HENRY F. KEENAN

THE IRON GAME: A TALE OF THE WAR

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BOOK I.

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THE CARIBEES.

CHAPTER I.

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THE BOY IN BLUE.

When expulsion from college, in his junior years, was visited upon Jack Sprague, he straightway became the hero of Acredale. And, though the grave faculty had felt constrained to vindicate college authority, it was well known that they sympathized with the infraction of decorum that obliged them to put this mark of disgrace upon one of the most promising of their students.

All his young life Jack had dreamed of West Point and the years of training that were to fit him for the glories of war. He knew the battles of the Revolution as other boys knew the child-lore of the nursery. He had the campaigns of Marlborough, the strategy of Turenne, the inspirations of the great Frederick, and the prodigies of Napoleon, as readily on the end of his tongue as his comrades had the struggles of the Giant Killer or the tactics of Robinson Crusoe. When, inspired by the promise of West Point, he had mastered the repugnant rubrics of the village academy, the statesman of his district conferred the promised nomination upon his school rival, Wesley Boone, Jack passionately refused to pursue the arid paths of learning, and declared his purpose

of becoming a pirate, a scout, or some other equally fascinating child of nature delightful to the boyish mind.

When Jack Sprague entered Warchester College, he carried with him the light baggage of learning picked up at the Acredale Academy. At his entrance to the sequestered quadrangles of Dessau Hall, Jack's frame of mind was very much like the passionate discontent of the younger son of a feudal lord whose discrepant birthright doomed him to the gown instead of the sword.

Long before the senior year he had allured a chosen band about him who shared his eager aspiration for war, and when the other fellows dawdled in society or wrangled in debate, these young Alexanders set their tents in the college campus and fought the campaigns of Frederick or Napoleon over again. Jack did not give much heed to the menacing signs of civil war that came day by day from the tempestuous spirits North and South. A Democrat, as his fathers had been before him, he saw no probability of the pomp and circumstance of glorious war in the noisy wrangling of politicians. The defeat of Douglas, the Navarre of the young Democracy of the North, amazed him: but all thought of Lincoln asserting the national authority, and reviving the splendor of Jackson and Madison, was looked upon as the step between the sublime and the ridiculous that reasoning men refuse to consider.

When, however, the stupefying news came that a national garrison had been fired upon by the South Carolinians, in Charleston Harbor, the college boys took sides strongly. There were many in the classes from Maryland and Virginia. These were as ardent in admiration

of their Southern compatriots as the Northern boys were for the insulted Union. Months passed, and, although the forces of war were arraying themselves behind the thin veil of compromise and negotiation, the public mind only languidly convinced itself that actual war would come.

The college was divided into hostile camps. The "Secessionists," led by Vincent Atterbury, Jack's old-time chief crony, went so far as to hoist the flag of the Montgomery (Jeff Davis's) government on the campus pole, one morning in April. A fierce fight followed, in which Jack's ardent partisans made painful havoc with the limbs of the enemy—Atterbury, their leader, being carted from the campus, under the horrified eyes of the faculty, dying, as it was thought. Then followed expulsion. When the solemn words were spoken in chapel, the culprit bore up with great serenity. But when he announced that he had enlisted in the army, then such an uproar, such an outburst, that the session was at an end. Even the grave president looked sympathetic. The like of it was never seen in a sober college since Antony with Cleopatra invaded the Academy at Alexandria. The boys flung themselves upon the abashed Jack. They hugged him, raised him on their shoulders, carried him out on the campus, and, forming a ring round him, swore, in the classic form dear to collegians, that they would follow him; that they would be his soldiers, and fight for the *patria* in danger.

"I have nothing to offer you, boys. I'm only sergeant; but if you will join now, I'm authorized to swear you in provisionally," Jack said, shrewdly, seizing the flood at high tide.

So soon as the names could be written the whole senior class (forty-three) were enrolled. Jack refused the prayerful urgings of the juniors, who pleaded tearfully to join him. But the president coming out confirmed Jack's decision until the juniors could get the written consent of their parents.

