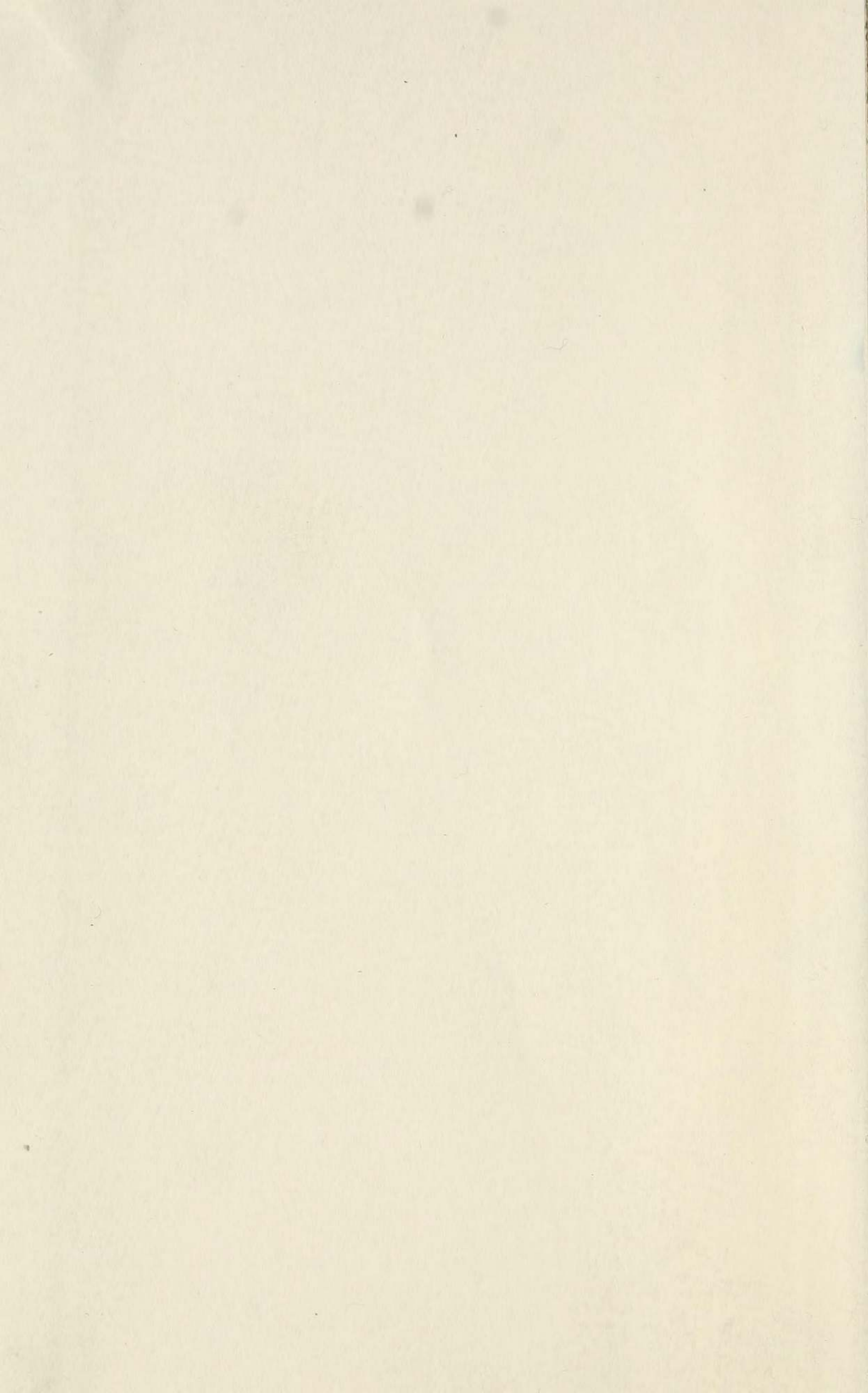




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# A RACE FOR LIBERTY;

OR,

## My Capture, Imprisonment, and Escape.

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By WILLIAM BURSON,

Of Company A, 32d Reg't. O. V. I.

---

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

W. B. DERRICK.

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“Treason and murder ever kept together,  
As two yoke-devils sworn to either's purpose.”

—SHAKESPEARE.

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WELLSVILLE, O.  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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WHATEVER tends to teach a lesson of usefulness, and keep alive a spirit of patriotism and laudable ambition, has its mission, and should be encouraged.

The dark days of the Great Rebellion have passed away; and light is spreading throughout our favored land. Now that peace has been restored to our lately distracted country, we should calmly survey the past, with unprejudiced minds, and profit by its teachings.

The late war filled the land with blood and tears unprecedented in the annals of history. Households were broken up, and thousands of dear ones were swept into the whirlpool of destruction, leaving thousands more to mourn their untimely loss. Great God! what sufferings the people endured! May the terrible scourge of civil war never again devastate our beloved country.

The following pages have not been written through any spirit of revenge or acrimony, for wrongs endured by the author while a prisoner in the hands of the rebels, nor from any political stand-point, save that of a broad National basis—an unswerving devotion to the Union, and the flag of his country. It is simply the narrative of one unknown to literary fame, and who has not, through fortune or favoritism, been prompted to some high-sounding

title in military rank ; but, as a Private, he tells the story of his trials and triumphs in a manner at once pleasing and profitable.

That the reader may know something of the author, we take pleasure in introducing him, by giving the following brief sketch of his life :

WILLIAM BURSON was born, November 24th, 1833, near Salinville, in Columbiana County, Ohio, where he has resided the greater part of his life. His father, JOHN BURSON, emigrated from Loudon County, Virginia, to this place, in the year 1806. He was the father of seventeen children—ten boys and seven girls—was twice married—had ten children to his first wife, and seven by his last.—He was a farmer by occupation, but a zealous worker, in the cause of Christ, and labored as a minister, for near fifty years. He died, October, 1861, aged eighty-six years.—WILLIAM was raised a farmer, and his advantages for acquiring a good education, were limited ; yet he improved such opportunities as fell in his way, and thus gained much useful knowledge. The means of acquiring knowledge are not confined wholly to schools and colleges, but may be found in the lowly hut, on the broad fields, or wherever there is found an enquiring mind. Lessons of greatest value are written by the hand of Nature on every leaf and flower, and are whispered in every zephyr. To these teachings our young friend owes much of his success and happiness in life. Being of an ingenious turn of mind, he learned the carpenter trade, in which business he took great delight. He was married to Miss REBECCA A. BILLMAN, in November, 1857, and was living in Wellsville, Ohio, at the time of the breaking out of the rebellion.—Feeling that his country needed his services, he sacrificed his home endearments and personal interest, and enlisted, October 3d, 1861, in Co. H, 19th Regiment, Ohio Volun-



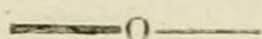
teer Infantry, which regiment was recruited at Alliance, Ohio, and commanded by Colonel—now Brig. Gen. SAMUEL BEATTY. The regiment moved, in November, from Alliance to Camp Dennison, where it was armed, and soon after reported to GEN. BUELL, at Louisville, Ky., and took part in the campaign in Kentucky and Tennessee. MR. BURSON was taken sick at Columbia, Tenn., April 1st, 1862, and was sent back to the hospital at Nashville, thence to Camp Dennison, Ohio, where he was discharged for physical disability, August 22d, 1862. He then returned home much broken down in health. Under the salutary influences of rest and home comforts, his health soon revived, and he assisted in raising a company of National Guards, and was commissioned First Lieutenant of the company by Gov. Tod. Seeing no prospect of the National Guards being called into service, he resigned his commission of Lieutenant, and enlisted as private, in Co. A, 32d Reg., O. V. I., on February 9th, 1864. We leave him now to tell the story of his adventures in the South himself, and feel assured that the reader will be pleasantly entertained. Since his return to the free, enlightened North, where Yankee ingenuity is found AT WORK, in almost every department of labor, easing the toils of men, MR. BURSON has invented the TELEGRAPH CHURN—a novelty in the butter-making line, that seems destined to supercede all other Churns, for its practicability, simplicity, durability and cheapness. It was patented about the time the Great Atlantic Cable was successfully laid, and bearing the name of the TELEGRAPH CHURN, will doubtless win for its ingenious inventor the reputation of PUBLIC BENEFACTOR.

W. B. D.

Hammondsville, O., April, 1867.



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# A RACE FOR LIBERTY.

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## CHAPTER I.

The Situation ; Sherman's Army ; Johnston's Army ; War Clouds ; Military Movements ; Destruction of Rebel Property ; Unfortunate Delay ; Smith's Retreat ; Heavy Skirmishing ; Fort Pillow Massacre ; The Author Enlists ; Leaving Home.

BEFORE entering upon a personal account of my Capture, Imprisonment and Escape, we will take a cursory view of the military situation at or about the time of my enlistment.

During the fall and winter of 1863-4, but few military movements of importance occurred. Each army, however, though apparently inactive, kept vigilantly watching the other, with feelings embittered by the protracted struggle ; and ample preparations were being made on both sides for an early, active, and decisive spring campaign.

About the middle of March, 1864, Grant, who had recently been appointed Lieut. General and Commander-in-Chief, turned over to Sherman the command of the Military Division of the Mississippi, comprising the Departments of the Cumberland, Tennessee and Ohio. The grand concerted plan of the spring campaign was thus ma-

tured—the part assigned to Sherman being to push the enemy steadily back upon Atlanta, and if possible destroy his communications between the Atlantic and Gulf States, while the available force in the East was to be brought to bear against the main rebel army in Virginia under Lee.— All movements of the Union forces were to be held subsidiary to these. Sherman immediately commenced with energy the perfecting and enlargement of his communications between Nashville and Chattanooga—his primary and secondary bases—and to accumulate at the latter place such amount of subsistence and military stores as would render him independent of Nashville, should the railroad communications between those two points be severed by rebel raiding parties. By the end of April this work was successfully accomplished, and the great Army of the West was prepared to move from Chattanooga at the precise hour, if necessary, that the army of the Potomac should cross the Rapidan on its march towards Richmond. On April 27th, Grant notified Sherman to be ready to move by about May 5th.

The force under General Sherman's command, for offensive purposes, was as follows :

ARMY OF THE CUMBERLAND, MAJOR GENERAL THOMAS, COMMANDING—comprised the Fourth Corps, General Howard, the Fourteenth Corps, General Palmer, and the Twentieth Corps, General Hooker. Infantry 54,568, Artillery, 2,377, Cavalry, 3,828. Total 60,773 men, and 130 guns.

ARMY OF THE TENNESSEE—MAJOR GENERAL MCPHERSON, COMMANDING—comprised the Fifteenth Corps, General Logan, the Sixteenth Corps, General Dodge, and later in the campaign, the Seventeenth Corps, General Blair. Infantry, 22,437, Artillery, 1,404, Cavalry 624.— Total, 24,465 men, and 96 guns.

ARMY OF THE OHIO—MAJOR GENERAL SCHOFIELD, COMMANDING,—comprised the Twenty-Third Corps, General Schofield. Infantry, 11,183, Artillery, 679, Cavalry, 1,679. Total, 13,541 men, and 28 guns.

These several armies making a grand aggregate of eighty-eight thousand one hundred and eighty-eight Infantry, four thousand four hundred and sixty Artillery, and six thousand one hundred and forty-nine Cavalry; or ninety-eight thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven men, and two hundred and fifty-four guns. These lay a few miles south of Chattanooga, in the beginning of May, in supporting distance of each other.

The rebel army, under command of Lieutenant General J. E. Johnston, whose reputation as a Confederate commander was second only to that of Gen. R. E. Lee, comprised the Corps of Hardee, Polk, and Hood, and the cavalry division of Wheeler, and numbered about fifty thousand infantry and artillery, and ten thousand cavalry, mostly veteran troops, and lay in and about Dalton, on the railroad connecting Chattanooga with Atlanta—the advance being at Tunnell Hill, a station thirty miles south of Chattanooga.

Such were the strength and positions of the contending armies. The Federals outnumbered the Confederates greatly, and were better equipped, but labored under the disadvantage of being in a hostile, inhospitable country, and being the attacking party, of having to assault strongly fortified positions.

A short time prior to this grand organization and concentration of forces, a few ominous war clouds were observable in the Southwest as portentous of the coming storm. During January, 1864, the rebels sent several expeditions into Tennessee. Johnston's Brigade, of Rhoddy's command, crossed the Tennessee River at Bainbridge,

three miles below Florence, and at Newport Ferry, six miles from the same point, intending to make a junction with a brigade of Infantry which was expected to cross the river at Lamb and Brown's Ferry, and thence proceed to Alton's, to capture the Union force there. An engagement ensued, in which fifteen rebels were killed and quite a number wounded and taken prisoners; our loss was ten wounded.

At the close of January, Gen. Rosecrans was assigned to the Department of Missouri, and Gen. Schofield assumed command of the Twenty-Third Corps, constituting the Army of the Ohio. On February 3d, a strong column, composed of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Corps, under command of Sherman, took up an easterly line of march from Vicksburg, following the line of the Southwestern Mississippi Railroad. The object was to strike Meridan, Selma and Montgomery; and open double railroad and double river communications with the Gulf.—The Pearl, Tombigby and Alabama rivers—leading into the heart of Mississippi and Alabama—would thus be thrown open to our Gunboats, and the great centre of productive forces would be seized. At the same time that Sherman's force was pursuing the line indicated, a powerful Cavalry column twelve thousand strong, under Generals Smith and Grierson, was to set out from Corinth and Holly Springs, to follow the Mobile and Ohio Railroad southward. On February 5th, the two corps, under Generals McPherson and Hurlbut were across the Big Black River, and advanced, driving the rebel General Polk before them, and inflicting immense damage upon the enemy. At Meridan, the great railway centre of the Southwest, which Sherman reached about the middle of the month, he destroyed the arsenal filled with valuable stores and ammunition, and rendered useless a number of mills.

Sixty miles of track besides depots, bridges, and rolling stock, were thoroughly destroyed, and several towns burned or desolated. Having waited at Meridan a week without news of Smith, Sherman returned to the Mississippi, carrying with him over eight thousand liberated slaves, and an immense amount of spoils. The resistance offered by the rebels was so trifling that the total Union loss was less than two hundred.

It being essential to the complete achievement of General Sherman's plan of campaign that the Cavalry column should move forward promptly, every precaution was taken to make it irresistible; and to render assurance doubly sure General Smith, Grant's Chief of Cavalry, was detailed to supervise operations. All these precautions, however, failed to accomplish the desired end. The column, which was to have left Colliersville on February 3d—the day that Sherman left Vicksburg—was detained until February 11th, in order to enable General Waring to bring up his brigade. This delay, it seems was sufficient to enable Forrest, Rhoddy and Chambers to concentrate their forces against him; and it gave Sherman a whole week the start, making a conjunction more difficult. After the expedition did finally start, various circumstances conspired to delay and oppose its progress.—It was seven days in reaching Okalona, one hundred and thirty miles southeast of Memphis—an average of but little more than fifteen miles per day from Colliersville, the point of departure. On the 19th it marched to Egypt, a station about seven miles south of Okalona, and here destroyed a large quantity of rebel stores. The expedition was then divided—one column, under Grierson, going through Aberdeen on the east side of the railroad, the other on the west side, and the two concentrating at Prairie Station, about seventeen miles south of Okalona, where

large quantities of rebel stores were destroyed. Grierson met with considerable opposition near Aberdeen. On the 20th, Forrest was reported in force at West Point, and on the 21st, our forces encountered him at that place.—Smith found Forrest, Lee, Rhoddy and Chambers combined against him, and after a heavy fight he was compelled to fall back, leaving three field-pieces—four pounder steel guns—on the field. These were spiked, and all the ammunition was saved. In his retreat, Smith burnt every trestle on the Memphis and Ohio Railroad, and destroyed miles of track and large quantities of corn. There was heavy fighting in the rear throughout the 22d. The rebels moved on each flank with the evident design of reaching the Tallahatchie in advance of our force, and then uniting, to prevent our crossing, and to capture the whole command; but by forced marching Smith passed both flanking columns, and, marching all night, crossed safely to New Albany. Skirmishing was kept up through the 23d and 24th. On the 25th the expedition reached Colliersville, about twenty-five miles east of Memphis.—The rebels now became more active. Forrest, having succeeded in defeating the expedition of Grierson and Smith, recruited his forces in Mississippi, and on March 22d, appeared suddenly at Bolivar, Tennessee, with a force of six or seven thousand strong. He advanced rapidly against Union City, which was garrisoned by about four hundred men under command of Colonel Harkins, and made several ineffectual charges against the slight earthworks which surrounded the town; but finding it impossible to carry them by assault, Forrest demanded the surrender of the garrison, threatening to bombard the town unless the demand was complied with. Harkins, it is said, against the wishes of the garrison, surrendered on the 24th, just before the arrival of a large Union force

from Cairo, under command of General Brayman, who was marching to his relief. From Union City, Forrest marched northward across Kentucky, and on the afternoon of March 26th, made an attack on Paducah, having first demanded the surrender of the fort, which was refused by Colonel Hicks, who was in command. The battle lasted the whole afternoon, during which time the rebels made four assaults but were foiled each time. Early in the evening they retired from the town but reappeared the next morning when Forrest sent in a request for an exchange of prisoners. This Hicks declined, and the rebels, without further demonstrations, retired in the direction of Columbus. Their loss was about three hundred killed and one thousand wounded. The rebel Brigadier General A. P. Thompson, was among the slain.

Maddened by the ill-success of a cause whose "chief corner stone" was slavery, an act of cruelty and diabolism, unparalleled in the history of the war, was perpetrated by the rebels about this time, which caused an almost universal outburst of horror and indignation throughout the loyal States. Rebel commanders had frequently threatened to raise the "black flag," carry on a war of extermination, and give no quarter in case of refusal to surrender, but it was reserved for the notorious rebel General Forrest, treacherous and unprincipled, and of relentless cruelty, to carry this threat into execution. On April 12th, Forrest appeared before Fort Pillow on the Mississippi River, a work of moderate size, mounting six guns, and garrisoned by about five hundred and fifty men, of whom two hundred and sixty were colored troops, the whole being commanded by Major Bradford, of the Thirteenth Tennessee Cavalry. At sunrise, the Union pickets were driven in, and from that time until two or three o'clock in the afternoon the rebels vainly endeavored to

dislodge the garrison, who made a gallant defence, in which they were aided by the gunboat *New Era*, which from her position in the river, shelled the enemy vigorously. The rebels, failing in their attack, now resorted to their customary flags of truce. The first one conveyed a demand from Forrest for the unconditional surrender of the Fort. To this Major Bradford replied, asking to be allowed one hour with his officers and the officers of the gunboat. In a short time Forrest sent another flag of truce with a communication that he would allow Major Bradford twenty minutes in which to move his troops out of the fort, and if it was not done in that time an assault would be ordered. Major Bradford replied that he would not surrender. While this conference was being held, and during the time the flag of truce was flying, the rebels, contrary to the usages of honorable warfare, but characteristic of their conduct on several previous occasions, treacherously crept to a position from which they could overwhelm the garrison by a sudden assault. Captain Marshall of the gunboat, saw them advancing, into the ravine above the fort, and could have checked their progress but refrained from firing, so as not to afford an excuse for subsequent atrocities, should the fort be captured by the enemy. But like incarnate fiends, these blood thirsty beings knew no mercy. The Committee on the Conduct of the War, two members of which visited Fort Pillow and took testimony regarding the circumstances of its capture, gave the following account in their report :

“Immediately after the second flag of truce retired, the rebels made a rush from the positions they had so treacherously gained, and obtained possession of the fort, raising the cry of ‘No Quarter.’ But little opportunity was allowed for resistance. Our troops, black and white, threw down their arms and sought to escape by running



down the steep bluff near the fort, and secreting themselves behind trees and logs in the bushes, and under the brush; some even jumping into the river, leaving only their heads above the water as they crouched down under the bank. Then followed a scene of cruelty and murder without parallel in civilized warfare, which needed but the tomahawk and scalping-knife to exceed the worst atrocities ever committed by savages. The rebels commenced an indiscriminate slaughter, sparing neither age nor sex, white nor black, soldier nor civilian. The officers and men seemed to vie with each other in the devilish work.— Men, women, and even children, wherever found, were deliberately shot down, beaten, and hacked with sabres.— Some of the children, not more than ten years old, were forced to stand up and face their murderers while being shot. The sick and wounded were butchered without mercy, the rebels even entering the hospital buildings and dragging them out to be shot, or killing them as they lay there unable to offer the least resistance. All over the hillside the work of murder was going on. Numbers of our men were collected together in lines or groups and deliberately shot. Some were shot while in the river, while others on the bank were shot and their bodies kicked into the water; many of them still living, but unable to make exertions to save themselves from drowning.— Some of the rebels stood on the top of the hill or a short distance down its side and called out to our soldiers to come up to them, and as they approached, shot them down in cold blood, and if their guns or pistols missed fire, forcing them to stand there until they were again prepared to fire.”

Further particulars of this horrid massacre are given in this report, but we turn from the sickening details and have only cited the forgoing to show the demoniac char-

acter of the rebels, into whose hands it was my lot subsequently to fall. The rebels admitted the atrocious slaughter, and while some gloated over it, others, ashamed to openly justify it, tried to excuse it in various ways, and sought precedents in history where whole garrisons have been put to the sword, forgetting that such massacres have very rarely been committed among civilized nations, and only under the most aggravating circumstances, and that no such circumstances attended the present case.

It was during these exciting, troublous times, when the Government was calling for help to crush out the rebellion that was trying to destroy the very life of the Nation, that I again enlisted, feeling it to be a duty I owed my God and my Country.

I had enlisted, October 3d, 1861, in Company H, 19th Regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, and was in the campaign in Kentucky and Tennessee, under General Buell, but my health failing, I was discharged for physical disability and returned home. Having regained my health, I now enlisted, February 9th, 1864, in Company A, 32d Regiment, O. V. I. My Captain was William<sup>Mc</sup>McAllister; my Colonel, B. F. Potts. The regiment, after enjoying veteran furlough, was ordered to report to General Sherman for duty. The time came for our departure.—To part with wife and little ones, home, and all their enjoyments and dear associations, for the uncertainties and hardships of a soldier's life, is a trying scene that none, save those who have experienced it, can fully realize.—How sadly we felt as we bade an affectionate farewell with our dearest friends and tried to choke down the sobs and keep back the tears that would intrude. But duty called and we felt that we must go. We knew that we had work to do—the sanguinary work of a soldier—and we knew not that we would ever meet again around the fam-

ily circle. Breathing a silent prayer for the protection of my family and for strength to endure the privations and burdens it might be mine to bear, I joined my company and regiment and was numbered among the "boys in blue."

