



The clouds have hardly held more rain drops than the tears which have fallen from women's eyes. There is a world of truth in the old song which said: "Man must work, and woman must weep." Women must weep not only for the troubles and ills of those they love, but because of the physical agony and suffering that they themselves endure in silence.

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**THE SOUTHERN STORY OF ANTE BELLUM DAYS**

BY JEANNETTE H. WALWORTH

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CHAPTER IX.

But no one came to her. The frogs held their hoarse notes in brief abeyance to that bell-like sound. The shrill throendies of the cicadas in the sycamore trees were suddenly hushed. But no human voice answered her call. She would make one more effort:

"Abe! Mr. Randal's Abe! I have food for you! No one shall harm you!"

She paused, leaning eagerly forward over the stile. Something had stirred a mass of brilliant leaves and blackened moss just at the foot of the cliff. Two glittering beads came cautiously into view. The fugitive rose from his lair and straightened himself up timidly. His wolfish eyes dilated at sight of the parcel Liza held toward him with both hands.

"It is food for you, Abram. Come, take it. Don't be afraid."

"Vittles for me! Gord-a-mity!"

With furtive side glances and the alertness of a woodland thing he drew nearer cautiously, fleetly, with ravening in his bearing. A foot or two from the stile he stopped suddenly.

"You ain't foolin' me, little mistis?"

"Fooling you! There is food in this paper. Take it. And Abram!"

She had meant to tell him that Randal Chambliss was come back and that his escapade would be forgiven him if he went home, but her good intentions

young woman in oneeet urgency. Her reliability as an oracle had been questioned.

"Yo' was born sassy an yo' will die sassy, Eliza Martin. Uv cose yo' is right and ole Viney is wrong. Thar ain' gwine be no stawm 'tall. Dar de steps."

She pointed one haggish finger vaguely at the cliffs and turned toward the house, mumbling and hobbling in unison. Evidently Viney was resolved to leave the high handed young woman who had dared entertain weather opinions of her own to the worst possible fate that might befall.

Liza surveyed the face of the cliff anxiously. She could see no sign of steps cut in its steep sides, but retreat now was impossible. Viney, at her sereneest, was forbidding. Viney in her wrath was formidable. She crossed the stile and walked rapidly in the direction of that vague hint.

All of her childish terror of Viney had revived at sound of that never forgotten harsh voice of hers. Once more she and Seth and Charlie were three abject little wretches, creeping about the house in awful terror of old Viney, who had come up from the stock milder's cabin in the flats to nurse her foster son through scarlet fever. Of the time when black Suzanne and Strong had drawn their life nourishment from those withered breasts, impartially offered, she knew only as a matter of family history. Time had not improved Viney's temper nor added to her beauty, but if she was good to Strong Liza was quite ready to condone all personal slights.

All these revived reflections went with her as she began the steep and stepless ascent of the cliff, holding fast by every branch and root that offered to support her, trusting blindly to stumble on the steps Strong had told her of. But presently there was nothing in her mind but that green, endless wall stretching up, up before her. Between the wind tossed branches of the trees she could catch glimpses of high piled cumulus clouds that were pregnant with thunder and rain. Viney was right, after all, and she was a venturesome little simpleton.



A charming disarray of moist brown waves.

came to naught. With the spring of a panther the boy had bounded near enough to seize the parcel in her hands and with half a dozen backward leaps had disappeared absolutely from view, somehow, somewhere! Liza followed the miracle of his vanishment with wondering eyes, then sighed contentedly and brushed some crumbs from her skirt front. "At least he will not go hungry for the next 24 hours."

A chuckling laugh close at her elbows made her turn quickly in its direction. A withered crone was standing at the foot of the stile leaning heavily on a single crutch.

"W'at yo' stealin my boy's vittles fur to gie to that ash cat? Ain't yo' learn no better'n to steal, wid all yo' schoolgoin? Whar yo' comman'mints?"

"Aunt Viney! What a fright you gave me. I don't care if you do tell Strong. I would do it right over again."

"Sassy as ever! Who say I gwine to tell on you?"

"You always used to. You never did treat me as well as you did Strong. You were always ready to scold me for him."

"Strong is my boy. I nussed him in dese ve'y arms. I suckled him 'long wid my own Suzanne. 'Cose I gwine stan up fo' him, an look arter his purvishness too. I is dat. Yher, you git down off'n dat stile an go in dat house. Don' you know de rain's-a-comin up? We gwine have a fuclass thun'erstawm in lees'n a hour."

"A thunderstorm! And my poor little pony is tied to a tree up yonder! Oh, Aunt Viney, my poor little Fancy!"

"Up whar? I ain't 'sponsible fur de stawm. Whar yo' pony?"

"At the top of the cliff."

"Who is yo' po' leetle Fancy?"

"My pony—my dear little pony that Seth gave me, and my new embroidered saddlecloth out for the first time!"

"Yo' pony ain't gwine to melt. Yo' git inter that house."

Liza stretched out her hands, palms upward, to feel for the threatened rain. The clouds were mustering overhead, but the downpour might not come for hours. Could anything be more horrible than to be penned up with old Viney in that cabin during a thunderstorm? She would rather risk everything. And then Fancy, she must be rescued. She was anxiously drawing on her gloves and securing her hat with long pins.

"Aunt Viney, where are the steps that Strong tells me are cut in the side of the cliff?"

"W'at yo' want wid them steps?"

"I want to go up them, of course. I am going home. You are entirely mistaken about the storm. It won't be here for an hour yet."

Viney drew away from this arrogant

(To be Continued.)



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