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SECRET SERVICE

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Secret Service

Being the Happenings of a Night in Richmond in the Spring of 1865

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CHAPTER I

THE BATTERY PASSES

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Outside, the softness of an April night; the verdure of tree and lawn, the climbing roses, already far advanced in that southern latitude, sweetly silvered in the moonlight. Within the great old house apparently an equal calm.

Yet, neither within nor without was the night absolutely soundless. Far away to the southward the cloudless horizon, easily visible from the slight eminence on which the house stood, was marked by quivering flashes of lurid light. From time to time, the attentive ear might catch the roll, the roar, the reverberation of heavy sound like distant thunder-peals intermingled with sharper detonations. The flashes came from great guns, and the rolling peals were the sound of the cannon, the detonations explosions of the shells. There was the peace of God in the heaven above; there were the passions of men on the earth beneath.

Lights gleamed here and there, shining through the twining rose foliage, from the windows of the old house, which stood far back from the street. From a room on one side of the hall, which opened from the broad pillared portico of Colonial fashion, a hum of voices arose.

A group of women, with nervous hands and anxious faces, working while they talked, were picking lint, tearing linen and cotton for bandages. Their conversation was not the idle chatter of other days. They “told sad stories of the death of kings!” How “Tom” and “Charles” and “Allen” and

“Page” and “Burton” had gone down into the Valley of the Shadow of Death, whence they had not come back. How this fort had been hammered yesterday, the other, the day before. How So-and-So’s wounds had been ministered to. How Such-a-One’s needs had been relieved. How the enemy were drawing closer and closer and closer, and how they were being held back with courage, which, alas! by that time was the courage of despair. And much of their speech was of their own kind, of bereft women and fatherless children. And ever as they talked, the busy fingers flew.

Upstairs from one of the front rooms the light shone dimly through a window partly covered by a half-drawn Venetian blind. One standing at the side of the house and listening would have heard out of the chamber low moanings, muttered words from feverish lips and delirious brain. The meaningless yet awful babble was broken now and again by words of tenderness and anguish. Soft hands were laid on the burning brow of the poor sufferer within, while a mother’s eyes dropped tears upon bloodstained bandages and wasted frame.

And now the gentle wind which swept softly through the trees bore a sudden sharper, stranger sound toward the old house in the garden. The tramp of horse, the creak of wheels, the faint jingling of arms and sabres drew nearer and rose louder. Sudden words of command punctured the night. Here came a battery, without the rattle of drum or the blare of bugles, with no sound but its own galloping it rolled down the street. Lean, gaunt horses were ridden and driven by leaner and gaunter men in dusty, worn, ragged, tattered

uniforms. Only the highly polished brass guns—twelve-pounder Napoleons—gleamed bright in the moonlight.

The sewing women came out on the porch and the blind of the window above was lifted and a white-haired woman stood framed in the light.

No, those watchers did not cheer as the battery swept by on its way to the front. For one thing, a soldier lay upstairs dying; for another, they had passed the time when they cheered that tattered flag. Now they wept over it as one weeps as he beholds for the last time the face of a friend who dies. Once they had acclaimed it as the sunrise in the morning, now they watched it silently go inevitably to the sunset of defeat.

The men did not cheer either. They were not past cheering—oh, no! They were made of rougher stuff than the women, and the time would come when, in final action, they would burst forth into that strange, wild yell that struck terror to the hearts of the hearers. They could cheer even in the last ditch, even in the jaws of death—face the end better for their cheering perhaps; but women are more silent in the crisis. They bear and give no tongue.

The officer in command saw the little group of women on the porch. The moonlight shone from the street side and high-lighted them, turning the rusty black of most of the gowns, home-dyed mourning,—all that could be come at in those last awful days in Richmond,—into soft shadows, above which their faces shone angelic. He saw the woman’s head in the window, too. He knew who lay upon the bed of death within the chamber. He had helped to bring him back from the front several days before. He bit his lips for a

moment and then, ashamed of his emotion, his voice rang harsh. With arm and sabre the battery saluted the women and passed on, while from the window of the great drawing-room, opposite the room of the lint-pickers and bandage-tearers, a slender boy stared and stared after the disappearing guns, his eyes full of envy and vexatious tears as he stamped his foot in futile protest and disappointment.