## CHAPTER II.

Southward-bound ; Ordered to report for Duty ; Grandeur of Sherman's Army ; Onward to Atlanta ; Topography of the Country ; Timely arrival of the Seventeenth Corps ; Skirmishing ; Rebel Works on Brush Mountain Stormed and Captured ; Johnston again Entrenched ; Kenesaw Mountain ; Sherman Repulsed ; Rebels Retreat ; Johnston Succeeded by Hood ; Vigorous Operations ; In sight of Atlanta ; Heavy Battle ; My Capture.

THE mind, when time is given for reflection, becomes calm and resolute, and like the gnarled oak that grows more firmly rooted with each succeeding storm, gathers strength from ordinary trials to withstand the chilling blasts of adversity.

After the pain of parting from home, nothing of special interest occurred for a few days. Our southward-bound journey was VIA Cincinnati. From Cincinnati we went to Cairo, Illinois. Left Cairo, April 28th, with the Fourth Division, Seventeenth Army Corps on transports for Clifton on the Tennessee River, which place we reached in three days after leaving Cairo. The expedition was commanded by Brigadier General Gresham. From Clifton we marched to Pulaski, Tennessee, and thence to Huntsville, Alabama, where we met the Third Division of the Seventeenth Corps, commanded by Brigadier General Leggett, of Zanesville, Ohio. We staid but a few days at Huntsville when we started, VIA Decatur, Alabama, for Rome,

Georgia. The two Divisions were under the command of Maj. Gen. F. P. Blair, of Mo. In due time we reached Rome, without any serious interruption on our way. The Corps passed forward the next day, and on the 8th of June reached General Sherman's Army, and was ordered to report for duty to General McPherson commanding the Army of the Tennessee. The next day, June 9th, we marched to Big Shanty and took our position on the line, being on the extreme left of Gen. Sherman's Army.

Of this grand army we have already spoken, but words seem meaningless and figures fail to convey to the reader's mind an adequate idea of its immensity and grandeur.—The vast multitude, martial music, tramp, tramp, tramp of soldiers, colors flying, horses neighing, cattle lowing,—and in time of battle—the rattling and firing of musketry, booming of cannon, shouts of the victors, screams and moans of the wounded and dying can all be better imagined than described, but must be witnessed to be realized.

Sherman had been steadily pressing the rebels back from Tunnell Hill, through Rocky Faced Ridge, Buzzard's Roost, Dalton, Snake Creek Gap, Resacca, Kingston, Rome, Allatoona Pass, Pumpkin Vine Creek, Dallas and Lost Mountain. The rebels had signal stations at Lost Mountain, which is on the direct road from Dallas to Marietta, seven miles from the latter place, and at Kenesaw Mountain, ten miles from Lost Mountain, a little east of north from it, on the railroad. These two points are detached peaks, overlooking the plain beyond, and connected by a ridge, or series of low hills, and were the right and left of the rebels' position—their army stretching along the hills between the two points. Between Kenesaw and Lost Mountain and half a mile to the north, is Pine Mountain, a lesser elevation, constituting the apex of a triangle of which the other two may be said to form the base.—

These three hills and their connecting ridges were fortified and afforded an admirable defensive position against an attacking army.

The timely arrival, on the 8th of June, of the Seventeenth Corps, in which it was my lot to be placed, compensated for Union losses in battle and by disease, and for garrisons left at Rome, Kingston and elsewhere, and enabled Sherman to renew the attack upon his wary adversary with as strong a force as at the commencement of the campaign. On the next day, 9th, the army was put in motion once more for Atlanta. The order of advance was somewhat different from that previously observed, McPherson being shifted to the left wing and Schofield to the right while Thomas held the centre. McPherson was ordered to move toward Marietta, his right on the railroad, Thomas on Kenesaw and Pine Mountains, and Schofield off toward Lost Mountain; Gerrard's Cavalry being on the left, Stoneman's on the right, while McCook looked to our rear and communications.

We did not advance far until skirmishing commenced. — On the 11th our lines were close, and dispositions were made to break the line between Kenesaw and Pine Mountains. On the 14th, the rebel General Polk was killed, during a sharp cannonading, and on the morning the 15th Pine Mountain was found to be abandoned by the rebels. Schofield and Thomas advanced and found them again strongly intrenched along the line of rugged hills connecting Kenesaw and Lost Mountains. McPherson also advanced his line, gaining substantial advantages on the left. On the centre, as vigorous operations were made as the nature of the ground would allow and an assault was ordered. The rebels abandoned Lost Mountain and their long line of formidable breastworks connecting it with Kenesaw, on the 17th, to prevent being flanked by Scho-

field who had wheeled around Pine Knob, and was pressing along the Dallas and Marietta road.

While our forces had been so successfully at work upon the rebels' centre and left, McPherson, on our left, had put them in a dangerous position on their right, pressing them on that flank beyond Big Shanty and Brush Mountain. On the 20th, the Seventeenth Corps stormed the rebel works on Brush Mountain and captured them with a few prisoners but without serious loss on our side. Skirmishing continued at all points, in dense forests of timber and across most difficult ravines, until the enemy was found again strongly posted and entrenched, on Kenesaw, his right wing thrown back to cover Marietta and his left behind Nose's Creek, covering his railroad back to the Chattahoochee, which enabled him to contract and strengthen his lines.

Kenesaw Mountain is made up of two elevations, joined almost at their summits—one being about eight hundred and the other about nine hundred feet high. Viewed from the north side they have the appearance of two immense mounds surrounded at the base by gentle irregularities of surface. The mountain rises gradually on the east side, describing almost a half circle, thence falling upon the west, about two hundred feet. This is joined by the other and rises to a still greater height and is somewhat more irregular. On the west side it loses itself rather abruptly in the small valley beyond, by which the country is deprived of its mountainous character. The base of the mountain is about four miles from east to west, and about one mile in breadth. Thick forests, brush, rock and boulders of various dimensions, cover its sides, rendering it almost impossible to take it in front. Its defenses consisted of a line of works on the summit, upon which were erected several batteries. Along the sides, single guns were located at

commanding points. The flanks of the mountain were held by heavy bodies of infantry and artillery, and its rear was protected in a similar manner.

Our right forced its way across and two miles beyond Nose's Creek on the Dalton and Marietta road, and our centre worked up to the base of Kenesaw Mountain and had carried some points west of the mountain, thus securing a position for an annoying enfilading fire upon the enemy; but it was impossible for our wings to make a further advance without cutting themselves loose from the centre, whose further progress was stayed by the strong defence of Kenesaw Mountain. McPherson now worked his left forward, while Thomas wheeled his left on Kenesaw, connecting with McPherson, and Schofield pressed to the south and east along the old Sandtown road.

On the 22d, as Hooker advanced his line, with Schofield on his right, the rebels, Hood's Corps, with detachments from others, suddenly sallied and made an attack, but the enemy was badly repulsed. Sherman now determined to risk an attack, and accordingly, on June 24th, issued orders for an attack to take place on the 27th. At the appointed time the Seventeenth Corps circled the eastern point of the mountain and threatened the enemy's right.—The Sixteenth Corps, next on the right, assaulted the heights on the northern slope of the mountain; the Fifteenth Corps the western slope of the mountain, Davis' Division of the Fourteenth Corps and Newton's of the Fourth constituted the assaulting column, on the centre, supported on the right by Geary and Butterfield of Hooker's Corps. Schofield was stationed on the extreme right of our line, and moved forward his whole force, driving the rebels from a line of light works. The object attempted offered but a desperate chance of success. On the summit of the rugged mountain peak, covered with a dense



growth of underbrush, the rebels had stationed a battery of twelve guns, from which they maintained a withering cross-fire on our troops engaged in forcing a passage up the steep sides of the mountain, and over the abatis and rifle-pits behind which the enemy lay sheltered. Our men could not possibly avoid a repulse. The Union loss, as reported by General Logan, was three thousand five hundred and twenty-one. Among the slain were Generals Harker and McCook.

Undaunted by this repulse, General Sherman resolved to try other means to accomplish the desired end. He accordingly ordered Schofield to press on the left while McPherson, being relieved by Garrard's Cavalry in front of Kenesaw, moved his whole army to the right, threatening Nickajack Creek and Turner's Ferry on the Chattahoochee, and Stoneman was sent to the river below Turner's. This caused the rebels to retreat on July 2d, and we were ordered to advance. On the morning of July 3d, General Sherman entered Marietta. McPherson and Schofield were instructed to cross Nickajack and attack the enemy in flank and rear. The Seventeenth Corps now moved from extreme left to extreme right of Sherman's Army, touching the Chattahoochee River. The design was to catch Johnston, if possible, in the confusion of crossing the Chattahoochee, but this wary rebel General had foreseen and provided against this. His front was covered by a good parapet and his flank behind the Nickajack and Rottenwood Creeks. On the 4th of July, Sherman pushed a strong skirmish line down the main road, capturing the entire line of the enemy's pits and made strong demonstrations along Nickajack Creek and about Turner's Ferry.— This had the desired effect, and the next morning the enemy was gone. He took a new position behind a line of unusual strength beyond the Chattahoochee and covering

the railroad and pontoon bridges. After considerable skirmishing and picketing across the river, the Corps moved and crossing the river some distance above the railroad bridge, took position again on the left, near Decatur. A change being made in the Corps, our regiment now formed a part of the First Brigade, under command of Colonel B. F. Potts, and of the Fourth Division, commanded by General Gresham.

The long retreat of Johnston which brought him to the south side of the Chattahoochee, and within eight miles of Atlanta, caused vehement demands to be made at the south that he should be relieved of his command; and, on July 17th, he was succeeded by General Hood. More vigorous operations were demanded by the Southern people, who, in their impatience overlooked the fact that Johnston had strongly opposed Sherman from Tunnell Hill to the Chattahoochee, without himself sustaining any serious disaster, and that Sherman's superior forces had enabled the Union army to press steadily on, under the flanking process, until Atlanta was in danger. Hood was to adopt a new offensive policy, but no additional means were provided to carry it out.

At the same time, July 17th, Sherman, having rested and recruited his army, resumed his forward movement.— On the 20th, all the armies had closed in converging toward Atlanta, and we crossed the railroad near Decatur and moved forward, but did not advance far until we were greeted by a few shells from the rebel artillery. After ascertaining their position, our column was formed into line and charged forward until the rebel skirmishers were driven back, when we took position and commenced throwing up fortifications. On the morning of the 21st, as we were busy working in the ditches, an order came to charge the rebel works. Spades and picks were dropped, the muskets

seized and the charge was made ; but being unable to accomplish our object, we were obliged to fall back to our works, not however without leaving a great many dead and wounded on the field.

In the evening we moved farther to the left, being then in sight of Atlanta. During the night strong fortifications were built. The morning of the 22d was serene, and all nature looked beautiful, but it was soon apparent that something unusual was going on ; for every few minutes a General and his Staff would ride along the line inspecting the works with an air of uneasiness. About ten o'clock, A. M., the pickets on our left commenced firing. Closer and louder came the reports of their guns, and it was evident that they were falling back. Soon the bullets of the enemy began to reach us, but were not coming in the anticipated direction, for instead of coming directly in front of us, they were coming on our flank, completely raking our lines. Nearer and nearer came the sound of musketry, and yell upon yell broke forth from the infuriated, would-be-victorious rebels. The combined rattling of musketry, booming of artillery, and the yelling and charging of the rebels gave an appearance of Pandemonium, or as though all the hosts of darkness had been let loose upon us. A part of our forces had changed front, and stood ready with strong determination to check the charge of the rebels.— As soon as they were well in sight, our men opened upon them with such a withering fire that their lines were quickly broken and somewhat demoralized. Some, however, rushed madly on, only to be halted and taken prisoners by the Union soldiers. The rebels soon rallied again and came charging upon us with such superior numbers that our lines were considerably broken and were compelled to give way. They having got to our rear, so completely flanked us, that we were obliged to cross our

works, making our rear where our front had been when the battle commenced. A line of battle had been held in reserve by the rebels between us and Atlanta. The rebels kept up a furious cannonading and the musketry made it anything but agreeable. Brave comrades were falling fast around us. Some wounded but slightly, others more severely, and some, alas! falling in the cold embrace of death, the roar of artillery and rattle of musketry dying upon their ears forever.

About ten o'clock in the forenoon, one of my comrades was severely wounded in the forehead and I was sent to help him off the field and to procure some water for him.— When I had succeeded in getting him a short distance from the tumult of the battle, I left him under a large tree, there to remain until I could procure some water for him. Going across a field, in the direction of Atlanta, I came to some of our pickets who were getting some water at a little brook. I immediately commenced filling my canteen, and as soon as I had done so, some videtts came running toward us, saying that the rebels were close after them.— The picket officer who was present said that escape was impossible. There was a deep ditch through which the brook ran. The officer told us to jump into this ditch and give them the best we had. Obeying his command I jumped into the ditch and raised my gun to my shoulder.— I was about to dispatch a rebel captain who just that moment came in full view, when half a dozen or more voices a little to my left exclaimed, “Throw down that gun, you d—d rascal, you!” Seeing half a dozen against one, I had not long to decide what to do. It was either throw down my gun, or run the risk of being killed outright; so down went my gun and I was ordered to the rear.

### CHAPTER III.

A Gloomy Prospect ; Colloquy with a Rebel Officer ; Atlanta ; Rebel Provost Marshal ; Prisoners coming in ; Ordered to East Port ; Our Rations ; March to Griffin ; The Missing Major ; The " Chattanooga Rebel " ; Railroad Accident ; Arrival at Andersonville ; Observations by the way.

I WAS now a prisoner and in the hands of rebels who had no respect for the flag of their country—and but little regard for its defenders. Their merciless treatment of Union prisoners on former occasions, and the well known fact that thousands of our brave boys were then famishing in rebel prison-pens, caused me to shudder, and sigh for liberty.

But I had little time for reflection. Being ordered to the rear, I had not gone far before I fell in with several others who had been taken prisoners, among whom was the picket officer. We were being hurried away toward Atlanta, when ascending a little hill, we came to a line of battle awaiting orders to move forward. It now struck me as to what the real object of the rebels was in making the flank movement. It was to capture the Forth Division entire of the Seventeenth Corps. But in this I saw they would be disappointed, for before the line of battle we had just passed would reach the scene of action, our lines would be restored, reinforcements sent forward from some other part of the line, and the rebels repulsed. A little further on we met two sections of artillery commanded

by a Lieutenant who came rushing along as though the fate of the Confederacy depended entirely upon his exertions.— He would order his men to drive off in one direction a little way, then countermarch them and go off in some other direction, seeming to be at a loss to know where to go, yet thinking that his services were needed somewhere.— Once he came galloping along behind me and yelled out, “Get out of the way, ‘blue coat,’ d—n you, I would as soon ride over you as not.” This remark gave me to know that he had not much respect for Union prisoners. As I stepped to one side to let him pass he said :

“Say, Yank, how many men has old Sherman got out there?”

“I am not General Sherman’s Adjutant-General,” I answered.

“Is Sherman gwine to surrender to General Hood?” he asked.

“Not much,” I replied.

“How do you like General Hood’s fighting?” said he.

“I think he is getting into a bad scrape,” said I.

“Rather impertinent,” he replied, as he rode on.

The city of Atlanta was soon reached when, I, with the other prisoners, some twenty in all, were ushered into the presence of the Provost Marshal, Col. Hill, who kept a register of all the prisoners—their name, rank, company, regiment, brigade, division, and corps. The Provost Marshal was a very fine looking man. He began to interrogate the prisoners as to General Sherman’s movements, number of his batteries and of his force generally; but all the information he received did not amount to much, for the prisoners were loth to acquaint him with anything they knew. He appeared to be very sanguine of the success of Hood over Sherman, and exclaimed, “I will stake one hundred negroes that Sherman is driven back across the

Chattahoochee, or has his army captured before to-morrow night." But his remarks had not much effect on the minds of the prisoners, for they had too much faith in their leader to believe that he could be so easily whipped.

The prisoners kept coming in pretty fast—sometimes a squad of a dozen, and at other times fifty or a hundred.—But the most affecting sight to me was to see our flag carried, or rather trailed by rebel hands. Several stands of colors were brought in during the afternoon. To add to our sorrow, the sad intelligence reached us that General McPherson had been killed. From the roar of artillery and incessant rattle of musketry we knew the battle was raging terribly. Just about sundown we were ordered into line and started for East Port, a station on the railroad, six miles from Atlanta. There were, altogether, about three hundred of us. I happened to fall in with a former comrade named Lewis,—we had been comrades in camp, comrades in battle, and were now comrades in prison.—We reached East Point about ten o'clock at night and were turned into a half finished fort which served as a prison for us. The next morning our number was much increased by the arrival of more prisoners. A great many officers were among them—some Colonels, some Lieutenant Colonels, and a great many Majors, Captains and Lieutenants. Forty of my own regiment were there as prisoners. Four of my own company, viz: Sergeant James Hill, and Privates Oliver Shook, James Lewis and myself. The number of prisoners here was eighteen hundred.

We were kept at East Port for three or four days.—Our rations were not very plenty nor of a very great variety—they consisted of a little corn meal and bacon. Our stay at this place was very unpleasant, for we had no shelter of any kind and the hot sun almost scorched us in blisters. A rebel band would come near us about twice a day

and play "The Bonny Blue Flag," "Southern Marseilles," "Dixie," and other Southern airs. Whether they did this to taunt or amuse us, I know not, but must say there were some good musicians among them, and their playing amused us very much.

On the morning of the 26th, we were ordered to prepare to march. As the cars were all in use, moving the wounded from, and supplies to, Atlanta, we would be compelled to march the whole, or part of the way, to Andersonville—that place of which we had heard so often, and of which we knew so little, but of which we were in a fair way to find out something about it. Accordingly, the order was given to fall into ranks, four abreast; and as we filed out of prison they were very careful in counting us. The guards who were to take charge of us were the Fifty-Fourth Va., and Third Tenn., troops. As we marched along I had several opportunities of conversing with the guards, and I found a pretty strong Union feeling existing among them. They had lost so many of their men by desertions that neither regiment numbered more than three or four hundred; and for fear they would all desert, they were sent to the rear to do provost duty.

During the day we passed through several small towns and villages. Every time we entered a town our boys would strike up "Hail Columbia," "Rally Round the Flag," and such other patriotic airs as best suited them.—The first day we marched about fifteen miles and camped on a little brook. The officers of the guard would count us as we passed into camp, but when we left this place they for some cause or other, did not count us. When we had gone four or five miles we were counted, and one of the prisoners, a Major, like the old man's sheep, "came up missing." Some guards were sent back immediately to hunt up the missing Major. In due time they returned



but without the Major. They only found where he had been. He had found a small gutter which had been washed in the bank of the stream where we encamped, and had laid down in this rut, and some of his comrades covered him with brush and weeds. As soon as the coast was clear, he had sallied out and made tracks for some more secure abode. Whether he ever succeeded in reaching the Federal lines or not, I am unable to say; but this I know, when it became known among the prisoners, that he had escaped the best wishes of all went after him.

The conduct of the citizens toward us as we marched along was in almost every instance becoming. They seemed to look upon us more with pity than anything like disrespect. They perhaps knew more of our fate than we did ourselves, and of the loathsome prison in which we were soon to be incarcerated. Nothing of particular interest transpired while on our march to Griffin, at which place some of the prisoners were put on the cars and the remainder went into camp for the night. Soon after we went into camp a severe rain storm came on, wetting us completely; and just about the middle of the rain a wagon load of corn bread came for us and was issued out to us during the storm, so, by the time we got it into our possession, it had more the appearance of pudding than bread.

The next morning, seeing one of the guards reading a newspaper, I went to him and asked him if he would lend it to me when he would get through it. He said that he had read it and I could have it if I would watch the officers and come to him when none of them were looking.— An opportunity soon occurred and I went to him, when he handed me a copy of the CHATTANOOGA REBEL, the office of which paper had been chased from its original home, and now found a transitory abiding place in the

village of Griffin, Ga. The paper contained an article concerning the prisoners, stating that they were a hale, hearty, well dressed, good looking set of fellows, and seemed to be pretty well supplied with "Greenbacks" and "Confederate Scrip," which last article was mostly counterfeit. I thought it did not make much difference whether it was counterfeit or genuine, as it would not buy much at any rate. With it we could buy small green apples at two dollars a dozen, and beans or peas at from five to ten dollars for a hat full.

We were now ordered to "fall in" and were marched to the railroad where we were crowded into stock cars so closely that we had scarcely room to sit down. Soon the order, "all right," was given, the bell rang, the whistle screamed, the cars jerked, and away we sped. After going ten or fifteen miles an axle of one of the cars broke, which had the effect to start the prisoners and guards to jumping off the train. By the time the train had stopped quite a number had jumped from the cars, and strange as it may appear, seven of the rebels were severely hurt, but not one Union prisoner received a scratch. Providence seemed to be on our side that time. This accident caused a delay of several hours, until the engine could run to Macon and get another train. Some time after dark the train arrived, and getting aboard we were on our way again. During the night we reached Macon where the officers were separated from, and left us—they to remain in Macon, and we to go on to Andersonville. The train lay at Macon until daylight when we were again put under way and reached Andersonville about noon, on July 29th.

The country through which we passed from Atlanta to Andersonville presents a most unfavorable appearance.—Scrubby red brush or pine timber generally covers the

ground. The crops were very light—in fact, blackberries were the best crop I noticed. The evil effects of slavery were apparent on every plantation. Orchards were unpruned and fence-corners grown up full of briars. But of all the places in this God-forsaken country, Andersonville seemed to be situated in the worst, which uninviting spot, as if fit for nothing else, was chosen for the incarceration and destruction, by neglect and ill-usage, of Union prisoners. And here was to be our destination, for how long a time God only knew. Whether we should ever be permitted to again behold the glorious banner of Liberty, and meet with loving friends in our cherished home in the far-away Free North, were questions that time alone could solve, yet fraught with the deepest interest to us.

## CHAPTER IV.

Examination of Prisoners; Private Property "Confiscated"; Capt. Wirz and Gen. Winder; Georgia Militia; Entrance into Andersonville; Pitching our tent; Different Styles of Quarters; Burrowing in the Ground; Defences of the Prison; Water; Hospital; Anxious Enquiry; Old Acquaintances; Sutlering; Police Organization.

