



THE ~
LITTLEST
~ REBEL
EDWARD PEPLE

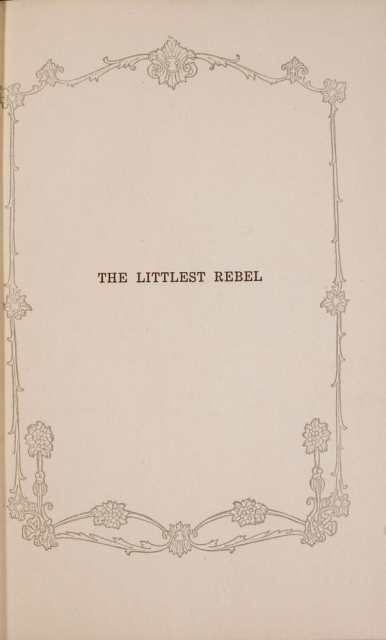
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THE LITTLEST REBEL

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The Prince Chap

The Mallet's Masterpiece

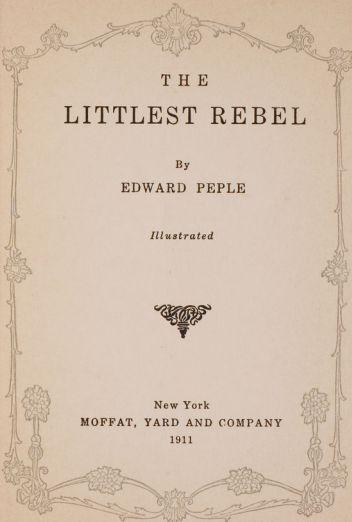
Semiramis

The Spitfire

A Broken Rosary



IN THE CABIN'S DOORWAY STOOD VIRGIE AND
HER FATHER HAND IN HAND.

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. At the top center is a large floral ornament. At the bottom center is another large floral ornament. The sides are decorated with vertical scrollwork and floral elements.

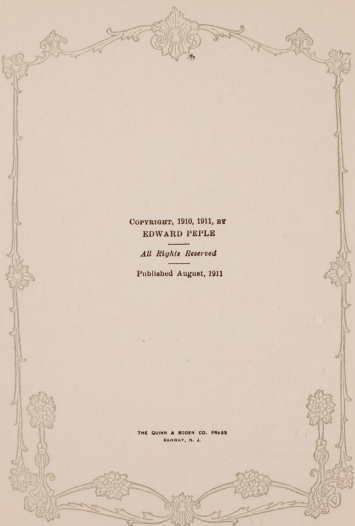
THE
LITTLEST REBEL

By
EDWARD PEPLE

Illustrated

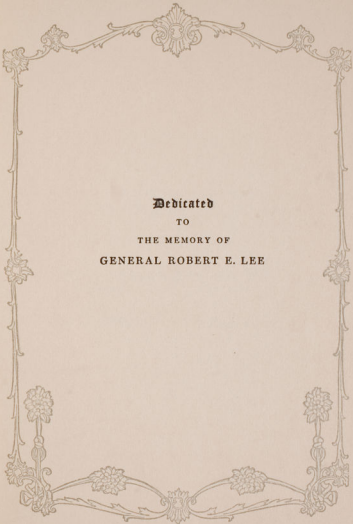


New York
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1911

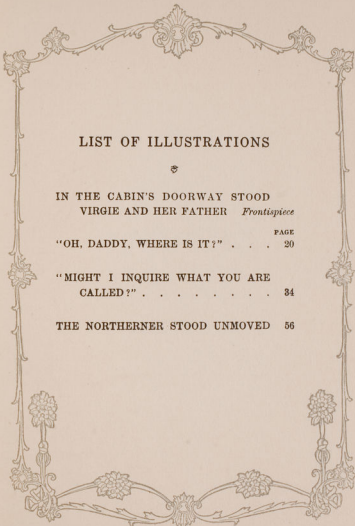


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Dedicated
TO
THE MEMORY OF
GENERAL ROBERT E. LEE

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. It features large floral designs at the corners and smaller ones along the top and bottom edges, connected by elegant scrollwork.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

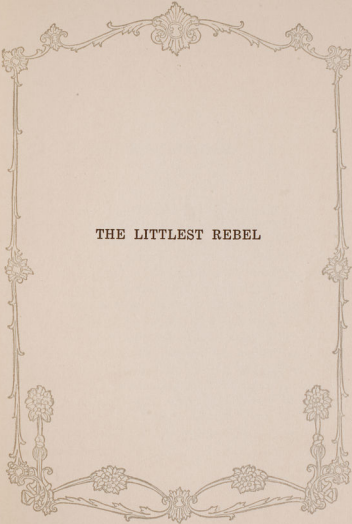


IN THE CABIN'S DOORWAY STOOD
VIRGIE AND HER FATHER *Frontispiece*

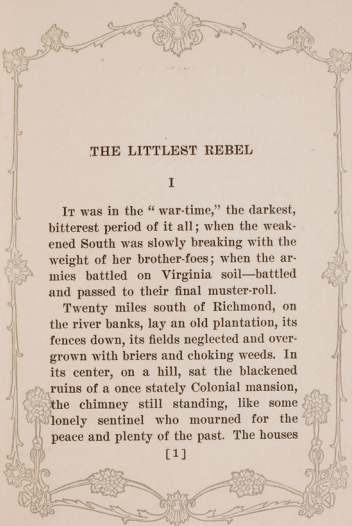
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A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs framing the text. The border is composed of vertical lines on the left and right sides, and curved, ornate flourishes at the top and bottom. The top and bottom flourishes feature central floral designs with radiating petals, flanked by symmetrical scrollwork. The vertical lines are adorned with smaller floral motifs and leaf-like patterns.

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A decorative border with floral motifs and scrollwork framing the text.

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I

It was in the "war-time," the darkest, bitterest period of it all; when the weakened South was slowly breaking with the weight of her brother-foes; when the armies battled on Virginia soil—battled and passed to their final muster-roll.

Twenty miles south of Richmond, on the river banks, lay an old plantation, its fences down, its fields neglected and overgrown with briars and choking weeds. In its center, on a hill, sat the blackened ruins of a once stately Colonial mansion, the chimney still standing, like some lonely sentinel who mourned for the peace and plenty of the past. The houses



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in the negro quarters had long since disappeared, their timbers consumed by the campfires of a passing Union host; yet, away to the left, at the bend of a weed-grown carriage road, one building was left unburned.

In the old days it had been the cabin of an overseer. It had but two rooms, and a shallow attic, which was gained by means of an iron ladder reaching to a closely fitting scuttle in the ceiling. The larger room was furnished meagerly with a rough deal table, several common chairs, and a double-doored cupboard against the wall. In the deep, wide fireplace glowed a heap of raked-up embers, on which, suspended from an iron crane, a kettle simmered, sadly, as if in grief for her long-lost brother pots and pans. The plaster on the walls had broken away in patches, especially above the door, where the sunlight streamed



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through the gaping wound from a cannon shot. The door and window shutters were of heavy oak, swinging inward and fastening with bars; yet now they were open, and through them could be seen a dreary stretch of river bottom, withering beneath the rays of a July sun.

Beyond a distant fringe of trees the muddy James went murmuring down its muddy banks, where the blue cranes waited solemnly for the ebbing tide; where the crows cawed hoarsely in their busy, reeling flight, and the buzzards swung high above the marshes. Yet even in this waste of listless desolation came the echoed boom of heavy guns far down the river, where the "Rebs" and "Yanks" were pounding one another lazily.

From the woods which skirted the carriage road a man appeared—a thin, worn man, in a uniform of stained and



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tattered gray—a man who peered from right to left, as a hunted rabbit might, then darted across the road and plunged into the briery underbrush. Noiselessly he made his way to the now deserted cabin, creeping, crawling till he reached a point below an open window, then slowly raised himself and looked within.

“Virgie!” he whispered cautiously. “Virgie!”

No answer came. For a moment the man leaned dizzily against the window-sill, his eyes fast closed with a nameless dread, till he caught his grip again and entered the open door.

“Virgie!” he called, in a louder tone, moving swiftly but unsteadily toward the adjoining room. He flung its door open sharply, almost angrily; yet the name on his lips was tender, trembling, as he called: “Virgie! Virgie!”

In the loneliness of dread, he once more

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. It features a central floral ornament at the top, a smaller one at the bottom, and four larger floral designs at the corners, all connected by elegant, flowing lines.

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leaned for support against the wall, wondering, listening to the pounding of his heart, to the murmur of the muddy James, and the fall of a flake of plaster loosened by the dull reverberation of a distant gun; then suddenly his eye was caught by the kettle simmering on the fire, and he sighed in swift relief.

He wiped his brow with a ragged sleeve and went to where a water-bucket stood behind the door, knelt beside it, drinking deeply, gratefully, yet listening the while for unwonted sounds and watching the bend of the carriage road. His thirst appeased, he hunted vainly through the table drawer for balls and powder for the empty pistol at his hip; then, instinctively alert to some rustling sound outside, he crouched toward the adjoining room, slipped in, and softly closed the door.

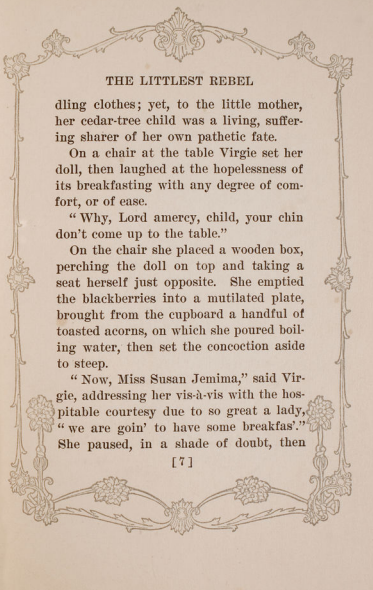
From the sunlit world beyond the



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cabin walls rose the murmur of a childish song, and Virgie came pattering in. She was a tiny thing, a tot of seven, in a calico bonnet, and a gingham dress which scarcely reached to her little bare, brown knees. Her face was delicate, refined, but pale and thin, causing her big dark eyes to seem bigger still beneath her tumbled hair. In one hand she carried a small tin bucket filled with berries; in the other she clutched a doll and held it lovingly against her breast.

This doll was more than an ordinary doll; she was a personage—though strangely, wonderfully made. To the intimate view of the unimaginative, the babe was formed from the limb of a cedar tree, the forking branches being legs and arms by courtesy, her costume consisting of a piece of rag, tied at the waist with a bit of string, and bearing some faint resemblance to an infant's swad-

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs, framing the text on the page.

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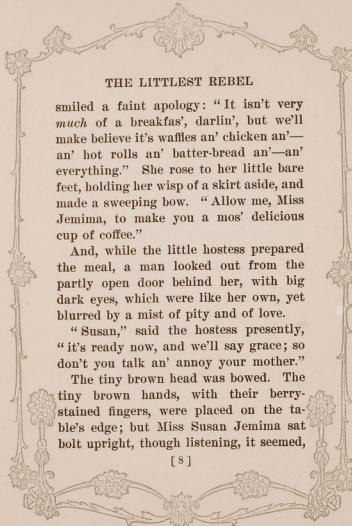
dling clothes; yet, to the little mother, her cedar-tree child was a living, suffering sharer of her own pathetic fate.