The noise made by the passing cannon soon died away in the distance. Stillness supervened as before; workers whispered together, realising that some of those passing upon whom they had looked would pass no more, and that they would look upon them never again. Upstairs the moans of the wounded man had died away, the only thing that persisted was the fearful thundering of the distant guns around beleaguered Petersburg. Within the drawing-room, the boy walked up and down restlessly, muttering to himself, evidently nerving himself to desperate resolution.

“I won’t do it,” he said. “I won’t stay here any longer.”

He threw up his hands and turned to the portraits that adorned the room, portraits that carried one back through centuries to the days of the first cavalier of the family, who crossed the seas to seek his fortune in a new land, and it was a singular thing that practically every one of them wore a sword.

“You all fought,” said the boy passionately, “and I am going to.”

The door at the other end was softly opened. The great room was but dimly lighted by candles in sconces on the wall; the great chandelier was not lighted for lack of tapers, but a more brilliant radiance was presently cast over the

apartment by the advent of old Martha. She had been the boy's "Mammy" and the boy's father's "Mammy" as well, and no one dared to speculate how much farther into the past she ran back.

"Is dat you, Mars Wilfred?" said the old woman, waddling into the room, both hands extended, bearing two many-branched candle-sticks, which she proceeded to deposit upon the handsome mahogany tables with which the long drawing-room was furnished.

"Yes, it is I, Aunt Martha. Did you see Benton's Battery go by?"

"Lawd lub you, chile, Ah done seed so many guns an' hosses an' soljahs a-gwine by Ah don't tek no notice ob 'em no mo'. 'Peahs lak dey keep on a-passin' by fo'ebah."

"Well, there won't be many more of them pass by," said the boy in a clear accent, but with that soft intonation which would have betrayed his Southern ancestry anywhere, "and before they are all gone, I would like to join one of them myself."

"Why, my po' li'l lamb!" exclaimed Martha, her arms akimbo, "dat Ah done nussed in dese ahms, is you gwine to de fight!"

The boy's demeanour was anything but lamb-like. He made a fierce step toward her.

"Don't you call me 'lamb' any more," he said, "it's ridiculous and——"

Mammy Martha started back in alarm.

"'Peahs mo' lak a lion'd be better," she admitted.

"Where's mother?" asked the boy, dismissing the subject as unworthy of argument.

“I reckon she’s upstaihs wid Mars Howard, suh. Yo’ bruddah——”

“I want to see her right away,” continued the boy impetuously.

“Mars Howard he’s putty bad dis ebenin’,” returned Martha. “Ah bettah go an’ tell her dat you want her, but Ah dunno’s she’d want to leab him.”

“Well, you tell her to come as soon as she can. I’m awfully sorry for Howard, but it’s living men that the Confederacy needs most now.”

“Yas, suh,” returned the old nurse, with a quizzical look out of her black eyes at the slender boy before her. “Dey suah does need men,” she continued, and as the youngster took a passionate step toward her, she deftly passed out of the room and closed the door behind her, and he could hear her ponderous footsteps slowly and heavily mounting the steps.

The boy went to the window again and stared into the night. In his preoccupation he did not catch the sound of a gentler footfall upon the stairs, nor did he notice the opening of the door and the silent approach of a woman, the woman with white hair who had stood at the window. The mother of a son dead, a son dying, and a son living. No distinctive thing that in the Confederacy. Almost any mother who had more than one boy could have been justly so characterised. She stopped half-way down the room and looked lovingly and longingly at the slight, graceful figure of her youngest son. Her eyes filled with tears—for the dying or the living or both? Who can say? She went toward him,

laid her hand on his shoulder. He turned instantly and at the sight of her tears burst out quickly:

“Howard isn’t worse, is he?” for a moment forgetful of all else.

The woman shook her head.

“I am afraid he is. The sound of that passing battery seemed to excite him so. He thought he was at the front again and wanted to get up.”

“Poor old Howard!”

“He’s quieter now, perhaps——”

“Mother, is there anything I can do for him?”

“No, my son,” answered the woman with a sigh, “I don’t think there is anything that anybody can do. We can only wait—and hope. He is in God’s hands, not ours.”

She lifted her face for a moment and saw beyond the room, through the night, and beyond the stars a Presence Divine, to Whom thousands of other women in that dying Confederacy made daily, hourly, and momentary prayers. Less exalted, more human, less touched, the boy bowed his head, not without his own prayer, too.

