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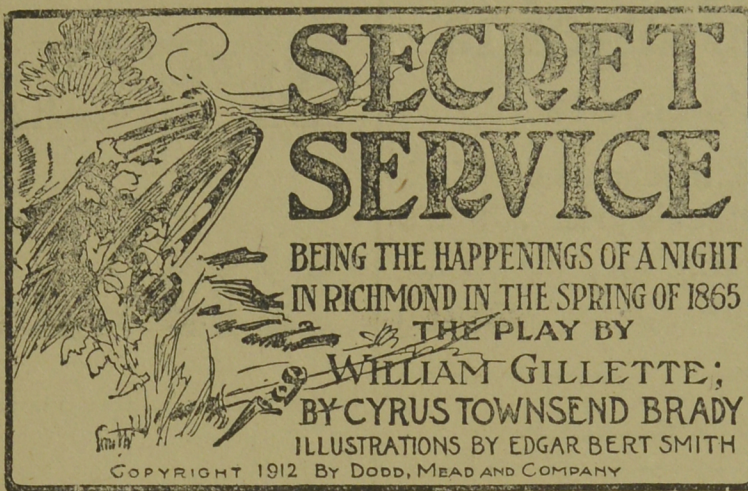
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### SYNOPSIS.

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 federal army 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 relative of Edith's, detects Jonas, Mrs. Varney's butler, carrying a note from a prisoner in Libby prison. Arrelsford suspects it is from 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: "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 gathering up himself that he is alone attempts to send a message, but is interrupted by the arrival of a messenger from the secretary of war with a dispatch.

CHAPTER XIII—Arrelsford and Edith see Thorne after the secret service dispatch. Thorne is also in the office by Arrelsford, then 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 attended by the arrival of General Randolph. Thorne again becomes superior the dispatch. Arrelsford protests declaring Thorne is sending a forged order to weaken the lines of defense. Randolph demands upon what authority Thorne has assumed command of the telegraph office. Miss Varney appears.

"Stop him!" exclaimed the general. "What do you mean?"

It was evident that the dispatch was not to go out then. Thorne had not succeeded in getting an answer to his signal. He left the key, rose and saluted.

"He means me, sir," he said. "He's got an idea some dispatch I'm sending out is a trick of the Yankees."

"It is a conspiracy!" cried Arrelsford. "He is an impostor!"

"Why, the man must have gone crazy, general," said Thorne coolly holding his position by the table and listening with all his ears for the return signal.

"I came here on a case for—" expostulated Arrelsford.

"Wait!" said General Randolph. "I will soon get at the bottom of this. What was he doing when you came in, sergeant?" he asked of the non-commissioned officer in charge of the guard.

"He was firing on the captain, sir," answered the sergeant saluting.

"He was sending out a false order to weaken our lines at Cemetery Hill and I—ah—Miss Varney, she was here. She saw it all," explained Arrelsford. "Miss Varney!" exclaimed the general.

"Yes, sir."

"The general's daughter?"

"Yes, sir."

"And what was she doing here?"

"She came to see for herself whether this man was guilty or not; whether he was a spy or a traitor."

"Is this some personal matter of yours, Mr. Arrelsford?" asked the general suspiciously.

"He was a visitor at her house and I wanted her to know."

"Where is she now? Where is Miss Varney?" asked Randolph impatiently.

"She must be out there on the balcony," answered Arrelsford. "I beg you to send for her, sir."

"Sergeant," said General Randolph, "step out on the balcony. Present my compliments to Miss Varney, and ask her to come in at once."

In a moment the sergeant returned. "There is no one there, sir," he replied saluting.

At that instant Thorne got the long desired signal. Without a moment's

hesitation, he turned to the key. He picked up the dispatch with his wounded left hand and with the other began to manipulate the sounder.

"She must be there," said Arrelsford, "or else she's stepped into the next room, the commissary general's office, the window was open, tell him to—ch!" as the sound of the clicking caught his ear, "Stop him. He is sending it now!"

Mr. Arrelsford's distress was so overwhelming and so genuine that something of the man's suspicion was communicated to the general.

"One moment, captain," he said.