On a chair at the table Virgie set her doll, then laughed at the hopelessness of its breakfasting with any degree of comfort, or of ease.

“Why, Lord amercy, child, your chin don’t come up to the table.”

On the chair she placed a wooden box, perching the doll on top and taking a seat herself just opposite. She emptied the blackberries into a mutilated plate, brought from the cupboard a handful of toasted acorns, on which she poured boiling water, then set the concoction aside to steep.

“Now, Miss Susan Jemima,” said Virgie, addressing her vis-à-vis with the hospitable courtesy due to so great a lady, “we are goin’ to have some breakfas’.” She paused, in a shade of doubt, then

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs, framing the text. The border is symmetrical and features a central floral ornament at the top and bottom, with smaller floral elements at the corners and midpoints of the sides.

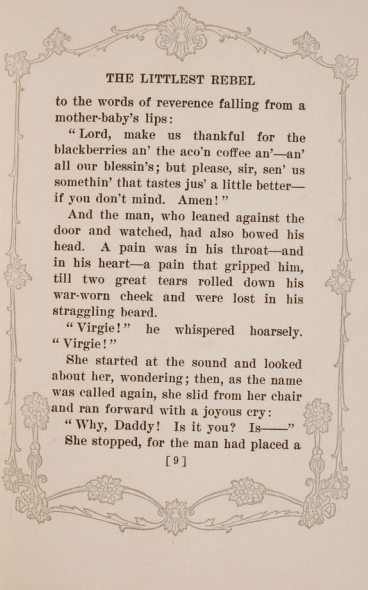
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smiled a faint apology: "It isn't very *much* of a breakfas', darlin', but we'll make believe it's waffles an' chicken an'—an' hot rolls an' batter-bread an'—an' everything." She rose to her little bare feet, holding her wisp of a skirt aside, and made a sweeping bow. "Allow me, Miss Jemima, to make you a mos' delicious cup of coffee."

And, while the little hostess prepared the meal, a man looked out from the partly open door behind her, with big dark eyes, which were like her own, yet blurred by a mist of pity and of love.

"Susan," said the hostess presently, "it's ready now, and we'll say grace; so don't you talk an' annoy your mother."

The tiny brown head was bowed. The tiny brown hands, with their berry-stained fingers, were placed on the table's edge; but Miss Susan Jemima sat bolt upright, though listening, it seemed,

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is symmetrical and features a central floral element at the top and bottom, with smaller floral designs at the corners and midpoints.

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to the words of reverence falling from a mother-baby's lips:

"Lord, make us thankful for the blackberries an' the aco'n coffee an'—an' all our blessin's; but please, sir, sen' us somethin' that tastes jus' a little better—if you don't mind. Amen!"

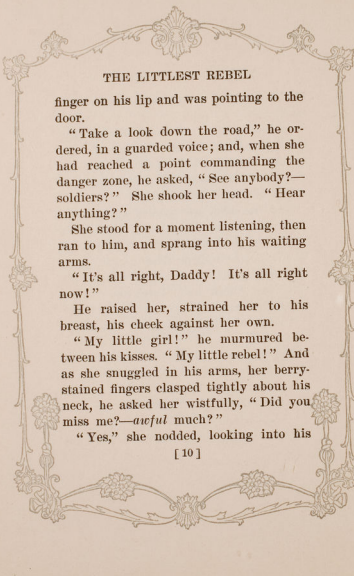
And the man, who leaned against the door and watched, had also bowed his head. A pain was in his throat—and in his heart—a pain that gripped him, till two great tears rolled down his war-worn cheek and were lost in his straggling beard.

"Virgie!" he whispered hoarsely.
"Virgie!"

She started at the sound and looked about her, wondering; then, as the name was called again, she slid from her chair and ran forward with a joyous cry:

"Why, Daddy! Is it you? Is——"

She stopped, for the man had placed a

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of several repeating floral designs connected by elegant, flowing lines.

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finger on his lip and was pointing to the door.

“Take a look down the road,” he ordered, in a guarded voice; and, when she had reached a point commanding the danger zone, he asked, “See anybody?—soldiers?” She shook her head. “Hear anything?”


She stood for a moment listening, then ran to him, and sprang into his waiting arms.

“It’s all right, Daddy! It’s all right now!”

He raised her, strained her to his breast, his cheek against her own.

“My little girl!” he murmured between his kisses. “My little rebel!” And as she snuggled in his arms, her berry-stained fingers clasped tightly about his neck, he asked her wistfully, “Did you miss me?—*awful* much?”

“Yes,” she nodded, looking into his



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eyes. "Yes—in the night time—when the wind was talkin'; but, after while, when—— Why, Daddy!" He had staggered as he set her down, sinking into a chair and closing his eyes as he leaned on the table's edge. "You are hurt!" she cried. "I—I can see the blood!"

The wounded Southerner braced himself.

"No, dear, no," he strove to reassure her. "It isn't anything; only a little scratch—from a Yank—that tried to get me. But he didn't, though," the soldier added with a smile. "I'm just—tired."

The child regarded him in wondering awe, speaking in a half-breathed whisper:

"Did he—did he *shoot* at you?"

Her father nodded, with his hand on her tumbled hair.

"Yes, honey, I'm afraid he did; but I'm so used to it now I don't mind it any

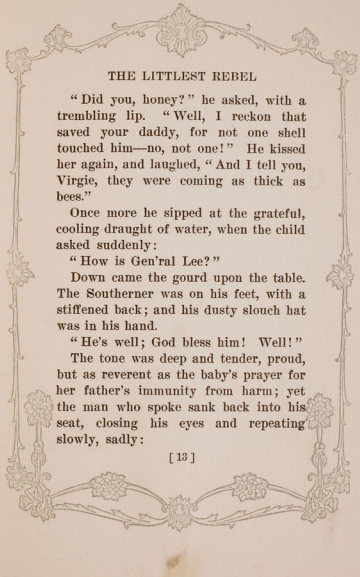
A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. The top features a central floral ornament with symmetrical scrolls extending to the corners. The sides are decorated with vertical floral patterns. The bottom has a wide, symmetrical floral flourish.

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more. Get me a drink of water, will you?" As Virgie obeyed in silence, returning with the dripping gourd, the man went on: "I tried to get here yesterday; but I couldn't. They chased me when I came before—and now they're watching." He paused to sip at his draught of water, glancing toward the carriage road. "Big fight down the river. Listen! Can you hear the guns?"

"Yes, plain," she answered, tilting her tiny head. "An' las' night, when I went to bed, I could hear 'em—oh! ever so loud: Boom! Boom! Boom-boom! So I knelt up an' asked the Lord not to let any of 'em hit you."

Two arms, in their tattered gray, slipped round the child. He kissed her, in that strange, fierce passion of a man who has lost his mate, and his grief-torn love is magnified in the mite who reflects her image and her memory.

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“Did you, honey?” he asked, with a trembling lip. “Well, I reckon that saved your daddy, for not one shell touched him—no, not one!” He kissed her again, and laughed, “And I tell you, Virgie, they were coming as thick as bees.”

Once more he sipped at the grateful, cooling draught of water, when the child asked suddenly:

“How is Gen’ral Lee?”

Down came the gourd upon the table. The Southerner was on his feet, with a stiffened back; and his dusty slouch hat was in his hand.

“He’s well; God bless him! Well!”

The tone was deep and tender, proud, but as reverent as the baby’s prayer for her father’s immunity from harm; yet the man who spoke sank back into his seat, closing his eyes and repeating slowly, sadly:

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs, framing the text.

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"He's well; God bless him! But he's tired, darling—mighty tired."

"Daddy," the soldier's daughter asked, "will you tell him somethin'—from me?"

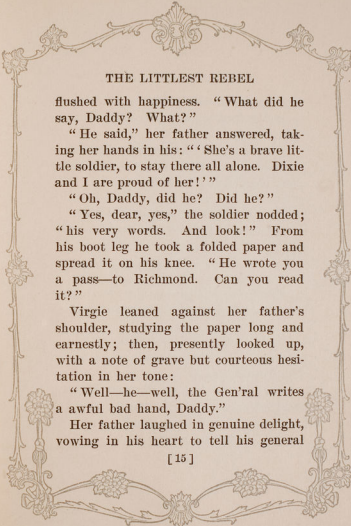
"Yes, dear. What?"

"Tell him," said the child, with a thoughtful glance at Miss Susan Jemima across the table, "tell him, if he ever marches along this way, I'll come over to his tent and rub his head, like I do yours—if he'll let me—till he goes to sleep." She clasped her fingers and looked into her father's eyes, hopefully, appealingly. "Do you think he would, if—if I washed my hands—real clean?"

The Southerner bit his lip and tried to smile.

"Yes, honey, I know he would! And think! He sent a message—to *you*."

"Did he?" she asked, wide-eyed,

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text.

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flushed with happiness. "What did he say, Daddy? What?"

"He said," her father answered, taking her hands in his: "'She's a brave little soldier, to stay there all alone. Dixie and I are proud of her!'"

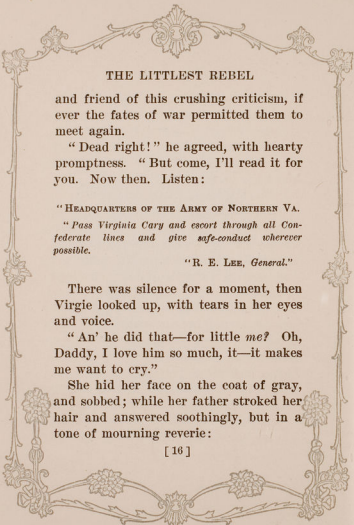
"Oh, Daddy, did he? Did he?"

"Yes, dear, yes," the soldier nodded; "his very words. And look!" From his boot leg he took a folded paper and spread it on his knee. "He wrote you a pass—to Richmond. Can you read it?"

Virgie leaned against her father's shoulder, studying the paper long and earnestly; then, presently looked up, with a note of grave but courteous hesitation in her tone:

"Well—he—well, the Gen'ral writes a awful bad hand, Daddy."

Her father laughed in genuine delight, vowing in his heart to tell his general

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs, framing the text on the page.

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and friend of this crushing criticism, if ever the fates of war permitted them to meet again.

“Dead right!” he agreed, with hearty promptness. “But come, I’ll read it for you. Now then. Listen:

“HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY OF NORTHERN VA.

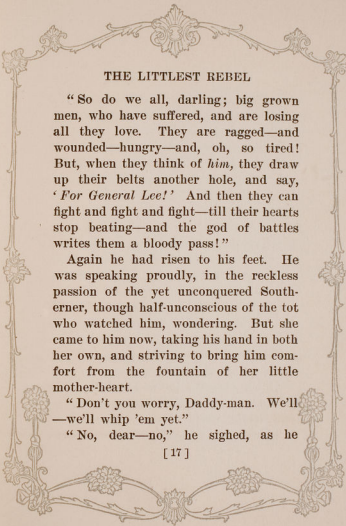
“Pass Virginia Cary and escort through all Confederate lines and give safe-conduct wherever possible.

