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AND so, returned to the Bluegrass, the mid-summer of that year, Chadwick Buford, gentleman. A youth of eighteen, with the self-poise of a man, and a pair of level, clear eyes, that looked the world in the face as proudly as ever, but with no defiance and no secret sense of shame. It was a curious story that Chad brought back and told to the Major, on the porch under the honeysuckle vines, but it seemed to surprise the Major very little: how old Nathan had sent for him to come to his death-bed and had told Chad that he was no foundling; that one of his farms belonged to the boy; that he had lied to the Major about Chad's mother, who was a lawful wife, in order to keep the land for himself; how old Nathan had offered to give back the farm, or pay him the price of it in live stock, and how, at old Joel's advice, he had taken the stock and turned the stock into money. How, after he had found his mother's grave, his first act had been to take up the rough bee-gum coffin that held her remains, and carry it down the river, and bury her where she had the

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right to lie, side by side with her grandfather and his—the old gentleman who slept in wig and peruke on the hill-side—that her good name and memory should never again suffer insult from any living tongue. It was then that Major took Chad by the shoulders roughly, and, with tears in his eyes, swore that he would have no more nonsense from the boy; that Chad was flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone; that he would adopt him and make him live where he belonged, and break his damned pride. And it was then that Chad told him how gladly he would come, now that he could bring him an untarnished name. And the two walked together down to the old family graveyard, where the Major said that the two in the mountains should be brought some day and where the two brothers who had parted nearly fourscore years ago could, side by side, await Judgment Day.

When they went back into the house the Major went to the sideboard.

"Have a drink, Chad?"

Chad laughed: "Do you think it will stunt my growth?"

"Stand up here, and let's see," said the Major.

The two stood up, back to back, in front of a long mirror, and Chad's shaggy hair rose at least an inch above the Major's thin locks of gray. The Major turned and looked at him from head to foot with affectionate pride.

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"Six feet in your socks, to the inch, without that hair. I reckon it won't stunt you—not now."

"All right," laughed Chad, "then I'll take that drink." And together they drank.

Thus, Chadwick Buford, gentleman, after the lapse of three-quarters of a century, came back to his own: and what that own, at that day and in that land, was!

It was the rose of Virginia, springing, in full bloom, from new and richer soil—a rose of a deeper scarlet and a stronger stem: and the big village where the old University reared its noble front was the very heart of that rose. There were the proudest families, the stateliest homes, the broadest culture, the most gracious hospitality, the gentlest courtesies, the finest chivalry, that the State has ever known. There lived the political idols; there, under the low sky, rose the memorial shaft to Clay. There had lived beaux and belles, memories of whom hang still about the town, people 't with phantom shapes, and give an individual or a family here and there a subtle distinction to-day. There the grasp of Calvinism was most lax. There were the dance, the ready sideboard, the card table, the love of the horse and the dog, and but little passion for the game-cock. There were as manly virtues, as manly vices, as the world has ever known. And there, love was as far from lust as heaven from hell.

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It was on the threshold of this life that Chad stood. Kentucky had given birth to the man who was to uphold the Union—birth to the man who would seek to shatter it. Fate had given Chad the early life of one, and like blood with the other; and, curiously enough, in his own short life, he already epitomized the social development of the nation, from its birth in a log cabin to its swift maturity behind the columns of a Greek portico. Against the uncounted generations of gentlepeople that ran behind him to sunny England, how little could the short sleep of three in the hills count! It may take three generations to make a gentleman, but one is enough, if the blood be there, the heart be right, and the brain and hand come early under discipline.

It was to General Dean that the Major told Chad's story first. The two old friends silently grasped hands, and the cloud between them passed like mist.

"Bring him over to dinner on Saturday, Cal—you and Miss Lucy, won't you? Some people are coming out from town." In making amends, there was no half-way with General Dean.

"I will," said the Major, "gladly."

The cool of the coming autumn was already in the air that Saturday when Miss Lucy and the Major and Chad, in the old carriage, with old Tom as driver and the pickaninny behind, started for

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General Dean's. The Major was beautiful to behold, in his flowered waistcoat, his ruffled shirt, white trousers strapped beneath his highly polished, high-heeled boots, high hat and frock coat, with only the lowest button fastened, in order to give a glimpse of that wonderful waistcoat, just as that, too, was unbuttoned at the top that the ruffles might peep out upon the world. Chad's raiment, too, was as Solomon's—for him. He had protested, but in vain; and he, too, wore white trousers with straps, high-heeled boots, and a wine-colored waistcoat and slouch hat, and a brave, though very conscious, figure he made, with his tall body, well-poised head, strong shoulders and thick hair. It was a rare thing for Miss Lucy to do, but the old gentlewoman could not resist the Major, and she, too, rode in state with them, smiling indulgently at the Major's quips, and now, kindly, on Chad. A drowsy peace lay over the magnificent woodlands, unravaged then except for firewood; the seared pastures, just beginning to show green again for the second spring; the flashing creek, the seas of still hemp and yellow corn. And Chad saw a wistful shadow cross Miss Lucy's pale face, and a darker one anxiously sweep over the Major's jesting lips.