The recitations were sadly disjointed that day, and the excited professors were glad when rest came. The humanities had received disjointed exposition during that session. Jack had been summoned to the president's sanctuary, where he had been received with a parental tenderness that brought the tears to his big brown eyes.

"Ah, ha! soldiers mustn't know tears. You must be made of sterner stuff now, sergeant," the doctor cried, cheerily, as the culprit stood confusedly before him. "O Jack, Jack, why did you put this hard task upon me? Why make me drive from Dessau the brightest fellow in the classes? What will your mother say? I would as soon have lost my own child as be forced to put this mark on you? But you know I am bound by the laws of the college. You know I have time and again overlooked your wild pranks. We have already suffered a good deal from the press for winking at the sympathy the college has shown in this political quarrel."

"Yes, professor, I haven't a word to say. You did your duty. Now I want you to bear witness how I do mine. I do not complain that I am condemned rather through the form than the fact. I was carried out of my senses by the sight of that rebel flag."

The Warchester press, known for many years as the most sprightly and enterprising of the country, was too much taken up with the direful news from Baltimore to even make

a note of Jack Sprague's expulsion, and the soldier boy was spared that mortification. Nor did he meet the tearful lament and heart-broken remonstrance at home, to which he had looked forward with lively dread. His friends in the village of Acredale were so astonished by his blue regimentals that he reached the homestead door unquestioned. His mother, at the dining-room window, caught sight of the uniform, and did not recognize her son until she was almost smothered in his hearty embrace.

"Why, John! What does this mean? What—what have you on?"

"Mother, I am twenty-two years old. A man who won't fight for his country isn't a good son. He has no right to stay in a country that he isn't willing to fight for!" and with this specious dictum he drew himself up and met the astonished eyes of his sister Olympia, who had been apprised of his coming. But the maternal fears clouded patriotic conceptions where her darling was involved, and his mother sobbed:

"O Jack, Jack! what shall we do? How can we live without you! And oh, my son, you are too young to go to the war. You will break down. You can't manage a—a musket, and the—the heavy load the soldiers carry. My son, don't break your mother's heart. Don't go—don't, Jack, Jack! What shall I do?—O Polly, what shall we do?"

"What shall we do? Why, we'll just show Jack that all of war isn't in soldiering; that the women who stay at home help the heroes, though they may not take part in the battle. As to you and me, mamma, we shall be the proudest women in Acredale, for our Jack's the first—" she was going

to say "boy," but, catching the coming protest in the warrior's glowing eye, substituted "man" with timely magnanimity—"the first man that volunteered from Acredale. And how shamed you would have been—we would have been—if Jack hadn't kept up the tradition of the family! He comes naturally by his sense of duty. Your father's father was the first to join Gates at Saratoga. My father's father was the right hand of Warren, at Bunker Hill! If ever blood ran like water in our Jack's veins, I should put on—trousers and go to the war myself. I'm not sure that I sha'n't as it is," and, affecting Spartan fortitude, Olympia pretended to be deeply absorbed in adjusting a disarranged furbelow in her attire to conceal the quavering in her voice and the dewy something in her dark eyes. The mother, disconcerted by this defection where she had counted on the blindest adhesion, sank back in the cane rocker, helpless, speechless.

"Yes, mother, Polly is right. How could you ever lift up your head if it were said that son of John Sprague's—Governor, Senator, minister abroad—was the last to fly to his country's call? Why, Jackson would turn in his grave if a son of John Sprague were not the first to take up arms when the Union that he loved, as he loved his life, was in peril!"

