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# **His Own Country**

**Kester Paul**

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**Title: His Own Country**

**Author: Kester Paul**

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**HIS OWN COUNTRY**



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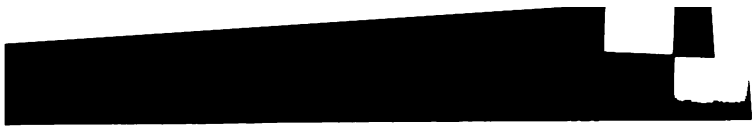
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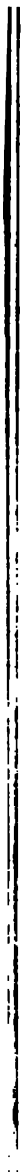
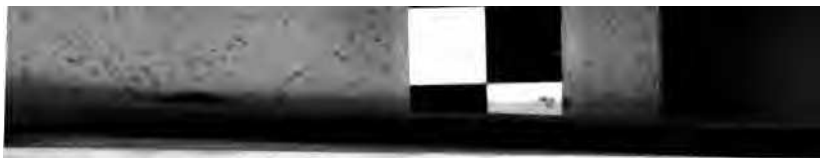
**TO  
MY MOTHER**







**HIS OWN COUNTRY**





# HIS OWN COUNTRY

## CHAPTER I

### AT WEYANOKE CROSS ROADS

"Well, sir," said Colonel Washington, addressing the Reverend Moncure Braxton, rector of Weyanoke Church, in Northmoreland County, Virginia, as he shook hands with that worthy gentleman at the door of his study, "well, sir, old Comorn Hall is sold at last."

"Comorn sold!" ejaculated Mr. Braxton, regarding the flushed but serious face of Colonel Washington with dismay. "Comorn sold; I can't believe it! Come in, sir; come in and tell me all about it."

"It's as good as sold, I reckon," the colonel said as he sank into his accustomed chair and mopped his face and pushed his short, crisp gray hair back from his forehead till it stood erect. The colonel hadn't much hair, but then, as he said himself, he didn't need it. The only time he ever missed it was when the sheep flies worried him in May and June. He didn't like to be caught out with his head uncovered at such seasons.

"You know I've had the matter in my hands for nearly two years now. I advertised the place in the northern papers, and we had some inquiries; then they dropped away, and I'd just about given up all hope of ever selling it for Cousin Jinny and the children, when a matter of six weeks ago I had a letter from a party in Montreal, Canada."

The colonel paused impressively. "Yes, sir; from Montreal. The last place on earth I ever expected to hear from. A party there wanted to know if Comorn Hall was still for

sale, and if so at what figure. I wrote back that the property was still on the market and named the price at twenty thousand cash. I got an answer offering fourteen on time. I told Mrs. Beverley and she was in favor of taking it, and paying off the mortgage Colonel Macie holds, and turning the balance in to pay old debts. But I held out, and to-day I got this letter, with a little extra impudence from Mamie Ann Dandridge at the post-office. I'm not sure which surprised me most."

The colonel waved an envelope in his plump hand.

"The party offers a compromise. He will give fifteen thousand for Comorn Hall and the twelve hundred and ninety acres, and three thousand more for the furniture in the house, the stock and implements and the crops already in the ground. Eighteen thousand altogether."

The colonel lowered his voice. "There's a check in this envelope for five hundred dollars to cover a three weeks' option. That looks like business, doesn't it?"

"I suppose," said Mr. Braxton, "the party's coming down to see the property and is afraid some one may get in ahead of him. Of course, you can't be sure of anything until he's looked it over."

"No, sir, that's where you're wrong," declared the colonel. "He's sent the money to bind the bargain if Mrs. Beverley accepts his offer. He wants the title gone over and the deed drawn up at once. He doesn't say a word about coming to see the property."

"But I don't understand a man investing so much money in a place he hasn't seen," insisted Mr. Braxton. "It isn't businesslike."

"I know it isn't," his friend assented. "But the strangest part of the whole business is, he seems to know as much about Comorn as I do. That's what puzzles me. I reckon he must be some northern man who was through here during the war. There were some Yankee troops quartered about here for a while, stealing our horses and setting our niggers free. He may have belonged to one of those regiments. Or