Guests were arriving, when they entered the yard gate, and guests were coming behind them. General and Mrs. Dean were receiving them on

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the porch, and Harry and Dan were helping the ladies out of their carriages, while, leaning against one of the columns, in pure white, was the graceful figure of Margaret. That there could ever have been any feeling in any member of the family other than simple, gracious kindness toward him, Chad could neither see nor feel. At once every trace of embarrassment in him was gone, and he could but wonder at the swift justice done him in a way that was so simple and effective. Even with Margaret there was no trace of consciousness. The past was wiped clean of all save courtesy and kindness. There were the Hunts—Nellie, and the Lieutenant of the Lexington Rifles, Richard Hunt, a dauntless-looking daredevil, with the ready tongue of a coffee-house wit and the grace of a cavalier. There was Elizabeth Morgan, to whom Harry's grave eyes were always wandering, and Miss Jennie Overstreet, who was romantic and openly now wrote poems for the *Observer*, and who looked at Chad with no attempt to conceal her admiration of his appearance and her wonder as to who he was. And there were the neighbors roundabout—the Talbotts, Quisenberrys, Clays, Prestons, Morgans—surely no less than forty strong, and all for dinner. It was no little trial for Chad in that crowd of fine ladies, judges, soldiers, lawyers, statesmen—but he stood it well. While his self-consciousness made him awkward, he

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had pronounced dignity of bearing; his diffidence emphasized his modesty, and he had the good sense to stand and keep still. Soon they were at table—and what a table and what a dinner that was! The dining-room was the biggest and sunniest room in the house; its walls covered with hunting prints, pictures of game and stag heads. The table ran the length of it. The snowy tablecloth hung almost to the floor. At the head sat Mrs. Dean, with a great tureen of calf's head soup in front of her. Before the General was the saddle of venison that was to follow, drenched in a bottle of ancient Madeira, and flanked by flakes of red-currant jelly. Before the Major rested broiled wild ducks, on which he could show his carving skill—on game as well as men. A great turkey supplanted the venison, and last to come, and before Richard Hunt, Lieutenant of the Rifles, was a Kentucky ham. That ham! Mellow, aged, boiled in champagne, baked brown, spiced deeply, rosy pink within, and of a flavor and fragrance to shatter the fast of a Pope; and without, a brown-edged white layer, so firm that the lieutenant's deft carving knife, passing through, gave no hint to the eye that it was delicious fat. There had been merry jest and laughter and banter and gallant compliment before, but it was Richard Hunt's turn now, and story after story he told, as the rose-flakes dropped under his knife in such thin slices that their edges

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coiled. It was full half an hour before the carver and story-teller were done. After that ham the tablecloth was lifted, and the dessert spread on another lying beneath; then that, too, was raised, and the nuts and wines were placed on a third—red damask this time.

Then came the toasts: to the gracious hostess from Major Buford; to Miss Lucy from General Dean; from valiant Richard Hunt to blushing Margaret, and then the ladies were gone, and the talk was politics—the election of Lincoln, slavery, disunion.

"If Lincoln is elected, no power but God's can avert war," said Richard Hunt, gravely.

Dan's eyes flashed. "Will you take me?"

The lieutenant lifted his glass. "Gladly, my boy."

"Kentucky's convictions are with the Union; her kinship and sympathies with the South," said a deep-voiced lawyer. "She must remain neutral."

"Straddling the fence," said the Major, sarcastically.

"No; to avert the war, if possible, or to act the peacemaker when the tragedy is over."

"Well, I can see Kentuckians keeping out of a fight," laughed the General, and he looked around. Three out of five of the men present had been in the Mexican war. The General had been wounded

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at Cerro Gordo, and the Major had brought his dead home in leaden coffins.

"The fanatics of Boston, the hot-heads of South Carolina—they are making the mischief."

"And New England began with slavery," said the lawyer again.

"And naturally, with that conscience that is a national calamity, was the first to give it up," said Richard Hunt, "when the market price of slaves fell to sixpence a pound in the open Boston markets." There was an incredulous murmur.

"Oh, yes," said Hunt, easily, "I can show you advertisements in Boston papers of slaves for sale at sixpence a pound."

Perhaps it never occurred to a soul present that the word "slave" was never heard in that region except in some such way. With Southerners, the negroes were "our servants" or "our people"—never slaves. Two lads at that table were growing white—Chad and Harry—and Chad's lips opened first.

"I don't think slavery has much to do with the question, really," he said, "not even with Mr. Lincoln." The silent surprise that followed the boy's embarrassed statement ended in a gasp of astonishment when Harry leaned across the table and said, hotly:

"Slavery has *everything* to do with the question."

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The Major looked bewildered; the General frowned, and the keen-eyed lawyer spoke again:

"The struggle was written in the Constitution. The framers evaded it. Logic leads one way as well as another and no man can logically blame another for the way he goes."

"No more politics now, gentlemen," said the General quickly. "We will join the ladies. Harry," he added, with some sternness, "lead the way!"

As the three boys rose, Chad lifted his glass. His face was pale and his lips trembled.

"May I propose a toast, General Dean?"

"Why, certainly," said the General, kindly.

