

## XXI

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SHORTLY after dusk, that night, two or three wagons moved quietly out of Lexington, under a little guard with guns loaded and bayonets fixed. Back at the old Armory—the home of the “Rifles”—a dozen youngsters drilled vigorously with faces in a broad grin, as they swept under the motto of the company—“Our laws the commands of our Captain.” They were following out those commands most literally. Never did Lieutenant Hunt give his orders more sonorously—he could be heard for blocks away. Never did young soldiers stamp out manœuvres more lustily—they made more noise than a regiment. Not a man carried a gun, though ringing orders to “Carry arms” and “Present arms” made the windows rattle. It was John Morgan’s first ruse. While that mock-drill was going on, and listening Unionists outside were laughing to think how those Rifles were going to be fooled next day, the guns of the company were moving in those wagons toward Dixie—toward mocking-bird-haunted Bowling Green, where the underfed, unclothed,

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unarmed body of Albert Sydney Johnston’s army lay, with one half-feathered wing stretching into the Cumberland hills and the frayed edge of the other touching the Ohio.

Next morning, the Home Guards came gayly around to the Armory to seize those guns, and the wily youngsters left temporarily behind (they, too, fled for Dixie, that night) giped them unmercifully; so that, then and there, a little interchange of powder-and-ball civilities followed; and thus, on the very first day, Daniel Dean smelled the one and heard the other whistle right harmlessly and merrily. Straightway, more guards were called out; cannon were planted to sweep the principal streets, and from that hour the old town was under the rule of a Northern or Southern sword for the four years’ reign of the war.

Meanwhile, Chad Buford was giving a strange journey to Dixie. Whenever he dismounted, she would turn her head toward the Bluegrass, as though it surely were time they were starting for home. When they reached the end of the turnpike, she lifted her feet daintily along the muddy road, and leaped pools of water like a cat. Climbing the first foot-hills, she turned her beautiful head to right and left, and with pointed ears snorted now and then at the strange dark woods on either side and the tumbling water-falls. The red of her wide nostrils was showing when



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she reached the top of the first mountain, and from that high point of vantage she turned her wondering eyes over the wide rolling stretch that waved homeward, and whinnied with distinct uneasiness when Chad started her down into the wilderness beyond. Distinctly that road was no path for a lady to tread, but Dixie was to know it better in the coming war.

Within ten miles of the Turners', Chad met the first man that he knew—Hence Sturgill from Kingdom Come. He was driving a wagon.

"Howdy, Hence!" said Chad, reining in.

"Whoa!" said Hence, pulling in and staring at Chad's horse and at Chad from hat to spur.

"Don't you know me, Hence?"

"Well, God—I—may—die, if it ain't Chad! How air ye, Chad? Goin' up to ole Joel's?"

"Yes. How are things on Kingdom Come?"

Hence spat on the ground and raised one hand high over his head:

"God—I—may—die, if thar hain't hell to pay on Kingdom Come. You better keep off o' Kingdom Come," and then he stopped with an expression of quick alarm, looked around him into the bushes and dropped his voice to a whisper:

"But I hain't sayin' a word—rickollect now—not a word!"

Chad laughed aloud. "What's the matter with you, Hence?"

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Hence put one finger on one side of his nose—still speaking in a low tone:

"Whut'd I say, Chad? D'I say one word?" He gathered up his reins. "You rickollect Jake and Jerry Dillon?" Chad nodded. "You know Jerry was al'ays a-runnin' over Jake 'cause Jake didn't have good sense. Jake was drapped when he was a baby. Well, Jerry struck Jake over the head with a fence-rail 'bout two months ago, an' when Jake come to, he had just as good sense as anybody, and now he hates Jerry like pizen, an' Jerry's half afeard of him. An' they do say as how them two brothers air a-goin'——" Again Hence stopped abruptly and clucked to his team. "But I ain't a-sayin' a word, now, mind ye—not a word!"

Chad rode on, amused, and thinking that Hence had gone daft, but he was to learn better. A reign of forty years' terror was starting in those hills.

Not a soul was in sight when he reached the top of the hill from which he could see the Turner home below—about the house or the orchard or in the fields. No one answered his halloo at the Turner gate, though Chad was sure that he saw a woman's figure flit past the door. It was a full minute before Mother Turner cautiously thrust her head outside the door and peered at him.

