



"He seized Val's arm_roughly."

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WANDERERS IN THE WAR.

By A. A. METHLEY.

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CHAPTER XVII.

AND in the meantime, what had happened to Val? She had not been a bit frightened at first. But it was lonely in the wood, and except for the distant thunder of the guns, very silent.

The little girl began to wonder whether she were not rather frightened after all, and she wished with all her heart that the wounded man would open his eyes and speak to her, or that Roger would come back.

At last the hoot of a horn was heard far away and then the sound of a motor coming nearer and nearer. Val stumbled to her feet and limped out from among the bushes. Could it be Roger returning on his cycle? But no, this motor was coming from the north, and now she could see it, a long, low car, rushing towards her at a great speed. She struggled forward and stood recklessly in the middle of the sandy road waving the great bracken frond above her head.

'Stop! stop!' the child's voice rang out clear and shrill, and then the motorists saw her, there was a loud exclamation, and the car swerved sharply to one side, its wheels cutting deeply into the grassy bank.

There were two passengers, a man and a woman. The former wore a mask with large goggles and the latter was muffled in a thick gauze veil. She pushed this back and showed a fat, rosy face and a pair of round blue eyes.

'Fräulein Heinz!' Val dropped her bracken frond and stood motionless for a moment, as if struck dumb with amazement. Then, recovering herself, she seized the woman's arm and dragged her towards the bushes.

'Come with me. There's a man here. He's hurt, badly, and I don't know what to do. You must help me.'

'Val!' The German stared at the little girl as if hardly able to believe the evidence of her own senses. 'You? Here? What has happened? Why are you still in France? And in this dress?'

Val told her story in a few hurried sentences. Fräulein listened impatiently, and then, suddenly, an expression that was almost one of terror came into her blue eyes. She clutched Val's arm tightly with both hands.

'The letter—where is the letter?' she cried. 'You have it safely? Give it to me back, quick! quick!'

'The letter!' For a moment Val looked up into the flushed, agitated face in complete bewilderment, then a little careless laugh broke from her lips, 'Oh, yes, it's all right, but I'd forgotten all about it. Roger has it. I gave it to him to take care of; it's in his pocket now.'

'Roger!'

'Yes, he'll be back soon—he promised; you needn't bother. And now—'

But Fräulein Heinz was already pushing her way back through the bushes. The other motorist had got out of the car and was waiting in the road, smoking a cigarette. He was a tall man, fair-haired and blue-eyed like Fräulein herself, and it was easy to see that they were brother and sister. Captain Max Heinz, however, was disfigured by a long scar, the result of a duel in his student days, which ran across one side of his face and twisted his mouth into a perpetual sneer.

'Come, we must be off: get into the car, Rosa,' he said now, as his sister appeared, but she laid a detaining hand on his arm and her troubled face showed that something was amiss.

'Stop, Max, and listen,' she said in a low, hurried whisper: 'This child here is one of my pupils.' And then Fräulein went on to explain what had happened.

The man frowned angrily as he listened to the story. He had already blamed his sister for entrusting the letter, and the important paper it contained, to her pupil, and it was evident that his fears had been well founded. The position had been a difficult one, certainly, for it had been necessary to get the paper to England quickly and it would not have been safe to post it in France during the troubled days before the declaration of war. Now the letter had to be recovered, for, although it was in cypher, it must not fall into the hands of the French authorities.

It will, perhaps, be best to explain at once that Fräulein Heinz and her brother were spies, who for many months had been engaged in collecting important information in France; which they forwarded to their country or to other spies still in England.

'We must drive on at once,' Fräulein said, after a moment's anxious thought, 'and Val must come with us. When we overtake the boy she can ask him for the letter. He most likely would not give it up to us, and besides, I have never seen him.'

The man growled a surly assent, and Fräulein pushed her way once more into the bushes. 'You must come with me, dear little one,' she said. 'I cannot leave you here alone. We will drive on and find your brother.' She put one arm round the little girl's shoulder and spoke in her gentlest tones, but Val proved unexpectedly obstinate, and declared that she had promised to wait for Roger, and could not go away till he came back.

'Max!' Fräulein called the name sharply over her shoulder, and the man with the scarred face strode through the bracken, pulling his motor mask forward as he joined the group. He seized Val's arms roughly, and she struggled to get away, her face startled and white with indignation.

