Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library

SEVEN MONTHS A PRISONER

SEVEN MONTHS A PRISONER

BY

J. V. HADLEY

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1898

TROW DIRECTORY
PRINTING AND BOOKBINDING COMPANY
NEW YORK

To

THE MEMORY OF

My Widowed Mother

WHO BORE THE CHIEF BURDEN OF SORROW

WHILE THE EVENTS CHRONICLED

HEREIN WERE PASSING

THIS VOLUME IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED

SEVEN MONTHS A PRISONER

I

A LITTLE before midnight on May 3, 1864, about one mile south of Culpeper, Va., we broke perhaps the most comfortable winter-quarters ever occupied by the Army of the Potomac. Man and officer felt, as he drew off the piece of shelter-tent which had formed the roof of his log hut, "Well, we've had a good time in these quarters, anyhow." And we had, too. We had had excellent rations, good clothing, and furloughs—three things as necessary to the good feeling of an army as discipline and victory are to its efficiency. Everyone, too, seemed to appreciate the magnitude of the work before him.

Grant was to lead us. Coming from the West flushed with victory, and flattered in his bold, stubborn methods, with his new and exalted rank he would hardly be less

aggressive in the East than he had been in the West, and the troops were determined to give him a support equal to anything he had had. For several days evidence had been multiplying that a new power was at work. Army-wagons in great numbers had been passing to and from the railroad station; muskets had been closely inspected and some exchanged; cartridge-boxes had been filled, and, to the great gratification of the men, a long column of heavy artillerymen from the fortifications about Washington and Baltimore, eight thousand of them, came marching to the front with muskets in their hands. The influence of Grant was seen upon every side.

These extraordinary preparations, together with a very suggestive order from General Meade, beginning: "Soldiers, you are again called upon to meet the enemy," was conclusive enough to the dullest mind that the coming campaign would be a hard and perilous one.

The army had perfect confidence in Grant, and in themselves. Although not so many victories were inscribed upon their banners, they never doubted but that they could fight as long and as well as the Western armies, if

led by the same genius, and not once did they believe that, when the much-hated Rapidan was again crossed, they would have to return, as they had done twice before.

The order to march was not unexpected, but it took an hour of busy bluster to make ready for the start. Certain transfers of property were to be made, extra rations drawn, the sick hunted up and sent back, surplus effects packed and sent to storage, tents taken down, and wagons loaded, but when midnight came Warren's Fifth Corps was ready to move.

The writer was serving upon the staff of General J. C. Rice, Second Brigade, Wadsworth's Division, Fifth Corps.

Lee's army at the time lay in winter quarters, its left (Longstreet) at Gordonsville, its centre (A. P. Hill) at Orange Court-house, and its right (Ewell) on the south bank of the Rapidan, immediately west of the Wilderness.

It was Grant's scheme to cross the Rapidan to the east of the Confederate army, pass through the Wilderness, turning Lee's right, and thus to draw him from his strongly entrenched position for battle, or force him to fall back to Richmond.

A little after midnight, May 4th, the Army of the Potomac moved in two columns—one, composed of Warren's and Sedgwick's Sixth Corps, in the order named, led by Wilson's Division of Cavalry, headed for Germania Ford, the other Hancock's Second Corps, led by Sheridan's Cavalry, for Ely's Ford, six miles farther down the river.

The night-march was made without incident or interruption. The freshness of the troops and animals and bracing night-air carried the column briskly on. We had reached the hills of Stevensburg when the great red sun came up over the eastern tree-tops and saluted the opening of one of the boldest campaigns of modern times. As far to the eastward or westward as the eye could reach was the moving column, winding up and over the hills, looking the very thing of life it was. There were sections of infantry in dark-blue, stepping in measured tread, with their battle-torn banners waving in the morning breeze. Interspersed were long teams of horses, with riders, dragging along the batteries, bouncing and rattling over the stones. There were also here and there groups of army-wagons, with covers white as

the driven snow, moving in unison with the monster upon its mission of death. At intervals streamed the pennants of general officers, accompanied by their personal staffs, each young man in lazy posture, dreaming of glory to come.

A cloudless sky let the morning sun fall upon the scene, bright as the "sun of Austerlitz." Its golden beams, reflected from the bright brass cannon and swaying muskets, from the unfolding leaflets of the trees and dew-kissed verdure of the fields, presented a scene of shimmering beauty, to inspire, to exhilarate, and to soften the heart of a mighty army in its march to the front.