As soon as the cars stopped at Andersonville we were ordered to disembark, and were marched a short distance below the station where we were formed into two ranks to be examined. Several rebel sergeants came forward and commenced searching us. It soon became apparent that arms alone were not the only object of their search; for whenever a watch or purse was found, it was immediately transferred to the pockets of the rebels. Some of the boys seeing this unfairness on the part of the rebels, commenced hiding their watches and money in their shoes, in order that they might escape this unwarranted "confiscation." Some of the prisoners who had not been robbed of their blankets before coming to this place were now compelled to give them up to the rebels as government property. Fortune favored me, as I had succeeded in getting two blankets thus far with me—one woolen and one rubber blanket—and the man who searched the squad that I was in did not seem to have any use for such articles,—at least he allowed the prisoners to retain them. While this examination was going on, an old Dutchman dressed

in white pants, and with an old rusty sabre hung to his side, kept moving about cursing and swearing all the while about "te tampt Yankees." This man I soon ascertained to be the commander of the prison, and was called Captain Wirz. Another individual, dressed in an officer's suit of grey, was present, whom they called Gen. Winder. He was a rather portly man, with gray hair, whiskers and mustache, and had that self-important, scornful look, so peculiar to the Southern chivalry.

As soon as the examination was ended we were counted into detachments of two hundred and seventy. Each detachment was then divided into three messes of ninety men each. A Sergeant was then chosen from among the prisoners for each mess, to take charge of the mess, attend to roll call, sick call, and draw rations. The time spent in the examination and organization occupied two or three hours, all of which time we were kept at attention; and some of the prisoners became so exhausted that they fell to the ground and only saved themselves from a thrust of Capt. Wirz's sword by being helped to their feet by some of their comrades. The organization being completed, we were turned over to the prison guards, which were composed of Georgia Militia. The militia were formed into ranks at open order,—the lines reaching from where we stood to the prison gate. We were then marched through the open ranks of the rebels. As we passed through, I had a very good opportunity of seeing them; and a meaner, more uncouth looking set of "scalawags," styling themselves soldiers, it had never been my privilege to look upon. Hardly any two were dressed alike, unless it was in color—a sheep grey or butternut brown. All classes and conditions of men, from the strippling boy of fifteen to the old man of fifty-five or sixty, went to make up the hybrid throng.

Soon the head of the column reached the gate and commenced passing through. Over this gate might very appropriately have been written Dant's inscription over the gates of Hell, "Who enters here must leave all hope behind." As I came close to the gate I paused and looked on either side, but the guards standing there with fixed bayonets and loaded pieces admonished me that I had better pass along. As I passed through the gate my thoughts flew back hundreds of miles to the loved ones at home, and the question came into my mind, When or how will I pass out again? So forcibly did the thoughts of friends and home rush upon my mind that I felt my heart almost sink within me, and it so affected me that it was a considerable time before I could speak without weeping.

When we got inside the stockade I found it so densely crowded that it was with considerable difficulty, my comrades Shook and Hill, and myself could find room sufficient to pitch a tent. We, however, at last found a small space, and set about erecting something like a tent, more to protect ourselves from the scorching rays of the sun than to shield us from the hard rains so frequent in that section of country. Sergeant Hill bought a few poles, and I was so fortunate as to have a rubber and a woolen blanket. Hill and Shook had both been robbed of their blankets, but had succeeded in buying one apiece from the rebel guards while on our way to Andersonville.— Taking my rubber, and one other blanket, for a shelter, and the other two for a bed, we were soon as comfortably quartered as the circumstances of the case would allow.

The different varieties and styles of quarters of the prisoners would make a lesson for any Yankee architect. A great many of the prisoners had been robbed of all their valuables, and the greater part of their clothing. These had to resort to the disagreeable task of burrowing in the

ground, and building mud houses. Some by reason of sickness being unable to help themselves, had to lay out in the hot sun, and endure the drenching rains, and the heavy dews that fell during the night. Others, more fortunate, who had managed to hide their money from the thieving, avaricious rebels, had bought some boards with which they had constructed pretty comfortable quarters.— Some of the prisoners who had been put into the stockade first, had got some logs and brush with which they had built huts for their protection.

The stockade was made by first digging a ditch into which logs were placed on end, standing about fifteen feet above ground, and close together. There were about thirty sentry boxes which were placed outside and near the top of the stockade, requiring about thirty guards on duty at a time. About fifteen feet from the stockade on the inside was driven a row of posts, on the tops of which strips of boards were nailed. This was called the “dead line,” a name given it on account of orders having been given that if any prisoner approached nearer the stockade than this line he was to be shot dead by the guards. This order I learned had been given by the “Old Dutch Captain,” as he was called, who had command of the prison. And so rigidly was this order enforced that several of the prisoners were killed by the guards who were ever on the look-out for some one to shoot at. It was positively asserted by the guards that every time a “Yankee” was shot the one who did the bloody deed was rewarded by a thirty day furlough.

At each corner of the prison a fort was built, the guns of which were bearing directly on the prison. The armament of these forts I could not find out, except the one at the Southwest corner, which mounted twelve guns, probably about six-pounders. As we were marching to

the prison I noticed the gunners all standing at their guns, ready for action, a movement which I noticed among them upon the arrival of every squad of prisoners that came while I was there. The prisoners informed me that the rebels had frequently fired into the prison to disperse crowds who would gather about the gates on the arrival of prisoners. A range of high poles had been placed in the prison from south to north, bearing white flags; and the orders were that whenever a crowd assembled on the west side of these white flags, the artillerymen were to fire a shell into the crowd.

The source from which the prisoners received their supply of water was from a shallow brook which ran through the prison from west to east, on either side of which stream was a swamp that appeared to be of a very poisonous nature; for if any of the prisoners had sores on their feet and would step into this mire with their bare feet they were sure to be taken with gangrene, and in many cases amputation became necessary in order to save life. This stream of water was extremely foul, having passed through a rebel camp near by, in which was a sink, and then past the cook house, the washings of which were turned into the brook, which served as a "sewer" to carry off the filth and refuse of the rebel camp and cook-house before it came into the prison. The prisoners not satisfied with this supply of water, dug a great many wells inside the prison from which they obtained a supply of better, purer water. Almost every detachment had a well, and those who had none had to use the water from the brook or buy the right of water from some well holder.—The manner of digging the wells was very simple. The soil being a sandy clay loam to the depth of sixty or seventy feet, it was easily excavated, except in lifting the earth from the well, which had to be done with a bucket



attached to a rope, which latter article was generally made of old boot tops, blankets, etc. In this manner wells were often sunk to the depth of seventy feet or more.

At the southwest corner, outside of the stockade, was the hospital, which occupied three or four acres, enclosed by a board fence. I could see quite a number of tents, and was told that they had shelter for all that were admitted to the hospital, but that bedding was very scarce,—the sick having nothing to lie upon except a little straw which was thrown on the ground, but which was never changed and consequently became greatly infested with lice and vermin.

There were two gates to the prison—the north and the south gate. Just outside of the south gate were the medicine stands, where the sick who were inside the prison had to report directly after roll call each morning to be prescribed for, for their diseases, whatever they might chance to be, and where they or their department commanders had to report in the evening for medicine. The ones who did the examining and prescribing were rebel doctors; and those who issued the medicines were prisoners who had been captured while acting in the capacity of hospital stewards or nurses. The quantity and variety of the medicines issued at these stands were very small, consisting mostly of barks and herbs. Scarcely could any medicine of mineral character be found in their dispensary. Instead of castor oil they issued pea-nut oil. For the disease known as scurvy they gave sumac berries; and for chronic diarrhoea, they gave sweet gum bark.—These medicines might be very good for those diseases, had the quantity been sufficient to have had the desired effect.

The first questions asked us by the prisoners were about the exchange of prisoners. Had an exchange been agreed

upon by the Commissioners, was the anxious inquiry. Of this we knew but little, but it was not long before it became the leading theme of conversation among all of us. — Here, enclosed within the stockade, we found Federal soldiers who had been imprisoned for the long term of eighteen months. Some had been in prison for a year, some eight months, some six months, and some but a few days, all dragging out a miserable life of wretchedness and sorrow. Here I found many old acquaintances and friends. — Among them were two of my nephews, Abner and Milton Burson, who belonged to the Fifth Michigan Cavalry, and had been captured near Richmond, Va., while under Gen. Sheridan, in May, 1864. No one can imagine my feelings on meeting near and dear relatives in such a horrible place. My comrade, Serg't. Hill, having met with a relative of his, I sold him my interest in our tent for five dollars and removed to the quarters of my nephews where I spent the remainder of the time I was at Andersonville.

The scene witnessed on Main Street as we entered the prison was not unlike that of a market day in a city. — Sutler stands were erected on either side of the street as close as they could be placed, and in the street, soup jobbers and gamblers were to be seen on every hand. The first sutler nearest the gate cried out as I came opposite his stand, "Here's your nice, cool, sour beer, only five cents a cup, fresh and cool, right out of the barrel." Being very thirsty and having a little money which had escaped the thieving propensities of the rebels, I concluded to indulge in a cup of the beverage. Without stopping to scarcely taste it, I emptied the cup. "Shades of departed swill-tubs!" It was nothing but water in which some corn meal had been put and allowed to remain there until quite sour when it was called "beer," and declared ready for use. Some were engaged in selling one thing, and

some another. "Greenbacks" was the kind of money mostly in circulation, though they never refused Confederate money, but took it at a discount of eighty per cent.— With this money they would buy produce, such as flour, peas, eggs, onions, tobacco, &c., of the rebels. Some of the sutlers were doing a very extensive business, having accumulated, in some cases, thousands of dollars. I was informed that some prisoners who were engaged in this business, having had an opportunity of being exchanged, sold their chance for fifty or a hundred dollars, preferring to stay in prison and follow the business of sutlering, rather than be exchanged and again take their places in the ranks to fight in defence of their country. So avaricious are some men that they will sacrifice honor, principle and everything ennobling in man for "filthy lucre." And though it gives us pain to speak ill of a fellow prisoner, yet truth will not allow us to shield the undeserving.— During the months of May and June, some four men were murdered in prison for their money; and in order to secure safety, a police organization was formed among the prisoners. Arrests were made of some suspicious characters supposed to be connected with the murder, and six persons were tried and found guilty. A report of the proceedings of the court was sent by flag of truce to the Federal lines, asking advice of the War Department what to do with the convicted parties, and received instructions to do just what they considered best for the maintenance of law and order. Accordingly, a gallows was immediately erected and the six men were hung. The effect produced by these proceedings was very perceptible for good, and as long as any prisoners remained at Andersonville the police organization was kept up.

## CHAPTER V.

Sufferings of the Prisoners; Demoralization; Religious Exercises; The Priest; Employment of the Prisoners; Rebel Newspapers; Attempt to Escape; Reports of an Exchange; Leaving Andersonville; The Secret Out; Unexpected Sympathy; Arrival at Florence; New Prison; No Rations; Planning an Escape; The Stampede; Our Race Begun.

THE sufferings of the prisoners from want and exposure were beyond the power of the pen to portray, and were enough to melt a heart of stone. Our rations, when drawn and apportioned to each man per day, would amount to about two ounces of pork, or in lieu of pork, about four ounces of beef, or in lieu of meat of any kind, six spoonfuls of molasses. Six ounces of corn bread made with unsifted meal, and no salt. Sometimes we would get about half a pint of rice instead of bread. In addition to this we would get about one pint of beans or peas per week.— These privations and hardships brought on severe attacks of diarrhoea and scurvy, of which dreadful diseases the prisoners died at the rate of about one hundred and fifty per day. At one time, in walking a distance of twenty or thirty rods through the prison, I stepped over three dead men and saw as many more lying in the hot sun and apparently in a dying condition. One poor fellow was calling piteously for some one to bring him a drink of water.— I inquired if there was no one who could bring him some water; but was answered by a man near me that I would

soon find out that all a man could do there was to take care of himself, and if a person commenced the practice of charity in that place he would soon find himself an equal sufferer with his subjects and have no one then to assist him. It was astonishing how selfish and childish the prisoners became under their privations. Fighting and quarreling were as common among them as though they were children of eight or ten years of age. Two men of thirty or forty years of age would stand up and fight about a spoonful of beans or a teaspoonful of salt. It really seemed as though the rebels knew just how to demoralize the Union prisoners and make them useless to the Federal Government, and adopted this means to accomplish their hellish purpose.

Very little comfort could be derived from anything or anybody except from religious exercise and meditation.— One evening, about dark, as I was taking a stroll through the prison, I heard some persons singing, and stopping to listen, could distinguish the hymn beginning,

“From all that dwell below the skies,  
Let the Creator’s name arise ;  
Let the Redeemer’s name be sung,  
Through every land by every tongue.”

This was sung to the well known tune of “Old Hundred,” with an earnest pathos and tenderness befitting the occasion, and seemed to carry me back to other and happier days in my far-away pleasant home in Ohio. Wending my way among the tents toward the place from which the sound proceeded, I soon found myself near a crowd of persons who had assembled for Divine Worship. After the hymn was finished, a young man led in prayer, after which he delivered a discourse from the 31st verse of the 16th chapter of John. Preaching was held in several places in the prison every evening that the weather would permit; and it was really a consolation to know that

though we were shut in from the world, and from the society of friends and relatives, we could have access to a throne of grace.

The spiritual advisor of the prison was an old Roman Catholic priest; but the prisoners had so little confidence in him that his hearers were few. He could not command order while preaching, as the prisoners would sometimes exclaim, "Don't hit him with that club!" "Don't strike him behind his back!" and other exclamations of like nature, which always had the desired effect with the boys of shortening his sermon somewhat. He finally became so disgusted with these disturbances, that he discontinued his visits almost entirely. The prisoners had but little confidence in any person connected with the rebel government; and they knew the old priest must necessarily be a rebel, or otherwise he could not hold the position he did, consequently his influence was very limited.

Thus time wore languidly away. Each day seemed almost a week in duration. Many and various were the plans adopted to pass the time away. Some were engaged in making bone jewelry and various kinds of toys; some in playing cards, chess, dominoes, etc. And some—yes, a great many—spent the most of their time in reading the Bible. Persons who had never read the Word of God before, would bring out the precious volume that had been bestowed on them by a kind father or mother with a parting blessing, and there find instruction and consolation.

Almost every day, while active operations were going on between the two armies, fresh prisoners would be coming in. These were always closely questioned in regard to a parole or exchange of prisoners, army movements, news from home, and hundreds of similar questions; but seldom could we learn anything definite about which we

most wished to know. Occasionally we could get some of the rebel newspapers, and could form some vague idea of what was going on in the outside world; but we could not place much confidence in these papers, for it was well known they were filled with lies whenever it was deemed necessary to so prostitute the Southern press for the good of the rebel cause.

Some of the prisoners despairing of an exchange, and determined to get out of "durance vile" in some manner, resorted to the plan of digging tunnels under the stockade. But the number that effected their escape by this means was very few, for as soon as any were missed from the prison the "Old Dutch Captain" would start his bloodhounds on their track, and they would often be brought back torn and bleeding from the bites of these ferocious animals.

At last we began to have many and various rumors of an exchange. The MACON TELEGRAPH published various pieces on the subject—that the officers had been exchanged, and that the exchange of privates would commence soon. One day, a paper which found its way into the prison, stated that the exchange of prisoners was actually going on, and that they would commence shipping from Andersonville on September 7th. Expectation and anxiety were now at the highest pitch, until the evening of the 7th. Many were the speculations about the anticipated meetings with fathers and mothers, wives and little ones, and of good times generally. About dark, orders came for several detachments to get ready to move. Some had faith in the report of an exchange, but many of the older prisoners, who had been deceived before, could not be made believe that any exchange was really going on. Prisoners were, however, being sent away, for what purpose we knew not, unless it was to be exchanged. Every one was

desirous of knowing what was doing, and anxiously awaiting his turn to go. But the removal was not progressing fast enough to suit some of us; so I, and some others, concluded to go out the first opportunity. If happily, for exchange, we would get the earlier benefit of it; and if for another prison, we felt that it could not be worse than the one we were in. Accordingly, when the thirty-second detachment was called, I, having some acquaintances in it, concluded to go with it.

It was late in the evening of the 12th of September, when we marched from the prison to the depot, passing by the General's Headquarters, where we were counted by the light of a pine torch. When we reached the depot we were crowded into stock cars; and so full were the cars that we had scarcely room to sit down on the floor—there being no seats of any kind in the cars. Our rations for the trip consisted of corn bread and bacon—about three-fourths of a pound in all to each man. These rations were all we got for four days. In a few minutes after getting into the cars we started. Sometime in the night we reached Macon where we stopped until daylight. While at this place, a little boy came along by the train, looking at us, and as he came opposite the car I was in, he stopped and said :

“ Old Sherman was gwine ter let you'ns loose down ter Andersonville, wasn't he ? ”

“ Oh, no, ” said I, wishing to get all the information I could.

“ Y-a-a-s, but he was, and they're sendin' you'ns all ter' Charleston, to another prison. ”

Just as this last sentence was spoken, the guard from the top of the car exclaimed, “ begone you little devil, or I will put a bullet through you, ” which put an end to our colloquy; but enough was said to settle the idea of ex-



change with me, for I knew the little boy did not make the report he was circulating.

The cars were soon in motion again, bearing us away we knew not whither. A little while before night the city of Augusta, Ga., was reached. When the cars stopped, the train was immediately surrounded by a guard. Several women came to look at us, and expressed considerable sympathy for us. The prisoners asked them for something to eat, which request was readily granted by several of them, who brought out loaves of bread and divided it among us. One woman spoke of going to the bakery and getting more for us, but was prevented from so doing by the guards. Before starting, I noticed a man walking past us who turned and smiled upon us—not a scornful smile, but a friendly smile of sympathy. He did not stop until he got some distance past us, when he paused and stood musing a few minutes, then turned and came walking back toward us. As he came near the car, in the door of which I was standing, I caught his eye and immediately recognized in him a member of the Union League. Various signs of recognition passed between us. Here was a man in the garb of a rebel soldier, but who really had his sympathies with the Union army. I tried to drop him a line that I hastily wrote with a pencil, but could not succeed, for when the guards were not looking, he was not either. Having here found a friend, I resolved, if possible, to jump from the train that night, and try to find him.

Soon the curtains of darkness drew around us. The bell rang, the whistle sounded, and the cars were again in motion. Having been crowded back from the door, I made an effort to gain it for the purpose of jumping out; but just as I reached the door the train was on the bridge crossing the Savannah River. To jump out in the bridge

would be almost certain death, and by the time we were across the river, I was again crowded back from the door ; so I abandoned the project till a more convenient opportunity. The train did not stop again, except to take on wood and water, until we reached Branchville, South Carolina, sometime the next day. There we had to change cars for some other place, we knew not where. On the night of the 14th, the cars being very much crowded, I requested the guard to let me ride on the top of the car, which favor he granted, and I then had a chance to lie down and get some sleep. On the morning of the 15th, we reached Florence, South Carolina, a place of little importance, except for its railroad crossings. The Branchville and Wilmington, and Charleston and Cheraw Railroads cross here. We found seven or eight trains here, standing loaded with prisoners.

As soon as the train stopped, orders were given to not allow the prisoners on one train to hold conversation with those on the other trains. This order confirmed my suspicions that another prison was somewhere near by. But notwithstanding their orders, we soon found out that all had come from Andersonville. Some by way of Charleston, and some by Savannah ; but there was no room at either of those places for them. The next question to be solved was, Where is the prison ? This mystery, however, was soon explained by seeing squads of negroes passing along with axes, shovels, etc. There was no prison for us, and these sons of toil had been sent in by their masters to build a stockade. This I ascertained from one of the guards.

Soon the trains commenced moving away on the south road. The train I was on followed the others. After going about a mile south, the cars stopped and we were ordered to get off. We were then marched out into an old field that had been abandoned some years and which had

grown up with young pines. But no stockade or prison was to be seen—nothing to keep us there but a single guard line, composed of the South Carolina Reserves, which were made up of old men from forty-five to sixty, and boys from fifteen to eighteen years of age. It was soon ascertained that this “new issue,” as the prisoners termed them, had never seen service; and they seemed discouraged and discontented.

The most of us having had but one day's rations for the last three days, were considerably pinched with hunger, and enquiries were made for something to eat. But no rations were there for us. The officers informed us that they had to depend on the citizens to bring in provisions for us; but what could a thinly settled part of the country do, without any previous notice, for eight thousand prisoners? In the mean time it was evident that the negroes were working at the stockade, as their songs could be heard as they proceeded with their work.

We now attempted to organize the prisoners for the purpose of disarming the guards and making our escape; but no concert of action could be had, so the project had to be abandoned. But I could not rest. I was like a caged bear, always on the move, and made up my mind to effect an escape, if possible, or hazard my life in the attempt.—I thought I had better die trying to escape than to lie there and starve to death; for I could see no other alternative, as I was then so reduced by starvation that it was with difficulty, I could walk without reeling like a drunken man. My first plan was to find out what part of South Carolina we were in. This much desired information I was not long in obtaining from one of the guards, who informed me that it was about 110 miles to Charleston, 107 miles to Wilmington, North Carolina, and about 75 miles to North Carolina. Having learned thus much, I set about

devising some plan of escape, and also to find some one whom I could rely upon to accompany me. A comrade was soon found in a man by the name of John Henson, of the 31st Illinois Regiment, who agreed to go with me.— Our plan was soon laid. We were to pretend to want to go out after wood, get a guard to go with us, and, when we would get into the woods, disarm the guard, and leave for other parts. This plan we immediately attempted to put into execution. Going up to the guards' quarters, which were on the south side of the camp, we made our desires known to the officer of the guards. He replied that having sent a guard out with some others, on the same errand, he could not accede to our wishes just then, but that he would be pleased to accommodate us in about a couple of hours.

While waiting here, I chanced to look across to the north side of the camp where I noticed some of the prisoners carrying rails from a fence near by. Henson and I immediately started for the north side of the camp. The guards having let some out to get rails for wood, others wanted to go also. Pretty soon signs of a stampede became apparent. Several prisoners cried out, "Let's all go!" The scene now witnessed for a short time, was of a most thrilling and interesting character. A general rush was made, and guards were knocked down in all directions. The cry, "halt! halt!" was heard all along the line on the north side of the camp, but no halt was made.— A boy of about seventeen came directly in my way and commanded me to halt. Suiting the action to the word, I made a pause and struck at him, but he dodged the stroke, and I missed him. Following him up, I gave him a push with my left hand which sent him sprawling backward over a stump. I then ran on as fast as I could.— The guard, raising up, fired at me, but missed me and hit

another man, who was ahead of me, in the hip. And thus  
began my RACE FOR LIBERTY.