Mrs. Sprague listened with woe-begone perplexity to these sounding periods, conscious only that her darling, her adored scapegrace, had suddenly turned serious, and was using the weapons she had so often employed to justify his conduct. For it was using one of the standing arms in the maternal arsenal, to remind the wild and headstrong lad that his father had been Jackson's confidant, that he had

been Governor of Imperia, that he had enforced the demands of the United States upon European statesmen, that after a life spent in the public service he had died, reverenced by his party and by his neighbors. Jack, as an infant, had been fondled by Webster, by Clay, and, one never-to-be-forgotten day, Jackson, the Scipio of the republic, had placed his brawny hand upon the infant's head and declared that he would be "worthy of Jack Sprague, who was man enough to make two Kentuckians."

"But you—you, ought to be a colonel. Your father was a major-general in the Mexican War at twenty-five. A Sprague can't be a private soldier!" she cried, seizing on this as the only tenable ground where she could begin the contest against the two children confederated against her.

"I don't want to owe everything to my father. This is a republic, mamma, and a man is, or ought to be, what he makes himself. I saw in a paper, the other day, that the Government has more brigadiers and colonels and—and—officers than it knows what to do with. I saw it stated that a stone thrown from Willard's Hotel in Washington hit a dozen brigadiers. I want to earn a commission before I assume it. I'll be an officer soon enough, no fear. I could have had a lieutenant's commission if I had gone in Blandon's regiment. But I hate Blandon. He is one of those canting sneaks father detested, and I won't serve under such cattle."

Mrs. Sprague, like millions of mothers in those days, was cruelly divided in mind. When the neighbors felicitated her on the valor and patriotism of Mr. Jack she was elated and fitfully reconciled. When, in the long watches of the night, she reflected on the hardships, temptations, the dreadful

companions her darling must be thrown with, country, lineage, everything faded into the dreadful reality that her darling was in peril, body and soul. He was so like his father—gay, impressionable, easily influenced—he would be saint or sinner, just as his surroundings incited him. This was the woe that ate the mother's heart; this was the sorrow that clouded millions of homes when mothers saw their boys pranked out in the trappings of war.

Our jaunty Jack enjoyed the worship that came to him. He was the first boy in blue that appeared in the sandy streets of Acredale. Never had the rascal been so petted, so feted, so adored. He might have been a pasha, had he been a Turk. The promising down on his upper lip—the object of his own secret solicitude and Olympia's gibes during the junior year—was quite worn away by the kissing he underwent among the impulsive Jeannettes of the village, who had a vague notion that soldiers, like sailors, were indurated for battle by adosculation. Jack may have believed this himself, for he took no pains to disabuse the maidens as to the inefficacy of the rite, and bore with galliard fortitude the wear and tear of the nascent mustache, without which, to his mind, a soldier would figure very much as a monk without a shaven crown or a mandarin without a queue. And though presently big Tom Tooker, chief of the rival faction in Acredale, gave his name to the recruiting officer in Warchester, and a score more of Jack's rivals and cronies, he was the soldier of the village. For hadn't he given up the glory of graduation and the delights of "commencement" to take up his musket for the Union? And then the fife was heard in the village street—delicious airs from Arcady—and

a great flag was flung out from the post-office, and Master Jack was installed recruiting sergeant for Colonel Ulrich Oswald's regiment, that was to be raised in Warchester County. For Colonel Oswald, having failed in a third nomination for Congress, had gallantly proffered his services to the Governor of the State, and, in consideration of his influence with his German compatriots, had been granted a commission, though with reluctance, as he had supported the Democratic party and was not yet trusted in the Republican councils.

CHAPTER II.

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FLAG AND FAITH.

If Acredale had not been for a century the ancestral seat of the Spragues, and in its widest sense typical of the suburban Northern town, there would be merely an objective and extrinsic interest in portraying its sequestered life, its monotonous activities. But Acredale was not only a very complete reflex of Northern local sentiment; its war epoch represented the normal conduct of every hamlet in the land during the conflict with the South. Now that the war is becoming a memory, even to those who were actors in it, the facts distorted and the incidents warped to serve partisan ends or personal pique, the photograph of the time may have its value.