“But you wanted to see me, Wilfred, Martha said,” the woman presently began.

“Yes, mother, I——”

The boy stopped and the woman was in no hurry to press him. She divined what was coming and would fain have avoided it all.

“I am thankful there is a lull in the cannonading,” she said, listening. “I wonder why it has stopped?”

“It has not stopped,” said Wilfred, “at least it has gone on all evening.”

“I don’t hear it now.”

“No, but you will—there!”

“Yes, but compared to what it was yesterday—you know how it shook the house—and Howard suffered so through it.”

“So did I,” said the boy in a low voice fraught with passion.

“You, my son?”

“Yes, mother, when I hear those guns and know that the fighting is going on, it fairly maddens me——”

But Mrs. Varney hastily interrupted her boy. Woman-like she would thrust from her the decision which she knew would be imposed upon her.

“Yes, yes,” she said; “I know how you suffered,—we all suffered, we——” She turned away, sat down in a chair beside the table, leaned her head in her hands, and gave way to her emotions. “There has been nothing but suffering, suffering since this awful war began,” she murmured.

“Mother,” said Wilfred abruptly, “I want to speak to you. You don’t like it, of course, but you have just got to listen this time.”

Mrs. Varney lifted her head from her hands. Wilfred came nearer to her and dropped on his knees by her side. One hand she laid upon his shoulder, the other on his head. She stared down into his up-turned face.

“I know—I know, my boy—what you want.”

“I can’t stay here any longer,” said the youth; “it is worse than being shot to pieces. I just have to chain myself to the floor whenever I hear a cannon-shot or see a soldier. When can I go?”

The woman stared at him. In him she saw faintly the face of the boy dying upstairs. In him she saw the white face of the boy who lay under the sun and dew, dead at Seven Pines. In him she saw all her kith and kin, who, true to the traditions of that house, had given up their lives for a cause now practically lost. She could not give up the last one. She drew him gently to her, but, boy-like, he disengaged himself and drew away with a shake of his head, not that he loved his mother the less, but honour—as he saw it—the more.

“Why don’t you speak?” he whispered at last.

“I don’t know what to say to you, Wilfred,” faltered his mother, although there was but one thing to say, and she knew that she must say it, yet she was fighting, woman-like, for time.

“I will tell you what to say,” said the boy.

“What?”

“Say that you won’t mind if I go down to Petersburg and enlist.”

“But that would not be true, Wilfred,” said his mother, smiling faintly.

“True or not, mother, I can’t stay here.”

“Oh, Wilfred, Russell has gone, and Howard is going, and now you want to go and get killed.”

“I don’t want to be killed at all, mother.”

“But you are so young, my boy.”

“Not younger than Tom Kittridge,” answered the boy; “not younger than Ell Stuart or Cousin Steven or hundreds of other boys down there. See, mother—they have called for all over eighteen, weeks ago; the seventeen call may be out any moment; the next one after that takes me. Do you want

me to stay here until I am ordered out! I should think not. Where's your pride?"

"My pride? Ah, my son, it is on the battlefield, over at Seven Pines, and upstairs with Howard."

"Well, I don't care, mother," he persisted obstinately. "I love you and all that, you know it,—but I can't stand this. I've got to go. I must go."

Mrs. Varney recognised from the ring of determination in the boy's voice that his mind was made up. She could no longer hold him. With or without her consent he would go, and why should she withhold it? Other boys as young as hers had gone and had not come back. Aye, there was the rub: she had given one, the other trembled on the verge, and now the last one! Yes, he must go, too,—to live or die as God pleased. If they wanted her to sacrifice everything on the altar of her country, she had her own pride, she would do it, as hundreds of other women had done. She rose from her chair and went toward her boy. He was a slender lad of sixteen but was quite as tall as she. As he stood there he looked strangely like his father, thought the woman.

"Well," she said at last, "I will write to your father and ——"

"But," the boy interrupted in great disappointment, "that'll take forever. You never can tell where his brigade is from day to day. I can't wait for you to do that."

"Wilfred," said his mother, "I can't let you go without his consent. You must be patient. I will write the letter at once, and we will send it by a special messenger. You ought to hear by to-morrow."

The boy turned away impatiently and strode toward the door.

“Wilfred,” said his mother gently. The tender appeal in her voice checked him. She came over to him and put her arm about his shoulders. “Don’t feel bad, my boy, that you have to stay another day with your mother. It may be many days, you know, before——”

“It isn’t that,” said Wilfred.