"I want to drink to one man but for whom I might be in a log-cabin now, and might have died there for all I know—my friend and, thank God! my kinsman—Major Buford."

It was irregular and hardly in good taste, but the boy had waited till the ladies were gone, and it touched the Major that he should want to make such a public acknowledgment that there should be no false colors in the flag he meant henceforth to bear.

The startled guests drank blindly to the confused Major, though they knew not why, but as the lads disappeared the lawyer asked:

"Who is that boy, Major?"

Outside, the same question had been asked

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among the ladies and the same story told. The three girls remembered him vaguely, they said, and when Chad reappeared, in the eyes of the poetess at least, the halo of romance floated above his head.

She was waiting for Chad when he came out on the porch, and she shook her curls and flashed her eyes in a way that almost alarmed him. Old Mammy dropped him a curtsey, for she had had her orders, and, behind her, Snowball, now a tall, fine-looking coal-black youth, grinned a welcome. The three girls were walking under the trees, with their arms mysteriously twined about one another's waists, and the poetess walked down toward them with the three lads, Richard Hunt following. Chad could not know how it happened, but, a moment later, Dan was walking away with Nellie Hunt one way; Harry with Elizabeth Morgan the other; the Lieutenant had Margaret alone, and Miss Overstreet was leading him away, raving meanwhile about the beauty of field and sky. As they went toward the gate he could not help flashing one look toward the pair under the fir tree. An amused smile was playing under the Lieutenant's beautiful mustache, his eyes were dancing with mischief, and Margaret was blushing with anything else than displeasure.

"Oho!" he said, as Chad and his companion passed on. "Sits the wind in that corner? Bless me, if looks could kill, I'd have a happy death here

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at your feet, Mistress Margaret. *See* the young man! It's the second time he has almost slain me."

Chad could scarcely hear Miss Jennie's happy chatter, scarcely saw the shaking curls, the eyes all but in a frenzy of rolling. His eyes were in the back of his head, and his backward-listening ears heard only Margaret's laugh behind him.

"Oh, I do love the autumn"—it was at the foot of those steps, thought Chad, that he first saw Margaret springing to the back of her pony and dashing off under the fir trees—"and it's coming. There's one scarlet leaf already"—Chad could see the rock fence where he had sat that spring day—"it's curious and mournful that you can see in any season a sign of the next to come." And there was the creek where he found Dan fishing, and there the road led to the ford where Margaret had spurned his offer of a slimy fish—ugh! "I do love the autumn. It makes me feel like the young woman who told Emerson that she had such mammoth thoughts she couldn't give them utterance—why, wake up, Mr. Buford, wake up!" Chad came to with a start.

"Do you know you aren't very polite, Mr. Buford?" Mr. Buford! That did sound funny.

"But I know what the matter is," she went on. "I saw you look"—she nodded her head backward. "Can you keep a secret?" Chad nodded; he had not yet opened his lips.

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"That's going to be a match back there. He's only a few years older. The French say that a woman should be half a man's age plus seven years. That would make her only a few years too young, and she can wait." Chad was scarlet under the girl's mischievous torture, but a cry from the house saved him. Dan was calling them back.

"Mr. Hunt has to go back early to drill the Rifles. Can you keep another secret?" Again Chad nodded gravely. "Well, he is going to drive *me* back. I'll tell him what a dangerous rival he has." Chad was dumb; there was much yet for him to learn before he could parry with a tongue like hers.

"He's very good-looking," said Miss Jennie, when she joined the girls, "but oh, so stupid."

Margaret turned quickly and unsuspectingly. "Stupid! Why, he's the first man in his class."

"Oh," said Miss Jennie, with a demure smile, "perhaps *I* couldn't draw him out," and Margaret flushed to have caught the deftly tossed bait so readily.

A moment later the Lieutenant was gathering up the reins, with Miss Jennie by his side. He gave a bow to Margaret, and Miss Jennie nodded to Chad.

"Come see me when you come to town, Mr. Buford," she called, as though to an old friend, and still Chad was dumb, though he lifted his hat gravely.

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At no time was Chad alone with Margaret, and he was not sorry—her manner so puzzled him. The three lads and three girls walked together through Mrs. Dean's garden with its grass walks and flower beds and vegetable patches surrounded with rose bushes. At the lower edge they could see the barn with sheep in the yard around it, and there were the very stiles where Harry and Margaret had sat in state when Dan and Chad were charging in the tournament. The thing might never have happened for any sign from Harry or Dan or Margaret, and Chad began to wonder if his past or his present were a dream.

How fine this courtesy was Chad could not realize. Neither could he know that the favor Margaret had shown him when he was little more than outcast he must now, as an equal, win for himself. Miss Jennie had called him "Mr. Buford." He wondered what Margaret would call him when he came to say good-by. She called him nothing. She only smiled at him.

"You must come to see us soon again," she said, graciously, and so said all the Deans.

The Major was quiet going home, and Miss Lucy drowsed. All evening the Major was quiet.

"If a fight does come," he said, when they were going to bed, "I reckon I'm not too old to take a hand."

"And I reckon I'm not too young," said Chad.