Made up of thriving farmers and semi-retired city men, Acredale mingled the simple conditions of a country village and the easy refinement of city life. The houses were large, the grounds ornate and ample, the society decorously convivial. People could be fine—at least they were thought very fine—without going to the British isles to recast their home manners or take hints for the fashioning of their grounds and mansions. There was what would be called to-day the English air about the place and some of the people;

but it was an inheritance, not an imitation. Save in the bustling business segment, abutting the four corners, where the old United States road bore off westward to Bucephalo and the lakes, the few score houses were set far back from the highway in a wilderness of shrubbery, secluded by hedges and shaded by an almost primeval growth of elms or maples. The whole hamlet might be mistaken for a lordly park or an old-fashioned German Spa. Family marketing was mostly done in Warchester; hence the village shops were like Arabian bazaars, few but all-supplying. The most pregnant evidence of the approach of modern ways that tinged the primitive color of the village life, was the then new railway skirting furtively through the meadows on the northern limits, as if decently ashamed of intruding upon such idyllic tranquillity. The little Gothic station, cunningly hidden behind a clustering grove of oaks at a respectful distance from the Corners, like the lodge of a great estate, reconciled those who had at first fought the iron mischief-maker.

The public edifices of the town—the Episcopal church, the free academy, the bank, the young ladies' seminary—were very unlike such institutions in the bustling, treeless towns of to-day. Corinthian columns and Greek friezes adorned these architectural evidences of Acredale's affluence and taste. The village had grown up on private grounds, conceded to the public year by year as the children and dependents of the founders increased. The Spragues were the founders, and they had never been anxious to alienate their patrimony. Acredale is not now the sylvan sanctuary of rural simplicity it was thirty years ago—before

the war. The febrile tentacles of Warchester had not yet reached out to make its vernal recesses the court quarter for the "new rich." In Jack Sprague's young warrior days the village was three miles from the most suburban limits of the city. There was not even a horse-car, or, as fashionable Warchesterians have it, a "tram," to remind the tranquil villagers that life had any need more pressing than a jaunt to the post twice a day. Some "city folks" did hold villas on the outskirts, but they used them only for short seasons in the late summer, when the air at the lake began to grow too sharp for outdoor pleasures.

Society in the place was patriarchal as an English shire town. The large Sprague mansion, about which the village clustered at a respectful distance, was the "Castle" of local phrase. Much of the glory of early days had departed, however, when the Senator—Jack's papa—died. The widow found herself unable to maintain the affluent state her lord had loved. His legal practice, rather than the wide acres of his domain, had supported a hospitality famous from Bucephalo to Washington. But with prudent management the family had abundance, and, as Jack often said, he was a fortune in himself. When the time came he would revive the splendors his father loved to associate with the home of his ancestors.

"But where are we to get this splendor now, Jack?" Olympia inquired, as the youth was dilating to his mother on the wonders to come. "Private soldiers get just thirteen dollars a month; and if you continue smoking—as I am informed all men do in the army—I expect to have to stint my pin-money expenses to eke out your tobacco bills."

"Oh, I'll bring home glory. Napoleon said that every soldier carried a marshal's *bâton* in his knapsack."

"I'm afraid you won't have room for it if you carry all the things that
I know of intended for you in this and other families."

"Yes; but, Polly, you know, or perhaps you don't know, a *bâton* is like a college love—no matter how full your heart is, you can always find room for another!"

"John," Mistress Sprague reproves mildly; "how can you? I don't like to hear my son talk like that even in jest. Don't get the idea that it is soldierly to treat sacred things with levity. Love is a very sacred thing; it ought to be part of a man's religion; it was of your father's."

"Then Jack must be a high priest, for there are a dozen girls here and in the city who believe themselves enshrined in that elastic heart."

"Olympia, you are a baleful influence on your brother. If anything could reconcile me to his going it is the thought that he will escape the extraordinary speech and manners you have brought back from New York. Do the Misses Pomfret graduate all their young ladies with such a tone and laxity of speech as you have lately shown? Strangers would naturally think that you had no training at home."

