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FAST AND LOOSE

IN

DIXIE.

AN UNPREJUDICED NARRATIVE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AS A PRISONER OF WAR AT LIBBY, MACON, SAVANNAH, AND CHARLESTON,

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF A DESPERATE LEAP FROM A MOVING TRAIN OF CARS, A WEARY TRAMP OF FORTY-FIVE DAYS THROUGH SWAMPS AND MOUNTAINS, PLACES AND PEOPLE VISITED, ETC., ETC.

BY

James
J. MADISON DRAKE,

CAPTAIN NINTH NEW JERSEY VETERAN VOLS. AND BREVET BRIG.-GENERAL N. G. N. J



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P R E F A C E.

WHILE serving as an officer in the Ninth New Jersey Veteran Volunteers, it was my lot to face the enemy in a series of battles on the right bank of the James River, Va., in the month of May, 1864, where, in a day of gloom and disaster for the Union cause, I was taken prisoner.

With the gallant Heckman, intrepid Belger, and other officers whose good opinion it was my privilege to enjoy, I passed a few days in Libby Prison, and was successively introduced to other gay and festive scenes in the so-called Confederate States. But to men thoroughly in earnest to serve their imperilled country, the attractions offered for our gratification by rebel officials, failed to make life happy in the "Sunny South:" in point of fact, the captives with whom I mingled despised the hospitalities tendered.

Nay, more ; the souls of these brave men animated them to resolute action to escape from their depressing surroundings. At Macon and Savannah carefully devised plans for regaining our liberty received the hearty approval of many who owned that no peril or hardship should hinder them from again following the old flag as it was borne aloft on ensanguined fields ; and weeks of severe toil were cheerfully endured in constructing tunnels for escape.

Though baffled by treachery in a promising enterprise for regaining our freedom by tunnelling, I conscientiously declare that I never ceased to cherish the hope of escape from rebel prisons. True, the prospect was gloomy indeed. Confined in fetid strongholds and surrounded by sleepless sentinels, the boldest at times were ready to despair. But even the horrors of Charleston jail-yard (where pestilence raged, and over and around which bursting shells shrieked

wildly, as I lay in the shadow of a hideous gallows) were powerless to divert me from seeking a favorable opportunity for flight. In the vicissitudes of war I well knew that a brave heart and unceasing vigilance would, sooner or later, offer me an opportunity of striking for liberty, with some prospect of success.

After weary waiting, a day memorable in my history dawned somewhat unexpectedly. The waning fortunes of the Confederacy were now in danger of an overwhelming disaster, as Sherman was prepared to pursue his triumphant march from the mountains to the sea, laying a heavy hand on a rebellious people. Fear reigned in Confederate councils, and desperate efforts were made to avert the threatened doom.

Among other precautions taken was the hustling of several hundred captive Union officers into a train of cars, at Charleston, and a swift departure for Columbia, where, it was believed, they could be retained in bondage. Myself and many of my friends hailed with joy the proposed change of scene. Four of us resolved to take our lives in our hands and leap from the moving train. How we succeeded in our carefully considered enterprise is set forth in this little volume. There is no attempt at fine writing, neither is it my purpose to seek to create a sensation by drawing on a fertile imagination for my facts. Startling incidents are chronicled, it is true, but their authenticity is attested by unimpeachable witnesses. Portions of this narrative have been published in *Harper's Weekly*, in the *Philadelphia Times*, *Newark Advertiser*, *Albany Press*, and other widely circulated journals, but in no instance have the interesting facts here stated caused unfriendly criticism.

I have a feeling of pride in pointing to the testimonials herewith printed, from soldiers who served their country in the tented field, and of whose friendship any man may well feel proud. But for their request, seconded by many others, to print this narrative, the MSS. would probably still rest in their pigeon holes.

It is but just to state that in all his rambles, from one prison to another, and during his pilgrimage from Charleston to Knoxville, through gloomy swamps, over broad savannahs, beside bivouacs in mountain fastnesses, and on the snow-covered heights of North Carolina and Tennessee, the writer jotted down, in a small diary, incidents of his daily life.

The gracious Providence that guided my feet safely when environed by perils, and nerved my heart to bear up bravely when adversity pressed with heavy hand, enabled me to preserve safely the "jottings by the way," and I have found the diary of great advantage in writing my narrative. The little memorandum book, though worn and faded, faithfully preserved the facts chronicled at the time of their occurrence, and I prize it highly as a *souvenir*.

J. MADISON DRAKE.

ELIZABETH, N. J., 1880.

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FAST AND LOOSE IN DIXIE.

CHAPTER I.

OPENING OF THE GREAT CAMPAIGN.

EARLY in the Spring of 1864, those of us who were inured to war, pronounced it folly to imagine that we were to have a pleasant Summer. From the immense preparations that were being put forth on every hand, and from the fact that the greatest soldier of the age—General Ulysses S. Grant—had been placed in supreme command of the Union forces, we became satisfied that we would speedily be engaged in fierce conflict with our foes. Confident that truth and justice would triumph, we were eager to again meet the enemy, although we knew we should often be exposed to fearful perils. If accident befel us, we would cherish the consolation that we were suffering in a glorious cause, and this thought alone sustained me during many painful hours, spent in rebel prison-pens.

Our division of the 18th Corps, which had been in Winter quarters at Getty's Station, a few miles above

Norfolk, Va., broke camp on the 26th of April, and at noon next day, disembarked at Yorktown. During our brief stay here, we were "reviewed" by various officers, and marched toward Williamsburg and Richmond—then back again. On the third day of May, the 10th Corps re-embarked, followed next morning by the 18th Corps—the vessels coming to anchor off Fortress Monroe early that evening.

CHAPTER II.

UP THE JAMES RIVER.

A ROCKET sent up at midnight from the magnificent steamboat "Greyhound," upon which General Butler had his headquarters, was the signal to weigh anchor, and when the sun on the morning of the 5th gilded the eastern horizon, the Armada, preceded by fifteen gunboats, several of them monitors, was many miles from the starting point. My duties as "officer of the day" were not particularly irksome. Passing City Point, we saw the flag of truce steamer which had the previous day arrived to exchange prisoners. I apprehend that the boat was sent up as a sort of a "blind," to cover the tracks of the expedition; if so, it was a success in this respect, for the rebels on the wharf looked bewildered as they saw steamer after steamer pass beyond, in the direction of Richmond. Troops, before nightfall, were hastily debarked on Bermuda Hundred—the

“Star” brigade—to which I belonged—being the first to reach the low-ribbed shore. We marched a couple of miles in order to “cover” the landing, put out piquets, then bivouaced for the night. An occasional shot was all that disturbed our tranquillity.

The morning of the 6th broke clear and fair, auguring well for our enterprise. The order to “move forward” was given at daybreak, the writer, with Company D, 9th N. J. Vols., being honored with the extreme advance. We saw nothing of the enemy for several hours, and began to imagine that the road to Richmond was open at last, but toward noon we were aroused from our lethargy, and convinced by ocular proof that the enemy had left no loop-hole by which we could enter the city. We soon became satisfied that we had work to do, for now, instead of desultory firing, the Johnnies appeared in numbers, contesting every foot of the way. We knew, however, that it was only a question of time, so we pushed forward, with an immense force at our back. At noon, the enemy made what, at first, promised to be a determined stand at Chapin’s farm, but when they saw a flank movement threatening their left, they beat a hurried retreat in the direction of Walthall Junction. Our intrepid commander, followed by his brigade, was soon after ambushed—the brigade being badly cut up in the encounter at Walthall. It was after darkness had overspread the earth, that the force got back within the lines, leaving our dead where they were slain.

General Butler, having determined upon the de-

struction of the railroad between Richmond and Petersburg, directed General Brooks to move in that direction for that purpose, while our brigade coöperated by making a feint on Port Walthall Junction. We moved forward at an early hour on the morning of the 7th, and speedily occupied the battle-ground of the day previous. Here we found the bodies of several of our fallen soldiers in a state of nudity, and horribly mutilated. They were interred in the open field. Although we reached the spot at an early hour—just as the sun was rising—we found indubitable evidences of the enemy's proximity. My company, acting as a support to Company I, Captain Samuel Hufty, deployed across the open field in which the battle of the previous day had been fought. The enemy, who were in plain sight, made a corresponding move. As we advanced, so did they. Finally, we reached the spot designated, and halted. The Johnnies did likewise. For an hour and more we stood, like lions at bay, glaring at each other, but during all this time not a shot was fired by either party. We could see the heads of the enemy bobbing up and down behind the breastworks three or four hundred yards in rear of their skirmish line, and we wondered when they would "open the ball." Directly, we see a battery of light field pieces unlimber at the edge of a wood on our left, when we begin to realize that the dreadful monotony is at last to be broken. Belger's Rhode Island battery, which had always shared the glories and dangers of our brigade, and which had, up to

this moment, been covered by a hill near Dr. Walthall's mansion, was now run up, and unlimbered, and in less time than it takes me to write it, Belger had commenced the engagement, which proved to be one of the prettiest I ever witnessed. The Confederates promptly replied, and in a moment the air was heavy laden with hissing, shrieking and bursting shells. The explosion of a caisson, belonging to the enemy, caused them a deal of trouble, and the loss of a number of men. During this duel between the two batteries, we lay in the open field—part of the time conversing with the Johnnies on the skirmish line. I must confess that the conversation was not particularly edifying. The Confederates had no sooner hauled off their battery, than we saw a movement on the part of their infantry. We knew they outnumbered us at this point, and some of us began to feel uneasy. At this moment, however, when so full of anxiety, we hear heavy firing away on our right front, and directly after see a double line of blue coats moving hurriedly across an open field, directly in the right rear of the force which had all day been confronting us. We can restrain ourselves no longer, and break out with hearty cheers which cause the enemy's skirmishers to turn all sorts of colors, and roll their tobacco quids nervously in their mouths. Brooks has gained the enemy's rear, and is now tearing up the railroad, and severing telegraphic communication between the rebel capital and the south. The strength of his column enables him to act with almost perfect impunity,

although he is kept quite busy with a foe who is vigilant on all sides. The "object of the expedition having been accomplished," the forces returned to camp, well satisfied with their day's work.

Next day, the 8th, many of us bathed in the dark waters of the Appomattox, notwithstanding the close proximity of the Johnnies, who fired upon us as opportunity offered.

The army was put in motion at three o'clock next morning, 9th, but the enemy was not encountered in force until we reached Swift Creek, about three miles from Petersburg. The battle was opened without delay, the fighting being severe during the entire day and night. It was here that the 25th and 27th South Carolina Regiments were opposed in hostile array to the 25th and 27th Massachusetts Regiments of our brigade. The Palmetto regiments made repeated charges on their brethren from the Bay State, and were as often driven back with frightful loss. The Confederates were here in strong force, most of them having just come from South Carolina, with Beauregard, who now was skillfully directing the enemy's movements.

Next morning, 10th, the enemy feeling very bitter, vigorously renewed the battle, both armies having slept upon their arms during the night. In making an examination of the battle-ground, we found *in one spot*, the bodies of a captain, two lieutenants, orderly sergeant, a corporal and a number of privates, belonging to one company in the 27th South Carolina, which proved, if such a thing be necessary, the

desperate character and staying qualities of the enemy, and the fierceness of yesterday's conflict. We were glad to leave the ensanguined field, reaching our camp late in the afternoon.

11th—Everything within sound is quiet to-day, for which we are devoutly thankful. But what will the morrow bring forth?

Daybreak on the 12th, found us on the march again—this time our point of direction being to the right, inclining toward the James river. It soon leaked out that we were on the way to Drewry's Bluff or Fort Darling—an impregnable place on the river—seven miles from Richmond. On the way up the turnpike, we "gobbled" several cavalymen, bearers of dispatches to General Beauregard. During the afternoon, Generals Heckman, Brooks and Wistar engaged the enemy near the turnpike—driving him from a number of positions, which successes served to cheer and nerve us for whatever might be in store for us.

We fought hard all day on the 13th, pressing the enemy steadily back. Towards the close of the afternoon, while "resting," we heard all sorts of rumors—not one of which, as I afterwards learned, had any foundation in fact, although they served their purpose well. We received orders to make coffee, which we greatly needed, and were about to enjoy its fine aroma, when our Adjutant, Carroll, directed me to take Companies D and G, deploy them and move forward in the woods in our front. I disliked very much to leave my coffee, and started

away with a quart cup in one hand, and a sword in the other. Just before entering the woods I was halted, and while a Western regiment, armed with sixteen-shooters, blazed away in my immediate front, I sipped my coffee, and it was well I did so, for directly afterwards, while climbing a fence, I missed my footing, and went over in a hurry, coffee and all—my men laughing heartily at my misadventure. The rain now fell in torrents, and we speedily became drenched, our situation being very disagreeable. It was impossible to see anything, owing to the darkness in those dreary woods, and how I ever managed to keep my men together, is more than I am able to explain. I was thankful that the enemy did not molest us in the early part of the night, for we could not have made any defence—besides, we were just as likely to shoot one another as the rebels. I was told the next day by a prisoner whom we captured, that the only reason we were not attacked, was because the rebels believed us to be armed with sixteen-shooting rifles. Of course I slept none that night, such a thing was utterly impossible—besides, we were supposed to be a breastwork for the entire army, our duty being to “cover” it.

At a late hour word reached me that Captain Samuel Hufty, with a picked force, was about to make a reconnoissance on my right. I had considerable difficulty in finding my men to notify and caution them of the movement, owing to the intense darkness. Captain Hufty penetrated the enemy's

lines and gained valuable information without firing a shot, and without losing a man.

The field "officer of the day," belonging to a Massachusetts regiment, failed to put in an appearance that night, and next morning, when Adjutant-General Abel came in to order my command "forward," he was surprised to learn that the one who had been charged with the duty of inspecting the line, had been remiss in his duty. I will merely add in this connection that this officer was subsequently dismissed from the service which he had disgraced.

I had proceeded but a short distance on the morning of the 14th, when I saw through an opening in the woods, strong fortifications, surmounted by the flag of the "stars and bars." I halted my command and apprised General Heckman, who was coming up in the rear with his brigade, of my discovery. We made a reconnoissance of the enemy's position, and while thus engaged, were fired upon by his sharpshooters. The general made prompt dispositions, and ordered me to advance. The rain continued, which materially interfered with the movements of the infantry, as well as the artillery. When the brigade had gained the position coveted, I was ordered to charge the enemy, who were snugly posted in the abattis. This movement was executed with a dash that surprised the Johnnies, who quickly crawled out from behind their logs, and hastily fled—springing in all haste over the formidable earthworks which were the crowning glory of the fort to which

they were but auxiliary—yet a necessary defence. We followed to within a few yards of the fortifications—then, under cover of the abattis, which the enemy had just deserted, we “popped” away, whenever we saw anything worth “popping” at.

The Confederates replied to the fire of my skirmishers as opportunity offered, but their temerity in showing their heads or arms above the breastworks was fearfully punished—my men being able to take deliberate aim—shots seldom being wasted. My first sergeant, Hulsart, solicitous concerning my safety, insisted upon the removal of my shoulder straps. He also protested against my wearing a gold cord on a fine regulation hat, presented to me a few days previously by Lieut. Colonel James Stewart, jr. The sergeant would listen to no refusal, insisting that the “ornaments” were drawing the enemy’s fire. It was amusing to watch the Johnnies in their efforts to discharge two or three light field pieces whose muzzles pointed in a threatening manner directly towards the orderly and myself. The reader may rest assured we kept a sharp eye on those guns—neither of which were fired until we fell back at two o’clock in the afternoon, when we were relieved by two other companies, E and K. Just as the sun went down, my command was sent in again, remaining an hour or so, when we made our way out of the abattis to the ravine where the regiment lay. During the night we rested but little, owing to the heavy firing of the skirmishers.

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE AND THE CAPTURE.

SUNDAY morn we received a mail from Jersey,— letters from my father being directed to me at “Richmond, Va., or—elsewhere.” The colonel jocosely remarked that the letters had reached me one day too soon, for we all believed that we would be in the rebel capital on the morrow. We passed the day in cleaning our rifles, instead of listening to the chaplain, or worse still, hearing the articles of war read, and assisted in throwing up a breastwork, which later in the day we left for the benefit of others. There was nothing in the surroundings to remind us that the day was the Lord’s. We did not even have the customary inspection. Just at dusk, when the breastwork was about completed, we marched silently to the right, in the direction of the James river. We felt pleased to think that our arduous labors had been appreciated, and that we were at length to go where we could obtain sleep and needed rest. But alas, for human calculations, especially when made by soldiers. Instead of turning to the rear, we suddenly found that the movement just executed was simply a prolongation of the battle line. Between the right of our regiment and the James river, was an intervening space, which was immediately occupied by several regiments of colored cavalry. During the long night which followed, we busied ourselves in stretching wires upon the ground

in our front, and in collecting branches of trees, stumps, etc., which, placed in a line, served admirably for protection. Of course we felt that we had not been fairly treated, for had we not fought almost continuously for a week, besides working on entrenchments which we should have been allowed to defend? The Confederates, evidently suspecting a battle on the morrow, kept up an incessant fire from their small arms, as much to keep us from sleeping, as to prevent any movement on our part. To add to the horrors of this never-to-be-forgotten night, the rebs yelled all along the line. The yell of a Comanche is child-like in comparison. To vary the monotony, they made occasional attempts to charge, but our skirmish line was sufficient to hold the Confederates in check—that is, for the time being.

Just before daybreak on the memorable morning of the 16th, a dense fog enveloped the earth. I never before had seen such a fog—not even in Virginia. It was impossible to see fifteen feet in any direction. I could not see the entire front of my company, so heavy and pall-like was the mist. Down behind the frail breastwork of logs, we anxiously awaited the approach of the infuriated enemy, who we knew had made every arrangement to come out from his works for the purpose of attack. Satisfied that the Confederates had received large reinforcements, and that his brigade was in a position of extreme peril, General Heckman begged for assistance,—at least that the gallant Belger and his

battery might be sent to his relief, but for some reason never explained, "Baldy" Smith, in command of our division, failed to comply, leaving our brigade, which had become decimated, to withstand the shock of the rebel army under General Ransom, of North Carolina. I have heard a great many soldiers express the opinion that Smith wanted Butler defeated, so that he could supersede him in the command, hence his action in withholding the assistance so importunately asked for. I do not know why we were allowed no artillery, although a dozen superb batteries were idle in our rear, and no one can convince me that treachery did not underlie the action of some officers, high in rank though they were.

It was about a quarter before five o'clock in the morning, when four brigades of the enemy, in line of battle, emerged from their works, and moved noiselessly across an open field. Our skirmishers, seeing the futility of attempting to check such a force, crawled out of their "gopher" holes, and discharging their rifles as rapidly as possible, retreated upon our line, which they had hardly gained, when the battle of Drewry's Bluff had been opened in dreadful earnest. The Confederate artillery made the earth tremble, while the shriek of the shell multiplied the horrors of the contest. On, on, came the sanguine Confederates, until they reached the wires which befouled them. Our opportunity came at last, and we embraced it with all the zeal of which we were capable. A constant sheet of flame from

the brazen muzzles of our trusted rifles, proved to the enemy that the Yankee was still there, with no thought of surrendering the advantages gained by the previous ten days' fighting. The fog still remained, and to its kindly shelter the enemy owed a great deal. Charge after charge was made by the maddened enemy, who was as often driven back to the field where his shattered lines would be reformed. During the lulls, we heard the groans of the dying, some of whom uttered bitter imprecations.

It was, perhaps, eight o'clock when I imagined that all was not as it should be. I heard heavy firing in my *rear*, but could not account for it, nor for the solitude in my immediate proximity. I could not see more than a few yards away, owing to the fog which hung like drapery over the landscape. I peered to my right and to my left, but could see no troops anywhere, not even in front. While in a state of wonderment, I was surprised by an exclamation of Sergeant Tom Hazleton. Turning quickly I saw a number of Confederates springing over our logs. Having no desire to cultivate their acquaintance, I picked up my sword, (I had been using a rifle), and patent-leather haversack, and calling upon my men to "retreat," started on a run for the *rear*. We got along finely; no one interfered with us, but I confess the further I went, the more I was confused. A short distance to the right of a road upon which I was hastening along, I saw a battery, the pieces unlimbered and pointing in the direction I was running. This seemed strange, but I could not

bring my mind to realize that that battery belonged to the enemy. I continued on, walking slowly, meditating on the singular turn affairs had taken, when I was suddenly halted by a ragged looking fellow. I thought he was a "bummer" on a thieving expedition, so I bade him get out of my way. He put a revolver to my head, and told me to "surrender." At this moment, for the first time that morning, the sun put in an appearance, speedily dissolving the fog. I was bewildered when asked to surrender, but now, on looking about, I found myself surrounded by rebels, and directly *in rear of their battle-line*. I lost no time in presenting Lieutenant Sherwood, of the 31st Alabama regiment, with my sword, belt, revolver and haversack. It must not be understood that I insisted upon his accepting the latter article, but it was all the same to the Lieutenant, who placed his services at my disposal for the purpose of showing me about, more particularly to conduct me to the rear, where he assured me it would be much safer, especially as the battle was about to be renewed.

On the way to Fort Darling, the Lieutenant chatted pleasantly with a view of getting my Napoleon boots, which he was anxious to obtain, because, he said, they were handsomer than the boots worn by "Archie Gracie," the commander of his brigade. I thought I had been liberal enough to the Lieutenant, especially upon so short an acquaintance, and I made up my mind to resist his overtures for the boots, which I determined to stick to as long as

they *lasted*. On the way to the fort we passed over what had but recently been the battle-ground. Along a stream I saw hundreds of poor fellows washing in and drinking the now blood-stained water. I was very thirsty, but my stomach revolted at the thought of quenching thirst in that brook, so I passed along—several of the wounded Confederates anathematizing me. I pitied the unfortunate soldiers who would doubtless soon be free from all pain. I had never before seen so many sufferers in so limited a space—the ground everywhere was dotted with the dead and dying. The spectacle was heart-sickening, and its incidents will never be blotted from my remembrance.

Reaching Fort Darling, an impregnable position on the water front at Drewry's Bluff, myself and comrades (second Lieutenant George Peters being among the number), were transferred to the custody of a provost-marshal, who was quite willing to allow us to go "on to Richmond" when he had satisfied himself that we had no articles of value about our persons. His search not being rewarded with success, he sent us down the one hundred and fifty steps to the wharf, and in a few minutes, in answer to a signal, a steamboat came up, which, we were politely informed, would convey us to Richmond, a city, he remarked, we were doubtless anxious to visit.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE WAY TO LIBBY PRISON.

MY heart almost ceased its pulsations as I stepped on board the vessel, over whose deck lazily floated the Confederate flag. It was not till this moment that I realized my condition—the horrors of the rebel prison-pens suddenly burst upon me, making me wretched indeed. The terrible scenes through which I had so recently passed, seemed like a dream, and I could not believe in their reality. While contemplating the loneliness of my situation, and wondering how our regiment could have moved away without my knowledge, I was suddenly startled. Seated on a bench, near the wheel-house of the steamer, sat an officer whose form was familiar to me. I watched him closely. His head was bowed, resting upon his hands, which prevented me from obtaining a clear view of his features. The sudden explosion of a torpedo in the river, by a passing vessel, caused him to change his position, when I discovered his identity. He proved to be my brave and intrepid commander, General Heckman. He extended his hand, grasping mine with much warmth, and congratulated me upon my safety. He had been captured quite early in the engagement by General Archibald Gracie, who commanded an Alabama brigade. Gracie formerly lived in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and when the rebel-

lion broke out, for expressing disloyal sentiments, he was invited to leave the place, which he had good sense enough to do, thus saving the Unionists of that city the trouble of procuring him a novel apparel—tar and feathers.

General Heckman said the Ninth had stood its ground until it was swept away by an irresistible line, when it slowly moved to the rear, firing in two different directions. It was while riding to where he knew me to be posted, that he was captured. His staff officers had been placed *hors de combat* soon after the battle opened, leaving him alone. He had heard that Colonel Abram Zabriskie, and Captains Edwin Stevens Harris, Edward S. Carrell and J. B. Lawrence had been killed, Lieut. Col. James Stewart, jr., and other officers wounded, and he feared that the Ninth had suffered terribly in the loss of other brave men.

The sail up the river was almost devoid of interest to us, although we noticed that the stream was filled with gun-boats, torpedoes and other submarine appliances of modern warfare. Almost before we were aware of it, the boat drew up and was made fast to the wharf at "Rockett's." Here we found a motley crowd, who manifested unmistakable delight on seeing the "Yankee general" walk ashore. The mob hooted and howled, and for a moment I was afraid that some of the cowardly wretches would strike the general, but these brave citizens of Richmond contented themselves with showing their courage and following us at a respectful distance,

until we were halted in front of a large three-story brick building, over the door of which hung a small weather-stained sign, bearing the ominous words: "Libby and Son, Ship Chandlers and Grocers."

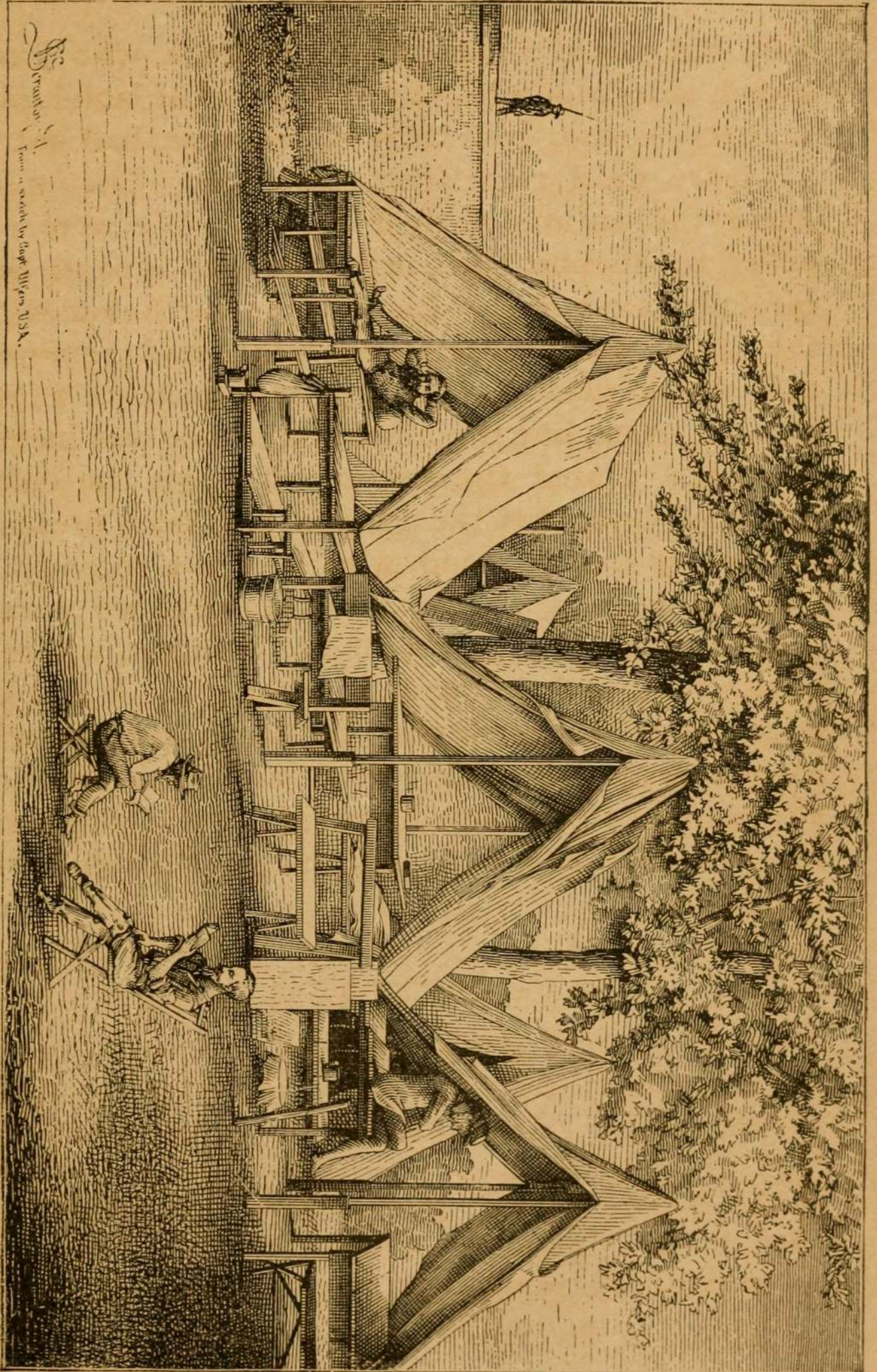
It was not necessary for any one to tell us that this was the Confederacy's loathsome prison-house, which I could not look upon without shuddering. Entering and turning into a small room on the first floor, we were invited to "register," after which Dick Turner, a deep-dyed villain, escorted us to another apartment, where we were peremptorily bidden to bring forth and deliver to him any articles of value which we might happen to have about our persons. The general protested against this larceny, but Turner carried his point, by suddenly thrusting a huge revolver at his face, which had the desired effect, and the general handed over some one hundred and fifty dollars in lawful money of the United States. Lieutenant Peters was the possessor of some forty dollars, which he had by some means managed to keep from his captors on the battlefield. It made me smile to see him transfer his treasure to the biggest thief in Richmond, especially as he insisted on having the amount carefully counted and placed to his credit. Turner told the Lieutenant that he could "draw a certain amount each week," which he knew to be a base lie when he uttered it. Turner, after placing our valuables in his desk, inquired whether, on our honor as officers and gentlemen, we had given up everything in our possession. I believe most of us bowed as-

sent, but this did not satisfy the leech, who gave a signal, whereupon in walked a squad of lank-looking soldiers (?) who, from their appearance, had not had a square meal since the war began. They understood the nature of their errand. We were compelled to disrobe, each article of our apparel being carefully examined. Lieut. Col. Bartholomew, of the 27th Massachusetts regiment, had retained a pair of field glasses. He begged hard to be allowed to keep these, but the inhuman keeper was inexorable. He refused the request, although the colonel informed him that the glasses had been presented to him by a lady friend, who had but recently departed this life. Donning our apparel we were piloted to the second story of the building, where we were left to our sorrowful meditations. I had kept a large and handsome seal ring (a gift from my wife), as well as a small pocket diary and some other articles, and I congratulated myself upon having fooled the Johnnies, who were not always as smart as they imagined.

CHAPTER V.

HARD LINES.

DURING our stay in "Libby," we suffered many indignities, which galled us more than the privations to which we were systematically subjected. Turner, and his ready tools, embraced every



From a sketch by Capt. W. G. A. S.

PRISON YARD AT SAVANNAH.

opportunity to annoy us, even directing the sentinels in and around the building, to cry out the hour during the long nights, to prevent us from enjoying sleep, which was the only consolation to be had. I think I can convey a better idea of how we were treated, by copying from my diary, in which I made the following entries, viz. :

May 17th—Nothing to put in my mouth to-day, save two chews of poor tobacco, with an abundance of very dirty water supplied from a hydrant in the room, but for this I was thankful.

18th—Made an attempt to obtain a portion of the money which we had deposited with Dick Turner, in order to purchase some food, which we began to feel we could not very well get along without. I need hardly say that our petition was treated with scorn by our "banker." At dusk he had the goodness to send up a piece of dry corn-bread, which we divided equitably; but this only served to increase, rather than appease our appetite.

19th—We awoke long before the sun rose, because it was impossible to sleep with hunger gnawing our vitals. At a late hour in the morning several loaves of corn-bread were thrown into our room, which we devoured with avidity. At noon we received some corn-meal, with which we made mush—a palatable article. For the evening repast we had—well, we had nothing, not so palatable.

20th—Mush and corn-bread for breakfast, mush and rotten black beans for dinner, with corn-bread for supper. About noon to-day, the Rev. Mr. Wil-

mer, of Richmond, entered the east room, and after learning that General Heckman was from New Jersey, handed him a valuable gold watch, which some Confederate soldier had stolen from Lieutenant Baldwin, of a New Jersey regiment. The general took the watch, and directed me to give the minister a receipt for the same, which I did, but neither of us held any conversation with the conscience-stricken clergyman. On reaching the pen at Macon, General Heckman found the owner of the watch, and returned it to him, being heartily thanked therefor.

21st—Mush for breakfast, rotten black beans for dinner—a small piece of corn-bread for dessert. Boiled rice for supper. Great excitement in the city—bells rung, citizens called out, etc. Rumored that Lee has been terribly defeated, and that Gen. Grant is marching on the city.

22d—Mush for breakfast, beans and worms for dinner, bread for supper.

23d—Mush for breakfast, fried mush for dinner—beans for dessert. Sour bread for supper. Received ten pounds of bacon and maggots—too rotten and filthy excepting for cooking purposes. We used it up in frying mush.

24th—Sour cakes and corn coffee (!) for breakfast, beans for dinner, boiled rice for supper.

25th—"Intelligent contraband" informed us that Grant had defeated Lee, and was within eight miles of Richmond. Fried mush for breakfast, bread and beans for dinner, and for supper we had *mush!*

26th—*Nothing* for breakfast—(quite a change!) Small piece of corn-bread for dinner—boiled rice for supper. Lieut. Peters paid one dollar for a loaf of bread (about as large as one of Branin's doughnuts), two dollars for a common lead pencil, and two dollars for having the errand performed, in Confederate money.

27th—Mush for breakfast—fried bread for dinner, and for supper on this particular occasion we concluded to have boiled rice.

28th—For breakfast, fried mush; for dinner, fried bread; and for supper, mush fried. Six or seven pounds of very filthy bacon issued to sixty-two of us.

29th—Boiled rice for breakfast, fried bread for dinner, and for supper boiled rice. "Rebs" busily engaged all day in hauling locomotives and cars through the streets, from the York River R. R.

30th—Rice boiled for breakfast, bread fried for dinner, and boiled rice for supper.

CHAPTER VI.

AN EXCURSION DIXIEWARD.

31st—Long before daybreak we heard heavy and continued firing in a northeasterly direction, and soon after noticed unusual activity among citizens and soldiers on Carey street. A liberal supply of bread was sent up to us, immediately after which

we were ordered to "fall in." In less than two minutes thereafter, we were marching through the street, surrounded by armed guards. At Castle Thunder several hundred of our poor enlisted men joined us—then we were hurried across the Mayo bridge to Manchester, where a train of filthy cattle cars stood in waiting. Some sixty prisoners were crowded into each car. These cars were exceedingly nasty, cattle having just been discharged from them. Our guardians not only refused to clean the cars, but declined to allow us to do it. The intensely hot weather added to our discomfort, and increased the stench beyond the power of words to express. After a delay of some two hours, the train was started, making slow progress, however. During the night, several of our men, who descended to the ground to get a breath of fresh air, whenever the train stopped, were shot.

We crossed the river Dan just as the sun rose, on the first day of June, and a few minutes later disembarked at Danville, where it became necessary to change cars. There was but little life here, notwithstanding the fact that there was a prison-pen, with a regiment on duty. The place was so far in the interior that its denizens had no fear of the "invader." We reached Greensboro, North Carolina, about noon, over a new road, which even now was scarcely completed. We rested here until midnight, under beautiful shade trees, the people treating us kindly, although I cannot say that many opened their pocket books for our benefit. I had an oppor-

tunity, while here, of talking to some of our enlisted men, whose harrowing stories of cruel treatment tortured my soul. Some of them had come from Belle Isle, where they had endured everything but death—that would have been a blessing to many. Although I had prepared a palatable dish for the general, he refused to partake of it, saying he had lost his appetite. I then regretted that he had been compelled to listen to the emaciated men with whom I had been in converse. During the evening I kept as close to the guard as was safe, watching for any chance that might present itself for escape. The sentinels crowded us closely together and showed us no favors. I thought that if I could once get away from the town, I would be able to reach the majestic Blue Ridge mountains, behind which were friends and safety; but the rebs were unusually vigilant, maintaining a double line of guards, which I finally believed could not be safely or successfully eluded. It was a tedious and disagreeable ride to Charlotte, ninety miles distant, which we reached at a late hour next day.

When the train halted at Salisbury, several East Tennesseans succeeded in making their escape, and when the fact was communicated to our keepers, their rage knew no bounds. A Pennsylvania officer got out of our car to talk with a citizen, whom he had known before the war, and while standing on the ground quietly conversing, one of the guards used grossly insulting language, for which he was called to account by Captain James Belger, the ar-

tillerist. The cowardly wretch, not liking the interference of the captain, attempted to thrust him with his bayonet, when the weapon was suddenly seized by Captain Belger, who, in another instant would have sent the desperado before his Maker, had not the officer in charge of the train interposed. Several of our enlisted men were killed at various stations, for no other reason than that they were found on the ground. Just before we left this place, a Confederate officer came up and told our custodians to treat us kindly. He said he had been a prisoner at Camp Douglass, and that the Yankees had used him "like a man." This officer's kindness was the only redeeming feature of the trip, so far.

We reached Columbia, South Carolina, just before dusk, and were transferred to still poorer cars. The stench which greeted my olfactory nerves was so disagreeable that I begged permission of the lieutenant to occupy the top of a car. He accorded me the privilege, which I lost no time in embracing. I sprang up quite nimbly, glad to escape from the noisome place inside. The train finally got under way, and I was soon covered with cinders from the rickety and puffing locomotive. Notwithstanding these inconveniences, I congratulated myself upon the change which I had made. I had one unpleasant encounter while on the car, that was when one of the guards came running along over the "tops." He stopped when he saw me lying there, and on discovering my identity, let loose a volley of vile curses. The increasing darkness prevented me from

seeing whether he was armed, and I was becoming quite nervous at his outrageous conduct, when the train dashed under a covered bridge. What became of my tormentor I never learned, but he disappeared at that particular moment, and as he did not again put in an appearance on the train, I consoled myself with the belief that he must have been too badly injured by the fall to overtake it. He came in sudden contact with one of my Napoleon boots, which caused him to lose his equilibrium and topple off the car.

Augusta, Georgia, was reached about the middle of the forenoon; the train wound its way slowly through the city, stopping near a large open yard, formerly used for the storage of cotton. Thousands of people, of all shades and conditions, surrounded us as we debarked, and so great was the curiosity of the multitude, that the guards made a passage with great difficulty. We occupied the cotton-yard during our short sojourn in Augusta, the hotels being insufficient to accommodate so large a party. I presume this to be the reason we were not sent to the hotels. I conversed with a number of the citizens, some of whom were well disposed towards us. A few even went so far as to express sorrow at our unfortunate condition. Captain Bradford, son of Governor Bradford of Maryland, provost marshal of the place, was very attentive to our wants, and did what in his power lay to ameliorate our condition. He provided us with an abundance of edibles, among which were fresh crackers and excellent

ham. A man (!) wearing the Confederate uniform, with a corporal's chevrons, ascertaining that I was from New Jersey, was very anxious to obtain information about some of his friends in Elizabeth. Happening to be acquainted with several whose names he mentioned, I made myself as agreeable as possible, and endeavored to enlighten him. While talking to me, several Johnnies came up and saluted this redoubtable corporal, and this so pleased his excessive vanity, that every time he was thus greeted, he drew a huge roll of Confederate bills from his pocket, and presented the soldier with a V or an X, whichever came handiest. Finally, as he was about to depart, I stated my circumstances, and asked him to furnish me with a sheet of writing paper, an envelope, and a postage stamp, saying I was anxious to write to my family, as I had not been able to do so since my capture. This brave corporal straightened himself up, and deliberately told me that he would see me — first, and he strutted haughtily away, without saying "thank you" for the favor I had done him, at his request. The name of this fellow was John Clark, a native of Elizabeth, N. J., and a more despicable renegade I never met in the South. I ought to say that Clark was one of the first to meet and welcome General Sherman's troops when they appeared at Augusta, protesting in the most cowardly manner that he had always been a Unionist, and offering to prove it by appealing to his relatives in his native place. That's the kind of a man John Clark was.

We passed the night pleasantly enough, and felt much refreshed by uninterrupted sleep. During the forenoon, we were visited by many citizens, among whom was a goodly number of ladies, who were happy or unhappy, in finding friends and relatives in our wretched looking party. One lady presented a friend of mine with a Bible. Our stay here was extremely agreeable, and when we marched across the city in the afternoon, followed by an immense concourse of people, many of us felt as if we were leaving kind-hearted friends, whose generous deeds shall always have a place in my memory,

CHAPTER VII.

ARRIVAL IN THE CRACKER STATE.

IT was a tedious ride to Macon, which we reached shortly after daylight on the 6th. The officers were bidden to leave the cars, and while we waited at the depot, the long train moved further southward with our enlisted men, destined, as I subsequently ascertained, for Andersonville, beside which no other prison-pen was at all comparable for horrors. A short march brought us to "Camp Oglethorpe," an enclosure formerly used for county fair purposes. Entering the yard, we were saluted with loud cries of "fresh fish," "give them air," "keep your hands on your pocket-books," "louder, pudding head," etc., my first impulse being that we were

in a market place, but this proved to be a delusion. Among the fifteen hundred officers of the army in this yard, I found many whom I knew. Our new home embraced some three acres of land, enclosed by a high board stockade, along the top of which paced sentinels closely posted. Cannon were mounted on platforms overlooking the yard, and they could be readily ranged to sweep the place, in the event of our keepers deeming such a proceeding necessary. A number of long sheds had been erected, but they were insufficient to accommodate or shelter all confined here. For more than two weeks after my arrival, I was unable to find any shelter from the tropical sun by day, and heavy, sickening dews by night, save that afforded by a tree on the hillside, which was quite near to the common sink.

I entered this prison destitute of everything. I was without money, without a blanket, and without utensils of any kind in which to cook the coarse yellow meal allotted me. Lieut. Joseph Donovan, of the 2d N. J. Vols., succeeded in obtaining a frying pan, which he kindly loaned me, and many times afterward during my captivity he showed me favors. "Gus" Conover, an engineer in the navy, who had known me in Trenton, where I resided when the war broke out, presented me with a twenty dollar greenback, which I expended in a frugal manner, buying vegetables calculated to keep me clear of the scurvy, a disease I much dreaded.

Our keepers issued wood in limited quantities,

and one axe to each squad of two hundred. The axes we were compelled to return each day within a specified time, the "Johnnies" being afraid we would attack them if allowed to retain such formidable weapons. Our chief staple of food here consisted of rice, beans and corn-meal, with the smallest possible quantity of bacon, which I never could stomach. Occasionally we received sorghum molasses and vinegar. We were compelled to do our own washing and cooking, if such are proper names for operations performed under distressing circumstances. Grumbling! Of course there was grumbling, and plenty of it, for what was there in that vermin-covered yard calculated to make us think more of the Confederates, or—ourselves? A rebel prison-pen was where human nature could be seen without any artificial appliance. Although each of the sixteen hundred officers confined in this place were supposed by the U. S. A. regulations to be "gentlemen," yet I am afraid many were only restrained from acts of pillage by the fear of summary punishment. No officer having a shirt or other article of apparel would wander away without keeping both eyes upon it. Necessity knows no law, especially among men thrown together and kept without proper food and without comfort, hence the care which we bestowed upon what articles still remained to us. I saw officers who had no shirts, others without unmentionables, while many were without a covering for their head or feet.

After I had lain on the side of the hill for a couple

of weeks exposed to all sorts of weather—the rebels having refused to supply any boards for the newcomers, Peters and I concluded to dig a hole under the “fair building,” in which we would at least be shielded from the sun and rain. We were progressing finely with our work, when operations were interrupted by the rebel officer of the day, who threatened us with all sorts of punishment in case we did not cease our labors. We informed him that we could not find cover elsewhere, and begged him to allow us to finish our abode; but our humble petition was denied, the chivalrous son of the South moving away muttering all sorts of imprecations and threats. Next day, after he had been relieved, we renewed our labors, and completed the hole without further interruption, and greatly to our joy and satisfaction. The hole, however, did not answer my expectations, for it was damp and cold and cheerless, and the penalty exacted was chills and fever, which made my comrade doubly wretched. Happening to have a small quantity of quinine in my vest pocket, I administered a dose to Peters, which cured him, perhaps because I had not been particular as to the quantity prescribed.

Quite a number of prisoners managed, from time to time, to procure money, which they used in purchasing necessaries. Some were visited by relatives, others by friends, who supplied them with funds, etc. Captain Seth B. Ryder, of the 5th New York Cavalry, one of the more fortunate ones, was frequently visited by an old uncle, publisher of a paper

in Milledgeville, Georgia, who took great pleasure in aiding him. These kindnesses were subsequently well rewarded, for the old gentleman having lost his property at the end of the war, received assistance in the time of his need from his gallant nephew, which enabled him to pass the remainder of his days without discomfort.

