

in; I feel no mercy for them," said Mr. Lane, savagely.

"But they are human creatures, papa," said the girl, turning around from the instrument.

"They don't act much like 'em," said her father, dryly, "destroying and stealing things as they do."

"But all that is done in war."

"Don't argue with me, Lida," cried her father. "Suppose one of Morgan's men should walk off with Pet, how would you feel?"

"Awfully sorry," said she, smiling.

"Of course, and nothing saved him but the defeat of the wretches."

"I'm sure the Federals press horses," said the girl.

"I don't care if they do, that is a different case. All good citizens will sustain the government."

"I don't think so," cried the girl.

"How can you think otherwise?" asked Capt. Fairlie. "I am surprised to hear you advance such sentiments."

"Your surprise is of no moment to me, sir," said she, haughtily.

"My daughter!"—began the father.

"Well, it isn't, papa; this is a free country—or said to be—and every one has a right to an opinion, and my opinions are all Confederate," said she, looking the Captain defiantly in the face.

"I am truly thankful that you have nothing but opinions and that Morgan and his rascals never reached here, or you would have ruined me."

"But, papa—"

"We won't discuss it," said her father, leaving the room. The girl rose to follow him. "Return and entertain the gentleman," said he in a low voice. "Do you wish my property confiscated on the plea of Southern sympathizing, and all for your nonsense?"

Lida returned to her seat with heightened color and downcast eyes.

"I cannot understand," said Capt. Fairlie, "how you came to have such rebel sentiments."

No answer.

"Did you ever see any of Morgan's men?"

"No."

"Perhaps if you had they would have disenchanted you."

"Not likely."

"A lot of dirty, thieving ragamuffins."

"You will oblige me, sir, by not discussing them."

Capt. Fairlie now shifted the conversation round and praised the Federals till his companion, who preserved a profound silence, looked as if she could have boxed his ears. He was mean enough to enjoy teasing her, feeling how safe his Union sentiments made him. So he chatted on and on, Lida preserving a scornful silence, till at the sound of her father's footsteps in the hall, she suddenly turned on her tormentor and said:

"I think you are the most hateful man I ever saw, and—and I despise you!"

Mr. Lane cut short any reply by inviting his guest out to supper, and Capt. Fairlie made himself very agreeable to his host by agreeing with all his Union sentiments, and even exceeding him in his denunciations of the Confederate cause, and so won his heart that the good gentleman invited him to stay with him for a few days and meet his son, whom he expected in the morning. Capt. Fairlie politely thanked him, but feared he could not accept, as his business was pressing.

"I have no doubt it is," thought Lida, "pressing others people's property, and papa so blind!"

Lida spent the evening at the piano, playing to herself and taking no part in the conversation between the two men. Mr. Lane leaving the room for a moment Fairlie seized the opportunity to speak to his companion.

"Miss Lane," said he, standing beside the piano and speaking in a low voice, "let me thank you for a pleasant evening."

"And I you for a very disagreeable one," she answered.

"I know that and I cannot leave without disabusing your mind of your opinion of me."

"That you cannot do," said she, hotly, "for I detest you."

"Even if you knew I was one of Morgan's men, flying for my life?"

"You!"

"See how much I risk to gain your good opinion! My very life!"

"It is safe with me if what you say is true."

"Did not I play my part to admiration?" whispered he, smiling.

"I think you did, you deceitful creature!"

"And how angry your father will be to-morrow, when he finds his forage thrown back on his hands! I am sorry for that."

"It doesn't matter: he can easily sell it, but he will be furious at the trick."

"Skin for skin, what won't a man give for his life?" said the captain, and then he told her how, when wondering where he should go, he had followed her home.

"Are you a Kentuckian?"

"No, I am a Georgian, and will be glad enough to be back again in Dixie. So after I leave to-morrow think of me as kindly as you can."

"Indeed I will. What can I do for you? Oh, do let me do something for you."

"Aren't you now giving aid and comfort to the Rebellion?"

"Very little," said she, smiling.

"But it saved me much suffering. I will long remember this even—"

Mr. Lane entered and cut short the sentence. The good gentleman was astonished at the change in his daughter's deportment: she was so polite to her guest and bade him such a smiling good night.

"What caused you to alter so suddenly?" asked her father, after Fairlie had gone to his room. "You seemed so pleased to tell him good night?"

"Well, so I was, papa—tiresome creature!" cried Lida, laughing gleefully. To think that one of Morgan's men was in their house! To think that she held such a valuable secret! She was wild with excitement and could hardly sleep. How many things she planned to say to him the next morning!

But when she awoke the bird had flown.

When alone, Captain Fairlie began to think he had done a very foolish thing to risk his chances of escape in that way. What did it signify what the girl thought? She was such a headlong, impulsive creature, she would betray his secrets before she knew. He wished sincerely he hadn't told her: he was a fool indeed.

He got so provoked with himself that he couldn't sleep, and tossed about planning and scheming. At last he de-

termined he'd rise before the break of day and steal off—better that than run any risk trying to keep up his character. Well, he was a fool, indeed!

It was still dark when Fairlie arose, dressed, and taking his boots in his hand, crept out of the house and made for the stables. Like all country places, nothing was locked. By the aid of a few matches he found where his saddle and bridle were, and, entering the stable, took his horse from the stall and silently crept away.

He had gone many a mile when day broke. Perhaps it was best for him to go thus, though he hated to sneak away, traveling in the night was safer, and how well his horse traveled. He had pressed him a few days before and was not very well acquainted with him, but it did seem that its gait had altered and was much faster.

Day at last broke. He had made a good trip. he—his eyes fell on his horse. Great goodness! It was not his horse. It was one of Mr. Lane's! It was the thoroughbred Lida Lane rode! Oh, horrors! He had stolen the girl's horse.

What should he do? He halted in the road and tried to consider. He would go back; yes, and be taken prisoner. No, he would go forward and have Lida Lane think him a horse thief all the rest of her life. Better a prisoner than that.

After much parleying, he determined he would retrace his steps as fast as possible, and perhaps he would reach Mr. Lane's before the theft was discovered. So he turned, pushed his horse to a canter and started back. Well, he had made a precious muddle of it!

But he had traveled farther than he dreamed, and the sun had risen when he came in sight of Mr. Lane's house. Here all was astir. John Lane had arrived quite early and aroused the household. He was a captain in the Federal cavalry and had taken a hand in the fight with Morgan. His return made a little stir, especially as he brought a couple of comrades with him.

In stabling their horses the loss of Pet was discovered, and a little later Capt. Fairlie was found missing. Consternation reigned. Mr. Lane told all he knew, and John saw at once he had been duped.

"Some rascally fellow playing off, probably one of Morgan's men: they are none too good—natural born horse thieves, oh, Lida!" for John delighted to tease her.

Alas! Lida's heart felt as if it would break. Was Fairlie an impostor? A thief? Was he really one of Morgan's men, and if so, would he stoop to do so low a thing? And her darling Pet, too.

Tears rolled down her cheeks. She could not bear John's rough banter and betook herself to the grove, after satisfying herself that Pet was indeed gone.

Adjoining the pasture land back of the house was a deep wood. She had not gone very far into it when what did she see but Pet, tearing over the grass field, whinnying in great glee. As he spied her he came trotting up to the fence.

"Oh, Pet, dear Pet, are you really here?" In her joy she embraced his neck and kissed him on a little white spot in his face, at which Pet seemed well pleased. "How did you get back, my pet?"

"I brought him," said a voice, and turning, Lida saw the disguised Con-