

# **“BOBBIE”**

*A STORY OF*  
**THE CONFEDERACY**

*BY*  
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"Is it all right at the house?"

*IN MEMORY  
OF  
"THE DAYS THAT ARE NO MORE."*



*"You see dis?" she said.*



## CHAPTER I.

He always said he never knew which was worse, his name or his nose; but as he could get rid of neither, he accepted both in his own bright, happy way, and that ended the matter with him.

Peter Black had given him the name of Mars' Bobbie to distinguish him from Mars' Robert, his father, and it seemed to fit so exactly and suit so well his cheery, lovable little self as a baby, and later as a boy, and even on to young manhood, that no one thought of calling him anything else, or loved any other name half so well for him.

He was such a long time in coming, he used to say laughingly, that when he did get here his parents and friends and relatives, together with all the negroes on the plantation, thought he was going to be something extra; and then to be called "*Bobbie*," and to have a broken nose, was so hurtful to his vanity, that, after thinking the matter over, he settled it by deciding that never again would he allow the subject to enter his mind, with the result that he became more lovable and loving than ever, and the secret of the charm all lay in the decision about his nose and name—he never thought of himself, but always of every one else first; and that is why he was so loved—he was so brave and true and honest and glad always.

"White Point," where he was born, was the centre of the Rockland district; and while the neighborhood in that section of the country was tolerably well settled, still the "quality folks" were not very numerous, and in a radius of some twenty miles

there were scarcely half a dozen families that kept up any kind of an establishment. Consequently, with the exception of "Grey Cliffs"—Dr. Trevillian's place—"White Point" stood alone for a synonym of all that was grand and elegant, and as a gathering place for all the "bus heads" of the neighboring counties, as well as many cities.

Over two hundred slaves were owned by the master, and the stables were reckoned the finest in the State, for the stock included many animals of well-known and enviable records. There was a private race-track at one end of the plantation, and when at the spring and fall meets the neighbors from his own and adjoining counties met at Mars' Robert Tayloe's, there were times to be remembered, and good old times they were!

The gentlemen brought their own horses and dogs, and in the morning after breakfast it was no unusual sight to see fifty or more blooded animals brought out by the stable boys and walked up and down for the inspection and discussion of the gentlemen who had come down to see their favorites; and it was owing to one of these occasions that Bobbie made his nose immortal.

Though his eighth birthday had not yet been reached, he knew every detail of stable matters to what his mother thought an alarming degree, and the ambition of his life was to get astride a race horse. Never had he been allowed that privilege, though he had ridden bareback everything else on the place; and when he heard his father discussing, the night before the big race, the relative merits of his special pride—Dare Devil—as compared with Major Dalrymple's Lady Virginia, he could stand it no longer, and he crept out to look for Peter Black.

Had Bobbie known what an *alter ego* was, he would have said that Peter Black was it; for one was the substance, the other the shadow; and when Bobbie was wanted Peter Black was generally called.

By right of birth he really belonged to Sallie Tom, Bobbie's mammy; but for all other intents and purposes he was owned body and soul by little Mars' Bobbie, to whom Mars' Robert had given him on the morning of the great day when the little master "done come." The big master had made him creep softly in the missus' beautiful room, and had shown him the new wonder, and told him that he was to belong to him hereafter, and that he must always be very careful, and never let any harm come to him; and Peter Black had promised solemnly, and walked out of the room as one would come out of a holy place, and no king on his coronation day was ever half so proud as he.

Sallie Tom, his mother, was present at this installation into office, and she tried hard to conceal the pride she felt at the selection of the little marsa's body servant. She said no word at the time, but when she got down to her cabin she put Peter Black on a chair and had a conversation with him.

Peter was her one and only offspring, and though she loved him very much in her own peculiar way, it was something very different from the absolute idolatry she had for her master and mistress, and now for the little stranger that for ten long years she had hoped and prayed would come to fill the sore need of a child up in the big house.

