THE EVENING NEWS.

Friday, - - September 29, 1871.

From for the Protector.

TRUE TO HER FLAG.

An Incident of the Late War.

BY FRANK VAUGHAN.

[CONTINUED.]

Accustomed to the river from her earliest y ars, Virginia rowed quietly and rapidly on, keeping well under the lee of the shore, and pausing occasionally when the tread of an approaching sentinel made progress dangerous. Twice they were challenged and commanded to halt, and both times, under cover of the darkness, Virginia eluded observation and pursuit. Winthrop sat spell-bound in the stern of the boat, obeying implicitly his companion's whispered instructions, and holding his breath hard as they lay now motionless in the deep gloom of an overhanging rock, or, cleaving the water as if impelled by wings, just escaped the whizzing bullet of some suspicious sentry who had caught sight of the flying skiff.

On they went through the gloom and darkness, the wind singing the requiem of their lost love in their ears, and the hearts of both filled with an unutterable tenderness which neither dared to speak.

As Winthrop glanced from time to time at the slight form toiling so manfully to bear him on to life and liberty, he felt an almost irresistible desire to seize her in his arms, and go down with her into the blackness and darkness, where no adverse fate could part them. Anywhere, anywhere, so she were his alone, was the cry of his strong young heart; and he determined, cost what it might, to make one last appeal to her to cast in her lot with his. "Virginia," he said as she rowed out into the wider part of the river, and all danger from the sentries seemed for the moment passed, "once more I lay my heart and fortune at your feet. If you think that these four years of separation have worked any change in my feelings toward you, you do me great injustice. By the memory of our happy, loving past, by the hope of a brighter, happier hereafter, I implore you to let me prove my gratitude for this night's service by a lifetime of devotion. Go with me now, and as I said to you once before, I say again, so help me Heaven, you never shall have reason to regret it." He paused, and it seemed to him that the darkness grew more intense, and the wailing of the wind more wild and mournful, as the still, clear voice of the Southern girl fell upon his ear.

"Major Winthrop," she said, "this is ungenerous and unkind. When I risked my life to save yours, I hardly expected to be insulted by words of love. Forgive me," she added after a moment's pause, as a struggling ray from a distant sentry fire showed her lover's face, almost ghastly from outraged feeling and recent sufferings; "forgive me if I seem cold and harsh, and believe that we can never be more to each other than we are at present."

"Then God have mercy on us both," replied Winthrop as the boat shot into a little cove, and Virginia sprang to her feet in answer to a sentry's challenge.

"Dispatches from Gen. Lee to Gen. Johnson," she said with the soldier's carbine pointed full in her face.

"Why, Wilson, you know me surely," she continued, as the astonished sentinel lowered his musket and peered cautiously through the darkness into her upturned face.

"Lord bless us, Miss Fairfax! what a turn you gave me. I reckoned it was some blasted Yankee prisoner trying to escape. And are you the bearer of dispatches Miss?"

"No Wilson, but my brother is. You remember Cap. Tom, Wilson; he has been badly wounded, and is still weak, but he wanted a post of danger, and the General has given it to him. Can you furnish him with a horse, Wilson?"

"To be sure I can, Miss," replied the delighted veteran. "Hurrah for the Old Dominion, and the Fairfaxes forever! There's half a dozen horses picketed a f w yards further on; the Captain can take his choice of them."

"Then all is well," said Virginia solemnly, as they moved on in the direction indicated by the sergeant's thumb. "Ride boldly forward, make use of Gen. Lee's order when needed, and if the darkness becomes too dense for you to see your way, trust to your horse, he'll take you safely on. God bless you, and farewell."

She was gone before he had time or strength to stop her; but he stood with the bitter tears of disappointment stinging his eyeballs, and the blackness of despair in his heart, until the light splash of her oars in the water had died out on the evening air. Then, flinging himself into the saddle, he dashed forward on his lonely way.

III.

The sun is going down over the soft curves, the gentle undulations, and the distant heights which encompass the Bay of Naples, and flooding heaven and earth with its purple and golden light. The air is soft and mild, and the gentle whispers of the waves, as they touch and embrace the shore, fall pleasantly on the ear. In front are the placid waters of the bay, now shining like molten gold in the sun's last rays, with the fairy isle of Ischia and her southern sister of Capri floating in the distance, and hundreds of gleaming sails shining through the veil of rose and amethyst which the coming night has thrown over the landscape. Behind rises a range of lofty mountains, whose peaks are even now covered with snow; and above all towers the huge bulk of Vesuvius, "holding aloft a fiery torch," whose light is somewhat paled now by the sun's golden beams. On a projecting headland which shuts in the plain of Sorrento on the south-west, a party of Americans had been dreaming away the afternoon, drinking in the intoxicating breeze from the water, and gazing almost spell-bound on the scene of unrivalled beauty that was spread out before them. The party had separated and disappeared now, and only an old man and his young daughter remained upon the spot, the girl reclining at her father's feet, and gazing fearfully up into the beloved face on which decay and death had so plainly set their mark.

To be continued.

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Salt Lake City, Sept. 2, 1871. d203 w3t

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