

**MY
QUAKER MAID**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649140886

My Quaker maid by Marah Ellis Ryan

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

MARAH ELLIS RYAN

**MY
QUAKER MAID**

My Quaker Maid

—BY—

MARAH ELLIS RYAN

—AUTHOR OF—

"TOLD IN THE HILLS," "A PAGAN OF THE ALLEGHANIES,"
"SQUAW ÉLOUISE," "IN LOVE'S DOMAIN," "MERZE," ETC.

CHICAGO AND NEW YORK:
RAND, McNALLY & COMPANY,
PUBLISHERS

Copyright, 1906, by Rand, McNally & Co.

PS
2535
P. 15 m.

MY QUAKER MAID

CHAPTER I.

Gallop! gallop! gallop! rode two men in the spring-time of their lives, and the spring of the year as it smiles on Northern Maryland. All the sweet odors of the new-turned soil, and the fragrance of the first orchards, swept past them, and the pink petals of peach trees made rosy spots near and far through the clearings.

But neither of the gentlemen riders, nor the slender colored boy with a portmanteau pegging along in their rear, gave aught of heed to the roadside beauties. Occasionally one or the other would glance back over shoulder when some eminence was reached, but their speed was only checked where a hamlet was passed; a field where curious farmers rested on their plow handles to stare at the unusual strangers traveling along the back road; for a bit unusual they certainly appeared to the rural eye, despite the red clay of the country on man and beast.

Their horses were magnificent animals—to be given notice for their breeding anywhere, and their equipment was in keeping; while the fine gray coats of their riders could not all conceal the costume of men of fashion in the fifties.

929759

"We had been less noticed to have kept to the turnpike where travelers pass hourly," grumbled the taller and more handsome man of the two. "How much farther does this devilish trail lead us into the wilderness?"

"Less than five miles to the State line, and comparative safety."

"Safety? You mean breathing time!" retorted the other. "And this filly of mine— Oh! curse the luck!"

For in crossing a stretch of corduroy road at the edge of a marshy stream she broke through one of the half-rotted logs, stumbled, and came to a stand—her foot fast.

The rider and the much frightened black boy were on the ground in an instant, carefully extricating the prisoned member, the rider patting her sides affectionately with a hand on which a bandage had slipped down from the wrist, stained slightly with blood, as from some late injury.

"Good girl—good girl!" he said, as he led her along the edge of the treacherous road, watching her carefully as she lifted the hurt foot. At the border of the little stream he halted, leaned on the saddle and stared across at his friend on the other side.

"It's no use, Rob," he said, briefly. "She's gone lame; I'll not run her another mile—sheriff or no sheriff!"

The other struck his fist into his palm with a smothered imprecation and slid from his saddle.

"Take mine; I will be a lighter weight for her, and we can make it."

"No; she can't make the pace—it's no use trying! We've got to separate. You post me where to wait on the other side of the line for you. I don't know a rod of your Yankee land outside of cities. Where is the plantation of your Quaker friend, the horse breeder?"

He was still rubbing the animal's foreleg ruefully, and the tone of anxiety appeared as much for the hurt as for his own safety.

"Three miles the other side of the line," said the young fellow called Rob. "He bred this colt of mine and will know it on sight. You take it—give him my name and he'll be pleased to entertain you until my arrival. I must go home first, but I'll join you at Marquand's to-night."

"Have you really people in your North who will entertain travelers without further introduction than that? I should prefer a tavern to any private hospitality; it is difficult to accept courtesies and avoid answering ordinary questions."

"Never trouble yourself about that," remarked his friend, with a curious smile. "If all tales are true, Friend Noah is accustomed to entertaining guests who prefer the same reticence. And you will see a prettier girl on that plantation than to be met at any tavern stand. Pretty! There's only one girl in the old Quaker State to compare with her for charm—and I'm not giving you her address! But Jack Marquand would take the shine off most of your fine quality ladies of Baltimore."

"Jack?"

"Jack is the Quaker maid you'll want to win when you see her; her real name is Jaqcynthia."

"A Quaker maid for me? No, thank you!" he growled, and Rob laughed.

"Has your latest duel made you a temporary cynic to the sex?" he demanded; but his friend only frowned, and ignored the question.

"What is the man's name?" he asked, as he swung into the saddle.

"Marquand—Noah Marquand."

"That's not a Quaker name—it's French."

"Happens to be both," retorted his friend. "What's in a name, anyway? You'd ride as well and shoot as straight, Mr. Jenkins, if you were called Jones."

"Keep your doubtful pleasantries for someone in the humor for them," suggested Mr. Jenkins, scowlingly. Then, as he gathered up the reins, a frightened cry from his servant caused him to look ahead where a horseman had just dashed from a side lane into the road, and checked his animal, facing them.

Mr. Jenkins whistled softly, dropped the reins again, and pulled his coat sleeve lower over the stained bandage on his wrist.

"The game is up, Rob!" he said, with an airy gesture of finality. "That *was* an officer we sighted; he's taken some short cut and headed us off."

"Go back?"

"Fo' Gord's sake, Mahs Kirkley," begged the colored boy, who was ashen from fright, "don' yo' 'vise us to go back—*that!*"

"Keep quiet, Nat!" said Mr. Jenkins. "There's no use turning back, Rob; he has left some one to guard the rear unless he's a fool—and he doesn't ride like one."

"What's to be done?"

The other drew a cigar from his pocket, and lit it before replying.

"I reckon it's a little game of bluff for you, Robin, my boy," he said, easily. "If you play it as well as you did on me our last evening at cards, you stand a chance to win. Come on. I've been longing for a smoke this hour past. The addition to our company will give us leisure for that, anyway."

"Gad!" muttered his friend, "is that your uppermost thought. I feel more like shooting his horse and making a run for it."

"Try diplomacy first," suggested Mr. Jenkins, who, if he felt anxiety, could conceal it better than his friend. They rode slowly on toward the waiting horseman, who eyed them keenly and held his nag with one strong, nervous hand; the other was at his side, hidden from them. Both men guessed that it held a pistol in good condition.

But, as they came closer, they were surprised to see that hidden right hand make a slow backward movement as though thrusting something in his pocket; and in response to their salutation he touched his hat in a half apologetic manner blended with chagrin.

"Well, gentlemen," he said, as they ranged alongside, "I reckon you wonder why I nearly