"Don't fear, mamma; strangers are not favored with my lighter vein; I assume that for you and Jack, to keep your minds from graver things. I preserve the senatorial suavity of speech and the Sprague austerity of manner 'before folks,' as Aunt Merry would say. Which reminds me, Jack, Kitty Moore declares that you are responsible for Barney's

enlisting. The family look to you to bring him home safe—a colonel at least."

"Well, by George, I like that! Why, the beggar was bent on going long ago. He was the first to ask me to run away and enlist. The other day he wanted me to have him sworn in, and I told him to wait until—until I got a commission." Jack was going to say until he was older, but he suddenly recollected that Barney was his own age, and that, in view of his mother's argument, struck him as unfortunate. He saw Olympia smiling mischievously and turned the subject abruptly. "I suppose you know, Polly, that Vincent is going home to join the rebels?"

"Is he?" She had turned swiftly to gather a ball of worsted, and when it was secured began to rummage in her work-basket for something that seemed from her intentness to be vitally necessary to her at the moment.

"Yes, he wrote to President Grandison that he should go as soon as his passports and remittances came. He's promised a captain's commission. I'm very, very sorry. Vint is the noblest of fellows. I hate to think of him in the rebel army."

"That's the reason you half killed him the other day, I suppose,"
Olympia said, sweetly, still investigating the contents of the basket.

"What, John, you've not been in a broil—fighting?" and Mistress Sprague could not, even in imagination, go further in such an odious direction, and let her eyes finish the interrogatory.

Jack, a good deal subdued by what Olympia had left unsaid, rather than what she had said, blurted out: "It was a campus shindy: Vint led the rebel side and they got licked, that's all."

"Oh, was that all?" Olympia had ended her search in the basket and fastened a glance of satiric good humor upon the culprit, which did not tend to relieve the awkwardness of the moment. Jack blushed under the glance and began to hum an air from Figaro, as if the conversation had ebbed into an impass from which it could only be rescued by a lively air.

Mrs. Sprague looked at the uneasy warrior, then at her daughter, darting the crochet-needles placidly through the wool.

"Well," she said, "never mind what's past; we must have Vincent out here for a visit before he goes. I must send Mrs. Atterbury a number of things. I hope she won't think that we intend to let the war make any difference in our feeling toward the family."

Jack was very glad to set out at once for his quondam foe, and in ten minutes was driving down the road to Warchester. Vincent's bruises were nearly healed, and he saluted Jack as a "chum" rather than as the agent of his late discomfiture.

"I'm mighty glad you've come to day. I didn't know whether you meant to break off or not. I don't cherish any rancor. I don't see any use in carrying the war into friendships. We made the best fight we could. We did better than your side. You had the most men and the biggest fellows. We showed good pluck, if we did get licked. If you

hadn't come to-day I should have been gone without seeing you, for I began to think that you were as narrow as these prating abolitionists. My commission is ready for me now at Richmond, and I'm just aching to get my regimentals on. I'm to be with Johnston in the Shenandoah, you know, and—"

"You mustn't tell me your army plans, Vint. I'm a soldier," and Jack drew himself up with martial pomposity, "and—and—perhaps I ought to arrest you now as an enemy, you know. I will look in the articles of war and find out my duty in such cases." Jack waved his arm reassuringly, as if to bid the rebel take heart for the moment—he would not hurry in the matter. Vincent eyed his comrade with such a woe-begone mingling of alarm and comic indignation that Jack forgot his possible part as agent of his country's laws, and said, soothingly: "Never mind, Vint, I'm not really a full soldier in the technical sense until the regiment is mustered in at Washington. After that, of course, you know very well it would he treason to give aid or comfort to the country's enemies."