And then Bob, who had been lying asleep on the grass, awoke and lifted his round bushy head with a low growl. He showed his teeth savagely and his eyes gleamed through the tangle of hair on his forehead.

The German dropped his hand from the little girl's shoulder and stepped back.

'Val! Val, call off that horrible dog,' Fräulein's voice was shrill with terror, and then, when Bob's collar was firmly grasped, she went on more quietly. This was her brother Max, who would take them in his car. They would all go together. The wounded man could be taken to some hospital or hotel where he would be looked after, and Roger would be certain to be found. Most likely they would meet him on his way back.

Val gave way in the end, for she had no reason to distrust Fräulein Heinz, and perhaps her brother had really meant to be kind. In a few minutes the dispatch rider had been comfortably installed on the back seat of the car, while Val was given a place in front. Just as they were starting Bob jumped in too, and although Captain Heinz scowled, he made no objection to the dog's presence. Perhaps he thought that Bob was a person with whom it was wise to keep on good terms.

For some time the car sped on and on, following the

same route that Roger had taken an hour before, but no sign of the young dispatch rider was seen. At last, however, a figure appeared on the dusty road ahead, which, when overtaken, proved to be an old man, who, weak and exhausted, had lagged behind some band of refugees that had passed early in the day. When questioned, he said that, while resting under the trees, he had seen a boy on a motor cycle race past.

So far so good, they were evidently on the right track, and later on another peasant was encountered, who told them how, looking back along the road, he had seen the meeting between the dispatch rider and the French officers. He had been some way off, and could not see what had happened very distinctly, but there had been two cars, and afterwards one of them passed him as he trudged along the road. Was there a boy in the car? Well, he could not be certain, for it had flown by like the wind, but there was a motor cycle in it, and French officers—he had seen the gold lace in their caps.

'We will follow that car,' Fräulein Heinz turned to Val, 'and doubtless we shall overtake it before long. Then you can join your brother. He is safe, you see; but doubtless was not allowed to return to the wood.'

Val was obliged to be content with that explanation, and it seemed certain that Roger was safe, which after all was the chief thing that mattered. Yet, at the same time, she wished that she were back again, alone with Roger and Bob in the cool, silent forest.

Hour after hour passed by and on and on the car sped, until it grew dark and stars began to glimmer in the clear sky overhead; and again and again during the evening the car was stopped and inquiries made. The other automobile always seemed to be far ahead, and at last Captain Heinz informed his sister that it was useless to think of overtaking it.

'Those men were on their way to Paris, no doubt,' he said, 'and we will go straight on there ourselves. But we must get rid of this Englishman before we do anything else. If he were to die on our hands there would be endless complications; and the girl, too—I don't intend to take her with us to Paris. She knows too much about you, and might be dangerous.'

'No, no, Max,' Fräulein Heinz interrupted her brother hastily, 'we must keep the child until her brother is found. How should we explain things to him?—and he would almost certainly refuse to give up the letter. Besides, the poor little girl is quite harmless; she has fallen asleep, and most likely won't wake up for hours.'

'All right, have it your own way,' he said; and so before long, when a large village was reached, arrangements were made for leaving the wounded man behind at the 'Hotel Lion d'Or,' the kind-hearted landlord promising to find room for him, and if possible to have him taken to a hospital on the following day.

Val did not wake while the wounded Englishman was being carried into the inn, nor when a fresh start was made; but, after a few minutes' drive, the car once more came to a standstill. The road leading southward out of the village was crowded with refugees who had not been able to find lodgings for the night, and now way had to be made for the passage of several military automobiles.

There was a great deal of noise and confusion. A large waggon had lost a wheel and was lying in the ditch. Orders were being shouted, lanterns flashed from

side to side, and several worried-looking officials were demanding papers and questioning the travellers as to their routes and destinations.

Two of these men stopped by the German motor-car, and Val, who had been roused by all the clamour with which she was surrounded, opened her eyes and listened amazed to the strange statements that were being made.

'Yes, we are from Belgium,' the false story came glibly from Captain Heinz's lips, 'and we barely escaped from there with our lives. We have no luggage, as you see, and no papers. This child is a Belgian, too, who has lost his friends. We found him alone and brought him on with us.'

Val's blue eyes grew round with horrified surprise.

