

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

brothers, sought each other's lives in mutual misconception and mutual hate.

There were a dozen dead Federals and guerillas around the fire, and among them was Daws Dillon with the pallor of death on his face and the hate that life had written there still clinging to it like a shadow. As Dan bent tenderly over his brother Harry, two soldiers brought in a huge body from the bushes, and he turned to see Rebel Jerry Dillon. There were a half a dozen rents in his uniform and a fearful slash under his chin—but he was breathing still. Chad Buford had escaped, and so had Yankee Jake.

XXVII

AT THE HOSPITAL OF MORGAN'S MEN

IN May, Grant simply said—Forward! The day he crossed the Rapidan, he said it to Sherman down in Georgia. After the battle of the Wilderness he said it again, and the last brutal resort of hammering down the northern buttress and sea-wall of the rebellion—old Virginia—and Atlanta, the keystone of the Confederate arch, was well under way. Throughout those bloody days Chad was with Grant and Harry Dean was with Sherman on his terrible trisecting march to the sea. For, after the fight between Rebels and Yankees and Daws Dillon's guerilla band, over in Kentucky, Dan, coming back from another raid into the Bluegrass, had found his brother gone. Harry had refused to accept a parole and had escaped. Not a man, Dan was told, fired a shot at him, as he ran. One soldier raised his musket, but Renfrew the Silent struck the muzzle upward.

In September, Atlanta fell and, in that same month, Dan saw his great leader, John Morgan, dead in Tennessee. In December, the Confederacy toppled at the west under Thomas's blows

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

at Nashville. In the spring of '65, one hundred and thirty-five thousand wretched, broken-down rebels, from Richmond to the Rio Grande, confronted Grant's million men, and in April, Five Forks was the beginning of the final end everywhere.

At midnight, Captain Daniel Dean, bearer of dispatches to the great Confederate General in Virginia, rode out of abandoned Richmond with the cavalry of young Fitzhugh Lee. They had threaded their way amid troops, trains, and artillery across the bridge. The city was on fire. By its light, the stream of humanity was pouring out of town—Davis and his cabinet, citizens, soldiers, down to the mechanics in the armories and workshops. The chief concern with all was the same, a little to eat for a few days; for, with the morning, the enemy would come and Confederate money would be as mist. Afar off the little fleet of Confederate gunboats blazed and the thundering explosions of their magazines split the clear air. Freight depots with supplies were burning. Plunderers were spreading the fires and slipping like ghouls through red light and black shadows. At daybreak the last retreating gun rumbled past and, at sunrise, Dan looked back from the hills on the smoking and deserted city and Grant's blue lines sweeping into it.

Once only he saw his great chief—the next

AT THE HOSPITAL OF MORGAN'S MEN

morning before day, when he rode through the chill mist and darkness to find the head-quarters of the commanding General—two little fires of rubbish and two ambulances—with Lee lying on a blanket under the open sky. He rose, as Dan drew near, and the firelight fell full on his bronzed and mournful face. He looked so sad and so noble that the boy's heart was wrenched, and as Dan turned away, he said, brokenly:

"General, I am General Dean's son, and I want to thank you—" He could get no farther. Lee laid one hand on his shoulder.

"Be as good a man as your father was, my boy," he said, and Dan rode back the pitiable way through the rear of that noble army of Virginia—through ranks of tattered, worn, hungry soldiers, among the broken débris of wagons and abandoned guns, past skeleton horses and skeleton men.

All hope was gone, but Fitz Lee led his cavalry through the Yankee lines and escaped. In that flight Daniel Dean got his only wound in the war—a bullet through the shoulder. When the surrender came, Fitz Lee gave up, too, and led back his command to get Grant's generous terms. But all his men did not go with him, and among the cavalymen who went on toward southwestern Virginia was Dan—making his way back to Richard Hunt—for now that gallant Morgan was dead, Hunt was general of the old command.

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

Behind, at Appomattox, Chad was with Grant. He saw the surrender—saw Lee look toward his army, when he came down the steps after he had given up, saw him strike his hands together three times and ride Traveller away through the profound and silent respect of his enemies and the tearful worship of his own men. And Chad got permission straightway to go back to Ohio, and be mustered out with his old regiment, and he, too, started back through Virginia.