“R. E. LEE, *General.*”

There was silence for a moment, then Virgie looked up, with tears in her eyes and voice.

“An’ he did that—for little *me*? Oh, Daddy, I love him so much, it—it makes me want to cry.”

She hid her face on the coat of gray, and sobbed; while her father stroked her hair and answered soothingly, but in a tone of mourning reverie:

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of several repeating sections, each featuring a central floral element connected by elegant, curving lines.

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“So do we all, darling; big grown men, who have suffered, and are losing all they love. They are ragged—and wounded—hungry—and, oh, so tired! But, when they think of *him*, they draw up their belts another hole, and say, ‘*For General Lee!*’ And then they can fight and fight and fight—till their hearts stop beating—and the god of battles writes them a bloody pass!”

Again he had risen to his feet. He was speaking proudly, in the reckless passion of the yet unconquered Southerner, though half-unconscious of the tot who watched him, wondering. But she came to him now, taking his hand in both her own, and striving to bring him comfort from the fountain of her little mother-heart.

“Don’t you worry, Daddy-man. We’ll—we’ll whip ’em yet.”

“No, dear—no,” he sighed, as he

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is symmetrical and features a central floral element at the top and bottom, with smaller floral designs on the sides.

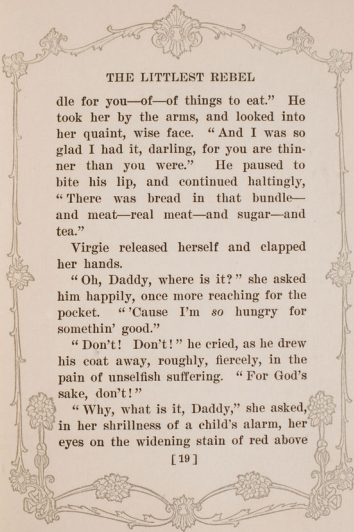
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dropped into his seat. "We won't. It's hard enough on men; but harder still on children such as you." He turned to her gravely, earnestly: "Virgie, I had hoped to get you through to Richmond—to-day. But I can't. The Yankees have cut us off. They are up the river and down the river—and all around us. I've been nearly the whole night getting here; creeping through the woods—like an old Molly-cotton-tail—with the blue boys everywhere, waiting to get me if I showed my head."

"But they didn't, did they?" said Virgie, laughing at his reference to the wise old rabbit and feeling for the pockets of his shabby coat. "Did you—did you bring me anything?"

At her question the man cried out as if in pain, then reached for her in a wave of yearning tenderness.

"Listen, dear; I—I had a little bun-

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of several repeating sections, each featuring a central flower-like element connected by elegant, curving lines.

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dle for you—of—of things to eat.” He took her by the arms, and looked into her quaint, wise face. “And I was so glad I had it, darling, for you are thinner than you were.” He paused to bite his lip, and continued haltingly, “There was bread in that bundle—and meat—real meat—and sugar—and tea.”

Virgie released herself and clapped her hands.

“Oh, Daddy, where is it?” she asked him happily, once more reaching for the pocket. “’Cause I’m *so* hungry for somethin’ good.”

“Don’t! Don’t!” he cried, as he drew his coat away, roughly, fiercely, in the pain of unselfish suffering. “For God’s sake, don’t!”

“Why, what is it, Daddy,” she asked, in her shrillness of a child’s alarm, her eyes on the widening stain of red above



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his waist. "Is—is it hurtin' you again? What is it, Daddy-man?"

"Your bundle," he answered, in the flat, dull tone of utter hopelessness. "I lost it, Virgie. I lost it."

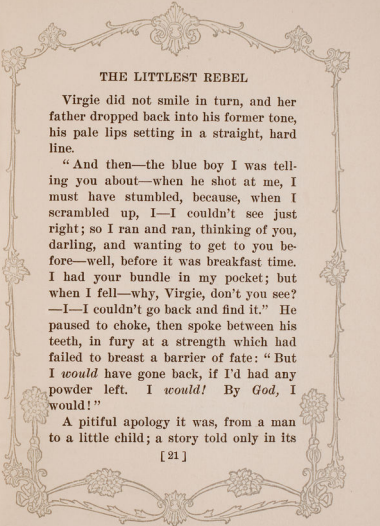
"Oh," she said, with a quaver of disappointment, which she vainly strove to hide. "How did you do it?"

For a moment the man leaned limply against a chair-back, hiding his eyes with one trembling hand; then he spoke in shamed apology:

"I—I couldn't help it, darling; because, you see, I hadn't any powder left; and I was coming through the woods—just as I told you—when the Yanks got sight of me." He smiled down at her bravely, striving to add a dash of comedy to his tragic plight. "And I tell you, Virgie, your old dad had to run like a turkey—wishing to the Lord he had wings, too."



"OH, DADDY, WHERE IS IT? 'CAUSE I'M SO HUNGRY FOR SOMETHIN' GOOD."

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is symmetrical and features a central floral element at the top and bottom, with smaller floral designs at the corners and midpoints of the sides.

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Virgie did not smile in turn, and her father dropped back into his former tone, his pale lips setting in a straight, hard line.

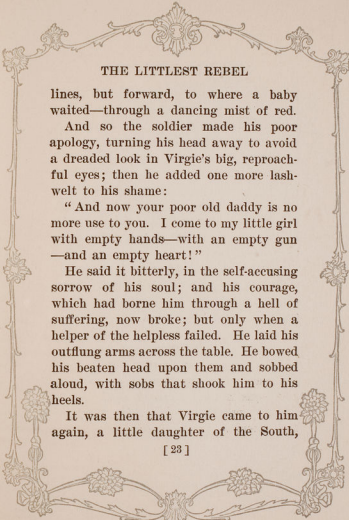
“And then—the blue boy I was telling you about—when he shot at me, I must have stumbled, because, when I scrambled up, I—I couldn’t see just right; so I ran and ran, thinking of you, darling, and wanting to get to you before—well, before it was breakfast time. I had your bundle in my pocket; but when I fell—why, Virgie, don’t you see?—I—I couldn’t go back and find it.” He paused to choke, then spoke between his teeth, in fury at a strength which had failed to breast a barrier of fate: “But I *would* have gone back, if I’d had any powder left. I *would*! By God, I would!”

A pitiful apology it was, from a man to a little child; a story told only in its

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. At the top center is a large floral ornament. The sides are decorated with vertical scrollwork and smaller floral motifs. At the bottom, there are three large floral ornaments connected by a scrollwork line.

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hundredth part, for why should he give its untold horrors to a baby's ears? How could she understand that man-hunt in the early dawn? The fugitive—with an empty pistol on his hip—wading swamps and plunging through the tangled underbrush; alert and listening, darting from tree to tree where the woods were thin; crouching behind some fallen log to catch his laboring breath, then rising again to creep along his way. He did not tell of the racking pain in his weary legs, nor the protest of his pounding heart—the strain—the agony—the puffs of smoke that floated above the pines, and the ping of bullets whining through the trees. He did not tell of the ball that slid along his ribs, leaving a fiery, aching memory behind, as the man crashed down a clay bank, to lie for an instant in a crumpled heap, to rise and stumble on—not toward the haven of his own Confederate

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lines, but forward, to where a baby waited—through a dancing mist of red.

And so the soldier made his poor apology, turning his head away to avoid a dreaded look in Virgie's big, reproachful eyes; then he added one more lash-welt to his shame:

“And now your poor old daddy is no more use to you. I come to my little girl with empty hands—with an empty gun—and an empty heart!”

He said it bitterly, in the self-accusing sorrow of his soul; and his courage, which had borne him through a hell of suffering, now broke; but only when a helper of the helpless failed. He laid his outflung arms across the table. He bowed his beaten head upon them and sobbed aloud, with sobs that shook him to his heels.

It was then that Virgie came to him again, a little daughter of the South,

A decorative border with floral motifs and scrollwork surrounds the text. The border is composed of several floral designs connected by elegant, flowing lines. At the top center is a large, ornate floral ornament. The sides are decorated with smaller floral motifs and vertical scrollwork. The bottom features a wide, symmetrical floral design with a central flower and two side flowers, all connected by a decorative line.

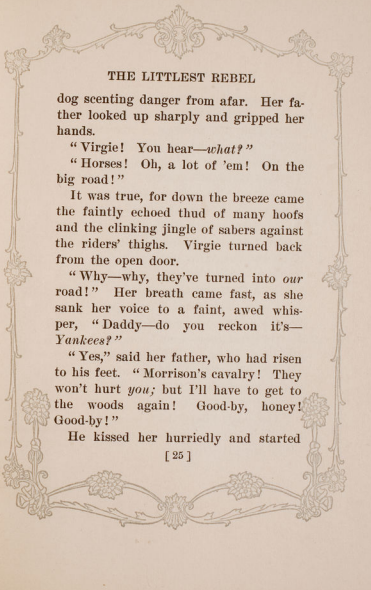
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who, like a hundred thousand of her sisters, brought comfort in the blackest hours. *The Daughters of the South!* A crutch—on which the staggering hopes of Dixie leaned.

One tiny, weak arm was slipped about his neck. One tiny brown hand, with its berry-stained fingers, was run through his tangled hair, softly, tenderly, even as she longed to soothe the weary head of General Lee.

“Don’t cry, Daddy-man,” she murmured in his ear; “it’s all right. *I* can eat the blackberries. They—they don’t taste so *awful* good when you have ’em *all* the time; but *I* don’t mind.” She paused to kiss him, then tried once more to buoy his hope and hers. “We’ll have jus’ heaps of things when we get to Richmon’—jus’ heaps—an’ then——”

She stopped abruptly, lifting her head and listening, in the manner of a sheep

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

dog scenting danger from afar. Her father looked up sharply and gripped her hands.

“Virgie! You hear—*what?*”

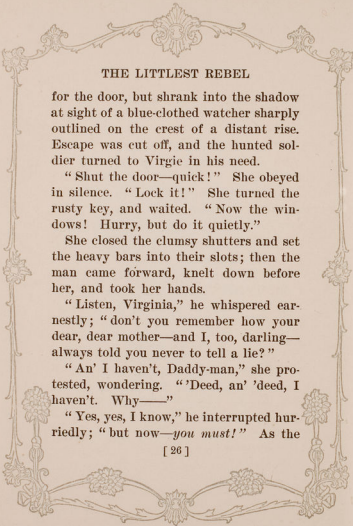
“Horses! Oh, a lot of 'em! On the big road!”

It was true, for down the breeze came the faintly echoed thud of many hoofs and the clinking jingle of sabers against the riders' thighs. Virgie turned back from the open door.

“Why—why, they've turned into *our* road!” Her breath came fast, as she sank her voice to a faint, awed whisper, “Daddy—do you reckon it's—*Yankees?*”

“Yes,” said her father, who had risen to his feet. “Morrison's cavalry! They won't hurt *you*; but I'll have to get to the woods again! Good-by, honey! Good-by!”