'Oh, Fräulein Heinz!' she exclaimed, her voice ringing out clearly, 'it isn't true; you know it isn't true. I'm English and you're German, and—'

Before she could say anything more Fräulein's hand was at her mouth, choking back the words so that they died away in a stifled gasp. But it was too late; the child's declaration had been heard by many people, and, in an instant as it seemed, the car was surrounded by fierce, hostile faces and clutching hands.

'Spies! Germans! Traitors!' The air vibrated to the sound of the ominous words, and Fräulein, hearing them, cowered down, her cheeks white with terror and her hands still clutching Val with a frantic grasp.

Captain Heinz, however, did not lose his self-control for an instant. He glanced swiftly round, saw that although the road in front was completely blocked there was an open space in the rear, and then backed the car, scattering the people who thronged it to right and left, swung it round with a jerk, and raced at a tremendous pace through the village.

In a very few minutes the motorists were beyond the houses, thundering along a road that led northward, while a car that started in pursuit was left far behind.

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A CURIOUS INCIDENT.

THE following story was told in a lecture by Colonel Archibald Young, V.D.

The British troops in Palestine were recently approaching a certain desert town when a deputation of natives came out to meet them.

'Please,' said the headman, 'may I speak to the British Commander?'

He was told that he might. During the interview, he informed the Commander that the people of his town were very good, and had every right to be treated kindly. To prove the truth of his words, the headman showed the Commander an old paper, which was a sort of testimonial, telling how well and honourably these natives had behaved the last time they had been visited by European troops.

This document was signed 'Napoleon Bonaparte'!

THE WHITE MAN'S MOON.

IN discussing the manner in which Congo natives are adapting themselves to all branches of industry, and are filling the places of white men gone to the War, the managing director of a great Congo trading



"To examine the 'White man's moon,' as they called it."

firm said the only thing known to have startled them out of stoicism was a searchlight brought up on a steamer to assist navigation. At first sight of its beam they scuttled away like rabbits to burrow, but returned

sheepishly in twos and threes to examine the 'white man's moon,' as they called it. Within an hour or two they were wildly beating their tom-toms and enjoying native dances in an unaccustomed glare.



"She sat gazing into the fire."

TAKE HOLD!

WHY don't you go, Royce? you're just the sort of fellow they want.' The words were spoken derisively, and Nen Royce

turned on the speaker. 'How can I?' he demanded, 'with Father laid up, and no one but Kitty to do anything?'

'Oh! well, I don't know,' answered his companion,

and lounged away, leaving Nen staring after him with angry eyes.

'He could go,' he muttered, 'and doesn't dream of it, while here am I tied hand and foot. Jove, I wish I were free!' He swung off down to the dépôt with his pack of skins and furs, which he had come into the town to sell, with a weary longing in his heart.

The salesman looked them over thoughtfully. 'I doubt there will be many of these wanted now,' he said; 'while the War lasts people won't buy.'

'Yet we must live,' said Nen.

'Yes.' Then he added, with a laugh, 'They pay you well for fighting though,' and carried the skins away.

He came back presently, gave the boy his payment, and watched him as he left the store and went slowly up the street. He purchased a few necessities, packed them into his small sleigh, and set off for home. How often had he thought out the problem now before him, coming always to the same conclusion. Could he anyhow leave and go to the Front? 'No, no,' sounded the horse's hoofs on the crisp snow. 'No, no,' jingled the bells, as the sleigh flew along. How could he leave the invalid father, and Kitty—only a girl—to do everything for him? Who would see to the traps, and the preparing of the skins for market? Who would drive the sleigh all those long miles to town to sell them when prepared, and buy groceries. 'It's no use,' Nen roused himself at last, coming to the same conclusion as usual. 'It's no use, I can't go, and there's an end of it.'

'Is that the end? Is that the end?' whispered the wind softly in the tree-tops; and still 'No, no!' jangled the sleigh bells, 'No, no, no!'

It was nearly dusk when he reached the little log cabin; his sister was outside watching for him. 'Oh! there you are!' she cried, in relief.

'Why, I'm not late am I?' springing out as he spoke.

'No, only——' Kitty did not finish her sentence, but came and helped him unharness the horses and carry the groceries in.

That evening, when the invalid had been seen to bed and the small living-room tidied up for the night, the brother and sister sat together, Nen cleaning the gun he was going to use the next day, and Kitty knitting by the stove. At least, she had been knitting, but now sat, her chin on her hands, gazing into the fire. 'Nen,' she said, suddenly, 'did you see Will Grayler in town to-day?'

'Yes.'