Greenbacks were readily exchanged for Confederate notes at from \$6 to \$15. The following is a list of the prices: salt, per bushel, \$64; flour, per barrel, \$300; bacon, per pound, \$5; fresh beef, per pound, \$1.50; beans, per quart, \$1; baking soda, per pound, \$12; small loaves of white bread, each, \$1.50; watermelons, \$8 to \$15 dollars each; black berries, per quart, \$1 to \$2; four small potatoes \$1; butter, per pound, \$6; molasses, per quart, \$6 to \$15; four cigars for a dollar. Board could be obtained at hotels in Macon, for \$35 per day—so the advertisements in the *Telegraph* announced.

Games of cricket, base ball, gymnastics, sword exercise, etc., by those strong enough to engage in these pastimes, furnished useful diversions, and relieved many depressed prisoners from their terrible *ennui*. We were allowed to purchase newspapers in this camp, but seldom did our keepers deliver to us the letters and papers sent us regularly from home, a wrong which I can never teach my heart to forgive them.

About the middle of June, fearing that an attempt would be made to overpower the guard, the rebel authorities took from our number the five

general and fifty field officers, and sent them away—to Charleston, as we afterwards learned. By doing this, our keepers felt that they would be depriving us of means to act harmoniously, and so prevent the ever-dreaded *emeute*. It is true that one or two of the general officers would have been useful to us when our plans were fully matured, but their absence was not allowed to interfere with a realization of our scheme to obtain liberty. The “Council of Ten,” was what we called our organization, which had for its object not only our own liberation, but also the liberation of 40,000 helpless and starved prisoners at Andersonville—some forty miles away. Seven hundred officers, of whom I was one, became members of the organization, being bound together by solemn oaths, a dozen in number, administered, as opportunity offered, in the little shed occupied by the commissary. Companies and battalions were formed, properly officered, and a complete code of signals agreed upon. The only mistake that was made, so far as I am aware, was the selection of a puffy West Point officer, as commander-in-chief, whose chief quality was incompetence.

CHAPTER VIII.

DIGGING FOR LIBERTY.

MEANWHILE labor on several tunnels was unremittingly carried on each night. No one, excepting those who have worked in a tunnel, can

have any conception of the immense and painful labors necessary to their construction. Of course secrecy was the first great point to be observed. We had not only to guard against surprises from the rebels, but also to keep a knowledge of our movements from many of our own officers, for there were Judases among our number. Digging tunnels, then, under such circumstances, was no holiday matter. The duty was attended with great hazard. An old blanket which I had picked up, I was compelled to *part* with. I cut out the holes and made bags of the remainder, which I used in carrying away the dirt from the underground passage. On receiving the bag from the shaft of the tunnel, I placed it under my arm, covering it as much as possible with my blouse, then walked about the yard, seeking the darkest spots, and scattering the dirt where it would do the most good. One tunnel which we succeeded in completing, was eighty feet in length, opening towards the railroad.

Our main plan was, on issuing from the tunnels, for one party to overpower the camp-guard, posted in a shaded field on the southerly side of the yard, and seize the small arms and artillery; another party was to hasten and occupy the arsenal in the city, while a third party was to rush to the round-house where a number of locomotives were kept, and after securing them, destroy the telegraph wires leading from the place. All this being accomplished, we were to embark on a train and proceed to Andersonville to secure the freedom of our brave boys, whom we knew

to be suffering grievous torments. Penned up like sheep, in an inclosure, partly swamp, without shade or shelter, in the sickliest region of the Gulf, their horrors were only comparable with those of the "Middle Passage." Almost daily we received heart-rending accounts from the pestilential pen. A Catholic priest, who had been among our men there, gave us reliable information, saying his heart bled for them. He told us that our men were dying at the rate of from seventy to a hundred and fifty a day—dysentery and scurvy being the general complaints. The bodies were dragged from the horrid place by brutal men, and carted to burial in one great pit. A riot had occurred among the wretched men, resulting in the death of several. Many had become insane, while others, grown desperate, were utterly reckless of life. Almost every morning a body or two was found—the result of a feud or suicide. Murders finally became of such frequent occurrence that the better class of the prisoners formed themselves into a "Vigilance Committee," to prevent, if possible, robbery and murder. It was ascertained at length that a gang of some two hundred reckless characters had perpetrated a series of murders—the object being plunder. The victims were, in most cases, newly arrived prisoners. If the gang met with resistance in pursuing their desperate calling, they murdered the poor unfortunate on the spot—either clubbing him to death or by strangulation—a quiet though certain means of accomplishing the object.

The committee having obtained sufficient evi-

dence, waited upon the rebel commandant and asked his assistance in bringing the guilty parties to punishment. To his credit, be it said, he listened attentively to the report of the committee, and furnished a guard which promptly entered the pen where a large number of those implicated were arrested and taken outside the stockade. A judge and jury were selected from among the prisoners, and the trial was at once proceeded with—resulting in the conviction of six of the murderers, who had acted as ringleaders. The evidence was positive in each case. The condemned were given twenty-four hours in which to prepare for death, at the end of which time they were hung, expiating their guilt upon a rudely constructed scaffold. It is, perhaps, needless to say that no more robberies or murders were committed after this summary proceeding.

Sherman having reached Atlanta just as we had completed the tunnels, it was felt that the time for action had arrived. The time was agreed upon, and we anxiously awaited the moment of action. I almost felt the free, untainted air, and yet, while revelling in the imaginative sweets of liberty and freedom, my hopes were foully crushed. At nine o'clock one morning the customary guards entered the enclosure, and deploying across the same, drove us to one side—sixteen hundred of us in a compact mass. We noticed there was some delay in counting the prisoners, which we supposed was the object of their presence, and as the sun, under whose rays we stood, was intensely hot, our situation was anything

but pleasant. We noticed that the rebel officers, standing in a group near the gate, acted nervously, but it was impossible to fathom their intentions. It is only when they move towards one of the sheds that the knowing ones divine the object. When they demolish a board bunk, and commence removing the bags of dirt from the shaft, we feel that every hope has fled—that we had worked in vain. The rebel officers proceeded direct to each of the other tunnels, which proved that we had been foully betrayed—the villain being a lieutenant of an Illinois cavalry regiment, who, on discovery, was compelled to place his cowardly carcass under the protection of the prison authorities—and it was well he did so, for no earthly power could have saved his precious skin had he fallen into the hands of the infuriated managers of the underground railway. Thus ended the tunnelling project in Macon. A few more hours and one of the most brilliant dashes of the war would have been made—the results of which would have won the admiration of our enemies and the thanks of the army and the people of the North.

One evening, Lieutenant Gershon, a New Yorker, was on his way to the spring to procure a cup of water for a sick comrade. The lieutenant was halted by the guard, who stood upon the stockade, but whether he failed to hear the challenge, or supposed the sentinel was speaking to some one else, no one knew. At all events the sentinel shot him dead. In an instant the camp was in a state of commotion. A number of officers ran towards the

spot, but were warned away—the guards shouting themselves hoarse in their attempts to keep them back. Fearing a general massacre, our officers slowly “fell back” to their quarters, and it was an hour and more after this before the body of the slain officer was recovered and taken into the main building, where it was prepared for interment. Richard Barrett, the murderer, was next morning promoted to a corporal, and given the customary furlough for “killing a Yankee.”

The Macon papers, printed at times on coarse brown paper, were very amusing, even though high-priced—fifty-cents being the sum asked for a single copy. During July they kept up the spirits of their readers by publishing the silliest reports of “Confederate successes.” In one column they acknowledged the every-day defeat of General Joe Johnston, but made up for this by saying in another place that Early was “shelling Washington,” had captured Baltimore, and was marching upon Philadelphia. I read in the *Telegraph*, after this, that Early had captured Bangor, Maine. A people that required news of this character to keep them up to the “fighting pitch” were deserving of pity.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NATAL DAY CELEBRATED.

THE Fourth of July was duly celebrated by the prisoners, the enthusiasm being raised while the officers were being counted. Captain Harry H.

Todd, 8th New Jersey Volunteers, was the happy possessor of a miniature silk American flag, which Miss Paradise, of Jersey City, had given him when leaving for the army. The captain carried this flag in his pocket-book. Its display on the morning of the Fourth incited the heartiest cheering, leading to the rendition of the "Star Spangled Banner," by Adjutant Lombard, of Illinois, the chorus being joined in by the entire throng. The rebels, on hearing the cheering, strengthened the line of sentinels and manned the field pieces on the stockade. Roll-call being concluded, we repaired to the fair building, where a meeting was formally organized, Chaplain Nixon, of the 16th Connecticut Volunteers, offering a fervent and decidedly patriotic prayer. Orations were delivered by a number of officers, whose names I do not remember. The exercises, which were of a most interesting character, were continued until broken up by the rebel officer of the day, who entered the building, forcing himself to the speakers, followed by a company armed to the teeth.

After the meeting, which was of the most enjoyable character, Peters and myself set to work and made a blackberry pudding. We spent the last cent of Conover's twenty-dollar greenback in purchasing the berries, flour, etc.; and when the dough had been prepared and everything was in readiness for cooking, we discovered that we had nothing in which to boil it. We knew not what to do, or which way to turn. It was absolutely necessary to have a bag of some sort, but where could such a thing be

had? Those who had such articles doubtless had them in use. After fruitless efforts to borrow something which would answer our purpose, we hit upon the happy expedient of extemporizing the article we so much needed from one of my woolen stockings, knit for me by my dear old grandmother after she had attained the age of fourscore years. I prized the stockings on this account. Running down to the brook in the lower part of the yard, I washed the one which seemed best adapted to hold the dough, and hastened back to my expectant comrade, whose bronzed face reflected great joy when he saw how clean I had made the stocking. Neither of us, however, gave it a critical examination, as that was altogether unnecessary, the urgency of the case not allowing us to indulge in fastidious ceremonies. We lost no time in stuffing the dough into the capacious stocking leg, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing the water boiling around it like a geyser spring. We at length removed the kettle from the fire, fished the precious stocking from the water, and "squeezed" the pudding out upon a board; then with mouths which watered at the tempting sight, enjoyed the fruits of our labors. I never had a dinner which I enjoyed more heartily, although I have an idea that the pudding would have been more palatable had not the berries sunk down to one corner of the dough, and had we had some sweeter sauce than that made of vinegar.

CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER EXCURSION.

THE news which we received from Sherman's army grew more and more encouraging to us, and correspondingly depressing to the rebels. From what we could overhear, when the sentinels conversed loud enough for us to distinguish what they said, we became satisfied that our early removal to another place had been decided upon. Accordingly, on the 27th of July, six hundred officers were sent off to Charleston, and two days later, six hundred others were transported to Savannah. Our keepers could not deceive *us*, for on every hand we saw evidences of Sherman's triumphant march into the heart of the Confederacy, heretofore exempt from the horrors of war. Hundreds of freight cars along the railroad contained "poor white trash," refugees from the upper part of Georgia. These people had been driven from their hitherto peaceful homes, and now they began to suffer some of the horrors which they had provoked. How they would be able to subsist was a mystery.

The ride to Savannah occupied some twelve hours. The country was a wilderness, or nearly so. Only here and there did we see a house, or a farm which looked as if it could be made productive. On leaving the train at the depot in Savannah, we were surrounded by a company called the "Blues,"



Yours Truly
L. C. Lewis.

headed by a "black" band, and were escorted to our new prison-home, which we found to be the old Marine Hospital grounds, property of the United States, luxuriously shaded by beautiful live-oak trees. The streets through which we marched were crowded with people anxious to get a "look at the Yankees." Many females displayed the flag of the stars and bars, and took great pride in attracting our attention thereto. Some even indulged in singing a ridiculous song called the "Bonnie Blue Flag," which, to say the least, did not show very good taste on their part.

I was fearful on leaving Macon that we might be taken to a worse place, if such could be found, but on entering the hospital grounds, my mind was happily set at rest on that score. Indeed, I congratulated myself on the change, when I found ample shade, green grass on which to sleep, and a well of good water, of a sulphurous taste—yet said to contain medicinal properties of a high order. I found the place, which was surrounded on all sides by a high brick wall, to be delightful, and I never slept more tranquilly.

From the fact that no preparations had been made for our reception, we decided that the rebels must have been greatly alarmed when they sent us from Macon. The morning after our arrival at Savannah a number of carpenters entered the yard and erected a "dead line," a necessary appendage to a camp for prisoners. This afforded us a chance to secure pieces of boards, which we used in con-

structing bunks on which to sleep. During the day, one hundred clean tents were issued to us, also an abundance of cooking utensils, etc., and we were further surprised a few days after by receiving boards sufficient to stockade every tent in the yard. With all these things, together with plenty of corn-meal, rice, beans, salt, fresh beef, etc., we made ourselves quite comfortable. The commandant of the camp, Colonel Wayne, of the First Georgia Regulars, and his gentlemanly officers, did all in their power to ameliorate our condition, and none who were there will ever forget the many favors so generously shown. This camp was elysium itself. I attributed the generosity of our new keepers to the fact that they had been to the "front," knew what war was, and treated us accordingly. Had they been "home-guards," our condition would have been made as unpleasant as possible, for "home-guards" must always do something to show their importance.

The tents answered a double purpose, several of them serving to screen tunnelling operations, a work which some of us at once engaged in. Two tunnels were commenced at the same time—one from the large privy vault, the other from Captain Grant's tent. I worked actively on the latter. The soil being of a light, sandy nature, we were enabled to make astonishing progress, succeeding beyond our sanguine expectations. It was while disposing of dirt from the tunnel, one dark night, that I detected a comrade, Captain John Parker, First New Jersey Volunteers, engaged in a similar occupation. We

seated ourselves under a huge live-oak tree and made an arrangement by which both parties should work in unison, and in the event of one tunnel being completed in advance of the other, the one thus finished should be used by all in common. As luck would have it, Parker's tunnel was first completed, and we were notified to get ready for flight. I lost no time in cooking what meal, etc., I had, and at about ten o'clock at night stood waiting in the vault, expecting momentarily to receive the signal to descend the shaft and enter the tunnel, the narrow yet certain path, I fondly hoped, to freedom. Parker, Donovan, and several others had crawled in. What could the matter be? Why so much delay? Our anxiety was finally set at rest by the sudden appearance of those who had but a few minutes before gone into the mouth of the tunnel with such high hopes. Covered with perspiration—for it must be borne in mind that a tunnel of that nature is a "close corporation"—Parker gave the following explanation. Reaching the farthest end of the tunnel, he "probed" the opening, and was about to emerge therefrom when his attention was attracted to a sentinel who stood leaning against the prison-wall a few yards away. Satisfied that our designs were suspected and that egress was impossible, the gallant captain "kicked back," and the party retreated, feet foremost, to the starting-point, and a more crest-fallen crowd I never saw. We had no means of covering our tracks, it being impossible to refill the hole in the sidewalk outside the prison-yard,

and as we knew the gap would be discovered when daylight came, we slunk away to our quarters, and slept soundly till the sun rose next morning. When daylight came, the tunnel was discovered in a singular manner. A cow, in passing along, had fallen into the pit, from which she was unable to extricate herself. A vigilant sentinel, seeing her predicament, raised an alarm, which was speedily responded to by the officer of the day, who hastened to the spot, accompanied by two "reliefs."

The prison commandant subsequently entered the yard: he expressed his surprise at our conduct, especially as he had shown much forbearance, and had been uniformly kind and obliging. He forbade further tunnelling. Should the attempt be made, however, discovery was certain, and would lead to unpleasant results. With this frank expostulation he retired. We congratulated ourselves upon the non-discovery of the tunnel in Grant's tent, and this we determined to push forward to an early completion, although we felt that it would be necessary to extend it into a grove on the opposite side of the street. But during the afternoon the commandant again appeared, this time with a party of officers, each of whom carried an iron ramrod. With these they probed the ground in each tent. They were about to cease their examination, when one of the officers accidentally dropped his rammer, which on being picked up, by some unaccountable means, became attached to the strap of one of the bags sunk in the shaft, and exclaiming, "Hallo, what's

this?" stooped down, and after exerting considerable strength, hauled out a bag filled with dirt. Although the occupants of that tent expressed surprise at the discovery, nothing which they could say in explanation would satisfy the Confederates, who ordered the removal of the tent to another spot. The tunnel was destroyed during the afternoon, and again were we doomed to bitter disappointment.

A day or two after this we commenced two other tunnels, and had made considerable headway with them, when one night we were discovered in the act of dragging the bags therefrom. Captains Grant and Benson, acknowledging that they were the responsible parties (although none of us saw any crime in the transaction), were marched to the city prison, where they were kept in close confinement for a week. They were on the point of escaping therefrom, when they were escorted back to the yard. They reported to us that there were many Unionists in the city, and that if any of us could get away, the prospect of meeting with friendly assistance was extremely good.

There was one amusing, if not ridiculous feature of prison-life which may be worth mentioning; that was the all-absorbing question of "exchange." This word was in every one's mouth, and but little else was thought of or talked about. Every day, through the dreary months of our captivity, we heard rumors of a contemplated exchange. It, being a question of vital importance, was debated *pro* and *con* by all. We credited almost everything that we heard in re-

lation to this matter, especially if the report corresponded with our wishes and our hopes. The subject finally became a farce, and when two officers or more were seen conversing together, cries of "Louder on Exchange" were sure to greet them. No term was used as much as "Louder on Exchange," and the phrase prompted the following, written by Lieutenant J. B. Vance, Company K, 95th Ohio Vols.:

"LOUDER ON EXCHANGE."

AIR—PUTTING ON AIRS.

Of slang words there are many,
Which this war about did bring,
And among the rest, now there is one,
About which I shall sing.
You need not think I mean you ill,
Nor take it very strange,
When I tell you that the words I mean,
Are "Louder on Exchange."

CHORUS—Every day, and every day,
To me it is not strange,
To hear the prisoners calling out,
"Louder on Exchange."

A group of friends together meet,
With all arrangements made,
Just to while away a pleasant hour,
Some place in the shade.
They are talking o'er the various plans
Our government could arrange,
When some one suddenly bellows out,
"Louder on Exchange."

CHORUS.—Every day, etc.

Then you chance to get a paper,
That contains a little news—
Not enough to raise your spirits up,
Or drive away the blues.
A crowd gathers round you, and
The first thing they exclaim,
What's the news from our army,
Next—"Louder on Exchange!"

CHORUS.—Every day, etc.

Then you hear of General Foster,
And the rebel General Jones,
How they swapped off fifty men,
And sent them to their homes.
You think the news is good enough,
And nothing now remains ;
You cannot help from calling out,
"Louder on Exchange!"

CHORUS.—Every day, etc.

Our authorities at Washington,
That very well we know,
Will release us all in course of time,
But it seems so very slow.
And when we do get out of this,
And have our freedom gained,
There will be no more this calling out,
"Louder on Exchange."

CHORUS.—Every day, etc.

This song became very popular, and was sung by all the prisoners with a vim peculiar to themselves and their condition.

One morning, noticing that the Johnnies were more quiet than usual, we suspected that something had gone wrong with them, and we became decid-

edly anxious to learn the news. Towards noon the sergeant of the guard gave us a copy of the *Republican*, which explained the cause of grief on the part of our keepers. We read with pleasure of the capture of the "Gate City" (Atlanta), by Sherman. Seeing the officer of the day passing through camp shortly after, we inquired whether there was any news from Atlanta. "No-o, gentlemen! I—oh! I haven't seen a paper in a week," and he walked hurriedly away, as if he had an important engagement elsewhere. We felt sorry for him.

While we had many comforts at Savannah that had been denied us elsewhere, we never could account for the caution which the Confederates took to prevent us from ascertaining the news. We petitioned General McClaws for permission to purchase the papers, but he disapproved our request.

During the cool of mornings and evenings we took such exercise as was available, and felt all the better therefor. Take it all in all, our sojourn in Savannah was pleasant, far better than we expected, and my recollections of the place are of an agreeable character. Many a time afterward I regretted leaving it.

Nothing in particular occurred to disturb the monotony of our existence at Savannah. After we found tunnelling unproductive, we settled down to the natural order of things, becoming quite philosophic the more we reflected upon the hopelessness of making our escape.

CHAPTER XI.

A RIDE TO THE "CITY BY THE SEA."

IT was at a late hour on the night of September 12th, when we received an order to prepare two days' rations, and be ready for departure at day-break. Immediately the camp was in the usual state of bustle attendant upon an order to move elsewhere, and a thousand and one rumors speedily got into circulation, followed, of course, by considerable excitement. True enough, as a clock in a neighboring church spire struck four, we marched out of the gate and through the principal streets to the depot, passing *en route* the Pulaski monument, the statue upon which appeared to look pityingly upon us—many of the officers being barefooted and without proper apparel.

A freight train was in waiting, and as none of us had any superfluous baggage, it required but a few minutes to complete our embarkation, when the signal being given to the engineer, the locomotive puffed away, and the quiet city was soon left far behind. The ride to Charleston was not of a particularly attractive or romantic character, the ground being low and swampy, but said to be admirably adapted to rice-growing. Few houses were to be seen between the two cities.

We reached Charleston about the middle of the afternoon, and were met at the depot by large num-

bers of the slave population. While crossing the Ashley river we had a view of the harbor, Fort Sumpter, and the surrounding islands, but the train passed over the bridge too swiftly for us to observe all the beauties of the landscape. The weather was intensely hot, and several officers were overcome by the tropical heat.

Formed in a column of fours we moved through narrow and dirty streets to the city jail-yard, before whose frowning walls we halted. A huge double gate at last swung lazily open, and into the filthiest place upon the American continent we marched.

As we passed in an Irish woman cursed us bitterly, expressing the wish that "not one of yees iver gits out alive." The yard, as I first saw it, beggared description, and my heart almost failed me when I saw the terrible surroundings. I took possession of an "A tent" which had been pitched in the mud near the scaffold, but on learning that a prisoner had just died there with the yellow fever, I deserted it, and pre-empted a dry spot of ground directly under the scaffold, which place I occupied for two weeks.

When night came I spread an old rotten blanket which I had found, upon the ground, and attempted to sleep, but the infernal din created by the felons, of both sexes, who crowded to the grated windows for air, rendered such a luxury impossible. A heavy, chilling dew, which saturated my blanket and scanty apparel, added to my discomforts, and made me wish that we had not been forced to leave Savannah.

At daybreak next morning I heard the "boom" of a heavy gun, and from the conduct of the older prisoners, I suspected that the Union General, John G. Foster, had renewed his fire. Sure enough. In a few moments we heard the terrible hissing and sissing of a monster shell, which, passing to our right, exploded with a fearful report a few hundred yards away, in front of the jail. A terrific cheer from the prisoners in the yard, workhouse, Roper and Marine hospitals, greeted the advent of the shell. I had heard much concerning the bombardment of Charleston, and in April, 1863, was on the expedition sent down to aid the navy in the capture of the city. For a week, a hundred shells a day were thrown into the city—some of them being projected a distance of between six and seven miles. Their explosion prevented sleep, and a very wakeful time I had until I became accustomed to the din. Very few shots were made that failed of execution, most of the missiles fell crashing through buildings, or setting them on fire, which was the point most aimed at. A Catholic priest, who entered the yard one day, said his house had been struck three times within the previous twenty-four hours, and as the general was sending over his compliments a little too often and too close for his personal comfort, he had been compelled to remove to a point out of reach of the guns. On the 17th of September a shell exploded in a large house nearly opposite the workhouse, setting it on fire. The firing ceased for a time, but when a great column of black smoke ascended skyward, the firing

was resumed; the shells came over with rapidity, dropping, one after the other, in nearly the same place, and preventing the firemen (negroes) from working for the preservation of adjoining property. The conflagration raged with violence all the afternoon, and till a late hour at night, when, having nothing further to feed upon, it died out, leaving the city in frightful darkness. One engine which the darkies ran by the jail, was "smashed by one of dese rotten shot," as the foreman told us. Quite a number of persons were killed at this fire, according to the newspapers. At one time we were fearful that our gunners might possibly miss their calculations, and drop a shell or two in the jail-yard, but nothing of the kind occurred, although several pieces of shell fell quite near the spot where I had my headquarters, one piece tearing away a limb from a small tree standing near the water-closet, in the corner of the yard, which made me nervous.

One day a shell demolished the rebel commissariat, which afforded the authorities an excuse for depriving us of three days' rations, while another shell was found bearing the label, "*Show me the way to the arsenal.*"

To compare our treatment received here with that at Savannah, it will only be necessary for me to say that the following rations and quantities were issued me for ten days:

One pint of corn-meal, one quart of flour, one and a half quarts of beans (filled with worms, which answered for fresh beef), one tablespoonful of lard,

half-pint of sour molasses, one quart of rice—half worms, one spoonful of salt.

No wonder I weighed but ninety pounds at this time. During our sojourn at Charleston, the yellow fever raged with unabated violence, the city being a vast charnel-house. Several of our keepers died in the office of the jail. Although the yard was a fetid place—an awful stench constantly arising therefrom—and we had neither palatable food nor sufficient quantities of what was issued, and no water in which to wash or clean our persons, yet we were miraculously preserved, which fact we acknowledged was entirely due to the gracious interposition of a merciful Providence.

We petitioned General Jones for healthier quarters, but he refused to listen to our prayers—for all he cared we might continue to lie in the mud and filth, and DIE! Some officers, however, finally gave their parole, and obtained pleasant quarters on Broad Street, and in other localities.

One afternoon, a long-haired, clean-faced gentleman, whose garb betrayed the calling of a clergyman, visited us, and after commiserating our wretchedness, rejoiced our hearts by saying that he had it in his power to ameliorate our condition. Was he a commissioner of exchange in disguise, I wondered? No. He was simply a minister of the gospel, and having a sum of money—Confederate notes, of course, for which he had no use at present—it occurred to him that he could be serving his Master and himself at the same time by loaning his scrip

to the unfortunate men who were suffering the vicissitudes of war. He took us to be gentlemen—for certainly the government would not commission any man who was not a “gentleman”—and being “gentlemen,” of course if we took his treasure, giving him drafts on our friends at home for *gold*, at the rate of one dollar for six in Confederate scrip, of course the “drafts would be honored” when presented. I was finally prevailed upon by the “Lord’s disciple” to accept some two hundred dollars, giving him in return therefor a draft on my father, who was to redeem it in *gold*. Other officers bled the disciple without any compunction, some of them drawing a thousand dollars each. The “disciple,” who doubtless imagined that he was going about doing good—for *himself*, speedily got clear of his scrip, and bidding us “good day, *gentlemen*,” took his departure. I will venture to say that he never realized enough in *gold* from that afternoon’s work to pay him for the wear of his jaw while talking to us upon the advantages that would accrue from the transaction. A few months after I got home from the army, my draft was presented for payment, but in less time than it takes me to relate the incident, the holder was kicked down two pair of office stairs. I never heard anything more about the matter. The money which the old man insisted upon my accepting, was expended to very good advantage, in the purchase of fresh white bread, occasionally, and onions and potatoes.

On the 9th of September, feeling as if I could

not long survive the torments of the fetid place, I wrote to Maj.-Gen. John G. Foster, whom I learned was now in command of the besieging forces, and a few days later I received the following :

HEADQRS. DPT. OF THE SOUTH, HILTON HEAD, S. C.
Sept. 21, 1864.

LIEUT. J. MADISON DRAKE,
Charleston Jail-Yard.

SIR:—Major-General Foster directs me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th inst., asking his assistance in procuring an exchange for you. He sympathizes with you in your confinement, and desires me to say that he shall not forget the services of yourself or your gallant regiment in North Carolina. Should, however, exchanges be resumed in this department, he feels that justice will require him to seek the delivery of our officers and men as nearly as possible in the order in which they were captured. Very respectfully yours,
STEWART L. WOODFORD, Lieut.-Col. etc.

CHAPTER XII.

MEETING OLD FRIENDS.

TOWARDS the latter part of September, I was engaged, one intensely hot afternoon, in endeavoring to extemporize a tent at the foot of the scaffold, when I imagined I heard my name called. Looking around, and seeing no one who appeared to be addressing me, I went on with my labor.

Directly I heard, "Drake, is that you, Drake?" I stepped back a few feet, and looking over the high brick wall, whither I now knew the voice proceeded, saw my old friend, Captain James Belger, standing upon the rear piazza of the Marine Hospital, leaning forward over the hand-railing. "Don't you want to leave that hole and come in here?" enquired the gallant captain. "Yes, but how am I to get in there?" I asked.

"There is nothing easier," replied Belger. "Give your parole, and you can come around at once."

"I'll never do that, for I mean to get away at the first opportunity," I responded.

"If you don't leave that filthy yard pretty soon, you will not live to make another attempt; you look like death now," insisted my good friend.

After some further parleying, I took the captain's advice, gave my parole to an officer who speedily waited upon me for that purpose, and that evening had a delightful chat with Belger, Captain Seth B. Ryder and others, whom I had not seen or heard from since leaving Macon. Captain Ryder, to whose squad I was at once assigned, searched about the building until he found a "bunk," which was allotted to my use. Now I began to live again. With the rations, which Ryder always divided in an equitable manner, and with the money which I now had, I managed to have plenty to eat. We "chipped in" and purchased several instruments, and every afternoon and evening large crowds were attracted in front of our quarters to listen to charming vocal and in-

strumental music. Our situation was now so comfortable that we began to feel like staying, but I never remember of any camp that we liked where we remained long after getting things fixed to suit us.

CHAPTER XIII.

ANOTHER CHANGE OF BASE, AND A LEAP FOR LIBERTY.

ON the evening of October 5th it became apparent that the Confederates were not content to leave us and "well enough" alone. From certain movements on their part we became satisfied that another change of base had been resolved upon by our keepers. To be prepared for any emergency which might arise, Captain Harry H. Todd, 8th New Jersey Volunteers, Captain J. E. Lewis, 11th Connecticut Volunteers, Captain Albert Grant, 19th Wisconsin Volunteers, and myself, resolved to escape whenever removed from Charleston, and accordingly purchased a quantity of supplies, such as lucifer matches, onions, etc. During the evening we succeeded in getting hold of a piece of an old map of the Southern States, and this we studied till a late hour, when we retired—to again dream of "freedom."

We had not been mistaken in our prognostications, for breakfast was hardly concluded when a

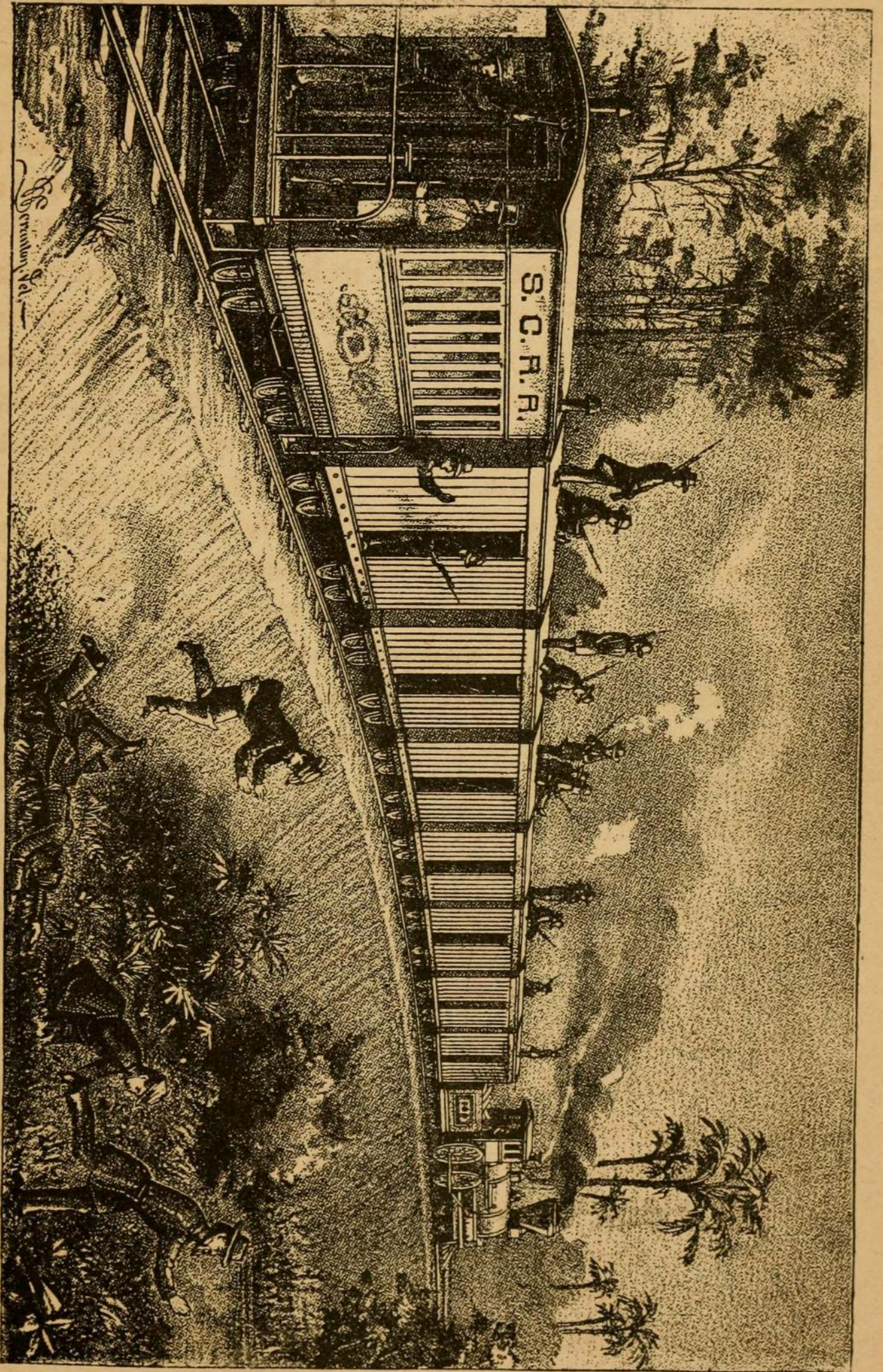
squad of Confederates marched up in front of the hospital, and bade us "come out." In ten minutes our entire party were in the street, where another batch joined us, when we started for the depot—marching up King street, I believe it was. The thoroughfare was a wide one and looked as if it had once been prominent, but now all was changed. The stores were closed, many buildings had been demolished, and grass grew luxuriantly between the cobblestones of the pavement. War had had its revenge upon the city by the sea—the birthplace of the hydra-headed monster had been prostrated. When we reached the train, myself and three comrades kept closely together, and, watching our opportunity, sprang into the car adjoining the "caboose," which contained the reserve guard. We had an object in this, for we well knew that in the event of our jumping from the car in safety, the train, being some distance beyond us when our flight was discovered, would prevent the guards, posted on the top of each car, from hitting us, unless they were much better marksmen than "home-guards" in those days were supposed to be. At all events the car suited our plans best, and into it some fifty officers were huddled together. Just before starting, a sergeant and six armed men also climbed in. They took the precaution to close the sliding-doors on one side, and opening the others on the shady side, deliberately sat down therein. We had not expected this manœuvre on their part, and for a time felt that it would be impossible to leap from the car. As

good luck would have it, the rickety old locomotive gave out several times along the road, and much delay occurred in repairing its worn-out machinery. Myself and comrades kept as close to the open doors as possible, and did our best to cultivate the good-will of the guards, who, finally, became quite sociable and communicative. We purchased black molasses cakes from the old colored women who came to the train whenever it stopped, and occasionally we bought cigars, at fifty cents each, which we presented to the guards, who, from their actions, judged we were capital fellows. The sergeant, during the afternoon, permitted Todd, Grant, and Lewis to sit in the open doorway, with their legs dangling outside. I now thought it was "all up" with poor me, but I concluded to maintain my position and watch events.

Long before the train reached the point where we had decided to leave it, I had succeeded in removing the percussion caps from every rifle in the car. This was only accomplished after repeated efforts. Had I been detected at this dangerous work, perhaps it would have gone hard with me, as my friend Belger has often said, but "he who would himself be free, must strike the blow." When I removed the cap from the last rifle, which required much tact in its consummation, I felt that half the battle was gained, and the victory ours. Giving the cap to Captain Belger who had repeatedly attempted to dissuade me from the dangerous task, I told him that I intended shortly to leap from the car, and requested him, if he lived to return North, to write to

my family, giving them information of my escape, and the route which I had made up my mind to take to rejoin them. I did this, because I was somewhat fearful of failing in an undertaking which my comrades constantly declared to be foolhardy and dangerous in the extreme. Belger protested against my jumping from the car, saying that if I succeeded in reaching *terra firma* without breaking my head or a limb, which he regarded as a certainty, I could not hope to gain the Union lines, more than five hundred miles distant. He argued that the South Carolina swamps, through which I must pass, were obstacles not easily to be overcome, while if we reached the mountains we would either starve or die at the hands of the guerrillas who infested them. The weather, too, would soon be inclement, and exposure to it, sure to result in terrible suffering. My good friend, by whose side, almost, I had stood in many a battle, implored me to follow his advice, but with eyes bedimmed, I pressed his hands, and took my position near the doorway, ready to leap therefrom the moment my companions sprang off.

The shades of night began to envelop the earth just before the train approached the southern end of the long and rickety wooden structure spanning the Congaree river, which made it quite difficult for me to watch the movements of my friends. The sergeant and his men seemed to occupy positions nearer to the door, which caused apprehension on my part, a suspicion taking possession of my mind that our intentions were suspected, and our plans



A LEAP FOR LIBERTY.

about to be thwarted. We could not converse with each other, owing to the peculiarity of our situation and the proximity of our enemies. We each held our breath, and anxiously bided our time and opportunity. The train finally touched upon the left bank of the Congaree, and still Todd did not give the signal. Peering out I saw that the cars continued to pass over trestle-work, which probably accounted for the delay. Todd suddenly became sick, or pretended to be sick, which was all the same, so far as his purpose was concerned, and while gagging, preparatory to vomiting, he *slid out of the car*—Lewis and Grant, both of whom occupied seats by his side, going with him. I saw them depart, and as the rebel sergeant threw up his hands in dismay, exclaiming “My God!” I sprang out of the doorway with the bound of a man determined to be free, if a single jump would attain that object. I shall never forget the thousand and one thoughts that crowded through my mind as I leaped from that rapidly moving train, and whirled through the air on the principle of a buzz-saw. That moment was the most thrilling of any I ever experienced, and the incentive must needs be a powerful one that would again tempt me to repeat it, even under the most favorable circumstances.

Regaining my feet, I hastened along the railway embankment until I found my three companions, all of whom, like myself, were in the possession of every faculty, neither of them being at all injured, although two of them received scratches by tumbling

into a bramble-bush. But we had no leisure to reflect upon our novel situation. Fortune had been kind to us so far—that was sufficient for all practical purposes. Besides, those rifle flashes—the train was now a mile and more distant—warned us that if we would avoid recapture, much remained to be accomplished. At once striking off into a dismal swamp, which lined the river's bank, we placed as much space as was possible between ourselves and our infuriated pursuers. Captain Grant narrowly escaped drowning, shortly after starting, but we fished him out of the pond, and continued our flight. To add to our discomforts, the rain fell in torrents; and believing this would serve to efface our tracks and partially destroy the scent, we felt thankful for the storm, which continued throughout the entire night with unabated violence. It was impossible to see one another, save by the lightning's fitful flashes, the darkness rendering walking difficult. The swamp, at another time, would have been regarded as a dismal place, but now it had the greatest attractions, and was considered the most delightful resort we had ever visited. By and by, hearing the deep baying of the blood-hounds, which sent the blood coursing double quick through our veins, we redoubled our efforts and waded deeper into the recesses of the gloomy woods. The dogs would be unable to track us in the swamp, on account of the water, but if they surrounded it, would we be able to escape them when we ventured forth, which we must do, sooner or later? The wind howled,

but occasionally, as we heard the dogs and the voices of their owners, our reflections were not of the pleasantest character.

Towards daybreak, when everything had become quiet, I began to reflect upon the dangers I had escaped, upon the many chances of fortune which had resulted favorably to me, upon the liberty I was beginning to enjoy and which I had long sought to gain. This greatly moved me, and in thankfulness to a merciful Providence I felt as though suffocating with sensibility until tears came to my relief.

We were somewhat alarmed next morning, on hearing the dogs barking furiously, as if they had the right scent, but towards noon they were called off, and all was peace and quiet. During the day, which was a terribly long one, we stood in mud and water, waist deep, at times endeavoring to while away the hours in playing cards, but the games were totally uninteresting. All our conversations were carried on in whispers for several days, as we were fearful of being overheard. We neglected no possible precaution, having resolved to take no risks, if such could be avoided.

CHAPTER XIV.

A START FOR GOD'S COUNTRY.

JUST as the sun disappeared we stood upon the verge of the swamp, listening attentively, and not seeing or hearing anything which looked like danger

to us, we emerged into an open field, surrounded by a heavy undergrowth of trees. A new bright moon appeared to give us the point of direction and to guide us on our lonely way. We moved with extreme caution, halting repeatedly to listen, but nothing disturbed the harmony of that wild, save the chirping of birds. Avoiding roads and paths, and keeping as near the woods as possible, we hastened on—our course being northwest. The Wateree river on our right, and the railroad to our left, would serve us in maintaining the direction which we had agreed to take. We made rapid progress during the night, marching at the rate of between three and a half and four miles per hour. It was the darkest hour before daybreak when we “struck” a broad smooth turnpike. Seeing a white object near by, which resembled a mile-post, we climbed over the fence, and striking a match, read “19 miles to C.” At this instant, it seemed as if pandemonium had been let loose, for down the road came a number of dogs, followed by men who shouted and cursed in a horrible manner. Springing over the fence with an agility that would have reflected credit upon acrobats, we ran with lightning-like rapidity across an open field in the direction of the river, until so much exhausted by the exertion that we were compelled to halt for a “rest,” lying down on the bank of the river and sleeping serenely till the sun’s heat awoke us.

Having no disposition to lose time, we resumed our journey, and almost before aware of it, had ap-

proached to within a short distance of a large steam saw-mill. We "laid low" and watched the premises. Seeing two men and a dog moving about, we retrograded, and crossing a large open field, gained a heavy woods, where we commenced the preparation of "breakfast." It was the work of but a few moments to kindle a fire (always a small one), in which to roast some ears of corn. While felicitating each other upon the good time we were having, our hair was made to stand upon each particular end by seeing a number of dogs dashing towards us. We left that spot in some haste, leaving the corn in the ashes, and I have never thought well of a dog since they deprived me of a breakfast that morning. We made for a heavy woods, and after entering, found them bordered with a stream of running water—too wide to jump, too deep to wade, and impossible for me to swim. What to do we knew not. The dogs were advancing, howling at every leap, and unless we could cross that stream and find safety in that swamp, all would be lost, for recapture, if not death, would be certain. Hearing the voices of men, now squarely upon our trail, we continued on up the right bank of the stream, until our hearts leaped with joy at the sight of an old tree, which in falling had completely spanned it. Todd, Lewis and myself crawled in safety to the opposite side, where we awaited Grant, whose movements, at this time, were provokingly slow. The old man finally reached the middle of the stream, when the log gave way, precipitating him into the water, ten feet below. Reaching him a branch from

a tree, he had the kindness to take hold, when we pulled him out. But didn't he swear when he found that the extra pair of stockings which he carried in his pocket, had become soaked? We lost no time in gaining the densest portion of what proved to be an immense cypress swamp, and as forbidding-looking reptiles were too numerous for our personal comfort, we crawled out upon the uppermost branches of a mammoth pine-tree which had been prostrated by the wind—perhaps many years ago—to dry our apparel and obtain needed rest. Had it not been for venomous snakes, which we saw crawling about, we would perhaps have remained here all night, but the snakes were too many for us, rendering a change of quarters absolutely necessary for our safety. Todd climbed several lofty trees for the purpose of observation, but he failed to see anything which resembled land. We made repeated attempts to get out of the swamp, failing each time, and were about to give up in despair, being nearly exhausted, when at sun down, we suddenly emerged therefrom, having fortunately struck a high and open country, a stretch that we had not before seen. Away to our right, we saw a village, and lights flitting about; but having no relatives or friends in that direction, we took a northerly course, tramping uninterruptedly for hours across beautiful plantations, stopping now and then to pull sweet potatoes which we found along the route. It was a delightful night, calculated to inspire men in our position with hope, and the reader may rest assured we took every advantage of it.

Feeling encouraged with what we had already accomplished, and believing that if we at all times manifested *prudence* we might reach the Union lines, we halted just before daylight and roasted some delicious sweet potatoes and several ears of corn which we had plucked from still standing stalks. We also boiled coffee—a small quantity of which we had brought with us from Charleston.

