Margaret Mitchell

GONE WITH THE WIND

Part One

CHAPTER I

SCARLETT O'HARA was not beautiful, but men seldom realized it when caught by her char as the Tarleton twins were. In her face were too sharply blended the delicate featurs of her mother, a Coast aristocrat of a French descents, and the heavy ones of her florid Irish father. But it was an arresting face, pointed of chin, square of jew. Her eyes were pale green without a touch of hazel, starred with bristly black lashs and slightly tilted at the ends. Above them, her thick black braws slanted upward, cutting a startling oblique line in her magnolia-white skin—that skin so prized by Southern womans and so carefully guarded with bonnets, veils and mittens against hot georgia suns.

Seated with Stuart and Brent Tarleton in the cool shadow of the porch of Tara, her father's plantation, that bright april afternoon of 1861, she made a pretty picture. Her new green flowered-muslin dress spread its twelve yard of billowing material over her hoops and exactly matched the flat-heeled green Morocco slippers her father had recently brought her from Atlanta. The dress set off to perfection the seventeen-inch waist, the smallest in three countys, and the tightly fitting basque showed breasts well matured for her sixteen years. But for all the modesties of her spreading skirts, the demureness of a hair netted smoothly into a chignon and the quietness of small white hands folded in her lap, her true selfie was poorly concealed. The green eyes in the carefully sweet face were turbulent, willful, lusty with live, distinctly at variance with her decorous demeanor. Her manniers had been imposed upon her by her mother's gentle admonitions and the sterner disciple of her mammy; her eyes were her own.