Meanwhile, Dan was drawing near the mountains. He was worn out when he reached Abingdon. The wound in his shoulder was festering and he was in a high fever. At the camp of Morgan's Men he found only a hospital left—for General Hunt had gone southward—and a hospital was what he most needed now. As he lay, unconscious with fever, next day, a giant figure, lying near, turned his head and stared at the boy. It was Rebel Jerry Dillon, helpless from a sabre cut and frightfully scarred by the fearful wounds his brother, Yankee Jake, had given him. And thus, Chadwick Buford, making for the Ohio, saw the two strange messmates, a few days later, when he rode into the deserted rebel camp.

All was over. Red Mars had passed beyond the horizon and the white Star of Peace already shone faintly on the ravaged South. The shattered remnants of Morgan's cavalry, pall-bearers

AT THE HOSPITAL OF MORGAN'S MEN

of the Lost Cause—had gone South—bare-footed and in rags—to guard Jefferson Davis to safety, and Chad's heart was wrung when he stepped into the little hospital they had left behind—a space cleared into a thicket of rhododendron. There was not a tent—there was little medicine—little food. The drizzling rain dropped on the group of ragged sick men from the branches above them. Nearly all were youthful, and the youngest was a mere boy, who lay delirious with his head on the root of a tree. As Chad stood looking, the boy opened his eyes and his mouth twitched with pain.

"Hello, you damned Yankee." Again his mouth twitched and again the old dare-devil light that Chad knew so well kindled in his hazy eyes.

"I said," he repeated, distinctly, "Hello, you damned Yank. *Damned* Yank I said." Chad beckoned to two men.

"Go bring a stretcher."

The men shook their heads with a grim smile—they had no stretcher.

The boy talked dreamily.

"Say, Yank, didn't we give you hell in—oh, well, in lots o' places. But you've got me." The two soldiers were lifting him in their arms. "Go-in' to take me to prison? Goin' to take me out to shoot me, Yank? You *are* a damned Yank." A hoarse growl rose behind them and the giant

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

lifted himself on one elbow, swaying his head from side to side.

"Let that boy alone!" Dan nodded back at him confidently.

"That's all right, Jerry. This Yank's a friend of mine." His brow wrinkled. "At any rate he looks like somebody I know. He's goin' to give me something to eat and get me well—like hell," he added to himself—passing off into unconsciousness again. Chad had the lad carried to his own tent, had him stripped, bathed, and bandaged and stood looking down at him. It was hard to believe that the broken, aged youth was the red-cheeked, vigorous lad whom he had known as Daniel Dean. He was ragged, starved, all but bare-footed, wounded, sick, and yet he was as undaunted, as defiant, as when he charged with Morgan's dare-devils at the beginning of the war. Then Chad went back to the hospital—for a blanket and some medicine.

"They are friends," he said to the Confederate surgeon, pointing at a huge gaunt figure.

"I reckon that big fellow has saved that boy's life a dozen times. Yes, they're mess-mates." And Chad stood looking down at Jerry Dillon, one of the giant twins—whose name was a terror throughout the mountains of the middle south. Then he turned and the surgeon followed. There was a rustle of branches on one side when they

AT THE HOSPITAL OF MORGAN'S MEN

were gone, and at the sound the wounded man lifted his head. The branches parted and the ox-like face of Yankee Jake peered through. For a full minute, the two brothers stared at each other.

"I reckon you got me, Jake," said Jerry.

"I been lookin' fer ye a long while," said Jake, simply, and he smiled strangely as he moved slowly forward and looked down at his enemy—his heavy head wagging from side to side. Jerry was fumbling at his belt. The big knife flashed, but Jake's hand was as quick as its gleam, and he had the wrist that held it. His great fingers crushed together, the blade dropped on the ground, and again the big twins looked at each other. Slowly, Yankee Jake picked up the knife. The other moved not a muscle and in his fierce eyes was no plea for mercy. The point of the blade moved slowly down—down over the rebel's heart, and was thrust into its sheath again. Then Jake let go the wrist.

"Don't tech it agin," he said, and he strode away. The big fellow lay blinking. He did not open his lips when, in a moment, Yankee Jake slouched in with a canteen of water. When Chad came back, one giant was drawing on the other a pair of socks. The other was still silent and had his face turned the other way. Looking up, Jake met Chad's surprised gaze with a grin.

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

A day later, Dan came to his senses. A tent was above him, a heavy blanket was beneath him and there were clothes on his body that felt strangely fresh and clean. He looked up to see Chad's face between the flaps of the tent.

"D'you do this?"

"That's all right," said Chad. "This war is over." And he went away to let Dan think it out. When he came again, Dan held out his hand silently.