"Why, Aunt Betsey," called Chad, "don't you know me?"



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At the sound of his voice Melissa sprang out the door with a welcoming cry, and ran to him, Mother Turner following with a broad smile on her kind old face. Chad felt the tears almost come—these were friends indeed. How tall Melissa had grown, and how lovely she was, with her tangled hair and flashing eyes and delicately modelled face. She went with him to the stable to help him put up his horse, blushing when he looked at her and talking very little, while the old mother, from the fence, followed him with her dim eyes. At once Chad began to ply both with questions—where was Uncle Joel and the boys and the schoolmaster? And, straightway, Chad felt a reticence in both—a curious reticence even with him. On each side of the fireplace, on each side of the door, and on each side of the window, he saw narrow blocks fixed to the logs. One was turned horizontal, and through the hole under it Chad saw daylight—portholes they were. At the door were oaken blocks as catches for a piece of upright wood nearby, which was plainly used to bar the door. The cabin was a fortress. By degrees the story came out. The neighborhood was in a turmoil of bloodshed and terror. Tom and Dolph had gone off to the war—Rebels. Old Joel had been called to the door one night, a few weeks since, and had been shot down without warning. They had fought all night. Melissa herself had handled

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a rifle at one of the portholes. Rube was out in the woods now, with Jack guarding and taking care of his wounded father. A Home Guard had been organized, and Daws Dillon was captain. They were driving out of the mountains every man who owned a negro, for nearly every man who owned a negro had taken, or was forced to take, the Rebel side. The Dillons were all Yankees, except Jerry, who had gone off with Tom; and the giant brothers, Rebel Jerry and Yankee Jake—as both were already known—had sworn to kill each other on sight. Bushwhacking had already begun. When Chad asked about the schoolmaster, the old woman's face grew stern, and Melissa's lip curled with scorn.

"Yankee!" The girl spat the word out with such vindictive bitterness that Chad's face turned slowly scarlet, while the girl's keen eyes pierced him like a knife, and narrowed as, with pale face and heaving breast, she rose suddenly from her chair and faced him—amazed, bewildered, burning with sudden hatred. "And you're another!" The girl's voice was like a hiss.

"Why, 'Lissy!" cried the old mother, startled, horrified.

"Look at him!" said the girl. The old woman looked; her face grew hard and frightened, and she rose feebly, moving toward the girl as though for protection against him. Chad's very heart



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seemed suddenly to turn to water. He had been dreading the moment to come when he must tell. He knew it would be hard, but he was not looking for this.

"You better git away!" quavered the old woman, "afore Joel and Rube come in."

"Hush!" said the girl, sharply, her hands clinched like claws, her whole body stiff, like a tigress ready to attack, or awaiting attack.

"Mebbe he come hyeh to find out whar they air—don't tell him!"

"Lissy!" said Chad, brokenly.

"Then whut did you come fer?"

"To tell you good-by, I came to see all of you, Lissy."

The girl laughed scornfully, and Chad knew he was helpless. He could not explain, and they could not understand—nobody had understood.

"Aunt Betsey," he said, "you took Jack and me in, and you took care of me just as though I had been your own child. You know I'd give my life for you or Uncle Joel, or any one of the boys"—his voice grew a little stern—"and you know it, too, Lissy—"

"You're makin' things wuss," interrupted the girl, stridently, "an' now you're goin' to do all you can to kill us. I reckon you can see that door. Why don't you go over to the Dillons?" she panted. "They're friends o' your'n. An' don't

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let Uncle Joel or Rube ketch you anywhar round hyeh!"

"I'm not afraid to see Uncle Joel or Rube, Lissy."

"You must git away, Chad," quavered the old woman. "They mought hurt ye!"

"I'm sorry not to see Jack. He's the only friend I have now."

"Why, Jack would snarl at ye," said the girl, bitterly. "He hates a Yankee." She pointed again with her finger. "I reckon you can see that door."

They followed him, Melissa going on the porch and the old woman standing in the doorway. On one side of the walk Chad saw a rose-bush that he had brought from the Bluegrass for Melissa. It was dying. He took one step toward it, his foot sinking in the soft earth where the girl had evidently been working around it, and broke off the one green leaf that was left.

"Here, Lissy! You'll be sorry you were so hard on me. I'd never get over it if I didn't think you would. Keep this, won't you, and let's be friends, not enemies."