The breakfast was all that we desired, and we partook of it with great relish, Todd estimating that such a meal would cost us forty dollars each in Charleston or Macon. The atmosphere being quite frosty, we kept the fire burning, then laid down and courted tired nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep. How long we slept I never knew. When I awoke I saw a party of armed men running up the slope towards us. Self-preservation being the first law of nature, and having no weapons, save cudgels, wherewith to defend ourselves, we sprang to our feet and darted off in an opposite direction, speedily gaining a contiguous swamp, whose lonesome depths we became quite familiar with before the sun went down that day. It was not till we felt "safe" that we discovered an irreparable loss. We retreated from our camping ground in such haste that we left behind our cooking utensils, knives, forks, a towel, several boxes of matches, etc., besides our entire stock of rations.

This was a terrible misfortune, causing intense wretchedness. The food we did not care so much about, but the matches and towel, and especially

the knives and the pot in which we boiled our coffee, etc., would be sadly missed, and so they often were. We remained in the swamp till after dark, then commenced our tramp, keeping as near the woodland as possible.

Next morning broke in great splendor, the country presenting a charming appearance. We continued to maintain a sharp lookout for the "men folks," and kept steadily on until noon, when we sat down on the edge of a heavy woods to "rest." We slept an hour or two, and feeling refreshed, pursued a course heading to the North, walking rapidly, noticing during the afternoon a number of houses, also white boys and negroes busy at work. Towards morning, the weather became quite cold, and being greatly fatigued, we looked about, in a quiet little valley, for a place where we could sleep without fear of interruption. Seeing a small frame dwelling, somewhat dilapidated, which looked as if it had not been recently occupied, we cautiously neared it, and finding everything clear, entered. The ground floor, filled with straw, afforded us ample fuel, and after warming sufficiently, we threw ourselves back upon the straw, and soon were in the land of nod. I do not remember when I slept more comfortably than in that old shanty. We made the most of it, as we might not find so luxurious a couch again in the C. S. A.

CHAPTER XV.

AN EXCITING ADVENTURE.

CAREFULLY extinguishing the fire, we closed the door, went out into the frosty air, and were well on our way when the sun came peeping over some small hills on our right. How hungry we had become! I thought I should perish, for we had been fasting a good while. We visited a field where corn had been recently grown, and our search therein was rewarded with success, although the ears picked up were both hard and dry. The question of subsistence began to grow unpleasantly urgent, and we thought of little else now. We saw a white boy driving cows, and secreted ourselves in the bushes until he had passed by, then made for the low lands, in order to escape being seen by the inmates of several farm houses which were but a short distance ahead. In a swamp we found berries, grapes, etc., upon which we gorged ourselves for an hour, when we continued on our way, the walking being exceedingly unpleasant, owing to the mud and water.

During the afternoon it fell to the lot of Grant and myself to make an effort to procure food of some sort, and with this in view we made a reconnoissance to the rear of a small house near the edge of the swamp. We crawled along upon the ground until we got quite near to the habitation, when, not having noticed any men about the premises, we

raised up and started towards the house. We had gone but a few yards, however, when we saw three rebels emerge from the kitchen, and several dogs following closely at their heels. The breath nearly left my body, but I retained sufficient presence of mind to drop to the ground, and looking around, I saw that the captain had done likewise. I saw no way of escape, still hope did not entirely desert me. We fairly hugged the ground, with our faces towards the Johnnies, and in this manner, *slid backwards* to the swamp, gaining which we sprang to our feet and ran to our comrades, who were in ill-humor when they saw that we had failed to procure for them something to eat, demonstrating how ungrateful men can become when they are more than half-starved. Fearful that we might have been seen, we sprang into a stream of running water and waded *downwards* for a mile or so in order to more effectually destroy the scent, should the ever dreaded dogs get upon our trail. We then crossed a deep creek by crawling over a pole, which we had to drag a long distance through the swamp for bridge purposes. We made all the progress possible, and as the shades of night once more gathered around us, we built a fire at the foot of a large turpentine tree, and lying down, were soon wrapped in sleep. Awakened soon after by a terrible crackling noise, we saw the flames had climbed the tree a distance of twenty feet, illuminating the woods, and making everything near by as bright as day. We knew how useless it would be to attempt to extinguish

the fire, so we ran away from that spot as fast as our legs could carry us, our movements being greatly accelerated by the blowing of a horn, which is never sounded at night, except as a signal of danger or trouble. Had a high wind prevailed, the woods would have been destroyed, for turpentine trees burn like tinder. We could not travel much farther without food. I was so weak I could scarcely place one foot before the other, and it was doubtful whether I could hold out much longer. I had, since the battle of Roanoke Island, suffered from a chronic complaint, which, with my experience in the prison-pens, had greatly enfeebled me. Captain Todd, a sturdy Scotsman, always encouraged me, and at all times lent me a helping hand. When he could save me from getting wet, he took me in his strong arms and carried me across streams of cold water. At an early hour next morning, we struck a wagon road in the woods, and shortly afterwards observed a small house, from the rudely-constructed chimney of which was lazily ascending blue smoke. Secreting ourselves in the underbrush adjacent, we watched the premises for more than half an hour, until satisfied that there were no men about, when Todd and Lewis, their turn now, crawled up, and after listening at the door, timidly knocked, asking for food. Grant and myself remained near by to give the alarm, should danger threaten. We saw our comrades enter, and great was our joy thereat. We could hardly restrain ourselves from following, so great was our hunger. They did not return as

we expected, and we speculated on the causes which induced them to tarry when they knew that we were nearly famished. Directly we saw two rebels standing at the door, leaning on their rifles. How they got there, or where they came from, we could not tell; we had heard nothing, seen nothing, but there they were, and what could we do about it? Nothing remained but to await developments. Strange to say, the incident ended all right. By and by the door opens, and out step Todd and Lewis, followed by the "Johnnies." They laugh quite heartily together, which surprises us, and as they pass along, we hear the two "Johnnies" coaxing the two Yankees to accompany them to Ridgway to—vote. We follow noiselessly at a respectful distance, and when the parties separate, we hasten to join our comrades, who had brought us a quart of sweet potatoes and a piece of corn-bread, for which they had paid the poor housekeeper fifteen dollars. Grant and myself made short work of the bread, as we marched rapidly along, when Todd gave us the particulars of his visit. He said that after entering the humble domicile, the woman kindly invited them to sit down at the table and breakfast. They stood not upon the order of the invitation, but did as requested. The meal was nearly finished when they saw the two rebs enter—one of whom was a brother of the hostess, at home on a furlough. Todd took in the situation at a glance, and at once engaged the new-comers in conversation, using the slang of the "poor white trash," which he could

imitate to perfection. The rebs eyed Todd and Lewis suspiciously, that was easily to be seen, but as it was *do or die*, the offensive was at once assumed. Todd lied in so plausible a manner, that the Johnnies were speedily thrown off their guard, and in a few minutes the party might have been adjudged members of the same command, so very communicative were each to the other. Finally, the rebs invited Todd and Lewis to accompany them to the polls to vote, saying whisky would be free and plenty. Todd said he didn't take any interest in politics, and preferred being excused,—besides, he was anxious to reach his home at Ebenezer, N. C., his mother being very ill. We congratulated ourselves upon getting clear of the well-meaning "Johnnies," for it was a very narrow escape indeed.

The country which we were now exploring was quite hilly, proving that we had made considerable headway, and that if careful, we might yet be able to reach the mountains. Shunning, during the day, all paths and roads, we did not walk as fast as at night, when there was less danger, and when we could avail ourselves of the thoroughfares. Just before dark we found, near the edge of a swamp, some corn still on stalks, also an abundance of brown beans. We picked all that it was convenient for us to carry, and entering the swamp, built a fire where we cooked the beans in a pint tin basin, and roasted our corn. Under the protection of a bough-house, we slept serenely for several hours.

Long before daylight we were on our journey,

marching till noon without a halt. We baked more beans—a tedious process—roasted corn, and feasted sumptuously thereon. During the afternoon I met with a great misfortune—my right foot giving out. This was my greatest cause for sorrow till the other failed to answer the purpose intended. Todd was attacked by a large venomous snake, which he succeeded in killing after a desperate engagement. Owing to the openness of the country we made but little progress during the day. It was impossible to reach the heavy woodland without diverging a long distance from our true course. While resting in a small grove, near the turnpike, we heard the sound of an axe. Grant, satisfied that it must be wielded by a negro, proceeded in the direction of the welcome sound, and found, without difficulty, the object of his search. The poor old slave was greatly frightened on seeing the captain, who soon gained the darkey's confidence. The slave said his "mass'r" was a "bad man," but he would do all in his power to relieve Grant's distress, if the latter would meet him at the same place after dark. He promised to bring all the food he could get. Before the captain could take the bearings of the spot, the negro suddenly became very much excited, and bade him run, "for dere comes mass'r." Grant turned his head, and seeing a white man advancing towards him, took to his heels. We saw Grant running as if for life, and wondered what the matter could be. He took a circuitous course, and was soon out of our sight. Positive that there was danger, we "laid low."

Directly we saw a white man coming squarely towards where we lay. In his arms he carried two or three dozen ears of corn, which he had just plucked from the stalks. He looked neither to the right nor the left, which convinced us that he had not seen Grant, who was still *non est*. We watched him closely, and the nearer he advanced, the more did I perspire, for we had determined to kill him in case he discovered us. We could not allow him to continue on if he saw us, for he would certainly betray us, in which case our recapture or death was quite certain—as we could not hope to reach a swamp in case of a vigorous pursuit. I was devoutly thankful when he passed by, with his sorrowful eyes cast upon the ground. He never knew the danger he was in, or that he had saved his own life. The captain soon after rejoined us, narrating his experience, and advising us to wait for night, in order to meet the darkey, but the majority deciding the locality to be dangerous, we hurried away. Whether the slave kept his appointment we never knew. It rained nearly all night, but the sun appeared in the morning and speedily dried our soaked apparel.

The morning of the thirteenth was a glorious one. The sun shone brightly on the foliage, which had already assumed a myriad of beautiful colors, caused by the action of the frost. Troubled with our complaint—hunger—we reconnoitred along the outskirts of several plantations for something to eat, but our persevering efforts went unrewarded. Noticing a large number of negroes at work in a

cotton-field, we crawled to within a short distance of them, and endeavored to attract their attention. When they at last saw us, the poor creatures raised an alarm and ran toward their houses, making a great noise. Not deeming it advisable to longer remain, we hastened away in an opposite direction, running some four or five miles until we believed ourselves safe, when we halted and cooked some beans, which we had providentially found along the way. While enjoying refreshing sleep, we were ruthlessly awakened by Lewis, who was endeavoring to kill a huge cotton snake which, to his terror, he had found crawling upon his person. His snakeship was finally killed. At sunset we started again and continued on until it became too dark (in the woods) for us to proceed farther. It was quite difficult at times for us to keep the north star in sight, and unless we could follow that bright guide there was but little use in moving on, as we should lose more ground than we could gain.

CHAPTER XVI.

FED BY NEGROES IN THE SWAMPS.

NEXT day we were made happy in finding some wild grapes, also pomegranates, which we devoured in a greedy manner. While picking pomegranates we were suddenly confronted by a colored boy and a white girl, the latter running off on seeing us. We entered into conversation with the lad,

gave him a dollar bill, and "pumped" him to the best of our ability. He said he had recently come up here from Florida—that the Yankees were moving in that quarter and that most of the slaves had been sent to South Carolina for safety. He said we were ten miles from the railroad, and to the northward of Winnboro; and promising to say nothing about having seen us, he left, when we likewise hurried away.

While proceeding along, shortly after this, we saw a negro. Grant gave chase and overhauled him, allowing him to go after he had promised to supply us with food as soon as it became dark. We waited for him, believing that he would keep his word. True enough he came at last, although we had long since given up all hope of seeing him again. He brought us four large pones of corn bread, a little coarse salt, which we much needed, two quarts of excellent maple syrup, and last, but not least, a plug of tobacco. The slave, who was quite interesting, gave us much valuable information, directing us as to the best route to follow, etc. We parted from our good friend with feelings of genuine sorrow.

There was something almost royal in the cheerfully-rendered services of the negroes; they seemed to look upon us as in some way sufferers for their sake, and they fairly loaded us with kindnesses. "Mass'r's berry welcome." This was always their greeting, the spice that enriched all their homely talk. Often did the darkies gather around us in the woods and swamps after dark, bringing us corn-

meal, etc., and drinking in all our words about the "free North." One thing particularly struck us in our intercourse with these dusky sons of toil, they understood perfectly, notwithstanding their remoteness from the theatre of conflict, the causes and tendencies of the war, and were at all times eager to escape with us to the Canaan which soon after was so fully and freely opened to them. They had an almost childish faith in "Mass'r Linkum," whom, above all others, they were most anxious to hear about.

Marching along with accelerated pace late that evening, our hearts were gladdened by a thrice welcome sound—the cackling of geese. A reconnoissance revealed a pen near the roadside. Captain Todd, never behind-hand in any enterprise which promised food, sprang over a high fence, entered the pen, seized a noisy goose, and made good his escape. The poor goose flapped its wings in vain, for Todd held it with the grip of a vice. But despite all he could do, the head remained fast to the body; it could not be twisted off. I never saw a goose make such a determined struggle for life. It had a wonderful tenacity, not only while alive, but also after its violent death. We thoroughly roasted the old "patriarch," as we called him, and when done to a perfect brown, ate very heartily of him. I apprehend that he would have tasted much better if we had salt wherewith to savor him, but lacking that necessary ingredient, and considering the circumstances under which we dined, "roast goose" proved

not to be as palatable as we had fondly imagined it would. To sum up, briefly, that goose was a miserable failure, but he had revenge for his untimely death in making each of us very sick. I never had any inclination since then to taste "roast goose."

The next day the weather was dreary, the sun failing to put in an appearance. The sky was overcast, the clouds dark and lowering, the atmosphere damp and chilly. Soon after starting, we fell in with three colored men, who cheerfully supplied us with five quarts of meal, for which we gave them two dollars. We suffered a good deal, each vomiting freely, which caused us to hanker more than ever for salt. Towards midnight, we sat down in some bushes by the roadside and debated as to how we should proceed in order to procure the desired article. While thus engaged, and feverish with anxiety, we heard approaching steps. The moon shone brilliantly, and nothing, save the slow steps and the crowing of cocks on an adjacent plantation, disturbed the stillness of the beautiful night. We scarcely breathed, fearing that the person approaching might be a rebel patrolling the road. When directly opposite, we saw that the object of our alarm was an old, decrepid colored man, scarcely able to hobble along, even with the aid of a long staff which he managed to use in a dexterous manner. Satisfied that we had nothing to fear from him, we rose from our hiding place, and stepping into the roadway, in a low, firm voice, halted him. He looked at each of us, and appeared greatly bewil-

dered. On his arm was suspended a large basket, containing a very large loaf or "pone" of bread. It was but the work of a moment to "bless" that bread, and before the old man recovered from his surprise, we were cramming portions of it down our hungry throats. He became quite communicative when he found that we had no disposition to injure him. We asked him where the cavalry were posted, and whether any of the "boys" had been along this way to-night. The old fellow told us all he knew about the "horsemen," for he believed we were "Johnnies" off on a "skylark," as he told us before we left him. We coaxed him to get us some salt, but he said he was some distance from his home. However, after much persuasion, he shook his great feet out of his old slippers, and made his way to a large and handsome house near by. In a few minutes he was again at our side, furnishing us with about a quart of the much-desired article, which he said "auntie" had given him. His great kindness and service merited a rich reward, so we tendered him the last twenty-dollar bill in our possession, but this he refused to accept. We then told him that we were Yankee soldiers escaping from prison, but this he did not believe: if he did, he had a wonderful faculty in keeping the secret to himself. We asked him to look at us sharply, and at our *blue clothing*. On becoming satisfied that we were veritable Yankees—the first he had ever seen, he gave way to outward demonstrations of joy, so much so, that we had to check the exuberance of his spirits by plac-

ing a hand over his capacious mouth. It was all that we could do to quiet him, and keep him so. He cried, then laughed, then prayed, and begged to be allowed to accompany us. We showed him how impossible that would be; that the roads were rough, the mountains high, the rivers deep and wide; that our country was far away; that he would be unable to march so long a distance, and concluded by assuring him that the Union army would soon be along, and then he would be a *free man forever*, and protected in the fullest enjoyment of his liberties. This pacified him, and made him twenty years younger, he said. Now, anxious to do more for us, he invited us to accompany him to his cabin, nearly two miles away, where we should have all the corn-meal we wanted, his master that very day having issued him his rations for the ensuing ten days. At first we declined the old man's offer, not because we did not want his supplies, but because we were fearful of being heard or seen while proceeding along the highway. Our new-found friend insisting on our going with him, and promising to keep quiet, we accompanied him to within a short distance of his master's house, when the old slave left us and cut across the field to his cabin, speedily returning with six quarts of fresh meal.

Again did we tender him the twenty-dollar bill, and again did he refuse to accept it, saying we would need it more than he, and he only regretted that he had nothing more to give to us. He told us to be careful of the dogs, "in down de road dar;" and

thanking him for what he had done, we embraced him and hurried away, moving along with lighter hearts and more comfortable stomachs.

CHAPTER XVII.

A RUN FOR LIFE.

WE had gone but a few rods beyond the mansion, when out of the kennel by the roadside, sprang a large number of dogs, which made a terrible din with their yelping and barking. How we should escape the dogs was more than I could see. They sprang at us, keeping us busy, with the clubs we carried, in driving them back. We ran whenever the dogs would allow us, and before aware of it, were dashing pell-mell through the principal street of a village, which we did not observe until too late to effect a retreat. Windows were hastily raised, heads protruded, and all sorts of inquiries made: "What's the matter?" "What's the row?" Seeing our predicament, and not caring to answer any foolish questions, we pushed on, keeping in the middle of the road. As we passed an old tavern, at the junction of several roads, we saw a squad of men lounging on the broad stoop, but they were probably too drunk to distinguish us. We sprang over a picket fence, a short distance from the tavern, and found ourselves in a graveyard. Secreting ourselves behind an old vault, we listened atten-

tively, and hearing nothing, I went back to where we jumped over the fence, and picked up a newspaper I had then noticed, but which I did not stop for, being too much pressed for time. We remained in the graveyard half an hour and more, then pushed across several fields till we reached a heavy woods, where we bivouacked till daylight.

'Tis the Sabbath—so the calendar in my diary marks, and without this useful little book we should not have been able to keep an account of the flight of time. The weather was lovely. Searching about, we found in a field near by, some corn which we roasted for breakfast. A bath in a clear stream of cold water running down from the hills, and meandering through the meadows, greatly refreshed me, although the pleasure of the operation would have been enhanced by the application of soap and a towel, neither of which articles, however, were in our possession.

During the morning I read a chapter or two in a New Testament I had picked up in the east room of Libby prison; then I baked bread and boiled mush, which, perhaps, would have been more palatable with milk or syrup. Captain Lewis, at noon, read Christ's sermon on the mount. Todd concluded the day's devotions by reading psalms and hymns from an Episcopal prayer-book, which a prisoner gave me at Charleston. Thus did we pass the sacred day, until just before sunset, when we pursued our journey. A few miles away we came upon an assembly of negroes, who had gathered

around the cabin of one of their number to engage in religious services. It was the singing of a wild hymn which first attracted our attention to them. Nothing could have been more picturesque than this swarthy and curiously costumed peasantry, disposed around the lowly cabin, with the bright, genial setting sun gilding their upturned faces. It did us good to halt (at a respectful distance) and listen. As the singers became excited, their bodies moved rhythmically, and clinging to each other's hands, they seemed about breaking into the favorite warmth of some barbaric ceremony, when we heard the cracked voice of a patriarchal looking slave, and saw the assembly kneel, and bow their heads at the words: "Let us 'dress the Almighty!" While the minister or "leader" was praying, some young darbies who had been disporting near a cotton press, left off their pranks, and hastened to join the kneeling throng in front of the humble cabin. As we moved away we could hear the solemn pleading of the ebony Jacob as he wrestled with the angel in prayer, and the nervous responses of the brethren and sisters when their souls took fire from the inspiration of the moment.

After marching several hours, we suddenly discovered that we were in the wrong direction. This caused a countermarch of five miles before regaining the right road, which we pursued till nearly daylight, when we entered a dark woods and camped upon the bank of a running stream of clear cold water. My feet were now quite sore, and my companions



Yours truly
S. B. Myers

considerably alarmed thereat, although they constantly did what they could to cheer and comfort me. What I should do on reaching the mountains, whose faint outlines of blue could be seen far away in the distance, I was unable to judge. But I made up my mind to struggle on, although it was almost hoping against hope.

Next day we found some beans, and met a negro boy, who gave us valuable information concerning the whereabouts of the rebels and the surrounding country. He afforded us great joy in saying that we were now fourteen miles from "Rock Hill," and that Ebenezer, a small border town in North Carolina, was but three miles distant. This was encouraging news, for we felt that on reaching the "Old North State" we should find friends. We tramped along with buoyant hearts and active feet many miles, and failing to find Ebenezer, concluded the darkey had hoaxed us, so we entered a wood and threw our wearied bodies upon the ground, and slept.

On awaking we were scarcely able to rise from our recumbent position, so stiff were our joints. My feet pained me sorely, and for a time I was afraid that I would be unable to proceed farther. I baked beans again, and divided them equally, but notwithstanding this, my boarders grumbled a good deal at the quantity served.

Starting before sunset, we marched eight miles before the waning moon appeared, when we made considerable additional progress. We crossed the

railroad eight miles south of Ebenezer, and thanked Providence that at last we were within a few miles of North Carolina, which we expected to traverse with far less apprehension and danger than had been the case in South Carolina. After crossing the track—the same we had ridden over six months previously—we entertained the idea of tearing up a rail or two, or failing in this, to place obstructions thereon. We felt wicked enough to do almost anything, but better judgment finally prevailed, and we concluded not to touch the track, as the first train which came along might be filled with our prisoners of war. We would have taken some risk in destroying the bridge over the Catawba, but the weakness of our condition prevented any great exertion. We marched as rapidly as possible after this, and at daybreak came upon a negro, who was badly frightened in consequence. When he saw that we did not intend to molest him, he talked quite freely, and starting off, soon returned bearing a bag containing a peck of corn-meal and some potatoes, for which we paid him three dollars—all the small change in our possession.

Again did we seek the dark recesses of a wood, where we quietly remained till sunset, when we resumed our tramp, marching some fourteen miles before daybreak. The weather being quite cold, compelled us to build a fire, around which we warmed ourselves, meantime preparing our morning repast. The sky suddenly becoming overcast with heavy-colored clouds, rendered our situation dreary enough.

Looking about, we were delighted at finding grapes, hanging in clusters, under the bank of the brook. We feasted on the grapes as long as they lasted, and were sorry when no more could be obtained.

During the forenoon Lewis hit upon a happy expedient for baking bread. We waded in a stream of water—a disagreeable job—and fishing out a large thin flat stone, carried it to the shore, where it was placed over a hole which we managed to excavate. Starting a good fire in the hole, the stone at length became sufficiently heated to answer the purposes intended, when the meal, moistened with water and formed into cakes, was placed thereon. The cakes browned nicely, causing general congratulations. We thus baked up all the meal left—the task occupying a much briefer time than if we had followed the old plan—standing the cakes upon edge in front of the fire, which was not always a pleasant or satisfactory operation. Todd's little flag floated over camp "Sparta," from a hanging, limb until we took our departure, which was at the hour of "retreat."

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE OLD NORTH STATE AT LAST.

WE had gone but a short distance when we met a negro, who imparted the pleasing intelligence that we were now in North Carolina—"and a ways in too, mass'r." He supplied us with two

pecks of meal and a small quantity of coarse salt, and directed us as to the best route to take, when we again struck out, marching about thirteen miles—a halt being rendered necessary by the soreness of my feet. Both were badly lacerated, and I feared that my days for walking were over. My comrades assuring me that they would never desert me, imparted new life and hope.

The weather to-day is lovely, but our bivouac neither safe or convenient. We hear horsemen galloping up and down on a road near by, and sounds of revelry, which, as we subsequently learned, were caused by a party who had assembled to witness a race between horses belonging to different commands. We did not attend, much as we would have been interested in the sports. The proximity of the rebels prevented us from having a fire, and as the woods were quite open we dared not attempt to leave them, for fear of being discovered. We were half starved by sundown, notwithstanding we had eaten raw potatoes and washed down the dry meal with water, in which there did not appear to be much satisfaction, to say the least.

Marching along on a smooth road after dark, with but little to occupy our thoughts, and not dreaming of near danger, we were terrified, almost paralyzed, at hearing the dread challenge, "Who comes there?" and suiting the action to the words, a horseman dashed rapidly towards us. It was, however, but the work of a moment to spring into the woods, which lined both sides of the roadway, and in

another instant we were running through what we discovered to be a heavy copse. That we were in a sadly demoralized condition I will not attempt to deny, but we retained sufficient presence of mind to act together, and as subsequent events proved, in a wise and judicious manner. Exhausted by the run, our hands and faces lacerated and bleeding, by coming in contact with bushes, briars and other obstructions, we threw our tired bodies upon the earth to recover breath and to await developments. Matters developed sooner than we anticipated, for we shortly afterwards heard horsemen riding slowly by. A new fear came upon us. Instead of being in the heart of a dense woods, as we had imagined, we were but a few yards from the highway. The cavalrymen, as they passed by, laughed and joked about "scaring the — niggers," which explained the situation to us. The cavalry had mistaken us for slaves, none of whom were allowed, by law, to be away from their cabins after nine o'clock P. M.

Breathing freer, we gave the horsemen ample time to ride away—then set out on our journey. A deep running stream, however, compelled us to make a wide detour, and on crossing, which was accomplished with great difficulty and some danger, we found ourselves near the road leading to Dallas, the county seat. It was now near midnight, an hour when honest folks are commonly supposed to be in bed, so we apprehended but little danger. By and by, we heard a colored woman singing with all the force of her lungs, and listening attentively, we be-

came convinced that she was approaching us. Stepping behind some thick bushes along the road-side, we awaited her coming. She continued singing the peculiar melodies heard on the plantations all through the South. As she drew near we heard her talking, and soon ascertained that a man was her only companion. Of course we immediately decided the man was, like herself, a slave, whether her husband or lover, father or brother, we did not care. But he must be a *black man*, at all events, for no white man would be rambling in that sort of way at the dead hour of night, with a black woman for company.

It was now very dark, nothing being visible except the tall tree-tops, above which was a streak of gray. Doubting nothing but believing everything, when the couple reached the spot directly opposite where we stood, we boldly confronted and challenged them. With a wild, unearthly scream, the female took to her heels, while the man who was her companion, sprang back to the opposite side of the road, and cocking a revolver, demanded to know who we were and what we wanted. We begged him not to shoot, and then necessarily resorted to conversational strategy, putting and answering questions with the utmost wariness, the revolver, whose sharp click we had heard, making us studiously polite. But, thanks to a kind Providence, it did not take a long time for us to discover the *status* of the stranger, and probably he had never been embraced before with the vehement warmth we displayed

when we learned that he was a loyalist—a *Union man*. He told us this, and we believed him. At his urgent invitation we accompanied him to his home, passing through the woods the entire distance, nearly two miles. Telling his wife our story, she soon prepared for us a smoking supper, to which we did ample justice, the rich repast being seasoned with smiles and kindly sympathizing words. That night, sitting before the cheerful blaze on his great hearth, he told us the story of North Carolina mountain loyalty, proving to us that freedom still had brave defenders among the hardy forest-men of the old North State. He told us of the cruel persecutions to which Union men, in his section of country, had been subjected by the Confederate authorities, but that, notwithstanding their tribulations, they had remained faithful to their principles. He belonged, he said, to a society called “The True Heroes of America,” a sort of Union League, whose chief object was to keep Unionists out of the Confederate army. Thousands of good and true men were members of this order. “And we mean to stand to the work,” he added, “until this cursed rebellion is wiped out as clean as that hearth. The old government is good enough for us and for our children.”

It did us good to hear that patriot talk. His sentiments had the right ring, and his voice no uncertain sound. His noble wife expressed much sympathy for me and regretted that she had no shoes to give me. Captain Todd, before leaving, presented her with a large seal ring, a gift from his mother,

while Lewis gave our host his gold sleeve-buttons—I adding my Russia leather pocket-book, which he regarded as a great curiosity, never before having seen anything like it. Mr. W—— said he would like to accompany us, but he could not undertake so great a journey with his family, who would not be able to endure the fatigues and exposures of a tramp over the mountains.

Mrs. W. having, meanwhile, filled our haversacks with bread, flour, biscuits, onions, potatoes, etc., we returned her our hearty thanks, and kissing the baby in the cradle, marched away, her husband acting as guide. When daybreak dawned, we found ourselves some distance beyond the town of Dallas, which we had successfully flanked, and bidding our friend “good-bye,” we continued on our way; but often afterwards did our thoughts revert to him and his, and many were our prayers that Heaven would guard and keep them safe in that home, sheltered by the pines they loved so well.

McKinney’s Gap, now our immediate objective point, was seventy-four miles distant in a northerly direction. After marching thirteen miles, without a single halt, we stopped for rest, as well as to cook a few potatoes, which, being very heavy, we thought it advisable to dispose of first.

CHAPTER XIX.

A SEASON OF GREAT DISTRESS.

THE weather was so cold this night that we found it impossible to sleep, although we had built a small fire, but fearing observation, we dared not increase its cheerfulness. After dinner, however, finding our position to be one of danger, owing to the sparsity of cover, and as water was inconvenient, we moved to another place, half a mile away, where better security would be afforded. Here we lighted another fire, by means of a brand brought from the previous camp. This we did because our stock of matches had become greatly reduced, and knowing we would not have enough to last us through our journey, it behooved us to be very careful in their use, and economize in every possible way. After baking bread we again took up the line of march, munching as we proceeded along. During the following night, we passed under the railroad, near Lincolnton, bright lights from the town being visible. We made another blunder, by seeking to evade a squad of men, and marched several miles out of our course in doing so. On the appearance of daylight, we found a woods admirably adapted to our purposes, and went into bivouac, pretty well used up by the excessive fatigue, and benumbed with cold. On searching about we were overjoyed in finding some corn still standing on a

low spot of ground, the ears being quite green. The ground was white with a hoary frost, the night the coldest we had experienced. Building a fire, we threw ourselves beside it, and slept for several hours. On awakening, I found myself unable to rise to my feet, having an acute attack of rheumatism in my left leg. But after a great deal of rubbing by Todd, I was enabled to stand, and soon after to hobble about. It was here that we lost the knife which Mr. W—— had given us, and which we had found invaluable.

Confident that we shall be able to reach the Union lines, we march buoyantly along till day-break on the following morning, accomplishing a distance of some twenty odd miles. We were now within a few miles of Morganton, where all North Carolina conscripts went into rendezvous. We dreaded this place, which was in the direct line of our march, and felt that if we could safely flank and pass it, we should be comparatively safe. We had, however, grave apprehensions concerning our ability to do this. To add to the terrors of our party, my rheumatism returned with double force, and for several hours, all feared that I would be unable to proceed. I could not sleep, so intense was my suffering, but kept swinging my arms to cause a circulation of the blood. We were compelled to remain in camp all day, owing to my inability to walk, but just at sunset we again started, and as I got warmed to the work, the pain and stiffness disappeared, enabling us to move quite rapidly.

We were now again without anything to eat, but practicing Micawber's philosophy, we patiently awaited for "something to turn up." Seeing a light in a wood, near the roadway, we approached it, and as it proceeded from a hovel, we ventured to knock at the rude door. Entering, we found it occupied by a white man, his distressed wife and sickly-looking child—the trio presenting a pitiful spectacle, having scarcely enough apparel to cover their emaciated forms. They were destitute of everything that makes life desirable, except a cheerful fire, before which we sat and warmed ourselves. The man, entering into conversation, told us the old story—he had always been true to the "old flag," saying the war had ruined the Southern people, and that they would never be able to recover from its blasting effects. What little property he had been able to accumulate by a life of toil, was long ago stripped from him by the "levying officers," who, charging him with being a "traitor," had taken his horses and cattle, "without as much as a simple thank ye." He deeply regretted his inability to aid us, but gave us the names of many men along our probable route who would be happy to lend a helping hand.

After leaving the humble habitation of that unfortunate man, I felt that we were not the only unfortunates in the world, and this thought nerved me to renewed efforts. We continued our tramp several hours, until we became so cold that we could proceed no farther, when we halted and built a fire,

which was the only cheerful thing we could find or devise.

Daylight, however, found us walking northward, each sharply watching for something to satisfy our cravings for food. Discovering a log-house in the woods, we determined to visit it and obtain food, for we were upon the verge of *starvation*, and men will do almost anything while in that condition. Entering the abode without previous notice to that effect, we were surprised to find the "lord" at home. He was so much surprised at our sudden appearance, that he actually, in stepping backwards, fell into a chair. Finding a quantity of potatoes on the rude table, we pitched them in the ashes on the hearth and roasted them—the family meanwhile remaining quiet, and acting as if we had taken unwarranted liberties. We informed the man, in order to allay any suspicions he might have, that we had deserted from Hood's army in Georgia, and that, tired of the war, we were now on our way to Kentucky, where our people lived. The man, pleased with the statement, now bustled about, and procuring six quarts of meal, insisted upon our accepting it. We declined at first, believing that his family needed it quite as much as we did, but he was *so* importunate and ourselves *so* hungry, we consented to accept it; and after thanking the family for their hospitality, we departed, hastening away with all the speed possible, for we did not altogether like the actions of the man, who might take it into his head to alarm his neighbors, and so get us into trouble.

CHAPTER XX.

OUR BEST FRIEND A CONFEDERATE BRIGADIER.

TO-DAY we reached and climbed over the first hill, or mountain, and on descending met a white woman, who was so much frightened on seeing us, that it was some time before she would answer our questions or enter into conversation. She finally told us that her husband was in the hospital at Petersburg. Assuring her that we had recently deserted from Petersburg for the purpose of seeing our families, who lived near Lenoir, she expressed her sympathy, and a wish that her "Peter" would soon be able to do the same thing. Upon a pressing invitation, we accompanied her to her humble home, where she speedily prepared us a good breakfast, giving us an abundance of rich, sweet milk to drink. On departing, the good woman supplied us with a peck of potatoes and all the meal in the house, for which we sincerely thanked her. Evidently she had no idea that she had been entertaining "angels in disguise!"

We had gone but a short distance when we met a man who charged us with being "—— Yankees." He said, however, that we need not fear him, as he had lost all interest in the war—three of his sons having been killed, and one dying of fever at Fort Delaware. We could proceed on our way, he added, without any objection on his part. Glad to get away

from this fellow, the moment we were out of his sight we ran a long distance, fearing pursuit. Hereafter we must be more careful, and not act on the hypothesis that every person we meet is devoted to the Union, even though he is a *North Carolinian*.

Towards noon we struck and hastily crossed the railroad, moving between Salisbury and Morgantown, about four miles north of the latter place. Proceeding cautiously, we soon after entered a pine woods, which, at first sight, appeared to be quite dense, but the farther we went, the "lighter" did they appear. Moving along in "Indian file," careful of our steps, lest the sudden snapping of a dry stick should give an alarm, we were thrown into a state of intense excitement on beholding, a few yards away, an officer superbly mounted on a magnificent horse. A single glance revealed our danger. My breath failed, while my knees trembled like aspens. The horseman kept his piercing black eyes upon us, gently guiding the animal he bestrode towards us. Escape was now impossible—not to be thought of. As he reached the spot where we had instinctively halted on first seeing him, a smile seemed to play upon his handsome face. Todd, who acted as spokesman, asked him the way to Morgantown—the very place of all others we had no inclination to visit. The horseman looked sharply at each of us in turn, but deigned no reply, and Todd, thinking that he might have misunderstood him, repeated the question, whereupon he laughed heart-

ily, which convinced us that we could not hope to deceive him—that our last game had been played.

Determined, however, to play every card, Todd asked the horseman (whom we had by this time discovered by the insignia on his coat collar to be a *general*), for a “chaw terbacker.” Without saying a word, he reached down into one of his saddlebags, and pulled therefrom a long plug, which he handed down to me. Breaking it in two pieces, I gave Todd one piece, placing the other in my shirt bosom, the pockets in my breeches having long since given out. The horseman smiled again, and broke the silence by saying, “That’s — cool, any way.” Spurring his horse sharply around, he looked squarely at us, and said: “You fellows do not want to go to Morgantown, but if you do, that’s the way,” pointing in the right direction, and then, striking his horse’s flanks with his steel spurs, he galloped away. We knew not what to do—if he had gone for troops, we could not hope to elude or distance them. The Catawba river, whose loud roaring could now be distinctly heard, was in our front, but a mile or two away. And yet, if the general meant us harm, why did he not *hold* us where we stood? In his holsters we saw the bright butts of heavy revolvers, while suspended at his side was a beautiful bright sabre. I cannot portray the thoughts which coursed through my mind.

While profoundly agitated by the perils which environed us, we heard hoofs rapidly approaching, and looking up, observed the same officer riding

furiously towards us, and beckoning for us to approach. At a total loss to know what he meant, we did as requested, and on gaining his side, noticed that he was terribly excited. His voice was now husky, his whole manner at variance with what it had been but a few minutes previous. He spoke quickly, looking back every moment or two, as if he expected to see some one approaching from the direction he had just come. He said: "Boys, you cannot deceive me. I have seen too much service in Virginia to be fooled by any of your kind. But I will befriend you. Could I take you to my home, two miles away, I would give you all the bread you could eat, and all the brandy you could drink."

We, meanwhile, stood dumbfounded, our hearts going out to that Confederate soldier, whose love for us we could not fathom. Not a word which he uttered was lost; and never shall I forget his looks, as he leaned over his saddle-bow to speak encouragingly to men who a few moments before had been considered deadly enemies. Bending low, he continued: "You want to reach the mountains yonder, this you need not tell me. You must hasten away from here, for in a few minutes two of my regiments will pass along this road, on their way to the railroad, near where *I saw* you cross the track, to take the cars for Richmond. You must lose no time in getting away from this vicinity." Here he rose in his stirrups and, looking back, listened attentively for a moment. "You see that mound; keep that in your front, and get to its base as soon as God will

let you—it is on the right bank of the Catawba river, which, of course, you will be compelled to cross. You will find a *scow* near by, in which you can effect a crossing, when you will be comparatively *safe*. You have my hearty wishes for success. RUN !”

Almost before we could comprehend the fact, the Confederate general was gone—passing entirely out of sight ere we could realize that we were still at liberty. He said “run,” and this command being indelibly impressed upon our minds, we hastened to comply. Run ! I never run faster than on that occasion, and perhaps never acted more carelessly. In carefully keeping the mound within sight, we paid but little attention to surrounding objects. We now plainly heard the waters rushing over the rocks in the roaring river, and almost imagined ourselves safe across a noble stream, whose fountain-head is among majestic mountains. While hurrying along, we narrowly escaped an adventure which might have proven less pleasant than the one I have just related. A couple of hundred yards away, we saw a mounted soldier, riding slowly in a diagonal direction, and bearing away to our right. It was but the work of an instant for us to drop upon the ground directly behind a large fallen tree, which fortunately we had just reached. From this covert we closely watched the movements of the cavalrman, or whatever he may have been, and while thus engaged were almost paralyzed with fear at the sight of a huge moccasin snake, of the most poison-

ous species, which leisurely crawled out from the tree and wriggled its disgusting form away, much to our satisfaction, for we had no desire to engage it in battle at that particular moment. On looking again for the horseman, we failed to discover him, and after a few minutes further delay, sprang up and proceeded towards the river, which we were anxious to cross before nightfall.

CHAPTER XXI.

CROSSING THE CATAWBA RIVER—A DIFFICULT TASK.

IT was about two o'clock in the afternoon when we reached the Catawba. Standing on the mound we saw the turbulent river flowing at its base, seventy-five feet below, its broad current dashing into breakers and foam-flakes, as it beat against the rocks in the channel-bed. We could see swirls and eddies around the masses of driftwood washed down from the mountain sides; now deep and black, the majestic river flows in a strong, steady current, beside banks where the trees are grouped in beautiful forms, creating foregrounds over which the artist's eye lovingly lingers. We could hear the voice of the river crying among the cliffs, and moaning and sighing as it laps the banks in the gorges above and below us. We were entranced with the spectacle presented, and strongly moved with this our

first gaze upon the grand river and the glorious Blue Ridge range which loomed up so proudly before us.

At length, descending the bluff upon which we had been reverently but idly standing, into a small valley below, we found a number of apple-trees, still containing fruit, to which we helped ourselves, filling our haversacks with choice specimens. On the opposite side of the river, the land was low and level, houses being noticeable here and there. Giving ourselves no uneasiness about these distant habitations, or their occupants, we acted as inclination led us—deeming it perfectly safe to do so. We next discussed the boat question, and looked up and down the bank, but could discover none. This puzzled and disappointed us. We had not dreamed of any impediment in crossing the river after receiving explicit directions from our Confederate friend. Night was fast creeping on, and feeling it to be an imperative duty to cross over before dark, we set to work constructing a raft, obtaining the materials from a neighboring fence. It was only when we had nearly completed it, that we saw the utter impossibility of launching it in a successful manner. Should we succeed in getting it into the seething waters, we could not hope to push the ponderous and unwieldy raft across the stream, as the irresistible current would speedily carry it into the wild chaos of the dashing and leaping stream, and drown us in the mysterious eddies a hundred yards below.

Night's shadows were fast creeping over the mighty Appalachian range as we hastened to the

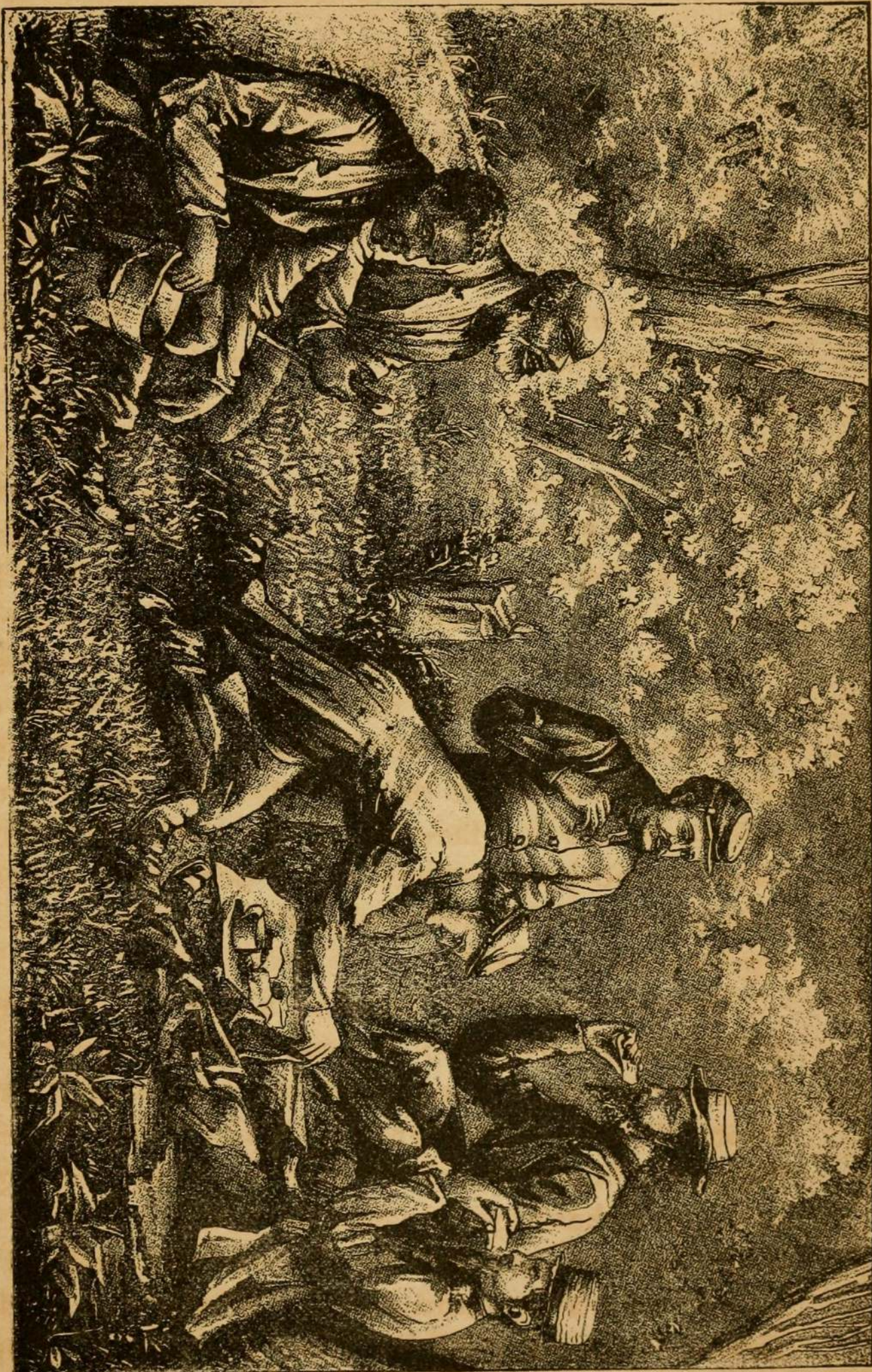
summit of a hill a few hundred yards below the point where we first reached the river. This we did in order to obtain a better place for observation. While scanning the banks for a boat, we were greatly surprised to notice three men and a boy hastily leaving a house on the opposite side of the river; they walked hurriedly across the fields, heading directly for the river—*towards us*. As they drew quite near, we also noticed that each man carried a gun. This caused us considerable uneasiness, and now, for the first time, we saw how unwisely we had acted while getting the apples and in building the raft. There was no doubt in our minds but that the party on the other side had seen us on our arrival, and, had during the interim, been preparing to “hunt us.” We “laid low,” and congratulated ourselves upon the near approach of darkness, which would aid us in making a retreat. In due time the party reached the river bank, and before we could divine their further intentions, we saw them rowing quickly across in a heretofore undiscovered boat, which had lain moored to the shore under heavy overhanging bushes. We crept to the brow of the hill, and saw three of them spring ashore—some two hundred yards below. It was now dusk, but we could see their every movement distinctly. The three men walked hastily through a corn-field, jumping over a fence which stood in their way, and moved silently along at the base of the hill occupied by us—thence up a ravine to our right and rear, and were soon lost to sight and hearing.