Vincent didn't leave next day, nor for a good many days. He seemed to get a good deal of "aid and comfort" from those who should have been his enemies. Mistress Sprague found that he was not in a fit state to travel; that he needed nursing to prepare him for his journey, and that no place was so fit as the great guest-chamber in the baronial Sprague mansion, near his friend Jack. Strange to say, Vincent's eagerness to get to Richmond and his shoulder-straps were forgotten in the agreeable pastimes of the big house, where he spent hours enlightening Olympia on the wonders the Southern soldiers were to perform and the

glory that he (Vincent) was to win. He went of a morning to the post-office, where Jack was installed recruiting-agent for Acredale township, and made very merry over the homespun stuff enrolled in defense of the Union.

"Our strapping cavaliers will make short work of your gawky bumpkins;" he remarked to Jack as the recruits loitered about the wide, shaded streets, waiting to be forwarded to the rendezvous.

"Don't be too sure of that. These young, boyish-looking fellows are just the sort of men that met the British at Bunker Hill. They laughed too, when they saw them; but they didn't laugh after they met them, nor will your cavaliers," Jack cried, loftily.

"But there's not a full-grown man among all these I've seen. How do you suppose they are to endure march and battle? None of them can ride. All our young men ride, and cavalry is the main thing in modern armies."

In the Sprague parlors conversation of this risky sort was eschewed. Mistress Sprague was anxious that the son of her oldest friend should return to his mother with only the memory of amiable hospitality in his heart to show that, although war raged between the people, families were still friends. Vincent's mother had been one of Mistress Sprague's bridesmaids, and it was her wish that the children might grow up in the old kindly ties. So Vincent was made much of. There were companies every night, and drives and boating in the afternoons, and such merry-making as it was thought a lad of his years would enjoy. He was a very entertaining guest; that all Acredale had known in the old

vacations when, with his sister, the pretty Rosa, he spent a summer with the Spragues.

But, now that there was to be a separation involving the unknown in its vaguest form, the lad was treated with a tenderness that made the swift days very sweet to the young rebel. It was from Olympia that he met the only distinct formality in the manners of his hosts. He had known and adored her in a boyish way for years, and now, as he contemplated going, he thought that she ought to exhibit something of the old-time warmth. In other days she had ridden, walked, and flirted to his heart's desire. Now she avoided him when Jack was not at hand, and when she talked it was in a flippant vein that drove him wild with baffled hope. The day before he was to bid the kind house adieu he had his wish. She was riding with him over the shaded roadway that curves in bewildering beauty toward the lake. She seemed in a gentler mood than he had lately seen her. They rode slowly side by side, but Vincent had a dismal awkwardness of speech in whimsical contrast to his habitual fluency.

"There's only one thing hateful to me in this war," he said, caressing the arching neck of his horse, "and that is, the better we do our duty as soldiers the more sorrow we must bring upon our own friends."

"That's a rather solemn view to take of what Jack regards as the path of glory."

"Oh, you know what I mean: under the flag there can or ought to be no friendships—the bullet sent from the musket, the sword drawn in light, must be aimed blindly. It might be my fate, for example, to meet Jack, to—to—"

"Yes," Olympia laughed demurely, ignoring the sentimental aspect of Vincent's remark. "Yes, that might paralyze the arm of valor; but, then, you and Jack have met before, when duty demanded one thing and affection another: I don't see that the dilemma softened the blows, or that either of you are any the worse for them."

Vincent was the real Southerner of his epoch—impulsive, sentimental, ardent in all that he espoused, without the slightest notion of humor, though imaginative as a dreamer; love, war, and his State, Virginia, were passions that he thought it a duty to uphold at any and all times. He colored under the girl's satiric sally. If she had been a man he would have bid her to battle on the spot. Her sly fun and gentle malice he resented as insulting, coarse, and unwomanly. He flashed a look of piteous, surprised reproach at her as she flecked the flies from the neck of her horse. He rode along moodily—too angry, too wretched to trust himself to speak, for he felt sure he must say something bitter. But, as she gave no sign of resuming the discourse, he was forced to take up the burden again. Venturing nearer her side, he said in a conciliating, argumentative tone, as if he had not heard the foregoing speech:

"Do you know, it seems to me, Olympia, that you of the North do not seem to realize the seriousness of the war, the determination of our side to make the South free? Here you go about the common business of life, parties, balls, dress, and all the follies of peace, as if war could not affect you at all. Your newspapers are full of coarse jokes at the expense of your own soldiers, your own President. There seems no devotion to your own cause, such as we feel in the South. I

believe that if put to a vote more than half the North would side with us to-day."