He held it out, and the girl angrily struck the rose-leaf from his hand to her feet.

Chad rode away at a walk. Two hundred yards below, where the hill rose, the road was hock-deep with sand, and Dixie's feet were as



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noiseless as a cat's. A few yards beyond a ravine on the right, a stone rolled from the bushes into the road. Instinctively Chad drew rein, and Dixie stood motionless. A moment later, a crouching figure, with a long squirrel rifle, slipped out of the bushes and started noiselessly across the ravine. Chad's pistol flashed.

"Stop!"

The figure crouched more, and turned a terror-stricken face—Daws Dillon's.

"Oh, it's you, is it? Well, drop that gun and come down here."

The Dillon boy rose, leaving his gun on the ground, and came down, trembling.

"What're you doin' sneaking around in the brush?"

"Nothin'!" The Dillon had to make two efforts before he could speak at all. "Nothin', jes' a-huntin'!"

"Huntin'!" repeated Chad. He lowered his pistol and looked at the sorry figure silently.

"I know what you were huntin', you rattlesnake! I understand you are captain of the Home Guard. I reckon you don't know that nobody *has* to go into this war. That a man has the right to stay peaceably at home, and nobody has the right to bother him. If you don't know it, I tell you now. I believe you had something to do with shooting Uncle Joel."

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The Dillon shook his head, and fumbled with his hands.

"If I knew it, I'd kill you where you stand, now. But I've got one word to say to you, you hell-pup. I hate to think it, but you and I are on the same side—that is, if you have any side. But in spite of that, if I hear of any harm happening to Aunt Betsey, or Melissa, or Uncle Joel, or Rube, while they are all peaceably at home, I'm goin' to hold you and Tad responsible, whether you are or not, and I'll kill you"—he raised one hand to make the Almighty a witness to his oath—"I'll kill you, if I have to follow you both to hell for doin' it. Now, you take keer of 'em! Turn 'round!"

The Dillon hesitated.

"Turn!" Chad cried, savagely, raising his pistol. "Go back to that gun, an' if you turn your head I'll shoot you where you're sneakin' aroun' to shoot Rube or Uncle Joel—in the back, you cowardly feist. Pick up that gun! Now, let her off! See if you can hit that beech-tree in front of you. Just imagine that it's me."

The rifle cracked and Chad laughed.

"Well, you ain't much of a shot. I reckon you must have chills and fever. Now, come back here. Give me your powder-horn. You'll find it on top of the hill on the right-hand side of the road. Now, you trot—home!"



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The Dillon stared.

"Double-quick!" snouted Chad. "You ought to know what that means if you are a soldier—a soldier!" he repeated, contemptuously.

The Dillon disappeared on a run.

Chad rode all that night. At dawn he reached the foot-hills, and by noon he drew up at the road which turned to Camp Dick Robinson. He sat there a long time thinking, and then pushed on toward Lexington. If he could, he would keep from fighting on Kentucky soil.

Next morning he was going at an easy "running-walk" along the old Maysville road toward the Ohio. Within three miles of Major Buford's, he leaped the fence and struck across the fields that he might go around and avoid the risk of a painful chance meeting with his old friend or any of the Deans.

What a land of peace and plenty it was—the woodlands, meadows, pasture lands! Fat cattle raised their noses from the thick grass and looked with mild inquiry at him. Sheep ran bleating toward him, as though he were come to salt them. A rabbit leaped from a thorn-bush and whisked his white flag into safety in a hemp-field. Squirrels barked in the big oaks, and a covey of young quail fluttered up from a fence corner and sailed bravely away. 'Possum signs were plentiful, and on the edge of the creek he saw a coon solemnly search-

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ing under a rock with one paw for crawfish. Every now and then Dixie would turn her head impatiently to the left, for she knew where home was. The Deans' house was just over the hill; he would have but the ride to the top to see it and, perhaps, Margaret. There was no need. As he sat looking up the hill, Margaret herself rode slowly over it, and down, through the sunlight slanting athwart the dreaming woods, straight toward him. Chad sat still. Above him the road curved, and she could not see him until she turned the little thicket just before him. Her pony was more startled than was she. A little leap of color to her face alone showed her surprise.

"Did you get my note?"

"I did. You got my mother's message?"

"I did." Chad paused. "That is why I am passing around you."

