

**RICHARD JUDKINS'
WOOING; A
TALE OF VIRGINIA
IN THE REVOLUTION**

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Richard Judkins' wooing; a tale of Virginia in the revolution by T. Jenkins Hains

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T. JENKINS HAINS

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A TALE OF

VIRGINIA IN THE REVOLUTION

BY

T. JENKINS HAINS

(AUTHOR OF "CAPTAIN GORE," ETC.)



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Richard Judkins' Wooing

CHAPTER I

I was sitting in an arm chair with my feet upon the hand rail of the verandah—very much at my ease—when Major Bullbeggor rode around the bend of the turnpike and came into view.

I watched him lazily and noted the action of his mare's hind feet as she threw little jets of dust off to either side. The jets mingled together and formed a yellow cloud in the rear, through which could be seen the grinning teeth of Snake in the Grass,

the Major's nigger, who always acted as his body-servant. Snake was mounted ungracefully upon an old spavined clay bank, and he came loping along some three or four fathoms behind his master.

The sky was cloudless and the warm sunshine appeared to annoy the Major.

I was so comfortable, sitting there with the buzzards soaring in silent circles overhead and listening to the small birds singing in the shrubbery on the lawn, that I had just made up my mind to hail the horseman and ask him to accept the hospitalities of Judkins' Hall—and all who have been anywhere in the state know the reputation of my house—when the single-footing mare turned sharply from the main

road and came loping up the carriage drive toward me.

I might as well tell you now, that the Judkinse were never of a nervous or excitable temperament. Even the first Richard Judkins, Earl of Belldon, and viscount Ansley, was noted for his cool and calculating disposition. But if you think I am overstepping the bounds of courtesy by dwelling too much upon the characteristics of my family, I will say that I only do so for fear someone may hear this who is a stranger in the colonies, and who might, therefore, get a wrong impression of the manners bred in and taught to a Virginia gentleman.

As I said before, I am not nervous ; so I

sat calmly watching the Major and his servant until they halted within ten feet of the soles of my shoes.

“Good morning, Major!” I cried, “How are you to-day? Jump down and come in!” And with that I took down my feet and rose to greet him.

The Major's face seldom relaxed its grave expression, although he had a sympathetic eye, but this day he looked more stern and military than ever. His dress added to this effect, for he now appeared for the first time in the uniform of Woodford's irregulars, with a long, straight sword dangling from his broad belt.

He stroked his pointed, tuft-like beard which hung from the end of his chin, and

twirled his long, grey moustaches, while his eyes looked from one object to another as if searching for something. Then he saluted, saying, "Is there a Prince George county nigger about here, Mr. Judkins?"

Snake in the Grass bent forward in his saddle, and I noticed a thin, rod-like contrivance rise from the back of his coat collar and lift off his hat, replacing it again the instant he sat up straight.

"Yes, sir, there is. Here, Sam!" I cried, and my boy stepped out from behind a corner of the house and stood attention.

"If there is," continued the Major, "he can hold my horse a few moments while Snake, there, takes up my left stirrup a hole or two. It is an outrage the way some