CHAPTER III.

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MALBROOK S'EN VA-T-EN GUERRE.

Olympia had been jogging along, apparently oblivious to everything but the blazing vision of sun and cloud above the lake, purpling shapes of mirage, reflecting the smooth surface of the glowing water. But as the young man's voice—fallen into a melodious murmur—ceased, she took up the theme with unexpected earnestness.

"That's the error the South has made from the first. You know my father was a public man. I have been educated more at our dinner-table and in his talks with guests than at school. That is, the things that have taken strongest hold of my mind young girls rarely hear or understand. Now I think I can tell you something that may be of value to you in official places where you are going. The North is not only in earnest—it is religiously in earnest. If you know Puritan history you know what that means. For example: if Jack had hesitated a moment or made delay to get rank in the army, I should have abhorred him. So would our mother, though she seems to be dismayed at his serving as a common soldier. I adore Jack; I think him the finest, the most perfect nature after my father's—that lives. But I give him up gladly, because to keep him would be to degrade him. We know that he may

fall; that he may come back to us a cripple or worse. But, as you see, we make no sign. Not a line of routine has been changed in the house. Jack will march away and never see a tear in my eye or feel my pulse tremble. It is not in our Northern blood to give much expression to sentiment, but we feel none the less deeply—much more deeply, I think, than you exuberant Southerners; you are impulsive, mercurial, and fickle."

"Oh, don't say that: I can't bear to hear you say it; we have deep feelings, we are constant, true as steel, chivalrous—"

"Yes, you are delightful people; but you are always living in the past. Shall I say it? You are womanlike; you can't reason. What you want at the moment is right, and only that; with us nothing is real until we have tried and proved it. If you count on Northern apathy you will soon see your mistake. When Beauregard fired on Fort Sumter the North was of one mind, and will stay so until all is again as it was."

"Pray don't let us talk on this subject. I'm free to own that it does not interest me. Then," he added adroitly, "you are readier in argument than I, because you were brought up in it. But what I want to say is, that it seems base for me to turn upon the goodness I have met in this house, and—and—"

"But you need not turn. In battle do your duty like a man. If it should fall to you to do a kindness to the wounded, do it in memory of the friends you have here. War is less savage now than it was when your ancestors and mine tortured each other in the name of God and the king."

"All murder is done for love of one sort or another: war is love of country; revenge is love of some one else—men rarely kill from hate," Vincent stammered, his heart beating at the nearness of what he was dying to say.

"In that case I hope I shall he hated. I shall shun people who love me," and with that she struck the horse a lively tap and soon was far ahead of her tongue-tied wooer. Was this a challenge? Vincent asked himself, as he sped after her. When he reached her side the tender words were chilled on his lips, for Olympia had in her laughing eye the, to him, odious expression he saw there when she made the irritating speech about himself and Jack a few minutes before. Fearing a teasing retort, he bridled the tender outburst and rode along pensively, revolving pretexts for another day's stay in Acredale. But when they reached home he found an imperative mandate to set out at once, as his lingering in the North was subjecting himself and kinsmen to doubt among the zealous partisans of the Davis party. Olympia was alone in the library when he ran down to tell Jack that he must start at once. He took it as an omen, and said, confusedly:

"It is decided; I must go in the morning."

As this had been the plan all along, she looked up at him in surprise, not knowing, of course, that he had been thinking of putting off the fixed time.

"Yes, everything has been made ready; Jack will take you to Warchester, and we shall drive over to see you *en route*."

"It is fortunate the letter from my mother came to-night." He stood quite, over her chair, his eyes glittering strangely, his manner excited.