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BY CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY
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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 father, after 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 Mitford, 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 suspicion regarding Thorne. He declares the latter is Lewis Dumont of the "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.

about as intelligible to her as Sanskrit. The lieutenant humored her, and waited while Caroline turned toward the door and summoned Martha to her. She did not leave the room, however, for her way was barred by a young private in a gray uniform. The newcomer looked hastily at her and the old negro, stopped by them, and asked them very respectfully to wait a moment. He then approached Foray, who impatiently waited until he could send the message. He saluted him and handed him a written order, and then crossed to the other side of the room. A glance put Foray in possession of the contents of this order. He rose to his feet and approached Caroline still standing by the door.

"Miss Mitford," he said.

"Yes."

"I don't understand this, but here is an order that has just come from the secret service department directing me to hold up any dispatch you may try to send."

"Hold back my telegram?"

"Yes, Miss Mitford," and Foray looked very embarrassed as he stared again at the order and then from the young girl to the orderly, "and that isn't the worst of it."

"What else is there?" asked the girl, her eyes big with apprehension.

"Why, this man has orders to take back your message with him to the secret service office."

"Take back my message!" cried Caroline.

"There must be some mistake," answered Foray, "but that's what the order says."

"To whom does it say to take it back?" asked the girl, growing more and more indignant.

"To a Mr. Arrelsford."

"Do you mean to tell me that that order is for that man to take my dispatch back to Mr. Arrelsford?"

"Yes, Miss Mitford," returned Lieutenant Foray.

"And does it say anything in there about what I am going to do in the meantime?" asked the girl indignantly.

"Nothing."

"Well, that is too bad," returned Caroline ominously.

"I am sorry this has occurred, Miss Mitford," said the lieutenant earnestly, "but the orders are signed by the head of the secret service department, and you will see that I have no choice—"

"Don't worry about it, Lieutenant Foray," said Caroline calmly, "there is no need of your feeling sorry, because it hasn't occurred, beside that, it is not going to occur. When it does, you can go around being sorry all you like. Have you the faintest idea that I am going to let him take my telegram away with him and show it to the man? Do you suppose—"

She was too indignant to finish her

sentence and old Martha valiantly entered the fray.

"No, suh," she cried, in her deepest and most indignant voice. "You all ain't gwine to do it, you kin be right suah you ain't."

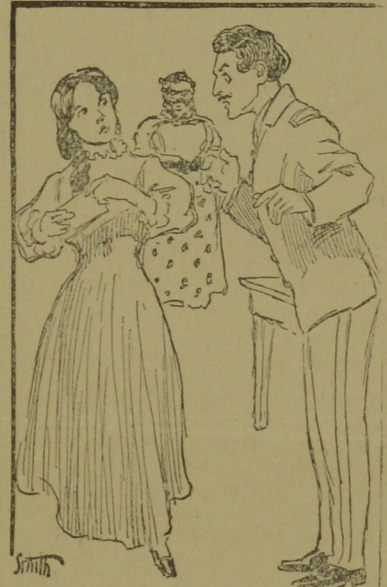
"But what can I do?" persisted Foray, greatly distressed.

"You can hand it back to me, that's what you can do."

"Yes, suh, dat's de vely best thing you kin do," said old Martha stoutly, "an' de soonah you do it de quickah it'll be done—Ah kin tell you dat right now, suh."

"But this man has come here with orders for me to—" began Foray, endeavoring to explain.

He realized that there was some mistake somewhere. The girl's message had nothing whatever to do with military matters, and he quite understood that she would not want this communication read by every Tom, Dick or Harry in the secret service department. Besides all this, as she stood before him, her face flushed with emotion, she was a sufficiently pleading figure to make him most willing to help her. In addition, the portly figure of old Martha, whose cheeks doubtless would have been flushed with the same feeling had



"I Didn't Tell You You Could Read It!"

they were not black, were more than disconcerting.

"This man," said Caroline, shaking her finger at helpless Private Eddinger, who also found his position most unpleasant, "can go straight back where he came from and report to Mr. Arrelsford that he could not carry out his orders. That's what he can do."

Martha, now thoroughly aroused to a sense of the role she was to play turned and confronted the abashed private.

"Jes' let him try to tek it. Let him tek it if he wants it so pow'ful bad. Jes' let de othah one dare gib it to him—an' den see him try an' git out thu dis yeah do' wid it! Ah wants to see him go by," she said. "Ah'm jes' waitin' fur de sight ob him gittin' pas' dis do'. Dat's what Ah's waitin' fo'. Ah'd lak to know wher dey s'pose it was Ah comed around yeah fo' anyway—dese men wid dese ordahs afussin' an'—"

"Miss Mitford," said Foray earnestly, "if I were to give this dispatch back to you it would get me in a heap of trouble."

"What kind of trouble?" asked Caroline dubiously.

"I might be put in prison, I might be shot."

"Do you mean that they would—"

"Sure to do one thing or another."

"Just for giving it back to me when it is my message?"

"Just for that."

"Then you will have to keep it, I suppose," said Caroline faltering.

"Thank you, Miss Mitford."

"Very well," said Caroline, "it is understood. You don't give it back to me, and you can't give it back to him, so nobody's disobeying any orders at all. And that's the way it stands. I reckon I can stay as long as he can. She stepped to a nearby chair and sat down. "I haven't very much to do and probably he has."

"But, Miss Mitford—" began Foray. "There isn't any good talking any longer. If you have got any telegraphing to do you had better do it. I won't disturb you. But don't you give it to him."

Foray stared at her helplessly. What might have resulted it is impossible to say, for there entered at that opportune moment Mr. Arrelsford himself, relieving Mr. Foray of the further conduct of the intricate case. His glance took in all the occupants of the room. It was to his own messenger that he first addressed himself.

"Eddinger."

(To Be Continued)

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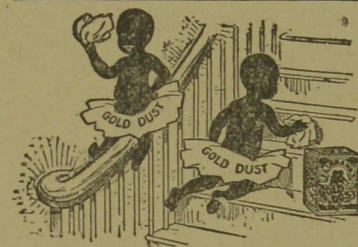
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