## CHAPTER VI.

Exciting scene; Dispersing in Small Squads; Guide Chosen; Eating Grapes; Difficulties and Danger; Crossing the Great Peedee; Interposition of Providence; Our Vigilance; Discovered by a Friendly African; Characteristic Conversation; Timely Aid.

HAVING got outside the guard line, I determined to make a desperate effort to avoid being recaptured. Steering my course toward the northeast corner of the field, I ran as fast as I could, followed by Henson. Being so much reduced by starvation, I could not walk without staggering, but excitement now lent strength to my weakened frame. The woods were soon reached and I immediately jumped the fence, but Henson stopped.

“What are you stopping for?” I inquired.

“Why,” says he, “there are pickets in the woods.”

“I don’t care for pickets,” said I, “I will run on until I find one. Come on,” I entreated, and he jumped the fence.

The scene was like that of a lot of sheep released from a pen. The woods were full of “blue coats” running in various directions. Some starting west, some north, and some east. Very few seemed to know which way to go.—The shooting by the guards was still going on at a lively rate. Some of the boys becoming alarmed turned and started back to the prison, saying that we would all be killed. “Comrades!” I cried, “men who have no more

courage that that, ought to go back and lie there and rot."

After getting fairly into the woods. I started directly east. About a mile north of us was the railroad running east and west. I supposed that guards would be immediately placed on the railroad to prevent our crossing toward the north, and I hoped by fast traveling to get far enough east to be able to cross before the guards could be stationed. I also thought the blood hounds would be started after us, as there were some at Florence. We soon came to a swamp which suited our purpose exactly. By directing our course through the swamp, the hounds would not be able to keep our trail. I soon saw that my plans were apprehended by the others, and that a large crowd had started after me. I stopped and told them that if they expected to effect an escape they would have to scatter off in squads of three or four, but if we kept together we would be caught before we traveled ten miles. "Well," says some, "we don't know where to go." "You know as much about the country as I do," I replied. One man came and begged to accompany us. I told him he might. — His name I soon learned was B. F. Porter, and that he was a member of the Tenth Ohio Cavalry.

Our number now being increased to three we set forward, not without, however, determining who should be the guide. It was soon agreed upon that I should act as guide. Neither Henson nor Porter knew where we were, and consequently knew not which way to go. I had, before leaving the prison, ascertained what part of South Carolina we were in, and consequently knew better which direction to take, so I told them I would guide them, but they must submit to my decisions altogether. After going about a mile through the swamp we came to a grape vine which was quite full of grapes, and being very hungry we

concluded to dine on grapes. Hiding ourselves from view we sat down and ate some of the grapes, but we were afraid to eat many of them, for our stomachs were not in a fit condition to bear many. We made our stay here very short, and set forward again, going eastward. We soon emerged from the swamp into thick woods, and then soon came in sight of a farm. Going up to it very cautiously to see if any one was in sight, I found the way was clear.— No house was visible and the place where we came to the farm was at the edge of a corn field. As we crossed the field we gathered some of the softest of the corn that we could find, and when we got into the woods again we stopped to rest and eat some corn, which seemed to me, raw as it was, the sweetest food I had ever tasted.

After traveling eastward about three miles, I changed the direction to the northeast until we came in sight of the railroad. Here we halted to ascertain whether there were any guards posted on the road or not. Bidding Henson and Porter stop, I moved forward to reconnoitre, by creeping on my hands and knees until I reached the road, then rising cautiously I looked first toward Florence, then in the opposite direction. Seeing no one, I motioned to my comrades to follow, and we crossed the railroad. As there was a railroad and telegraph running north from Florence to Cheraw, I thought it prudent to get out of the neighborhood of that road and telegraph; for I felt assured that the news of the stampede would be immediately sent to the various points, and the rebels would soon be on the alert for us.

By directing our course northeast we could soon be out of the neighborhood of both roads and telegraphs. In this direction our march was kept up until nearly night.— Woods, swamps and plantations were crossed ere the shades of night were drawn around us. About dark I



changed our course due north, taking the north star for a guide. As it was about full moon and a clear sky, it was pretty light and we were enabled to travel with considerable rapidity. We had the good fortune, soon after dark, to get into a good road leading directly north, and we could now travel with more ease than through the woods. About midnight our path led us to a river which I afterward learned was the Great Peedee. Here was an obstruction in our way. The point at which we struck the river was evidently a place of crossing, but no boat could be found. We went up the river a short distance in search of some kind of a craft in which to cross the river, but we were afraid to go far in that direction, as it would lead us toward the Cheraw Railroad. Not finding the object of our search in that direction we retraced our steps and went down the river in quest of a boat or bridge, but all to no purpose, so we concluded to stop until morning when we could see better to find some way of crossing.— Finding a cornfield near and refreshing ourselves by eating several ears of corn apiece, we laid down under a large tree to rest and sleep.

Rising at early dawn we found ourselves so sore and stiff that for some time it was with difficulty we could walk. We, however, resumed our search for something in which we could cross the river, and finally found some hewed logs near an old house on the river bank. We immediately set to work to construct a raft out of these logs. By putting two of them into the water, and tying them together with grapevines and sticks, we soon had a raft on which we started for the opposite shore, using a piece of board for a paddle. The opposite shore was thus reached with safety, but not without our getting wet, as we had to keep on our knees while crossing,—one on either end of the raft and the other in the middle;—to

keep it steady, the logs sinking several inches in the water. After crossing the river we again took to the woods, but had not gone far till we came to a large cypress swamp. To flank this was impossible, so we had to go through it. There was no water of any consequence in it, but plenty of mud.

Before leaving the prison I committed myself to the care and guidance of Divine Providence in effecting an escape, and it now seemed apparent that we were guided by a higher power; for various things that we could eat, such as grapes, persimmons, muscadines, etc., came directly in our way.

Through the day we came to a path leading directly in the way we wished to go. Following this path we came to a creek, on the opposite side of which was a canoe.—The creek was too deep to wade, and we felt too much worn out and tired to swim it; but Porter said he would try to swim it and bring over the canoe for us, which he did, and we were soon safe across. We now concluded to take a rest; and as we wanted to travel at night, it was necessary to sleep in daytime.

I began to think of applying to the negroes for something to eat, and for directions as to roads, but my companions were afraid of being betrayed by them. I was not afraid, but desisted for a few days until we got nearer North Carolina. We would generally sleep part of the day and travel the balance of the time, always keeping in the woods and swamps, and on a strict lookout for "rebs," for we had begun our race for liberty, and in order to win the prize it was necessary that we should be as vigilant as possible. One day we came to a plantation which was too large to "flank" as we had flanked others, and desiring to find a road that we could travel by at night, we concluded to cross the plantation. Just as we got across

we came to a large mill-pond. This was another obstruction in our way, and we could not get around it without being discovered. If we would go to the left we had to pass by the mill; if to the right, we had to pass near the house, and some one was hunting ducks near the pond, which we knew by the firing of a gun and the flying of ducks overhead. To stay where we were until dark was a rather hazardous undertaking, for the road was close by; so we concluded to go back across the farm into the woods and there remain until night, and then slip past the mill. As we were recrossing the farm through a cornfield, we noticed somebody in a lane adjoining the field. The corn had been topped and bladed and did not afford a very good hiding place; but as soon as we saw persons in the lane we laid down in the furrows between the rows of corn and tried to hide ourselves. Presently a negro man got over into the field and came toward us. As he came near us he took a circuit around the place where we lay, and kept whistling or singing as though he did not see us. After he had gone entirely around us, he stopped suddenly and looked directly at us. Seeing that we were discovered, I beckoned for him to come to us. As he approached he took off his hat and made a low bow to us. I asked him if he had ever heard of Yankee soldiers.

“Oh, yes, massa,” said he.

“Did you ever see one?”

“No, sah.”

“Would you like to see some of them?” said I.

“Oh, yes, massa, berry much,” he replied.

“Well,” said I, “here are three of them.”

“De Lord bress my soul, you ain’t Yankees, am you?” said he, slapping his hands on his knees, and manifesting great surprise and pleasure.

I told him we were, and how we came there, and asked

him if he was a friend to us. He assured us that he was our friend, and said that he had seen us in the cornfield, and thought it was some persons in distress, so [he came over to us, and seeing that we were white men, did not like to come up to us until asked to do so. “But,” said he, “dis am too public a place for you, and you had better go back to de woods. I am oberseer, and as soon as I set de boys to work I will come ’round and talk wid you.”—I told him we would do so, but did not want him to tell anybody about us, and to not betray us. Said he, “My name is Will, and mind you, massa, whatever Will says you may ’pend on.” So saying, he started off to put the hands to work—it being just past noon.

We wended our way back to the woods, but took the precaution to not stop at the place our colored friend had directed us; but took another position, so as to be able to observe his movements. Pretty soon he came whistling along by himself. When he came near the place where he had directed us to stop he gave a sharp whistle. Not getting any answer he repeated it, and I then answered him. He then came to us. I told him that we were very hungry, having had but little to eat for four days, except raw corn and grapes. He said he had not much himself, but would divide with us what he had. He then went to his cabin, a short distance off, and soon returned with some corn bread and meat, which we eagerly devoured, and with a relish known only to famishing men. He seemed to sympathize with us very much, and said his master had told him that the South was whipping the North; “but,” said he, “how in de name o’ de Lord is it dat when de Souf am whippin’ you, dat you am comin’ DIS WAY all de time?—yah! yah!—dat’s what I’d like to know. Dey may talk to de darkies as much as dey please ’bout whippin’ you, but de darkies don’t b’lieve um—

b'lieve de Lord am on your side, and dat you will whip, and us darkies will all be free."

We continued for some time conversing wth him on the subject of the war, and found him quite well informed, especially on President Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. He told us to stay in the woods till night, when he would come back and bring something more for us to eat, and put us on the road that would carry us straight to North Carolina; and said we need not be afraid of the darkies, as they were all friends to us. And so we found them to be. The afternoon was spent in sleeping. Night came, and with it our faithful colored friend, bearing a basket of provisions, and a little bag of salt that we requested him to bring, as we had been eating so much raw corn and fruit we were badly afflicted with diarrhoea. After eating heartily we started on our way, the negro piloting us some distance.

## CHAPTER VII.

The Wet Season ; Chased by Bloodhounds ; Sad Accident ; Corn-blade Shelter ; Substitute for a Compass ; Negro Hospitality ; In North Carolina ; An Old Log School House ; Unwelcome Visitors ; Dreadful Storm ; The Turpentine Region ; Secret Union Organization ; Meeting Rebel Soldiers ; Quaker Settlement ; A Puzzling Question.

THE time of year had come for the wet season to set in. Accordingly, about the twenty-third day of September, the rains began to come, making our race for liberty more dreary and difficult.

One evening we heard the baying of dogs in the distance, and soon discovered that they were coming nearer. We could distinguish by their howling that they were not the common fox-hound, nor the bull-dog. It soon occurred to my mind that they were bloodhounds, and that we had been discovered, as we had crossed several farms that evening. Our situation became more critical every moment, as we could notice they were gaining on us and were evidently on our trail. The first thing now to be done was to throw the dogs off our trail, if possible, for if we did not we would surely be captured. Fortunately we came to a swamp on our route into which we went with great haste. After going about fifty rods the swamp was crossed, and we came to a very deep ditch, which was too wide for us to jump across. A place was soon found where some poles were thrown across the ditch. We attempted to

cross on these poles, and as I reached the middle of the ditch one of the poles broke and I fell with much force to the bottom, hurting me very much. I managed to get out of the ditch pretty soon, but was too much hurt to proceed. On examination I found that I had fractured a rib in my left side. Henson and Porter proposed to climb trees as a means of safety. To this I objected; for if we were to climb trees and the dogs were to find us, we would be easily captured by the citizens. But I told the boys that I could go no farther, and we had better prepare ourselves for a fight. We each cut a club and stationed ourselves on the bank of the ditch ready to knock the dogs back if they should attempt to cross after us; but when the dogs came to the swamp it was too wet for them to follow us and they lost the trail.

We moved on a short distance further, when it became so dark that we could not keep the direction, and as I was suffering much from my side, we were compelled to stop for the night. We had no blankets or shelter of any kind, and a heavy rain was coming on. On looking about we discovered a cornfield in which was a stack of corn-blades. Carrying some rails into the woods, we tied one to a couple of saplings about four feet from the ground, then leaned other rails on this one. We then covered this with corn-blades for a shelter, and made a bed inside with the same materials. But only exhaustion and fatigue caused me to sleep, for I was too badly hurt to have slept under any other circumstances.

The state of the weather was such that we could no longer travel at night. Only in daytime could we proceed, and then we were afraid to travel on any public roads, but we kept our course unmindful of streams or swamps. To travel in daytime, in cloudy weather, we needed a compass, but nature furnished a very good substitute. I

had remembered hearing some old hunters remark that the moss on the tree was all on the north side; and by taking particular notice to this we could keep the course tolerably well. Whenever we came to a farm we would generally make a flank movement and go around it, keeping in the woods to avoid being seen. To facilitate our escape we had succeeded in trading our blue coats to the negroes for citizen's coats, and would at every opportunity make inquiries of the negroes about the rebel soldiers and home guards. They told us that up further North there were a good many home guards hunting "exerters" (deserters).

At every place where we made application to the negroes for food and directions we were accommodated and found them trustworthy. One day while traveling thro' the woods we heard some persons chopping. Moving up very cautiously, I saw several negroes at work in a clearing; so I went up pretty close to them and beckoned to one to come to me. He came immediately and I made our wants known to him, which were for something to eat, and information respecting the home guards. He said we would have to stay till night, for it was but a mile to the creek called Shoeheel, the bridge across which was guarded, and we could not cross; but if we would stop till after dark he would bring us out something to eat and take us where we could get across the creek. Taking his advice we laid down in the woods and slept till dark.

At the appointed time the darkey came along with a basket full of cooked sweet potatoes and some corn bread and meat, which we soon ate, then following the negro he took us up the creek two or three miles to a mill-dam, on which we were able to cross. When we had got across the creek he bade us wait till he would get us some rations. He started off, and in about an hour returned, car-



rying a side of bacon. On enquiring where he got it, he said, "Captain Johnson hab some bery fine bacon, so I goes and gets his man Joe to take de dogs and start on a 'possum hunt, and as soon as he was gone dis chile slips to de smoke house and grabs um." He cut the meat in two with his knife and gave us half of it, and said he would sell the rest for "three dollars a pound." He said that if his master knew what he had done he would "burn him alive," but he seemed willing to risk the "burning," both here and hereafter.

We had to take all the advantage we could of the weather for traveling. Sometimes we would travel at night, at other times in daylight. We had to subsist off the country as we passed along, and while traveling at night would get sweet potatoes, apples, chickens, geese, etc.— We were so fortunate as to get some matches from a negro, and as we traveled at night would gather a supply of provisions for the next day, then stop in some secluded spot and cook our rations. We would then leave the place where we had built a fire, lest the smoke might betray us. We were now in the pine forests and among the sand hills of North Carolina, but had not, as yet, spoken to a white man since our escape from the prison at Florence.

While traveling through the pine forests of North Carolina, I discovered, one evening, that a dense cloud was rising in the west and to all appearances we would have a wet night. We were on what seemed to be a by-road, but was in reality a public highway. Residences were miles apart and gave evidence of being inhabited by the poorest class of persons. While contemplating how to pass the night, we came to a cabin situated in the forest near the road. On going close to it we found that it had been built for a school house. It had a chimney and fire-

place, a door which hung on the outside, a log had been cut out the whole way across the end for a window, and a board lay there that had been used to shut the window. "Here," said I, "we will stop for the night, and after dark we can make a fire, roast our potatoes, and sleep quite comfortably." Near the school house was a spring of water. Porter and I went to get a drink, and while at the spring our attention was directed toward the school house by the barking of a dog. On looking toward the house we discovered several men standing around the door, having Henson surrounded and talking to him.— We saw that they were unarmed. Porter proposed a hasty retreat, but to this I objected, and told him that if Henson was captured we would share his fate. On going up to the school house we found Henson surrounded by four persons—a man and his three sons—who had been passing along the road, and discovering the school house door open had come to see who were there. We entered into conversation with the old man and found him to be a vile rebel. One of the boys belonged to the rebel army and was then home on furlough. They asked us many questions, but it was useless to give them evasive answers, as Henson had told them who we were. They showed by their actions and looks that they would like to make us prisoners but the undertaking was liable to be attended with difficulty in the absence of arms, so casting a furtive glance at us and at the coming storm, they bade us good evening and started southward.

Deeming it unsafe to remain in the school house, now that we had been discovered, as soon as our unwelcome visitors were out of sight we started. We had not gone far before the rain began to fall, and darkness was closing around us. After going about two or three miles we stopped in the woods a short distance from the road and

attempted to kindle a fire, but the rain descended in such torrents that we found it impossible to build a fire—for the time being at least. Leaning ourselves against trees we were compelled to stand for two hours in as hard a rain storm as I ever witnessed. The darkness was equal to Egyptian darkness. The thunder roared, the lightning flashed, the winds blew, the rain literally poured down, and, all in all, it was one of the most dreary nights I ever knew. No one can realize my thoughts and feelings as I stood by that old pine tree, not knowing what moment I might be struck down by some of the falling timber or by lightning. As I stood there, far from home, hungry and weary, wet and cold, my mind wandered over the past and present, and the prospective future, and I felt as tho' the drenching rain would extinguish the last spark of patriotism within me; but I committed myself to the Ruler of the Universe, and felt greatly relieved and comforted.

At last the rain ceased and I again attempted to kindle a fire, but judge of my perplexity at finding my matches wet and would not strike fire. By holding them to my breast awhile they became dry enough to light, and having plenty of pine-knots near by, we soon had a large fire.— We were soon warm and dry, and after roasting our sweet potatoes, we ate heartily and then lay down to sleep.— Those who have always slept upon downy beds in palaces or comfortable cottages, know but little of the value of “Tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep.” None but persons placed in our situation could fully realize and appreciate a good night's rest.

Daylight came, and we started on our way again. I now found that my system was fast giving way under the extreme exposure through which I was passing. While in prison at Andersonville and Florence, I was subject to attacks of bronchites, and it was now apparent that the

disease was growing on me, as my speech was almost wholly leaving me. This was about the 28th of September, and by the first of October I was unable to speak above a whisper.

Our route that we had chosen, passed directly through the turpentine forests of South and North Carolinas.—Every mile or so we would come to the camps that had been occupied by the negroes, when attending the pine trees and gathering turpentine. But the war, brought on by the South, had put a stop to the manufacture of turpentine and rosin, by the Carolinians. Great quantities of rosin were scattered over the ground in places where barrels had bursted. It was evident to my mind that we were near the settlements inhabited by Union men, and as our course was still northward, we were anxious to learn which would be the best way to turn,—whether east toward Newbern, or west toward Tennessee. We did not wish to change our course until we could be advised as to the most practicable route. This desired information we finally obtained from an old man, a member of the Home Guards of N. C., who had been recommended to us by the negroes, as being a Union man, and as such we found him to be. He told us that to go to Newbern would be attended with difficulty, as there was a considerable force of rebel soldiers between us and Newbern. He also gave us our suppers and directed us where to find the Union men, of whom there were quite a number, in that part of the country. He gave me to understand that there was a secret organization in the South, whereby Union men were enabled to recognize each other, and said if we could get initiated into the order, that we would then have no trouble in getting through to Tennessee,—that if we belonged to the order, and were recaptured by the Home Guards, we would find many friends among them, who would assist us in

making our escape. I asked him how I could get initiated into the order, as I was anxious to know more about it. He replied, that a man could not join it without a member of the order vouching for him, and as we were strangers to him, he would not like to become voucher for us. This man, though dressed in rebel garb, was Union at heart, and I found that the Jeff. Davis government was losing more by such soldiers than it was gaining.

Bidding the old man a hearty good by, we resumed our journey, keeping a northward course, as we had learned there was a large settlement of the Quakers in Randolph County, and thitherward we directed our steps. One day as we were traveling through the woods, we thought we would find out where the road was, in order to travel on it by night. We had not long to search till we came to a plank road, which looked so inviting to travel on, compared with the rough way, through thick brush and woods, that we concluded to travel awhile on it. We had not gone far, when just as we approached to the top of a little hill, we came directly in contact with two rebel soldiers.— They had the appearance of soldiers going home on furlough, having their knapsacks and haversacks with them. We were so close to them before they were observed, that it was useless to try to hide from them. Seeing that they had no arms with them, we went boldly up, facing them as we passed and bidding them good day. They returned the salute, and as they got a little way past, one said to the other, “Them fellows looked d'm much like Yankees.” We thought it prudent now to leave the road, that had the appearance of being such a public one. A few miles further on, and we were in the Quaker settlement.— We could now travel with more safety, as almost every man we talked with gave evidence of being connected with the secret organization before mentioned; but the signs of

recognition I was unable to learn. I had, by close observation, detected a certain movement of the hand, made by almost every one I spoke to, but to this sign or question I could make no reply. All the Quakers with whom I conversed, claimed to be neutral, in reference to the war, but on a lengthy conversation with them, it was easy to discern that their sympathies were with the Federal Government, which guarantees to them, all the privileges they could desire. I made enquiry as to who the leading man among the Quakers was, and was informed his name was Joseph N——, and that he lived about eight miles further north on the plank road. My reason for making this enquiry, was to find a person that could give me directions to East Tennessee. It was now late in the afternoon, but I determined, if possible, to get to the old gentleman's that night, before he would retire. Our eagerness to see him that night made us a little too venturesome, as we concluded to travel on the road that evening; and as we were traveling along, we came suddenly to a party of soldiers, who were getting a drink, inside of a gate by the wayside. They had stacked their guns against a tree that stood in the yard, and as we came up bade us good evening, which salutation we returned, though with fear and anxiety. They evidently did not mistrust who we were, but doubtless supposed us to be some citizens or home guards going home, as there had been a camp broken up in the neighborhood that day. After getting out of sight we congratulated each other on our narrow escape.