It was suggested that our best plan would now be to go down, seize the boat and cross the river, but this was for a time strongly objected to by a majority of our party. My companions were satisfied that the boy (whom we had not seen since the boat landed) had been left behind to guard the craft, and that if we advanced he would be certain to fire upon us, and thus create an alarm, resulting in our capture or death. Finally, Todd coincided with my views, and springing to his feet, said he would attempt the enterprise, Lewis and Grant immediately following suit. Descending the hill in a cautious manner, we proceeded along the bank listening for the slightest sound, and searching intently for the boat or boy—or both. We travelled a long distance down the river—far beyond the place where the boat had appeared to touch this shore, but saw nothing of it. We retraced our steps, peering under each overhanging bush which lined the bank, until we reached the base of the hill again—then back we went; still we saw nothing of the boat. There was a mystery connected with this matter, and neither of us felt like giving it up. It must be unravelled if it took all night, we decided. Returning the second time, we plainly heard the tinkle of a cow-bell in the adjoining field. The cow appeared to be walking in our direction, and this gave us an impulse to secure and milk her. With this object in view, we advanced towards her. We had taken but a few steps, however, when we became alarmed—satisfied that the bell was in the hands of a human being,

who was using it as a means of decoy. I had known this dodge to be practised by the rebels, in surprising our piquets in Virginia, in the early part of 1861.

Halting in the corn-field to listen, we heard a party of men jump over the fence before alluded to—the bell being unduly excited and ringing quite fiercely in executing the movement. This sudden and unexpected state of affairs compelled us not to stand upon the order of our going, but to *go* at once. Bending our heads and bodies quite low we ran as fast and as silently as was possible down the river's bank, and finally inclined to the right, where we hoped to be able to secrete ourselves in the heavy woods. We expected to be fired upon, but for some unknown reason, the rebs failed to act in time, and we gained the woods in safety. They were either unprepared for the suddenness of our action, or they failed to hear us in our flight. We never stopped till we found a place which we thought would answer our purposes—that was a deep ravine, running parallel with the river, which we regarded as offering us a safe retreat.

We tried to sleep without a fire, but finding this impossible, owing to a heavy frost, built a small blaze with dry chips, and lay down and soundly slept, despite the dangers which surrounded us. At about two o'clock in the morning, feeling very cold, and having occasion to arise, I placed some fresh fuel on the slumbering embers, walked some twenty feet away, and directly afterwards Todd and Grant followed. While they were conversing in a



FED BY DARKIES.

low tone, my attention was attracted to a moving object just beyond the fire, which was now burning quite brightly, and within a few feet of where Lewis unconsciously lay sleeping. I distinctly heard the crackling of dry twigs, as if made by some one walking upon them, and in a moment more saw the eyes of several fierce-looking men glaring into and about the fire. I was satisfied that we had again been discovered. What to do, or how to act I did not know. Had Lewis been with us, we could, by a bold dash, have got away, but none of us thought of retreating, leaving him in the hands of cruel tormentors. Noiselessly reaching Todd and Grant, I whispered to them the fact of my discovery, whereupon we all three returned to the fire and again lay down, acting as if dreaming of no danger, present or prospective. Our enemies, doubtless imagining that our capture would be easier and more certain if they allowed us to go to sleep, remained perfectly passive, for which we were devoutly thankful. We seized our haversacks, *pinched* Lewis, who instantly awoke, sprang up and ran back into the woods, seemingly in a great deal less time than I have taken to relate it. Anticipating a volley of shot or bullets, we ran along, keeping as close to the ground as possible. Each particular hair stood erect upon my head, while beads of cold sweat rolled down my back, until I felt that we were again out of harm's way. I am of opinion that I was very much frightened when we dashed away from the party in the ravine, and I made up my mind that if they succeeded in

again coming up with us, they would not take any risks, but shoot us at first sight—not a very comfortable reflection certainly, for a young fellow who was anxious, above all other things, to reach his home.

We did not try any more experiments with fire that night, although after halting we became very cold. We were allowed to pass the remainder of the night in peace and quiet, and when the sun rose were again on the way, laboring to reach the river above the point we struck it the previous day. Reaching a wide open field we viewed its beauties from behind a fence. Away to our right, a mile and more distant, we saw a small frame house, in front of which stood a crowd of men, doubtless the party who had put us to so much trouble during the night. We could see no way of crossing that field without being detected, but soon after finding a ditch running to the opposite side, we got into it, and crawled over, occasionally stopping and taking a peep at our friends, who still remained near the house. Making a wide detour, we regained the river about noon, reaching it at a point two miles above where we struck it twenty-two hours previously. As good luck would have it, we discovered apples, grapes, persimmons, and a large red berry, of a savory taste, upon which we feasted to our heart's content.

We stood just within the woods, for the rugged valley road which ran along its skirts might be dangerous, and gazed down into the low valley, in the centre of which rolled the mighty mountain flood. Mountains of every imaginable shape rose in gran-

deur far beyond, while the forest seemed delicate fringes of purple and gold. We could readily trace the massive and curiously curving ranges of the Alleghanies, and longed to ascend them. The open space intervening between the road and the Catawba, was covered with a tall and heavy-looking grass or weed, which would admirably cover our movements, for we had determined upon crawling through it to the water's edge, hoping on arriving there to find a boat near by. Several houses were within sight upon both banks, and it was quite probable that some of the farmers possessed a craft which would answer our purposes.

It was finally deemed advisable that but one of our party should go down, and this important duty Todd volunteered to perform. He had scarcely reached the roadside when he heard, as we also did, the barking of a dog. With his usual instinct, Todd sprang back into the woods, thick with laurel bushes, and it was well that he did so, for the next moment a large covered wagon, filled with men, and drawn by two horses, went dashing by; this party had evidently been summoned to join in the hunt for us. The men commenced singing just as the dog barked at Todd, and to this, perhaps, were we indebted for miraculous preservation on this occasion. Feeling that no time was to be lost if we would cross the river, Todd ran across the road, sprang over the fence and prostrated himself in the tall grass, and although we kept our eyes upon the spot and in the same line to the river, yet we failed to

see anything of him until he reached the bank, when he made a signal to us. Satisfied that no danger lurked near the roadway, we crossed over, and following Todd's tactics, crawled all the way to the river, where we rejoined our brave comrade, whom we found in conversation with an old woman in her garden on the opposite bank, engaged in picking beans. Todd imposed upon the good nature of this dear old soul, by telling her that the war was over, and inquiring where the boat was. She asked him if her "John" was "all right," and when Todd informed her that "John" would be "along in an hour or so," she threw down her pail and advanced so near the bank that I was afraid she would lose her balance and fall into the water. "Why," asked she, "don't you take the ferry boat?" "It ain't at the ferry," replied Todd. "Yes, it is," she insisted, looking up the river, "I can see it now."

Todd then left us, and made his way up the stream, keeping as close to the water as was consistent with safety, until he reached the "ferry." We heard him pounding the chain, which we knew he must be endeavoring to break, and in a minute or so afterwards, heard splashes in the water, which convinced us that he had succeeded, and that if no accident occurred, we should soon set our feet upon Canaan's happy shore.

In the meantime we had clambered out among the branches of a low tree which overhung the water, where we awaited the coming of the "ferry-boat," now guided by our gallant comrade. Directly we

see the craft floating along—her sides rubbing against the bushes—and on reaching our station, we drop upon her capacious bottom. Heading the heavy and unwieldy craft towards the opposite shore, we shove it away, and by the aid of long poles, succeed, at last, in reaching the desired haven. Springing upon the shore, we stand for a minute or two and see the old boat turn round and rapidly descend with the fierce current, and shortly afterwards dash over and disappear in the wild waters under the falls—a hundred yards below where we crossed. It was the culmination—the finishing stroke of our varied enterprises, the end of our present troubles.

That we may not be considered ungrateful, I will add that we paid the old woman a visit, picked a peck or so of beans, which we carried away with us, then departed—leaving the old lady not in very good humor, as I judged by her actions towards us.

CHAPTER XXII.

A WRETCHED FAMILY.

WE tramped briskly along until dark, when we camped for the night. The sky was overcast with dense black clouds, and before the next morning broke it rained very hard, causing us considerable difficulty in keeping a fire. On the following day no sun appeared, and as we could obtain no certain point of direction, there was no alternative except to remain quiet. Towards noon, however, we

concluded to make an effort and again started, guiding ourselves by the bark of trees, whose roughness always appears on the north-east side. In consequence, we made but little headway. During the afternoon we discovered a cabin in the wilderness, and reconnoitring, found it occupied by a wretched-looking white woman and half a dozen children, all clothed in rags, scarcely sufficient to cover their nakedness. The poor woman, whose chief possessions were her rags and wretchedness, had one *solace*, that was the snuff she continually rubbed on her teeth with a well-worn stick. She said she could not aid us in any way, as she was destitute of everything that made life desirable. Her husband, she said, was a "home-guard," doing duty on the mountains, searching for "deserters." I felt sorry for myself, but it pained me to see that miserable family who were far more wretched. Could it be that her husband had his heart in the rebellion?

The rain continued to fall steadily; the roads being flooded, rendered our march very disagreeable and fatiguing. After dark, seeing a light in a small house near a road about four miles from Lewis, we knocked and were invited to enter. Within, we found, seated before a blazing fire, an old man, his wife and a married daughter—the latter eyeing us suspiciously from the moment of our entrance. We told them that we had deserted from Morgantown, and were now on our way to our homes in Wau-
tauga county. This induced the daughter to give vent to her pent-up feelings, and she "exploded"

forthwith. She denounced the war and all connected with it. Her husband had been killed at Gettysburg, while five of her brothers had died on various battlefields; then the poor woman wept as if her heart would break. We did not disturb her in her grief. Wiping her inflamed eyes with the skirt of her coarse dress, she hoped we would pardon her infirmity, but whenever she thought of her dead she had to "give way." We told her that the men who caused the war had taken good care to keep out of danger, and that the contest could not be continued much longer. In reply, she said she hoped it would soon be over, for she could not live any longer in that location. At the first opportunity she would go to Reading, Pennsylvania, where a sister lived very happily. Believing it to be perfectly safe, we threw off all disguise, and told the family that we were Yankee officers, escaping from prison; that we had marched all the way from Charleston, South Carolina, and as we were very hungry, we would thank them for something to eat. Our statement had an astonishing effect, for in a moment the young woman was bestirring herself preparing us a supper, which we enjoyed greatly. While thus engaged the conversation took a pleasant turn—the daughter especially being pleased to gain information about the North. Just before departing we tendered her the only twenty-dollar bill in our possession, but she refused to accept it, saying we needed it more than she did. We bade the family "good-bye," and went out into the storm, leaving the note on the table.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE ELEMENTS AT WORK.

BUT what cared we for wind and rain and mud? We were about to enter upon that vast elevated region which forms the southern division of the Appalachian mountain system, and constitutes the culminating point in the Atlantic barrier of the American continent. We were at the gate of the lands through which runs the chain of the Roan, Bald, and Great Smoky Mountains, separating Western North Carolina from Eastern Tennessee. Meanwhile the storm increased in violence; the thunder broke along the luminous sky, and the lightning seemed to rend it in twain. It was mighty and beautiful; a strange, rushing wind came with it, bending the trees as though they were saplings. We were mute and frightened before the terrific grandeur of the warring elements.

Regarding the road as somewhat dangerous, the night being intensely dark, and fearing stragglers, we took to the fields, making but little progress, however. We stumbled over fallen trees, ran against fences, and fell into water-filled ditches. What to do or where to go we had no idea. While standing against a fence, we saw, during a vivid flash of lightning, but a few yards away, a small log-house. Not a light was anywhere visible, and not a sound, save the rushing of the wind, could be heard.

We waited, holding our very breath, and when the woods were again illumined by the lightning, we saw a number of other small houses similarly constructed.

Was it a village of the dead? If not—what? We could not account for or explain the strange, solemn silence which pervaded the place, so we determined to make an examination. We found the houses arranged in rows or streets facing each other, while at one end of the ground was a large open structure containing what seemed to be a pulpit and innumerable wooden benches. It flashed upon our minds that this was a camp-meeting ground, and being such, we decided upon “holding forth” for the night, at least. Losing no time, we entered one of the cabins, which was fitted up with two tiers of bunks, a fireplace, and chimney. Pine-knots being at hand, we built a fire, before which we stretched ourselves, warming our thoroughly benumbed frames, and drying our soaked apparel.

We warmly congratulated each other upon the singular good fortune which had favored us in the time of our greatest need, and were about to climb up into the bunks to obtain needed sleep, when we were thrown into a state of excitement and alarm, beside which all others seemed dwarfed and insignificant. Our hearts throbbed violently as a troop of horsemen galloped into the grounds. We looked into each other's faces, and found nothing but dismay depicted there. If we had been a gang of cut-throats, with a halter around our necks, we could

not have looked more woe-begone. We had been followed, and now completely surrounded, without a single chance for escape; our situation was wretched in the extreme. Visions of men swinging from trees presented themselves vividly to our troubled minds, for "home-guards" were always brave and cruel where no danger to themselves was to be apprehended. But why did our sanguine enemies delay operations? Certainly they did not fear danger from four unarmed, half-starved men? Then why did they not enter our cabin and take us therefrom? The only door opened towards where they stood watching us through the open crevices. Had there been a rear door or window, we would long ago have made an attempt at escape, but there was but one place of egress—that was in front, where we were sure the enemy was drawn up in battle line to shoot us down when we attempted to leave.

But Captain Todd, meanwhile, had taken a practical view of things, and when it seemed as if all hope had fled, he suddenly broke out into a hearty laugh, which caused cold perspiration to suffuse my face, and sent the blood coursing rapidly through my veins. Had impending danger made him a maniac? He laughed long and loud, then turning suddenly, seized Lewis and dragged him forth from an upper bunk, rolling him over the floor, and before quitting his maniacal antics, pulled Grant's old hat down over his eyes and face, and renewed his cachinnations.

"Cavalry!" he shouted loud enough to be heard

a mile away. "Cav-al-ree! Hogs, hogs!" Saying which he seized a blazing pine-knot—an excellent torch—and his club, and sallied forth—to the battle. After a short search we found an old sow and a litter of pigs lying under the platform in the "tabernacle." We fearlessly attacked them, killing three of their number, which we carried back to our cabin. Having no knife, we protruded a sharp stick longitudinally through each of the little porkies, and at once set to work roasting them over the blazing fire. We succeeded in browning them nicely, then divided the parts as equitably as possible, tearing them into pieces with our hands, having no means of cutting them up; then lay down, sleeping soundly till morning, despite the storm which continued without interruption.

As the sun rose we resumed our tramp, the atmosphere being fresh and pure, a cold wind blowing strongly down upon us from the mountain tops in our front. The ascent of the hills greatly fatigued us, but we kept on, not halting until noon, when, seeing a small farm-house in an open field, we stopped to reconnoitre, and not finding any men about the premises, we emerged from our covert and boldly walked up to it.

The first objects we saw were two young women engaged in churning near the back door. We addressed them in a respectful manner, and asked for a drink of buttermilk. While one of the beauties proceeded to comply with our request, the other suddenly departed, but speedily returned, followed

by two young men, both clad in gray uniform. Had a shell exploded at our feet, we could not have been more surprised, but as there were only two rebels, and four Yankees, we gave ourselves no particular uneasiness. We kept our eyes upon the young men, and they took the same pleasure in looking at us, but we did not intend to allow them to obtain any advantage over us. One of the girls, and she was a vixen, finally inquired where we came from, and where we were going. Replying that we were "Tennesseans," on our way home, she flushed up and declared that she did not believe a "single word" we uttered. She was sure "you uns" were "Yankees," for we wore "blue clothing," and we acted "just like that pesky people." We endeavored to laugh her down, but this only incensed her so much that she threatened to send over to Lenoir and tell Captain Estes of her suspicions. She took special pleasure in telling us that it was not such a very long time ago that a Yankee, who had escaped from Salisbury, had been recaptured and hung near Lenoir, and if she was only sure that we were "Yankees," she would gladly assist in hanging us on the same tree.

John W——, one of the men on the stoop, was a cripple, and the happy or unhappy husband of the female who had acted so bitterly towards us. While his spouse was declaiming against us so virulently, he remained a passive listener; and when she concluded her tirade, he winked at us significantly, and hobbling off the stoop, bade us follow him. I must

confess that I accompanied him with misgivings, because uncertain as to what might be the result. He walked directly towards and entered a heavy underbrush in the centre of the field, but two or three hundred yards from the house. Seating ourselves upon a log, John told us the following story:—He had served in the Confederate army at the commencement of the war, and been wounded in one of the earlier battles, subsequently being discharged for disability, his wound having incapacitated him from performing further service. Six weeks ago he had married that girl, and it was only this morning that he had received an order to repair to the rendezvous for service to the end of the war, whenever that might be. Every man in the Confederacy had that day been conscripted, and all able to creep had to go to the "front." He said he knew we were Yankees the moment he "sot eyes" on us; notwithstanding, he had resolved to befriend us. He hoped we would be able to get through to our lines, then return and take him prisoner. Two of his brothers, captured in battle, had "taken the oath," and were now doing a good business at the North, and his sole ambition was to join them. He believed the North could feed and whip the South at one and the same time.

When John informed us that he had a rifle, we coaxed him to accompany us, and I verily believe he would have consented to our proposition had not his little wife at that inopportune moment entered the swamp. Perhaps it was unjust to condemn her

so severely, for she brought us half a bushel of sweet potatoes, but after all, she generally upset her kindnesses by indulging in vain threats. She dumped the potatoes upon the ground, ordered her husband to return at once to the house, then left, without bidding us farewell. John gave us general directions as to the best course to pursue, bidding us to be as cautious as possible, and keep clear of everyone in the vicinity. He pointed to a woods half a mile away, which if we could gain in safety, would afford us cover till after dark, when it would be advisable for us to march with all haste toward the mountain. In the meanwhile, he would keep watch over us until sunset, when we would have to look entirely to our own safety.

Thanking this kind-hearted and unfortunate soldier for his goodness to us, and seeing him regain his family, we ran out of the thicket and speedily gained the woods indicated. The place, however, was not what we had expected to find it, being open, and illy adapted for our purpose. Finding a large pile of brush, we succeeded in crawling under it, and making ourselves quite comfortable, soon fell asleep. Towards sunset, we were awakened by a noise near by, and peering through the labyrinth of brush, saw a large dog "smelling" around the stack. Close at hand, also, were an old woman and a little girl picking chips. The dog, determined upon ascertaining what was in the brush, kept "nosing" about, which had a wonderful depressing effect upon our nerves. If he discovered us, an

alarm would doubtless be raised, and to prevent this, Todd protruded his arm, and poising his club, let it drive with great force, striking the canine on his hind legs, and causing him to move off, howling in a terrific manner. The old woman in her fright dropped her basket, and looked about; but seeing nothing, again went on with her task, which being concluded, she left the woods, and went to a house in the clearing.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A BLIND MAN IN OUR PARTY.

AS the sun sank behind a great hill on our left, we emerged from the woods, and pursued our way. Reaching soon after a narrow though deep stream of water coursing through the little valley, we had considerable difficulty in crossing it. We finally got over by means of a fallen tree which spanned it. While pushing our way through some tall dry grass I suddenly lost my sight, my eyes having filled with the dust shaken from the tops of the weeds. I could not follow my comrades, neither did I dare call aloud for them. As it was now quite dark I was afraid they would not be able to find me. Discovering my absence on reaching the woods they hastily returned, and on learning my condition they expressed profound sorrow. Todd led me along for an hour or two, when, it being impossible

to see the north star, owing to the density of the woods, we halted; some fine boughs afforded us a luxurious bed, on which we soon fell asleep. The night was bitter cold, with a heavy frost falling, but we had to endure it, having no matches with which to ignite a fire. We had not needed one so greatly at any previous time.

The next morning, October 29th, "Old Sol" came forth in all his glory, to cheer and guide us on our way. My heart was glad when I became satisfied that my sight had returned, as during the night we all feared that my eyes had been injuriously affected by the moon; that I was "moon-struck," as I have heard it termed.

Our route now lay through the mountain forest, and, consequently, ascending we caught from time to time exquisite views of the lofty summits. Great mists were moving lightly away. Now and then some monarch of the ranges had his lofty brow wrapped in the delicate embrace of white clouds, which trembled into fantastic shapes of smoke-wreaths and castles and towers, and sometimes to take the contour of the mountains themselves. The ascent of the mountain became tedious and painful. There was no road, no beaten path for us to follow. But how delicious the sunlight on the tree-stems, through the glades of that wild forest! how delicate the green mosses clothing the trunks of fallen monarchs! how crystal and sweet the water which we found and drank from the foamy brooks!

Still we continued on, climbing on and upward,

the prospect, I confess, growing more and more dreary step by step. Noontime had come and gone, so had the last vestige of our "pigs." A few raw potatoes were all that remained to us, and as all space beyond us seemed barren and inhospitable, two of our party refused to move another step forward until more abundantly supplied with rations. They refused to listen to any argument, and declared that, danger or no danger, they would replenish their haversacks with food before advancing another step.

CHAPTER XXV.

AMONG THE DESERTERS.

AWAY below our perch on the mountain side we observed a cabin constructed of solid logs, and as this was the only sign of civilization visible, Todd and Lewis resolved to visit it. Grant and I watched them as they descended towards it. On reaching the base, however, instead of continuing on to the house, they suddenly turned to the right, up which they followed a ravine, walking with hasty strides. Wondering what could divert them, we reluctantly concluded to follow, although we felt that every step taken backwards was a serious loss. On gaining the ravine, we saw our comrades engaged in earnest conversation with two women, who appeared to be

at work in a small clearing. Directly Todd and Lewis climbed over the rude fence, and when we again saw them they were hard at work, cutting what we then supposed to be corn, but which we afterwards found out was sugar-cane. The two females followed a path along the opposite side of the ravine, and soon disappeared within the cabin. Grant and I were now satisfied that good luck was once more to attend us, so we patiently waited for the return of our comrades, whom we could see were still wielding some kind of a cutting instrument in the little field above us.

While seated thus, another actor appeared upon the scene. The new-comer, a bright-looking boy of thirteen summers, came up the ravine, leading an old horse, attached to a rudely constructed sled. On seeing us, he stopped, acting quite shy. We at once engaged him in conversation, and in reply to a question he said he was carting cane to his mother's mill. The little fellow kept his beautiful blue eyes upon the gold-plated and once bright buttons on my faded and tattered blue vest, and as I saw that he was greatly pleased with them, I told him I would give him the vest if he procured for us something to eat. The boy's eyes sparkled like diamonds, as he replied cheerfully, "I will!" But I little realized at that moment how greatly I should need that vest before reaching the Union lines. How often did I shiver afterwards for the want of that old vest, and how many times I wished for it, I may not say. I gave it away cheerfully because I was very hungry,

and for food a half-famished mortal will give all that he hath.

"Joe" Estes—that was the pretty name of the little fellow—told us his father was "in the army," but he acted so strangely while telling us this, that I doubted the truthfulness of his assertion.

"How far is it across the mountains?" we inquired.

"You uns can't never git across 'em," was the reply.

When we inquired whether we could not find some one to guide us over, he said:

"Oh, yes, uncle will show you the way."

"Who is your uncle?" meekly asked Grant.

"———," was the prompt reply.

On hearing that dread name pronounced, I was suddenly affected with faintness, being convinced that our enterprise had come to an untimely end, simply because my two hungry comrades had acted imprudently.

——— was a captain in the Confederate army, doing duty with his command in the mountains. We had repeatedly heard of him and his deeds before crossing the Catawba river, and had been cautioned against attempting to ford the river at Lovelady's Ford, as his command guarded it.

We looked at the lad, and he in turn looked at us. There was a peculiarity about his face which reassured us, so we continued the conversation. His uncle, he went on to say, lived over that mountain—pointing to a hill seven miles distant,—and he was

now at home. This was some consolation, at all events, as I should have been very uneasy, had I been told that the captain was at a less distance. He being seven miles away I plucked up courage to see what else I could learn from the boy, who seldom said anything unless in answer to a question, when he gave business-like answers. He said his mother was at the sugar-mill, just down the "gully," grinding "cane," and he knew that she would be glad to give us something to eat. He would go down and see, if we would "hold the horse." Promising to carefully attend to the old animal, Joe ran off as fast as his little legs could carry him. Grant and I at once concluded that it would be politic to get away from this locality with as little delay as possible as there was no telling how soon the dreaded mountaineer and his company might put in an appearance, in which event it would be fool-hardiness to attempt flight.

But all's well that ends well. We were in what seemed to be a trap, and we must extricate ourselves before it was sprung upon us. But how should we be able to do this?

Voices! Looking down the ravine, in the direction pursued by Joe, we saw the lad and a woman—his mother—approaching. She was a typical woman of the North Carolina mountains. No shadow of fear manifested itself in her somewhat masculine features, as she boldly advanced towards us. If the boy had surprised us, she was still more of a mystery. She lost no time in proceeding with the busi-

ness at hand, and in a voice which had no uncertain sound, demanded to know who we were, and what we wanted "in this neighborhood." Her bearing as well as her manner of speech was not calculated to impress us favorably, and induced us to act carefully. We were tired of the war, and anxious to see our families, who lived in Tennessee, we told the woman, who kept her eyes fixed upon us. As we were half-starved, we would thank her for something to eat. She finally alarmed us by saying that although she had not seen any Yankees since the war commenced, yet, from our appearance and actions, she was convinced that we were "Northerners." We assured her that our homes were in Tennessee, and that we had only last week deserted from the army. The woman said we could not deceive her, and the sooner we proved our identity the better it would be for us. "If," said she, "you have been sent up into these mountains to look for deserters, you cannot intimidate me. I will give you food, but beware how you abuse my hospitality. You must not use any deceit, nor attempt to guide any one else here; if you do, you will be shot down where you stand. A dozen true rifles are now levelled on you, and if I raise my hand you will fall dead at my feet. You look God-forsaken enough, at any rate, and I will not see you suffer for food. You must prove *who* you are before I leave this spot, and if you should turn out to be spies, seeking the life of my husband, and his friends, you will rue the day you ventured into this wild."

We had never before met such a woman. Certainly she was the bravest of her sex, and being, as she had just admitted, the wife of a "deserter," why should we not implicitly trust her? If we were to find "deserters" on the mountains, why might not the present be a favorable opportunity. Everything seemed to favor the supposition that deserters roamed these hills at their own sweet will; then why not confide in the honor and generosity of the brave woman who confronted us? We were perhaps, entirely in her power, and we might as well make the best of her friendship, if it could be gained. Confessing all, I showed her a new commission which my colonel had given me on the field of battle a day or two previous to my capture, and which I had been enabled to retain. I exhibited my well-worn diary, together with a pencil sketch of myself in the prison-pen at Savannah, taken by Captain Ullfers, the noted engineer on General Fremont's staff—also several other papers, which satisfied our shrewd inquirer that we were veritable Yankees, and officers besides. Mrs. Estes grasped each of us warmly by the hand, and was fervent in her expressions of good-will. Her face was radiant with joy, reflecting her heart's delight at the discovery which she had made. While engaged in pleasant converse, Todd and Lewis, accompanied by the two women heretofore alluded to, came down the ravine, the latter bearing a large earthen jug and several big loaves of bread, hot from the oven. On reaching us, Todd and Lewis looked somewhat surprised on seeing us in the company of

Mrs. Estes and her son, while the two women who had baked the bread, were staggered on hearing the lady talking to us as though she had simply met old acquaintances instead of utter strangers. When they heard her allude to our "Northern Country," one of the women cried out: "Thar, now, what liars, you two uns are! you swore to us that you were Kaintuckians and deserters, when we stuck to it all the time that you uns were real Yankees. Had you told us the truth at the start, we would have done much better by you, for we love the Yankee soldiers—we are Yankees *ourselves*."

The party laughed heartily at this sally of Julia Setser and Sarah Teague. That is, those laughed who could laugh, but a mouthful of corn-bread, soaked in sorghum molasses, prevented me from being outwardly mirthful. It was quite a picnic scene for an hour after this, during which time the women made many inquiries concerning our country—a subject which did not grow tiresome to them. After having heartily partaken of the good things which had been provided in great abundance, Mrs. Estes invited us to follow her down the ravine, which we took great pleasure in doing—being willing captives. Secreting us in the laurel near the cane-mill, and cautioning us to remain very quiet, as the main road ran near the house, she left, and accompanied by her two female friends, proceeded direct to her humble home.

Night's shadows were fast creeping over the mighty hills when we were awakened by our angelic

friend from a doze into which we had unconsciously fallen when left alone in the silent woods. She looked quite handsome now, having combed her hair smoothly down her ruddy cheeks, and with her comely form robed in a green dress. With a gracious smile, worthy of a queen, she invited us to partake of "supper," for which duty I verily believe no other four men in the Confederacy were better qualified to perform. We needed no second invitation, and straightway she led us to a most inviting repast. Upon the clean, green sward, under the grateful shade of a huge tree, we found a splendid set-out—nice wheat flour biscuits, corn-cakes, milk, honey, chicken *en fricassée*, roasted potatoes, etc., tastily arranged upon a cloth as spotless as purity itself. Nothing could be more inviting to men in our condition. What a contrast to our supper on the previous day! Would wonders ever cease?

"Now, gentlemen," said Mrs. Estes in a clear, rich voice, "you may prepare yourselves for another surprise," saying which she stepped back a few feet, and looking upward, waved a white cloth over her head. In a few minutes afterwards, we were amazed on beholding a score of men, clad in the Confederate gray, each carrying a rifle, rapidly descending from the giddy height almost above us. Before we could comprehend what seemed to be an ideal tableau, these same men, hardy mountaineers, with Mrs. Estes' husband at their head, surrounded us. Introductions followed, when the entire party squatted upon the grass in order to more successfully attack

MEETING WITH A CONFEDERATE GENERAL.



the edibles. Long before the repast was finished, there existed between these gallant men, who had welcomed us with open arms, and ourselves, a kinship which made us at once friends and brothers.

Mrs. Estes was very attentive to me, continually expressing sympathy, and declaring that she could not understand how I had been able to travel so far without a covering for my head or feet. Touched by her motherly regard, and desirous of partially repaying her for her kindnesses, I drew a heavy gold seal ring from my finger, and begged her to accept it as a memento of the occasion. The good woman at first declined, but upon my insisting upon her acceptance of the trinket, she reluctantly took it, saying she would keep it as long as she lived, then ask her children to treasure it as a keepsake of the war. She was profuse in her thanks for a gift which I most cheerfully made.

We lingered around the repast, which was joyous beyond my power of description. If we were pleased with the attentions showered upon us, our new-found friends were equally so. They were thoroughly unselfish, noble and courageous, and I had no doubt that they would see us through to our lines. The women, too, talked about the war, having had an abiding faith that the old Union would be preserved. The women whom I met along upon the mountains of Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee, while surrounded by terrible dangers, and often caused to suffer, were as heroic as any whose noble deeds are recorded in our country's annals.

In every age and clime woman has proved herself the good angel sent by Heaven to alleviate human misery. In the depths of African forests, Mungo Park would have perished, but for the sympathy and generous assistance of the dusky maidens who ministered to his necessities. Other intrepid travelers, the recipients of woman's kindness, also attest their appreciation of her virtues and services. When I forget the kind words and noble deeds of many women whom I met in my painful pilgrimage may my right hand become palsied, and my tongue lose its power to bless. Their position was often pitiable, but their misfortunes and sorrows caused none to turn their backs when a suffering soldier solicited their good offices. With all their trials and tribulations, they manifested the greatest sympathy for us.

The supper concluded—it was now quite dark—we bade the women “good night,” and commenced the ascent of the mountain, the base of which rested at the edge of our supper table. Marching in “Indian file” we crept skyward—a silence, not of gloom, but of reverence and joy, falling upon our party as we passed through the aisles of the grand wood and climbed the knolls which rose like whales' backs every few hundred yards. After an hour's weary climbing in Cimmerian darkness, we entered a long line of laurel thicket, and in the midst of the awful solitude, my blood curdled on hearing a determined voice demand, “Who comes there?” A thousand thoughts flashed through my mind on hearing this

dread challenge. I had not expected anything of the kind, and for a moment I was unkind enough to wonder whether we were not being led to the place of slaughter. Had we been deceived, and were we in the hands of friends or enemies? My suspense, however, was of short duration, for the countersign, whatever it may have been, was properly given, when we moved forward a short distance and descended into what seemed to be the heart of the mountain.

Judge of my surprise as I entered a commodious cave in the hill-side, and found a cheerful fire and plenty of dry straw upon which to repose. At the farther end was a chimney—simply a hole excavated through the mountain's side to allow the escape of smoke as well as to admit of proper ventilation. A barrel or two of sweet potatoes, bags of meal and apples, were also found within the apartment. This spectacle allowed me to take no thought for the morrow, which would certainly take care of itself.

Directly after entering the cave, a real cozy place, two young men who had remained on guard while their comrades were at supper in the valley below, were brought in and introduced to us. They were handsome fellows, even in their rabbit-skin caps and fur moccasins. Each carried a long and very heavy smooth-bore rifle. They tarried but a few minutes, however, as they were anxious, they said, to take a "tramp down into the valley," in order to "have a little fun with the reg'lars," also to pay their respects to a couple of young ladies who had manifested some little interest in their welfare.

Excusing themselves, bidding us "good night and pleasant dreams," and promising to be with us again on the morrow, they bowed themselves out, and disappeared in the forest's deep gloom.

Bill Estes and a single companion remained with us through the night. Anxious to hear about our wanderings in the swamps of South Carolina, and up to the hour of our first meeting with his wife, we briefly related the story. Bill regarded our march as a wonderful feat, and said he was puzzled to know how we had accomplished it. "Why," said he, "with my knowledge of the country, and dressed in gray clothing, I would not dare to attempt such a thing." He told us a hundred times that night that we must be "brave men" to go through so many dangerous scenes, and "right smart to fool them South Carolinians like that." Until now we had not fully realized the magnitude of our enterprise, nor the dangers which environed us. His exclamations of surprise caused us to think that the tramp was really a remarkable incident in our history, and worthy of record.

Bill was the most interesting man we had met in the sunny South. He had a large heart, while no danger could deter him from the performance of any known duty. I never wearied in listening to his stories of fatigue, hardship, and suffering, but all the time felt great pity for his misfortunes. Tired of the war, wherein most of his friends had been slaughtered, and anxious, like ourselves, to see home once more, he watched his opportunity when Lee's army

crossed into Virginia, after its defeat at Gettysburg, and gaining the Blue Ridge, he followed the range almost to his very door, which he safely reached after some three weeks' travel. He had an intense hatred for the Confederate leaders, and declared that he would never allow himself to be taken back to the army. True, he was not permitted to occupy his home, nor live with his wife and children—neither could he extend to his family the protection and assistance which they so much needed, yet it was a great satisfaction to him and to them to be where they could at least see one another occasionally. He had not passed a single night in his own house since his return from the army, for spies were continually watching for him, and for hundreds of others who were in a similar predicament. We talked until after midnight, then stretching our weary bodies upon the soft bed of clean straw, reposed blissfully till late next morning—Sunday. We slept tranquilly, because, for the first time in many months, we went to bed with every assurance of safety, being surrounded by friends, with brave and loving hearts.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN SABBATH.

IT was about eight o'clock when we arose, invigorated by long needed rest. Looking out of the cave, we saw the genial sun creeping heavenward

over the mountain in front, and noticed a number of our last night's acquaintances standing without. It was a singular spectacle, certainly, which no one would have dreamed of a few hours previous. Here we were, four Yankee officers, in the heart of the enemy's country, in a mountain fastness, surrounded by some of the men whom we had encountered in battle's stern array at Bull Run, Roanoke, Newbern, Fredericksburg, and on other ensanguined fields, who now were keeping watch and ward over our lives, which they regarded as precious in their sight—willing to shed their blood in our defence.

Walking down the mountain side to a beautiful babbling brook, we made our morning toilet with pleasure. This was a duty we had been derelict in for a long time. So complete was the transformation, after the process of washing, that it was with difficulty we recognized each other. Returning, or rather climbing back to the "cave," Bill invited Todd and myself to accompany him to breakfast—Grant and Lewis going off in another direction with Lewis Beaumont.

We walked leisurely along, the ascent of the hills being quite tedious and fatiguing. The sunlight was gorgeous, the atmosphere balmy. Beside our path the mountain laurel, the ginseng and the gentian abounded, and pines and spruces, poplars, hickories, walnuts, oak, and ash grew in profusion. Every turn brought a new vista of grand old hills to our astonished view. The rare atmosphere gave new zest to our journey. It was here, in this remote and

mountain-guarded dell, that we found the mountaineer in his native purity. No contact with even the people of the lowlands of his own State had given him familiarity with the world below him.

A by-path through a dense laurel thicket, where wild vines grew luxuriantly, brought us to a small clearing, and from behind these immense pine-trees on the mountain's pinnacle an exquisite view was afforded. At this point Bill had stood through winter's blasts and summer's fervent heats, watching his wife and children in the beautiful valley below. It is difficult to imagine a more romantic-looking spot. From our lofty perch we looked down upon the home of our new-found friend, while beyond, high on the horizon, lay Grandfather and Grandmother Mountains, sharply outlined in the sun's glare, their delicate blue colors amazing and delighting us. We were entranced with the grand view the landscape presented.

Bill gave a peculiar call, so closely imitating the cry of a bird peculiar to that region, that I involuntarily turned, expecting to see the songster, and in less than a minute afterwards we saw his wife leave her habitation, bearing a basket upon her arm. The brave-hearted woman disappeared from our sight, but half an hour afterwards emerged from the thicket near by, cheerily greeting us with a "good morning, gentlemen; I trust you have enjoyed yourselves." After exchanging salutations, she spread a spotless cloth upon the ground and covered it with excellent biscuits, beef, pork, butter, preserves, etc. She also

served us with coffee (made from rye-flour), which answered as a substitute for old government Java. While feasting, the conversation took a general turn—the most agreeable part thereof being chapters from the war history of the brave matron, to whom I never could tire in listening. She had repeatedly been awakened at the dead hour of night, she assured us, and forced out of doors by blood-thirsty guerrillas seeking her husband's life. Often and again had she been driven from her home and made to stand in the snow while bands of cutthroats searched the premises, turning her household effects topsy-turvy, to gratify a spirit of devilish malignity. On one occasion, after removing her and her children from the house, the guerrillas seized "little Josie," and tying him by his thumbs to a tree, attempted to extort from him information concerning the whereabouts of his father. The noble boy, however, withstood the terrible punishment without murmuring, and heroically refused to betray his father, notwithstanding the torture to which he was so cruelly subjected. She knew that Joe would die sooner than reveal his father's hiding-place, because he had been educated to value his safety beyond all other considerations. When all else had failed, the woods had been fired, in order if possible, by this means to drive the deserters—"lyers-out" as they were generally called—from their lairs. This, however, had had no other effect than to make the game scarce during the winter months. The "hell-hounds," as the Unionists invariably denominated the troops sent

to effect their capture, had surrounded Mrs. Estes' house for days together, hoping thus to prevent her from communicating with her husband or supplying him with food.

During the winter season, when the ground was covered with snow, Mrs. Estes had, in visiting her husband, been compelled to climb to giddy heights, walking on ice and through water so as to *leave no trail*. The "hounds" had stolen her horse and cows and poultry, had threatened to burn her house; in fact, they had done all that intense hatred and devilish ingenuity could devise. The good woman told us much that I failed to jot down. She remained with us some two hours, and on seeing her regain her abode in safety, we walked slowly back to the cave, where, lighting corn-cob pipes, we smoked and chatted with a number of mountaineers, who, having heard of our arrival, had gathered from the surrounding hills. During the afternoon, others came over to "headquarters" to see the "Yankee officers"—all treating us with marked respect. Our journey was a source of great wonder to these brave people, who could not understand how we had been able to accomplish such a marvellous feat.

At about two o'clock, a score of ladies, young and old, reached the hill above us, each bringing some article of food. Spreading white cloths upon the moss-covered earth, they speedily deposited thereon roast chickens, bread, potatoes, milk, apples, honey, etc., and invited all to partake. Our party, which had been augmented, now numbered more

than forty men, nearly every one of whom carried a rifle or shot-gun. These men were "dead-shots," having from boyhood roamed the mountains in search of deer, bear, panther, and other game. They were inured to hardship and capable of great fatigue and desperate daring.

After a long conversation, a number of these men consented to accompany us to the Union lines. They said it would be impossible for us to cross the mountains without a guide—hundreds of miles would have to be traversed ere we would be able to reach a place of safety. They argued that they would be quite as well off in accompanying us as in remaining behind, and as they needed supplies the present afforded a favorable opportunity for obtaining them. We promised to assist them on reaching the Union lines to the extent of our ability. The women-folks, too, urged them to go with us, and as everything was soon settled the men departed to make preparations for the journey. At four o'clock, after sorrowful adieus, we took our departure from a people whose hospitality has ever been proverbial, and a memory of whose unbounded kindnesses will last as long as life.

Bill and his wife skilfully guided us along the "range," keeping well out of sight of the roadways. Having forgotten a flask of powder, which Bill deemed necessary for the trip, he went back to procure it, promising to rejoin us after dark. His wife said she knew "every foot of the way," so she volunteered to conduct us over to her sisters'. She

sprang like a gazelle over rocks and across dark ravines, and speedily exhausted us, for which she begged "pardon." After climbing along a rugged pathway for several miles, we descended the mountain slope and almost before aware of it, stood upon the right bank of a wide, though somewhat shallow running stream of water, which came down from the mountain through a beautiful valley. Mrs. Estes, seeing that we were in a quandary, remarked that we need not feel alarmed, as the water was "quite shallow." Gathering up the skirts of her dress, she fearlessly stepped into the river, bidding us "follow," keeping as quiet as possible. We had no difficulty in crossing, as the water was in no place more than two feet in depth. Quite frequently our guide stopped and listened attentively, then proceeded as before.

The sun was sinking behind a great hill on our right as we gained the opposite bank, where we secreted ourselves behind a huge stack of corn-stalks, to await the return of our fair cicerone, who had left us to visit a large farm-house, which we could plainly see, some half mile away. We congratulated ourselves upon the bright prospect before us, and were exceedingly happy. Noticing an apple-tree near by, we crawled out of the bushes and gathered some of the delicious fruit, and while thus engaged, noticed the hurried approach of a woman who did not at all resemble the lady who had but recently left us. As she came near, we saw that she was young and quite pretty. Walking directly to

where we stood, the rosy-cheeked lass modestly curtsied, saying in a melodious voice, "Sister says it will be necessary for you to remain where you now are until after dark, as soldiers have been passing along the road all the afternoon." The young lady, noticing our fondness for apples, picked us some choice ones, and made herself very agreeable, and each of us did our best to entertain her. She expressed great sympathy for us, especially wondering at my ability to travel barefooted. She made many inquiries concerning the North, which she said she would dearly love to visit.

Darkness prevailed when Mrs. Estes, accompanied by a young lady, a sister of the first arrival, joined us, reporting that a rebel vidette was patrolling the road near the house, a small force having proceeded towards the mountains on our left. They told us that a brother of the young ladies had just returned from the Union lines at Bull Gap, which place was besieged by General Early. Had any other general been reported there I would have been very sad; but it was Early, and as the Confederates always had him besieging some out-of-the-way place, I concluded there must be some mistake about the matter. Early, the last time I heard from him, was bombarding Bangor, Maine, and as he would likely keep on in that direction till he got to Quebec, it was hardly possible that he could have returned so soon.