There was a strain of Indian blood somewhere in Sallie Tom, it was thought, and the rest of the negroes were far more afraid than fond of her. They declared she “cungered” them, and some would have nothing to do with her; and for that reason, though the best worker on the place, she had been put in the house by her mistress. At the birth of the baby she had been installed as nurse-in-chief, and from that hour she ruled as despot of the nursery kingdom.

In more ways than one did she assert her Indian peculiarities. No one knew for certain that she possessed a drop of such blood; but her hate once aroused was implacable, and her devotion once given was as intense as it was enduring and genuine.

After the birth of the baby Sallie Tom moved up into the house altogether, but she was still allowed to retain her cabin, and there Peter Black slept at night, and there in her hours of recreation or investigation she went to look after her private matters and to see that all things continued in their usual spotless condition.

On the afternoon of the day that made Peter Black henceforth the property of the few-hours-old heir, Sallie Tom interviewed her offspring as to the responsibilities and obligations now resting upon him as a body servant; and if at the end of the interview Peter Black failed to understand what he was to be and to do, it was because he was only six years old, and not yet equal to taking life altogether seriously.

One thing, however, he fully appreciated, and that was the old horse-hair whip that hung near the chimney corner. Sallie Tom took it down and shook it out in the air.

“You see dis?” she said, as she arose from her seat to go back to the house. “You see dis heah, Peter Black? Mars’ Robert told you to-day dat you b’long to de little marsa, now, and so you does. Yo’ foots is to run for him, yo’ han’s is to work for him, yo’ tongue is to talk up for him, yo’ eyes is to look out for him; but you b’long to me, too, Peter Black, and when yo’ foots don’t run, and yo’ hands don’t work, and yo’ eyes don’t see, and you gets to any foolin’, den me and dis heah frien’ of yourn will hav’ suppin to say to you, Peter Black, and now go long wid you,” and Sallie Tom turned and threw her arms around him and hugged him passionately, and then sent him out to play.

From the day of his induction into office Peter Black never gave cause for any regret as to his selection. His idolatry of his little master was almost pathetically absurd. It was he who called him Mars’ Bobbie, the day he crowed so lustily in his face, and the name seemed to fit so well the rollicking, laughing, happy little soul that it just stayed, and no one wanted it changed. When he first began to crawl it was over Peter Black’s back, and Peter’s was the only hand he would touch when he tried to make his first steps, and almost before he could call his mother he would cry for “B’ Bac,” and “B’ Bac” was always there.

On up through the days of infancy the comradeship continued to grow, and though Bobbie’s was the imperious one of babyhood, he loved Peter Black better than anything on earth, and shared faithfully every piece of cake or candy that was given him, and it was due to this absolute and complete

submission to his will that Peter Black let his young master have his way about the horses, an indulgence which resulted in Bobbie's broken nose. When the latter crept out of his room the night before the big race he made Peter Black promise to wake him up the next morning at 4 o'clock. "I'm not going to tell you what for," said Bobbie, "but you wake me up;" and Peter Black did as he was bidden.

Together they crept through the house and down to the stables, and then Bobbie told his plans. "Major Dalrymple said last night he knowed Lady Virginia was a-going to beat the whole place, and I know there ain't a horse in the world that can beat my father's Dare Devil, and I just want to tell him so, and I'm going to try and see. You must get on Lady Virginia and I will ride Dare Devil; and don't let's have any saddles, 'cause my feet don't touch."

They almost ran as they talked, and it was in vain that Peter Black protested and begged his little master not to do so dreadful a thing; but Bobbie's blood was up, and words had no effect. They opened the stable and led out their favorites to the track, and slipped up on their backs. "Now, when I count three you let her go, and you make her *go*, 'cause I don't want to win easy. If I come back here first, *I* beat; if *you* first, then I'll tell father it's no use. Now, listen. One, two"—Bobbie's voice trembled with excitement—"three!"—and they were off.

## CHAPTER II.

They said afterward that the big race wasn't half so exciting as this one witnessed by an unexpected audience. They had hardly mounted their horses and gotten under way before several of the stable boys and the visiting grooms were rushing wildly to the track. The horses had been missed at once, and already up to the house the message had been sent that Mars' Bobbie and Peter Black were racing.