A little while after dark we arrived at the house of Joseph N——. It stood by a tollgate on the plank road.— On calling at the gate the old man appeared, and as I was quite ill, I asked him for some place to sleep that night.— He enquired who we were. I told him, and the circumstances connected with our presence there. He replied,

“Thee knows that we take neutral grounds, and we are not in favor of war in any case. We feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and try to live acceptable in the sight of God.” Thus saying, he asked us to come in and get some supper, and he would furnish some place for us to sleep.— But my illness prevented me from partaking of the bounties offered us by our hospitable friend. While my comrades were partaking of a hearty supper, I had a great many questions to answer, for the old gentleman was very inquisitive. He had long been without any RELIABLE army news, and could not understand how it was, that according to the best Southern authority, the Federal troops were being repulsed in every action, and yet the Confederates were losing all their territory! This was indeed a puzzling question that only Southern rebels or their Northern sympathizers seemed to understand.

After supper, we were generously offered good beds to sleep in but this offer we respectfully declined, as our host had informed us that the soldiers we had seen, had been to Raleigh with some conscripts, and that, in all probability, there would be more along that night; so we declined staying in the house, but told him that we would be glad to sleep in his barn or fodder-house. He directed one of his sons to conduct us to his barn, where we found very comfortable quarters, compared to what we had been enjoying, and as the night was wet, the pattering of the rain upon the roof, soon lulled us into a sound sleep.

## CHAPTER VIII.

A Union Lady ; Prices of Produce and Goods ; More Union People ; A Barbarous Transaction ; A Heroine ; Successful Female Disguise ; The H. O. A. ; Southern Prescription ; Crossing Deep River ; Marching Along ; Old Battle Ground ; The Yadkin River ; A Friendly Colored Ferryman ; "Carrying Water on Both Shoulders."

EARLY the next morning we resumed our journey, taking a northeasterly course, so as to avoid too close proximity to some of the towns. As we wended our way through the woods after leaving the old Quaker's, we came in sight of a small but neat cottage at the edge of the woods. Not seeing any man about, we walked to the house and found it occupied by a woman and two small children.—She received us kindly, but hesitated to give us something to eat, as she thought we had misrepresented ourselves, in order to find out whether she had been harboring conscripts and deserters. Assuring her that we were what we represented ourselves to be, and asking her some questions about the home guards, and if her husband belonged to them, she became satisfied that we were not imposters, and got us some breakfast. She said that her husband had been conscripted into the rebel service, but had succeeded in getting detailed to work at the Salt Works at Wilmington, as he was a Union man and would not fight against his country. She said the Federals had made a dash on the Salt Works, and had captured about fifty of



the hands, her husband among the rest, and the last she had heard from him he was at Fort Delaware, in prison. She was rather in advance of the ordinary class of Southern women in point of intelligence; and was carrying on a pretty large farm in the absence of her husband, and it really appeared as though everything she undertook prospered with her. She gave me a list of the prices of produce and store goods in that part of the country: Salt \$1,25 per lb., flour \$1,00 per lb., muslin \$3,00 to \$5,00 per yard, calico \$6,00 to \$10,00 per yard, and to support their families the soldiers were getting \$11,00 per month. No wonder they had to keep a standing army at home to hunt deserters.

During the day, as we were going through the woods, we heard some one singing, and on coming to a field we discovered a white woman and two little boys at work gathering corn-fodder. Seeing no one else about we got over the fence and went up to them, and I accosted the lady thus:

“Is it possible that in this country, where negroes are so plenty, white women have to go into the field to work?”

“I prefer doing my own work rather than be troubled with slaves, for a trouble they were,” she replied.

“Are you a widow?” I enquired.

“Yes, sir—a war widow.”

“Your husband is in the army, then,” I said.

“No, sir, but in the navy. He is on a gunboat at Wilmington.”

“Then,” said I, “you don’t want to see us if your husband is in the Confederate service.”

“I cannot say about that, not knowing who you are; but I have a pretty good idea who you are,” she said.

“Whom do you take us to be?” I asked.

“You are hunters, trying to find out where the conscripts are,” she replied.

I then told her that we were not “hunters,” and as she did not seem very dangerous, I told her who we were and how we came there. She seemed to put but little confidence in us at first; but on making our case clear, she said her husband had been conscripted into the Confederate service, but was a Union man, and that two of her brothers had gone to Tennessee to join the Union army. She invited us to go home with her for dinner, and said she would send for her remaining brother, who would be glad to see us.

As we walked toward her house, which was about a mile distant, she related one of the most barbarous transactions that I had ever known to take place in a civilized country. An order had been issued from the Confederate War Department conscripting all able bodied men, from seventeen to fifty years of age, to go to the field immediately; and where men refused to go, and could not be found, the guards were to take their wives, mothers or sisters, and throw them into prison and keep them there until released by the men coming in and giving themselves up. She said that when this order was received her two brothers and a great many others started for Tennessee, and to fill the order her three sisters, the only support of an old lady ninety years of age, were put into prison.— Old women from sixty to eighty years of age, and younger women with three or four little children, and young ladies yet single, went to make up the number thus thrown into prison.

After dinner we left the house and went to the stable to rest until night. During the afternoon the news came that the women were released from prison, and this intelligence was confirmed by the arrival of the lady's three

sisters, they having been set at liberty. On learning that three Yankee prisoners were secreted in the stable, the oldest sister—a shrewd, intelligent young lady—came out to see us. She gave full particulars of their incarceration, and said they would have starved had they not taken provisions with them. She related instances of women who had small children with them, who, having been robbed by the rebels, and having nothing to take to prison with them, almost starved to death. The cries of the children for bread were scarcely ever hushed. The news having gone abroad that the women and children were starving caused some of the men to come from their hiding places and give themselves up, in order that their families might be released from the prison in which they were famishing.

This young lady seemed to be the heroine of the neighborhood, and while in prison she bore the title of “General.” She related to us one incident that almost entitled her to the rank of “Brigadier.” A few evenings before the young men left for Tennessee to join the Union army, the girls made a party for the benefit of those young men. During the evening, while the party was going on smoothly, the news was heralded through the house that they were surrounded by home guards. Retaining her presence of mind, this “Lady General” set about to release the boys. Each lady in the house was required to doff part of her clothing, and she then proceeded to dress the young men in women’s apparel, in which disguise they walked out under the guns of the guards, who supposed they were the ladies leaving the house as ordered to do. Judge of the disappointment of the rebel soldiers as they walked into the house to find their game gone. She said that her last words to her brothers were to not come back until secession and the Southern Confederacy were wiped out; and declared that she would rather die in prison

than see her brothers go into the army to fight for Jeff-Davis and against the Union.

Evening came, and after eating supper with the good lady, we, accompanied by her sisters, went to their brother's. We found him to be a very strong-minded Union man. He escaped being conscripted only by being employed in a cotton factory at Franklinsville, Randolph Co., N. C. He received for his labor three yards of sheeting per day, which, before the war, was worth but seven cents per yard. This gentleman spoke of the secret Union organization, which I have already mentioned, and said there was a large society in that neighborhood; and that the rebels had tried, in every possible way, to find it out, but without success. The officers of the Freemason lodge had also tried, by swearing all the members of the lodge and by questioning them, but their efforts were in vain.

While in this neighborhood I found it necessary to stop a few days to recruit my health. I told Henson and Porter that they need not wait on me, if they did not wish to do so; but they said they would wait, as I was their guide. It being too much of a tax on the hospitality of one individual for us all to stay at one place, we procured different places of lodging. The man with whom I stopped was a strong friend of the Union, and, of course, a bitter enemy of the so-called Confederacy. I staid with him four or five days, and he, becoming satisfied that I was what I represented myself to be, proposed to have me initiated into their Secret Order. Accordingly, one evening I was ushered into the lodge, and being vouched for as a "true blue" by my friend, I was duly initiated into the mysterious order, H. O. A., which organization was doing almost as much injury to the rebel cause as an invading army. The President told me that there were sev-

enty-five thousand of this Order in North Carolina alone. He had been in the rebel army as a conscript, guarding prisoners at Salisbury, N. C., and while there had actually released forty prisoners within the space of two months. He was then sent to Richmond on some duty, and there he made the acquaintance of some of the Master Machinists, four of whom he piloted to Tennessee; and on seeing his "recruits" in Uncle Sam's employ, he turned his steps homeward, and at once opened a station on the Underground Railroad.

From this place we were sent to one R. S——, where I expected to get a chart, or directions of the way we wished to go; but on arriving at his house we were greatly disappointed, as he was not at home. His wife, however, showed me a map, from which I was enabled to get a tolerably direct route to the mountains.

We were now in the neighborhood of the Stogdons, a family widely known as being very hostile to the cause of Jeff. Davis and his thieving coadjutors. The Stogdons were so closely watched by the rebels that they, with a great many others, did not dare to sleep in their houses at nights. I found among them men who had not slept in their houses for two years, and some who had not eaten in their houses for six months. They were compelled to camp out in the woods, in order to hide from the rebel soldiers who would frequently make raids on the Union men, and if caught in their houses, or elsewhere, they would, in almost every case, murder them outright.

We crossed Deep river, a branch of Cape Fear river.— At the point where we crossed there was a high bridge, and coal mines on the north side of the river. The crossing was effected about twelve o'clock at night. When we got within about a mile of the mines we heard the engine, which we took to be a ferry boat or some other craft on

the river, and so approached very cautiously, stopping every few rods to try to determine what was keeping up such a noise at that hour of the night. We finally reached the bridge, and finding no obstruction in the way, passed noiselessly and speedily across.

Various incidents came in our way as we continued our march. We were often compelled by the cloudy weather to travel in daylight, and as we were in the part of the country where the home guards were on the alert, it was necessary for us to travel very cautiously. Whenever a farm was to be crossed we would procure a stick apiece, place them on our shoulders, and walk rapidly across, giving ourselves the appearance of soldiers in the distance. At times we suffered very much with hunger and would frequently gather and eat the mushrooms we found growing in the woods. To hungry men, anything that can be eaten tastes good. Paw-paws, persimmons, grapes, apples, etc., that fell in our way served to stay the craving of the appetite, and we would sometimes have to resort to the robbing of milk-houses to satisfy our hunger.

As we passed through Guilford county, I had a strong desire to visit the old battle-ground near Martinsville, where Gen. Greene was whipped by the British during the time of the Revolutionary war, but prudence forbid, and we passed along as unobservedly as possible. Another day, and we were nearing the Yadkin river. We found that there were several places of crossing the river. One was at Shallow Ford, but the stream was too much swollen by recent rains to be fordable. Further up the river was a ferry known as G——' Ferry, which was kept by a negro. The owner of the ferry, I was told, was a Union man by the name of G——. Being put on the road that led to the ferry we advanced very cautiously, keeping in the woods by the side of the road as much as

possible, to avoid being seen. As we descended the hill the river came in view. We had a wide bottom to cross before the ferry was reached, but fortune again favored us, as there were large fields of corn and sugar cane on either side of the road, and by getting into these we were enabled to get to the ferry without being discovered.

Keeping ourselves concealed in the cane, we watched the boats, which lay on the opposite side of the river from us. Presently two negroes came to the river to cross.— We waited patiently until the crossing was made. As the negroes landed I stepped toward the bank and motioned to the ferryman who presently came to me. He was a very large man and quite intelligent, being a pretty good scholar,—i. e., a pretty good scholar for a North Carolinian. I told him who we were and what we wanted.— He said he was willing to assist us, but that he would have to wait till after dark, for fear of being detected,—that if detected he would be hung, as he had been so threatened by the military authorities for putting men across without a pass. He told us to go back and wait till night, and when he would be ready for us he would whistle. It was then about noon; and we regaled ourselves during the afternoon with a good, sound sleep.

Night came, and the glad sound of the ferryman's whistle greeted our ears. Leaving our hiding place we approached the river, and jumping into the canoe we were soon over the obstruction. The ferryman told us to not tarry long with him, as we had been seen that day by a Lieutenant of the home guards, who, supposing us to be rebel deserters, or conscripts, had followed us and had accused the negro of putting us across the river, which he promptly denied, saying that he had seen no such persons. He told us that he had put hundreds of refugees, and many escaped prisoners, across the river, and he gave us a great

deal of information about the road to East Tennessee, as he had traveled it often, and was raised near Knoxville. I asked him where his master, Mr. G——, lived, as I had understood that he was a Union man and I wished to see him. He replied that he lived on the road, about two miles ahead of us, but said we had better not see him, as he knew his master better than the neighbors did. He then related a circumstance of an escaped prisoner stopping with this G—— and being betrayed into the hands of a rebel Captain. This Mr. G—— also kept a mill, and in order to retain custom, he tried to be Union and rebel both at the same time, and thus “carry water on both shoulders.” It was necessary for us to pass by in sight of the mill, so following the advice of the negro we stole quietly by. We also passed G——’ house in the same manner. As it was night, the house was lit up, and we could see that it was one of the finest residences we had come across in North Carolina.

The night was a dreary, tedious one, and we were so much worn down by marching and sickness that we could travel only two or three miles at a time, when we would have to stop and rest, and would drop asleep, but soon awakened by reason of the cold, and then start on our race again.



## CHAPTER IX.

A Dangerous Crossing; Climbing the Mountains; Beautiful Landscape; On the Wrong Road; Deserters and Conscripts; Negro Assistance; Slaves Desire' for Freedom; Contemplate Freeing Them; A Slight Altercation; Baptist Meeting; Home Guards; Plans Frustrated; Mountaineers; On the Top of the Blue Ridge; Re-captured.

FROM the direction we were traveling it was evident the Yadkin would be to cross again. We enquired of Union men the best place to cross, and learned that we would likely have some difficulty in crossing, as there was no ferry, and the ford, which was pretty deep, was in front of Capt. M——'s house; and we would be liable to be shot from the house by the Captain, who was a vile secesh, and always on the watch for refugees.

Happily we found a Union man, whom I recognized as a member of the H. O. A. Taking his gun with him, he piloted us to the river by a secret road, which led to the river some distance below the ford. He then directed us to take a path that led along the river's bank, through brush and briars, until the ford was reached; and stationing himself in the woods, said he would watch the Captain's movements, and if we were fired upon while crossing he would, he said, "despatch the Captain to H—l or some other seaport." We were soon at the ford and, seeing no one about, plunged in and made for the opposite shore. The water was very swift and above

waist deep, which made the crossing quite difficult, but we got over without any molestation. We then hastened into the woods to hide ourselves, and finding a place where the sun shone quite warmly upon us, we lay down to dry our clothes and sleep.

Resuming our race, we struck for the mountains which we reached in two or three days. At the foot of the Blue Ridge we came to a little village called Traphill. It was about twelve o'clock at night when we arrived at this place, and finding a number of roads leading up the mountain, we concluded to stop till daylight, lest we should take the wrong road. Finding a barn a short distance from the village we turned in for a nap, but a cold wind was blowing off the mountain, which made our stopping place very uncomfortable.

With the first break of day we were up, and selecting what we thought to be the right road, began to climb the mountain. Never shall I forget the scenery that presented itself to my view. On looking back, after we had ascended a mile or so, we could distinguish in the distance the pine forests through which we had passed weeks before. Here, spread out before us like a map, was a vast extent of country, intended by the Almighty Ruler to be almost a garden of Eden; but the blighting curse of slavery was manifested everywhere. Numerous were the farms we could see that had been worn out by avaricious slaveholders in trying to get the last cent's worth out of both land and slaves. In some few cases the fences had been taken away to fence new farms. How different, thought I, is the North from the South in point of improvement. The Southern people were using farming utensils that had been laid away by the North for fifty years. Here in the South could be seen a team of mules with husk collars, rawhide traces, and hitched to a plow with a wooden mole-board.

Keeping on up the mountain in the winding road for two or three miles, we came to a small house by the way-side. We found this house inhabited by an old lady and two children—a boy and a girl. These children, she said, were her grandchildren. Their mother had been dead some years, and their father, having been conscripted into the rebel army, was killed in battle in front of Richmond. She said he was a Unionist, and had been “bushing it” for six months, but was finally captured and dragged off to the army. Before reaching the mountain, we had been directed to take the Mulberry Gap road, but, on making inquiry of this lady, we learned that we had taken the wrong road, and was on the Salt Lick road, leading to Saltville, Va. But she said she could soon put us right, and sending the little boy with us, we were put on a by-road that led to a Mr. B——’s. Here we stopped and got breakfast—or dinner, rather, as it was about the middle of the day. While we were eating, there came in a negro to whom we were made known by Mr. B——. As the negro (who was a slave) had received permission to visit his wife, and was going our road, he volunteered to pilot us some distance. And a valuable pilot he proved to be. There were a great many conscripts and deserters lying in the mountains, and this slave knew just where to find them. He said that if any one would pilot him he would leave for Tennessee, as his master was a rebel.

I found this negro to be a smart man for one of his privileges, but he had a poor chance to make his escape to the Union lines, as he was not acquainted with the country well enough to venture alone, and the white refugees would not permit him to go along with them. I asked him if any more slaves in that vicinity wished to go to Tennessee. “Oh, yes, massa,” he replied, “dar am five other darkies what wants to go.” I told him we would

then stop in the neighborhood a few days, and perhaps would take him and them along. Being elated at the prospect of freedom, he promised that we should not want for anything while we remained. He told me his master's name was S——, and that his (the slave's) wife belonged to a man by the same name, but who was a Union man, and that he would take us there. This was on Saturday, and the Baptist yearly association was in session in the neighborhood; and as this Mr. S—— was one of the leading men of the church, it was likely that he would have company, and we might be exposed by going there; so we concluded to stop in the woods until the negro would go to the house and see if all was right. Soon he returned, bearing a basket filled with corn bread, sweet potatoes and apples. He told us that we had better not go to the house, but remain where we were until night, when he would return and take us to a good place to stay that night. Porter and I spent the afternoon in hunting chestnuts and grapes, which were quite plenty, and Henson spent the time in sleeping.

When night came the negro made his appearance, accompanied by four other slaves and two white men. The white men I immediately recognized as members of the H. O. A., and felt that I was among friends. They had been in the rebel army and had deserted. They declared that they could not fight against their principles,—though forced into several hard battles in the vicinity of Richmond, said they always shot so high that no one was ever hurt by their bullets, as they expected to be killed themselves, and wanted to die with a clear conscience. I spoke to them concerning the negroes who wanted to go with us to Tennessee, and asked their advice. They said the boys were all good fellows and belonged to rebel masters, whom they would be glad to see robbed of their slaves, but I

would incur a great risk by taking them; for if we should be captured in company with these slaves, we would most assuredly be hung. On hearing this, Henson, who always had a great antipathy to negroes, strongly objected to taking them. But I was not afraid of being hung by rebels, as they knew better than to hang Union soldiers; and to anybody who had treated me as well as the negroes had I would do all in my power to assist them out of bondage. We spent that night very pleasantly in an old tan-house in which there was a comfortable fire.

The next morning at break of day we left the old house and went into the woods. Soon one of those deserters made his appearance, accompanied by several ladies who said they had often heard of Yankee soldiers but had never seen any. They were nice, intelligent ladies, and brought with them a large basket of provisions for us,—as good a breakfast as I ever ate. Their husbands were conscripted and taken off to the rebel army, but they were expecting them home. After eating our breakfast, we set about making the necessary arrangements for taking the negroes through the lines with us—Henson all the while protesting against it. Getting impatient with him, I told him that if he did not want to travel with negroes he might go before by himself or follow on behind; and other angry words passed between us which came very near parting us.

Being near the road, and as the people were going to meeting, we thought we had better move to some more secure retreat. Guided by one of the men, we came to a place where we could secrete ourselves, yet see the people passing, and could hear the singing and preaching.—We saw several men passing along with guns on their shoulders. I took these to be home guards, but was told that they were Unionists, and carried their guns to defend

themselves with. My informant also told me that nearly all the home guards in that county (Wilkes) had been disarmed by the conscripts and deserters.

The negroes now made their appearance and we soon concluded our arrangements for our departure. The negroes were nearly all without shoes,—Henson and Porter were also barefooted, and I was nearly so. Something must be done toward getting shoes. One of the negroes said that he was a tanner and his master had a tan-yard and plenty of leather; so I concluded that this was our chance, and that we would make a raid on the tannery for some leather to make ourselves shoes. But while we were discussing this matter, one of the deserters, with several other men, came to us. One of these men told me privately that he was a member of the home guards, and that his Captain, hearing of us, had called the company together to have us arrested. Being thus apprised, I thought best to immediately start on our race again, and I informed the darkies of our danger. “Well, well,” they said, “nebber mind us, massa, we’ll come arter while.”

That Sunday evening, after leaving the place near the meeting ground, we met a man who said he belonged to the home guards, and that he had been notified to turn out and help hunt some Yankee prisoners that were in the mountains; but he said he would not do it, as he was a Union man, and was then going to a neighbor’s to keep out of the way of the officers. I asked him why he belonged to the home guards when it was against his principles, and he said it was merely to keep out of the army. We conversed freely for some time, and I enquired of him where we had best stay over night, as the paths in the mountains were hard enough to find in daylight without trying to find them at night. He directed me to a Mr.

C——, as the most suitable place to stop for the night.— We did not reach Mr. C——'s until about twelve o'clock at night, and when we arrived we found quite a number of deserters there. This place seemed to be a sort of rendezvous for them. One of the deserters told me that he had been captured by the home guards nine times, but they never succeeded in getting him to the front. Mrs. C—— made us a bed on the floor, and we were not long in making our way to dream land.

The next morning was quite frosty. After partaking of a breakfast of corn bread and cabbage, we bade adieu to Mr. C—— and family, and started on our race again. On going about three or four miles we came to the residence of Mr. Wm. S——, who was a strong-minded Unionist. He seemed quite intelligent, and in speaking of the cause in which we were engaged, said he believed our cause was just and must triumph. Said he, "I am a sinner, but I believe in God, and believe he has guided you on your journey, or you never could have reached the distance you have come." I told him that I had never lacked for a guide, as I had committed myself to the care of Him who ruleth over all, and believed He had directed us. This man had sacrificed much for his Union principles, and said that, if necessary, he was ready to lay down his life for his country. The men living in the mountains, if they are land-holders at all, generally own a large estate. This Mr. S—— said that he had twelve hundred acres of land, that he had bought it for five cents per acre, had always paid his taxes until the South seceded, since which time he had never paid one cent of tax, nor would not until the proper authorities were ready to collect the taxes.

About twelve o'clock we reached the residence of Mr. John W——, whither we had been piloted by Mr. S——.