He kissed her hurriedly and started

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of several repeating sections, each featuring a central flower-like element connected by elegant, curving lines.

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for the door, but shrank into the shadow at sight of a blue-clothed watcher sharply outlined on the crest of a distant rise. Escape was cut off, and the hunted soldier turned to Virgie in his need.

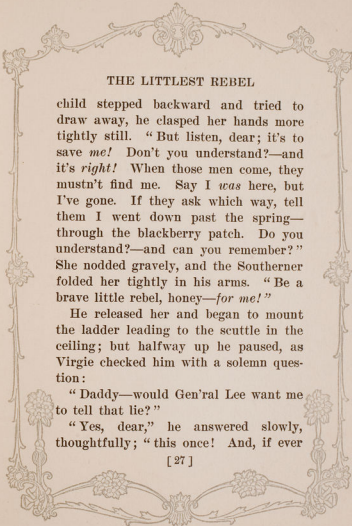
“Shut the door—quick!” She obeyed in silence. “Lock it!” She turned the rusty key, and waited. “Now the windows! Hurry, but do it quietly.”

She closed the clumsy shutters and set the heavy bars into their slots; then the man came forward, knelt down before her, and took her hands.

“Listen, Virginia,” he whispered earnestly; “don’t you remember how your dear, dear mother—and I, too, darling—always told you never to tell a lie?”

“An’ I haven’t, Daddy-man,” she protested, wondering. “’Deed, an’ ’deed, I haven’t. Why——”

“Yes, yes, I know,” he interrupted hurriedly; “but now—*you must!*” As the

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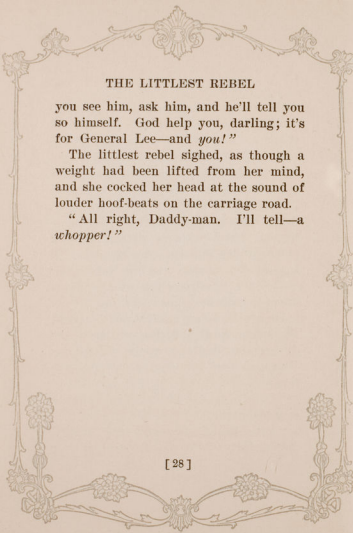
THE LITTLEST REBEL

child stepped backward and tried to draw away, he clasped her hands more tightly still. "But listen, dear; it's to save *me!* Don't you understand?—and it's *right!* When those men come, they mustn't find me. Say I *was* here, but I've gone. If they ask which way, tell them I went down past the spring—through the blackberry patch. Do you understand?—and can you remember?" She nodded gravely, and the Southerner folded her tightly in his arms. "Be a brave little rebel, honey—*for me!*"

He released her and began to mount the ladder leading to the scuttle in the ceiling; but halfway up he paused, as Virgie checked him with a solemn question:

"Daddy—would Gen'ral Lee want me to tell that lie?"

"Yes, dear," he answered slowly, thoughtfully; "this once! And, if ever

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of several ornate floral designs at the corners and midpoints, connected by elegant, flowing lines.

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you see him, ask him, and he'll tell you so himself. God help you, darling; it's for General Lee—and *you!*”

The littlest rebel sighed, as though a weight had been lifted from her mind, and she cocked her head at the sound of louder hoof-beats on the carriage road.

“All right, Daddy-man. I'll tell—a *whopper!*”

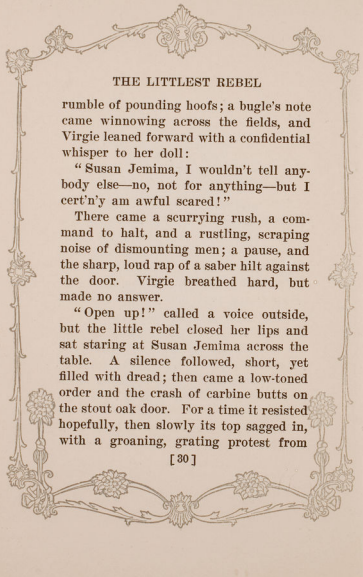
A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. It features a central floral ornament at the top, a smaller one at the bottom, and four larger floral designs at the corners, all connected by elegant, flowing lines.

II

THE man crawled up through the scuttle hole and disappeared; then drew the ladder after him and closed the trap, while Virgie tiptoed to the table and slipped into a seat.

The cabin was now in semi-darkness, except for a shaft of sunlight entering through the jagged wound from the cannon-shot above the door; and it fell on the quaint, brown head of little Miss Virginia Cary, and the placid form of Susan Jemima, perching opposite, in serene contempt of the coming of a conquering host.

The jingling clank of sabers grew louder to the listeners' ears, through the

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is symmetrical and features a central floral element at the top and bottom, with smaller floral designs on the sides.

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rumble of pounding hoofs; a bugle's note came winnowing across the fields, and Virgie leaned forward with a confidential whisper to her doll:

"Susan Jemima, I wouldn't tell anybody else—no, not for anything—but I cert'n'y am awful scared!"

There came a scurrying rush, a command to halt, and a rustling, scraping noise of dismounting men; a pause, and the sharp, loud rap of a saber hilt against the door. Virgie breathed hard, but made no answer.

"Open up!" called a voice outside, but the little rebel closed her lips and sat staring at Susan Jemima across the table. A silence followed, short, yet filled with dread; then came a low-toned order and the crash of carbine butts on the stout oak door. For a time it resisted hopefully, then slowly its top sagged in, with a groaning, grating protest from

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. At the top center is a large, ornate floral ornament. The border continues with smaller floral designs at the corners and along the sides, connected by elegant scrollwork.

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its rusty hinges; it swayed, collapsed in a cloud of dust—and the enemy swept over it.

They came with a rush; in the lead an officer, young and dashing, a naked saber in his fist, followed by a squad of grim-faced troopers, each with his carbine cocked and ready for discharge. Yet, as suddenly as they had come, they halted now at the sight of a little lady, seated at table, eating berries, as calmly as though the dogs of war had never even growled.

A wondering silence followed, till broken by a piping voice, in grave but courteous reproof:

“I—I don’t think you are very polite.”

The officer in command was forced to smile.

“I’m sorry, my dear,” he apologized; “but am afraid, this time, I can’t quite

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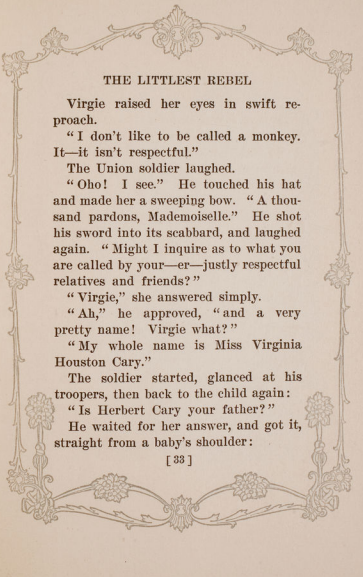
help it." He glanced at the door of the adjoining room and turned to his waiting men, though speaking in an undertone: "He's in there, I guess. Don't fire if you can help it—on account of the baby. Now then! Steady, boys! Advance!"

He led the way, six troopers following, while the rest remained behind to guard the cabin's open door. Virgie slowly turned her head, with eyes that watched the officer's every move; then presently she called:

"Hey, there! That's *my* room—an' don't you-all bother any of my things, either!"

This one command, at least, was implicitly obeyed, for in a moment the disappointed squad returned. The carbine butts were grounded; the troopers stood at orderly attention, while their officer stepped toward the table.

"What's your name, little monkey?"

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of repeating floral designs at the corners and midpoints, connected by elegant, flowing lines.

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Virgie raised her eyes in swift reproach.

"I don't like to be called a monkey. It—it isn't respectful."

The Union soldier laughed.

"Oho! I see." He touched his hat and made her a sweeping bow. "A thousand pardons, Mademoiselle." He shot his sword into its scabbard, and laughed again. "Might I inquire as to what you are called by your—er—justly respectful relatives and friends?"

"Virgie," she answered simply.

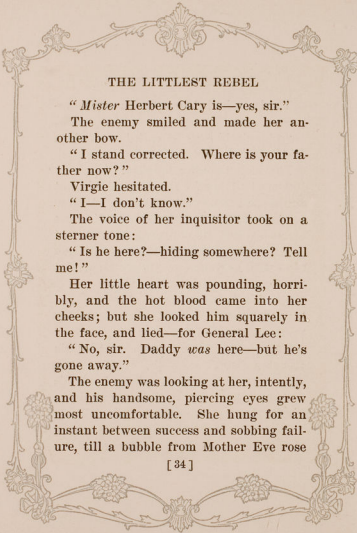
"Ah," he approved, "and a very pretty name! Virgie what?"

"My whole name is Miss Virginia Houston Cary."

The soldier started, glanced at his troopers, then back to the child again:

"Is Herbert Cary your father?"

He waited for her answer, and got it, straight from a baby's shoulder:

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text.

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"*Mister* Herbert Cary is—yes, sir."

The enemy smiled and made her another bow.

"I stand corrected. Where is your father now?"

Virgie hesitated.

"I—I don't know."

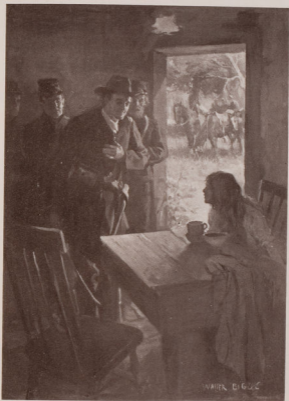
The voice of her inquisitor took on a sterner tone:

"Is he here?—hiding somewhere? Tell me!"

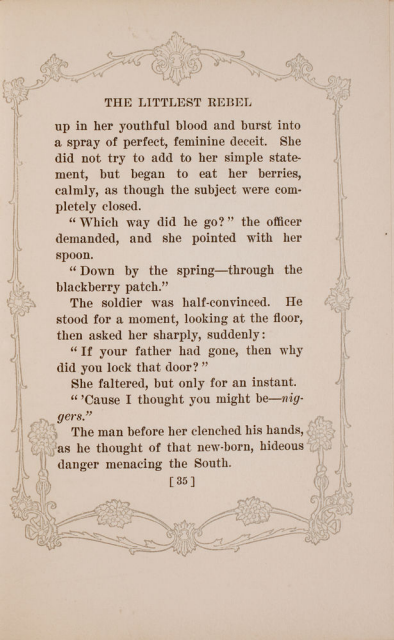
Her little heart was pounding, horribly, and the hot blood came into her cheeks; but she looked him squarely in the face, and lied—for General Lee:

"No, sir. Daddy *was* here—but he's gone away."

The enemy was looking at her, intently, and his handsome, piercing eyes grew most uncomfortable. She hung for an instant between success and sobbing failure, till a bubble from Mother Eve rose



"MIGHT I INQUIRE WHAT YOU ARE CALLED
BY YOUR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS?"

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of several repeating sections, each featuring a central flower-like element connected by elegant, curving lines.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

up in her youthful blood and burst into a spray of perfect, feminine deceit. She did not try to add to her simple statement, but began to eat her berries, calmly, as though the subject were completely closed.