When everything seemed safe, we started toward the farm-house, the ladies taking the lead. We

closely followed a fence which skirted the field, and on reaching the roadway listened for the enemy, whom, of course, we were exceedingly anxious to avoid. Carefully crawling between the bars of the fence, we lost no time in crossing the road and entering the yard, where a big watch-dog barked furiously, as we ran up a wagon-way to the barn. The women, fearful that the barking of the dog (which was unusual) would alarm and bring the enemy down upon us, returned to the road to respond should there be any "callers." No one troubling us or them, the girls soon came back and piloted us up a path into a very deep ravine, which was washed by a torrent of water, where, they said, we would be "perfectly safe," and where no one could possibly disturb us: they then left, promising to return as speedily as possible.

The girls had been absent probably five minutes, when we were alarmed by hearing some one moving along the side of the rugged mountain on our right, and almost immediately above the spot where we stood. Halting within a few yards of us (although we could not see him, nor he us), he sung out in a deep undertone: "Hey, Bill! B-i-l-l! Hey! Whar be you?" My blood chilled, while beads of perspiration quickly gathered upon my face. Satisfied that we had been outflanked, that the enemy had surrounded us, that we were in a very tight box, and that our safety consisted in immediate flight, we ran down the ravine in the direction of the house, perhaps not the wisest thing to do under the cir-

cumstances. Had I not tumbled into the creek, near the barn, and had not my comrades stopped to help me out of the water, there is no telling where we would have gone, or what would have become of us, for while engaged in blowing the water out of my nose, the girls happened to pass near by. When informed of the cause of our alarm and trepidation, the girls laughed heartily, quieting our nerves by saying that the man who wanted to see "Bill" was their brother, who had come down from his "retreat" on the mountain, to converse with another brother—a cripple.

If we had been unduly frightened, so had the fellow who caused the alarm, for when he heard us scampering away, he took to his heels and made off in an opposite direction. He was as positive, he told us, we were after him as we were sure that he was after us. An hour or so later, on returning, he good-humoredly joined in the laugh, which the young ladies insisted upon enjoying. The girls had brought with them fresh bread, milk, apples, and a small tin pail filled with sorghum molasses, for which of course we had a decidedly good appetite—and when did we not have an appetite? Breaking the bread, we dipped the pieces into the pail; and when the repast was concluded I was completely bedaubed with molasses—hands, face, and what little apparel still remained upon my person. Still, I must confess I enjoyed the edibles, eating as if I never expected to obtain another square meal. Upon the conclusion of the repast, we were piloted back to the

large flat rock from which we had recently fled, the girls returning to the house to procure beds and bedding, they declaring that we should not sleep upon the cold ground while they were able to prevent it. In half an hour our guardian angels came back, bearing *two feather beds* and plenty of quilts, under which they usually slept, and these being placed and smoothed out upon the rock, made the best bed I had seen since leaving home, nearly a year before. "Tucking us in" and wishing "good night," two of the best and prettiest girls in the entire South left us to pursue their lonely way through intense darkness to their home.

The blue-vaulted sky shone far above us, but owing to the abruptness and awful height of the mountains on either side of the narrow ravine, but little of the firmament could be seen. As I reposed there that night my thoughts constantly reverted to my distant home, from which I had not heard since my capture—the rebels refusing to deliver to me the letters which I knew were regularly sent, regardless of expense. But Providence had been gracious to me, preserving my life when danger blocked my path, and delivering me from many afflictions. Uttering a silent prayer for the welfare of the good friends who had been raised up for me in the wilderness, and invoking for them Heaven's choicest blessing, I insensibly sunk into a sweet slumber, from which I was not awakened until a bright hour next morning, when I saw the two lovely girls standing near my *bedside*. Their faces were luminous as they

inquired how we had "passed the night." They had brought with them a warm breakfast, consisting of fresh beef, deliciously fried, some pork, bread and syrup. We threw our feet out, and sitting upon the bed ate a hearty breakfast. Not knowing when we should have another opportunity to enjoy such an excellent meal, I was selfish enough, as I sat there, to wish I could eat enough to last me for a month. After breakfast we made our way to the mountain's summit, in order to have better chances for observation and equal chances with the enemy in case any put in an appearance, where we talked with the ladies an hour or so, until old Jacob Beaumont came over from a neighboring ridge, and said that a large force of Confederates were posted on the "Globe," a mountain a few miles to the westward. He added, that as soon as Bill arrived, he must pilot us away from those parts without further delay, as it would be "resky" to longer remain so near the road.

As Bill did not join us till nearly noon, the girls would not consent to our departure until "after dinner," which they returned home to prepare. When they came back they were accompanied by Mrs. Estes, who apologized for her long absence by saying that she had to remain at the house to wait upon the old folks and her crippled brother. Before leaving these good people, these kind friends, I drew up a statement (writing it on blank leaves taken from my hard-worn diary), explaining our condition, testifying to the devotion of the girls and their friends for the Union, and committing them and

theirs to any Union soldiers who might pass that way, and begging our officers to remember their people kindly, giving our full names, official rank, etc. The girls, to whose keeping the document was entrusted, said they would "treasure it forever."

CHAPTER XXVII.

A SORROWFUL LEAVE-TAKING.

DINNER being concluded, we took leave of Bill's wife and her two lovely sisters, each being visibly affected at the separation. Their kindness I shall ever remember with the liveliest feelings of gratitude. The parting between Bill and his wife was peculiarly touching, as they clung to each other, the good wife sobbing audibly at the necessity for another separation, which would probably be for a long time—perhaps forever. I pitied them from my heart, for the sacrifice was simply and solely in the interest of four strangers—four Yankees—whom they wished to save from a cruel fate. True, Bill might as well go with us as to lounge about his native hills (for he had no home he dared visit), and he could be of but little use to his family, no matter how great their danger.

We started, Bill carrying his long, heavy rifle at a "trail," having the advance. The country here and henceforward was of the wildest and most romantic character. The houses, which were occasionally visible in the clearings, were invariably con-

structed of logs. We marched some five miles over the roughest hills I had ever seen, passing through one gap thousands of feet high. We looked down upon the tops of mighty forests, and often had the grandest views to be seen east of the Sierra Nevadas. This day's journey, as many which followed, was but a succession of grand panoramic views.

Late in the afternoon we descended a huge mountain, halting at its base, where laurels were abundant, and a crystal brook flowed silently by, in order to take a needed rest; to partake of the milk, honey and corn-bread which kind-hearted women subsequently set before us; to lie on the moss-covered ground beside the gentle stream; to drink in at every pore the delicious inspiration of the pure mountain air, and to await the arrival of the Confederate deserters, who, anxious to accompany us, had promised to rejoin us at this point.

Bidding us remain very quiet, Bill moved cautiously along the roadside, just within the shadow of the woods, and shortly afterwards crossed over and darted into a house, which he had told us was now occupied by the family of his brother—the officer whose command we had so successfully evaded at Lovelady Ford. Keeping our eyes upon the house, we saw an old woman emerge therefrom and walk slowly towards us, carrying in her left hand a pail, while in the other was a stick—her inseparable companion. Introducing herself, she said that she could not resist the opportunity of visiting us, and again shaking hands with her “own

countrymen." But before entering into "pettickers," she invited us to partake of some buttermilk, which her daughter had just churned. It is needless to say that we each drank heartily of the milk, Grant taking so much of the contract that he soon after became very ill, vomiting freely. The old woman said she had lived in Wisconsin for many years, and that several of her children now resided near Milwaukie in that State. As this was Captain Grant's State, he and the old lady had an interesting conversation until the milk, which perhaps had not been perfectly churned, began to *work* again in the captain's capacious stomach, producing a very unpleasant sensation in that region. The old lady, after sunset, returned to the house, and an hour afterwards, when it was quite dark, a young colored man, free-born, visited our haunt, saying he had been directed to pilot us to the barn, and if we followed him it would be his pleasure to attend us. We had been in the barn but a short time when we received a visit from the wife of the Confederate captain, and several other ladies.

After a brief conversation, carried on in a low tone of voice, we accompanied them to the house, where a table spread with many good things greeted us. The women extended a hearty welcome, and sought to make us forget our ills and feel at home. While disposing of the food set before us, the ladies took turns in watching the roadway, which was unpleasantly near, fearful of a "surprise" from soldiers who were liable to pass at any moment. As the old

clock in the chimney corner struck nine, we arose from the table, feeling as though we had eaten enough to last during our natural lives, and thanking the ladies for their interest in our behalf, we bade them each "good night," went out into the frosty air, and gaining the hay-loft in the barn, wrapped ourselves in woollen blankets, kindly brought out to us, and slept comfortably till nearly daylight, when we were awakened by our hostess, whom we at once followed to a secluded nook on the steep mountain's side, where she subsequently served us with a magnificent breakfast.

Here we were to await the appearance of Bill and the party who had promised to accompany us to the Union lines—hundreds of miles distant. About the middle of the day we were surprised to see a Confederate officer coming through the thicket towards us. Our first impulse was to "run," but finally becoming satisfied that he had pacific intentions, we concluded to await his nearer approach. When a few yards away, noticing our excited appearance, he told us not to disturb ourselves, as "Bill" had sent him. He shook our hands warmly, introducing himself as First Lieutenant B——. He was at home on a brief leave of absence, and having accidentally learned that we were in his vicinity, had called to pay his respects, and ask permission to accompany us to our lines. As he disliked deserting his men, he requested us to postpone our departure until he returned from "Camp Vance" with as many of his command as he could induce

to come with him. He argued that the men would bring their rifles and ammunition with them, and thus armed, we should neither suffer from lack of game, or fear any straggling parties which might be encountered. As singular as it may appear, another Confederate officer, Captain L——, in full uniform, put in an appearance while we were talking. He came upon us unawares, and had he dropped from the clouds, we would not have been more dumb-founded. He laughed when he found that he had been able to "surprise" us, but confessed that he had followed tactics not always adopted in modern warfare. He joined with his friend, the lieutenant, and begged us to wait until they could go back to camp and get their companies, when they would speedily rejoin us.

All this was agreeable enough, and we assured the officers that this proposition was both fair and very kind; that nothing would be more congenial to our feelings were we in a condition to postpone our departure; but being sick and sore, nearly exhausted by terrible privations and fatigue, and anxious, above all other things, to proceed homewards, we would be compelled to decline the offer. We urged these officers to go along with us, but they said they could not do so honorably, as their men would suffer by their absence. In conclusion, we told them that we should be guided in all our movements by "Bill," but that he would not be back until dark. The captain and lieutenant said they hoped to meet us again, but in case they were un-

able to do so, we would have their best wishes on the long and perilous journey before us. They pressed our hands quite warmly, and departing, were soon lost to our view in the heavy thicket of laurels which surrounded us.

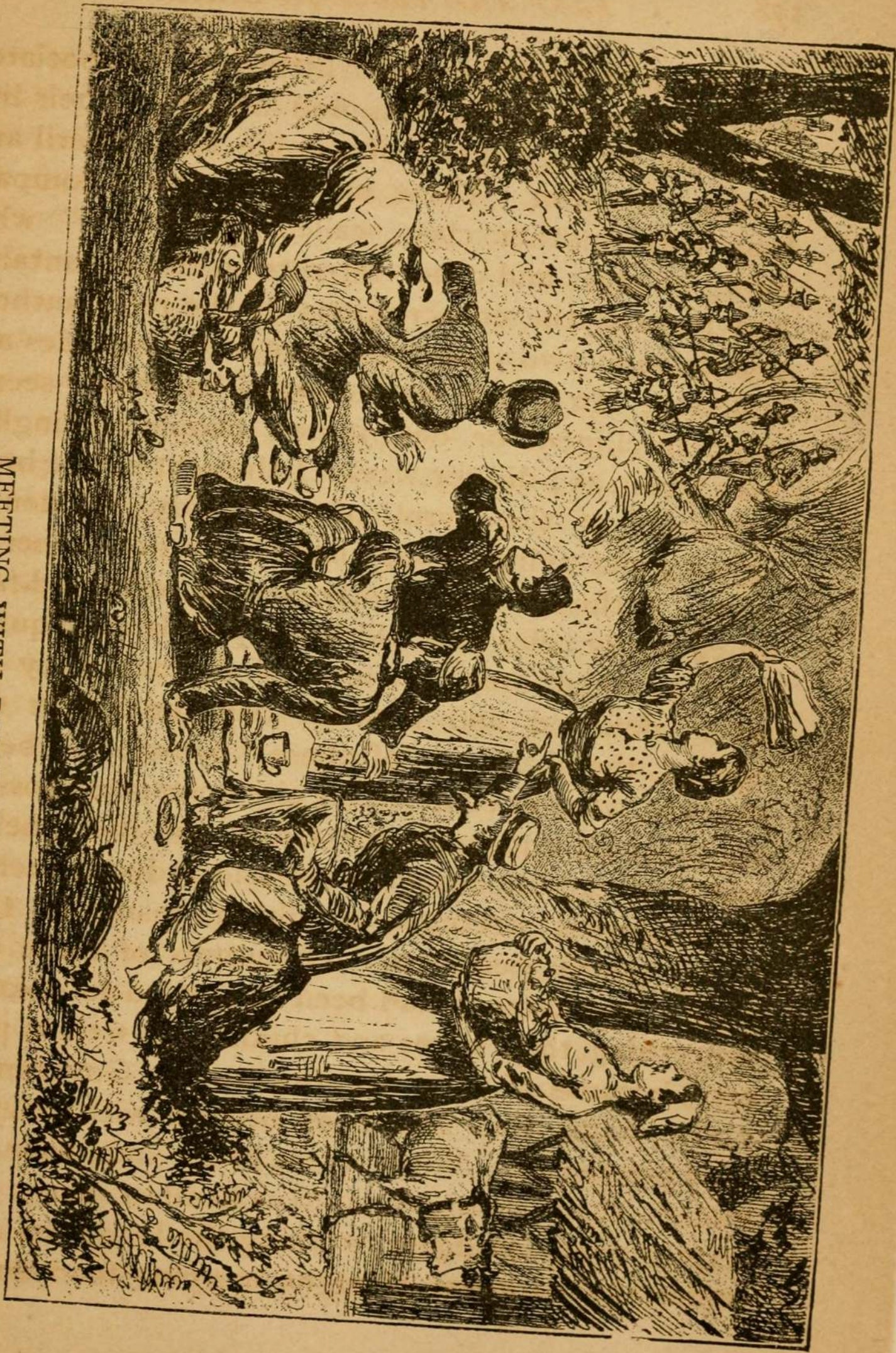
At sunset our hearts were made happy at seeing "Bill" and thirteen others approach. The party had three rifles, four Colt's six-shooters and several shot-guns loaded with buckshot. Anxious to get away, we urged "Bill" to move forward, fearful that our whereabouts must sooner or later become known to the wrong party. He said a start would soon be made, but it would hardly be fair to leave without seeing his brother, the captain, who was now at home, and would shortly visit us. True enough, after dark, the veritable captain came, saw and conquered. This rebel chieftain, whose name had been our greatest terror at one time, in order to evade whom we had tramped many weary miles and passed sleepless nights, now stood before us. More, he came to us staggering under the weight of edibles—meat, bread, potatoes, etc., insisting upon our acceptance thereof. Entering into conversation, he said that his "scouts" had seen us cross the Catawba river, and that they would in all likelihood have overtaken us that rainy night had they possessed any means of crossing the river. He told us that his chief duty was to scour the mountains for "deserters." "I do this," said he, "in the daytime, and at night I am generally with the boys. Of course they know enough to keep out of my sight

during the day, which makes it exceedingly difficult for me to catch them. The war is nearly over, thank God, and it is about time for us mountaineers to forget our animosities and bury our bloody hatchets. I saw all I care to see in Virginia, and although I have been ordered there again, I shall take good care not to go. General Sherman is over-running Georgia, and in a few days he will be in possession of Charleston. With the entire seaboard lost to the Confederacy, what is left?" The captain, while expressing his regret at not being able to accompany us, said he would be happy to aid us in every way possible. He raised our drooping spirits by predicting that we would be able to reach the Union lines, although it might be necessary to go on as far as Chattanooga. Thanking the gallant captain for his great kindnesses to us, we embraced him, and sorrowfully ascended the mountain, marching as rapidly as possible until after midnight, when, the weather being quite cold, the wind blowing strongly from the north-east, we halted and went into bivouac, passing a very uncomfortable night.

The gallant men now with us were the very ones whom, while wading through the swamps of South Carolina, we had expected to meet on reaching the mountains. Comrades in prison had told me of the loyalty of the people of Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee, and at last, after many weary days, we were in their very midst. From this time forward we experienced little trouble in finding "friends," for they were everywhere. In Caldwell

County, where we first met "little Joe," I associated with hundreds of this class, and had from their lips the story of their bitter life—a life full of peril and sublime heroism. These men were boon companions with another class, called "lyers-out," who, living in caves and other retreats in the mountains, had resisted the conscriptions of the rebel authorities through two years and more of vicissitudes and suffering. In all my wanderings I had never seen a more intelligent or determined people. Mingling with them, as I did for weeks, I thought of the brave defenders of the Tyrol, of the hardy Waldenses, fighting and dying among the hills for dear Liberty's sake. Although but poorly armed, with old-fashioned heavy rifles and old horse pistols and squirrel guns as their only weapons of defence, they had often defeated and kept at bay the forces sent against them. Many of these "lyers-out," before the war, were in comfortable circumstances, possessing pleasant and profitable farms, but the rebellion and its dreadful consequences had reduced them to their present wretched condition, many of them being utterly penniless. Thousands of these poor men, I was assured, had been compelled to abandon everything, their wives and children, as well as property, because of their devotion to the Government, under which they had been blessed with unexampled prosperity. While these brave men were thus exiled, their courageous, true-hearted wives performed every drudgery, working the land, and often, under the darkness of night, carrying food surrep-

MEETING WITH DESERTERS.



titiously to their loved ones hiding in the clefts of the mountains.

With daylight also came a cold rain-storm, which admonished us to hasten on, eating as we proceeded. Not a word was uttered, silence and caution being essential to the success of our undertaking. Noontime found us flanking the settlement at Wilson Creek, all thoroughly soaked and suffering greatly from the cold and piercing winds. Observing an untenanted house in an open field we took possession, and a few minutes afterwards a blazing fire conduced to our comfort, enabling us to warm our shivering bodies and dry our apparel, together with the blankets our friends had wisely brought with them. It rained incessantly day and night, flooding the valley, and rendering a resumption of our journey very difficult, if not impossible for a time.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

A WELCOME GUEST.

ABOUT the middle of the afternoon we were thrown into one of those alarms which had now become periodical. On the summit of a bold mountain in front of the house, half a mile and more distant, we saw four armed men, clad in gray, bobbing suspiciously about from tree to tree. None of our party were able to recognize the strangers, whose conduct was inexplicable. If they only numbered

four, we felt competent to get away with them; but it might be that a force was near them, in which case discretion would be the better part of valor, and the approaching night would arrive none too soon to aid us in a retrograde movement.

Determined to ascertain who the new-comers might be, "Bill" seized his rifle and advanced towards the base of the hill, which he had no sooner reached, than the strangers descended rapidly to where he stood, and a moment afterwards the entire party were walking in our direction. The new-comers, stalwart fellows, were headed by SIMEON PHILYAW, a noted and daring scout of the Union army, who was armed with a Henry rifle and two of Colt's navy revolvers. "Sim," as he was familiarly called, gave us the latest news from the front. He had, he said, "just run up over the mountains to see the folks for a few days." On being assured that his mother and sister were well, and that he could do greater service by piloting our party over the mountains to Bull Gap, which he declared to be occupied by General Gillem, he consented to forego his prospective pleasures at home, and accompany us. "Sim" manifested an especial liking for me, and in language more forcible than polite, said he would procure a horse for me to ride, as I could never get through *barefooted*. He and a North Carolinian consulted together a few moments, then declared their intention of paying a visit to "Widow P——," who lived a few miles beyond the settlement. She was a bitter secessionist, and had contributed liberally to

aid those who fought for the Confederacy, her boast being that she had two sons in the Southern army, and her only wish was that their number was legion. It would do no harm to take a horse or two from her; and, besides, when we got through with the animals, they could be readily disposed of and the proceeds divided among the party. Although the storm continued with unabated violence, and the night was intensely dark, these gallant fellows started off to procure me a hat, or shoes, or a "hoss," promising to return by daylight, if all went well: if prevented from doing this, they would re-join us somewhere on Grandfather Mountain. Although I had suffered a great deal for the want of hat and shoes, and would cheerfully have given my check on any bank in New Jersey for a liberal sum to obtain these indispensable articles, I deeply regretted to see these brave men go off, on a dismal night, on such a dangerous errand, for I knew they would incur great personal danger, perhaps death.

The North Carolinians with us told off the "guards," formed them in "reliefs," posted the sentries where they could best hear the approach of an enemy or friend, those remaining stretching themselves upon the kitchen floor, where we slept peacefully until daybreak, when we hurried away, the people in the "settlement" being ignorant of our departure. While most of the people residing along the creek could be safely trusted with our secrets, there were some who would have been happy in betraying us to the enemy. I disliked to proceed

without my friends, who had not yet returned, but the necessity of our getting to a safer point being strongly urged, we soon after began the ascent of Grandfather Mountain, whose rugged summit was 5,560 feet high. The wind blew strongly from the north-west, which rendered our task of climbing no easy matter. Pressing onward and upward, we succeeded shortly after meridian in reaching and standing upon the summit of the mighty monarch. Here, thousands of feet above the plains we had so gladly left a few days previous, we enjoyed a crystal atmosphere. It was a region compared to which the White Mountains seemed dwarfed and insignificant, for through an extent of several hundred miles, height after height towered in solemn magnificence. But as this was a trip for *life* itself, rather than for pleasure, I turned but for a moment to gaze upon the sublime spectacle afforded. A grand view of parts of Caldwell and Wilkes counties was to be had from the giddy point upon which we stood.

Proceeding along upon the range, after an hour's wearisome marching we reached a log cabin in the midst of a small clearing. A tall, lean, and sickly old man, clad in a homespun pair of trousers and a flax shirt, courteously greeted us. The housewife, we found upon entering the habitation, was smoking a corn-cob pipe, and sitting on a rude three-legged stool, rather disconsolately, before the fireplace warming her thin hands. The furnishings were of a meagre character. The woman gave us some buttermilk, with which we were "filling up" when our

hearts were made glad by the return of my two friends, who came galloping across the open space, yelling like Comanches, drawing rein only on reaching the door of the cabin. One was mounted upon a young bay horse, while the other was astride of a mule which looked as if he might be between one and two hundred years of age. Dismounting and fastening the animals in rear of the cabin, out of the wintry blast, they entered the humble abode, and while warming their feet and partaking of a lunch, related the story of their thrilling adventures.

After leaving us at the "settlement" the previous evening, they in due time reached the farm of the widow in question, and were naturally surprised on finding her two sons "at home." Nothing daunted, and determined on success, they resolved to allow no impediment to interfere with their well-laid plans. Making a careful reconnoissance of the premises, and waiting until the last light in the house was doused and "everything quiet as the grave," they finally brought up at the stable, the door of which, to their great dismay and disappointment, was fastened with a large lock and chain. Nothing of this kind had been anticipated, for stable doors in that region were seldom locked. While seeking about the premises for an axe, or other implement with which to break the fastening upon the strongly battened door, two large dogs suddenly sprang at them, barking furiously, and attempting to grapple the two men by the throat. They could have shot the infuriated canines, but

feared to do so, lest the occupants of the house should be alarmed, and the object of the expedition rendered abortive. By desperate efforts they managed to keep the brutes at arm's-length, meanwhile beating a retreat—their faces continually towards the foe, which finally wearying of the chase, returned homewards, stopping now and then to bark as a sort of defiance. With no intention of being thwarted, the two gallant fellows waited and watched, and when things again became quiet, retraced their steps to the barn, and while crossing the yard heard the winnowing of a horse. For a moment their hearts stood still. The discovery was important, so they carefully made an examination of the premises, and finding a young horse and a mule sheltered under a shed, and concluding they could do no better, searched about until they found a bridle and a halter, when, biting the animals and springing upon them, they galloped away through the valley, which was "dark as the shadow of death." They rode fifteen miles before daylight, and reached us on the mountain as before stated.

Now that our two friends had joined us, we continued the tramp, Lewis riding the colt, and putting on all the airs of a staff-officer on a review, while I, astride the mule, which evidently was a passenger in the ark, followed slowly in the rear. Towards night we reached the humble home of a Baptist minister named Prickett, a storm of wind and rain and sleet nearly blinding us. The typical woman of the mountains, tall and thin, but kind and

graceful, the mother of a dozen children, most of whom stood ranged around her like white-headed notes in the scale of love, welcomed us in the absence of her husband, who was "out looking at the traps." Very simple were the appointments of this cabin. The bare, rough floor shone, however, so clean it was; the old spinning wheel, with the flax hanging to it, stood in a corner beside the only bed, while near the only door in the cabin, was a commodious fireplace, and great pine-logs blazing thereon.

Our entire party crowded into the main apartment, the wind, intensely cold and blowing a hurricane across the bald top of the mountain, rendering such a step necessary. I had long felt a certain sense of pity for my own sad condition, but when I entered the wretched abode of that poor family and saw their destitution, I thanked Providence for rich mercies vouchsafed to me. Not a chair, table, stove, or dishes were anywhere visible, the only cheerful thing within that hut being the smiling face of our hostess, and the blazing knots upon the mud hearth.

By and by, Mr. Prickett, the husband, and the father of the white-haired cherubs, returned. He greeted each of us warmly, and bade his good wife lose no time in baking all the corn-meal in the house into "pones," to be divided among the party. He regretted that he had no meat—the last bit of venison having been eaten at the morning repast. Some of our party having a craving for meat, started off

to hunt for some, and an hour afterwards returned, carrying upon the shoulders of two men, a huge *black bear*, which they had killed near an old saw-mill, a mile or so away. Great was our rejoicing when the dead animal was brought in and deposited upon the floor. In a remarkably short time the carcass had been skinned and five fat steaks were frying before the fire. The rich savor greeted my olfactory organs in a pleasant manner, and went far towards satisfying my craving appetite. I had never been educated to eat fat meat, and was afraid it was "too late to learn." But the moment the first steaks were transferred from the skillet to an iron receptacle (answering the purposes of a platter), I was pressingly invited to "try a piece"—all present refusing to partake until myself and three Yankee companions had been amply supplied. Tasting of the meat, and finding it tender and sweet (closely resembling fresh pork), I managed to dispose of the portion given me, together with all that was subsequently set before me. The task of cooking in a small skillet for three or four dozen half-starved men, was a tedious and tiresome process, but it was at last successfully accomplished, each man having had his "fill."

While the men were masticating the "bar," the master of the cabin and myself filled and lighted brown clay pipes, and entered into conversation. Mr. Prickett said that himself, sons and brothers, for their adherence to the cause of the Union, had not only suffered the loss of their worldly posses-

sions, but had been compelled to endure many indignities and privations in the country below. Escaping from the wrath of enraged neighbors, he and his family had succeeded in reaching the mountain range, where, while they had but few comforts, they could live in comparative security. He regretted his house was insufficient to afford us shelter from the inclement weather, but we could go to the "Rock House," two miles away, where we would be quite sure to find two of his sons "lyers-out," who had occupied the place for nearly two years. The "Rock," he said, would afford us some shelter, the best to be found on the mountain.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BAREFOOTED IN THE SNOW.

WHEN nearly ready to depart, the wind had increased in violence, blowing so strongly that the trees were lashed against each other in great fury. I shuddered at the thought of soon being compelled to leave the cheerful fire and obliged to breast the tempest, but there was no alternative—it must be done. One of our party entering the cabin, as we were getting ready to leave, was covered with snow, which he said had just commenced falling. My heart sank within me, as in gazing out of the door, I saw the large fleecy flakes descending and

flying through the troubled air. It was with absolute terror that

“I stood and watched
The noiseless work of the sky,
And the sudden flurries of snow-birds,
Like brown leaves whirling by.”

What would now become of *me*? What should I now do? True, I had a mule on which I could ride, but without a covering for my head, with only an old red flannel shirt and torn and threadbare blouse, and a dilapidated pair of blue pants reaching only to the knees, which I had worn *without change* for many months, how would I be able to endure the terrible exposures which certainly must follow a continuance of the journey?

On leaving the cabin, Mrs. Prickett insisted upon my accepting the skin recently taken from the bear. She said it would assist in keeping me warm, and when dried, answer very well for a coat. I gratefully accepted the skin, although it was wet and quite heavy, and placing it upon the mule's back, was assisted thereon. In this way I was conveyed to the “Rock House,” which we reached in due time, although the night was as black as Erebus. What a situation for men to be in! And yet there was no murmuring, although I could plainly see that many of the brave fellows with us moved about in no pleasant mood. As they had less at stake than ourselves, I was fearful they would, if the storm continued to rage, refuse to proceed farther on the

journey. This gave me more concern than my own suffering.

The "Rock House," so called, was not what I had expected to find it. There was about it no resemblance to a *house*. The name was a misnomer. It was a monster rock, some seventy-five feet high, the top leaning gently towards the south, affording on that side a sort of shelter from the rain or wind. It was open at the base, and under the overhanging shelf, as it were, we pitched our camp. Gathering a large quantity of fuel, to be had in abundance, we speedily had a bright cheerful fire, before which most of the party stretched themselves for rest and sleep. I never experienced a more terrible night: it was far worse and I more miserable than when I lay in the rays of a tropical sun under the scaffold in the filthy jail-yard at Charleston—a hostage for the safety of Confederate prisoners who had been brought by our authorities to James Island, when it was ascertained that the rebels had placed us under the fire of our own guns in the pestilential city. The tempest was awfully wild, snapping the locusts like paper twine, and prostrating great oaks and pines. Sitting near the great fire, unable to sleep, I uttered:

"Come, sleep, O sleep, the certain knot of peace,
The baiting place of wit, the balm of woe,
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release,
The indifferent judge between the high and low,
With shield of proof, shield me from out the prease
Of those fierce darts Despair at me doth throw;
O, make these civil wars to cease:
I will good tribute pay, if thou do so!"

But no "sleep, gentle sleep," closed my eyes that night. One of the Carolinians awaking and noticing my misery, insisted on my sharing his blanket with him, and, to keep from perishing, I at last crawled under it, with nothing but a stone for a pillow. While lying there, I imagined all sorts of things—particularly that snakes were crawling from under the rock towards the fire, and this, with the active offensive operations of the lice with which my scanty apparel swarmed, made me exceedingly restless. As my blood became warm, the confounded vermin sallied out, making a dead-set upon the warmest part of my person. They knew just where to go. Lately I had been troubled but little with the varmints, owing to the cold weather, being willing to freeze a little, if such exposure would have the effect of killing them off; but I finally gave up the undertaking, as I was convinced, after several such attempts, that they could stand the cold *much* better than myself. I remained under the blanket as long as the punishment was to be endured, but when I found that I was likely to lose what little blood still remained in my emaciated body, I resolved to get up and sit by the fire, where, at least, I could partially punish the lice, even though I was made to suffer in a corresponding manner. While thus engaged, one side of my person would be roasting, while the other side was freezing.

How the wind howled! how the snow-flakes flew past! often driven under the rock upon the weary sleepers, causing more than one of our party

great uneasiness. Would the morning never break? I asked myself a thousand times. There I sat beside that fire—at times piling on logs, anon scratching furiously, to drive back the swarms of vermin, rendering my flesh raw and causing it to bleed at every pore. I was sorely tempted to remove my shirt and shake off the vermin, but refrained from so doing, lest I should be unable to get it on again—it was so *rotten*. Oh, how much I now needed the old blue vest which I had given to “little Joe!” but then he had taken such a fancy to the buttons, and I had nothing else to give him. I had no idea that I should ever need it so badly, never having dreamed that before reaching the Union lines, I would be exposed to all the horrors of a snow-storm on a bleak and desolate mountain, which almost touched the sky. We had imagined that crossing the mountain before us was a comparatively easy task, and that on descending we should enter a beautiful valley—the promised land of peace, flowing with milk and honey, where kind friends awaited us. But what a fatal mistake! Hundreds of miles still had to be traversed, giddy heights ascended, dangerous rivers crossed, before we should reach the haven of our heart’s fondest desire.

The dreadful memories of that night will never leave me. There I sat, hour after hour, in an inhospitable waste, thousands of feet above the sea’s level, on a tempestuous night, hungry and almost naked, with threescore men, comparative strangers, at one time deadly enemies, whose condition was

but little better than my own. Perhaps these same men, in whom we now so fondly trusted, in whom we placed so many hopes, would desert us on the morrow—leaving us to a cruel fate. What could we hope to do alone in such a wilderness without money or weapons? What reason had we to think that if left to our resources we could cross those dreary ranges and reach our army in safety? My brain reeled as I thought of the difficulties to be encountered, of the obstacles to be overcome, ere we should accomplish the object for which we risked so much when we jumped from a train of cars in the Palmetto State.

To aid in driving away my *ennui*, I kept the logs burning brightly, there being no danger of discovery, for who would be abroad on the mountain's top on such a night? The wind continued to howl mournfully—the snow falling in blinding sheets. Besides, we were not likely to be seen, for a few feet beyond the fire it was dark as pitch.

I had almost forgotten to say that on arriving at the "Rock" we found the two sons of Mr. Prickett. Loving the "old government," they had determined to suffer everything rather than enter the Confederate service, which was so repugnant to their feelings and their education. So far they had been able to successfully elude those sent to effect their capture or their death, although they had had many narrow escapes. With the rifles which they continually carried, they had obtained food with but little trouble, game being abundant. Ammunition

being difficult to obtain, they were careful in its expenditure, never wasting a shot on a deer, bear, panther, or a bushwhacker. Tired of the life they were leading, they would have to bide the end of the war, when, if all was well, they would rejoin the old folks and live in peace. They seldom visited their parents, fearful of compromising their safety.

Daylight came at last, but brought little with it to encourage us. The men, greatly disheartened at the prospect before them, rolled their blankets in silence, and after eating more of the bear-meat and corn-bread, started away from the shelter of the rock in no enviable mood. The North Carolinians were leaving everything "near and dear," while every step taken placed us nearer our homes and those we loved so well. The walking was heavy and very disagreeable—even the mule laboring hard in getting through, sometimes slipping and sliding and stumbling, rendering it difficult for me to retain my seat.

CHAPTER XXX.

A MUTINY AMONG THE DESERTERS.

THE climax, which I had dreaded through the night, was reached at about ten o'clock in the forenoon, when the party halted, positively refusing to proceed farther. The ground was now covered with six or seven inches of snow. Todd, Lewis, Grant, and myself importuned the Carolinians to con-

tinue on, at least until the Cumberland valley was in sight, promising to reward them when we were able. We appealed to them to stand by us in this hour of our extremity, arguing that they would be quite as well off in one place as another. Our lives depended on our getting home. After a delay of some two hours, the party concluded to accede to our repeated requests, and made another start—in better spirits, if possible, than they had been at any previous time.

During the afternoon we diverged from the true course, in order to look at "Little Lost Cove," a great natural curiosity. The cavern, they told us, was more than three thousand feet deep. A silence, not of gloom, but of reverence, seemed to fall upon us as we overlooked it. Rolling large boulders into the cavity, to listen to the awful reverberations which they made as they tumbled down its sides and dashed to the bottom, gave me much pleasure. Here were virgin rocks upon which no pestiferous quack has painted his shameless sign, precipices which had not been invaded by the grand tour, whose solitary magnificence thrills and impresses you, as if in some barren land you came upon the brilliant lustre of a priceless diamond. It was while standing here that the weather suddenly cleared, affording us magnificent views for seventy-five miles and more. The appearance of the sun raised our hopes and cheered us to renewed efforts.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A BATTLE ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

WHILE proceeding along on the terrible height, our party was thrown into a state of great excitement at seeing a man, clad in a strange garb, hastening towards us. The stranger, who proved to be HARRISON ALDRICH, and reputed, at that time, to be the best shot in the South, was warmly welcomed, his presence being an additional safeguard. Aldrich gave us the particulars of a battle which had taken place the previous day, a few miles from Crab Orchard. He said that Lieutenant James Hartley, of the Third North Carolina Mounted (Union) Infantry, who was up in the mountains on recruiting service, on learning that his brother, Captain Hartley, in command of a company of bushwhackers, had been ordered to proceed to Saltville, Virginia, determined to attack him, and with this in view, gathered a dozen Unionists and prepared an ambush for the Confederates.

Lieutenant Hartley was advised of his rebel brother's movements by a young lady, who not only had the cause of the Union at heart, but who loved the gallant lieutenant with an intense passion. The thirteen or fourteen Unionists took an advantageous position on the side of a hill commanding the road along which the Confederate company was certain to march, and there patiently awaited the

approach of a foe who had been a terror to the loyalists in that section. The Confederate leader, at the head of his command, finally came in sight, marching unconsciously along, not dreaming that danger lurked in his mountain path. When he had reached the forest from which he could best be attacked, the gallant Union lieutenant, who had been watching the advancing enemy from a covert on the mountain's side, stepped out, and in a voice which made the grand old woods ring, cried "Halt!" The explosion of a two hundred pound shell at the feet of the Confederate captain would not have caused him greater surprise. Instinctively he and his men obeyed the dread command, which had no uncertain sound, and turning his eyes upward in the direction from whence it had proceeded, the leader saw his own brother—for the first time since the latter had left his home to do what in his power lay for a government that he had ever loved with patriotic fervor.

Livid with rage, the Confederate captain levelled his rifle and—fired, the bullet, correctly aimed, doing no further damage than to pass through the Union lieutenant's cap. "Jim" Hartley—a dead shot—could have easily killed his brother in his tracks, without a word of warning, but his chivalric nature revolted against so cowardly a proceeding. Standing there in all the grandeur of his manhood, without "cover," he summoned the Confederates to "surrender;" but laughing him to scorn, and with shouts that caused the mountains to echo, they promptly deployed along on the side of the opposite

hill, each man quickly securing a tree, rock, or stump as a "cover," determined to fight to the bitter end, and, if possible, teach the loyalists a lesson that they would never forget.

Young Hartley saw these dispositions, yet he remained, like a statue, disdaining to avail himself of any undue advantage. Forbearance, however, no longer being a virtue, but a sign of pusillanimity, and the Unionists chafing under their leader's restraint, now opened fire—the battle among the clouds commencing in earnest.

The unequal contest raged for hours, and often above the sharp crack of the rifle could be heard the coarse voices of the baffled Confederates uttering vile imprecations against the "renegades and Yankees." The small band of Unionists, fighting for everything near and dear, kept close behind their "cover," not deeming it advisable to offer any more of their persons as a mark for the Confederate riflemen than was absolutely necessary. The battle, however, was not to the strong; and the Confederates finding themselves worsted throughout, with no signs of exhaustion on the part of the loyalists, finally beat a retreat—leaving eight poor fellows dead where they fell. It was subsequently ascertained that some twenty others were wounded.

But one Unionist was injured, he, a member of Lieutenant Hartley's regiment, having been shot through the arm, near the shoulder. I met both Hartley and this wounded soldier a couple of days after this.

Aldrich took an active part in the engagement above recorded, and doubtless rendered efficient aid. He never joined either army, preferring to roam his native mountains at "his own sweet will and pleasure." His sympathies, however, were ever with the cause of the Union. He was the impersonation of a mountaineer. His large, noble head was covered with a coon-skin cap, his body enrobed in panther's skins, his feet encased in moccasins—each article being his own handiwork. In a belt which snugly encircled his waist, was a huge hunting-knife and an eight-inch navy revolver. His rifle, a long-barrelled, heavy weapon, was like a toy in his brawny hands.

At one point it became necessary to cross a frightful precipice, the span, or natural bridge, made all the more dangerous by the ice and snow, being only wide enough for a courageous man to walk over. The party had crossed over in safety—all save the mule and horse, which brought up in the rear. "Bill" awaited me on the opposite side of the "gulch," and advised me to "stick to the critter," which would be certain to cross in safety. My nerves were considerably unstrung as I gazed down into the fearful chasm which yawned so boldly before me. The old mule, as I urged him to the brink, lowered his great long head to the rock, his eyes carefully scanning the narrow pathway, then moved slowly forward, as cautiously as I had seen trained elephants in circus rings step over the prostrate form of their keepers. A slip of his unshod hoofs would have terminated our further usefulness, but

as good luck would have it, we crossed the frightful abyss in safety, for which I was devoutly thankful.

Shortly after our party had an interesting time of it in descending the range, which was only accomplished with vast difficulty. The men slipped and slid many yards at a time, and narrowly escaped bad falls against trees and rocks. I did not exactly see how the mule could get to the bottom in safety, but I made up my mind he must try; so at it he went—accomplishing most of the distance by going down sideways. At times he gained such momentum that I feared we would both be crushed against the trees, but somehow or other, he dexterously managed to elude them. The mule seemed to have as much wisdom in directing his movements as some of the men who had preceded us, and who now stood at the foot of the hill, laughing at his curious efforts.

I was glad to reach the foot of the mountain, for it was very much warmer there. I could hear the cold winds whistling far above us. Here we found a great forest of sugar-maple trees, and by and by we came to what had once been a thriving sugar-maple mill or distillery, but was now in a dilapidated state, everything about the place having gone to ruin. The day's journey had been a succession of grand panoramic views of gorge and height. Some of the party favored stopping at the mill for the night, but it was finally decided to continue on until darkness prevented traveling. Following a path cut out of a mountain's steep side, we saw, hundreds of feet below, the tops of tall pines and spruces.

Not a human habitation was to be seen, and there was no sign of life save when a grouse, rabbit, or deer sprang across the track. At dusk we reached a small valley, nestling between giant hills, through which a creek flowed rapidly, and whose outlet was found between two mountains towering thousands of feet above us; and there finding a rude, though commodious cabin, we stopped to obtain rations, and rest and sleep.

Mr. Banner, a somewhat aged gentleman, who came to the door in answer to our summons, looked us over intently for some moments before he responded to our polite salutation, then he greeted us heartily. Bidding his wife and daughters prepare "something to eat," he directed a son to conduct the party to the barn, and while Todd, Lewis, Grant, and myself were enjoying his hospitality at the family table, our friends were eating heartily upon the floor of the barn, food having been sent to them there. The courteous old gentleman made many inquiries concerning the North and our army, and regarded our flight from Charleston as a matter in which Providence had had a direct hand. By and by the family came into the main room for "evening prayers," when the devout old mountaineer took down a well-worn Bible, and opening at the Psalms, read, in an impressive manner, and with occasional quaint expoundings, one or two selections. After this he took up an old hymn-book, and rising, with a tallow candle in his hand, read a hymn, the good old wife and children singing line

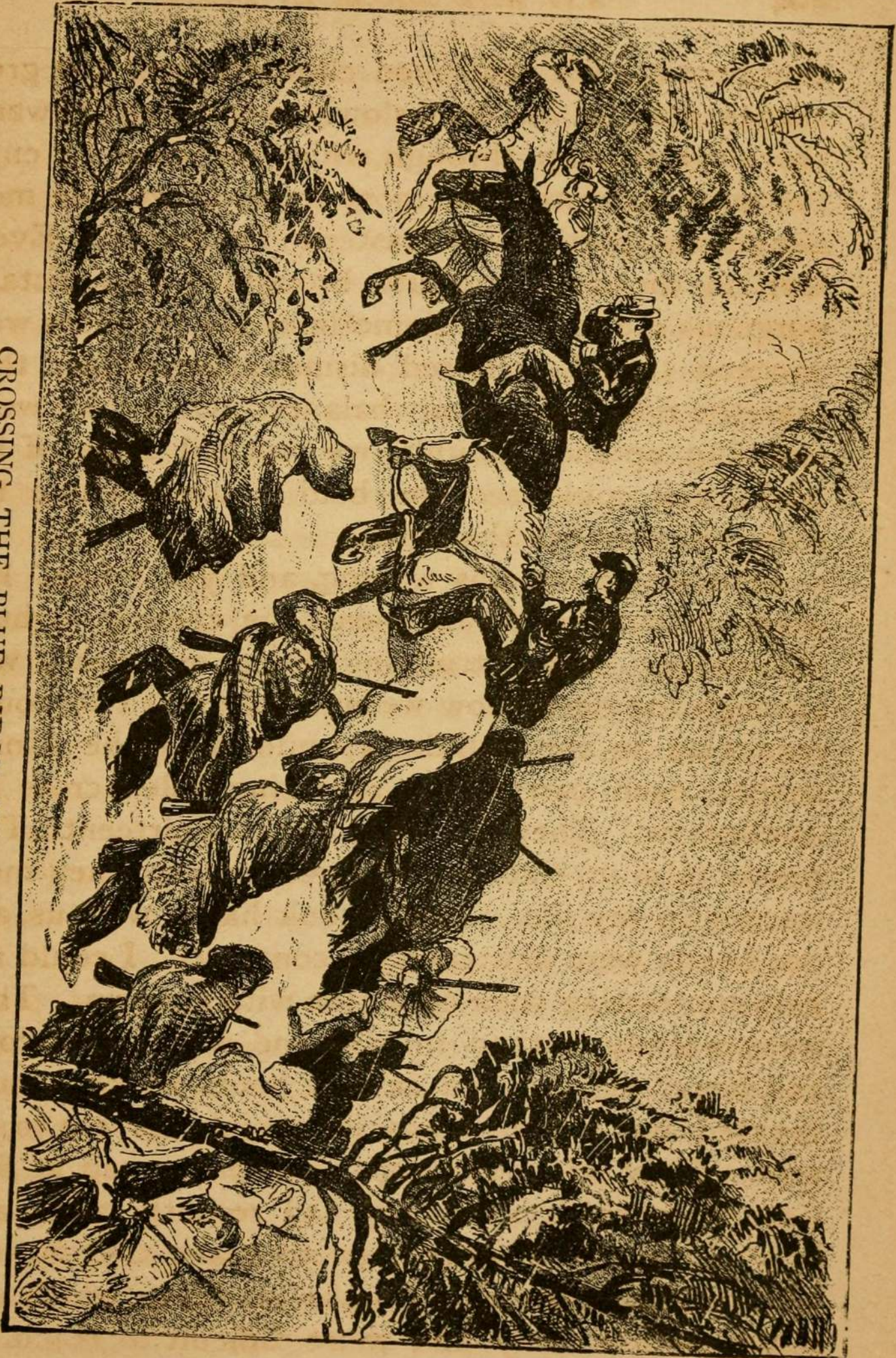
by line as he gave them out. They sang in quavering, high-pitched voices, to the same tunes which were doubtless heard when the country round about there was crimsoned by the Indians. The echoes of the hymn had no sooner died away, than the old man, dropping upon his knees, engaged in a prayer of earnestness and power, marked here and there by glowing sentences, which made us bow our heads in reverence, for our good friend prayed for us and for our continued preservation on our long and dangerous journey. His fervent petitions deeply affected us. Another hymn was lined, and at length the family withdrew, leaving us in the apartment alone. Presently, however, our kind host reappeared, saying that he would share the room with us, which he did; we slept tranquilly until six o'clock the next morning, when we were awakened for breakfast, the most palatable meal I had enjoyed for a long time. After eating heartily we thanked the farmer, and marched away, carrying with us the happiest recollections of our visit to his hearthstone.