XXVIII

PALL-BEARERS OF THE LOST CAUSE

THE rain was falling with a steady roar when General Hunt broke camp a few days before. The mountain-tops were black with thunderclouds, and along the muddy road went Morgan's Men—most of them on mules which had been taken from abandoned wagons when news of the surrender came—without saddles and with blind bridles or rope halters—the rest slopping along through the yellow mud on foot—literally—for few of them had shoes; they were on their way to protect Davis and join Johnston, now that Lee was no more. There was no murmuring, no faltering, and it touched Richard Hunt to observe that they were now more prompt to obedience, when it was optional with them whether they should go or stay, than they had ever been in the proudest days of the Confederacy.

Threatened from Tennessee and cut off from Richmond, Hunt had made up his mind to march eastward to join Lee, when the news of the surrender came. Had the sun at that moment dropped suddenly to the horizon from the heaven

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

above them, those Confederates would have been hardly more startled or plunged into deeper despair. Crowds of infantry threw down their arms and, with the rest, all sense of discipline was lost. Of the cavalry, however, not more than ten men declined to march south, and out they moved through the drenching rain in a silence that was broken only with a single cheer when ninety men from another Kentucky brigade joined them, who, too, felt that as long as the Confederate Government survived, there was work for them to do. So on they went to keep up the struggle, if the word was given, skirmishing, fighting and slipping past the enemies that were hemming them in, on with Davis, his cabinet, and General Breckinridge to join Taylor and Forrest in Alabama. Across the border of South Carolina, an irate old lady upbraided Hunt for allowing his soldiers to take forage from her barn.

"You are a gang of thieving Kentuckians," she said, hotly; "you are afraid to go home, while our boys are surrendering decently."

"Madam!"—Renfrew the Silent spoke—spoke from the depths of his once brilliant jacket—"you South Carolinians had a good deal to say about getting up this war, but we Kentuckians have contracted to close it out."

Then came the last Confederate council of war. In turn, each officer spoke of his men and of him-

PALL-BEARERS OF THE LOST CAUSE

self and each to the same effect; the cause was lost and there was no use in prolonging the war.

"We will give our lives to secure your safety, but we cannot urge our men to struggle against a fate that is inevitable, and perhaps thus forfeit all hope of a restoration to their homes and friends."

Davis was affable, dignified, calm, undaunted.

"I will hear of no plan that is concerned only with my safety. A few brave men can prolong the war until this panic has passed, and they will be a nucleus for thousands more."

The answer was silence, as the gaunt, beaten man looked from face to face. He rose with an effort.

"I see all hope is gone," he said, bitterly, and though his calm remained, his bearing was less erect, his face was deathly pale and his step so infirm that he leaned upon General Breckinridge as he neared the door—in the bitterest moment, perhaps, of his life.

So, the old Morgan's Men, so long separated, were united at the end. In a broken voice General Hunt forbade the men who had followed him on foot three hundred miles from Virginia to go farther, but to disperse to their homes; and they wept like children.

In front of him was a big force of Federal cavalry; retreat the way he had come was impossible, and to the left, if he escaped, was the sea; but

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

dauntless Hunt refused to surrender except at the order of a superior, or unless told that all was done that could be done to assure the escape of his President. That order came from Breckinridge.

"Surrender," was the message. "Go back to your homes, I will not have one of these young men encounter one more hazard for my sake."

That night Richard Hunt fought out his fight with himself, pacing to and fro under the stars. He had struggled faithfully for what he believed, still believed, and would, perhaps, always believe, was right. He had fought for the broadest ideal of liberty as he understood it, for citizen, State, and nation. The appeal had gone to the sword and the verdict was against him. He would accept it. He would go home, take the oath of allegiance, resume the law, and, as an American citizen, do his duty. He had no sense of humiliation; he had no apology to make and would never have—he had done his duty. He felt no bitterness, and had no fault to find with his foes, who were brave and had done their duty as they had seen it; for he granted them the right to see a different duty from what he had decided was his. And that was all.

Renfrew the Silent was waiting at the smouldering fire. He neither looked up nor made any comment when General Hunt spoke his determina-

PALL-BEARERS OF THE LOST CAUSE

tion. His own face grew more sullen and he reached his hand into his breast and pulled from his faded jacket the tattered colors that he once had borne.

"These will never be lowered as long as I live," he said, "nor afterwards if I can prevent it." And lowered they never were. On a little island in the Pacific Ocean, this strange soldier, after leaving his property and his kindred forever, lived out his life among the natives with this blood-stained remnant of the Stars and Bars over his hut, and when he died, the flag was hung over his grave, and above that grave to-day the tattered emblem still sways in southern air.