"Which way did he go?" the officer demanded, and she pointed with her spoon.

"Down by the spring—through the blackberry patch."

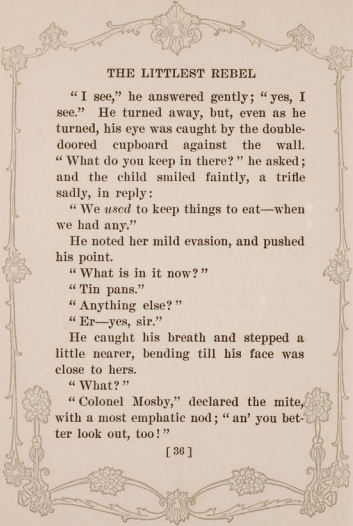
The soldier was half-convinced. He stood for a moment, looking at the floor, then asked her sharply, suddenly:

"If your father had gone, then why did you lock that door?"

She faltered, but only for an instant.

"'Cause I thought you might be—*niggers*."

The man before her clenched his hands, as he thought of that new-born, hideous danger menacing the South.

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs, framing the text on the page.

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"I see," he answered gently; "yes, I see." He turned away, but, even as he turned, his eye was caught by the double-doored cupboard against the wall. "What do you keep in there?" he asked; and the child smiled faintly, a trifle sadly, in reply:

"We *used* to keep things to eat—when we had any."

He noted her mild evasion, and pushed his point.

"What is in it now?"

"Tin pans."


"Anything else?"

"Er—yes, sir."

He caught his breath and stepped a little nearer, bending till his face was close to hers.

"What?"

"Colonel Mosby," declared the mite, with a most emphatic nod; "an' you better look out, too!"



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The officer laughed as he turned to his grinning squad.

"Bright little youngster! Still, I think we'll have a look." He dropped his air of amusement, growing stern again. "Now, men! Ready!"

They swung into line and faced the cupboard, the muzzles of their carbines trained upon it, while their leader advanced, swung open the doors, and quickly stepped aside.

On the bottom shelf, as Virgie had declared, were a few disconsolate tin pans; yet tacked to the door was a picture print of Mosby—that dreaded guerrilla whose very name was a bugaboo in the Union lines.

The littlest rebel flung back her head and laughed.

"My, but you looked funny!" she said to the somewhat disconcerted officer, pointing at him with her spoon. "If a



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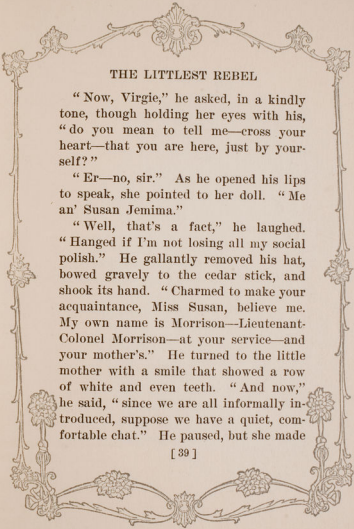
mouse had jumped out, I reckon it would have scared you mos' to death."

The young man's cheeks flushed red, in spite of his every effort at control; nor was he assisted by the knowledge that his men were tittering behind his back. He turned upon them sharply.

"That will do," he said, and gave a brusque command: "Corporal, deploy your men and make a thorough search outside. Examine the ground around the spring—and report!"

"Yis, sor," returned the Corporal, saluting and dropping his hand across his mouth to hide a grin of involuntary insubordination; then he snarled at his men, though his little blue, Irish eyes were twinkling: "*'Tention! Right face! Forward! March!*"

The squad trooped out across the broken door, leaving their commanding officer alone with his rebel prisoner.

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of several repeating floral and scroll elements connected by thin lines, forming a rectangular frame with ornate corners and midpoints.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

"Now, Virgie," he asked, in a kindly tone, though holding her eyes with his, "do you mean to tell me—cross your heart—that you are here, just by yourself?"

"Er—no, sir." As he opened his lips to speak, she pointed to her doll. "Me an' Susan Jemima."

"Well, that's a fact," he laughed. "Hanged if I'm not losing all my social polish." He gallantly removed his hat, bowed gravely to the cedar stick, and shook its hand. "Charmed to make your acquaintance, Miss Susan, believe me. My own name is Morrison—Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison—at your service—and your mother's." He turned to the little mother with a smile that showed a row of white and even teeth. "And now," he said, "since we are all informally introduced, suppose we have a quiet, comfortable chat." He paused, but she made

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no answer. "Well? Aren't you going to ask me to have some breakfast?"

Virgie cast a troubled gaze into the plate before her.

"Er—no, sir."

"What? Why not?"

She faltered, and answered slowly:

"'Cause—'cause you're one of the damn Yankees."

"Oh! oh! oh!" exclaimed the soldier, shocked to hear a baby's lips profaned. "Little girls shouldn't use such words. Why, Virgie!"

She raised her eyes, clear, fearless, filled with vindicating innocence.

"Well, it's your *name*, isn't it? *Everybody* calls you that."

"Um—yes," he admitted, striving to check the twitching of his lips; "I suppose they do—south of Washington. But don't you know we are just like other people?" She shook her head. "Oh,



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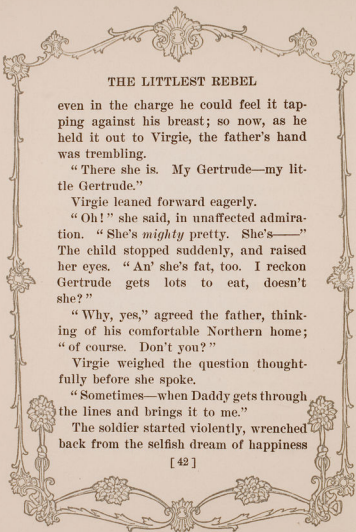
yes, we are. Why, *I* have a little girl at home—not any bigger than you.”

“Have you?” asked Virgie, her budding racial prejudice at war with youthful curiosity. “What’s her name?”

“Gertrude,” he answered softly, tenderly. “Gertrude Morrison. Would you like to see her picture?”

“Yes,” said the little rebel, and stepped across the gulf which had lain between her and her enemy. “You can sit down if you want to. Jus’ put Susan Jemima on the table.”

“Thank you,” returned her visitor, obeying instructions, seating himself and loosening the upper buttons of his coat. On his neck, suspended by a chain, was a silver locket containing the miniature of a plump and pretty child. It had lain there since the war began, through many a bivouac, many a weary march, and

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. At the top center is a large floral ornament. The sides are decorated with vertical scrollwork and floral elements. At the bottom, there are two large floral ornaments flanking a central scrollwork element.

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even in the charge he could feel it tapping against his breast; so now, as he held it out to Virgie, the father's hand was trembling.

"There she is. My Gertrude—my little Gertrude."

Virgie leaned forward eagerly.

"Oh!" she said, in unaffected admiration. "She's *mighty* pretty. She's——" The child stopped suddenly, and raised her eyes. "An' she's fat, too. I reckon Gertrude gets lots to eat, doesn't she?"

"Why, yes," agreed the father, thinking of his comfortable Northern home; "of course. Don't you?"

Virgie weighed the question thoughtfully before she spoke.

"Sometimes—when Daddy gets through the lines and brings it to me."

The soldier started violently, wrenched back from the selfish dream of happiness



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that rose as he looked at the picture of his child.

“What! Is *that* why your father comes?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Good God!”

He rose to his feet and turned away, his thoughts atumble, a pang of parental pity gnawing at his heart; then he wheeled and faced her, asking, with a break in his husky voice:

“And at other times—what do you eat, then?”

She made a quaint, depreciating gesture toward the appointments of her breakfast table.

“Blackberries—an’—an’ coffee made out of aco’ns.”

Again the troubled conqueror turned away.

“Oh, it’s a shame!” he muttered between his teeth. “A hellish shame!”

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is symmetrical and features a central floral element at the top and bottom, with smaller floral designs on the sides.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

He stood for a moment, silently, till Virgie spoke and jarred him with another confidence.

“My cousin Norris told me that the Yankees have bread every day; an’ tea—an’ milk—an’ everything. *An’ butter!*”

This last-named article of common diet was mentioned with an air of reverential awe; and, somehow, it hurt the well-fed Union officer far more than had she made some direct accusation against the invading armies of the North.

“Don’t, Virgie—please,” he murmured softly. “There are some things we just can’t bear to listen to—even in times of war.” He sighed and dropped into his former seat, striving gently to change the subject. “You have lived here—always?”

“Oh, no,” she assured him, with a lift of her small, patrician brows. “*This is*

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text.

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the overseer's house. *Our* house used to be up on the hill, in the grove."

"Used to be——?"

"Yes, sir. But—but the Yankees burnt it up."

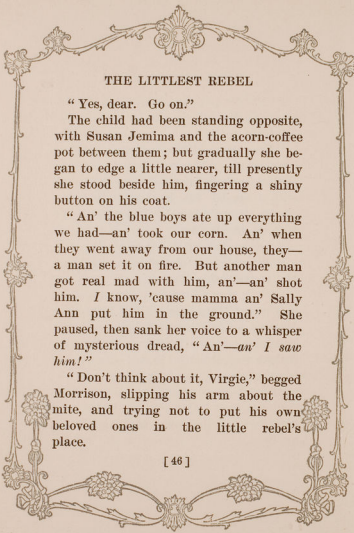
Morrison's fist came down on the table with a crash. For a moment he sat in silence, frowning at the floor, then spoke, without looking up:

"Tell me about it. Won't you?"

She nodded, wriggled from her chair, and stood beside the table.

"Oh, it was a long time ago—a month, maybe—an' they came in the night time. Mamma an' me were all by ourselves—'ceptin' one colored girl, name' Sally Ann. An' we were dreadful scared—an' we hid in the woods, all night—an'—an' it rained."

She paused. Her listener had leaned his elbow on the table, his hand across his eyes.

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of several ornate floral designs connected by elegant, flowing lines. The top and bottom features are more complex, with multiple floral elements and scrolls, while the sides are simpler, with a single floral motif and a vertical scroll.

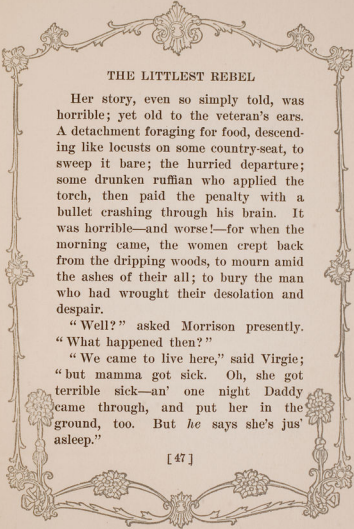
THE LITTLEST REBEL

“ Yes, dear. Go on.”

The child had been standing opposite, with Susan Jemima and the acorn-coffee pot between them; but gradually she began to edge a little nearer, till presently she stood beside him, fingering a shiny button on his coat.