'Is he going to the Front?'

'No; he thinks I ought to.'

'Well, why don't you?'

'What!' the boy stared at her open-mouthed.

Kitty flung down her knitting and came over to him.

'See here, Nen,' she said; 'you want to go, don't you?'

'Of course.' He bent over his work, hiding his face from her.

'Well, go. I can do the trapping and the skinning. Father will be all right to leave, I mean for a little while, when I'm driving into town.' She broke off.

'You couldn't do it,' answered her brother, gruffly; 'it's too hard work for a girl.'

'If you were ill I should have to. And you know, Nen, we can't go and fight, we can't really serve our country, though I want to as much as you do. All we can do, it seems to me, is to take over the work and let the men go. Don't you see?'

'Yes, I see, but——'

He saw more; the long, weary days, the tiring work,

the danger of snowstorms, blizzards, and wolves. It's true Kitty was fairly strong; even then—— 'You're a brick to think of it, Kits,' he said, still bending over his gun; 'but it won't do; I should be a beast to leave you.'

He spoke as if it were settled, but she would not leave it like that, and at the end of half an hour of earnest talk Nen stood upright, squaring his shoulders as if a load had fallen from them. 'All right, Kits, I'll go; you're a jolly good pal. Shake.'

They clasped hands, and the girl felt at that moment that she, too, was serving her country.

Ah! Kitty, you were proud when you drove into town to see him off, smart and soldierly in his khaki, a proud, happy smile on his lips. Nothing else seemed to matter then; but driving back through the snow and falling dusk your teeth were clenched and your heart was faint, for you knew as well as he, if not better, what lay before you.

'It's my bit,' she muttered; 'my bit for my country. And then suddenly she laughed. 'Girls! take hold!' she cried.

No one certainly could complain of the way Kitty 'took hold.' She trapped and skinned and hunted like any man, not because she liked it, but because it had to be done; and if the soft girl's heart of her failed sometimes, no one knew but the vast silences of the Canadian forest, or now and then the horses flying home from town felt the slack hand on the reins.

But it was worth it every bit, when, after long months of absence, Nen stood once more in the little log hut, once more grasped her hand like a good comrade.

And they looked at his laughing face, his dancing eyes, and, above all, at the little cross, the wonderful little cross on his breast.

'For Valour!' read Kitty. 'Oh, Nen!'

'Yes; and the King, our King, Kits, put it on himself,' cried the boy, proudly. 'But,' he added, half shyly, 'I think its rightful place is there!' and with a quick movement he transferred it to her blouse.

MANNERS!

WHEN Mary Brown goes out to tea,
Oh, such a pattern girl is she;
Her frock is starched so stiff and white:
Her manners, they are perfect, quite:
She whispers 'Thank you,' 'Yes,' and 'No,'
And only takes one cake, or so;
And every hair is well in curl;—
She really is a perfect girl!
That's what the people say, you see,
When Mary Brown goes out to tea!

Mary before her tea at home,
Just hates to use her brush and comb:—
'Go and get ready! nurse, oh, why?'
That is Miss Mary's fearful cry!
And then, oh, dear!—when down she sits,
She cuts her bread up into bits:
And asks why there's no sugar-cake!—
Her nurse's heart must ache and ache;
For Mary puts good manners on
With her best clothes! And they're all gone,
And changed to bad manners, you see,
At meal-times in her nursery!

ETHEL TALBOT.

THE SURRENDER OF BREDA.

ABOUT the year 1590, the country of the Netherlands was the scene of a prolonged struggle. The inhabitants had been for years striving to free themselves from the yoke of Spain, but the genius of Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma, had been Spain's strongest ally.

Now, however, sorely against his will, and in obedience to Philip of Spain, Parma was turning his back on the Netherlands in order to relieve Paris, which was hard pressed. Thus an opportunity was given of winning back to the Netherlands some of their most valuable possessions.

The city of Breda lies on the Merk, a stream navigable for small vessels, which flows through the great canal of the Dintel. At that time a strong castle fortress commanded the town, in which lay five companies of Italian infantry, and one of cavalry.

Breda was an important strategical position, and Prince Maurice of Nassau was anxious to drive the Spaniards and Italians from their strongholds, and so win it back to the Netherlands.

In February, 1597, Prince Maurice received a visit from a boatman, Van der Berg by name, who lived at a village eight miles from Breda, and who supplied the castle there with turf for fuel. His vessel thus passed often in and out of the castle without being searched by the guard, and he had thought of a plan to surprise the garrison.