Mr. W—— received us very cordially and had dinner prepared for us. After partaking of his hospitalities, we started on our way again, with many kind wishes for our success and the success of the Federal arms. Mr. W—— directed us to his brother Frank's, but we had not gone far until we lost the road altogether, and had to travel through the woods; but this did not discourage us.— About sundown we came to a house which, upon enquiry, we found to be the place we had started for. But Frank W—— did not prove of any use to us whatever, as he was so drunk that all reason had left him, and he could not even tell who his next neighbor was. His wife directed us to a Union man's where we might stop for the night, and we started again. Just at dark we came to a turnpike road leading up the mountain. A little further on we came to a house which we took to be that of the Unionist to whom we had been directed. On entering we found our mistake. We had missed the road somehow, and were in the house of a rank secessionist named P——. We asked for something to eat, but was told we could get no supper there. Not wishing to press the acquaintance we left; but first received some directions from him about the road.

We continued our wearisome march, tired and hungry, and after going about two miles, arrived at the top of the Blue Ridge. We crossed the Ridge, and going about a mile came in sight of a house which was some distance from the road. Henson and Porter insisted on going to the house to get something to eat. We could hear persons talking at the house, and I said I thought we had no business there, as things had rather a suspicious appearance to me, and something seemed to tell me that all was not right. But I reluctantly yielded to their wishes. As we came near the house, a large dog attacked us,



making a fierce noise and trying to bite us. The owner of the dog soon came out and drove him away. I asked if we could get some supper. He said that it was doubtful, as he had considerable company. I enquired who his company were. He said they were cattle drovers. On hearing this, I made a move to go; but just then three men stepped out of the house. As we were in rather close quarters, I did not think it prudent to attempt to get away. One of the men began to question us as follows:

“Where are you from?”

“South Carolina,” I replied.

“From the army?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Got any papers?”

“No, sir.”

“Consider yourselves our prisoners,” said he.

“Guess not,” I answered; but the sudden appearance of two or three revolvers gave us to understand that we had better surrender at once. One of them pushed open the door and ordered us to walk in.

## CHAPTER X.

Unhappy Feelings ; Our Captors ; A Relative of Mrs. Lincoln and Gov. Tod ; An old Flint-lock Rifle ; Conversation on the War ; Closely Watched ; On the Back Track ; " Playing off ; " A " Good Samaritan ; " Locked Out ; Re-escape ; On my Race Again.

ON entering the house we found six more rebel soldiers, making nine in all. Judge of our feelings, after three weeks of hard traveling and anxiety, to be thus unceremoniously gobbled up. All the bright visions of home and of happy meetings with dear friends suddenly vanished. The remembrance of the past and the prospect of the future almost sickened me. To think of going back to a loathsome prison, and there dragging out a miserable existence, was most disheartening, and I resolved to effect an escape, if I had to do it at the risk of life, for it was almost certain death to me to be taken back to prison.— Having formed this determination to escape, I silently invoked the assistance of Divine Providence to aid me in my endeavors.

As we took seats by the fire, one of the men, who seemed to be the leader of the gang, commenced asking us questions, such as what regiments we belonged to, etc.— I told him that I belonged to the 32d Ohio ; Porter said that he belonged to the 10th Ohio Cavalry ; and Henson, that he belonged to the 31st Ill. " Oh, I see how it is," said our questioner, " you are all Yankees,—you all have

the blue pants on,—how did you come here?" Thinking it best to tell him the truth, I told him who and what we were. He said he thought, when he first saw us, that we were some of the prisoners who had escaped from Florence, S. C., as he had heard that four hundred had made their escape. This was the first news I had received of the number that got away when we did. This man said that his name was Tod—that he was a relative of Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, and also of Gov. Tod, of Ohio. He said that he was a Government Contractor and Press Agent, and had been buying cattle through the mountains. But I had heard of him before—he was buying cattle from the rebel farmers, and stealing from the Unionists. He ordered supper for us, but I did not feel in a very pleasant mood for eating.

The man who lived at this house was named Coldiron, and he was a member of the Ash county home guards.—Tod asked him if he had a gun. He replied that he had, and produced an old flint-lock squirrel rifle. Had there been no more dangerous weapons about than that, I should have risked taking my departure immediately; but the presence of several revolvers made things look a little more warlike. Tod told Mr. C. that as they would have the cattle to attend to the next day, to go that night and hunt some of the home guards to assist in guarding us.—C. said that he thought he could find two or three, and forthwith started on his mission. I earnestly hoped that he might not find any one to help guard us.

While Coldiron was gone, we entered into conversation with Tod on the subject of the war. He asked what we were fighting for. I replied, "to preserve the Union, and for the restoration of law and order;" and then asked him what he was fighting for. He said, "I am fighting for thirty niggers that the Yankees stole from me." I told

him he was taking a poor plan to get them ; but he said if he did not get the "niggers" he would try and kill as many Yankees in place of them. We disputed warmly, but neither could convince the other. We needed the philosophy of the "Immortal J. N." to show us that we were "both right, and both wrong."

While this conversation was going on, I noticed that two of the rebels who were guarding us were desirous of calling our attention to the old flint-lock that they were guarding us with. One of them said,

"I'll bet this is a first rate gun."

"I'll bet so, too," said the other, "I wish I had it, how I would pick off the squirrels and turkeys with it." Then addressing me, said,

"Say, Yank, what kind of guns do you have in your country?"

"Pretty much all flint-locks!" said I, wishing to make him believe that I thought it a good gun.

"Do you'ns have any flint-locks in your army?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," said I, "a GREAT MANY; but as we could not get enough of them to supply the army, we were OBLIGED to take the cap-locks!"

I was now meditating an escape, and made a great many excuses to get outside of the house, hoping that when a guard went with me it would be the one with the old gun, and I would risk the good qualities of the old flint-lock. But instead of this I was always guarded out with revolvers.

The night wore away without any chance of escaping. Sometime in the after part of the night Mr. Coldiron returned, and announced that his efforts to obtain any home guards to assist in taking charge of us had been in vain.

“Well,” said Tod, “I shall myself have to help, while the other boys take care of the cattle.”

Morning came, and the rebels were all astir. Breakfast, which consisted of corn bread, potatoes and cabbage, was soon served. As soon as breakfast was finished we were told that all was ready for a start. Tod and Coldiron went before the cattle and guarded us, while the others drove the cattle, and in this way we started back on the road we had come the night before.

On we went down the mountain. The cattle every little while showed signs of a stampede which I tried to help along. We were doing our best in the way of “playing off.” Porter had taken a severe pain in his back, accompanied with headache, which gave reason for thinking that perhaps he was attacked with pneumonia or a fever. Henson was almost barefooted—nothing on his feet but rag moccasins, and he was very lame with sore feet. My complaints were sore feet and diarrhoea, causing me to stop often by the wayside, but we were closely watched by either Coldiron or Tod. Thus we kept on for about seven miles when we came to a house at the foot of the mountain. Here Tod ordered a halt to rest the cattle and prisoners. Mr. Coldiron inquired if they had any brandy at the house, saying he thought if the prisoners had some they could travel better. Thought I, “old fellow, if you don’t look sharp, I will show you before night that I can travel fast enough.” But the man had no brandy, as he had not yet got his apples distilled, (it being the custom, in that part of the country, for the farmers to get their apples distilled into brandy,) so we had to do without. By the time they were ready to start, Porter had grown so much worse, (apparently,) that it was almost impossible for him to travel at all. He complained very much of headache, and the woman of the house, “Good Samari-

tan" like, brought out some red peppers, ground and wet with vinegar, and bound them on his head, saying she thought he would soon be better. Nothing but the situation in which we were placed prevented me from laughing outright at the pains the woman was taking to ease Porter's pain. We had not gone far when, as I was walking by the side of Porter, he slyly slipped the bandage of peppers from his head and dropped it by the side of the road, saying, in an undertone, "D—n the peppers and the Southern Confederacy together."

When we reached the distance of some nine or ten miles from where we started in the morning we came to a man named Calloway, on the head-waters of the Yadkin river. He was a member of the home guards, so Tod left us there in charge of Coldiron and Calloway. It so happened that Calloway had no gun, so they concluded to take us across the hill, about half a mile, to a Lieutenant of the home guards, and give us into his care. By this time we had played the confidence game on our captors so effectually as to make them believe we would not run away if we had a chance. A walk of a few minutes brought us to the Lieutenant's. He had been away—but just returned, and while he was away his wife had locked the door and gone to some of her neighbor's. Fortunately for us, the Lieutenant's gun was in the house, and he could not get it until he would go to the neighbor's and get the key of the door. Bidding the two old men guard us until his return, he started off. The day was pretty warm and we sat down on the grass, under an apple tree, in front of the Lieutenant's door. I thought to myself that now was my chance to make an effort for freedom, for there were but two old men guarding us with an old flint-lock rifle, and when the Lieut. would return there would be three men and two guns to guard us. I rose up, left my hat

and cane lying under the tree, where Porter was moaning piteously, and speaking to one of the guards, said I had occasion to step to one side. "All right," said he, thinking, no doubt, that I was too lame and weak to attempt to get away. Stepping behind the stable, and taking advantage of the cover of the house and stable, I started off as hard as I could run; and it appeared to me as though the wind assisted me along. I had run but a short distance when I heard Coldiron calling out, "Halt, you d—d rascal, or I'll blow your brains out!" Turning my head and looking over my shoulders, I saw Coldiron, with his gun to his face, trying to shoot me. But he did not shoot, and I think there was no load in the gun, or else he could not get it to go off; or perhaps he thought if he shot at me the other two would make their escape.

As I ran I came to an orchard fence, which was about as high as my chin, and up-hill,—placing my hands on the fence, I went over it at a single bound, a feat I could not have performed under any other circumstances. I soon crossed the orchard, entered the woods, and made my way up the mountain's side. After I got some distance up the hill I stopped and looked back to see what had become of Henson and Porter in the muss, and saw them still lying under the apple tree where I had left them. But I had not long to rest. The Lieut. would soon be back, the neighbors aroused, and I would be hunted. The direction I had started was contrary to the one I wished to go. I, however, pushed on up the side of the mountain eastward, until the top of the peak was reached. Here I stopped to rest a moment and pick my direction. Invoking Divine assistance and guidance in making my escape, I again set forward on my race. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and having nothing to eat since morning, I felt quite hungry. Taking a circuit of six or

seven miles, I came to a path on a ridge which led me to the turnpike road we had come down that morning. As the turnpike was considerably traveled I deemed it prudent to lay by until night before I would resume my journey, and selected a spot where I could see the road and yet be hid from view. As I had left my hat when I escaped, I was now bareheaded. I, however, had a towel in my pocket which I had carried through the whole of the summer's campaign until I was captured, and then used it while in prison. This towel I tied on my head, making a pretty good substitute for a hat. Stretching myself out on the leaves, I was soon asleep, dreaming of home, and wife, and little ones. But what feelings of disappointment were mine on awaking to find myself surrounded by laurel bushes instead of the loving ones at home! It was night, and the moon was shining brightly, being near full moon.

I now ventured on the road, and went tripping along at a lively rate. I could not help but compare my gait with what it was when I passed down in the morning. I soon came in sight of the house of Jim P——, where we had stopped the evening before for something to eat but were refused. Thinking it best to not go past the house, and as there was a large bend in the road, I took across, thro' the fields and woods to avoid being seen by any one at P——'s. As I neared the top of the Blue Ridge I heard some one coming tramp, tramp, down the road. Stepping to one side of the road, in the shade of a tree, I could see, as he passed, that he carried a cartridge-box and gun, and I felt that had I a gun I could have killed him, as I took him to be the Lieutenant who lived at the house whence I escaped, and thought it quite probable that he had been up the mountain looking for me. When the sound of his footsteps died away around a turn in the road,



I stepped from my hiding place, and, with noiseless tread, moved hurriedly up the road. After reaching the top of the Ridge I was soon in sight of Coldiron's house, where I had been captured the night before ; but preferred doing without supper this evening, rather than go there for it, although I was suffering very much from hunger and fatigue. I was now at the fork of the road where we should have turned the night before. Leaving the main road I entered the forests and crags of the mountain. Onward I went as noiselessly almost as a cat, yet making very good time. The owls hooted, the wild-cat screamed, and occasionally the growl of a bear was heard in some lonely hollow, making my way anything but pleasant. But sweet liberty would crown my efforts at the end of my race. A wife and little ones were waiting anxiously and thinking the time long to hear from the missing husband and father. A mother was tearfully wondering what had become of her lost son. Brothers and sisters were waiting with impatience the return of the wanderer. As these thoughts filled my mind, I was nerved to renewed exertions to make my way through, having full confidence in God, that He would be my guardian and guide.

## CHAPTER XI.

Sour Apples ; Seeking Information ; Union Aid ; New River ; Attempt to Take a Horse ; Misfortunes ; Captured Again ; Confab with Guards ; Exciting Rumors ; An Old Rebel ; Extorting Information ; My Opinion of Rebels and Their Cause.

ABOUT midnight I came to an orchard by the side of the road. I climbed over the fence and searched for some apples, but in vain, and was about leaving the orchard in despair, when I happened to find some little, hard, sour apples under a tree in the corner of the fence. Filling my pockets I started along the road, eating as I went. Having had nothing to eat since early in the morning, my appetite was considerably sharpened by this time, and the apples, hard and sour as they were, proved very refreshing. I pressed forward as fast as possible through the mountains, occasionally passing the hut of some mountaineer. About three o'clock in the morning I became so much exhausted that my tired frame almost refused to move, and I found it necessary to seek some place where I could refresh myself with sleep. Leaving the road, and groping my way through the brush for some distance, I stopped, and, gathering some pine knots, built a fire, by the side of which I laid down and slept very sweetly until the break of day, when I awoke and pursued my journey.

I soon came to a house, but it being quite early, and seeing no one astir, I passed by without being noticed.—

About a mile further on I came in sight of another house by the roadside. Not wishing to expose myself, I made a flank movement and kept in the woods until I had passed the house. When I got past I heard some one chopping in the woods. Going cautiously up, I found it was a small boy chopping wood. This was just such a chap as I desired to see. I asked his name. He said it was Saunders. He also told me that his father belonged to the home guards and was away at a camp at Boone. I asked who lived in the next house, and he replied that it was a widow woman. Having got all the information I could from the boy, I started for the widow's, where I soon found that I was not welcome. On asking for something to eat I was told that she had eaten the last she had for breakfast. She spoke of her son being one of the magistrates of the county, and I knew that he must be a rebel, or otherwise he could not hold the office of magistrate. I concluded, however, to make myself known; and, on doing so, she seemed to express considerable sympathy for me, and said she would give me something to eat, if she had it; but as she had nothing, she would send me to a place where I could get plenty. She then directed me to D——'s, a man whom I shall always remember with gratitude. He sympathized with me very much, and congratulated me upon my success in escaping, but said he ran a great risk in assisting me. I gave him to understand the position that he and I stood to each other, and that he was bound to assist me. He then concealed me behind his smoke-house, and bid me wait there until he would send me some breakfast. In a few minutes his wife appeared with a pitcher of milk, some corn bread and sweet potatoes, which I ate with as good a relish as a hungry wolf would devour a lamb.

Mrs. D——, presented me with a hat which her hus-

band had worn out, but a poor hat was better than none, especially to a man in my situation. After I had eaten my breakfast, Mr. D—— directed me to a place in the woods, where I might enjoy a good sleep, without being disturbed, and also told me where I could find other Union men along the road through the mountains. Thanking him for his kindness, I went into the woods and was soon wrapped in a sound sleep, from which I did not awake until late in the afternoon. I then started in quest of Mr. B——'s house, where I met with a cordial reception and plenty of provisions. Receiving some directions concerning the road I wished to travel, and what houses to stop at, and what ones to shun, I started on my way again.

I was now within six miles of New River, which, I was told, I would have to wade if I did not meet with some conveyance; "but" said my informer, "you will come to a farm just this side of the river, where there are some horses belonging to Dave B——, a rebel, and as there is no one living on the farm, you can probably get one of the horses and cross more easily."

Just before sunset I reached the river and found four fine looking horses in the meadow close by. Across the meadow was an old house to which I went, and, entering, found an old saddle. Now, thought I, if I only had a bridle I would avail myself of a ride to Tennessee, as I was then in Watagua County, and within twenty-five miles of the line. Going up stairs, I found a pair of old bedsteads with cords on them; but, having no knife to cut the cord, with which to make a halter, I was forced to the necessity of gnawing it off with my teeth. I soon had a halter ready, and then sat down to await the coming of night, when I would catch one of the horses and depart. Night came at last, and when it was about dark enough, I took

the saddle on one arm and the halter on the other, and started out toward the horses; but I happened to look behind me and saw a man coming over the hill toward the meadow. Being thus caught, almost in the act of stealing a horse, I felt as though I should like to be somewhere else, for the time being, at least. Dropping the saddle and halter in a bunch of briars and brush, I walked leisurely across the meadow toward the river. When I arrived at the river, I was out of sight of the man, and, without stopping to examine the depth of the stream, I plunged into it—which proved to be only about knee deep—and was soon on the other side. When once across, I started on a brisk run, and kept it up for about a mile, for fear of being followed and caught. In my hurry, I lost the road by taking the wrong one when I came to a fork of the road. After traveling a few hours, and making a circuit of several miles, I finally came into the right road again. I had not gone far until I came to a house that I had been told was occupied by rebels. It being late at night, and no light to be seen about the house, I concluded they were all abed, and so passed by without any disturbance whatever. After I got past the house a short distance, I came to where three women were making sorghum molasses in kettles hung on a pole. As I came up to them, I stopped and commenced talking to them, but soon found there was no sympathy for me in that crowd, so bidding them good night I passed on. After getting a little way past them, I came to the edge of the woods into which the road ran, and as I was just entering the woods, I met two home guards, who were fully armed and equipped. Not observing them until it was too late to get away, I made no effort to avoid them. As I met them, one, whose name I afterward learned was Green, said,

“Which way, old fellow?”

“Going out west a little way,” I replied.

“How far?” said he.

“Trying to get to Tennessee,” I said.

“From the army, eh?”

“Yes, sir.”

“What regiment?”

“Thirty-second Ohio.”

“How came you here?”

“I was in prison in South Carolina and escaped, and am trying to get home,” I replied.

“Well,” said he, “if your tale is correct we would rather have missed you than met you; but it is a fortunate thing for you that we have met you, or you might have been killed by tory bushwhackers before you reached Tennessee.”

“Well, gentlemen,” said I, “if you are really sorry, as you say, that you have met me, if you will just step to one side I will pass on and not trouble you further.”

“No,” he replied, “as we have met you we are obliged to take you back, or do what we have never yet done, i. e., swallow our own words. We are sworn to obey the laws of the Confederacy, and these make it obligatory on us to take up all such men as you that come in our way.

He then said that I must go back to the house I had just passed, and as we turned to go, he asked me if I had any pilot to help me along. “Yes,” I replied, “the best in the world.” “Who?” he asked. “God is my guide,” said I. “Well, he has brought you into a bad scrape to-night, sure,” said he. “Very well,” I said, “I will not complain. If my cause is just He will yet deliver me; and if I am wrong I deserve to be in prison for my wickedness.”

We had by this time reached the house and were soon admitted. When we became seated the guards entered

into conversation with the old man, and I soon learned that they were very much frightened in consequence of rumors that the Union men had burnt Taylorsville, in Tennessee, and were then marching into North Carolina. These men were on their way to Maj. Bingham's with the news when they met me.

The guards left me in charge of the old man and his son while they went to Major Bingham's. While they were gone, I had considerable conversation with the old man, whom I found to be very bigoted and ignorant. He had much to say about the war, and told me about the death of John Morgan. "There," said he, "was one of our best Generals betrayed by a mean, good-for-nothing, false woman." "Would to God there were many more such women," said I. These words seemed like a dagger to the old man, and he got very angry, but did not show any signs of violence. The subject turned from Morgan to Sherman in Georgia, and, said he, "Young man, you will soon hear some news that will be very unpleasant to you."

"Ah!" said he, "what is it?"

"You will hear of Gen. Sherman getting one of the WORSTEST whippings that any General has ever got."

"Why do you think so?" I enquired.

"I am in possession of news that would not be prudent for me to tell," he replied.

"Oh, yes," said I, "you have reference to the re-taking of Atlanta. I have been informed that Jeff. Davis and Gov. Vance have gone to Atlanta with TWO THOUSAND MEN to retake it!"

"Exactly so," he said, "that's it, that's it."

"Why," said I, "Jeff. Davis could'nt raise men enough in the whole Confederacy to retake Atlanta."

It was evident the old man did not like my style, but I

felt about as independent as he did. I was aware I had as many friends in that part of the country as he had, and if they knew of my situation, would release me before morning.

The guards soon returned and began questioning me very closely. They asked me where I had got something to eat, and who had given me directions. I answered that I did not generally ask people's names, and could not tell, besides, I did not see proper to betray my friends.— They said the Unionists had given them a great deal of trouble in harboring deserters and bushwhackers, and they wished to find them out. I told them to catch a deserter then, and get him to tell them who the Unionists were.— They said the Major's instructions were to make me tell, and if I would not tell by fair means, to use rough means; but said they did not want to use a rope on me as they had on others, and that I had better tell. To this I replied that as I was in their power they could do as they pleased with me, and if they did hang me it was nothing better than I could expect of the Southern Confederacy. They still insisted that I should tell; so, to avoid further trouble, I described, as well as I could, the residences of some noted rebels I had passed, thinking I might as well implicate rebels as Unionists, though it did "stretch the truth" a little in so doing. This apparently satisfied them on that point, and they then asked me to tell them what I really thought of them and their cause.

"Tell me," said I, "what you are fighting for."

"For our rights," they replied.

I said then it would not do for me to express my opinion of them while I was their prisoner, as they had already threatened to stretch my neck, and if I should tell them just what I thought of them and their cause they would certainly hang me. They answered that I should not be



disturbed, and they would guarantee me the right of speech, and whatever I might say would be taken in good part. This was just what I wanted—a guarantee of the freedom of speech, so that I could express my views. I then commenced by saying that God could not be a just being and allow them to gain their independence, and that if the Devil did not get every rebel, there was no use for a Devil—that his satanic majesty had better shut up shop and proclaim himself superceded by some of the Confederate leaders. And as they had said they were fighting for their “rights,” they would never get them until they would be hung as traitors. If nothing else would condemn their cause, the souls of the Union prisoners, who had starved to death in Southern prisons, would rise up in judgment against it, and cause every rebel to be damned to all eternity. “These,” said I, “are my views of you and your cause—make the most of them.” “Well, well,” said they, “you don’t have a very good opinion of we’uns,” and ended the conversation with a ruffianly, forced laugh. My language may appear harsh to the reader, but it was the only kind my captors were capable of comprehending.