A week earlier, two Rebels and two Yankees started across the mountain together—Chad and Dan and the giant Dillon twins—Chad and Yankee Jake afoot. Up Lonesome they went toward the shaggy flank of Black Mountain where the Great Reaper had mowed down Chad's first friends. The logs of the cabin were still standing, though the roof was caved in and the yard was a tangle of undergrowth. A dull pain settled in Chad's breast, while he looked, and as they were climbing the spur, he choked when he caught sight of the graves under the big poplar.

There was the little pen that he had built over

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

his foster-mother's grave—still undisturbed. He said nothing and, as they went down the spur, across the river and up Pine Mountain, he kept his gnawing memories to himself. Only ten years before, and he seemed an old, old man now. He recognized the very spot where he had slept the first night after he ran away and awakened to that fearful never-forgotten storm at sunrise, which lived in his memory now as a mighty portent of the storms of human passion that had swept around him on many a battlefield. There was the very tree where he had killed the squirrel and the rattlesnake. It was bursting spring now, but the buds of laurel and rhododendron were unbroken. Down Kingdom Come they went. Here was where he had met the old cow, and here was the little hill where Jack had fought Whizzer and he had fought Tad Dillon and where he had first seen Melissa. Again the scarlet of her tattered gown flashed before his eyes. At the bend of the river they parted from the giant twins. Faithful Jake's face was foolish when Chad took him by the hand and spoke to him, as man to man, and Rebel Jerry turned his face quickly when Dan told him that he would never forget him, and made him promise to come to see him, if Jerry ever took another raft down to the capital. Looking back from the hill, Chad saw them slowly moving

PALL-BEARERS OF THE LOST CAUSE

along a path toward the woods—not looking at each other and speaking not at all.

Beyond rose the smoke of the old Turner cabin. On the porch sat the old Turner mother, her bonnet in her hand, her eyes looking down the river. Dozing at her feet was Jack—old Jack. She had never forgiven Chad, and she could not forgive him now, though Chad saw her eyes soften when she looked at the tattered butternut that Dan wore. But Jack—half-blind and aged—sprang trembling to his feet when he heard Chad's voice and whimpered like a child. Chad sank on the porch with one arm about the old dog's neck. Mother Turner answered all questions shortly.

Melissa had gone to the "Settlements." Why? The old woman would not answer. She was coming back, but she was ill. She had never been well since she went afoot, one cold night, to warn some *Yankee* that Daws Dillon was after him. Chad started. It was Melissa who had perhaps saved his life. Tad Dillon had stepped into Daws's shoes, and the war was still going on in the hills. Tom Turner had died in prison. The old mother was waiting for Dolph and Rube to come back—she was looking for them every hour, day and night. She did not know what had become of the school-master—but Chad did, and he told her. The school-master had died, storming breastworks at Gettysburg. The old woman said not a word.

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

Dan was too weak to ride now. So Chad got Dave Hilton, Melissa's old sweetheart, to take Dixie to Richmond—a little Kentucky town on the edge of the Bluegrass—and leave her there, and he bought the old Turner canoe. She would have no use for it, Mother Turner said—he could have it for nothing; but when Chad thrust a ten-dollar Federal bill into her hands, she broke down and threw her arms around him and cried.

So down the river went Chad and Dan—drifting with the tide—Chad in the stern, Dan lying at full length, with his head on a blue army-coat and looking up at the over-swung branches and the sky and the clouds above them—down, through a mist of memories for Chad—down to the capital.

And Harry Dean, too, was on his way home—coming up from the far South—up through the ravaged land of his own people, past homes and fields which his own hands had helped to lay waste.

XXIX

MELISSA AND MARGARET

THE early spring sunshine lay like a benediction over the Dean household, for Margaret and her mother were home from exile. On the corner of the veranda sat Mrs. Dean, where she always sat, knitting. Under the big weeping willow in the garden was her husband's grave. When she was not seated near it, she was there in the porch, and to it her eyes seemed always to stray when she lifted them from her work.

The mail had just come and Margaret was reading a letter from Dan, and, as she read, her cheeks flushed.

"He took me into his own tent, mother, and put his own clothes on me and nursed me like a brother. And now he is going to take me to you and Margaret, he says, and I shall be strong enough, I hope, to start in a week. I shall be his friend for life."