Captain Thorne, of course, had no option but to release the key. He stopped sending and dropped the dispatch, saluting.

"Now, Mr. Arrelsford," said the general, "what have you to do with the military telegraph department?"

"This is a secret service case; they assigned it to me, sir."

"What is a secret service case?"

"The whole plot to send the order. It's the Yankee secret service. He is a member of it and his brother brought in the signal tonight."

"I beg your pardon, sir," said Thorne, "this dispatch ought to go out at once, sir. It came from the secretary of war and it is very urgent."

"Go ahead with it," said General Randolph.

Thorne needed no further permission than that, dropped to his seat, and once more seized the fatal key.

"No, no!" cried Arrelsford. "Don't let him—I tell you it's a—"

"Silence, sir," thundered Randolph.

"Do you know what he is telling them?" persisted Arrelsford.

"No, do you?"

"Yes," returned the secret service agent.

"Wait a moment, Captain Thorne," said the general, impressed in spite of himself by this man's earnestness, which made him disregard all orders, commands and everything else.

"Where is the dispatch?"

Captain Thorne picked up the paper and handed it to the general, and then stepped back. He had played his last card. He played it desperately, boldly and well.

"Well?" asked the general, looking from the dispatch to the accuser.

"What has he been telling them?"

"He began to give an order to withdraw Marston's division from its present position," said Arrelsford, making a brilliant and successful guess at the probable point of attack in "Plan 3."

"That is perfectly correct," said General Randolph, looking at the paper.

"Yes, by that dispatch, but that dispatch is a forgery. It is an order to withdraw a whole division from a vital point. A false order, he wrote it himself. This is the turning point of the whole plot."

"But why should he write it himself? If he wanted to send a false order, he could send it without putting it down on paper, couldn't he?"

"Yes," admitted Arrelsford, but he went on with great acuteness, "if any of the operators came back they would catch him doing it. With that order and the secretary's signature he could go right on. He could even order one of them to send it."

"And pray how did he get the secretary's signature to a forged telegram?" asked General Randolph.

"He tore it off a genuine dispatch. Why, general, look at that dispatch in your hand yourself. The secretary's signature is pasted on, I saw him do it."

"They often come that way, sir," said Thorne nonchalantly.

"He is a liar!" cried Arrelsford.

"They never do!"

Thorne stepped forward impulsively, his face flushed at the word "liar," but he controlled himself.

"General," he said, "if you have any doubt about that dispatch, send it back to the war department and have it verified."

It was a splendid, magnificent bluff. So overwhelming in its assurance that even Arrelsford himself was petrified with astonishment. He was morally certain that Thorne was a federal secret service agent and that the dispatch was a forgery, yet it would take but a few minutes to send it over to the secretary's office and convict him out of his own mouth. What could the man mean!

"That's a good idea," said General Randolph. He hesitated a moment and then turned to the guard. "Sergeant," he said, "take this dispatch over to the secretary's office and—"

At that moment, the key which had been silent began a lively clicking. General Randolph turned toward it, and Thorne made a quick step in the same direction.

"What's that?" asked the general.

Thorne stood by the desk listening while the key clicked out the message.

"Adjutant General Chesney," he spelled out slowly.

"Oh, from the front, then?" said Randolph.

(To Be Continued.)

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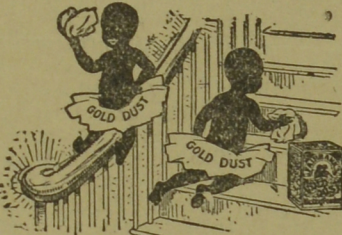
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The  
"Floor-and-Door-a"  
Girl

work and the endless doors, until when Hubby saw them, too, reflections said: "Why, howdy-do!"

"The Gold Dust Twins," said she, "I find, help leave the woes of dust behind. Each mark of sticky hands on doors, each tread of muddy feet on floors, all fade before the slightest touch of Gold Dust, and the work is such that, when the woodwork has been done, I find said work was only fun." This line of reasoning must show that those who've tried it OUGHT to know. If you, in one day's duties, find that there's a Grouch in every Grind, invite the Gold Dust Twins to share such tasks as tire and fret and wear.



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