## CHAPTER XII.

Rebel Camp; Jeff. Davis' Goslings; Unionists in Disguise; My Destination; Guards; Planning an Escape; Boone; More Yankee Prisoners; Guarding Us at Night; Conversation with Guard; Breakfast Ready; Prepared for an Emergency; Escaping Again.

As the night was fast wearing away I became very sleepy, and lay down on the floor for a nap. When I awoke, breakfast was ready; and, after breakfast, my captors started off with me, I knew not whither.

We traveled some ten or twelve miles, over mountain, hills and valleys, and came to a camp on Shoal Creek.— Here were encamped, in rude log huts, about two hundred home guards. As we entered the camp, the news soon spread that some guards had brought in a live Yankee, which caused quite a sensation. They flocked around me and gazed at me as though I was some wild animal; but, on looking around, I discovered that I had more friends in that camp than the men had who took me there. Here I found Union men doing duty as home guards to keep from being conscripted and sent to the front, but they had to be very cautious how they made themselves known to me. Some of the guards began to ask me a great many questions, some of which were very insulting, but I always tried to make the answer correspond with the question. One little scamp, who sported more brass than brains, said,

“What do you'ns want to free our niggers for?—s'pose you all want our nigger wenches for wives?”

“Oh, no,” said I, “we don't want to rob you Southern bloods of your bedfellows—we only want your negro men to fight you with.”

At this remark he seemed very much insulted, and would have done violence to me if he could, but the bursts of laughter from the bystanders put an end to the conversation. Pretty soon another boy about sixteen came up to me and said,

“Helloah, Yank, when's Old Abe gwine to make another call for geese?”

“Just as soon as Jeff. Davis makes another call for goslings.”

“Say, Jim, is supper ready,” he cried out, as he turned away.

I was turned over by my captors to Captain Miller, the commander of the camp, and was put into one of the cabins. Two men were detailed to guard me. They took a position on either side of the door outside until dark when they came inside the cabin. About dark, a young man of fine appearance came into the cabin with some corn bread and boiled beef, which he said he had prepared for me; adding that he had been a prisoner once himself. I asked him where. He said at Camp Chase, Ohio, and that if he was there now he would never be seen in North Carolina again. Not being allowed to talk much with me, he bade me good night and went out. Having eaten my pone and beef, I made a nest in the straw in my cabin and was soon sound asleep.

This camp was called Camp Mast, and was situated on the head-waters of Shoal creek, in Watagua county, N. C. The camp had but one street and a row of cabins on either side. There were but fifteen cabins in all,—twelve of

which were for the privates, one for officers, and two for horses. The uniforms of the home guards were of as many different colors and cuts as could almost be imagined; but the prominent color was butternut-brown.— There was hardly a regulation uniform to be seen in the whole battalion. Their arms were of about as many different styles as there were colors and cuts of their coats. Everything in the shape of a gun, from a shot-gun to a Spencer rifle, were represented here. The bearers of arms were of all ages and conditions of men, from the stripling boy of sixteen, to the hoary-headed man of sixty.

My stay at this place was only one night. In the morning I was ordered to Camp Vance, which I learned was at Morgantown, on the railroad, and distant about fifty miles; and thence I would be taken to Salisbury. Two guards were detailed to escort me. When I was brought out to start, I was almost overjoyed to find that one of the guards was a Union man and a true friend of mine. I immediately resolved to not go to Camp Vance, and only awaited an opportunity to speak with the guard and plan my escape.

After traveling about two miles with the guards, H——, the secessionist, stopped at a house to buy some butter, which afforded me an opportunity of speaking to C——, the Unionist, as we were now alone. I commenced on the subject of making my escape, and reminded him of the secret relation we stood to each other. He said we would walk on and thereby have a longer time to talk. My design was to escape that night, and I asked, or rather demanded his assistance in carrying out my plan. He said he would gladly do anything he could toward effecting my release, without exposing himself. I then told him that sometime in the night I would make an excuse to go out, and have him go out with me, as guard, and after we were

out of the house, I would run off. He was then to cry out "Halt!" and shoot off his gun, but to not shoot me. To all this he readily assented, and I was about to give him my hand, as a token of brotherly Union, when the other guard made his appearance around a turn in the road behind us. C—— told me that H—— was a notorious rebel bushwhacker and lived in Tennessee, and had been engaged in bushwhacking the Union men of that State until he was notified to leave, when he went over to North Carolina and joined the home guards, as he was too great a coward to go into the regular service.

H—— now rejoined us, and our conversation turned to other subjects. He appeared to be in a great hurry; but C—— said that, owing to a recent attack of rheumatism, he could not travel fast, and, as he was working for Jeff. Davis, he should not be in any hurry. We often stopped to gather chestnuts, which were quite plenty in the mountains. About eight miles from Camp Mast, we came to the town of Boone, the county seat of Watagua county. This town was almost entirely deserted—not more than half a dozen houses were occupied in the whole town.—Some of the buildings had the appearance of having once been used for stores. The Court House showed that the effects of the war had reached that mountain village. A whole light of glass could scarcely be found in the windows. I was told that the village had once been inhabited by Union-loving people, who, not liking the Jeff. Davis rule, had stampeded for Tennessee.

After we had left the town about a mile, we met two home guards, having with them two prisoners. One was dressed in the Federal uniform; the other in rebel garb. When we met them we were opposite a house by the side of the road, and, as the guards stopped to exchange salutations, a Lieutenant of the guards came out of the house

and began to question us. He asked me who I was. I replied that I was a full-blooded Yankee, a member of the 32d Ohio regiment,—was captured at Atlanta, and escaped at Florence, S. C. Being satisfied with my answer, he turned to the others. The one in blue clothes said that he and his companion belonged to the Fourteenth Battalion, North Carolina State Guards, that his name was Nicholas Jestes, his companion's name Gregg Jestes, and that they were brothers. The battalion, he said, had been disbanded for two weeks, when they were to report for duty again at Ashville.

“Where did you get that suit of Yankee clothes?” queried the Lieutenant.

“Got them by hard fighting, like many another one gets them,” he replied.

The guards who had the two Jestes in charge said they could go no further; but the Lieut. told them to go with us until we came to a certain cross roads, where he would meet them with some other guards to take their place.—The whole party—three prisoners and four guards—now started off together. We reached the cross roads pretty soon and found the Lieutenant waiting for us. He said he could not get the guards that he had been after, as they had gone to camp that morning; and that H—— and C—— would have to take charge of all three prisoners.—Then he took H—— to one side and I overheard him say that it would be necessary to be careful or the prisoners would get away.

The day was wearing away and our march was kept up, though quite leisurely. The only words I could get from the Jestes that day, were, as we stopped a moment to wait on one of the guards, that they were betrayed the night previous. “How long have you been on the tramp?” I asked. “Two months,” said the oldest. This was all

I had an opportunity of learning from them that day.—Sometime after dark we stopped at the house of a man by the name of Robins, who said he was a member of the home guards. The guards told him they wished to obtain lodging for the night. Supper was prepared for us, after which we retired. One of my fellow-prisoners carried a coverlet with him, which served to cover all three of us. We were soon all sound asleep, or pretended to be. I was snoring, but had an ear open to what was being said.—H—— said that he had been up all night the night before, and that Mr. Robins would have to help C—— guard us. C—— said he did not think it necessary for more than one to stay up at a time, and thought he could guard us himself. Robins had three girls that were women grown. One of them said, “I’ll help guard the prisoners.”—“Very well,” said the old man, and all went to bed, except C——, and the young lady. They chatted, laughed, and sang love songs until midnight, when the girl getting sleepy, went to bed, not without, however, telling C—— to “not let them fellers git away.”

Everything was working to suit me. After waiting until I thought the girl was asleep, I got up, put on my shoes, and told C—— I wished to go out; so picking up his gun, which stood by the chimney, he went out with me. When we got fairly out of the house, I said, “You go that way,” pointing to the right, “and I will go this way, and when I get started, fire off your gun.” “No,” he said, “it will not do, for I am strongly suspected already. H—— saw me talking privately with the other prisoners to-day, and if I let you go, I shall be punished. Those fellows are all right, and you just wait till to-morrow, and I will give you all a chance to get away.” We then made our arrangements for our escape the next day. I was to walk alongside of H——, C—— was to walk

between the other two prisoners, and when we would come to some place in the mountains, where the bank was very steep below the road, I was to throw H—— over the bank, while the other two were to disarm C——, and we would then all strike out for ourselves. “Now,” said C——, “if you make the attempt to throw H—— over, you must give him a H—L OF A HOOVE.” Having mutually agreed upon this plan, we returned into the house, and I laid down by the side of Nicholas Jestes. Wishing him to have an understanding of the matter, I whispered to him that C—— wanted to talk with him. He then got up, and taking a seat by the fire, commenced a conversation with C——. As my plans were all laid, I soon dropped asleep, and did not wake until after daylight.

Quite early in the morning we were told to get up and prepare for breakfast. We all went out to a brook close by the house and washed ourselves, then went back into the house. I was prepared for any emergency. The evening before I had stuffed my old hat into my coat pocket, and I now thought I would mend my old shoes, which had nearly given out. Taking one off, I commenced working with it. H—— laid his gun on the bed and stepped out of the house. Robins was out in the wood-pile, chopping wood. C—— had been guarding us all night and was, of course, very sleepy. He sat moodily by the fire, with his gun leaning loosely against his shoulder. Seeing the opportunity, I gave Nick a pluck, and pointed to the gun on the bed. As he made a move for it, I snatched the gun from C——. Nick picked up the one on the bed and we ran out of the house, forgetting all about the breakfast that was smoking on the table. As we ran out of the house, C—— ran out through the kitchen, exclaiming, “Look! look what these fellows are about!” Robins, who was chopping wood, commenced to yell out “Halt,



there ! halt !” I did halt, and, bringing my gun to my face, was about to fire at him, when he and H—— sprang behind the corner of the house.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Fast Racing ; Resting ; Nick's Story ; Hard Traveling ; Subsisting on Chestnuts ; Disagreeable Situation ; In Luck ; Corn, Pumpkins and Apples ; Our Pass ; Playing 'Home Guard ;' Strategy ; Our Suspicions ; In the Woods Again.

WE now jumped over the fence into the laurel brush and were soon out of sight. I, with my hat in my pocket, a shoe in one hand, and the gun in the other, was not in a very good condition for running through the woods ; but I made good speed, and Nick and Gregg kept close at my heels. In our hurry, we had forgotten the cartridge boxes, and therefore had no ammunition, except what was in the guns. After running about a mile, we stopped to rest and listen if we were followed. I then put on my shoe and hat. My foot was bleeding very profusely, from a cut I received while running through the woods, but which I had not noticed until now.

It was a beautiful morning, about the 18th of October, and the leaves in the woods being dry, and air still, we could hear any noise in the woods a considerable distance. As we sat resting on a log we could distinctly hear footsteps of some one in the woods approaching us ; so we started in an easterly direction, and wishing to go westward, we changed our course from east to north, and finally to the west, and were not molested further by the noise we had heard.

We soon crossed the road which we had traveled the

night before ; and for fear of an alarm being given, and that search might be made for us, we traveled as fast and cautiously as we could, avoiding everything that looked like a habitation ; nor would we allow ourselves to follow the paths and trails that came in our way, but took a direct course westward, over peaks and rocks, and across hollows and streams. After we had traveled several miles we concluded we had better stop awhile and rest ourselves. . Gathering a quantity of chestnuts, of which there were a great many, we sat down to eat them, and Nick gave me the following story, relative to himself.

He had been conscripted into the rebel army, and put in the Fourteenth Battalion, North Carolina State Guards ; but he would not fight against his principles, and therefore deserted and went home to Madison County, N. C.— After remaining at home for some time, hiding and scouting in the mountains, he concluded to go through the lines to Knoxville, East Tennessee. Accordingly, he went, and enlisted in the Federal service, in the Third North Carolina Regiment. After uniting himself with this regiment, he was put on detached duty and sent back to N. C., to recruit men for the regiment. He succeeded very well, enlisting eighteen men in a few days, and was about starting back for the Union lines, with his recruits, when they were surprised one day and all taken prisoners, including his brother, who was one of the recruits. They were taken to Ashville and lodged in jail. This was in May, 1864. After keeping them in jail for a few days, they were taken to Camp Vance, at Morgantown. Here they were kept for about a month, and were then taken to Richmond, Va., at which place Nick was tried by a military commission for desertion, and also for recruiting inside of the Confederate lines for the Federal army. The commission found him guilty of the charges, and he was

sentenced to be shot; but before the sentence was carried into execution, Nick and fourteen of his recruits made their escape. After getting out of prison, they divided into three squads. The squad that Nick was in, numbered five persons. They had been traveling for two months, and living as best they could, when, on the night previous to my meeting with them, they were being piloted by a pretended friend, until they came to a certain road, when their guide turned back, saying they could easily find the road now. On going about one hundred yards further, they were suddenly surrounded by Home Guards, and Nick and his brother taken prisoners, by being knocked down with guns, after the loads had been fired at them.— The other three made their escape. On finishing his story, he asked me what I thought of a North Carolina Federal. “Very well,” I answered. “I think you will make a Union soldier yet.”

We now resumed our race, keeping a little southwest.— Often we were so hemmed in by mountain cliffs that it seemed impossible to proceed, and we were almost ready to give up in despair. We had frequently to assist each other in getting down the rocks and mountain sides, and would climb the peaks by the aid of the laurel and ivy bushes, that grew on their sides. Thus the day passed away, without our having anything to eat, except chestnuts; but we concluded, that what would fatten rebel hogs, would keep Yankee soldiers alive. We gathered a considerable quantity of chestnuts, and selecting a secluded spot where we would not likely be observed, we made preparations for building a fire. We had but two matches with us, and those I had carried from South Carolina. If they should fail to strike fire, we stood a good chance of spending a cold night, for the air was quite frosty, and Gregg, in taking his hasty leave, had forgotten his cover-

let. How careful were we then, with our matches, and to our joy, they proved true! We soon had a good fire, roasted and ate our chestnuts, and getting some dry leaves for a bed, laid down before the fire, and were, ere long, enjoying a sound sleep and pleasant dreams.

When daylight came, we again started on our journey, stopping occasionally to gather chestnuts. We sometimes had to pass through laurel bushes so thick, that we could not walk erect, but had to frequently get down on our hands and knees, and crawl through the bushes, for thirty or forty rods, when it would grow thinner, and we could straighten up and get over the ground somewhat faster.— At other times, we would encounter what is termed, “fire-scalds,” where the timber is all burnt off, and grown up with osage thorns, briars, locusts, etc. To go through such places, was very trying on one’s patience. When we would come out, it would be with bleeding hands and faces, and the clothes almost torn off us. But onward we pushed, for if we stopped in the mountains, death was our almost certain doom. Without the means of making a fire, and bears and other wild beasts roaming through the mountains, made our situation very disagreeable to contemplate. If we left the woods, and took to the roads, we were almost sure of being recaptured. We supposed that, at the rate we were traveling, we were going about seven or eight miles a day.

We came to a small hut in the mountains, with a clearing of about two acres around it, and sat down to watch if any persons were to be seen about it. Not seeing any one, we went in and found it uninhabited. I found on a shelf a piece of punk, or touch-wood. This was of great value to us, as we could now strike fire in the old fashioned way, with flint and steel. One of my companions had a large jack-knife, and we could find plenty of flints in the

mountain. We also got, in the old house, some thread, and a piece of wire, out of which, we made a needle, by bending one end around to hold the thread, and with this simply constructed sewing machine, managed to sew the rents in our clothes.

The evening of the second day of our escape came. We had not yet procured anything to eat except chestnuts, and our gums became very sore. The third day was passed much the same as the first and second, but, toward evening, we had the good fortune to find a small patch of corn and pumpkins, in a little valley. No house was to be seen. One of us watched, while the other two crossed the fence. One gathered an armful of corn, and the other took a large pumpkin. We now made off to find some secure place to make a fire and cook our corn and pumpkin. While looking for a place, we discovered the ruins of an old house, around which were some apple trees, heavily laden with fruit. Surely, thought I, a kind Providence has not forgotten us. As the children of Israel were fed and guided through the wilderness, we felt that the same kind hand was aiding us. We gathered some apples and selecting a convenient place, we soon had a large, cheerful fire. We now parched our corn, and roasted our pumpkin and apples, and while we were partaking of our rich repast, with thankful hearts, we felt almost as merry as though we were sitting around our own fire-sides at home.

After eating heartily, we lay down to sleep, not forgetting to place our guns under our heads. These guns, that we had taken from the guards, were of the Austrin and Enfield patterns. The next morning we roasted some more of our pumpkin, and some apples, ate our breakfast, and started on our race much refreshed and with renewed hopes. We consulted as to the propriety of find-

ing a road, and traveling on it, as we were so heartily tired of traveling through the mountains without a road, and over places almost impassable, where, it seemed evident, no human had ever been before. Nick had some white paper, I had a pencil, and a thought struck me that I would write a pass, and we would play Home Guard, while Gregg would act the part of prisoner; and we would try what effect it would have on the citizens. Here is a copy of the pass:

“Head Quarters, 14th Battalion, N. C. Guards. }  
 “Ashville, N. C., Oct. 1st, 1864. }

“The bearers of this, James Robins and Edward Young, are hereby authorized to go to Wilkes Co., N. C., in search of William Waddens, and Albert Rice, who deserted their commands in August last. To return by 25th inst.

George Adams, Captain,  
 Co. E, 14th Batt., N. C. G.

Approved,  
 J. L. Henry,  
 Col. Commanding Batt.”

Being thus provided with the necessary papers, we were prepared to try the confidence game on the citizens. We soon found a road, and with our prisoner between Nick and myself, we marched along in true military style.— Presently a house appeared in view, and a few minute’s walk brought us to the door. Its occupants were an old man and his wife. We told them we were home guards on the hunt of deserters, and said we would like to have something to eat. After obtaining some refreshments, we set out again. The old man told us there were some Union bushwhackers in the country, and that the home guards were out after them, but he could give us no information of the whereabouts of either.

A little before dark, we came in sight of a house, and

thought we had better find out, if possible, where the home guards were. To do this without much risk, we had to use some strategy to get the man of the house out some distance, so that we might talk with him. Getting into the edge of the woods, and keeping our guns hid, we slipped along until we were discovered, and then disappeared in the woods. Pretty soon, we saw a man running toward us through the woods. We hid until he came close to us, when we stepped out, and, pointing our guns at him, bade him halt. This unexpected command, and the presence of two guns pointing toward his breast, frightened him so terribly, that it was with difficulty he could speak. He, however, stammered out, "I I sur-r-render," and, taking his hat from his head, threw it on the ground, in token of submission. We then asked him his name. "Benton Coffee," he gasped. We next accused him of being a bushwhacker, which he promptly denied. I then produced my pass, and told him we were home guards, and wanted to go to Ashville, and had to be there with our prisoner by the 25th; and as we had but two days more, we would be compelled to travel after night, and wanted him to direct us on a road we could travel without being interrupted by either bushwhackers or home guards. He said he supposed our pass all right, though he could not read it, as he was no scholar, and that he was a home guard himself, and would put us on a road that we could travel without being disturbed. After giving us minute directions in reference to the road, he invited us to come to his house and get supper. We thanked him for his kindness, but said we were not hungry, and bidding him good evening, we started.

When we had gone about a mile on the road, he directed us, we all three suddenly stopped, as though we had been ordered to halt. We looked at each other for a mo-



ment when Nick said, "we have gone far enough on this road." "So say I," I answered. We both were impressed with the belief that if we continued on the road we would be captured before an hour, but Gregg thought not—he was tired of the hills and brush. "Didn't you see the white of that fellow's eyes?" said Nick,—“he mistrusted who we were, or at least suspected us of being bushwhackers, and sent us down here to get picked up, and I shan't go any further on this road,” said he, and suiting the action to the word, he stepped below the road saying, “come on, boys,” and led the way through the woods, down the mountain, for about a mile. On turning a point of the hill we came into a cove where we were completely hid from view, from the surrounding country. “Here,” said Nick, “I'll roost to-night.”

## CHAPTER XIV.

Camping in a Cove; An Incredulous Widow; A "Fussy" Old Man; A Supper "As is a Supper;" Frightful Dreams; Falling in with Deserters and Conscripts; Wayside Incidents; Limestone Cove; Sensation Rumors; Comfortable Quarters; Raiding Expedition.

It was quite dark when we arrived at the cove, and had been so dark during our tramp through the woods, since leaving the road, that we had to find our way more by feeling than by sight.

Nick brought out his flint and steel, and a fire was soon crackling and sparkling quite lively, illuminating the fir and pine trees very beautifully, by the side of which fire we spent the night rather pleasantly.

With the morning sun, we arose and renewed our race for liberty, though suffering considerably from hunger, having had nothing to eat but chestnuts and sour grapes since noon the day before. We soon came to an old widow's, who, believing us to be home guards, looked on us scornfully. Let her principles be what they may, we concluded to tell her a true story; but it was pretty hard now to make her believe that we were really what we represented ourselves to be. She accused us of wanting to find out where her son was, and said "you're jist a lettin' on you're Union men." We asked her if she knew where the home guards were. "Laws, yes," she said, "there's lots on 'em down here on John's river, a watch-

in' for all folks as cross the Ridge on the Flat Top road." We looked at each other and could not help congratulating ourselves on our lucky escape from them, for that was the road we had been directed to take.

The old lady said that she had no bread or meal, but had sent to the mill that morning. After getting her convinced that we were not home guards hunting her son, she brought out a loaf of bread for us, saying that her daughter-in-law had left it for James. She then gave us directions to her brother, T. W——, who, she said, would give us something to eat and find a place for us to sleep at night. It was nearly night when we reached Mr. W——'s house. His son had just come in from a bear hunt, bearing a fine, fat, yearling bear. As we had not tasted any meat for several days, the sight of the young bear, as it hung, dressed, on a tree in the yard, almost made our mouths water. The old man was a "fussy," clever old fellow. He received us cordially, and bid us take seats while he would run down to the mill (a few rods off,) and grind some corn, "for," said he, "you must be hungry," Then turning to his family, said, "Jim go down to the tater patch and dig a basket of taters, and, mamma, you milk the cows and git supper, and we'll soon have a supper, as is a supper."

In due time supper was ready. It consisted of bear meat, sweet potatoes, corn bread, and milk. We ate so much that I really felt ashamed of myself and companions. After supper was over, the old man told us we might sleep in the house if we wished; but if we were afraid to do so, he would take us to the barn. We preferred going to the barn, and were accordingly conducted there by the old man. The next morning I asked Nick how he had slept. "Could'nt sleep at all, for dreaming of big black dogs," said he. He had eaten a little too much bear meat.