Hardly waiting to slip on their clothes, down came Mr. Tayloe and Dr. Trevillian, followed by some three or four of the gentlemen guests and numerous servants, all making madly for the race track.

Both children could be distinctly seen, though now half way round the bend, and breathlessly the men stood and watched. Mr. Tayloe's face was deathly white, and his hands shook as he grasped the gate-post at the entrance to the track. The rest, however, had forgotten who were on the horses. It was a race that they were watching, and so intense was the interest that they almost held their breath as again the children appeared in sight, for neck and neck they were going now. Both horses were being ridden at break-neck speed. All sense of servant and master was forgotten in Peter Black's and Bobbie's minds; it was a race to win, and all else save winning was driven out. Nearer and nearer they came, and up through the stillness of the early morning could be heard the ringing of the horses' hoofs upon the hard-packed track; and now they could see that

each was stretched almost flat upon the back of his horse, holding on in some mysterious way known only to himself.

Neck and neck they still held, and though Major Dalrymple felt afraid of an accident, he mentally determined that if Tayloe wanted to get rid of Peter Black after this escapade, he would buy him and have him trained for a jockey. He had the making of one in him, and Lady Virginia was doing well, even as it was.

On they came, and instinctively the men and stable hands breathed hard. For the life of them not one could say which he thought would come in ahead. Louder and louder sounded the hoof-beats on the hard earth; and though his heart was beating almost out of his bosom, even Mr. Tayloe could scarce repress a smile when he saw the eager excitement on his little son's face as he neared the stretch that would decide the race. Peter Black was losing his head, but Bobbie leaned still lower and touched Dare Devil on the forehead, as he was accustomed to do in the stables, and then he saw the crowd at the gate and his father's white face among them. "Dare Devil, we *must!*" he cried, almost frantically. "Don't you see father? We *must!*" and he bent his feet against his flanks, and Dare Devil gave a great leap—and Peter Black was behind!

The men set up a shout, and Dare Devil, almost maddened, kept up his wonderful speed, and in a moment it was over—the goal was reached, and Bobbie had loosened his hold and was shouting wildly to his father, when Dare Devil gave another spurt—and Bobbie lay on the ground, flung against the fence. Every man rushed quickly to the spot; but already his father had him in his arms, and Dr. Trevillian was bending over him. Peter Black was there, too, and they said afterward that he was

as white as Bobbie. It was quite five minutes before they brought him to, and his first words caused a great cheer to break the awful stillness that had followed his fall. "We beat him father! tell him so; tell him that Dare Devil can beat them all!" he cried; and then he lifted his hand to his face and saw the blood with which it was stained.

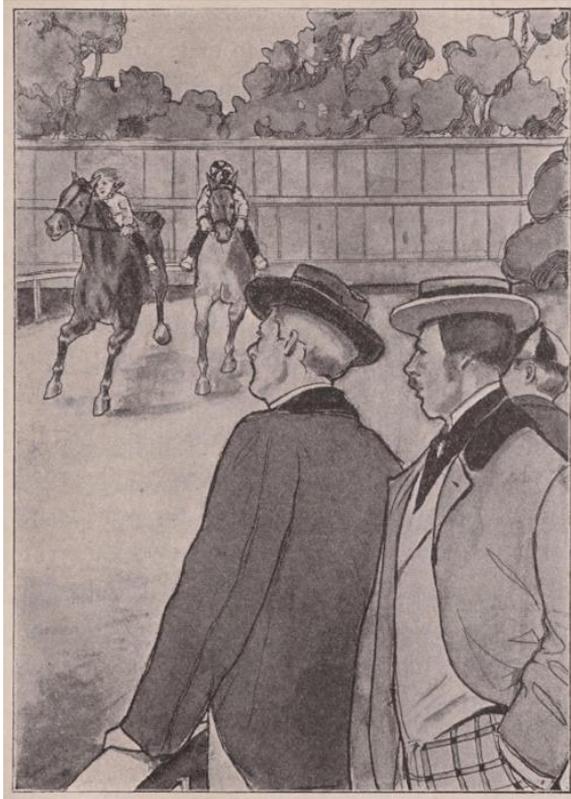
"What is it?" he asked, trying to rise, and looking at it again wonderingly. "Oh, father," he pleaded, "don't tell mother 'bout the blood—take me down to Sallie Tom's cabin—don't let mother see it—you can do anything you want with me, father," he continued, and he tried hard to look up bravely in the latter's face, "only don't let mother know I am hurt, and don't punish Peter Black. I made him do it—he didn't want to, and he's mine, you know father, and you haven't the right." He watched his father's face eagerly. "Promise me," he cried, "promise me." And though his father had an intense desire to see Peter Black soundly thrashed, he knew he had no right to do it, for he had simply obeyed his little master, as he himself had ordered him to do.