Prince Maurice listened to him, and consulted the statesman Barneveld. He thought well of the scheme, and suggested that Captain Charles de Heraugiere would be suitable for carrying it out.

Full of zeal, Heraugiere at once selected sixty-eight picked men to help in the task. On a certain Monday night he and his band met at a certain ferry, and when the vessel appeared, went on board, packing themselves into the hold.

The boat was apparently filled with turf, and moved slowly down the river. Navigation was difficult, owing to huge blocks of ice which were brought down by the winter wind, and at last the vessel came to a standstill.

From then till Thursday morning the seventy men lay huddled together, half-starved, half-frozen, yet none of them wishing to give up the task. Then secretly they went ashore at a lonely castle, for food and warmth.

There they remained till night, when one of the boatmen came to tell them that the wind had changed. Again they embarked, and after two days more of great discomfort, by Saturday afternoon they had passed the last sluice, and were in the city of Breda, with no chance of retreat.

The boat lay in the outer harbour, not far from the water-gate which led to the castle. Here an officer of the guard, seeing the turf, stepped on board, to bargain for it to be brought in, and stood where the adventurers could see and hear his every movement. A cough or a sneeze on their part would have betrayed them assuredly. But soon the officer, saying he would send men to bring in the boat, stepped off.

Now, however, the vessel sprang a leak, and those inside were presently sitting knee-deep in water. The boatmen worked the pumps to try and save the boat, and soon a party of Italian soldiers, sent by their officer, laboriously dragged ashore the ship containing the men who had come to slay them.

Now a crowd of buyers came on board, eager to secure

the peat. At this ill-timed moment, some of the half-frozen little party, to their dismay, were seized with attacks of coughing and sneezing which threatened to betray them.

But the clever skipper ordered his man to work the pumps, and the noise thus made drowned the sounds from within. Then a new peril arose, for the townspeople were so eager to buy fuel that before long the load was nearly disposed of, and the hidden adventurers were again in danger of being discovered.

Once more the skipper came to the rescue, declaring loudly that he was tired, and had sold enough for that day. Giving the workmen money, he sent them ashore, telling them to return next morning for the rest of the cargo.

A servant of the garrison still lingered, saying that the turf was not so good as usual, and his master would complain.

'Ah!' said the skipper, 'the best part is underneath, and is especially reserved for the captain. He will get enough of it to-morrow.'

Towards midnight Captain Heraugiere addressed his party. He told them the great moment had come, and there could be no turning back. He would slay with his own hand any traitor, but if the men did their duty, success was sure, and great reward and honour would be their portion.

He then divided them into two bands, one to attack the main guard-house and the other to seize the arsenal. Thus they stole out of the ship, and landed, Heraugiere marching straight to the guard-house.

'Who goes there?' cried the sentry.

'A friend,' said Heraugiere, seizing him by the throat and forbidding him, under pain of death, to speak above a whisper.

'How many are there?' muttered Heraugiere.

'Three hundred and fifty,' was the reply.

The Captain turned to his men. 'He says there are but fifty,' he whispered.

Just then the officer of the guard, hearing sounds, sprang out. 'Who goes there?' he cried.

'A friend,' replied Heraugiere, striking him dead.

Others came out, bearing torches. The brave leader was wounded, but killed a second enemy. His followers attacked the guard, who retreated into the house. Heraugiere bade his men fire through doors and windows, and soon every one of the garrison lay dead.

The second party had by now seized the arsenal and disposed of its defenders.

A nephew of the Governor, who had been temporarily left in charge, now came out with a few troops. He, however, was soon driven back, wounded, while the rest of the garrison fled in terror into the town, where they spread panic among the people.

In a short time Count Hohenlo, of the Netherlands, who had been secretly warned of the attack by the boatman, arrived at the head of some of Prince Maurice's troops. Soon after he had battered down the palisades near the water-gate, and had made an entrance, Prince Maurice himself appeared, and the resistance was over.

About fifty of the garrison had been killed, but not a man of the attacking party, and before sunrise the city of Breda had surrendered.

As Count Hohenlo reported, 'the castle and town of Breda are ours, without a single man dead on our side. The garrison made no resistance, but ran shrieking out of the town.'

F. M. BURDITT.



"An officer of the guard stepped on board to bargain."