It was at this place that the Jestes' received the first news of their three comrades who had escaped when they were captured. They had been to Mr. W——'s, and had gone to Mrs. P——'s, whither we were directed to go.— As we were going to Mrs. P——'s we met her going to mill. She told us that the boys whom we sought had been there but had gone again, though she thought we would find them at Mrs. C——'s, as there were several Unionists there getting ready to go to Tennessee. We then turned our course toward Mrs. C——'s, which place we found, after considerable rambling through the brush and hills; and when we arrived, we found several deserters and conscripts, and one escaped prisoner, named Davidson, who had escaped from Florence the day before I did. These men purposed starting for Tennessee the next morning, but as their road lay in a different direction from the one the Jestes wished to travel, and wishing to get to Tennessee as soon as possible, I parted company with Nick and Gregg, concluding to accompany my new made acquaintances.

Mrs. C——'s husband had gone to Tennessee to join the Union army; and all true Union men were welcome to her humble cottage. The next morning we started quite early for Crab Orchard, Tennessee, where William Campbell, a United States recruiting officer, was waiting for us. The distance was about fifteen miles, and my shoes having given out, it was with difficulty that I could keep up with the company. I had nothing on my feet but rag moccasins, and they were now so nearly worn out that I was soon obliged to fall in the rear and travel alone. About three o'clock in the afternoon, I reached the house of Mr. B——, the place of rendezvous of Campbell and his recruits. Mr. B—— provided me with a pair of shoes, but my feet being so very sore, and the shoes too large

for me, it was with difficulty I could travel at all. As Mr. B—— was overrun with company, I accepted an invitation to go and stay with Mr. Wm. P—— that night. It was no trouble to find friends now, that I was in Tennessee, for nearly all the citizens were true Union men.

The next morning the crowd assembled for a march to Limestone Cove, a distance of eighteen miles. We numbered fifteen in all, and had several guns and revolvers, so that in case we should meet any rebel cavalry we could show some resistance. Those of us who were armed were put before to act as an advance guard. This arrangement suited me very well, as I stood a better chance of getting provisions from the houses, before the main body would come up. A little while after dark we reached Limestone Cove, and began to scatter through the neighborhood for supper and lodgings. I, with two others, stopped at the house of Mr. M. B——, and got supper; but as it was close to the road, we did not like to stay there; so we were directed to another place where we obtained lodging. Our host informed us that he thought we had better not sleep in the house, as the rebels had frequently visited him in the middle of the night; but I told him I would risk it, and laid down before the fire for a night's rest.— He, however, would not venture to stay in his house, but took some blankets, and, in company with a neighbor, went out to the woods to spend the night.

As we were making arrangements, the next morning, for pushing ahead, the news came that forty rebel cavalry were in Greasy Cove, twelve miles below, and were coming up to Limestone Cove. This produced a great sensation. Those of our party who had gone further down, were coming back, badly frightened. I was now at the house of Mr. M——, who was apparently as much frightened as any one. Some now commenced making arrange-

ments for a retreat to Crab Orchard, but this was a change in the programme that I could not endorse. I had traveled too far, and endured too many hardships, to think of going back when I was now within Fifty miles of the Federal lines. I was eating breakfast at M——'s when word was sent me that all were going back. "I can't help it," said I, "I must finish my breakfast." Presently Davidson came in and asked me if I would go back. I told him I would not, so long as there was any corn in Limestone Cove to be had for a gun,—that, rather than go back, I would trade my gun for corn, then go in the mountains and live on corn and chestnuts. He then said that he would stay with me. We enquired where we could stop for a few days, and was told that a Mr. B——, who lived about half a mile from the road, and had an unoccupied and unfrequented house on the farthest side of his place, would probably keep us. Thither we went. It had been snowing all that morning and was by this time two or three inches deep, so if the rebels had come they would have had but little difficulty in finding us. We made our case known to Mr. B—— and proposed to help him do his work if he would board us and find some place for us to stay at night, until the way would be clear for us to go through to Bull's Gap, the place where the Federal forces were stationed. He readily accepted our proposal, and we were conducted to a house on the north end of his farm, into which, as he said, he had "toted a lot of corn." We husked the corn, and used the husks for a bed. We had a fire built in the house, and, with the addition of some blankets which Mr. B—— furnished us, made our quarters very comfortable.

We remained at this place several days, helping Mr. B—— husk his corn, and doing various little turns, when one day we were visited by three Union soldiers, who had

come from Greasy Cove, and said it was impossible for us to get through for some time. Their names were Champion and Case, of the 5th Ind. Cavalry, and had been to North Carolina on special service—their comrade's name was Michaels, and he belonged to the 3d N. C. (Federal) regiment. They were making up a crowd to go back to North Carolina on a raid. This suited us very well. There was a Lieutenant named H——, (a brother of the rebel I had helped to disarm,) who was in the neighborhood with a lot of recruits, several of whom were pretty well armed. Case proposed raising a party and, uniting, place the expedition under Lieut. H——'s command. The arrangements were accordingly made, and the expedition, numbering forty, were soon on their way to North Carolina.

Although our number was quite large yet, only fifteen of us had guns—five were Spencer rifles, the rest Kentucky, Austin, and Enfield, and squirrel rifles and shot-guns. The most of our number were recruits who preferred going to staying; and a number of citizens, without arms, went along, as they said, "for the fun of it."

## CHAPTER XV.

Raiding ; Two of Our Men Captured ; A Skirmish ; The Men Released ; Helping Ourselves ; Return to Limestone Cove ; A Clever Family ; Our Number Increased ; Greasy Cove ; A Threatening Aspect ; A "Galvanized Unionist ;" The Federal Lines Reached ; Our Appearance ; At the End of My Race ; Closing Remarks.

Our expedition started. Two days of uninterrupted marching found us in North Carolina. We made our way toward John's river--there being some pretty good stock there that would be of value to us. One day while we were traveling in the vicinity of John's river, some of our men who were without arms straggled away from the main body, and two of them were captured by home guards. As soon as the others returned with the news of their comrades' capture, we resolved to release them, if it lay in our power to do so. The armed portion of us set out immediately, and about midnight we came in sight of the rebels' camp fires. Creeping as close to them as we could without being discovered, we lay down in the laurel bushes until morning. When daylight came we ascertained their number to be about sixty. Just as the sun was rising, Lieut. H--- gave the order to fire on them. The whole fifteen of us fired at once, and kept it up for five hours,—the rebels all the while doing their best. Between eleven and twelve o'clock the rebels gave way, leaving three of their dead on the field. We afterward



learned that they had taken three other dead away with them. Of our number, not one was hurt. After the skirmish was over, the two prisoners who had been captured the previous day came to us,—they having escaped during the fight. From the citizens we learned that the home guards were commanded by Major Bingham, of whom I have before spoken. He said that the Yankees outnumbered him, and that he had to fight all of Col. Kirk's regiment! In reality, he had been fighting but fifteen men.

We now went to an old farmer and took from him three good mules; then to another, and killed some of his best hogs, with which we supplied ourselves with rations; then to a third, and took what clothing we could find that would be of use to us. Some got pantaloons, some coats, and others took bed-quilts. Having accomplished the object of our raid, we turned our steps once more to Tennessee.

A march of two days brought us again to Limestone Cove, near the Unaka mountain; but on arriving at the Cove, we learned that the way was not yet clear to get to the Union lines; so we scattered among the citizens. I took up my abode for the time being with Mr. M---n, who had emigrated from Canada to East Tennessee about eight years previous. This family was looked upon as one of the first class, which was perhaps owing to their refined manners and education, for they were highly educated, in comparison with their mountain neighbors, who were rather rude and ignorant. The family consisted of six persons:--The old gentleman and lady, Lizzie, David, and William and his wife. Neither William nor David had enjoyed the comfort of a night's sleep in the house for two years. They had to lay out in the mountains, in caves made for the purpose, and be ever on the watch for rebel cavalry; for they knew not what hour the rebels

might dash in upon them and capture and kill them, as was their custom with the leading Union men. While one worked, another had to stand picket for him. I spent my time more pleasantly at this place than at any other while in the South ; but my stay here was of short duration.— The news came that the Yankees had come up the railroad as far as Jonesboro', and the rebels having fallen back toward Virginia, the way was clear for us to get through. Giving my gun to David M——. to bushwhack rebels with, and bidding the family a hearty farewell, I made another start for the Union lines.

This place where I was at was on Indian creek, in Carter county, E. T. I had not gone far until I fell in with others who were going through the lines, so that by night the number was forty-two,---five of whom were escaped prisoners. Three of us had escaped from Florence, S. C.; the other two, from Salisbury, N. C. I would like to give the names of these escaped prisoners, but have forgotten all, except Albert Davidson, of the 8th Ind. Cavalry, and Holmes, of the 1st U. S. Sharpshooters, of New York.

When night came we found ourselves in the neighborhood called Greasy Cove, on Chucky river. The crowd, who were North Carolinians, began making preparations for camping for the night ; but as I had very poor health, and no blankets, I thought I would find lodging in some house. Accordingly, Holmes and I started off in search of something more inviting than laurel brush. We had not long to hunt, as we soon found the house of Mr. B——, a firm Union man,---one who had suffered much for the sake of his country, and was ready to suffer more. On arriving at this house, we found that some of our company had preceded us. Champion, Case and Davidson were there with the three captured mules, and were making themselves quite at home. Mr. B—— thought it

hardly safe to stay in the house, but would let us be our own judges in that matter. As we had three Spencer's and two revolvers we told him that we would risk it. So saying, we made ourselves as comfortable as possible.

About eight o'clock we were aroused by some persons calling at the gate. On going to the door, I discovered a party of men—about a dozen—with guns. They told us to come out, as they wanted to see us. I stepped back into the house and said, "Here's work for us, boys, get your guns." With our guns and revolvers in our hands, we stepped outside the door and demanded of them what they wanted with us. "Come out, come out," they answered, "if you are Yankees, you are all right, but if you are rebs we have a settlement to make with you." From their style of talking, we thought they were persons trying to capture us. We then asked them what command they belonged to; but they only answered by asking to what command we belonged. I then went up to the fence where they were standing, and commenced examining their clothing and accoutrements. I found they were fully equipped with the U. S. outfit, and asked them if they were Yankee soldiers. They replied that they were, and belonged to the 3d N. C. regiment. We then made ourselves known, and right glad were we to meet with this squad of Uncle Sam's boys.

Holmes and I had been seen going there in the evening, and as we had on gray clothes we were taken for rebel soldiers; and this squad of Federal soldiers being in the neighborhood, and being apprised of our whereabouts, had started in pursuit of us. They were North Carolinians on their way back to their homes to see their families, and were going prepared to clean out some of the rebels in their neighborhood.

The next morning we started quite early; but as the

crowd of Campbell and Johnson had gone ahead of us, we wisely concluded that our party of five was large enough. With three mules, we could ride by turns, and so get along very well. We traveled all day, down the Chucky river, and stopped at night with a man who said he was a rebel at the beginning of the war, but seeing the error of his way, had turned in favor of the Union; but I think his Unionism was only a sham pretense, to save his property. He was what was termed a "galvanized Unionist." But with all his secession principles, he used us very well, and seemed to sympathize with us. He had once been a man of considerable wealth, but the fortunes of the war was against him, and he had become very poor.

We were now within ten miles of Henderson, which was occupied by a brigade of Union troops, under command of General Gillem; and it being the eighth of November, the day of the Presidential election, we were very anxious to push forward. Holmes and I crossed the river by means of a canoe, and took a by-road for Henderson, while Case, Champion and Davidson, with their mules, pushed on to Bull's Gap.

We reached the Union pickets about two o'clock in the afternoon. A corporal was immediately called, who took charge of us, supposing us to be rebel deserters; but we had a different tale to tell. We had much the appearance of rebel deserters, it is true. Holmes was arrayed in a full suit of rebel uniform, with which he had escaped from prison at Salisbury, by passing out as one of the guards. My own shabby suit was a mixture. I wore the blue pantaloons, but it was hard to tell of what material they originally consisted, as they were so ragged and so TERRIBLY patched. My coat was a regular "nigger cut," and my hat of the true Southern style, made under the Jeff. Davis administration.

As we were going to Headquarters, escorted by the corporal, we met a battalion of cavalry just starting on a scout. And, oh, what emotions of joy did I experience, on once more beholding the flag of my country, as it was carried along by the color-bearer! In spite of my exertions to control my feelings, tears filled my eyes, and coursed down my cheeks. I was overwhelmed with gratitude to God for His providential care over me through all my wearisome race, and thankful that I still had a country to live in and fight for, over which the starry emblem of liberty so proudly waves.

The soldiers, taking us for rebels, commenced whooping and greeting us with, "Well, Johnnies, you have got tired of fighting for Jeff. Davis?" "Concluded to come in at last, have you?" "Think Uncle Sam the best master yet, eh?" and asking us various other questions so fast that it was impossible to answer them. Holmes grew very angry and began cursing his rebel uniform; but I told him that he should not curse anything that had done him so much service.

We were ushered into the presence of Gen. Gillem, who received us with great respect and attention, and asked us many questions. He then said, "Well, I suppose you would like to vote for 'Old Abe?'" We replied that we would; and after receiving the tickets, went to the polls and deposited our ballots. The General then ordered some rations for us, and an ambulance to convey us to Greenville, saying that he thought we had walked far enough. Upon estimating the distance I had traveled, I found it to be near four hundred miles.

We reached Greenville about dark, and were shown the place where the rebel Gen. Morgan was killed, and also the man that did the deed; viz., Andrew J. Campbell, of the 13th Tennessee Cavalry. We spent the night with

the 13th Tenn. Cavalry. The next morning we were furnished with transportation on a wagon train to Russellville, where we took the cars for Knoxville. We arrived there on the 11th of November, and reported to Brig. Gen. S. P. Carter, Provost Marshal of East Tennessee, who received us very kindly, and furnished us with clothing and transportation to Chattanooga. On arriving at this place, I made application for leave of absence to go home on furlough, but not being able to get one for a few days, hastened to the Telegraph Office and sent the following significant dispatch :

“ D. C. BURSON,

Salineville, Ohio :

“ Have escaped prison. —

Am in reasonable health. Will be home soon.

(Signed,)

WM. BURSON,

Company A, 32d O. V. I.”

Having come now to the end of my “ RACE FOR LIBERTY,” I have but little more to add. On December 8th, I received a furlough for forty days, and was soon at home, sweet HOME. Of my happy meeting, with wife and little ones, and social re-union with other dear friends, I leave to the reader's imagination, as the pen is inadequate to express the feelings of a heart overflowing with joyful emotion.

In the foregoing pages, I have given a plain, straightforward account of my Capture, Imprisonment, and Escape. I have not exaggerated my own sufferings, and the sufferings of my fellow prisoners ; neither have I sought to shield from odium, a cause founded upon human oppression, and so lost to virtue and honor as to wantonly starve its captives, and murder its helpless victims.

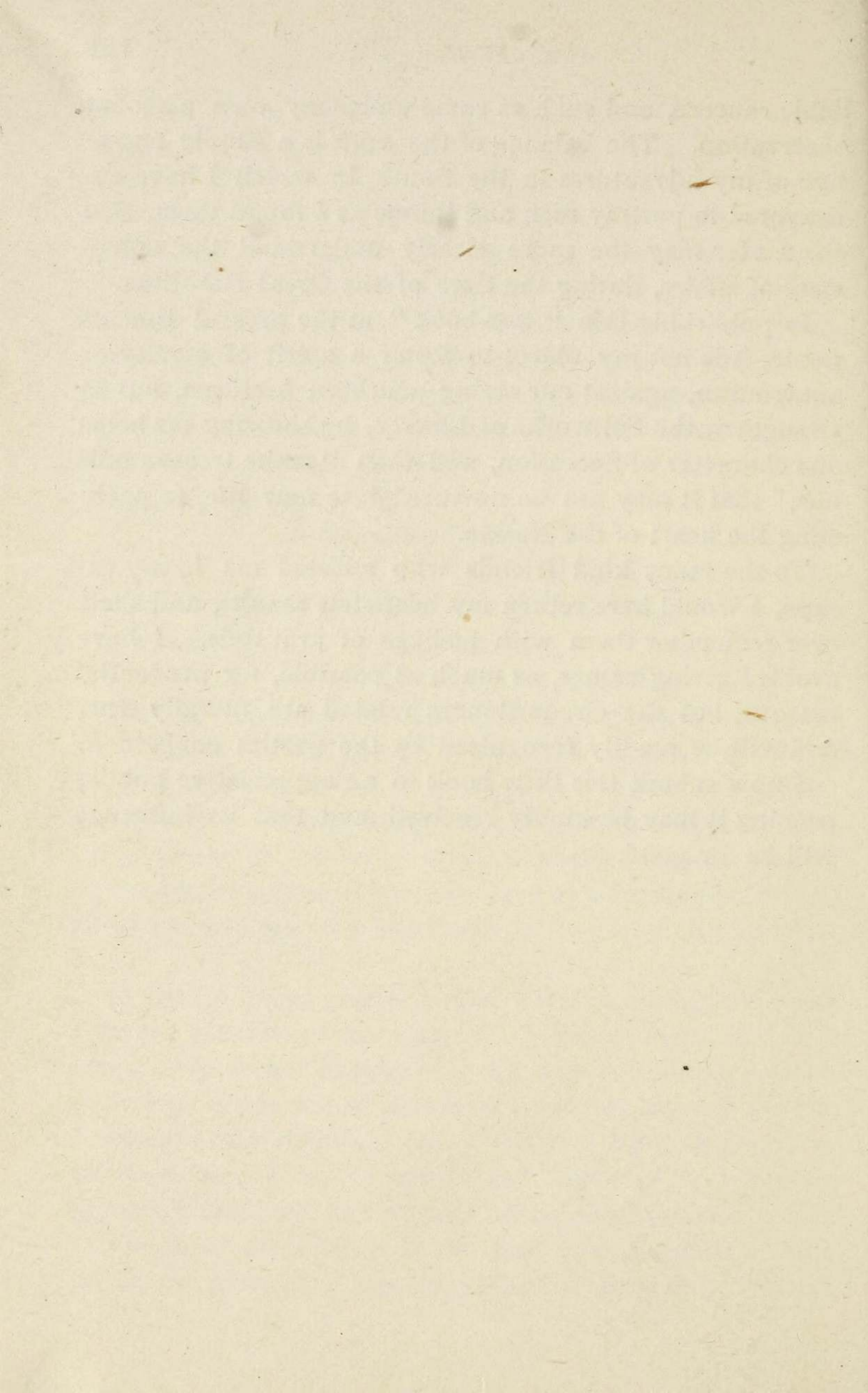
The incidents related in the first two chapters of this work, are matters of history, compiled from the most re-

liable sources, and such as came under my own personal observation. The balance of the work is a simple narrative of my adventures in the South, in which I have endeavored to portray men and things as I found them, that the reader may the more clearly understand the actual state of affairs, during the time of the Great Rebellion.

In publishing this "war-book" at the present time of peace, it is not my object to foster a spirit of enmity or antagonism, against our erring southern brethren, but to strengthen the bullworks of Liberty, by showing the heinous character of Secession, and thus "make treason odious," that it may not be nurtured into new life, to again sting the heart of the Nation.

To the many kind friends who assisted me in my escape, I would here return my heart-felt thanks, and shall ever remember them with feelings of gratitude. I have avoided giving names, as much as possible, for prudential reasons, but the circumstances related are literally true, and will be readily recognized by the parties concerned.

I now submit this little book to an appreciative public, trusting it may be kindly received, and that its influence will be for good.





## ADDENDA.

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### SHERMAN'S MARCH TO THE SEA.

[THE following beautiful song was written in Asylum prison-yard, Columbia, S. C., by Lieut. S. H. M. Byers, Adjutant 5th Iowa Cavalry. We are indebted for a copy to Hon. S. C. Kerr, member of the Ohio Legislature, who was First Lieutenant of Co. D, 126th O. V. I, and a prisoner at Columbia at the time the song was composed. In furnishing it, Mr. Kerr writes :

“ I enclose the song you request, which I have transcribed from a copy in my possession, which, through the politeness of Adjutant Byers, I was permitted to copy from the original. At the time this song was composed, (January, 1865,) there were about eleven hundred of us prisoners at Columbia, S. C. For over four and a half months, we had not received an ounce of meat, and but limited rations of unsifted corn meal of an inferior quality, with a little salt, and some sour sorghum molasses. Many of us were but thinly clad and suffered severely with the cold, having no shelter, save that furnished by our blankets, which were needed to keep us from freezing. Such were the circumstances surrounding us when the news of Sherman's success reached us, through the favor of a negro slave ; and almost instantaneously came the song.—

You may imagine, but cannot comprehend, the enthusiasm with which it was received; for it gave rise to the hope that 'our brave boys' would soon release us. Those days and scenes of prison life, as well as the arduous duties of the volunteer soldier, and the mental anxieties of the kind and loved ones at home, have passed away, and, I pray God, never to return."]

Our camp-fires shone bright on the mountain,  
 That frowned on the river below;  
 While we stood by our guns in the morning  
 And eagerly watched for the foe—  
 When a rider came out from the darkness,  
 That hung over mountain and tree,  
 And shouted, "Boys, up and be ready,  
 For Sherman will march to the Sea."

Then cheer upon cheer for bold Sherman,  
 Went up from each valley and glen,  
 And the bugles re-echoed the music  
 That came from the lips of the men.  
 For we knew that the stars on our banner,  
 More bright in their splendor would be;  
 And that blessings from North-land would greet us,  
 When Sherman marched down to the Sea.

Then forward, boys, forward to battle,  
 We marched on our wearisome way,  
 And stormed the wild hills of Resacca,—  
 God bless those who fell on that day!  
 Then Kenesaw, dark in her glory,  
 Frowned down on the flag of the free;  
 But the East and the West bore our standards,  
 And Sherman marched down to the Sea.

Still onward we pressed till our banner  
Swept out from Atlanta's grim walls,  
And the blood of the patriot dampened  
The soil where the traitor flag falls ;  
But we paused not to weep for the fallen,  
Who slept by each river and tree,  
Yet we twined them a wreath of the laurel,  
As Sherman marched down to the Sea.

Oh ! proud was our army that morning,  
That stood where the pine darkly towers,  
When Sherman said, "Boys, you are weary,  
But to-day fair Savannah is ours."  
Then sang we a song for our Chieftain,  
That echoed o'er river and lea,  
And the stars on our banner shone brighter,  
When Sherman marched down to the Sea.

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