The weather continued intensely cold, rendering it necessary for those who had blankets to wear them over their shoulders, which gave our party quite a banditti-looking appearance. It was rough walking through the untrodden snow, which in some places had formed into drifts. Here and there the country possessed features of the most romantic nature. Sometimes, looking down, we could see the tree tops in a valley below us, and a humble cabin, with cob-house, granary, and cattle-pen, nestling close by a

tiny brook. We continued climbing over the great ranges, making our way slowly, yet surely, towards the elevated gap, through which we were to enter the most patriotic and most loyal, as well as most dangerous portion of Eastern Tennessee. Every turn in the angular route brought a new vista of gorgeous mountains. Sometimes the hill-sides were so steep that I preferred dismounting rather than take the risk of losing my balance. On, on we went, climbing up and up, until we reached some of the peaks and could see the bald patches where the rocks stood out in the light.

The afternoon was waning, and yet "Sim" had planned that we should spend the coming night in Tennessee. While trudging along our weary way through the deep snow we suddenly met two young men, clad in the full-dress uniform of the Union soldier, each carrying a repeating rifle across his saddle-bow. They belonged to the Thirteenth Tennessee (Union) Cavalry. I never greeted men more warmly in my life. They shook hands with us, and our hearts were lightened by converse. I could not help contrasting their condition with my own. They were warmly clothed in *blue*, and wore great-coats and heavy high-topped cavalry boots, which I much coveted, but which it was impossible for me to obtain. They said our troops were encamped at Bull Gap, from which place they had recently come, and it would be to our advantage to make that our objective point, instead of Cumberland Gap, which was much farther away, and more difficult to reach. I

CROSSING THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS.



felt as if new life had been given me after seeing and talking with these soldiers, and, in fact, the entire party was stimulated to renewed exertion.

CHAPTER XXXII.

A FRIENDLY SETTLEMENT REACHED.

JUST as night was setting in, we descended a prodigious mountain by an old roadway, and entered what was known as "CRAB ORCHARD," East Tennessee. This settlement contained a score and more of houses, inhabited solely by women—the men seldom venturing to visit their homes because of the frequent and unexpected incursions of the Confederates. The valley, not more than three-fourths of a mile in width, ran southward five or six miles, and was surrounded on all sides by mountains which towered high above it. Learning that the "orchard" boasted a tannery, I hastened to the old building pointed out to me, and made diligent search for a piece of leather, but could find none; so I rejoined the party, which had stopped at Mr. Buck's, a mile or so down the valley. Mr. Buck, like all the men-folk, was absent from home, having a picnic all by himself on the snow-covered height back of his house; but his two pretty and amiable daughters told us to help ourselves to such of the cattle as we might want. Accordingly, a fine fat beeve was killed in a trice, and almost before I

was aware of it, the process of skinning the animal was well under way. When pieces of the slaughtered cow were distributed among our party, they moved towards a mountain in front of the house, where they were to pass the night in a cave or an old building, whichever might best answer their purposes—taking the mule and colt along with them.

“Bill” escorted Todd, Lewis, Grant, and myself down the valley over the ice-coated road, in order to obtain better quarters, if such were procurable. Coming to a neat-looking house, Lewis and myself left the road and knocked at the door, and receiving no response, although we knew the people were at home, we entered. Two little girls, on seeing us enter in such an unceremonious manner, hastily crawled under a bed out of sight, while a very old lady threw down her knitting, and looking sharply at us, told us to “go on,” as she had “nothing to give.” She paid no attention to anything we said, which was satisfactorily accounted for by one of the little girls (who had meanwhile recovered from her fright) saying that “grandma is deaf.” The little girl further told us that her mother was absent, whereupon we took chairs and seated ourselves before the comfortable fire, to await her return.

When she came in and found us in her sitting-room, she very frankly informed us that we must “move on,” it was “cruel” to imperil the lives of her family by remaining in her house. “If,” said she, “Keith’s Confederates dash in here and find you, they will kill you and us, and burn our home.

Please go on, gentlemen, and Heaven will bless you. I am alone here, or you would not dare to invade my home." Her appeal was a strong one, and under ordinary circumstances her request should have been promptly complied with; but night was now near at hand, and as it was too late to look elsewhere for quarters, we begged her to allow us to remain, assuring her that there could be no danger. Tears bedewed her eyes, as she finally consented to our request, promising, as soon as it became dark, to conduct us to the barn, in which, if we must stay on her premises, we could pass the night. The hay-mow was at length visited, and in it we slept till the bright, warm rays of the sun came streaming through the interstices, warning us that it was time to arise.

It was Sunday, November 6th. Repairing to the house, we enjoyed a good wash, wiping our weather-beaten faces on clean, soft towels—the first I had seen in a long time,—then sat down to a good breakfast, to which, it is unnecessary for me to say, we did the fullest justice. True, our hostess had no savory steak to set before us, nor meat of any kind, save bacon, and bacon I never could eat, no matter how hungry. Our party had agreed before separating the previous day, to spend the Sabbath in the "orchard," owing to the horrible condition of the roads, and the slippery state of the walking in the woods, in which the sun had but little chance to thaw the ice and snow.

After breakfast, it occurred to me that I was entitled to a share of the beeve killed at Mr. Buck's.

Mentioning this circumstance to Lewis, he said, as if he didn't care much about it, "Yes, so we are, but it's too deuced cold to go back after it." I then suggested that as his boots "still held out," he had better go for it, but to this he interposed a dozen objections. I spoke to the lady—whose pretty name I had meanwhile ascertained was Mrs. FRANCES MARION HAMPTON—about the meat, whereupon she promised to cook it for us in case it was obtained and brought to the house. I told her it would afford me great pleasure to go back for the meat if I had any means of reaching the place, but being *barefooted* it would be almost impossible for me to accomplish the errand. "You may take the colt," said Mrs. Hampton, "on which you will get along very nicely." Happy thought! Pinning the front of my old torn and threadbare blouse together (the buttons had long since disappeared), I took an old bridle, which I found in the stable, and ran down into the field fronting the house, to catch the colt, which was running at large therein. The colt being much younger than myself, and more briskly disposed, would not allow me to approach nearer than twenty feet, when he would kick up his little heels in a very provoking way, and gallop to another part of the lot. I was on the point of giving up the undertaking, when Mrs. Hampton, who had been amused at my futile efforts, came down to where I was standing. Complimenting me by remarking that she "guessed" I was no horseman, she relieved me of the bridle, and walking down to where the colt was standing, head

and ears up, placed the bit in his mouth and led him up to a fence upon which I had been glad to seat myself, in order to keep my feet out of the snow. Mounting the animal, I rode up the valley road as fast as its icy condition would permit, arriving without further mishap at Mr. Buck's. Fastening the colt under a shed at the roadside, I walked up to the house, in the door of which Mr. Buck's two daughters stood awaiting me. They extended me a hearty welcome, and for an hour and more, as I sat before their cheerful fire toasting my feet, we talked about the war and the North, matters in which they felt a lively interest. I exhibited to them a photograph of my wife, colored rather prettily, and they expressed astonishment at its beauty, never having seen anything of the kind before. That picture to those girls was as interesting as any works of art ever were to a *connoisseur*.

While sitting before the comfortable fire, the watch-dog commenced barking furiously, and on opening the door and looking out, one of the young ladies fairly danced with joy. "Jim! Jim!" she shouted to a horseman in a blue great-coat, who was in the act of dismounting from a horse in front of the house—then she tripped down to meet him, and after a warm embrace, conducted the stranger into the house, where he was introduced to me in a right royal manner.

Lieutenant James Hartley, the hero of the recent fight on the mountains, was the new-comer—the one, of all others, I was glad to meet and grasp by

the hand. My heart almost bounded out of my poor worn body as I took the gallant fellow by the hand. The young ladies were very happy on being informed that their "loved ones" at the front were safe; and while they perused the letters brought to them by the lieutenant, Hartley and myself engaged in conversation, soon becoming greatly attached to each other, talking as if we had long been acquainted. It was a source of great wonder to him how we had been able to reach the "orchard," how we had escaped the dangers which must have beset us on our long journey. He promised to do all in his power to aid me and my party, and he would gladly accompany us to the Union lines, if we could wait until he notified his "recruits" of his intention to start. Besides, the snow would soon disappear, rendering the traveling much better. He promised to ride over to the "cave" and see our party, and wishing us "good day," he sprang upon his horse and galloped away, soon being lost to our view.

It was nearly noon, and I had not even mentioned my errand. Borrowing a large knife, I went down to the "spring-house," where the beast's carcass had been put the night previous; but despite vigorous and protracted efforts, I was unable to procure the piece which I greatly wanted. My feebleness prevented me from severing the piece which I had haggled at. Mustering up courage, I returned to the house and told the girls of my failure. Expressing regret that they had not accompanied me at first, one of the girls skipped away, and a minute or two

afterwards returned, bearing in her arms a magnificent piece, which she declared would "be lovely for a pot roast." When I had become thoroughly "thawed out," I walked to the colt, and sprang nimbly from a chop-log to his back, the girls handing up to me the chunk of meat, which weighed some twenty pounds. Placing this upon the colt's neck, in front of me, I pressed the extended hands of the Tennessee girls, and bidding them "farewell," trotted away, feeling happier than tongue can tell or pen portray.

Riding along, I congratulated myself over and over again at the bright prospect before me. Providence continued to smile benignly upon me—what more could I ask, except a comfortable suit of clothes and a pair of good shoes or boots? I thought of the "square meal" I should have on my return to Mrs. Hampton's, and was inexpressibly delighted. But, alas for human calculations! The colt and I got along so pleasantly together that I did not dream of any mishap occurring. He slid at times, it is true, but his quick-footedness saved us from injury. Everything went as merry as a marriage-bell until we reached a stream of water from the mountain's side, crossing the roadway, both sides being lined with ice. The colt reluctantly and with much difficulty entered the stream, the ice giving way at every step, but on reaching the opposite side, he suddenly lowered his little head, which caused the old bridle to fall off. Elevating his head and turning his eyes knowingly towards me, he gave a win-

now loud enough to start the Seven Sleepers; the next instant I found myself flying through space. When I regained consciousness, some time after landing on *terra firma*, I was surprised to find myself lying under the bottom rail of a fence.

How long I remained unconscious I never knew. When I recovered my senses and painfully realized my helpless condition as I lay by the roadside, a few feet from the water's edge, I was thankful that I had not landed in the middle of the stream, where I should certainly have drowned. The horrors of the situation will not be forgotten while life lasts. Bruised and bleeding, my body racked with pain, I asked myself, Can it be that every bone is broken? Finally, by steadying myself against the fence, I raised myself to a sitting posture, but my right leg I could not move. When able to view it, I was horrified at the sight it presented—my knee had swollen to more than double its usual size. I was positive it had been fractured. No house or human habitation was within sight or hearing. What would become of me? I moaned in bitterness of spirit. It was fearfully cold, the sun having disappeared behind heavy leaden-colored clouds. While life has so many attractions, must I die in such a place? was the one thought which took possession of my soul. I repeatedly attempted to rise to my feet, but failed. I clutched the fence-rails and swung myself around, placing my bruised and bleeding feet in the water, which speedily warmed them, giving me new strength. Sensible that I should perish unless I

could get away without delay, I bathed my terribly swollen limb in the ice-bound brook until the acute pains were somewhat assuaged, when I made a determined effort to stand. Partially raising myself, I looked up and down the road, and across the fields to the high mountains on either side, but saw no helper. No pleasant sound cheered my fainting spirits. Even the landscape was dreary. True, there were some familiar objects. There, in the middle of the roadway, lay the meat which I had risked and suffered so much to obtain. The old bridle, too, the cause of my present misfortune, was near at hand. The sight of the meat increased my hunger, and, while "so near and yet so far," did much to tantalize me. I felt as ravenous as a wolf, and at one time I really believe I could have eaten the meat in its raw state, had I been able to reach it. After I had raised myself up against the fence, forced to rest my weight entirely upon my left foot, I made up my mind not to lie down again. How the minutes dragged as I stood in that lonely place, wondering whether Lewis would venture out to see what had become of me! Certainly he would start on seeing the colt return without its rider! Exercising the greatest patience and renewing my exertions, I was enabled, after a time, to place my right foot upon the ground, but to my dismay, found myself unable to take a single step forward with its aid. Convinced that death would soon claim me for his victim, unless I made a desperate effort for self-preservation, I continued to raise my foot, *working my*

leg as much as possible, until enabled to bear my weight upon it, when I hobbled out to where the meat and bridle were lying. It was too tempting to leave, but how can I carry such a great weight. An idea strikes me. Fastening the meat to the bridle, I commenced the return, the most disagreeable and painful march of my life, dragging it after me—the ice-covered roadway greatly aiding me in the task, as it not only was drawn easily, but was thus kept clean and *cool*. No refrigerator would better have answered the purpose.

Of course my progress was very slow and fatiguing—my feet feeling as if they were round balls, the circulation of the blood having long ago stopped. At one stage, feeling as if I had no feet at all, I lost my equilibrium and fell flat upon my face, and despite all I could do, they refused to aid me in getting up. It was at such times that I placed my feet in the stream of water which ran most of the way alongside the road. Often was I in the act of giving up, for I did not believe it possible for me to endure the agony much longer, and it seemed as if I would not live to reach Mrs. Hampton's; but hope, and a determination to reach God's country, prevailed, and saved me from a terrible death in the wildest part of Tennessee.

It was between four and five o'clock when I reached Mrs. Hampton's, having been four hours in walking or crawling between two or three miles. Mrs. H. met me at the gate, and when she saw my condition, she burst into tears, crying as if her heart

would break. I was greatly affected by her deep emotion, and sought to console her. Entering the house, she again gave way to her feelings, which added to my sorrow. I ascertained that her grief was more on *her own* account than on *mine*, when she inquired what would now become of *her* if I should be left on her hands to be taken care of, for God knows how long! I bade the poor woman be of good cheer, for nothing but death itself would be able to keep me any longer in that country than I could find a path in which to escape from it. I assured her that I would go on with the party if they had to drag me as I dragged the meat. This seemed to set her fears at rest, and she at once commenced the pleasant duty of cooking me a steak, which I had long craved.

Lewis was full of pity and excuses. He had noticed the return of the pony, but attributed nothing unusual to that circumstance, as he supposed the colt, becoming cold, while I was having an agreeable time within doors, had broken away and returned home. The good supper, promptly served, soon caused me to forget what I had undergone, for I never ate with greater relish, and good victuals will banish enmity at any time. How thankful I now was that I had brought the meat along. I should never have forgiven myself had I left it where it fell in the road.

During the evening Mr. Hampton put in his appearance, for the first time, coming down from his cave on the mountain for the purpose of ascertain-

ing who the strangers were and what they wanted. He was a fine-looking, intelligent man. Before the war he had been prominent in political affairs and a member of the Legislature. His narratives of guerilla outrages were blood-curdling. For months past he had, with his neighbors, been a "lyer-out," and although he had never found it necessary to wander very far from the mountain, which almost overshadowed his home, yet seldom had he dared venture to pass a day or night with his family. He was very kind to me, saying that if I was unable to proceed with my friends, it would be absolutely necessary for me to join him, as his family would be subjected to fearful perils in case the guerrillas caught me about the place. At midnight Mr. Hampton assisted me to the barn, and made repeated efforts to hoist me up into the hay-loft; but failing in this, he placed me in a manger, and covering me with hay, bade me "good bye," disappeared in the darkness, leaving me alone with my misery.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

A LAME MAN EXPECTED TO "FLY."

THE weather next morning was comparatively pleasant. My leg, although still painful and much swollen, was better, enabling me to walk or hobble with greater ease. On reaching the house, I found I was the object of much solicitude to my

devoted hostess, who tenderly inquired concerning my health, and brought me water in which to wash, and towels, with a hair-comb—certainly a great novelty to me. After breakfast I took down the family bible, and had just got interested in that portion of Deuteronomy where Moses blesses the tribes, when Mrs. Hampton rushed into the apartment, almost breathless with excitement, begging Lewis and myself to “leave the house.” Very much surprised at her conduct, and at a loss to understand the suddenness of her action, it was some moments before I could comprehend the nature of her alarm. She had heard a horn down the valley, which was the well-known signal of impending danger. I could not bring myself to believe that danger was imminent, being very loath to leave such a comfortable abode, and I finally succeeded in persuading the good woman that her fears were groundless—that she was laboring under a hallucination. She at length retired to the “kitchen,” an apartment in a small adjoining house in the rear, and resumed her customary avocation.

In replacing the bible upon the shelf in a closet, I was rejoiced to discover a razor, which, upon examination, I found would answer a useful purpose; so I procured some water and soap, and set about scraping my face, the first operation of the kind it had undergone in many months. I was getting along nicely with the process, being about half through, when I was startled by the sudden reappearance of Mrs. H., who sprang towards me, with a

wild look in her eyes, and seizing me before I had time to lay the razor down, fairly dragged me across the room to the back door, crying at the top of her voice, "Fly! fly! for God's sake fly!" I couldn't *fly*, and she wouldn't have proposed such an absurd thing, had she stopped a moment to consider the proposition. I could not *walk*, much less *fly*. Suddenly remembering my condition, she gave way to a fit of passionate sobs, but recovering, again implored me to "run!" for the "Confederates are coming." As she said this, I was startled by a loud and long blast of a bugle, which seemed to inspire me. In another instant I had bounded over a high rail-fence in rear of the house, and was running up the rugged mountain side, not stopping to look behind or to take breath, until I reached the summit, when I dropped, like one dead, behind the trunk of a huge tree. Directly, I arouse myself, and looking about, hear cries. Then I see Todd, Grant and "Bill" running as if for dear life, some distance ahead. I quickly followed, and when they reached the "cave," I was but a few yards behind.

The manner of our arrival at the "cave" caused considerable agitation among the mountaineers, but the moment matters were explained, skirmishers were thrown out, those having the best weapons taking the most advanced positions on the surrounding hills.

As I lay stretched upon the floor of the "cave," resting, it suddenly occurred to my mind that whereas I was lame, now was I whole. . How I had been

able to run up that steep mountain side and keep up with my comrades was a mystery to me. The whole thing seemed like a dream, impossible of realization, and I came to the conclusion that a man's ability to run depends very much on the inducements offered. Certainly, I needed no greater incentive. I verily believe I ran quite as fast as I had on any previous occasion.

As no attack was made, the men not on "outpost duty" finished their task of cutting up a beeve just slaughtered, and during the evening pieces of the same were roasted, boiled, etc., and divided up. I could not sleep, owing to the excitement and a return of my bodily pains. Had I been in the enjoyment of the best health, and free from danger, my condition would have been all the same, for the lice actually devoured me, or tried to do so. Every time I was fortunate enough to obtain a warm sleeping place, the vermin took advantage of the situation, and labored incessantly to add to my wretchedness.

The lice battled all night, and a terrible contest they had of it. Whether the aborigines from Libby Prison got the best of the South Carolinians, or whether the recent arrivals in Tennessee had attacked the entire force, I had no means of ascertaining. One thing was certain, the vermin did not live on amicable terms with themselves or with me. In biting, and causing a man to forget his religious principles, I think a Southern louse is eminently successful. Besides all this, they are mean creatures, for

they'll stay by a fellow till the last drop of blood is gone, and sometimes they will linger for a long time afterwards. Language fails in expressing my contempt and hatred for Southern lice, especially when they are *mixed*.

Daylight came at last, and with it the forward movement began. On reaching Mrs. Hampton's, I dismounted from the old mule and entered the domicile to procure the biscuits and meat which the good lady had promised to have in readiness. She had been true to her word. Thanking her for her kind attentions I remounted, and forced the mule down the narrow valley road, as fast as I could urge him, until I caught up with the party. We reached the south-western extremity of the valley at nine o'clock, when we struck off into the hills, gaining a commanding range about noon, when we halted and lunched. Our party now was quite large, being increased in numbers by the addition of several whom we found in the cave at the "orchard," and who had asked to accompany us.

While resting beside a sparkling brook, debating as to the best route in order to have the smoothest walking as well as to evade guerrillas, we saw a man dodging about in a small opening far below us. Lieutenant Hartley, recognizing the stranger as the major of his regiment—E. A. DAVIS—called out to him. The major promptly ascended the hill-side, and introductions speedily followed. He was armed with a magazine rifle and a large Colt's navy revolver. We entered into conversation with the

major, and begged him to be one of our escort, promising to reward him handsomely on reaching our lines. He replied that while he would like to be of service to us, yet he had a more important duty to perform. He wanted to see his mother, from whom he had long been separated, and after transacting some business he must obtain "recruits." A score or so of our party said they would enlist, if the major would turn back, and this so pleased him that he agreed to comply with our request, saying, further, he would only go as far as our safety might require.

The major was a valuable acquisition, as he was thoroughly acquainted with the country. I was now satisfied that we would be able to reach our army at no distant day, and my fainting heart beat with corresponding joy. Under the skillful pilotage of Major Davis we marched until sunset, meanwhile keeping a sharp lookout for any enemy that might be lurking about, having made the amazing distance of twenty-seven miles since starting at daybreak. Finding a large unoccupied barn in the centre of a valley, with no fences in sight, we halted for the night, and when assembled around the cheerful fire, the conversation became of a highly interesting character. Major Davis was a whole-souled fellow, thoroughly posted about the war and the recent operations of our armies.

Some one remarking during the evening that this was the eighth day of November—a day on which the people of the United States were casting their votes for president—it was proposed that our party

be canvassed. A *viva-voce* vote was taken, every man pronouncing the name of ABRAHAM LINCOLN, whom we declared to be the next president. Wrapping our blankets around us we were soon asleep.

During the next afternoon we killed a fine beeve which we found roaming at large, and while portions of it were being cooked, I wended my way to a clear running brook, where, with the aid of a cake of soap and a towel kindly loaned me by Major Davis, I succeeded in removing the dirt with which my body had been for a long time covered. Todd, after recognizing me, inquired whether I wasn't "afraid of taking cold."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AN ALARM AT MIDNIGHT.

JUST before dusk we halted at "Greasy Lost Cove" for supper, after concluding which we continued on, marching as rapidly yet noiselessly as possible. Directly, sounds of revelry burst upon our ears, instinctively causing each man in our party to spring behind a tree. The major and Hartley move forward, rifles in hand, ready for any emergency, to reconnoitre. Hartley soon returns bringing the joyful intelligence that "it's only a husking party!" whereupon we continue on, and reaching the house, find a large party assembled. We are warmly greeted and invited to enter the log cabin,

which is too limited to accommodate those already under the roof. Our visit occasioned great surprise; and when it became known that four "Yankee officers" were in the party, the festivities ceased—myself and three comrades becoming the cynosure of all eyes. The lady of the house set to work, assisted by several young ladies, and in a few minutes they prepared an inviting supper for us. While we were eating, dancing was resumed, and such dancing I had never before seen. A vast amount of vitality was displayed by both sexes. It made me dizzy to see them whirl about the room. After awhile the entire party repaired to the field adjoining the house, where all "shucked corn" for a couple of hours—then we all went back to the house for a "parting dance." While all were merry, the report of two rifle or pistol shots were heard in quick succession. The dancers stopped short, as if they never intended to resume their festivities, and a scene of indescribable confusion ensued. The disgraceful rout which I saw at Bull Run was a "dress parade" in comparison. I never understood how I got out of the house. My first recollection after I heard the shots was when I recovered my self-possession in a filthy hen-coop, into which some kind friend must have carried me. How else could I have got in such a place? I was forcibly reminded of my whereabouts by the odor which greeted my olfactory nerves, and by a wild fluttering of the poultry above my head. I think I *smelt* that hen-coop for months afterwards, and yet it may have

been a freak of the imagination. As no one disturbed me, and as I could not see or hear any enemy, I crawled out of my coop, and waited for the party to reassemble, which they finally did. I taunted Todd and Lewis with going off and leaving me. And they were just beginning to think I had acted in a brave manner by not running, when Todd inhaled the hen-coop fragrance about my person: then both he and Lewis paid me back with interest.

As the rain commenced falling, and our present position was one of danger, the major insisted upon our crossing the "Chucky" River before daylight. Time was when all this section of country was romantic ground. "The great Indian war-trail, along which so many scenes of violence and murder were enacted, ran not far from this point," said the major. "From the time of the settlement along the bank of this beautiful mountain river, more than a hundred years ago, until early in the present century, the settler took his life in his hands daily, and the war-cry of the Indian was a familiar sound to his ever-listening ears."

We struck the "Chucky" at the ford where it ran rapidly between great mountains, whose sides were so steep as to be almost inaccessible on foot. I shuddered when I reached and stood at the edge of the seething, plunging waters. The spray and rain were almost blinding. The angry stream clutched at the huge rocks which lined its banks, now and then tumbling them into the chasm. I saw hollows in the rocks, as I have seen them at

Niagara Falls, which had been worn to a considerable depth by the rushing waters. The stream, full of eddies and whirlpools, caused me to decline a ride across to the other shore on the mule, although my friends insisted that it would be perfectly safe to do so, and that I would thereby be saved much trouble and fatigue. I confess that, never particularly fond of water, I was afraid to make the venture, however safe a ferry the old mule might prove to be; and as I descended from his back, Sim vaulted upon him, and with a wild cheer he dashed into the foaming water, and was immediately lost to sight. A loud huzza, as he safely reached the opposite side, assured us of his safety.

The major knew there was a "ferry boat" just above the dam, but he was not certain that he could find it. He retraced his steps to a small log-cabin which we had but recently passed, and awoke the inmates—a man and his wife. The man appeared at an upper window, and when asked to pilot us to the "ferry," swore in a terrible manner; but the major cut him "short" by bringing his rifle to bear upon the enraged Tennessean, who all at once became studiously polite, and soon after graciously waited upon us. I shall never forget the dangers which beset us before reaching that dam. Proceeding along in single file, we began the perilous ascent and descent, for it was both. A scarcely perceptible trail led along the rugged mountain side, but now and then was lost, as we came to a rock, over which we were each compelled to climb and crawl and

drop. We held on to twigs and branches of trees and bushes, as down, far below our giddy perch, we could hear the roar of water plunging over the dam—and to lose our grip was certain death. We succeeded in reaching the dam without mishap, save to one of our party—the wife of the soldier who was shot through the arm in Hartley's fight. She who had come along to nurse her husband, had in dropping from a rock sustained the fracture of a limb. We had to leave the poor woman behind, with a family who promised to bestow every care and attention upon her.

Above the dam, a natural impediment, the water was smooth but very deep, the current strong and swift. Here we found the ferry-master with a large flat-bottomed boat, awaiting us, he having been awakened by "Sim," who had preceded us to this point. The boat was secured at each end by a stout rope, fastened on either shore. Long before daylight our entire party had been ferried across, and landed in a dense laurel swamp, through which we were guided to a large house, a mile or so distant. Myself and three Yankee comrades had no sooner entered the house, than the hostess insisted upon our taking her bed, which she said was large enough to accommodate us. Without disrobing we crawled in and slept until awakened after sunrise.

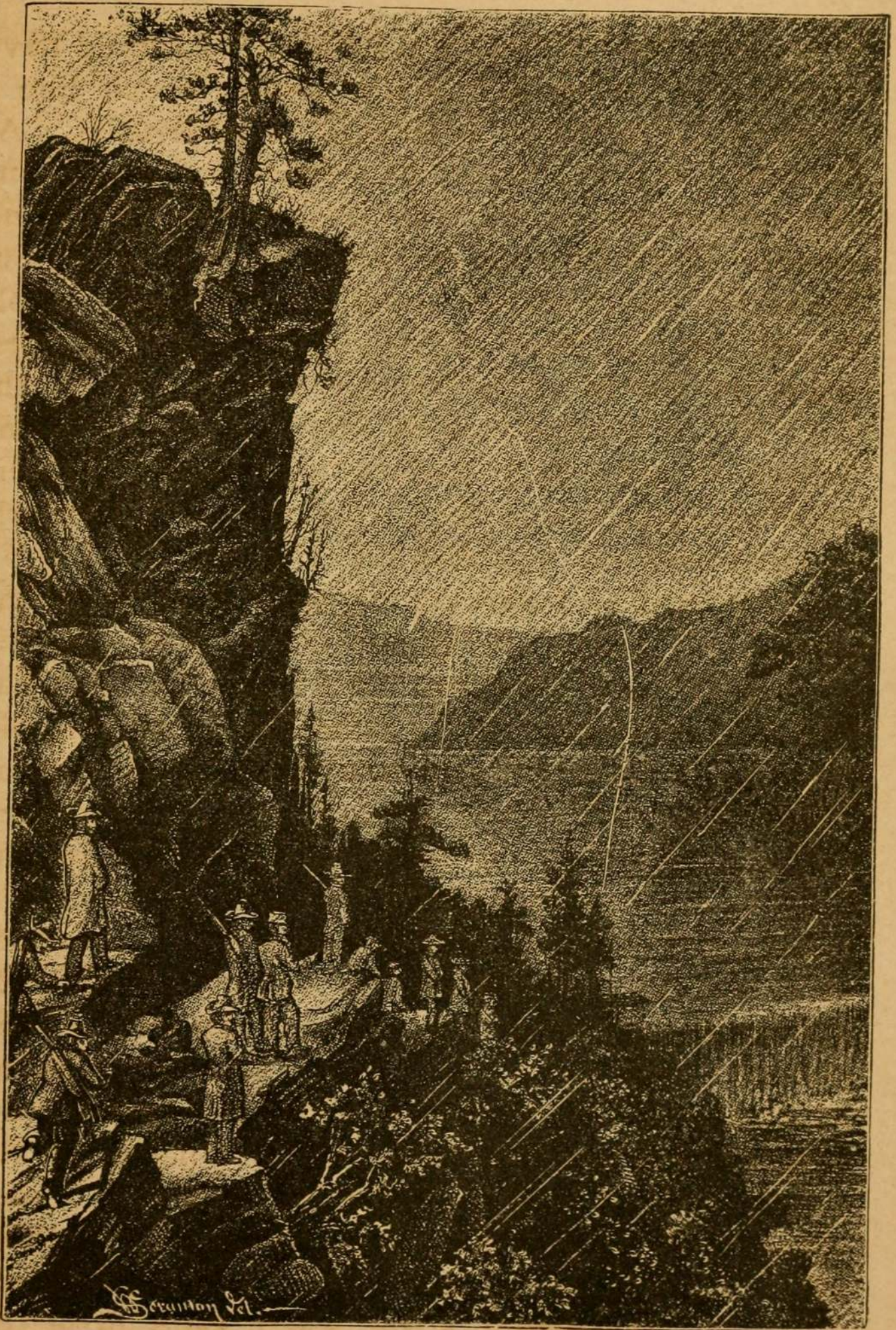
We were on the point of departing, when our party was increased by the addition of a man who appeared very suddenly. He was attired in the full uniform of a rebel officer. He was an officer in

Major Davis's regiment, and recognized by many in our party. He had recently escaped, he said, from Keith's guerrillas. Killing his captor, he stripped him of his uniform, and after donning it, had mounted upon his victim's horse and made good his escape. This officer was a valuable acquisition to our party, possessing, as he did, a perfect knowledge of the country, and familiar with the haunts of the guerrillas who constantly roamed through the eastern section of Tennessee.

By noonday we had gained a distance of some twelve miles, although I had imagined we had walked twice as far. Traveling, however, was bad and exceedingly fatiguing. We had now reached the chain of the great Smoky Mountain Range—the very place of all others we had been particularly cautioned against visiting just before we left Charleston, owing to the presence there of Indians, most of whom, an East Tennessee captain had assured us, were acting in the interest of the Confederacy. The mountains here rose to a height of between five and six thousand feet, and seen from a distance they seemed bathed in a mellow haze, like that distinguishing the atmosphere of Indian summer. We passed through a gap which had a great elevation; beneath us were vast canyons, from which came up the roar of the creeks, greatly swollen by recent rains. We looked down upon the tops of mighty forests, never tiring of their grandeur. The pathways grew rockier as we clambered along, but the air was pure and refreshing, and had I been comfort-

ably clad and in "good condition," I should have revelled in the beauty of the scenes, which like a panorama, constantly presented new beauties. As far as the eye could see, on every hand, stood long lines of towering crags, from which there seemed no outlet. Once I turned on the crest of a prodigious mountain, and, looking Carolinaward, I saw our old friends of the Blue Ridge and Allegheny ranges, scattered for miles in friendly groups among the dark and forbidding-looking forests. Before us and behind us were deep ravines, and beyond all, uncounted peaks, which the very sky seemed tenderly to bend over and kiss with affection.

The shades of another night were fast settling around us, when we discovered a cow running through a small clearing. We killed her and had a feast. After a "rest," we continued on along picturesque paths until we reached the placid Indian Creek, or river, with the mountains near it mirrored in its rain-rippled breast. Upon this beautiful country through which we were now wandering, the Indian had lavished that wealth of affection which he always feels for nature and never for man. He gave to the multitudinous hills and streams the soft poetic names of his expansive language—names which the white man has in many cases cast away, substituting the barborous commonplaces of the rude days of early settlement. Indian Creek "heads" in the Smoky Mountains, and swelling into volume from countless springs of coldest, purest, most transparent water, which send little tor-



CROSSING THE CHUCKEY RIVER.

rents down all the deep ravines, it goes foaming and dashing over myriad rocks, sometimes leaping from dizzy heights into the narrow and wild-looking canyons, until it comes to, and is lost, in the noble and majestic French Broad River, which we successfully forded a few days afterwards.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A TERRIBLE ENCOUNTER.

IT was about midnight when we reached a point where the river was fordable, and much time was consumed in crossing. Here the mule and horses (we now had several with us) proved their great usefulness, acting as they did in place of "ferry-boats." Each animal was made to carry two persons across at a time, then by means of a long rope, they were guided back for other "passengers." The horses swam splendidly, but after a while we found it necessary to give them occasional "rests." Most of the party had thus been ferried to the left bank of the river, myself and three Yankee comrades, with the major and Hartley remaining on the right bank, superintending the embarkations, and guiding the animals in their passage to and fro. Directly, loud and angry words, with terrible oaths, are borne to us on the wings of the wind. We know what they mean, for bad blood had been engendered between the North Carolinians and Tennesseans during the

early part of the evening, when we divided the last cow which had been slaughtered.

Fearful of a bloody contest, and the creating of an alarm which would bring down upon us a horde of bushwhackers, we sprang upon the horses and urged the poor beasts across the stream, dismounted, and rushing in among the infuriated men, succeeded in separating the combatants and restoring quiet, if not harmony. The women in the party were inconsolable. They ran up and down the river's bank, uttering loud lamentations, refusing to be pacified or comforted. A number of those who had been fighting were badly cut, knives having been drawn when the first insult was given. I was now full of trouble. If we should lose our influence over these men, it was almost certain that we should fail in reaching the Union lines. We appealed to them to stand by one another—to keep on with us, and that their reward should be great. They sheathed their bloody weapons, but at the same time each party looked as if they would renew the engagement as soon as opportunity offered. Both parties manifested great respect for us "Yankees," and swearing they would obey *us*, we resumed the tiresome tramp.

The ascent of Higgins's Ridge was both tedious and painful to me, requiring five hours in its difficult consummation. The gigantic hill, over which we were making our way, was clad in the sombre garb of the balsam—the sad and haughty monarch of those great heights. The odorous boughs of these mighty trees brushed against the clouds, while in the

deep thickets, where the sunbeams can hardly penetrate, safe refuges for the panther, wolf, and the bear are afforded. The balsam is emphatically an aristocratic tree. It is never found in the humble valleys, and rarely lower than at an elevation of four thousand feet. It consorts with the proud rhododendron, whose scarlet bloom was the object of the Indians' passionate adoration, and its grand stem springs from among the decaying and moss-grown rocks of the everlasting hills.

At noon I breathed more freely than I had at any time since my capture, as from a grand elevation, I, for the first time, gazed upon and across the lovely Cumberland Valley to its grand mountains beyond. Far below us, and directly opposite, was the town of Greenville, the home of Andrew Johnson, whom I had heard was the Republican candidate for Vice President. I suppose that was the chief reason why I looked so interestedly upon the place. I saw Jonesboro away to my right, while other villages dotted the beautiful and charming plains below.

Bull Gap, too, where a portion of the Union army was said to be encamped, was within sight—a long distance across the valley in our immediate front. With what wistful eyes I looked to the bold promontory, and what longings I had to be there. But another day would certainly chronicle my arrival among the blue-coats, and in this joyous expectancy I was nerved for the final struggle.

While hastening along the summit of a magnificent ridge, we were suddenly thrown into a wild

state of commotion by the appearance of a number of guerrillas, whom we accidentally saw riding furiously upon a parallel ridge, in the same direction we were going. The major grasped his rifle more firmly, and counselled us to march as fast as possible, or we should be "lost." It would be necessary, he said, to reach an elevation a mile and more ahead before the horsemen could gain it. We had the advantage of a direct and straight course, while the enemy were on the outer line of the circle, and it might be possible for us to reach the junction of the ridges before them, but a desperate effort would be required. The major, Captain Todd, and a dozen others who were best armed, hastened away in advance, with a view of gaining a position where they could resist the rebel cavalry and cover our retreat.

It was now a race for *life*—every man and woman for themselves. It was one of the most exciting chases I ever witnessed. Owing to the condition of my feet, which were very sore and bleeding, I soon fell to the rear. My heart, which a few minutes before had beaten with the liveliest emotions of joy, now almost fainted within me, as I contemplated the danger which surrounded us. I felt every moment as if I should drop, through exhaustion; and fearing that I would be unable to reach and ascend the high mountain directly in front, I thought of descending the hill upon which I was making my way, and secreting myself in the wilderness below, until the present danger had passed. Fortunately I continued on, doing my

best to keep up with the party, whom I could still see. At length I reached the point where our riflemen had stationed themselves, and once more feeling secure, threw myself upon the ground, where I lay for some time in an insensible state. The bushwhackers dashed up to within a short distance of us, when, finding our men armed, and in a capital position of defence, they fell back without firing a shot. The major maintained his place for an hour or so, when, the party being pretty well down the mountain, he gave orders to proceed, our progress being slow, it being necessary for Todd and others to assist me, as I was too weak to proceed without help.

We had another grand view of the Cumberland valley as we descended Big Butt Mountain, whose base rested in its bosom. "Bull Gap," the haven of our fond desires, was but fifteen or twenty miles away, and certainly we should be able to reach it safely. What, now, could prevent us from doing that? The "Gap" was within plain sight, and no danger could possibly lurk on that lovely plain, which seemed as quiet as a rural cemetery. In an hour we shall be revelling in the delights of the valley, and be among a people noted for their intelligence and hospitality—a people who will be pleased to render us all the assistance in their power, and who can speedily ameliorate my condition. In an hour—what a thought! I shall be enabled by means of the telegraph to flash to my family the news of my safe arrival from a rebel prison-pen!

What care I, now, for my frozen and bleeding feet, my emaciated appearance? Have I not passed through manifold dangers and been mercifully preserved through the terrible vicissitudes of a long journey, and is not the end near?

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A CLAP OF THUNDER IN A CLEAR SKY!

BOOM! Boom! Boom-m-m! What is that? Why the crashing of artillery and the rattle of musketry? Can it be that the fiends of hell have arisen to bar our farther progress? Thunder in a cloudless sky would not have been as surprising as the reverberations of the artillery which greeted our ears that afternoon. Heavy smoke soon arose near the "Gap," and we knew by the firing that a battle had been begun. No one in our party could offer a solution of the mystery, or account for the conflict. With an army of the enemy directly across our chosen path, and cruel and reckless guerrillas hanging about our rear, our situation became decidedly an unenviable one. Should we be able to elude both parties now? that was the all-absorbing question.

We moved on down the steep mountain side until we reached a deep ravine, up which we marched to a place deemed entirely safe, where we concluded to bivouac. As the shadows of evening settled

upon our wearied party, there came a sudden termination of the conflict which had filled our souls with anguish.

The bugles sang truce, for the night-cloud had lowered,
And the sentinel stars set their watch in the sky ;
And thousands had sunk on the ground overpowered,
The weary to sleep, and the wounded to die."

Guards being carefully posted, we stretched our forms upon the cold ground, to await the approach of morn.

"When reposing that night on my pallet of straw,
By the wolf-scaring fagot that guarded the slain,
At the dead of the night a sweet vision I saw,
And thrice ere the morning I dreamt it again.

Methought from the battle-field's dreadful array,
Far, far, I had roamed on a desolate track :
'Twas autumn, and sunshine arose on the way,
To the home of my fathers that welcomed me back.

I flew to the pleasant fields traversed so oft,
In life's morning march, when my bosom was young ;
I heard my own mountain goats bleating aloft,
And knew the sweet strain that the corn-reapers sung.

Then pledged we the wine-cup, and fondly I swore,
From my home and my weeping friends never to part ;
My little ones kissed me a thousand times o'er,
And my wife sobbed aloud in her fulness of heart.

"Stay, stay with us—rest, thou art weary and worn ;"
And fain was their war-broken soldier to stay ;—
But sorrow returned with the dawning of morn,
And the voice in my dreaming ear melted away."

The weather next morning was threatening. On the appearance of daylight, the dread firing was renewed.

“Hark to that roar, whose swift and deafening peals,
In countless echoes through the mountains ring.”

Deeming it prudent to change our position to a place affording better security, we marched some two miles, halting near a small village, the inhabitants of which were in a state of great alarm. Up to this moment we had been exceedingly anxious to escape from the dangerous and inhospitable mountains, but now that we had found an active and disciplined army of the enemy in the valley which we had been so desirous of gaining, and across which we had fondly hoped to pass without interruption or molestation, we felt less like leaving the rocks and caverns behind and within which, if necessary, we could defend ourselves for a considerable length of time. Having no hope of eluding the vigilant enemy in the open valley, we remained within the shadow of the woods.