“My darling boy—I know it. You want to fight for your country—and I’m proud of you. I want my sons to do their duty. But with your father at the front, one boy dead, and the other wounded, dying——”

She turned away.

“You will write father to-night, won’t you?”

“Yes—yes!”

“I’ll wait, then, until we have had time to get a reply,” said the boy.

“Yes, and then you will go away. I know what your father’s answer will be. The last of my boys—Oh, God, my boys!”

CHAPTER II

A COMMISSION FROM THE PRESIDENT

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The door giving entrance to the hall was opened unceremoniously by the rotund and privileged Martha. She came at an opportune time, relieving the tension between the mother and son. Wilfred was not insensible to his mother's feelings, but he was determined to go to the front. He was glad of the interruption and rather shamefacedly took advantage of it by leaving the room.

"Well, Martha, what is it?" asked Mrs. Varney, striving to regain her composure.

"Deys one ob de men fum de hossiple heah, ma'am."

"Another one?"

"Ah 'clah to goodness, ma'am, dey jes' keeps a-comin' an' a-comin'. 'Peahs like we cain't keep no close fo' ourse'f; de sheets an' tablecloths an' napkins an' eben de young misstess' petticoats, dey all hab to go."

"And we have just sent all the bandages we have," said Mrs. Varney, smiling.

"Den we got to git some mo'. Dey says dey's all used up, an' two mo' trains jes' come in crowded full o' wounded sojahs—an' mos' all ob 'em dreffeul bad!"

"Is Miss Kittridge here yet, Martha?"

"Yas'm, Ah jes' seed her goin' thu de hall into de libr'y."

"Ask her if they have anything to send. Even if it's only a little let them have it. What they need most is bandages.

There are some in Howard’s room, too. Give them half of what you find there. I think what we have left will last long enough to—to——”

“Yas’m,” said old Martha, sniffing. “Ah’m a-gwine. Does you want to see de man?”

“Yes, send him in,” said Mrs. Varney.

There was a light tap on the door after Martha went out.

“Come in,” said the mistress of the house, and there entered to her a battered and dilapidated specimen of young humanity, his arm in a sling. “My poor man!” exclaimed Mrs. Varney. “Sit down.”

“Thank you, ma’am.”

“Martha,” she called to the old woman, who paused at the door on her way to the stairs, “can’t you get something to eat and drink for this gentleman?”

“Well, the pantry ain’t obahflowin’, as you know, Mrs. Varney. But Ah reckon Ah might fin’ a glass o’ milk ef Ah jes’ had to.”

“All our wine has gone long ago,” said Mrs. Varney to the soldier, “but if a glass of milk——”

“I haven’t seen a glass of milk for three years, ma’am,” answered the man, smiling; “it would taste like nectar.”

“Martha will set it for you in the dining-room while you are waiting. What hospital did you come from, by the way?”

“The Winder, ma’am.”

“And is it full?”

“They are laying them on blankets on the floor. You can hardly step for wounded men.”

“I suppose you need everything?”

“Everything, but especially bandages.”

“Have you been over to St. Paul’s Church? The ladies are working there to-night.”

“Yes, ma’am, I’ve been over there, but they’re not working for the hospital; they’re making sand-bags for fortifications.”

“And where are you from?”

“I’m a Louisiana Tiger, ma’am,” answered the man proudly.

“You don’t look much like it now,” said the woman, smiling.

“No, I guess the lamb is more like me now, but just wait until I get well enough to go to the front again,” admitted the soldier cheerfully.

At this moment one of the ladies who had been working in the other room came in carrying a small packet of bandages done up in a coarse brown paper.

“Oh, Miss Kittridge,” said Mrs. Varney, “here is the gentleman who——”

Miss Kittridge was a very business-like person.

“This is every scrap we have,” she said, handing the soldier the parcel with a little bow. “If you will come back in an hour or two, perhaps we shall have more for you.”

“Thank you, ladies, and God bless you. I don’t know what our poor fellows in the hospitals would do if it weren’t for you.”

“Don’t forget your milk in the dining-room,” said Mrs. Varney.

“I’m not likely to, ma’am,” returned the soldier, as, in spite of his wounded arm, he bowed gracefully to the women.

