instantly.

"That's impossible, sir."

"You can give us your answer later," said the general.

"You have it now."

"You will be kept in close confinement until you come to our terms," continued the officer.

"You make me a prisoner for life, then."

"You will see it in another light before many days, and it wouldn't surprise me if Miss Varney had something to do with a change in your views."

"You are mistaken, General Randolph," quickly interposed Edith. "I think he is perfectly right."

"Oh, very well," said the general, smiling a little. "We will see what a little prison life will do. Sergeant?"

"Yes, sir."

"I have turned the prisoner over to Major Whitfield. He requests you to take the prisoner to his office, where he'll take charge of him."

(To Be Continued.)

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