A young woman, who resided in the village, an acquaintance of one of our party, volunteered to go over towards the “Gap” to reconnoitre. To make her self-imposed mission less perilous and mistrustful, she filled a large bag with ears of yellow corn, and was soon on her way to the “mill,” some miles away. Just before dark we had the great pleasure of welcoming her safe return. Her “filly,” as she called her pony, was covered with sweat, and well-

nigh exhausted, having traveled twenty-seven miles, going and returning. The poor woman was greatly agitated, for she had seen some of the horrors of the conflict. Her story was substantially as follows :

It was Breckinridge who had been and still was fighting. He and his ragged host had come down through the valley *via* Danville and Abingdon, and his march on Knoxville had been intercepted by General Gillem. She said it would be impossible for us to reach the Union lines, as Breckinridge had possession of every approach—particularly the bridges and fords—all of which had been effectually guarded. The roads, too, were patrolled by cavalrymen, and foraging parties were roaming everywhere. The enemy had arrested some twenty citizens between the “Gap” and the village, most of them being pronounced friends of the Union. She concluded her “report” by advising us to return to the mountains, and there wait until we could proceed with less danger and difficulty.

The brave woman had scarcely finished, when a mountaineer, intensely excited, rushed among us. He said he had been chased a long distance, and that if we would save ourselves we must lose no time in getting away, as Keith and Palmer’s men were coming down the mountain. He besought us to get back upon the range, as it would be nonsensical for a party like ours to attempt to “fight them cutthroats.”

Having no leisure to argue the question, we at once took his advice and commenced a retrograde

movement over the grand hill in what but recently was our rear, and from which we had but a few hours since descended, although in another place. Selecting a spot that was well calculated for purposes of offense and defense we again halted to await developments.

We had nothing to eat, save ears of hard corn, taken from a crib at the foot of the mountain, but for this I was devoutly thankful. The weather was very cold, yet we dared not light a fire lest the smoke therefrom might lead to a discovery of our whereabouts. As wretched as I then was I must confess I wanted to live. It seemed as if I should perish from the exposure, but as none in the party could relieve my distress, I had to grin and bear it, seldom uttering any complaint. One of the mountaineers, however, who commiserated my forlorn condition, went down to the village, hoping to procure me a pair of shoes or boots, but nothing of the kind could be found. Failing in this, he did the next best thing, and that was in securing a pair of rabbit-skins, which he converted into moccasins. I felt thankful to that poor man for his great kindness to me, and wished I had it in my power to repay him for his disinterested services. The moccasins were a great comfort to me, and I experienced a decided sense of relief in wearing them. The ground each night was white with frost.

The morning came at length, and with it the sun in all his glory—the only cheerful thing to be seen. The wind blew strongly from the north-west. We

made our breakfast of the dry ears of corn, and were thankful for so great a boon. We munched the almost unpalatable food in woful silence—the scene being one for an artist.

Direful rumors continued to reach us at intervals, adding to our anxiety. We knew that the enemy had been successful, for the noise of battle was *farther away*, and of course *nearer* Knoxville. Should this city be besieged now, our prospect for reaching the Union lines would indeed be slim. Knoxville, too, was one hundred miles distant, and how should I be able to reach it? I had only been enabled to keep up the last few days because of the nearness and certainty of reaching our lines. Our forces in Kentucky were much farther away, and it was useless for me to think of getting through to that State. Then what should I do?

About nine o'clock that morning we learned that Breckinridge, who had a force of some fifteen thousand ragged and half-starved men, who defeated General Gillem at Blue Lick Springs (near Bull Gap), capturing three cannon, dislodging the Union forces, was driving them before him directly upon Knoxville. Palmer, the guerrilla, had made a descent into the valley, and was committing depredations, killing and carrying away all the cattle he could find; his men had massacred a number of Unionists within three miles of our hiding-place.

Believing it to be dangerous to longer remain in our present position, we again started off, keeping along under the shadow of the ridge, and parallel

with the mountain above. How I shivered as the howling winds went through me! The excitement kept me up—on excitement I had always thrived. We continued our flight till darkness rendered it dangerous to travel farther, when reaching a ravine we disposed ourselves to obtain rest as best we could. Sleep came not to my swollen and heavy eyes. I was greatly troubled in mind and body, and fearful that I should not be able to hold out much longer. One of the party invited me to share his blanket, and as I was perishing, I concluded to do so; but the moment my person became warm, the vermin were correspondingly lively, conducting operations in such a manner as to nearly craze me. They stuck “closer than brothers,” soon driving me from under cover of the blanket. While seated upon a log, up under the hill-side, meditating on the mutability of human affairs, a Tennessean, who had taken considerable interest in my welfare, approached me, and was soon engaged in conversation. He expatiated on the situation in which we now found ourselves, and labored to prevail upon me to return with him to his “cave” on the mountain. He held out many inducements. He had a fine rifle with him, and in his “cave” was an abundance of dried venison, corn, potatoes, etc. He promised to take good care of me, and at the first opportunity conduct me to the Union lines. This worthy mountaineer did his best to obtain my consent, but as he did not have accommodations for my three Yankee comrades, I declined to go with him.

He implored me to accompany him, saying that it would be impossible for me to go much farther, even though we were fortunate enough to escape from the Confederates. When he found that his argument was useless, he pressed my hand tightly, and bidding me "good bye," commenced the ascent of the mountain, instantly disappearing in the darkness.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

GUERRILLAS "CATCH US NAPPING."

I SAT still in my revery, and while wondering as to what would transpire within the next twenty-four hours, the whole party below being asleep, I was suddenly alarmed on hearing hasty footsteps coming up the ravine. It was a villager, who shouted "Run! run!" In another moment, before any of us could realize the actual condition of things, all was commotion and confusion worse confounded. Hideous yells filled the air, while the heavy hoofs of a couple of hundred horses and the discharge of as many carbines made the "surprise" complete. The guerrillas, whom we had so skilfully evaded for the past four days, had at last discovered the place of our retreat, and were carrying on their hellish work, firing and slashing with their sabres, as they rode among the terrified and the helpless, sparing neither sex, age, or condition. They had fallen upon us like "avenging thunderbolts from the blazing

throne of Jupiter." The air was filled with whizzing bullets, but the demoniac yells of our cruel enemies were more appalling to my bewildered senses.

Owing to the intense darkness it was impossible for me to discover anything except the repeated flashes from the fire-arms of the ruffians who had broken in so unceremoniously upon us. For the time I must have forgotten my bodily ailments, as I discovered myself running, sometimes falling, intent only on widening the distance between myself and the enemy, from whom, if I was again captured, I certainly had no right to expect any favors. For nearly six weeks I had undergone every fatigue, the greatest exposure, to regain liberty, and I determined to drop dead in my tracks, sooner than be taken back to die in a pestilential prison-pen. Confident that those yelping bushwhackers would feel especial delight in administering punishment to me, I ran as a man can run who feels that to linger means death or something worse.

The bullets sped by me as I climbed up the dizzy height, their proximity accelerating my movements; but by and by, when almost exhausted and apparently out of immediate danger, I sat down to extricate a piece of stick which had been forced into the fleshy part of my heel, my ill-fitting moccasins having fallen off while I was ascending the mountain. It caused me great agony to remove the stick from the flesh, but as I had often seen men with worse wounds, I made up my mind not to complain.

Besides, who could I complain to? Not a soul was within sight or hearing. What had become of my companions I knew not, neither had I any means of ascertaining. Not a sound now disturbed the quiet which reigned among those silent hills. I was alone in my wretchedness, and my poor heart almost ceased to beat. As the gray streaks of the morning lightened the eastern horizon I continued on, and when the sun rose, discovered that I had traveled quite a long distance, as I failed to recognize the country which was unfolded to my view. I knew that I was proceeding in the direction of Knoxville, because the sun was nearly at my back. Seeing a number of men driving cattle in the valley, I sat down upon a fallen tree, shielded from view by a large rock, and "rested."

As I sat in that awful wild, contemplating my wretchedness, a terrible fear took possession of my soul. I had no article of value in my possession, no money, no knife, no utensil in which to cook—nothing to cook, nothing to eat—and I could not tell which way to turn my mangled feet. The landscape before me seemed to have been cultivated for centuries, so symmetrical was the foliage, so beautiful were the vines trailing over the trees, yet with their manifold attractions they had but few charms for me. Under more favorable auspices I would doubtless have been delighted with the charm of their loveliness. A river below me was fringed with trees, while in every direction was the blue stretch of far-away hills, or the shadow of woods.

I was on the brink of despair, when I heard sounds of an approaching party, my heart standing still as I bent forward and peered over the hill to see what manner of men they were. When two hundred yards distant, I discovered that my good friend Major Davis headed the party, and bounding forward, I was soon in his embrace. Captain Lewis, too, was there, but Todd and Grant were absent, neither having been heard from since the fatal encounter. Lewis warmly welcomed me, for he had believed himself the only Yankee who had escaped from the enemy. Where now were Todd and Grant?

But time was pressing, and we must continue on. Instead of the hundred and upwards who were with us but a few hours ago, only thirty-seven now remained. We kept close under the shadow of the mountains, as they would best afford us advantage in case we should be discovered and again attacked. The major was perfectly familiar with the country, and in plunging into the woods he readily discovered trails whose faint lines we of the city would soon have lost, but in which he easily kept. His rifle and revolver were still in his possession, while several others of the party retained their shot-guns, all of which would be of service either in procuring food, or as means of defense. At noon, after a fatiguing march, we took a rest, when it was decided that Knoxville must now be made our objective point. If we failed in reaching that place, nothing but a miracle would allow us to gain Chattanooga,

some two hundred and fifty miles away. We hastened on across creeks, over hills and slopes, determined to succeed.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

HOW I OBTAINED SHOES AND STOCKINGS.

NEAR evening, the major entrusted me with his revolver, and soon after, while passing through a heavy woods, he narrated to me how a farmer, living near by, had killed one of his men but a few days previous. He pointed out to me the new-made mound, whereupon I solemnly swore that if I came across the murderer, I'd strip him of his shoes, if they were the only ones to be found in Tennessee. The major cautioned me to be careful how I acted, as Bryan—that was the fellow's name—wasn't "afraid of the devil himself." The possession of the revolver made me feel like braving the entire Confederate army. Our party stopped at the various small farm-houses to obtain something to eat—the major, Lewis, and myself continuing on until we came to a creek which separated Bryan's farm from that of a neighbor. As we reached Bryan's place, he was pointed out to me as he sat on a three-legged stool milking a cow. I pushed open the antique-looking gate with a bang and entered the yard, my comrades going on to the house across the stream, where they promised to await me.

Mr. Bryan, contrary to my expectation, failed to

take notice of my approach. He remained seated, neither offering to rise or to "salute his superior officer." He continued milking, while I looked at his shoes. And such shoes! They were about six inches too long and three inches too broad for my feet, but they were *shoes*, and as such I made up my mind to possess them. If I could not wear them some one else in the party could. I broke the frozen stillness by remarking that I was barefooted. "Yes," he replied, "I kin see that."

"Well, old man," I continued, "I have a long distance to travel, and it is highly necessary that I should have a pair of shoes before proceeding farther."

Bryan looked at me sharply, manifesting some contempt, perhaps because I was small of stature. Not altogether liking his looks or his actions, I spoke more determinedly—thinking to frighten him—telling him not to "put on any airs." I was successful in not frightening him, for the next instant he sprang from his stool, and in a great rage said "no un" could abuse him on his own property. He had no shoes for me, hardly any for himself. The pair on his feet he had finished but two weeks since, and he guessed "no un could take 'em." I became quite nervous at the fellow's conduct, and was satisfied that peaceful means would never accomplish the laudable object I had in view. Suddenly elevating that ten-inch navy revolver to the immediate vicinity of his long proboscis, I sternly ordered him to "get out of them shoes!" This proceeding on my

part had the singular effect of causing him to make a sudden backward and ungraceful movement, in the course of which he tumbled over the old stool. I followed him closely, and told him not to make a fool of himself, meanwhile keeping the revolver pointed at his nose.

I then informed him that I was a Yankee officer, and if he did not at once comply with my demand, and *present* me with those shoes, it would afford me great pleasure to blow off the top of his ugly-looking head, and bury him in the woods beside the grave of the Union soldier whom he had murdered. Bryan glanced at me like a wounded tiger as I told him this, and concluding that I was likely to carry this threat into execution, he untied the great leather strings forthwith.

Mr. Bryan had just handed me one shoe, when his daughter, a pretty, red-cheeked girl of some eighteen summers, appeared as a new actor upon the scene. She was terribly frightened on seeing her father upon the ground, and a heavy revolver's mouth pointed directly at his face. The devoted girl sprang between us and earnestly begged me not to kill him. I endeavored to assuage her fears, but she refused to be comforted, and cried like a child, which *almost* tempted me to depart. I told her that I wanted a pair of shoes, and that much as I would like to oblige her, I could not think of leaving until I obtained them.

"Spare my father," she said, "and I will procure you a pair of shoes."

“Do so, my dear girl, and your parent shall live,” replied I, in as pathetic a manner as possible. The fact was, I liked the girl’s action—there was something romantic about it. Besides, she doubtless sympathized with me, and if not with me, certainly with her papa: I did not care which, so long as I obtained the shoes. As I lowered the revolver, both the girl and her father acted as if they had experienced a decided relief. The young lady promptly invited me to accompany her to the house, but a few yards away, and I cheerfully followed, first cautioning the old man to finish milking the cow, and not to think of leaving his work until I returned. To prevent Bryan from playing any practical jokes, I took possession of his rifle, which I discovered leaning against the mantel-piece in the kitchen, and walking to the door exhibited the weapon to him, in order to prove that I was, for the nonce, master of his premises.

The young lady and myself then proceeded to diligently search the house, even crawling about the garret, but no shoes could anywhere be found. Returning to the ground floor, she sat before me a tin pan filled with sweet-milk, inviting me to help myself, and refreshed me with a large piece of newly-made cake, of which sorghum molasses was a liberal ingredient. I enjoyed the refreshments so generously provided, and walking out to where the old man still sat, told him there was no help for it—bade him “hand over the other shoe.” On looking about, I discovered that he had, during my tempo-

rary absence, replaced the shoe upon his foot. I did not feel so bitter against Bryan now, for his daughter had been kind to me, and a full stomach always has the effect of making a man feel well-disposed towards all creation. Still, I had no idea of going away without shoes of some kind. As I approached the angry man, swinging the revolver meanwhile, his daughter again rushed to his side, importuning me to let her father retain his shoes, declaring they were all he had.

“If you must have shoes,” she exclaimed, “take mine!”

The spirited girl manifested a spunk worthy of a *better cause*, and while I could not help admiring her behavior, I felt compelled to rule out her exceptions. Taking a “peep” at the shoes upon her feet, I became satisfied that they would prove too small—my feet being sore and swollen. The girl might at first have labored under the hallucination that I would not accept her offer, but when I removed one shoe and attempted to put it on, she discovered that I was dreadfully in earnest about the matter, and she cried as if her poor little heart would break. The poetry in her hitherto pretty face disappeared all of a sudden, and instead of sweet words she bitterly denounced “Yankees.” Finding I could not get her shoe on my foot, I returned it, bidding her “dry up,” as her tears would now have no influence with me—neither would they preserve her father’s shoes to him. I told her I needed them—that I was a thousand miles from

home, and that further talk would be entirely useless.

I smiled as I saw the old man climb out of that pair of "gun-boats," as Lewis wickedly called them when he first saw me in them. Bryan handed the shoes to me, although I was afraid he would fling them at my head—he was so indignant, but he swore he would have "satisfaction." Raising his pail of milk to my mouth and taking a refreshing draught therefrom, I gathered up the two "tan-yards," and walking backwards to the roadway, bade the couple an affectionate farewell, promising if I ever again happened along that way to call and spend a night with them. I would have tipped my hat to the fair girl, but, unfortunately, I did not happen to have such an article of dress about me.

I walked rapidly and good-humoredly to the house where Davis and Lewis had stopped for "refreshments," and at the farther end of a long and ancient-looking hallway I saw those worthies eating supper, and acting generally as if they were "at home." While passing through the hallway, which was somewhat darkened, I was suddenly confronted by a tall, raw-boned man, whom I subsequently learned was the proprietor of the mansion. I never spoke more politely in my life, and yet when I asked him for a pair of stockings, he paid no heed to my request; on the contrary, he attempted to pass by me, towards the front door, which I found wide open at the time of my entrance. I sprang in front of him and repeated my request, whereupon he told

me he had "no stockings." I knew he lied, and when I told him so, he actually grew furious, and had I interposed no objection, I verily believe he would have been unkind enough to do me bodily harm.

Springing aside, I raised the revolver on a direct line with his optics, and giving him a shove, the next instant he was surprised to find himself doubled up on a large settee. The fellow, nearly choked with rage, gritted his teeth as he divested himself of his long gray woollen stockings—each about two feet in length—and kindly gave them to me. Such thorough unselfishness I had never before witnessed. I would have exchanged shoes with him, but on a careful examination found that the pair which Mr. Bryan had presented me were several inches smaller than those just taken off by my new-found friend.

With the shoes and stockings I hastened to the barn-yard, where I procured a quantity of straw; then repaired to the babbling brook in front of the house, washed my poor feet, put on the stockings, padded the shoes with the straw, inserted my feet into the same, and marched boldly into the mansion. I met Lewis as he came out of the dining-room, and being overjoyed at my good fortune, stepped gently on one of his toes. He saw the *point* at once, and congratulated me on my success. He wanted to know where I had got the stockings, so I told him. Inquiring "how?" I pointed significantly to the revolver, which he wanted to borrow in order to try a similar experiment; but having

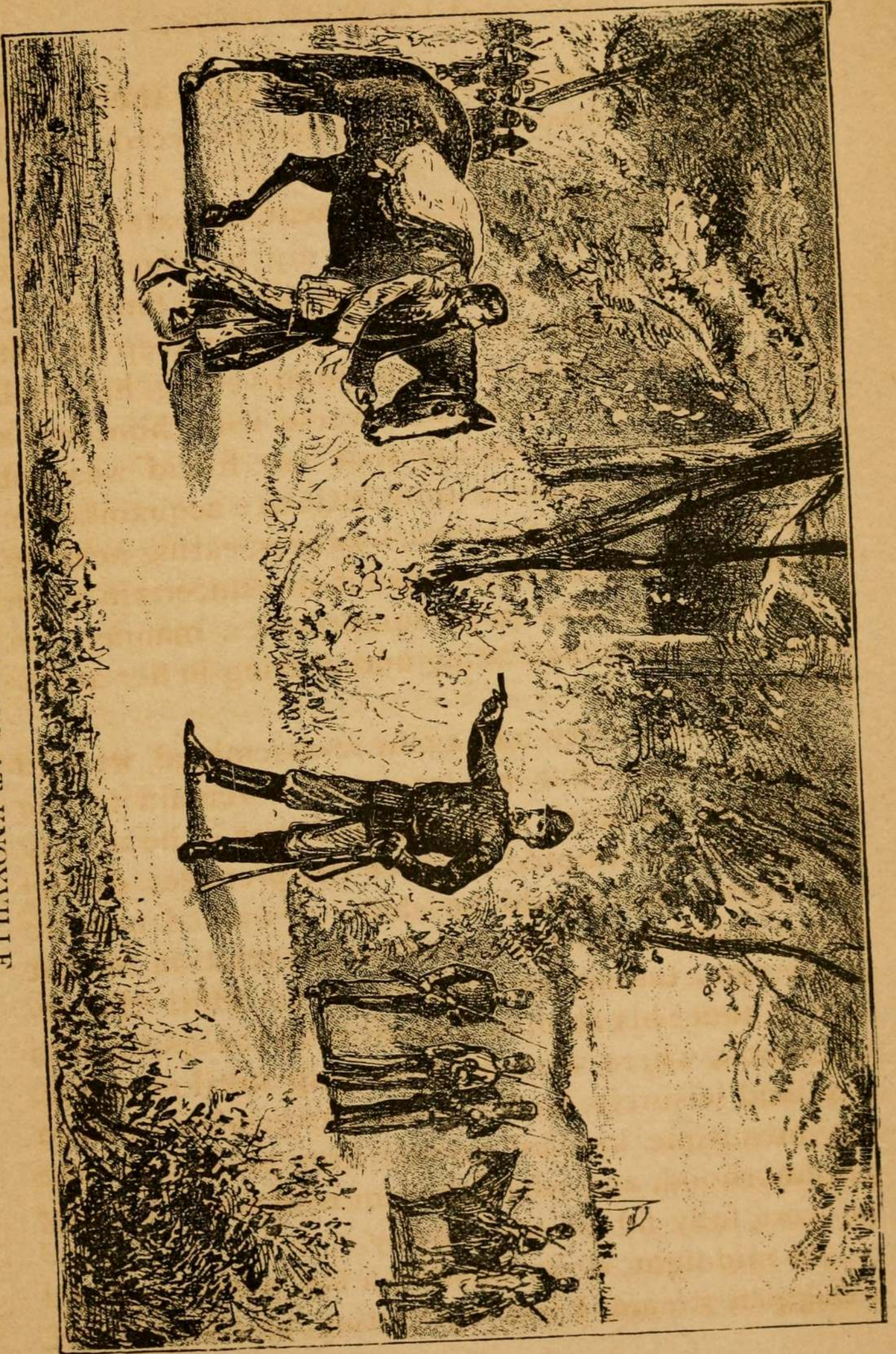
been enjoined by the major not to allow the weapon to leave my possession, I declined to accede to his request.

Entering the dining apartment, I seated myself at the table, directly opposite my benefactor, who eyed me very sharply considering our limited acquaintance. He looked as if he was in deep trouble of some kind, so I refrained from vexing his soul. I felt cheerful enough to converse with him, but a casual glance showed me that my friend was not disposed to cultivate a more intimate acquaintance. I partook of his hospitality, however, eating heartily of the tempting food, because it was uncertain when I should again fare in as sumptuous a manner—an aged colored woman being unremitting in her attentions to me.

When the party had again re-assembled, we told our surly host that we intended to remain in the neighborhood until morning, and that if he or any of his folks attempted to leave the premises during the night, they would be shot. I walked over to Bryan's and imparted the same information to that gentleman, taking especial pains to whirl the revolver under his chin, as I pointed to the spot across the brook, where we would encamp until morning. I walked leisurely back to the party, which had in the meantime kindled several fires to deceive the neighborhood, and when the sun rose next morning we were fully fifteen miles away.

At midnight, while crossing a log, which spanned a sluggish stream, I lost my footing, and slipped off,

ENTERING THE LINES AT KNOXVILLE.



falling with a splash into the water. I succeeded in getting out with a little assistance, but I could walk no farther in the heavy shoes, as they proved altogether unfit for my use. I cheerfully gave them to a Tennessean, who was grateful therefor.

Our discomforts were increased next day by a rain-storm, which rendered our tramp still more distressing. The swollen streams added to our perplexities, several of them being crossed with great difficulty as well as some danger. During the day we heard heavy firing to our right, which proved that we still had a chance of reaching Knoxville in advance of the enemy, as his progress seemed to be stubbornly contested.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A NOBLE-HEARTED PEOPLE.

IN the early evening, our jaded party reached Squire Gwinn's, a very comfortable place, having accomplished the extraordinary distance of thirty-seven miles since starting. We found the kind-hearted squire and the members of his family in a high state of excitement, consequent upon the falling back of our forces from Bull Gap, heretofore considered an impregnable position. A large number of the squire's neighbors visited him during the evening, all in an intense state of alarm. Many

came over mounted upon horses, while several drove their cattle before them, all anxious to save their property. I felt sorry for these long-suffering people, who had made greater sacrifices than those of any other section. They had contributed men and means for carrying on the war of the Union, which cause they regarded as of more importance than life itself. The people of East Tennessee were as heroic as any who ever lived. May they never experience war's sorrows again.

At midnight a kind woman furnished me a good supper, for which I blessed her, not possessing any tokens current among the merchants. We were in a quandary, not knowing whether to continue on in the darkness or wait for the approach of day. Our counsels were divided, some advocating one thing, some another. It was finally decided to halt where we were until daylight.

My feet were terribly lacerated, and the weather cold and disagreeable. The thought that but a few miles only intervened between me and our army alone served to keep me up. Those who saw my condition expressed pity for me, but *pity* did not make me warmer or otherwise relieve my distress. I wanted clothing and shoes and medical attention. Whether I should ever receive them, God alone knew. With these thoughts harrowing my soul, I laid down in some hay under a cow-shed, but no sleep came to refresh me or cause me to forget my afflictions.

The weather next morning was still disagreea-

ble, not at all calculated to inspire us with hope. At daybreak the probability of danger was intensified by the firing of musketry, which we now plainly heard, showing conclusively that the enemy was but a short distance away. We immediately recommenced our journey, travelling hastily. I had great difficulty in hobbling along, and was the subject of much solicitude, all encouraging me to "keep up."

Towards noon we crossed Pigeon River, and soon afterwards reached the farm-house and mill of a Mr. Snap, a most romantic-looking spot. Mr. Snap furnished us with a quantity of wheat flour, and after I had promised to write to his son George, Confederate prisoner of war at Rock Island, Illinois, he gave me several plugs of tobacco, which I esteemed as more precious than so much bread.

While resting at the mill, a neighbor arrived, reporting that Confederate horsemen were but a short distance away; and not being anxious to meet them, we at once departed and kept a sharp lookout for the enemy, of whom we now stood in constant and terrible dread. Marching along under the hills, we succeeded in flanking Sevierville, leaving that town to our right. An hour afterwards we learned from a citizen who had escaped from Sevierville that the enemy's cavalry had possession of the place, and were sacking the post-office when he left. He advised us to make all possible haste, as the surrounding country was sure to be overrun by the Confederates, who were elated over their victory at Blue Lick Springs and along the line of the railroad.

Not a moment was to be lost, if we would reach Knoxville, now but a few miles distant.

After dark we reached the house of a Mr. Thomas, where we found a large party of neighbors assembled, among whom intense excitement prevailed. Mr. Thomas packed up his most valuable effects and secreted them about the place; and after the refugees had partaken of food, provided in abundance, we resumed the journey, marching rapidly.

Oh, what hopes, what fears, what misgivings I now had for the possibilities of the next twenty-four hours! It was now life or death, home or prison. I had escaped so many perils that I was now more confident than ever of reaching a place of safety. For many weeks I had toiled and struggled, wearily plodding through swamps, crossing rivers, and laboriously traversing hills and mountains, often in imminent danger, weak, sick, and nearly starved, and it could not be that the kind Providence which had protected, shielded, and conducted me through all this, would now desert me in the hour of supreme need. A gracious God, I firmly believed, would continue his watchful care and deliver me in His own good time from the hands of the Philistines. I had too often been the recipient of His great kindness, had been fed apparently by His hand, when human assistance was hardly to be expected, much less relied on. He had protected me from storms of bullets, from pestilence, from flood, and mercifully saved me from recapture—from death. I could confidently trust in Him again—and I did, implicitly.

Daylight found us hurrying along to the goal of our fondest hopes. As I stopped by the roadside to extract a splinter from a bleeding toe, Mr. Thomas rode up and insisted upon my mounting the young horse he bestrode. I thanked him, and in another moment was astride the unsaddled beast. This was another interposition of Providence in my behalf, for which I was deeply thankful. Had I now seen the entire Confederate army in my path, I would not have hesitated in making the attempt to dash through its line. I felt like daring anything, now that I had a good horse under me. An ounce of lead would be the only thing that would tempt me to dismount until I was safe beyond peradventure. I had not felt as much confidence in myself since the sixth of last May, when, in command of the skirmish line which preceded the army of the James on its march up Bermuda Hundred, I discovered the tapering spires of Petersburg a few miles in my front.

Thus mounted, I rode slowly along in advance of the party, who traveled with difficulty, owing to the presence of many women and children, burdened with household effects which they were anxious to save from the spoiler.

We were getting along finely when some of the mountaineers got into another difficulty. Attracted by loud shouting, I galloped back, and found some twenty men engaged in combat. They refused to cease fighting, and as I did not care about having my head broke, I stood one side and patiently awaited a termination of the unnatural conflict.

One man received a fearful cut in his shoulder, while others were more or less injured in the *melée*. I confess my confidence in human nature was now somewhat shaken, and I longed for the hour to arrive when I should be delivered from my friends as well as my enemies, as I was now equally afraid of both.

CHAPTER XL.

HAIL! FLAG OF THE FREE!

ABOUT the middle of the afternoon Mr. Thomas informed me that we could not now be very far from our piquet, and as I was the best mounted man in the party, and would be more likely to know how best to approach the "blue-coats," he suggested that I "ride ahead and take observations." How my heart leaped as I dashed along on what was called the "Rock Road."

"Alone, but with unabated zeal,
That horseman plied the scourge and steel.
Away, away, my steed and I,
Upon the pinions of the wind,
All human dwellings left behind;
He sped like meteors through the sky."

A clearing suddenly afforded me a glimpse of a city set upon a hill, and looking, I beheld, not more than two or three miles away, my country's flag.

“Flag of the brave ! thy folds shall fly,
The sign of hope and triumph high !
Flag of the free heart’s hope and home,
By angel hands to valor given,
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome,
And all thy lives were born in heaven.
Forever float that standard sheet !
Where breathes the foe but falls before us,
With Freedom’s soil beneath our feet,
And Freedom’s banner streaming o’er us !”

Imagine my feelings as I beheld the glorious emblem streaming majestically from a huge earthwork a mile or so away. I breathed a fervent prayer, then and there, that mine eyes had again been permitted to behold its glory. Months had elapsed since I had witnessed such a sight. I now felt like a man, and that life was still worth all the sacrifices I had made to retain it. Under that flag gleamed bristling bayonets—under it, too, were loud dogs of war.

My horse, whose headlong gait I had checked on seeing the glorious sight just described, remained motionless, allowing me to gaze upon the beautiful and gladsome spectacle. I could hardly restrain loud expressions of joy and check my ardor. My first impulse, on awakening to a reality of the scene before me, was to gallop on, leaving the party to enter the lines as best they could, but on reflection I decided to await their arrival ; besides it was but just that I should return the horse to its owner, especially as Mr. Thomas had been very kind to me in the hour of my greatest need. In the course of half an hour the party reached me, when, in the exuber-

ance of the joy which had taken possession of my soul, I proposed three cheers for the flag we all loved so well. The woods rang again and again with the echoes.

Mr. Thomas insisted upon my riding forward until the piquets were reached—so away I went. A gallop over the flinty road for half a mile brought me within sight of Union soldiers—a squad of whom were standing in a menacing attitude in the middle of the road.

I could not account for their actions. Evidently something was wrong. It could not be that they were afraid of *me*! I rode slowly forward, descending a hill, and when I reached the gulley I was summoned to “halt!”

I never obeyed a summons more cheerfully. An officer now advanced down the hill, having in his hand a heavy revolver, and when within a few yards, demanded to know who I was. I answered “An officer who has escaped from Charleston.” Evidently he did not credit my statement, as he immediately raised his weapon and bade me “dismount;” with which summary request I instantly complied.

It was but the work of a moment to satisfy that Pennsylvania lieutenant of my identity; and after a hearty grasp of the hand he jerked off his canteen and insisted upon my taking a drink of “commisary,” but I declined his proffered hospitality, saying I did not drink liquor. He called to his men and they ran to his side, and on learning who I was and where I came from, their joy knew no bounds.

When Lewis and the rest of the party came up introductions followed, after which I requested the lieutenant to send an escort with us to the city. He promptly complied, and we were soon on our way—*safe within the Union lines!* Just before we reached the bridge which spanned the Holston River, our party was stopped by the provost guard, who refused to allow any but Lewis and myself and the “escort” to proceed to the city. In less than an hour afterwards, Lewis and myself were seated upon a sofa in the office of General Carter, Provost-Marshal General of Tennessee.

The general at first regarded our story with suspicion, but I speedily satisfied him with my credentials—my commission, note-book, etc. He was full of wonder, and thought it the most remarkable journey he had ever heard of. He called in the members of his staff and introduced us, and insisted on hearing all about our tramp, notwithstanding the fact that his supper had already been served on a marble-top table in the centre of the apartment. We briefly recounted our adventures, all the time expecting that the lice with which we were covered would scatter among the healthy-looking staff-officers. In imagination I could see the vermin marching in close-column by divisions over the sofa on which the general and myself closely sat. I kept edging away, but the old soldier was so much interested in my narrative, that he followed me inch by inch, until I could move no farther.

Finally, the darkey servant, “begging pardon,”

called the general's attention to the supper, long since grown cold, when the old soldier sprang up as if he had been shot, declaring he had forgotten all about it, and insisted upon our supping with him. We declined, saying that our greatest desire at present was to strip ourselves of our ragged and filthy apparel—our chief ambition, to enjoy the luxury of a bath, and to procure a clean suit of clothes, no matter how coarse or common.

Begging "ten thousand pardons," he sprang to his desk, and wrote to Captain Whitman, A. Q. M., directing him to furnish us with what articles of clothing we needed. We thanked the general for his kindness, and with the order in my hand—I had no pockets in my pants or blouse—hastened to the quartermaster's department, where our every want was promptly supplied.

Packing up the articles in paper, and holding the bundles at arm's-length, for fear of invasion by the vermin, we went in search of a barber's shop. Just think of it, a barber's shop!

Espying a saloon, we entered, and as we approached the colored tonsorial artist, he recoiled from us. Appearances were against us, but it would not do to be backward. I informed the barber that we had just come in from South Carolina; that we were without money, but that we would be everlastingly grateful to him for a shave. He walked, in the most deliberate manner, to the front door, opened it, and told us to "leave de shop!" He looked at us fiercely, and when he found that we

did not pay any attention to his order, he threatened to call a "guard." He was the first darkey who had ever treated me meanly, and I told him so. He blustered around "like a hen with its head off," until I told him that we would "pay him to-morrow," when he became fairly enraged, saying he wouldn't "shave a — rebel for all de money in de town!"

"Rebel!" Ah! that, then, was the secret of his rude behavior to us. We told him we were officers—officers of the army of the James—who had escaped from a prison in South Carolina. By this time a soldier, a Tennessee cavalryman, who was sitting in the barber's chair, came to our rescue. He said: "Boys, I hain't got much, but here's a dollar greenback, which you are welcome to." He compelled us to accept it, and refused to take the chair again until Lewis and myself had been attended to, my comrade entertaining him and the now happy barber, while the latter cut my hair and shaved my long-neglected face. When the artist had fixed us up, we tendered him the dollar which the cavalryman had just given us, but he generously refused to take payment for his valuable services. He regretted he had no bath-tubs, but directed us where to go for them.

Reaching the other shop, we found the proprietor closing for the night. We told him our story, and he "took us in," doing all in his power for us. While he was getting the bath-tubs ready, Lewis and I removed our worn-out apparel, placing it upon the floor; and on the barber's return we were watch-

ing the sportive antics of the millions of lice which had borne us company for the past six months. The poor barber, after a glance at the "situation," held up his hands in horror, and almost went into a fit. "My God! gentlemen," said he, watching the front door, "if this was known I'd be ruined, for no one would ever come in here again." Seizing a pair of iron tongs he saturated the cast-off clothing with camphene, and removed the rags to the street, where, in a moment afterwards, they were in a bright blaze—neither Lewis nor myself shedding a tear at the terrible fate of those who had stuck so closely to us.

After the fullest enjoyment of a first-class bath—the first we had had in nearly a year—we arrayed ourselves in clean suits of Uncle Sam's shoddy. Procuring and fastening *bars* upon the collars of our blouses, and wrapping our blankets around us, we thanked our colored friend for his kindness to us, then emerged into the street. But how different in appearance and feeling from what we had been an hour or so ago!

It was now nearly ten o'clock; the stores were mostly closed, but still there were many people upon the streets. Mounted men galloped hurriedly hither and thither, while pieces of artillery were dragged rapidly along with a thundering noise. On some of the thoroughfares long lines of troops "rested" along the curb. We paid little attention to these things—our objective point being to find a decent *hotel*, and as good luck would have it, we soon stumbled upon the "Franklin House."

CHAPTER XLI.

THREATENED WITH THE GUARD-HOUSE.

ENTERING, we found the reception room crowded with officers, each of whom acted as if the cares of the entire world rested upon his individual shoulders. Others came in bearing packages and new valises, which convinced us that many of those present had but recently earned or received the right to wear straps upon their shoulders. Others who came in looked as if they had had a hard time of it, with plenty of work still on hand. It was some time before Lewis and I could make our way to the book-keeper's desk, owing to the crowd which stood before the "opening."

At length, succeeding in elbowing our way to the centre, I inquired if we could be provided with accommodations. The book-keeper, peering at us, looked as if he wanted to say "no room!" But he didn't. He said he would do the best he could for us. Not caring to let the crowd know that we were impecunious, I whispered to the book-keeper that we were entirely without funds. "Without money!" exclaimed the clerk, loud enough to be heard across the room; "How do you expect us to run a hotel if travelers do not pay?"

Of course the attention of the officers near by was attracted towards us, and as I saw several of them

smile and wink at the clerk, I felt that we were at a disadvantage. It was not pleasant to beg a night's lodging at a large hotel, and I at once saw the difficulties under which we would labor until we came across a paymaster who would be good enough to give us some of our back-pay on account. One of the officers, who had noticed the bars on my blouse, came up, and said quite saucily: "Say, young fellow, what are you doing with those bars on your shoulders?"

As I did not like his bearing, I replied that I had a right to wear them. This didn't satisfy the officer, who now imagining he was going to have some fun, asked what I was "doing in a private's uniform?" The crowd who had now gathered about looked as if they would like to bounce us, and as I thought their jokes had been carried far enough, I straightened myself up, weak as I was, and replied that I had just received the clothing from the quartermaster, and that whether it suited them or not, it would answer my purpose until I could get to my home.

"Home!" ejaculated another young officer, who regarded Lewis and myself as frauds, "pray, where is your home? Now, this little game of your's won't work here; it's been tried too often. If you don't take off those bars and get back to camp I'll take charge of you both."

As things were now approaching a crisis, I deemed a full explanation necessary to our comfort; so bracing my back against the counter, I faced the crowd, and said:

“Gentlemen, *we* are officers of the army of the James. [It was just fun to see that crowd open their eyes and stare, as they closed in upon us.] We got away from the ‘Johnnies’ near Charleston, South Carolina, on the sixth day of last October, and after a pretty hard tramp through the swamps of that State, and over the mountains of North Carolina and East Tennessee, we succeeded in reaching this place early this evening—reporting, on arrival, to General Carter. If you want other evidence look at this—it is one of my commissions as an officer of the Ninth New Jersey Veteran Volunteers.”

That was enough, and it proved to be the best speech I ever made. The officers, one after another, pressed forward, grasping our hands and extending hearty congratulations. The officer who, a few minutes before, had been so anxious to remove the bars from my blouse, carried me around and behind the great counter, where he seated me in a chair; then withdrawing two handsome linen shirts from a valise, insisted upon my acceptance of the same. I firmly declined the shirts, saying I preferred the warm woollen ones the quartermaster had supplied me with. My new-found friend then directed the book-keeper to register our names, pledging himself to pay all the expenses which we might incur.

By this time everybody in the Franklin House had learned about our “escape,” and but little else was talked about. A handsome staff-officer waited

upon Lewis and myself, saying it would afford General Gillem pleasure to receive us at his table in the dining-room, and we were escorted thither. The general warmly welcomed us, and when we were seated at his side, he asked us to tell him about our trip. We did so briefly. When he ascertained that we knew something of Breckinridge's movements, he manifested unusual interest in our remarks. We gave him all the information at hand, and our opinion that Breckinridge was simply on a foraging excursion, as his loaded wagons and the cattle which had been gathered in the valley had all gone back towards Virginia.

General Gillem expressed himself as much pleased with the information we had given him, and before we retired he invited Lewis and myself to serve on his staff during the operations he was about to make. We thanked him for this mark of his esteem and confidence, and assured him that nothing would afford us greater pleasure than to render such assistance as we might be capable of.

After supper, we sauntered out to the reception room, and were enthusiastically greeted. A dozen first-class fellows devoted themselves to us; and after placing ourselves behind two huge imported cigars, Lewis and myself were compelled to give some of the particulars of our thousand-mile march through the States held by the enemy, without weapons of defence, compass, or guide.

Lieutenant D. M. Nelson, adjutant of a Tennessee regiment, compelled me, at a late hour, to

accompany him down the street to a shoe store, and after rousing the proprietor thereof, purchased a pair of handsome kid shoes, which I was forced to accept. The adjutant then escorted me to a furnishing store, where he made purchases of linen collars, silk socks, necktie, handkerchiefs, etc., acting as if he could not do enough for me. Adjutant Nelson's great kindness will never be forgotten by me.

It was after midnight when Lewis and I repaired to our room, one of the best in the house, and crawled in between clean white sheets—the first we had seen for many months. It is needless to say that we passed the remainder of the night in the most comfortable manner, and that we continually dreamed of the loved ones at home. Loved ones from whom I had not heard a single word since the day before my capture.

After preparing our toilet next morning—just imagine us combing and brushing our hair and teeth once more—we went down to the breakfast room, but could do no sort of justice to the good things set before us by the attentive waiter. For the first time in months we had no appetite. Had we still been wandering in the fields and swamps, I suppose we would have appreciated anything set before us. As it was, I sipped a little of the fragrant coffee, and this affected me very unpleasantly.

After breakfast, we took a short walk, visiting Parson Brownlow's printing office.

The patriotic "Parson" was not in, but we were

handsomely entertained by Mr. Tilghman Haws, his partner, who wrote an account of our wanderings, which was published in *The Whig*.

The streets were filled with troops from Chattanooga, passing through the fortifications on the east side of the town. At noon, learning that General Gillem would not make a forward movement for a day or two, we applied for and received orders for transportation, the provost-marshal-general directing us to report to the adjutant-general at Washington, D. C.

Owing to the danger of forwarding trains to Chattanooga, we found it impossible to leave the city, and were compelled to loiter about until next morning. We met agreeable company, however, and were waited upon by many officers, together with several newspaper correspondents, the latter writing handsomely of our tramp, endurance, and courage. During the evening I wrote to my wife and parents, also to Colonel James Stewart, jr., and Captain Jonathan Townley, jr., of the Ninth Regiment, for whom I had long entertained the warmest regard. I knew not whether any of them were living, neither did I know that the gallant Zabriskie, or Harris or Carroll or Lawrence were killed the morning I was captured. I wrote with fear and misgivings, and a few days afterward was rejoiced to receive replies from Stewart and Townley, both of whom had been preserved for continued usefulness.

We were aroused from slumber at six o'clock, by a waiter who had sung out at the top of his

voice, "Train all ready, gemmen. Hurry up, if you want to go to Chattanooga!" This was good news to us; so springing out we quickly dressed, and after a hurried bite at the table, we thanked the proprietor for his kindness, and bidding "good bye" to all who stood around, we stepped into the carriage which awaited us at the door, and in another moment were whirling at a rapid rate towards the depot, which, fortunately, we reached in the nick of time.

The ride to historic Chattanooga, which place we reached, after a terrible jolting, at about eight o'clock in the evening, was without interest. It rained hard all day, and in places the railroad, not in very good condition, was flooded. Walking into the "Crutchfield House," we asked for supper and lodgings, which the lady proprietress kindly accorded. We retired early.

Next morning I made my way to the table, and not being able to eat, took a walk to create an appetite. I gazed into the rapidly flowing Tennessee River, flooded by the recent rains, and beheld "Lookout Mountain" with rapturous delight. While sitting under an old barrack shed, to escape the rain, I was suddenly attacked by terrible cramps in my stomach. Lewis, greatly alarmed, and being weak himself, was unable to remove me to the hotel: he thought my "time had come." He did all in his power to relieve my distress, which doubled me up like a ball, almost driving the breath out of my emaciated body. Lewis, aided by an old darkey,

who happened near, finally succeeded in getting me back to the "Crutchfield House," where I was put to bed, receiving every attention. The surgeon who was summoned told my comrade that I had one chance in a thousand. "If that is so," said Lewis, "then he's all right—he'll be sure to take that chance." Would I be able to hold out for a week longer was the question which constantly presented itself to me, as I lay there racking with excruciating pains.

The storm continued, raising the flood in the Tennessee River to an unusual height, and it suddenly became quite cold. At noon news of an alarming character reached Chattanooga. Hood was reported marching upon Nashville. This gave me additional distress of mind. Unless I could get beyond that city before his arrival there, the chances for getting to Washington would indeed be slim. There is no doubt but that I was terribly homesick, and the thought of remaining at Chattanooga or again returning to Knoxville, caused me intense anguish. With a desperate effort I rose from bed, and was soon at the depot, where fortunately I found a train of empty freight-cars just ready to start for Nashville. The sergeant in charge granted Lewis and myself permission to take passage in the caboose, the ride being the roughest I ever experienced. A little cast-iron stove, glowing with heat, dried our apparel and kept us warm. After dark, one of the guards, commiserating my wretched condition and animated by pity, made me a bed of

blankets on the floor of the caboose, alongside the stove, and attended to my many wants until daylight. I was unable to sleep, owing to my pains and the jolting of the cars, which I imagined was off the track half of the time. Had the wheels been bouncing along on the ties, the jolting I verily believed could not have been very much worse. I thanked Heaven when the train finally stopped at Nashville, at daylight.