In the hall Martha’s voice could be heard exclaiming:

“Come right dis way, you po’ chile, an’ see what Ah’s got fo’ you in de dinin’-room.”

“You must be tired to death,” said Mrs. Varney to Miss Kittridge, looking at the white face of the other woman. Her brother had been killed a few days before, but the clods had scarcely rattled down upon his coffin before she was energetically at work again—for other women’s brothers.

“No, no,” she said bravely; “and our tiredness is nothing compared to the weariness of our men. We are going to stay late to-night, Mrs. Varney, if you will let us. There’s so many more wounded come in it won’t do to stop now. We have found some old linen that will make splendid bandages, and ——”

“My dear girl,” said the matron, “stay as long as you possibly can. I will see if Martha can’t serve you something to eat after a while. I don’t believe there is any tea left in the house.”

“Bread and butter will be a feast,” said Miss Kittridge.

“And I don’t believe there is much butter either,” smiled the older woman.

“Well, it doesn’t matter,” said the other. “Is—is your son—is there any change?”

“Not for the better,” was the reply. “I am afraid his fever is increasing.”

“And has the surgeon seen him this evening?”

“Not to-night.”

“Why not!” exclaimed Miss Kittridge in great surprise. “Surely his condition is sufficiently critical to demand more than one brief visit in the morning.”

“I can’t ask him to come twice with so many waiting for him,” said Mrs. Varney.

“But they would not refuse you, Mrs. Varney,” said Miss Kittridge quickly. “There’s that man going back to the hospital, he’s in the dining-room yet. I’ll call him and send word that——”

She started impulsively toward the door, but Mrs. Varney caught her by the arm.

“No,” she said firmly; “I can’t let you.”

“Not for your own son?”

“I am thinking of the sons of other mothers. The surgeon has done all that he can for him. And think how many other sons would have to be neglected if he visited mine twice. He will come again to-morrow.”

The second woman stood looking at her in mingled sympathy and amazement, and there was a touch of pride in her glance, too. She was proud of her sex, and she had a right to be there in Richmond that spring, if ever.

“I understand,” said Miss Kittridge at last. “I suppose you are right.”

They stared at each other, white-faced, a moment, when there entered to them youth and beauty incarnate. There was enough resemblance between the pale, white-haired mother and the girlish figure in the doorway to proclaim their relationship. The girl’s cheek had lost some of its bloom and some of its roundness. There was too much that was appalling and fearful in and about Richmond then not to leave its mark even upon the most youthful and the most buoyant, yet things did not come home to the young as they did to those older. She was still a lovely picture, especially in

the soft radiance of the candles. She carried her hat in her hand. The flowers upon it were assuredly those of yesteryear, it would not have passed muster as the mode anywhere except in besieged Richmond; and her dress, although it fitted her perfectly, was worn and faded and had been turned and patched and altered until it was quite beyond further change, yet she wore it as airily as if it had been tissue of silver or cloth of gold.

The mother's face brightened.

"Edith dear," she exclaimed, "how late you are! It is after eight o'clock. You must be tired out."

"I am not tired at all," answered the girl cheerily. "I have not been at the hospital all afternoon; this is my day off. How is Howard?"

"I wish I could say just the same, but he seems a little worse."

The girl's face went suddenly grave. She stepped over to her mother, took her hand and patted it softly.

"Is there nothing you can do?"

"My dear," said her mother, "Howard—we—are all in God's hands."

She drew a long breath and lifted her head bravely.

"Miss Kittridge," said the girl, "I have something very important to tell mother, and——"

Miss Kittridge smiled back at her.

"I am going right away, honey. There is lots of work for us to do and——"

"You don't mind, I hope," said Edith Varney, calling after her as she went into the hall.

"No, indeed," was the reply.

Mrs. Varney sat down wearily by the table, and Edith pulled up a low stool and sat at her feet.

“Well, my dear?”

“Mamma—what do you think? What do you think?”

“I think a great many things,” said Mrs. Varney, “but——”

“Yes, but you wouldn’t ever think of this.”

“Certainly I shall not, unless you tell me.”

“Well, I have been to see the President.”

“The President—Mr. Davis!”

“Yes.”

“And what did you go to see the President for?”

“I asked him for an appointment for Captain Thorne.”

“For Captain Thorne! My dear——”

“Yes, mother, for the War Department Telegraph Service. And he gave it to me, a special commission. He gave it to me for father’s sake and for Captain Thorne’s sake,—he has met him and likes him,—and for my own.”

