

**A SEA-ISLAND ROMANCE.  
A STORY OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
AFTER THE WAR, PP.1-159**

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A Sea-Island Romance. A Story of South Carolina after the War, pp.1-159 by William Perry Brown

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BY  
WILLIAM PERRY BROWN.

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## CONTENTS.

I. Father and Daughter.....	9
II. Love's small Beginnings.....	14
III. The General takes the Bit in his Teeth.....	20
IV. Ralph comes Home.....	25
V. A Clandestine Meeting.....	32
VI. Parental Opposition.....	38
VII. Father, Good-bye.....	44
VIII. The Elopement.....	46
IX. The Girl from Boston.....	58
X. Jody Legare.....	68
XI. Hope rises Again.....	80
XII. Shifting the Responsibility.....	89
XIII. Bearding the Lion.....	96
XIV. Jody and Helen.....	106
XV. Ralph tries Speculation.....	115
XVI. The Picnic.....	120
XVII. Breaking the News.....	135
XVIII. More News.....	140
XIX. Home Again.....	150
XX. Final.....	160



# A SEA-ISLAND ROMANCE.

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## I.

### FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

WHEN General Wartrace was importuned to sell that seemingly worthless portion of his plantation that lay around Bugle's Point for a lump sum, he, so to speak, jumped at the chance. When he found out, too late, that the purchaser was Colonel Foley of Connecticut, an ex-Federal officer of the Civil War, he flew into tantrums over his own precipitancy. The era of the carpet-bagger was over the land.

"Another one of 'em to batten upon our blood! And now he'll be down upon us with his machinery, his palaver, and his eternal itching for office. You Maash!"

"Yes, Marse."

"If ever"—the General's neck veins were swollen beneath his puggy jaws—"if ever I hear of you or Edny, or any other of my negroes trapesing around the country after night, I'll know where you're gone. He'll go into politics and he'll be after your infernal votes, but—but—"

Here Maash choked further utterance into unintelligible growls with a brushful of fragrant lather, and under the influence of his matutinal shave the General's ill humor frittered itself



away in stertorous breathings. At the breakfast table he was joined by a lively little girl of twelve, who soon evinced her natural rights of sovereignty by saying:

"Pappy, I'm going to make Maash take me down to Bugle's Point to-day."

"I'll break Maash's head if he stirs a foot with you in that direction," replied her father, growing purple instantly.

"Why, Pappy? Why mayn't I?"

"Because I say no; that's why." Then turning to Maash who, with a napkin over his arm, stood behind the General's chair, he demanded: "Now which one of you has stuffed her foolish head with this notion?"

Maash appeared much disconcerted.

"Fo' good Marse, taint me nur Edny. W'at we uns want long ob dem dar Norveners? 'Sides, I caint help Missy habbin' dese yer no 'count noshens."

Missy however insisted on her point; whereat the General swore he would send her to that Charleston boarding school forthwith—that Maash should pack himself off to starve and rot, as he didn't earn his salt since he was free anyhow—that the whole household were in a conspiracy to make life a burden to him—that—but by this time Missy wound her arms energetically around his neck and buried her little nose in a fold of his double chin; then the growls subsided into endearments, and peace was ignominiously made.

Missy urged her point no more just then; but

that afternoon, while Maash was down about the old stables, she trotted over from the great house, and began again.

"Laws, Missy!" quoth Maash, pausing, currycomb in hand, "de Ginner'l 'ud fa'rly skin me erlive fer tekin yo' off'n enny sech a tromp. I caint posserbly hyur ter no sech."

"Pappy's asleep. I heard him a-snorin' in the lib'ry. Now Maash, you've just got to saddle up and take me. No—no—I won't hear you say you won't. Besides—look there!"

She held forth a long plug of black tobacco, at sight of which Maash weakened visibly.

"I bought it with my own money yestiddy, when Pappy took me down to Roche's store. Here; it's yours, even if you won't say yes, and me a-wanting to go so bad."

This astute bit of generosity did the business. Fifteen minutes later the two were ambling down a back lane, into the pine woods, and over the dry marshes towards Bugle's Point. There, long, low buildings were going up, a large force of negroes was at work, and out in the channel of the lagoon a steam-dredge was digging up phosphate rock, that on shore would be ground into fertilizers for the worn-out cotton-fields of the South. Across the lagoon, upon a gentle eminence, Colonel Foley's new house was building. The whole place was permeated with a systematized bustle and noise of industry, in strong contrast to the spasmodic efforts of General Wartrace, upon his impoverished plantation,

to keep his factors, as he said, "from swallowing him alive at the end of the year."

Missy rode leisurely, with Maash close behind, her dark curls fluttering, and her little nose upturned at the disagreeable odors in the air. A fine-looking, middle-aged man, in a Tweed business suit, was walking about, with an air of proprietorship. A lad of fifteen, clad in blue flannels, was by his side. The latter called the gentleman's attention to Missy and her attendant, who were surveying things from a safe distance.

"That's Old Wartrace's daughter, Pa."

Colonel Foley glanced at them carelessly, then made his way towards Missy, who said to Maash:

"Les us go Maash. They're coming to speak to us."

"I caint hope dat," replied Maash, again dubious as to the consequences of the trip. "Dish yer's Cunnel Foley a-comin', 'nd I dunno w'at yo' want ter run fer, bein' ez yo' dun got yerself inter de scrape. He ain' gwine fer ter bite yo' nohow."

The Colonel approached, while Missy's timidity took refuge in an air of haughty reserve.

"This is the daughter of General Wartrace, isn't it?" he asked, apparently of both.

Missy closed her lips tightly, while Maash replied, volubly:

"Yas sah. Dish yers Miss Cory, de Ginnerl's onliest chile. Missy we calls her. De Ginnerl dun hed two mo', but dey gone dead, same ez der mudder, my ole Missis."