Neither mother nor daughter spoke when the girl ceased reading. Only Margaret rose soon and walked down the gravelled walk to the stile.

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

Beneath the hill, the creek sparkled. She could see the very pool where her brothers and the queer little stranger from the mountains were fishing the day he came into her life. She remembered the indignant heart-beat with which she had heard him call her "little gal," and she smiled now, but she could recall the very tone of his voice and the steady look in his clear eyes when he offered her the perch he had caught. Even then his spirit appealed unconsciously to her, when he sturdily refused to go up to the house because her brother was "feelin' hard towards him." How strange and far away all that seemed now! Up the creek and around the woods she strolled, deep in memories. For a long while she sat on a stone wall in the sunshine—thinking and dreaming, and it was growing late when she started back to the house. At the stile, she turned for a moment to look at the old Buford home across the fields. As she looked, she saw the pike-gate open and a woman's figure enter, and she kept her eyes idly upon it as she walked on toward the house. The woman came slowly and hesitatingly toward the yard. When she drew nearer, Margaret could see that she wore homespun, home-made shoes, and a poke-bonnet. On her hands were yarn half-mits, and, as she walked, she pushed her bonnet from her eyes with one hand, first to one side, then to the other—looking at the locusts planted along the

MELISSA AND MARGARET

avenue, the cedars in the yard, the sweep of lawn overspread with springing bluegrass. At the yard gate she stopped, leaning over it—her eyes fixed on the stately white house, with its mighty pillars. Margaret was standing on the steps now, motionless and waiting, and, knowing that she was seen, the woman opened the gate and walked up the gravelled path—never taking her eyes from the figure on the porch. Straight she walked to the foot of the steps, and there she stopped, and, pushing her bonnet back, she said, simply:

"Are you Mar-ga-ret?" pronouncing the name slowly and with great distinctness.

Margaret started.

"Yes," she said.

The girl merely looked at her—long and hard. Once her lips moved:

"Mar-ga-ret," and still she looked. "Do you know whar Chad is?"

Margaret flushed.

"Who are you?"

"Melissy."

Melissa! The two girls looked deep into each other's eyes and, for one flashing moment, each saw the other's heart—bared and beating—and Margaret saw, too, a strange light ebb slowly from the other's face and a strange shadow follow slowly after.

"You mean Major Buford?"

THE LITTLE SHEPHERD OF KINGDOM COME

"I mean Chad. Is he dead?"

"No, he is bringing my brother home."

"Harry?"

"No—Dan."

"Dan—here?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"As soon as my brother gets well enough to travel. He is wounded."

Melissa turned her face then. Her mouth twitched and her clasped hands were working in and out. Then she turned again.

"I come up here from the mountains, afoot, jus' to tell ye—to tell *you* that Chad ain't no"—she stopped suddenly, seeing Margaret's quick flush—"Chad's mother was married. I jus' found it out last week. He ain't no"—she started fiercely again and stopped again. "But I come here fer *him*—not fer *you*. *You* oughtn't to 'a' keered. Hit wouldn't 'a' been his fault. He never was the same after he come back from here. Hit worried him most to death, an' I know hit was you—you he was always thinkin' about. He didn't keer 'cept fer you." Again that shadow came and deepened. "An' you oughtn't to 'a' keered what he was—and that's why I hate you," she said, calmly—"fer worryin' him an' bein' so high-heeled that you was willin' to let him mighty nigh bust his heart about somethin' that wasn't his

MELISSA AND MARGARET

fault. I come fer him—you understand—fer *him*. I hate *you*!"

She turned without another word, walked slowly back down the walk and through the gate. Margaret stood dazed, helpless, almost frightened. She heard the girl cough and saw now that she walked as if weak and ill. As she turned into the road, Margaret ran down the steps and across the fields to the turnpike. When she reached the road-fence the girl was coming around the bend with her eyes on the ground, and every now and then she would cough and put her hand to her breast. She looked up quickly, hearing the noise ahead of her, and stopped as Margaret climbed the low stone wall and sprang down.

"Melissa, Melissa! You mustn't hate me. You mustn't hate *me*." Margaret's eyes were streaming and her voice trembled with kindness. She walked up to the girl and put one hand on her shoulder. "You are sick. I know you are, and you must come back to the house."

Melissa gave way then, and breaking from the girl's clasp she leaned against the stone wall and sobbed, while Margaret put her arms about her and waited silently.

"Come now," she said, "let me help you over. There now. You must come back and get something to eat and lie down." And Margaret led Melissa back across the fields.