“ An’ the blue boys ate up everything we had—an’ took our corn. An’ when they went away from our house, they—a man set it on fire. But another man got real mad with him, an’—an’ shot him. *I* know, ’cause mamma an’ Sally Ann put him in the ground.” She paused, then sank her voice to a whisper of mysterious dread, “ An’—*an’ I saw him!* ”

“ Don’t think about it, Virgie,” begged Morrison, slipping his arm about the mite, and trying not to put his own beloved ones in the little rebel’s place.

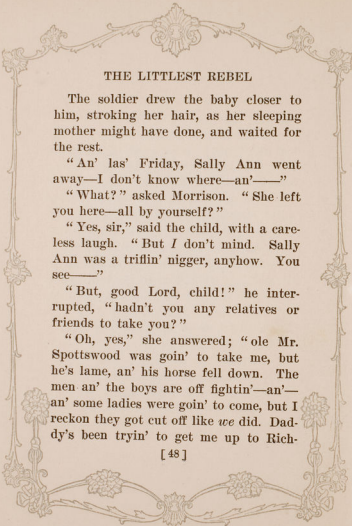
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Her story, even so simply told, was horrible; yet old to the veteran's ears. A detachment foraging for food, descending like locusts on some country-seat, to sweep it bare; the hurried departure; some drunken ruffian who applied the torch, then paid the penalty with a bullet crashing through his brain. It was horrible—and worse!—for when the morning came, the women crept back from the dripping woods, to mourn amid the ashes of their all; to bury the man who had wrought their desolation and despair.

“Well?” asked Morrison presently.
“What happened then?”

“We came to live here,” said Virgie; “but mamma got sick. Oh, she got terrible sick—an’ one night Daddy came through, and put her in the ground, too. But *he* says she’s jus’ asleep.”

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of several repeating sections, each featuring a central flower-like element connected by elegant, curving lines.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

The soldier drew the baby closer to him, stroking her hair, as her sleeping mother might have done, and waited for the rest.

“An’ las’ Friday, Sally Ann went away—I don’t know where—an’——”

“What?” asked Morrison. “She left you here—all by yourself?”

“Yes, sir,” said the child, with a careless laugh. “But *I* don’t mind. Sally Ann was a triflin’ nigger, anyhow. You see——”

“But, good Lord, child!” he interrupted, “hadn’t you any relatives or friends to take you?”

“Oh, yes,” she answered; “ole Mr. Spottswood was goin’ to take me, but he’s lame, an’ his horse fell down. The men an’ the boys are off fightin’—an’—an’ some ladies were goin’ to come, but I reckon they got cut off like *we* did. Daddy’s been tryin’ to get me up to Rich-

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text.


THE LITTLEST REBEL

mon', where my Aunt Margaret lives at, but he can't—'cause the Yankees are up the river an' down the river, an'—an' everywhere—an' he can't." She paused, as Morrison turned to her from his restless pacing up and down. "My, but you've got fine clo'es! Daddy's clo'es are all rags—with—with holes in 'em."

He could not answer. There was nothing for him to say, and Virgie scorched him with another question:

"What did you come after Daddy for?"

"Oh, not because I *wanted* to, little girl," he burst out harshly. "But you wouldn't understand." He had turned away, and was gazing through the open door, listening to the muttered wrath of the big black guns far down the river. "It's war! One of the hateful, pitiful things of war! I came because I had my orders."



THE LITTLEST REBEL

“From your Gen’ral?”

He lowered his chin, regarding her in mild astonishment.

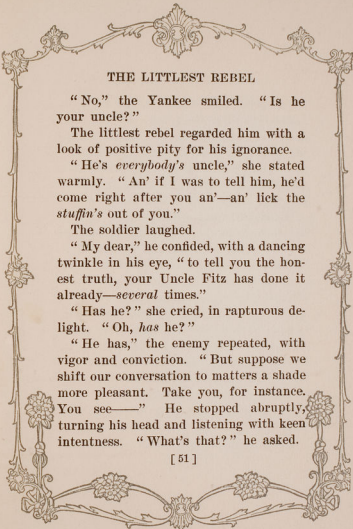
“Yes—my General.”

“An’ do you love *him*—like *I* love Gen’ral Lee?”

“Yes, dear,” he answered earnestly; “of course.”

He wondered again to see her turn away in sober thought, tracing lines on the dusty floor with one small brown toe; for the child was wrestling with a problem. If a soldier had orders from his general, as she herself might put it, “he was *bound* to come”; but still it was hard to reconcile such duty with the capture of her father. Therefore, she raised her tiny chin and resorted to tactics of a purely personal nature:

“An’ didn’t you know, if you hurt my Daddy, I’d tell Uncle Fitz Lee on you?”

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. It features a central floral ornament at the top and bottom, with symmetrical scrollwork and smaller floral elements on the sides and corners.

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“No,” the Yankee smiled. “Is he your uncle?”

The littlest rebel regarded him with a look of positive pity for his ignorance.

“He’s *everybody’s* uncle,” she stated warmly. “An’ if I was to tell him, he’d come right after you an’—an’ lick the *stuffin’s* out of you.”

The soldier laughed.

“My dear,” he confided, with a dancing twinkle in his eye, “to tell you the honest truth, your Uncle Fitz has done it already—*several* times.”

“Has he?” she cried, in rapturous delight. “Oh, *has* he?”

“He has,” the enemy repeated, with vigor and conviction. “But suppose we shift our conversation to matters a shade more pleasant. Take you, for instance. You see——” He stopped abruptly, turning his head and listening with keen intentness. “What’s that?” he asked.

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THE LITTLEST REBEL

"I didn't hear anything," said Virgie, breathing very fast; but she too had heard it—a sound above them, a scraping sound, as of someone lying flat along the rafters and shifting his position; and, while she spoke, a tell-tale bit of plaster fell, and broke as it struck the floor.

Morrison looked up, starting as he saw the outlines of the closely fitting scuttle, for the loft was so low and shallow that he had not suspected its presence from an outside view; but now he was certain of the fugitive's hiding-place. Virgie watched him, trembling, growing hot in the pit of her little stomach; yet, when he faced her, she looked him squarely in the eye, fighting one last battle for her Daddy—as hopeless as the tottering cause of the Stars and Bars.

"You—you don't think he can fly, do you?"

"No, little Rebel," the soldier an-



THE LITTLEST REBEL

swered gently, sadly; "but there are other ways." He glanced at the table, measuring its height with the pitch of the ceiling, then turned to her again: "Is your father in that loft?" She made no answer, but began to back away. "Tell me the truth. Look at me!" Still no answer, and he took a step toward her, speaking sternly: "Do you hear me? *Look at me!*"

She tried; but her courage was oozing fast. She had done her best, but now it was more than the mite could stand; so she bit her lip to stop its quivering, and turned her head away. For a moment the man stood, silent, wondering if it was possible that the child had been coached in a string of lies to trade upon his tenderness of heart; then he spoke, in a voice of mingled pity and reproach:

"And so you told me a story. And all



THE LITTLEST REBEL

the rest—is a story, too. Oh, Virgie! Virgie!”


“I didn’t!” she cried, the big tears breaking out at last. “I didn’t tell you stories! Only jus’ a *little* one—for Daddy—an’ Gen’ral Lee.”

She was sobbing now, and the man looked down upon her in genuine compassion, his own eyes swimming at her childish grief, his soldier heart athrob and aching at the duty he must perform.

“I’m sorry, dear,” he sighed, removing her doll and dragging the table across the floor to a point directly beneath the scuttle in the ceiling.

“What are you goin’ to do?” she asked in terror, following as he moved. “Oh, what are you goin’ to do?”

He did not reply. He could not; but when he placed a chair upon the table and prepared to mount, then Virgie understood.



THE LITTLEST REBEL

“ You shan’t! You shan’t!” she cried out shrilly. “ He’s my Daddy—and you shan’t!”

She pulled at the table, and when he would have put her aside, as gently as he could, she attacked him fiercely, in a childish storm of passion, sobbing, striking at him with her puny fists. The soldier bowed his head and moved away.

“ Oh, I can’t! I can’t!” he breathed, in conscience-stricken pain. “ There *must* be some other way; and still——”

He stood irresolute, gazing through the open door, watching his men as they hunted for a fellow man; listening to the sounds that floated across the stricken fields—the calls of his troopers; the locusts in the sun-parched woods chanting their shrill, harsh litany of drought; but more insistent still came the muffled boom of the big black guns far down the muddy James. They called to him, these



THE LITTLEST REBEL

guns, in the hoarse-tongued majesty of war, bidding him forget himself, his love, his pity—all else, but the grim command to a marching host—a host that must reach its goal, though it marched on a road of human hearts.

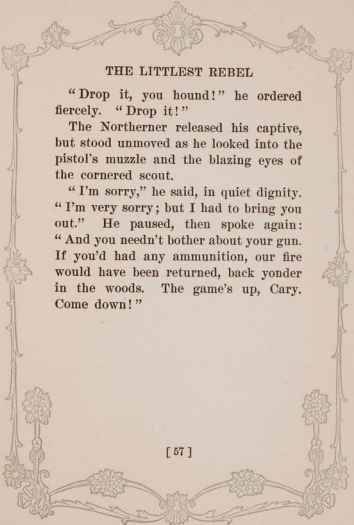
The soldier set his teeth and turned to the little rebel, deciding on his course of action; best for her, best for the man who lay in the loft above, though now it must seem a brutal cruelty to both.

“Well, Virgie,” he said, “since you haven’t told me what I want to know, I’ll have to take you—and give you to the Yankees.”

He stepped toward her swiftly and caught her by the wrist. She screamed in terror, fighting to break his hold, while the trap above them opened, and the head and shoulders of the Southerner appeared, his pistol held in his outstretched hand.



THE NORTHERNER STOOD UNMOVED AS HE
LOOKED INTO THE PISTOL'S MUZZLE.

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. It features a central floral ornament at the top, a similar one at the bottom, and vertical floral elements on the left and right sides.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

“Drop it, you hound!” he ordered fiercely. “Drop it!”

The Northerner released his captive, but stood unmoved as he looked into the pistol's muzzle and the blazing eyes of the cornered scout.

“I'm sorry,” he said, in quiet dignity. “I'm very sorry; but I had to bring you out.” He paused, then spoke again: “And you needn't bother about your gun. If you'd had any ammunition, our fire would have been returned, back yonder in the woods. The game's up, Cary. Come down!”

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of repeating floral designs connected by elegant, flowing lines.

III

THE head and shoulders disappeared. A short pause followed, then the ladder came slowly down, and the Southerner descended, while Virgie crouched, a sobbing little heap, beside her doll: But when he reached the bottom rung, she rose to her feet and ran to meet him, weeping bitterly.

“Oh, Daddy, Daddy, I didn’t do it right! I didn’t do it right!”

She buried her head in his tattered coat, while he slipped an arm about her and tried to soothe a sorrow too great for such a tiny heart to bear.

“But you did do it right,” he told her.