“What sort of an appointment?”

“Appointing him to duty here in Richmond, a very important position. He won’t be sent to the front, and he will be doing his duty just the same.”

“But, Edith, you don’t—you can’t——”

“Yes, it will, mother. The President,—I just love him,—told me they needed a man who understood telegraphing and who was of high enough rank to take charge of the service. As you know, most of the telegraph operators are privates, and Captain Thorne is an expert. Since he’s been here in Richmond he’s helped them in the telegraph office often. Lieutenant Foray told me so.”

Mrs. Varney rose and moved away. Edith followed her.

“Now, mamma!” she exclaimed; “I feel you are going to scold me, and you must not, because it’s all fixed and the commission will be sent over here in a few minutes—just as soon as it can be made out—and when it comes I am going to give it to him myself.”

Mrs. Varney moved over toward the table and lifted a piece of paper, evidently a note.

“He is coming this evening,” she said.

“How do you know?” asked her daughter.

“Well, for one thing,” said her mother, “I can remember very few evenings when he hasn’t been here since he was able to walk out of the hospital.”

“Mamma!”

“And for another thing, this note came about half an hour ago.”

“Is it for me?”

“For me, my dear, else I shouldn’t have opened it. You can read it, if you like.”

“Has it been here all this time?” exclaimed Edith jealously.

“All this time. You will see what he says. This will be his last call; he has his orders to leave.”

“Why, it’s too ridiculous!” said the girl; “just as if the commission from the President wouldn’t supersede everything else. It puts him at the head of the Telegraph Service. He will be in command of the Department. He says it is a good-bye call, does he?” She looked at the note again and laughed, “All the better, it will be that much more of a surprise. Now, mamma, don’t you breathe a word about it, I want to tell him myself.”

“But, Edith dear—I am sorry to criticise you—but I don’t at all approve of your going to the President about this. It doesn’t seem quite the proper thing for a young lady to interest herself so far——”

“But listen, mamma,” and as she spoke the light went out of Miss Edith’s face at her mother’s grave and somewhat reproving aspect. “I couldn’t go to the War Department people. Mr. Arrelsford is there in one of the offices, and ever since I—I refused him, you know how he has treated me! If I had applied for anything there, it would have been refused at once, and he would have got them to order Captain Thorne away right off. I know he would—why, that is where his orders came from!”

“But, my dear——”

“That is where they came from. Isn’t it lucky I got that commission to-day. There’s the bell; I wonder who it can be?” She stopped and listened while the door opened and Jonas, the butler, entered. “Is it Captain Thorne?” asked Edith eagerly.

“No, ma’am.”

“Oh!”

“It’s another offisuh, ma’am. He says he’s fum de President an’ he’s got to see Miss Edith pussonally.”

Jonas extended a card which, as he spoke, Edith took and glanced at indifferently.

“Lieutenant Maxwell,” she read.

“Ask the gentleman in, Jonas,” said Mrs. Varney.

“It’s come,” whispered Edith to her mother.

“Do you know who he is?”

“No—but he’s from the President—it must be that commission.”

At this moment old Jonas ushered into the drawing-room a very dashing young officer, handsome in face, gallant in bearing, and dressed in a showy and perfectly fitting uniform, which was quite a contrast to the worn habiliments of the men at the front. Mrs. Varney stepped forward a little, and Lieutenant Maxwell bowed low before her.

“Good-evening, ma’am. Have I the honour of addressing Miss Varney?”

“I am Mrs. Varney, sir.”

“Madam,” said the Lieutenant, “I am very much afraid this looks like an intrusion on my part, but I come from the President, and he desires me to see Miss Varney personally.”

“Any one from the President could not be otherwise than welcome, sir. This is my daughter. Edith, let me present Lieutenant Maxwell.”

The young Lieutenant, greatly impressed, bowed profoundly before her, and taking a large brown envelope from his belt, handed it to her.

“Miss Varney,” he said, “the President directed me to deliver this into your hands, with his compliments. He is glad to be able to do this, he says, not only at your request, but because of your father and for the merits of the gentleman in question.”

“Oh, thank you,” cried the girl, taking the envelope.

“Won’t you be seated, Lieutenant Maxwell?” said Mrs. Varney.

“Yes, do,” urged the girl, holding the envelope pressed very tightly to her side.