The girl said nothing.

"But I'm glad I came so near. I wanted to see you once more. I wish I could make you understand. But nobody understands. I hardly understand myself. But please try to believe that what I say is true. I'm just back from the mountains, and listen, Margaret—" He halted a moment to steady his voice. "The Turners down there took me in when I was a ragged outcast. They clothed me, fed me, educated me. The Major took me when I was little



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more; and he fed me, clothed me, educated me. The Turners scorned me—Melissa told me to go herd with the Dillons. The Major all but turned me from his door. Your father was bitter toward me, thinking that I had helped turn Harry to the Union cause. But let me tell you! If the Turners died, believing me a traitor; if Lissy died with a curse on her lips for me; if the Major died without, as he believed, ever having polluted his lips again with my name; if Harry were brought back here dead, and your father died, believing that his blood was on my hands; and if I lost you and your love, and you died, believing the same thing—I must still go. Oh, Margaret, I can't understand—I have ceased to reason. I only know I must go!"

The girl in the mountains had let her rage and scorn loose like a storm, but the gentlewoman only grew more calm. Every vestige of color left her, but her eyes never for a moment wavered from his face. Her voice was quiet and even and passionless:

"Then, why don't you go?"

The lash of an overseer's whip across his face could not have made his soul so bleed. Even then he did not lose himself.

"I am in your way," he said, quietly. And backing Dixie from the road, and without bend-

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ing his head or lowering his eyes, he waited, hat in hand, for Margaret to pass.

All that day Chad rode, and, next morning, Dixie climbed the Union bank of the Ohio and trotted into the recruiting camp of the Fourth Ohio Cavalry. The first man Chad saw was Harry Dean—grave, sombre, taciturn, though he smiled and thrust out his hand eagerly. Chad's eyes dropped to the sergeant's stripes on Harry's sleeves, and again Harry smiled.

"You'll have 'em yourself in a week. These fellows ride like a lot of meal-bags over here. Here's my captain," he added, in a lower voice.

A pompous officer rode slowly up. He pulled in his horse when he saw Chad.

"You want to join the army?"

"Yes," said Chad.

"All right. That's a fine horse you've got."

Chad said nothing.

"What's his name?"

"Her name is Dixie."

The captain stared. Some soldiers behind laughed in a smothered fashion, sobering their faces quickly when the captain turned upon them, furious.

"Well, change her name!"

"I'll not change her name," said Chad, quietly.



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"What!" shouted the officer. "How dare you—" Chad's eyes looked ominous.

"Don't you give any orders to me—not yet. You haven't the right; and when you have, you can save your breath by not giving that one. This horse comes from Kentucky, and so do I; her name will stay Dixie as long as I straddle her, and I propose to straddle her until one of us dies, or"—he smiled and nodded across the river—"somebody over there gets her who won't object to her name as much as you do."

The astonished captain's lips opened, but a quiet voice behind interrupted him:

"Never mind, Captain." Chad turned and saw a short, thick-set man with a stubbly brown beard, whose eyes were twinkling, though his face was grave. "A boy who wants to fight for the Union, and insists on calling his horse Dixie, must be all right. Come with me, my lad."

As Chad followed, he heard the man saluted as Colonel Grant, but he paid no heed. Few people at that time did pay heed to the name of Ulysses Grant.

## XXII

### MORGAN'S MEN

**B**OOTs and saddles at daybreak!

Over the border, in Dixie, two videttes in gray trot briskly from out a leafy woodland, side by side, and looking with keen eyes right and left; one, erect, boyish, bronzed; the other, slouching, bearded, huge—the boy, Daniel Dean; the man, Rebel Jerry Dillon, one of the giant twins.

Fifty yards behind them emerges a single picket; after him come three more videttes, the same distance apart. Fifty yards behind the last rides "the advance"—a guard of twenty-five picked men. No commission among "Morgan's Men" was more eagerly sought than a place on that guard of hourly risk and honor. Behind it trot still three more videttes, at intervals of one hundred yards, and just that interval behind the last of these ride Morgan's Men, the flower of Kentucky's youth, in columns of fours—Colonel Hunt's regiment in advance, the colors borne by Renfrew the Silent in a brilliant Zouave jacket studded with buttons of red coral. In the rear rumble two Parrot guns, affectionately christened the "Bull Pups."