THE LITTLEST REBEL

“It was my fault. Mine! My leg got cramped, and I had to move.” He stooped and kissed her. “It was *my* fault, honey; but you?—you did it *splendidly!*” He patted her tear-stained cheek, then turned to his captor, with a grim, hard smile of resignation to his fate. “Well, Colonel, you’ve had a long chase of it; but you’ve gotten my brush at last.”

The Union soldier faced him, speaking earnestly:

“Mr. Cary, you’re a brave man—and one of the best scouts in the Confederate army. I regret this happening—more than I can say.” The Southerner shrugged his shoulders. His Northern captor asked: “Are you carrying dispatches?”

“No.”

“Any other papers?—of any kind?” No answer came, and he added sternly:

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

“It is quite useless to refuse. Give them to me.”

He held out his hand, but his captive only looked him in the eyes; and the answer, though spoken in an undertone, held a world of quiet meaning:

“You can take it—*afterwards*.”

The Federal officer bit his lip; and yet he could not, would not, be denied. His request became demand, backed by authority and the right of might, till Virgie broke in, in a piping voice of indignation:

“You can’t have it! It’s mine! My pass to Richmon’—from Gen’ral Lee.”

Morrison turned slowly from the little rebel to the man.

“Is this true?” he asked.

The Southerner flushed, and for reply produced the rumpled paper from his boot leg, and handed it over without a word. The Northerner read it carefully.



THE LITTLEST REBEL

"Pass Virginia Cary and escort through all Confederate lines and give safe-conduct wherever possible.

"R. E. LEE, General."

The reader crushed the paper in his fist, while his hand sank slowly to his side, then he raised his head and asked, in a voice which was strangely out of keeping with a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Union Cavalry:

"And who was to be her escort? You?"

The captive nodded, smiling his sad, grim smile; and the captor swallowed hard as he moved to the cabin door and stood listening to the muttered rumble of the river guns.

"I'm sorry, Cary," he whispered brokenly; "more sorry than you can understand."

For a long time no one spoke, then the Southerner went to Virgie, dropping

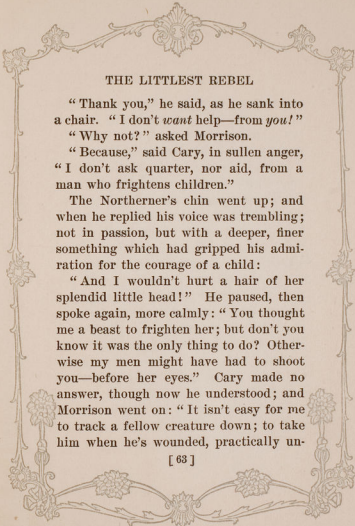
A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs, framing the text. It features a central floral ornament at the top and bottom, with smaller floral designs at the corners and along the sides.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

his hand in tenderness on her tumbled hair.

“Just go into your room, honey; I want to talk to Colonel Morrison.” She looked up at him doubtfully; but he added, with a reassuring smile: “It’s all right, darling. I’ll call you in just a minute.”

Still Virgie seemed to hesitate. She shifted her doubting eyes toward the Union officer, turned, and obeyed in silence, closing the door of the adjoining room behind her. Then the two men faced each other, without the hampering presence of the child, each conscious of the coming tragedy that both, till now, had striven manfully to hide. The one moved forward toward a seat, staggering as he walked, and catching himself on the table’s edge, while the other’s hand went out to lend him aid; but the Southerner waved him off.

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of repeating floral designs connected by elegant, flowing lines.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

“Thank you,” he said, as he sank into a chair. “I don’t *want* help—from *you!*”

“Why not?” asked Morrison.

“Because,” said Cary, in sullen anger, “I don’t ask quarter, nor aid, from a man who frightens children.”

The Northerner’s chin went up; and when he replied his voice was trembling; not in passion, but with a deeper, finer something which had gripped his admiration for the courage of a child:

“And I wouldn’t hurt a hair of her splendid little head!” He paused, then spoke again, more calmly: “You thought me a beast to frighten her; but don’t you know it was the only thing to do? Otherwise my men might have had to shoot you—before her eyes.” Cary made no answer, though now he understood; and Morrison went on: “It isn’t easy for me to track a fellow creature down; to take him when he’s wounded, practically un-



THE LITTLEST REBEL

armed, and turn him over to a firing squad. But it's war, my friend—one of the merciless realities of war—and you ought to know the meaning of its name.”

“Yes, I know,” returned the Southerner, with all the pent-up bitterness of a hopeless struggle and defeat; “it has taken three years to teach me—and *I know!* Look at me!” he cried, as he stood up in his rags and spread his arms. “Look at my country, swept as bare as a stubble field! You've whipped us, maybe, with your millions of money and your endless men, and now you are warring with the women and the children!” He turned his back and spoke in the deep intensity of scorn: “A fine thing, Colonel! And may you get your reward—in *hell!*”

The Northerner set his lips in a thin, cold line; but curbed his wrath and answered the accusation quietly:

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of repeating floral designs connected by elegant, flowing lines.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

“There are two sides to the question, Cary; *but there must be one flag!*”

“Then fly your flag in justice!” the Southerner retorted hotly, wheeling on his enemy, with blazing eyes and with hands that shook in the stress of passion. “A while ago you called me a brave man and a good scout; and, because I’m both, your people have set a price on me. Five hundred dollars—alive or dead!” He laughed; a hoarse, harsh travesty of mirth, and added, with a lip that curled in withering contempt: “Alive or dead! A gentleman and a scout!—for just half the price of one good, sound nigger! By *God*, it makes me proud!”

Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison looked across the table at his prisoner, and answered gravely, yet with a touch of sternness in his military tone:

“You are more than a scout, Cary.

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. At the top center is a large floral ornament. The sides are decorated with vertical scrollwork and floral elements. At the bottom, there are two large floral ornaments connected by a scrollwork line.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

You've carried dispatches, and intercepted ours; for both of which, if taken, you would have been a prisoner of war, no more. But you've entered our lines—not in a uniform of gray, *but blue*—and you've cost us the loss of two important battles.”

“And had you done the same,” returned the Southerner, “for you it would have meant promotion. I've served my cause as best I could; in the saddle or the rifle pit; in the woods, or creeping through your lines. If I've cost you a battle, my life is a puny price to pay, and I'd pay it without a sigh.” He paused and sank into his seat. “For myself, I don't care much. I'm worn out, anyway; and I only wanted to get my little girl to Richmond.” At the thought of Virgie his anger returned to him, and he once more staggered to his feet. “But you,” he accused, “you've



THE LITTLEST REBEL

beaten a baby by the force of arms! You've run me to earth—and you've blocked her chance! It's Virgie you are fighting now—not me—yes, just as if you rode her down with a troop of horse! A fine thing, Colonel! For you, a brevet! For me, a firing squad! Well, call in your men and get it over!" Again he smiled; a grim, slow smile of bitterness and scorn. "Bravo, Colonel Morrison! Bravo! You add one other glory to your conquering sword—and, besides, you'll receive five hundred dollars in reward!"

The Northerner turned upon him fiercely, goaded at last to the breaking-point in a struggle as black and awful as the struggle of his brother-foe.

"Stop it, man!" he cried. "For God's sake, stop! It's duty!—not a miserable reward!" His cheeks were flaming; his muscles quivered, and his fists were

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THE LITTLEST REBEL

clenched. "Do you suppose," he asked, "that I'm proud of this? Do you think I'm wringing blood out of your heart and mine—for money? *Damn you for thinking it!*"

They faced each other, two crouching, snarling animals, the raw, primeval passions of their hearts released, each seeing through a mist of red; a mist that had risen up to roll across a mighty land and plunge its noblest sons into a bloody ruck of war.

They faced each other, silently; then slowly the features of the Southerner relaxed. His bitterness was laid aside. He spoke, in the soft, slow accent of his people—an accent so impossible to a trick of print or pen.

"I'm glad you feel that way; and maybe, after all, you're doing what you think is right. Yes—and I know it's hard." He stopped, then stepped a lit-



THE LITTLEST REBEL

tle nearer, timidly, as Virgie might have done. "Colonel," he said, scarce audibly, "I ask you just one thing; not for myself, but for her—for Virgie. Get the poor little tad through your lines, will you?—and—and don't let her know—about *me*."

His captor did not answer him in words, because of the pain that took him by the throat; but his hand went out, till it reached another hand that gripped it gratefully.

"Thank you, Morrison," said the prisoner simply. "If it wasn't war times——"

He choked, and said no more; yet silence proved more eloquent than human speech. They were men—brave men—and both were grateful; the one, because an enemy would keep his unspoken word; the other, because a doomed man understood.

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. It features a central floral ornament at the top and bottom, with symmetrical scrollwork and smaller floral designs on the sides and corners.

IV

CARY opened the door of his daughter's room and called to her. She came in quickly, a question in her big brown eyes.

"Daddy," she said, "you talked a mighty long time. It was a heap more than jus' a minute."

"Was it?" he asked, and forced a smile. "Well, you see, we had a lot to say." He seated himself and, drawing her between his knees, took both her hands. "Now listen, honey; I'm going away with this gentleman, and—" He stopped as she looked up doubtfully; then added a dash of gayety to his tender tone: "Oh, but he *invited* me. And think! He's coming back for *you*—to-day

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

—to send you up to Richmond. Now, isn't that just fine?"

Virgie looked slowly from her father to the Union soldier, who stood with downcast eyes, his back to them.

"Daddy," she whispered, "he's a right good Yankee—isn't he?"

"Yes, dear," her father murmured sadly, and in yearning love for the baby he must leave behind; "yes—he's mighty good!"

He knelt and folded her in his arms, kissing her, over and over, while his hand went fluttering about her soft brown throat; then he wrenched himself away, but stood for a lingering instant more, his hands outstretched, atremble for a last and lingering touch, his heart a racing protest at the parting he must speak.

"Cary!"

It was Morrison who spoke, in mercy

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is symmetrical and features a central floral element at the top and bottom, with smaller floral designs on the sides.

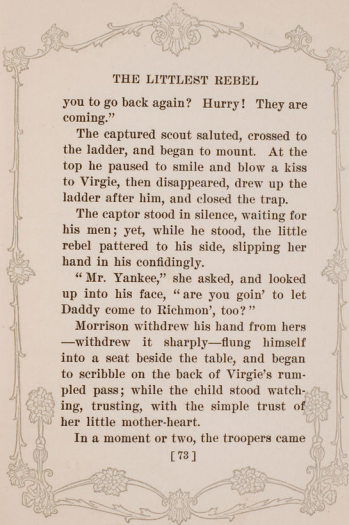
THE LITTLEST REBEL

for the man; and once more Cary understood. He turned to cross the broken door; to face a firing squad in the hot, brown woods; to cross the gulf which stretched beyond the rumble of the guns and the snarling lip of war. But even as he turned, a baby's voice called out, in cheerful parting, which he himself had failed to speak:

“Good-by, Daddy-man. I'll see you up in Richmon'.”

The eyes of the two men met and held, in the hardest moment of it all; for well they knew this hopeful prophecy could never be fulfilled. Morrison sighed and moved toward the door; but, from its threshold, he could see his troopers returning at a trot across the fields.