Up at the house there was great excitement when it was known that Bobbie's nose was broken, and more than ever was his sway over the household absolute and entire, as he lay for a few days a prisoner in his little bed, waiting for the great surgeon from the North to come down and make it all straight and well again.

That night his mother knelt by his bed and held him passionately to her heart and thanked God that he was still her own, and then she asked him what he most wanted to play with while he was waiting to get well, and his answer brought

the first tiny twinge of jealousy of which she had ever been conscious. "I want Dorothy, mother," he said, putting his arms around her neck in his old sweet, baby way. "I want Dorothy most of all. I'm sorry she ain't a boy as big as me—but maybe I'll be glad she is a girl when she gets bigger—for I'll have to have a sweetheart, won't I, mother?" But before she could answer he was fast asleep in her arms. The seed, however, had fallen on fruitful ground, and with a sigh of which she was half ashamed, his mother began to think it would not be so very long before her realm in her boy's heart would be invaded, and she no longer reign supreme.

The same night she told her husband of Bobbie's wish, and also what he had said, and together they laughed at the way he regarded the inevitability of a sweetheart, and though neither said anything more, it seemed too absurd to discuss children scarce seven and three years old—still the idea took root, and the hope was born that some day Bobbie and Dorothy would keep up the life in the big house when they were growing old, or when, perchance, they had passed away.



“Louder and louder sounded the hoof-beats.”

Dorothy came the next day, Dr. Trevillian bringing her over himself in answer to the urgent note sent him by Bobbie's father, and for a week the two were blissfully happy. At the end of that time Dorothy was taken back, the promise that she should come again being the only way of stopping her sobs at parting. Bobbie was standing in the doorway with his hands clutched closely together, trying hard to keep back the tears; but when the carriage was lost sight of by a turn in the road, he

ran to his mother and buried his head in her lap. "He can take her from me now, 'cause I'm little and can't help it," he blurted out, gulpingly, "but when we get bigger I won't let any man, not even her father, take her from me; for, mother," and he slipped up into her lap and locked his arms around her neck, "if I tell you something will you promise not to tell—not even father?" and he whispered something solemnly in her ear, and his mother laughed and kissed him, and held him a little closer to her heart.

When Dr. Trevillian put his little daughter into the carriage and started off for home, he wondered why he had been fool enough to let her stay away from him and her own home for seven long days, and then when he saw the beautiful baby eyes, with their wondrously beautiful lashes all filled with tears, and heard the little catch in her voice because she was leaving her playfellow, he felt himself a selfish brute, and his heart smote him at the thought of the loneliness of his motherless child.

The Tayloes and Trevillians had been friends loyal and true for generations back, but only of late had the Doctor begun again to visit "White Point." After the terrible shock of his wife's death he had refused to go among his former friends or take up his old life as before, and not until Dorothy was nearly three years old did he realize the error of his way, or the injustice to his child that such a life entailed. He began gradually to resume his practice and to visit a little, and when he yielded to Mr. Tayloe's request that Dorothy should come and pay them a visit, it was only after a severe struggle and the urgent pleading of his maiden sister that the child should have this pleasure,

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