CHAPTER XLII.

NO FOOLIN' DIS TIME!

DISEMBARKING, Lewis and I went in search of a train on which we could proceed to Louisville, Kentucky, being anxious to get home. Everybody was rushing about in an excited manner, and when I stopped an old colored man and asked what was "going on," he looked at me incredulously for a moment, then said: "Don't yer no nothin' bout dis, mass'r? Why, whar's ye bin, chile. Why, Jiral Hood is comin' wid a big foace to captur dis citee, an he ain't far off, eider. Ebery man is gettin' reddy to fite now, mass'r. No foolin' dis time—no, sah!" And away he went.

Snow now began falling, and as we could not ascertain when any train would leave, we went to the "Suwawnee House" to rest awhile. Here we saw a poster forbidding any person to leave the city.

As this order applied to us, as well as to any others, it gave me additional worryment—just as if I had not enough trouble already! I was in no condition to assist in the defence of the place, and a thousand times since have I regretted this, as I should have liked to participate in the battle of Franklin, where Hood received such a handsome thrashing at the hands of brave and gallant Thomas.

Visiting the office of the provost-marshal I exhibited my "papers" to that official, who very kindly as well as properly, granted me a permit to leave the city and continue my journey. I lost no time in reaching the depot, but at what hour I left I have no means of knowing, being too sick to use my diary further. Somehow I got separated from Lewis in Nashville, and I did not run across him again till 1873, when hearing that he was living in Connecticut, I invited him to visit me at Cape May, which he did, for a week, when we drank many "bumpers" in dry Heidsieck.

I remember crossing a river at Louisville on a singular looking ferry-boat, and a weary ascent of a hill to the depot on the opposite side; and I likewise recollect stopping near the depot entrance to rest on a wooden settee, too much exhausted to continue on. And on recovering from a stupor, I remember two officers who sat there supporting me from falling, one of whom was engaged in bathing my fevered head with water. They spoke kindly to me, asking me many questions; although I plainly heard them, yet I was unable to answer. They finally examined

my "papers," which explained everything; then they were more devoted than before. One of the officers brought me some eatables and a cup of coffee, but I had no appetite, and could not eat. In obedience to my request, they brought me a "pickle," and on taking it in my hand my weak stomach turned against it.

These two officers, as I subsequently ascertained, were from the camp at Pittsburg, Pa., to which place they were returning, having recently brought down to the army a number of "recruits." The name of one of the officers I found, years afterwards, written in my diary. It was "M. B. Lynch, 1st Lieut, 183d Pennsylvania Vols., Camp Reynolds, near Pittsburg, Pa., No. 1310 South 7th Street, Philadelphia." On discovering the address, I wrote to Lieut. Lynch, but failed to receive an answer. The "guards" who accompanied them were a good set of boys. When the passenger train was about ready to start, my new-found friends raised me to my feet, and walking on either side, supported me by my arms until the gate was reached, where our farther advance was barred by the keeper thereof, who proclaimed that "no soldiers would be allowed on this train."

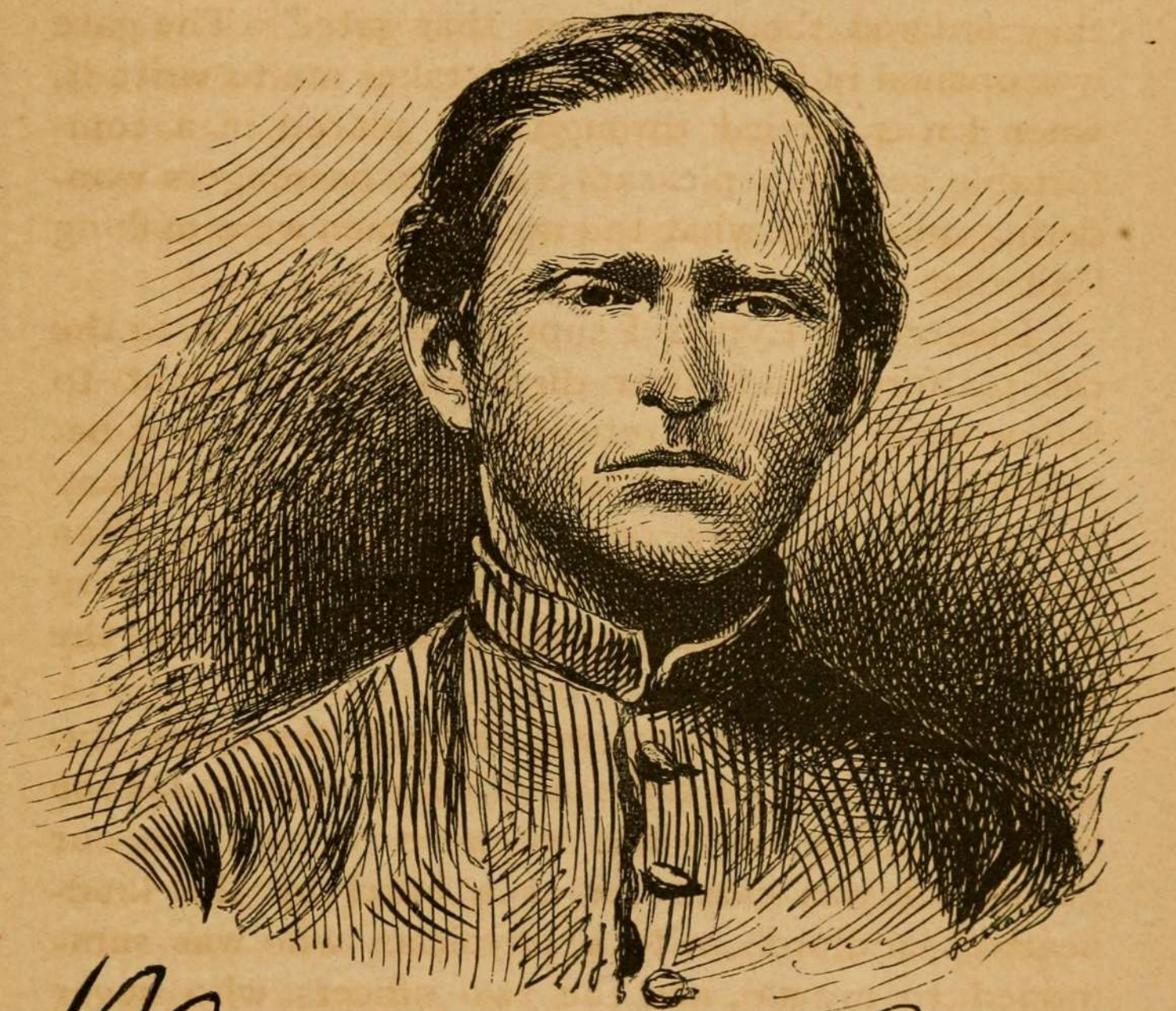
The conductor stood near, watch in hand, counting the moments, ready to give the signal for the train to start. He answered the hail of the officers, and drawing near was informed that I was a "sick officer, too feeble to ride in a freight train with them." The conductor couldn't "help it;" he had

his orders, and must obey. The two officers, in quite forcible language, said that I should ride on that train, and as a number of their men stood near, they ordered them to "open that gate." The gate was opened in less time than it takes me to write it, when I was carried through and placed in a comfortable seat in a pleasant car, the passengers wondering meantime what the railroad men were making "all that noise about."

Lieutenant Lynch, I suppose it was, went to the car platform, and after directing his sergeant to follow with his train, returned and took a seat beside me, saying he and his chum would accompany me as far as they could. My heart has often warmed towards those noble men, and the memory of their repeated kindnesses I shall carry to the grave.

During the evening we reached Seymour, Indiana, and changed cars; and while waiting for the train to arrive on which we were to continue our journey, I was cared for at a hotel by the kind-hearted landlord's wife, a physician who was summoned to my aid, and the two officers, who never left me for a moment, not even when I was napping. When ready to depart, the officers carried me (using my blanket as a stretcher) to the train.

I have an indistinct recollection of being in Cincinnati, through the streets of which I rode in a carriage, attended by the two officers, but at what point they left me I never could ascertain. It must have been Lieutenant Lynch who, just before leav-



William Estes

ing, gave me a five-dollar greenback, regretting he had no more to offer. I hope both he and his companion, whoever he may have been, have been abundantly blessed.

I remember, while riding in a train on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, before reaching Harper's Ferry, that a kind-hearted Virginian who lived in that section, invited me to stop at his station and accompany him home until I could recruit my wasted strength. I remember how he pleaded with me, and how other passengers joined with him, protesting against my going on until I was stronger. Home was the only place I now longed to see, and to my home I was determined to go, if only to drop dead at its threshold. I thanked the noble Virginian for his interest in my behalf, but declined to stop. I was glad, a few days afterwards, that I had continued on, for I read of a raid which the enemy's cavalry made in that very section. All along the route my fellow-passengers vied with each other in relieving my necessities, doing all in their power to make me comfortable.

I arrived in Washington about the middle of the day, exhausted in mind and body. Anxious, above all else, to get to my home in Trenton, N. J., I hastened up to the office of the adjutant-general. The doorman had the goodness (after I had stood half-dead against the wall for some time) to bring me a chair. In attempting to seat myself in it I fell to the floor, the chair rolling over, creating quite a racket. The noise brought an assistant adjutant-

general from an adjoining room in a hurry. He wanted to know what had occurred, and the door-man explained. I gave my papers to the adjutant-general, who looked them over two or three times, handling them in a nervous manner, and looking at me sharply, said, "The deuce!" Bidding me "be seated," he said, "You have had a long journey, and I suppose you would like to go to your home for awhile. I'll attend to your case at once." He then withdrew, reappearing, after a few minutes, returning my papers. His orders were that I should *return to my regiment within fifteen (15) days*, which proved that Republics were grateful indeed. I apprehend that my feelings at that moment were a little unkind towards the adjutant-general, for he had seen *me*, and he knew I was in no condition to go back to the army. I choked with anger, but restrained myself, for it would not do to tell the fellows who had a soft place in that office what I thought of them. They knew nothing about war and its vicissitudes, except what was told them; and yet a stranger entering the office would imagine the clerks there had the entire responsibility of the war, and that it would never end till they ended it. Drawing my blanket closely about my shoulders, I left the office, glad to get into the open air.

Having but a small amount of money in my possession, I wondered, on gaining the street, how I was to get to my home or to my regiment. I knew no one in Washington to whom I could apply for assistance. What, then, was I to do? Here I

was at the capital of the nation—an “officer and a gentleman,” sick and sore, without a friend and without money. I could not help contrasting my present position with that of a few weeks since, when, in the heart of great swamps, the poor negroes waded to me bearing supplies. There I was almost sure of assistance from the poorest of God’s creatures. Here in my own country, at the seat of the government I served, I was destitute. The adjutant-general could have given me an order for transportation, or he could have asked me if I needed *help*, but with his great cares of *red tape* resting on his mind, he forgot to do either.

I knew not what to do, or which way to turn my steps, but while walking along I noticed the office of the paymaster-general. It occurred to me that I could obtain a portion of my pay there, so I walked or staggered across the street, but found the lower door guarded by a cavalryman, armed with a drawn sabre. I stepped upon the large stone stoop, which he was pacing, when he gruffly said, “You can’t come in here!”

“I am an officer,” I responded, throwing back the blanket, and thus exposing to his view the *bars* on my blouse. He replied that it didn’t make any difference to him what I was. It was “after hours,” and no one could enter. That fellow, who had been serving his country all through the war on that stoop, wounded my feelings. So pushing him to one side, I rushed by him before he could recover himself, and ran up stairs, he all the time yelling, “halt!”

“halt!” On reaching the upper landing the guard tripped me, causing me to fall upon the floor, my head striking a door. He seized me and was shaking me roughly, when an old white-haired gentleman suddenly appeared in the hallway. He inquired the cause of the tumult, and the sentry told him the facts in the case, when he directed the guard to release me and return to his post, and invited me to follow him. The excitement and exertion in running up stairs had so much exhausted me, that I regained my breath with great difficulty. The old gentleman led me to a lounge near his desk, and inquired where I came from. I replied briefly, handing him the adjutant-general’s order, saying my greatest wish was to get money to pay my passage to my home.

He told me not to “worry about that,” as he would supply me with all that was necessary for the purpose. Then he made inquiries as to when I had last been paid. I replied that Major H. L. King had paid me in January, 1864, to December 1st, 1863.

“Major King,” exclaimed the old man, “why, the major was in this room but a few minutes ago, and I am now expecting his return. Now, if the major can recognize you, you will have no difficulty in getting all the money due you.”

This was good news, and true enough, in came the major. He failed to recognize me. And who could have recognized me as I then looked? Entering into conversation with the major, I reminded him of an incident which occurred while he was

paying my command on the steamship "Virginia," off Fortress Monroe, Va., in January, 1864.

"Oh, yes, General," said Major King, "I remember Drake very well. At the time he speaks of, he was in command of a company in the Ninth New Jersey, and unless his wife has drawn from this office, he has nearly a year's pay due him."

A general! what general was this? As I soon afterwards ascertained, he was the Paymaster-General of the United States Army. God bless him! He asked me if my wife had drawn any portion of my pay, to which I replied, "Not that I am aware of. I have never received a single word from her or from New Jersey since my capture." Turning to Major King, the general said:

"Well, Major, go over to the office, and make the necessary examination; and if all is right, give Drake a check in full to date, for he deserves it all." Taking me by the hand, he bade me "good bye, and a pleasant journey home."

I accompanied the genial major to another building, and entering a room, saw a large envelope post-stamped Trenton, N. J., lying upon a table. I recognized the handwriting of the superscription as that of my wife; and with my heart fluttering like an unwilling bird in a cage, I picked it up and handed it to the major. It was an acknowledgment from my wife that she had received "four hundred dollars from the pay department on account."

The major explained that wives of prisoners could draw the "pay proper" up to the date of the

last letter received from husbands. Then my wife had received some of my letters—that was certain. Even the few words contained in that business letter gave me pleasurable emotions, and relieved my mind of a great weight—a terrible anxiety. The major examined the rolls, and gave me a check for some eleven hundred dollars, for which I thanked him—then hastened to the depot, on the way to which I stopped at the office of the Christian commission, deposited the check, drew one hundred dollars in greenbacks, gave directions as to where the balance should be forwarded, and in half an hour afterwards was speeding over the iron rail towards Trenton.

Our train was due in Trenton at about three or four o'clock A. M., if I remember rightly, but an accident near Philadelphia delayed us for several hours.

CHAPTER XLIII.

HOME AGAIN!

THE train at length stopped at the depot, and the next moment I stood upon the platform. Nobody appeared to notice me as I staggered up the winding way. I saw several whom I knew, but did not feel like making myself known to them. Charles W. Jay, a custom-house officer, passed me, reading a Philadelphia paper. He raised his eyes to mine as I bumped up against him, then went on.

In a moment, however, he overtook me, and looking into my emaciated face, said, with some emotion, "Is this *you*, Drake?"

"Yes," I whispered, for I had no voice.

"Good God, what a sight! I have just been reading about your arrival in Knoxville, but I had no idea of meeting you so soon."

My old friend offered to procure a carriage, but as that would require some additional time I declined his offer. He accompanied me a short distance, then went on his way.

How wildly my heart beat as I came within sight of my home! Stretched across the sidewalk, from an upper window to a tree along the curb, was an American flag, bearing the words "Lincoln and Johnson." The window-blinds, from the basement to the upper floors, were closed tightly, which caused me some anxiety; but I continued on, and at last had my trembling hand upon the bell-pull. I heard the tinkling of the bell, but no answer came. Not a sound could I hear. I repeatedly pulled the bell-handle—still the summons was unheeded. I was about to turn away, when I heard a man shout at the top of his lungs; and looking down the street, I saw Mr. Charles Howell, whom I knew well, running towards me. His cry had alarmed the neighborhood, and people rushed to their doors, thinking a fire had broken out. Among others thus attracted to the street was my mother-in-law, Mrs. Taylor, who lived directly opposite.

I was assisted over to Captain Taylor's, where I

learned that my wife and boy were absent from the city—on a Thanksgiving visit to my parents in Elizabeth. I was now weaker than I had been at any previous time—the excitement and joy caused by being at home again being more than I could bear up under. It is needless for me to say, that my wife and boy—the latter three and a half years old—had a joyful reunion on their arrival from Elizabeth that evening, the joy of which will live in my memory as long as I have an existence.

I was at last with the loved ones, from whom, all through my dreary captivity, I had never heard one word, and who had begun to despair of seeing me again this side of that river which all of us must ford at the roll-call from above.

The news of my return to Trenton spread like wildfire, and during the day and evening hundreds called to congratulate me. Next day, Sunday, my house was literally besieged, not only by acquaintances, but also by many whom I did not know—all expressing pleasure at my return.

I need not tell with what animation I rehearsed the story of my sufferings and escape, nor how many friends cheered me by kindly offices. You can imagine it all; and if you have ever been in such peril as I had escaped, you will understand what I mean when I say that life seemed to me, in these first days of deliverance, like a resurrection, in which I stood with a crown upon my head and shining pathways, leading heavenward, stretching away in reaches of splendor before my weary feet.

For a week or two I was compelled to keep to a lounge, the skin having peeled off both my feet, the flesh cracking open and bleeding. Of course I did not lack for kind attention, for my family and the entire neighborhood did all in their power to alleviate my distress.

Dr. James B. Coleman and Dr. Richard R. Rogers, in daily attendance, availed themselves of all the appliances of science in treating me, as for several days they feared it would be necessary to amputate my feet to prevent mortification. But thanks to their attention and skill, under the blessing of Providence, this was finally deemed unnecessary. Among a score or more of ladies especially interested in my welfare and recovery, and who with the greatest kindness ministered to the restoration of my feet, were Mrs. William Lee and Mrs. Henry J. Bennett.

The press throughout the State and country published accounts of my escape, expressing the opinion that the tramp was the most remarkable on record. *Harper's Weekly* of January 14, 1865, contained nearly a page of my story.

Dr. Rogers, government examining surgeon, extended my leave till the first of January, 1865, when I set out to rejoin my regiment, at that time recuperating on Bogue Sound, North Carolina. On the train which I took at Trenton for Baltimore, I met my good friend, Captain Thomas Burnett, of New Brunswick, one of the best drilled men in the army. I was glad to meet with my comrade. My feet still

being quite sore and tender I was compelled to wear slippers during the trip. At Baltimore we took passage on the steamboat "Georgiana," for Fortress Monroe. About midnight, while all save those who navigated our steamer were buried in profound slumber, the schooner "John Walker," heavily freighted with oysters, in an hour of intense darkness ran violently against the steamer, crashing through ten of her state-rooms, and precipitating the ladies and gentlemen who occupied them, upon the decks below or into the tempestuous waves. Although the deck hands made heroic efforts to save them, eight lost their lives. Captain Burnett, with whom I was sleeping on a mattress on the floor of the main saloon, directed me to don my apparel, which I did in a hasty manner, and followed him outside. On reaching him, I found he had secured the gangway "bridge," quite a ponderous structure, and had it in a position to cast over the rocking vessel's side—each of us expecting the shattered vessel would speedily founder.

For a time a scene of the wildest confusion prevailed; but when Admiral Farragut, whom I had a pleasant chat with in the early part of the night, came down from his state-room, the fouling schooner was speedily cleared, and the "Georgiana" slowly continued her course—keeping close, however, to the Virginia shore, reaching her dock several hours behind her regular time.

I rejoined the Ninth at Carolina City, a few miles above Beaufort, where it had been ordered to camp

as a sanitary measure, the men being worn out with the great fatigues of the previous Summer's campaign in front of Petersburg and at Cold Harbor. Colonel James Stewart, jr., and his officers and men, gave me a cordial welcome, none of us retiring very early that night. Colonel Stewart (afterwards a brigadier-general) would not listen to my appeals for a discharge. On the contrary, he promoted me to a captaincy, begging me to remain with him, even though I should be unable to do active service. I received my commission as captain, but declined to be mustered, and yet I failed to get my discharge until the 11th day of April, 1865, when, the war being over, I returned to my home, the regiment following in July.

Colonel Stewart approved my application for a discharge as follows :

“ Respectfully approved. Lieutenant Drake was captured by the enemy May 16, 1864, but succeeded in effecting his escape in October. He marched 800 miles barefooted through the swamps and over the mountains, one of which (Blue Ridge) was covered with snow. His feet are frosted, and he is otherwise generally used up.

“ Lieutenant Drake is a most valuable officer, and I regret to lose his services ; but I do not think he will be fit for field-service for many months to come.

“ JAMES STEWART, JR.,

“ *Colonel Commanding 9th, N. J. V. V.*”

The regiment was *never engaged* with the enemy (except during my imprisonment in the South) unless I was with it, for it was a delight to me to share the dangers as well as the pleasures of my comrades.

Perhaps some will pardon me for saying that I was presented with a bronze medal by Congress (on the recommendation of General Stewart to General Ulysses S. Grant) for "*gallantry and bravery.*" The medal I shall take pleasure in transmitting to one of my sons.

APPENDIX.

I.

DOCUMENTARY VERIFICATION.

I HAVE read the MSS. of your forthcoming book with great interest. Although many years have elapsed, and that which was so vividly real to us then now seems like a dream, as I read your book I live over again the days of our prison life, and the long weary march through the enemy's country, and wonder how we lived through it all. Those who read your faithful portrayal of our "adventures by flood and field," will, I doubt not, wonder also.—J. E. LEWIS (formerly Captain 11th Conn. Vols.), *Banker, 74 Cedar Street, New York.*

Our journey, from near Charleston, S. C., to near Knoxville, Tenn., seems more like a dream than a reality. * * * I would like very much to meet yourself, Lewis, and Todd in Washington, or such other place as would be most convenient, and talk over that part of our history, for I think it was one of the most remarkable escapes, with its incidents, that has ever occurred.—CAPT. ALFRED GRANT, *19th Wisconsin Vols., Washington, D. C.*

Your leap from a train of cars, on which I also was an unwilling passenger, above Charleston, S. C., was a daring deed, while your long and dangerous journey through South Carolina, North Carolina, and East Tennessee, without guide or compass, is considered one of the most remarkable on record. The book will be thrillingly interesting.—CAPT. SETH B. RYDER, *Sheriff, Union County, N. J.*

A narrative of this description, from so gallant a soldier as yourself, cannot fail to be replete with valuable historical data, and many thrilling and interesting incidents. And as my battery was closely associated with your regiment (the fighting 9th New Jersey) in the late war, and as *I was an eye-witness of your desperate and wonderful leap for liberty from the train which was conveying us, as prisoners of war, from Charleston to Columbia, on that memorable afternoon of October 6, 1864, I shall wait with pleasure the day when the book will be placed in my hands.* Permit me, therefore, to congratulate you upon the opportunity you have of giving this treasure to the historian and student, and to wish the book a warm and hearty reception.—JAMES BELGER, *late Captain Battery F, 1st R. I. Artillery, and Chief Head-Clerk, New York Post Office.*

Your note with enclosed copy of your narrative is just received, and I will take an early day to read over the thrilling account of your wanderings while escaping from a rebel prison. Please accept my thanks for the note and narrative, and believe me, with great respect,
 your obedient servant, U. S. GRANT.

I am familiar with the many stirring incidents of your imprisonment and escape from the rebel prison-pens, and can bear testimony to the enthusiastic reception you met at the hands of your comrades upon your return to the regiment. A narrative vividly portraying your experience will be a valuable addition to the historical records of those days of the war.—LIEUT.-COL. SAMUEL HUFTY, *9th N. J. V. and Dep.-Com. of G. A. R. of N. J.*

The narrative of your capture, imprisonment, and escape during the civil war has been read by me with much interest. Being acquainted with your comrades, Captains Grant and Todd, I was particularly interested in your reference to them in your journal. I distinctly remember seeing you meet these gallant officers at Chicago, in 1868, for the first time after your escape from Southern prisons. It does seem right that the reminiscences of your personal history should be published in a more permanent shape than the columns of a daily newspaper, and I sincerely trust you will be able to give them to the public in book form.—BR. MAJ.-GEN. W. S. STRYKER, *Adjutant-General of New Jersey.*

* * * Your book revives the sad but glorious memories of the past, when with the old "Ninth" you and I were on the marches and in the battles together. Your example as a brave officer was a continual inspiration to us soldiers in the ranks, and I well remember that you never ordered a private soldier into any perilous position unless *you led the way*, and while sticking to the boys at Drury's Bluff you were captured. The consequences of your imprisonment in the vile rebel dens will be borne by you in your body to the grave.—EDMUND J. CLEVELAND, *late Private Co. K, 9th N. J. Vols., Elizabeth, N. J.*

I learn that you are about to publish in book form a narrative of your capture, imprisonment, and escape during the Rebellion. It is a period in the history of your army life, the description of which must prove vastly interesting, not only to your personal friends and comrades, but to all who retain any recollection of interest in the dangers and sufferings which our brave soldiers had to undergo during that eventful period. * * * If we except that part of the campaign of 1864 when you were in rebel hands, and the closing scenes of 1865, when, in consequence of your imprisonment and escape, you were physically incapacitated from being with us, *you were present with every movement* of the regiment, and by your valuable services helped make the proud reputation it enjoyed with our people, and still holds in the records of the State. I bespeak for the book the circulation which its merits must deserve, and which the deservings of the author entitle it to.—BRIG.-GEN. JAMES STEWART, JR., *Colonel 9th N. J. Vols., 131 N. Water Street, Philadelphia.*

* * The thrilling adventures that you passed through after escaping from the Confederate guards, appear like a romance, and all of our old comrades in arms should have the privilege of reading it. While it may be that I can add but little to your reputation as a soldier, still I wish to give my testimony, with other officers of our regiment, to your gallant conduct, soldierly bearing, and general efficiency during your four years of service with us; and I shall always cherish, with the liveliest feeling of pleasure, the fact that I have had the honor to be associated with yourself, and so many other good and brave men in helping to reëstablish the national authority.—LT.-COL. WILLIAM B. CURTIS, *9th N. J. V., Postmaster, Pennington, N. J.*

I have just received a copy of the *N. J. Journal* of Nov. 29th, announcing your arrival at Trenton. I heartily congratulate you upon your escape from rebeldom and safe arrival in God's country and to the bosom of your beloved family. I would be pleased to hear from you as soon as you have recovered from your fatigue.—GENL. C. A. HECKMAN, *Commanding 25th Corps, Army of the James.*

Your letter containing a brief account of your remarkable escape from Dixie, is at hand, and although I feel quite unwell, yet must write you. It affords us all unfeigned pleasure that you are out of the hands of the rebels, whose tender mercies are cruel, notwithstanding their pretensions to chivalry. During marches and in battles you endured much, but none of *us* have had your sad experience in rebeldom. If honor is due us, *you* have merited a double honor in your boldness to escape from rebel clutches, and in your perseverance shown in reaching our lines. We are glad you are safe at *home*, and hope before long to see you with us, ready once more to fight for the old flag—the emblem of nationality, and of power, too, in a sense never known before. Let me congratulate you on your escape, and on your being able once more to mingle with your friends.

* * * The services you performed before connecting yourself with the 9th N. J. Vols. are known throughout the State. Subsequent to that time, I can vouch for your faithfulness in duty and *downright pluck*. I will never forget the march to Goldsboro, under General Foster—the 9th having the advance. 160 miles and four battles in eleven days. Do you remember, upon return, of falling down in your tent unable to remove your shoes from blistered feet? * * * Wishing you every success, etc.—JON. TOWNLEY, JR., *Capt. 9th N. J. Vols.*

I am glad you have consented to publish your wonderful adventures in book form. Every one who admires heroic endurance, indomitable pluck, and loyalty to the "Good Old Flag," will be glad to read the work—for your "notes" surpass anything I ever read in novels.—W. HALSTED MELLACH, *Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.*

I am personally familiar with many of the places to which you make accurate reference in this volume. You have not only narrated

a most eventful and brave performance, but you have endowed a perfectly natural style with such indubitable honesty and candor of statement, that every one who reads two pages in your book will go right off to himself and read all the rest at once, in pure greed of pleasure. If our boys could read such books as this, dime novel fiction would cease, and the country would grow more heroes and fewer Indian-story vagabonds.—W. B. SMITH, ESQ., *New York City*.

Although I had made repeated attempts to obtain the post-office address of "Bill Estes," and others of my friends who aided me in the North Carolina mountains, yet I was never able to reach them until this year. Addressing a letter to the Postmaster at Lenoir, N. C., for information concerning my friends, I shortly afterwards received a letter from Mr. J. Mason Spainhour, giving me the desired information, for which I thank that gentleman. The following letters are in answer to those I first wrote, and they will fully explain themselves.—J. M. D.

GLENBURNIE, Caldwell Co., N. C., March 23, 1880.

Gen. J. MADISON DRAKE:

My Dear Sir—I received your letter a few days ago (which was very unexpected), and was very glad to hear from you. I would be glad indeed to see you, though I never expected to see you again.
* * * I am living in Mitchell County, my farm being about twenty miles from father's. When your letter reached mother, she was so glad that she sent a courier to me expressly to let me know about it.
* * * The names of the two women who were in the sugar-cane field when I first saw you, are Julia Setser and Sarah Teague, both of whom are still living near father's. You ask me if mother still has the gold ring you gave her. She says to tell you that she has it, and has always kept it sacred. Father and mother wish me to tell you that the rebels about broke them up in the time of the war, but we are about to recover at last.

There is no man I want to see more than you. I want to talk with you about the time you were with us. I remember the "old blue vest" you gave me. I want you to come down here next fall, without fail, and if you will give me a little warning, I will meet you at Icard Station (my nearest point to railroad) at any time. I shall look for you till you come. Yours truly,
JOSEPH ESTES.

COLLETTSVILLE, N. C., March 27, 1880.

Gen. J. MADISON DRAKE:

Dear Friend—Your letter is at hand. Never was I more pleased at the reception of a letter than yours. My dear friend, many years, with their trials, have passed since we parted near Greenville, Tenn. Our separation was caused by some rebel cavalry running upon us. I succeeded in getting away, and although disabled by rheumatism in my leg, finally got to my home. I am much pleased to hear of your preparing a book of your "tramp," etc. Would any of our names be of interest to you in writing your book? You are, dear sir, at liberty to use them therein. I would be glad to have a copy of it. Often have we talked of you, and wondered whatever became of you. Nothing would delight me more than to see you and have a long talk of the past. As my wife wants to see you as much as I do, she wants to write you a few lines in this, and I give way to her. Please write often. Very truly yours,

WILLIAM ESTES.

Gen. DRAKE:

Absent Friend—I have often wondered whatever became of you. I very well remember the Sabbath morning I brought you your breakfast, and of "wading the creek," also, the feather beds we brought you to sleep upon, but I hope I can give you a good bed to sleep on *in the house* when you come down. The ring you gave me I have yet, and will keep it as long as I live, as a memento of you. Your photograph I was pleased to see. It resembles you much, and reminds me of terrible times in the past. Write us as often as convenient. Very truly,

MRS. WILLIAM ESTES.

P. S.—The names of our children are as follows: Joseph, Henry, Theodore, Nancy, Caroline, and Cordelia. They are all living, and grown up.

II.

HISTORIC SUBSTANTIATION.

IN the history of "New Jersey and the Rebellion," written by Mr. John Y. Foster, occurs the following sketch :

"CAPTAIN J. MADISON DRAKE,

At the time the war broke out, was a citizen of Trenton, where he he had been for some years connected with journalism. He was among the first to enlist, and within three days after the fall of Sumter, recruited seventy-seven men. Being chosen captain, he declined the position, and served with the Third Regiment (three months' men) as color-bearer. Upon his return, he organized another company for the war, but troops not being at that time received, he returned to his business. When, however, the Ninth Regiment was formed, he joined it as a sergeant of Company K, in which position he served for eighteen months, when he was made Second Lieutenant of Company D, having meanwhile declined a captaincy in another regiment. After commanding Company D for a year, he was made First Lieutenant of Company K. In the battle of Drury's Bluff, May 16, 1864, he was captured while in the advance, and after being confined for some time in Libby Prison, was carried to Macon, Georgia, thence to Savannah, and thence to Charleston, suffering all the horrors which rebel malignity could inflict, but finally, in October, after wandering in the swamps and mountains, reaching the Union lines in safety. This gallant officer was warmly welcomed on his return—the story of his marvellous escape finding many listening ears. Colonel Stewart at once promoted him to a captaincy, but Drake's ill health prevented his muster in for another three years."

From the "History of New Jersey in the Rebellion."

On the 14th of January (1865), Lieutenant J. Madison Drake, who was captured at Drury's Bluff, Va., on the 16th of May, 1864, returned to the Regiment (Ninth), having effected his escape from the rebels by leaping from a train of cars while *in transitu* from Charleston

to Columbia, South Carolina, and marching some seven hundred or eight hundred miles, most of the distance *barefooted*, and without hat or suitable clothing.

This gallant officer was warmly welcomed on his return—the story of his marvellous escape finding many listening ears. Colonel Stewart at once promoted him to a captaincy, but the ill health of Lieutenant Drake prevented an acceptance of the position. The colonel, anxious of retaining his services, then kindly offered him an honorable position on his staff, but this was also necessarily declined, the lieutenant preferring his old position in the command.

Drake's escape was remarkable and romantic ; and with no shadow of the old peril on his face, he still lives to do battle for the principles for which he nobly suffered.

From Everts' History of the 9th N. J. V. Vols.

At the return of Lieutenant Drake to the regiment, he was offered a captaincy, or the appointment as quartermaster, if he wished to remain ; neither of which he could accept, because of *frozen feet* and general debility, contracted and produced in rebel prisons, on long marches and exposures of all kinds during his travels.

From Raum's History of Trenton, N. J.

The America Hose Company, No. 2, has in its house the first Union colors* that crossed the Long Bridge over the Potomac during the rebellion, and which were planted in Fort Runyon, Virginia. Company C, Third Regiment, was organized by J. Madison Drake, foreman of the America Hose Company, thirty-two members of which organization attached themselves to the Third Regiment within two hours after intelligence of the fall of Fort Sumter was received. Drake declined to lead the company to the war, but served faithfully as Ensign of the Third Regiment during the term of enlistment—three months. Lieutenant Franklin S. Mills (ex-Mayor of Trenton) asserts that Ensign Drake *unfurled the first flag on the enemy's soil*.

* In June, 1875, the America Hose Company, of Trenton, on their way to the Eastern States, stopped at Elizabeth, and marching to the residence of their old commander, presented these colors to him, thousands of people witnessing the ceremony. The colors were carried by Drake in the first campaign of the war.

III.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF CAPT. SETH B. RYDER,
BREVET MAJOR FIFTH NEW YORK VOL. CAVALRY.

CAPTAIN SETH B. RYDER, to whom I am indebted for many kindnesses during my captivity, who participated in my miseries, inspired me with hope, and who was on the train of cars from which I leaped, was born in Vermont, in 1830. His grandfather served his native land in the war of the Revolution, in Elisha Sheldon's famous legion. It was from his patriotic ancestor that young Ryder was imbued with love of country—from him that he first heard stories of camp and field, and from him that he received his first lessons in the art of war. At the time the rebellion flowered into hostilities, Ryder was engaged in the painting business in Albany, New York, whither his father had removed when Seth was a mere youth. Strong love of country having been inculcated in his breast by his venerable grandparent (long since gone to his reward), Ryder promptly made arrangements to enter the service. Love of adventure being strong in his nature, and with a view of seeing all in war there was to be seen, he speedily attached himself to the Fifth New York Cavalry (First Ira Harris Light Guard), and in September, 1861, was commissioned as a second lieutenant of Company D. In January, 1863, he was promoted to a captaincy, the honors of which position he bore as modestly as when a second lieutenant. I cannot attempt here to follow his brilliant career in every engagement in which the Fifth Cavalry took part, from the time of his maiden charge on Ashby's men in the Valley, to the battle of Russell's Ford, on Robertson River, October 10, 1863, where, after performing prodigies of valor, Captain Ryder was charged upon and captured by General Stuart's body-guard, and carried away to vile prison pens.

The day following the desperate engagement at Manassas Gap, in which Captain Ryder had distinguished himself by daring deeds, he was ordered off on an important and dangerous mission—his route being a long distance through a section of country then in the hands of the enemy. His thorough knowledge of the topography of the country gave him great confidence in his ability to outwit and escape any parties whom he might accidentally run across. But the best laid plans

of man "gang aft a'glee" and while galloping along at the base of a mountain, near Orleans, he was suddenly surrounded by a number of wild-looking horsemen, and without ceremony escorted back over the hill into the depth of the great woods. His captor, Lieutenant Weaver, treated the captain with the utmost consideration and kindness, and on learning that Ryder had once befriended his family, Lieutenant Weaver permitted him, after a captivity of three days, to rejoin the Union army, even going so far as to escort his guest most of the way.

After the battle of Gettysburg, where he greatly distinguished himself, Captain Ryder, in command of a battalion, actively assisted in the pursuit of Lee's army, and while thus engaged, found several hundred wagons belonging to the enemy, which he destroyed. A most enthusiastic soldier himself, Captain Ryder devoted his whole time and attention to his men, most of whom had grown up from boyhood with him. His great aim was to make his command efficient, and to this end he always *led* them in battle, and no men in the 5th responded more promptly or with greater courage to the noble example of their commander.

I will not dwell on Captain Ryder's captivity of eighteen months as a prisoner of war. His experience was quite similar to that of his sixteen hundred comrades, except that those around him were ever encouraged and benefitted by his cheerfulness of disposition and manliness of character. It is true his spirit was somewhat embittered because he could not share the perils and enjoy the triumphs of his companions in arms who continued to breast the iron storm of war.

Shortly after his muster out of the service—the war being over—Captain Ryder was induced to take up his residence in Elizabeth, N. J., where he resumed his old profession. His great intelligence, his correct business habits, and above all, his honesty, attracted to him a large share of trade, and every man who became acquainted with him also became his friend. Although he seldom attended political meetings, yet, in 1872, the Republicans of Union County, with a view of complimenting the veterans of the war, elected him Sheriff by the largest majority ever given to any candidate there. Captain Ryder served a term of three years, winning friends from all classes and conditions—then returned to the painting business. In 1878, the *people*, taking the matter out of the hands of the politicians, again

elected him Sheriff by a majority of some eight hundred—his election for a second term being without precedent.

Possessing in a marked degree noble traits of character, Captain Ryder wins the respect of all with whom he associates, and no other citizen of Union County has a larger circle of friends. Eminently generous and liberal, he never turns his back on a poor man, and his timely aid and wise counsels have saved many families from losing cherished homes. Numerous instances might be cited where the soldier's widow and her helpless offspring would have been turned from the threshold endeared to them by pleasant associations, but for his prompt efforts and liberal bounty in the day of adversity. While his charities, like the gentle showers of Spring, gave new life to persons ready to perish, he seemed to be surprised that such great results should be the fruits of what he was pleased to call his modest efforts. While Captain Ryder is noted for his unassuming deportment, few citizens exert so wide an influence in society. His genial qualities at once attract all with whom he comes in contact, the lowly and lofty alike admiring his gifts and graces. The man of culture appreciates the excellences of one so worthy of their regard, and the intelligent youth is decidedly happy when opportunity is afforded him to listen to incidents in the soldier's history, which, though narrated with great simplicity, affect him profoundly, and will be vivid pictures in his mind while life endures.

IV.

THE NINTH NEW JERSEY REGIMENT.

THIS command was recruited as a regiment of riflemen, under special authorization of the Secretary of War, the recruitment commencing in September, 1861. On the fourth of December it proceeded to Washington, nearly twelve hundred strong, creating a sensation as it marched through the streets of the capital. The Ninth was better armed, and more fully provided with ambulances, forges, etc., than any regiment which left New Jersey. The men had been recruited with great care, none but the strongest being accepted.

It formed an important part of the Burnside expedition, and won

undying fame by its heroism at Roanoke Island, Newbern, and Fort Macon, being the first regiment from New Jersey to engage in battle. During the summer of 1862, the Ninth overran the lower part of North Carolina, driving the enemy from its various positions along the coast, thus depriving the Confederates of a large supply of salt which had been manufactured at various points.

In December, 1862, the Ninth had the advance of Foster's corps, on the expedition to Goldsboro, which movement was intended to benefit Burnside in his advance across the Rappahannock. The Ninth, supported by Major James Belger's superb battery of Napoleons, drove the enemy back step by step, opening the battles at Deep Creek, Southwest Creek, Kingston, Whitehall, and Goldsboro, doing terrific fighting during five days. The railroad bridge at the latter place was set on fire by Corporal James W. Green and private Elias C. Winans, of Company K, despite the efforts of thousands of Confederates who labored to prevent its destruction, the act being one of the most daring on record.

In January, 1863, the Ninth went to South Carolina, with Foster's division, to join in the attack on Charleston. A portion of the command was disembarked in the Edisto river, and a reconnoissance made during the bombardment to which Fort Sumter was subjected by the monitors. Failing in their object, the iron-clad fleet moved back to Hilton Head, and a few days afterwards Heckman embarked his brigade for the old North State, going to the relief of Gen. Foster, who was besieged at Little Washington—glad to escape from the remorseless martinet, Hunter.

During the year 1863, the Ninth, brigaded with the 23rd, 25th, and 27th Massachusetts regiments, made harassing marches into the interior of North Carolina, doing infinite damage to the Confederacy, by cutting railroad connections, and by destroying cotton, tobacco, etc., raised for the support of the enemy. The regiment had many encounters with the Confederates, chief among which were the engagements at Deep Creek, Comfort, and Winton.

The year 1864, however, was the period which tried the mettle of the Ninth's war-worn veterans, most of whom had reënlisted for the *second term of three years*. The Ninth participated in the raid to Cherry Grove, and was among the first regiments to land on Bermuda Hundred in May. It had the extreme advance of the 10th and 18th

corps, and was the first to engage the enemy at Port Walthall, suffering severe loss.

The Ninth had no respite from fighting from the time it landed at Bermuda Hundred until late in the fall, when it was sent back to its old "stamping ground" in North Carolina, to recruit and recuperate. In the ten days' engagements preceding the desperate battle of Drury's Bluff, the Ninth was allotted the hardest part of the work, and its terrible losses attest the character of its labors.

In the sanguinary battle at the Bluff at an early hour on the morning of the 16th, the gallant Colonel Abram Zabriskie, with Captains Lawrence, Harris, and Carroll, were killed, Lieut. Col. James Stewart, Jr., and Captains Townley and Burnett, and Lieutenants Brown, Shepherd, and Hawk were wounded, while General Heckman and Lieutenants Peters and Drake were captured and taken to Richmond.

The Ninth did severe duty through the summer in the works fronting Petersburg, often rushing like an avalanche to the aid of other commands. It participated in the battle of Cold Harbor on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of June, fighting with desperate valor in the front line, to which it marched on landing at White House. On the 12th, the Ninth covered the withdrawal of Grant's army, which moved to take a new position. At the mine explosion, it acted as a reserve to the Ninth Corps.

The Ninth was before Petersburg sixty-four days, fighting forty days in the rifle-pits, from which it was dangerous to move owing to the contiguity of the enemy. In September, the regiment, under command of the gallant Stewart, was sent to North Carolina, where it remained until the close of the war. During the winter it was kept busy "raiding," engaging in no less than three fights during December—at Gardner's Bridge, Butler's Bridge, and Foster's Bridge.

In March, the Ninth led Schofield's host in its advance to Goldsboro, having a terrific encounter with the enemy at Southwest Creek, March 7th, at Wise's Fork, March 8th, 9th, and 10th, and capturing Goldsboro' March 21st—the Mayor surrendering the city to Colonel James Stewart, Jr., commanding the regiment and division. The Ninth's colors were quickly unfurled from the Court House, amid the cheers of the troops marching up the main street. Next day the advance of Sherman's army entered the city—the reunion of the two armies being a joyful event.

Foster's "History of New Jersey and the Rebellion" says: "New Jersey will ever be proud of the (Ninth) regiment, which thus, having helped to achieve a just and honorable peace, folded its standards and passed into history. Its story is the story of the war—its eulogy its own great deeds. During its term of service it participated in forty-two battles and engagements, and travelled by railroad and on foot a distance of seven thousand six hundred and fifty-two miles, making, while in North Carolina, some of the most remarkable marches on record. Entering the service with one thousand one hundred and forty-two men, and at various times strengthened by recruits, the mean strength of the regiment, when mustered out, was only six hundred men. Ten officers offered their lives as a sacrifice on the nation's altar, while twenty-three received wounds in battle, most of them of a serious nature. Sixty-one enlisted men were killed in battle, and four hundred wounded. Forty-three men died from wounds, and one hundred from disease. The total loss of the regiment, from all causes, was 1,646 men. The entire number of officers and men taken prisoners was about one hundred and thirty, forty-seven of this number dying while in the hands of the enemy."

THE END.

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