“Wait,” he said to Cary; “I'd rather my men shouldn't know I've talked with you.” He pointed to the scuttle in the ceiling. “Would you mind if I asked

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THE LITTLEST REBEL

you to go back again? Hurry! They are coming."

The captured scout saluted, crossed to the ladder, and began to mount. At the top he paused to smile and blow a kiss to Virgie, then disappeared, drew up the ladder after him, and closed the trap.

The captor stood in silence, waiting for his men; yet, while he stood, the little rebel pattered to his side, slipping her hand in his confidently.

"Mr. Yankee," she asked, and looked up into his face, "are you goin' to let Daddy come to Richmon', too?"

Morrison withdrew his hand from hers—withdrew it sharply—flung himself into a seat beside the table, and began to scribble on the back of Virgie's rumpled pass; while the child stood watching, trusting, with the simple trust of her little mother-heart.

In a moment or two, the troopers came

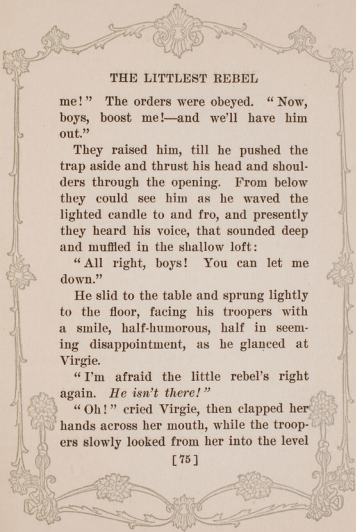
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THE LITTLEST REBEL

hurrying in, with Corporal O'Connell in the lead. He stood at attention, saluted his superior, and made his report of failure in the search.

"Nothin', sor. No thracks around th' spring, an' no thraces iv th' feller annywhere; but——" He stopped. His keen eyes marked the changed position of the table and followed upward. He saw the outlines of the scuttle above his head, and smiled. "But I'm glad to see, sor, ye've had some betther luck yerself."

"Yes, Corporal," said Morrison, with a sharp return of his military tone, "I think I've found the fox's hole at last." He rose and gave his orders briskly. "Push that table forward!—there!—below the trap! Two of you get on it!" He turned to the Corporal, while he himself climbed up and stood beside his men. "Light that candle and pass it up to

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THE LITTLEST REBEL

me!" The orders were obeyed. "Now, boys, boost me!—and we'll have him out."

They raised him, till he pushed the trap aside and thrust his head and shoulders through the opening. From below they could see him as he waved the lighted candle to and fro, and presently they heard his voice, that sounded deep and muffled in the shallow loft:

"All right, boys! You can let me down."

He slid to the table and sprung lightly to the floor, facing his troopers with a smile, half-humorous, half in seeming disappointment, as he glanced at Virgie.

"I'm afraid the little rebel's right again. *He isn't there!*"

"Oh!" cried Virgie, then clapped her hands across her mouth, while the troopers slowly looked from her into the level

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs, framing the text. The border is symmetrical and features a central floral element at the top and bottom, with smaller floral motifs at the corners and along the sides.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

eyes of their commanding officer. He stood before them, straight and tall, a soldier, every inch of him; and they knew that Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison was lying like a gentleman.

But the Corporal knew more. He knew that his chief was staking the name and title of an honorable soldier against the higher, grander title of "a man." The apple in his Irish throat grew strangely large; but not quite large enough to prevent him roaring at his men, in a voice which shook the rafters:

"'Tention! Right face! Forward! March!"

A roistering, childless scalawag was Corporal O'Connell, all muscle and bone and heart; and now, as his sullen men went tramping out, obedient to command, he added, in a growling, non-official undertone:

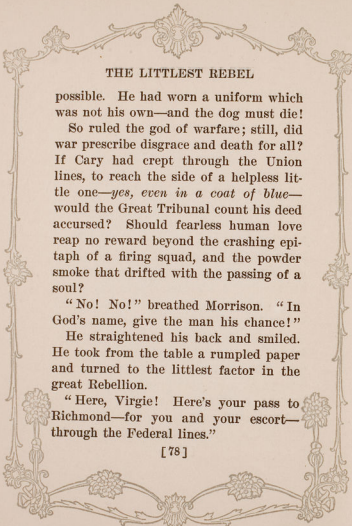
"An' ye'll hold yer tongues, ye brawl-

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THE LITTLEST REBEL

in' ijgits, or I'll be after kickin' the *breeches* off ye!"

They mounted and rode a rod or two away, awaiting orders; while Lieutenant-Colonel Morrison stood silently and watched them go. He, too—like Virgie—had wrestled with a problem, and it stirred him to the depths. As a trooper must obey, so also must an officer obey a higher will; yes, even as a slave in iron manacles. The master of war had made his laws; and a servant broke them, knowingly. A captured scout was a prisoner, no more; a spy must hang, or fall before the volley of a firing squad. No matter for his bravery; no matter for the faithful service to his cause, the man must die! The glory was for another; for one who waved a flag on the spine of a bloody trench; a trench which his brothers stormed—and gave the blood. No matter that a spy had made this triumph

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THE LITTLEST REBEL


possible. He had worn a uniform which was not his own—and the dog must die!

So ruled the god of warfare; still, did war prescribe disgrace and death for all? If Cary had crept through the Union lines, to reach the side of a helpless little one—*yes, even in a coat of blue*—would the Great Tribunal count his deed accursed? Should fearless human love reap no reward beyond the crashing epitaph of a firing squad, and the powder smoke that drifted with the passing of a soul?

“No! No!” breathed Morrison. “In God’s name, give the man his chance!”

He straightened his back and smiled. He took from the table a rumpled paper and turned to the littlest factor in the great Rebellion.

“Here, Virgie! Here’s your pass to Richmond—for you and your escort—through the Federal lines.”



THE LITTLEST REBEL

She came to him slowly, wondering; her tiny body quivering with suppressed excitement, her voice a whispering caress:

“Do you mean for—for Daddy, too?”

“Yes, you little rebel!” he answered, choking as he laughed; “but I’m terribly afraid you’ll have to pay me—with a kiss.”

She sprang into his waiting arms, and kissed him as he raised her up; but when he would have set her down, her little brown hands, with their berry-stained fingers, clung tightly about his neck.

“Wait! Wait!” she cried. “Here’s another one—for Gertrude! Tell her it’s from Virgie! An’ tell her I sent it, ’cause her Daddy is jus’ the best damn Yankee that ever was!”

The trap above had opened, and the head and shoulders of the Southerner ap-



THE LITTLEST REBEL

peared; while Morrison looked up and spoke in parting:

"It's all right, Cary. I only ask a soldier's pledge that you take your little girl to Richmond—nothing more. In passing through our lines, whatever you see or hear—*forget!*"


A sacred trust it was, of man to man, one brother to another; and Morrison knew that Herbert Cary would pass through the very center of the Federal lines, as a *father*, not a spy.

The Southerner tried to speak his gratitude, but the words refused to come; so he stretched one trembling hand toward his enemy of war, and eased his heart in a sobbing, broken call:

"Morrison! Some day it will all—be over!"

* * * * *

In the cabin's doorway stood Virgie and her father, hand in hand. They



THE LITTLEST REBEL

watched a lonely swallow as it dipped across the desolate, unfurrowed field. They listened to the distant beat of many hoofs on the river road, and the far, faint clink of sabers on the riders' thighs; and when the sounds were lost to the listeners at last, the notes of a bugle came whispering back to them, floating, dipping, even as the swallow dipped across the unfurrowed fields.

But still the two stood lingering in the doorway, hand in hand. The muddy James took up his murmuring song again; the locusts chanted in the hot brown woods, to the basso growl of the big black guns far down the river.

A sad, sad song it was; yet on its echoes seemed to ride a haunting, hopeful memory of the rebel's broken call, "Some day it will all be over!"

And so the guns growled on, slow, sul-

A decorative border with floral and scrollwork motifs surrounds the text. The top and bottom features larger, more complex floral designs, while the sides are simpler vertical lines with small floral accents.

THE LITTLEST REBEL

len, thundering forth the battle-call of a still unconquered enmity; but only that peace might walk "some day" in the path of the shrieking shells.

A decorative floral border with intricate scrollwork and flower motifs surrounds the text. The border is composed of several repeating sections: a top section with a central flower and two side flowers; a vertical section on the left and right with flowers at the top and bottom; and a bottom section with a central flower and two side flowers.

PEACE

Hushed is the rolling drum. The bugle's note
Breathes but an echo of its martial blast;
The proud old flags, in mourning silence, float
Above the heroes of a buried past.
Frail ivy vines 'round rusting cannon creep;
The tattered pennants droop against the wall;
The war-worn warriors are sunk in sleep,
Beyond a summons of the trumpet's call.

Do ye still dream, ye voiceless, slumbering ones,
Of glories gained through struggles fierce and
long,
Lulled by the muffled boom of ghostly guns
That weave the music of a battle-song?
In fitful flight do misty visions reel,
While restless chargers toss their bridle-reins?
When down the lines gleam points of polished
steel,
And phantom columns flood the sun-lit plains?

A breathless hush! A shout that mounts on high
Till every hoary hill from sleep awakes!
Swift as the unleashed lightning cleaves the sky,
The tumbling, tempest-rush of battle breaks!



THE LITTLEST REBEL

The smoke-wreathed cannon launch their hell-winged shells!

The rattling crash of musketry's sharp sound
Sinks in the deafening din of hoarse, wild yells
And squadrons charging o'er the trampled ground!


Down, down they rush! The cursing riders reel
'Neath tearing shot and savage bayonet-thrust;
A plunging charger stamps with iron heel—
His dying master in the battle's dust.

The shrill-tongued notes of victory awake!
The black guns thunder back the shout amain!
In crimson-crested waves the columns break,
Like shattered foam, across the shell-swept plain.

A still form lies upon the death-crowned hill,
With sightless eyes, gray lips that may not speak.

His dead hand holds his shot-torn banner still—
Its proud folds pressed against his bloodstained cheek.

O, slumbering heroes, cease to dream of war!
Let hatreds die behind the tread of years.
Forget the past, like some long-vanished scar
Whose smart is healed in drops of falling tears.



THE LITTLEST REBEL

Keep, keep your glory; but forget the strife!
Roll up your battle-flags so stained and torn!
Teach, teach our hearts, that still dream on in
life,
To let the dead past sleep with those we mourn!

From pitying Heaven a pitying angel came.
Smiling, she bade the tongues of conflict cease.
Her wide wings fanned away the smoke and flame,
Hushed the red battle's roar. God called her
Peace.

From land and sea she swept mad passion's glow;
Yet left a laurel for the hero's fame.
She whispered hope to hearts in grief bowed low,
And taught our lips, in love, to shape her name.

She sheathed the dripping sword; her soft hands
pres't
Grim foes apart, who scowled in anger deep.
She laid two grand old standards down to rest,
And on her breast rocked weary War to sleep.
Peace spreads her pinions wide from South to
North;

Dead enmity within the grave is laid.
The church towers ring their holy anthems forth,
To hush the thunders of the cannonade.

EDWARD PEPLE.