As Grant rode along the column, the wave of lusty cheers that kept pace with his galloping steed gave unmistakable proof of the confidence and superb spirit of the men.

It was a grand start.

The head of the column reached Germania Ford at 7 A.M. Wilson already had two pontoon bridges laid, and had crossed to the Wilderness on the other side.

The Wilderness was a wild, sterile plateau along the south bank of the Rapidan, in

length from east to west about fifteen miles, and in breadth about ten miles. Its forests had long since been cut away for lumber and to furnish fuel for the iron furnaces in the neighborhood, and a new growth of dwarf-trees and brushwood had sprung up over the district, in many places for large areas, so dense and interlaced as to make penetration very slow and difficult. The Orange Turnpike to the north and the Orange Plank Road to the south crossed it from east to west about two miles apart.

A number of less important roads crossed it from north to south. Among the latter the Germania ran from the Ford of that name east of south for five miles and crossed the Orange Turnpike, and then continuing south about two miles in a more easterly direction crossed the Orange Plank Road.

Warren at once crossed on the pontoons and marched southward upon the Germania Road to its intersection with the Orange Turnpike, and there bivouacked for the night in the very heart of the Wilderness, having moved his entire corps more than twenty miles in fifteen hours.

As Lee was reported to be advancing upon both the Orange Turnpike and Orange

Plank Road, the camp was aroused at dawn next morning for coffee, and an hour later was under arms.

The morning of the fifth of May opened fair and balmy as its predecessor, but only straggling rays fell upon the army, concealed in its bivouac in the Wilderness. In our last five-mile march the evening before we saw not a clearing, nor citizen, nor human habitation, and at the intersection of the important highways, where we rested, not a sign of human settlement, past or present, could be seen except the old Wilderness tavern, situated on the turnpike a few hundred yards east of the crossing, that had been abandoned many years and was fast falling to decay. The place was apparently the last on earth that great modern armies would seek for battle. A few guns were heard early, three or four miles to the west and south, where the cavalry had found the van of the enemy.

Warren was directed to deploy and move out in force along the Orange Turnpike to meet Lee.

In the execution of this order, Wadsworth's Division, led by Rice's Brigade, took a country road in a southwesterly direction,

so narrow that the spreading branches of the bushes came near meeting overhead.

Having proceeded about a half-mile, the column was halted, faced to the west, and muskets loaded. General Rice then directed me to cover the brigade with skirmishers. This order was obeyed by detaching two companies of the Seventy-sixth and three companies of the Ninety-fifth New York, and advancing them deployed five hundred yards to the front. The division formed for battle with Rice on the left, Roy Stone in the centre, and Cutler on the right. At the time of the advance Rice had no support on the left, and his left flank was entirely unprotected, but later Getty's Division of the Sixth Corps came in, and took position on Rice's left, and Hancock's Second Corps, on the Orange Plank Road, connected with Getty's left.

Some time after I had reported to Rice that the skirmishers were in position and properly connected with those of Stone, perhaps 10 A.M., Warren rode up to Rice, who was lounging with his staff in the shade of a wide-spreading tree, and said: "General Rice, there is some uncertainty about the position of the enemy, and the character of the coun-

try prevents its accurate ascertainment, and you will therefore advance your skirmish line in connection with Stone's on your right, for a mile and a half, unless the enemy is found at shorter distance, and your skirmishers will hold all the ground covered till the line of battle gets up—you moving forward as soon as the firing begins."

Whereupon Rice turned at once to me and said, "Lieutenant, you will see that the orders of General Warren are carried out with regard to the skirmish line."

I replied by calling for my horse, and at the same time casting a significant glance at my friend and blanket-companion, Lieutenant Homer Chisman, who was lying at ease on the ground. He well knew that I had been in the saddle my full share that morning, and, divining my wishes, sprang to his feet with "General, with your permission, I will assist the Lieutenant in advancing the skirmishers."

"I shall be very glad if you will, sir," was the answer, and Chisman joined me before I reached the line.

The difficulties of the advance were very great on account of the interlacing trees and tangled underbrush. In many places it was

wholly out of the question to see twenty feet in advance, and many times Chisman and I were compelled to dismount and lead our horses. Our perplexity was increased by the impossibility of ascertaining how our progress and alignment harmonized with those upon our right. We crept slowly and cautiously along for a mile, making or hearing no sound louder than the cracking of a stick, when suddenly an owl in our front, not far away, went "hoot, hoot, hoot." "Hoot, hoot, hoot," went another off to the right, and we hurried along the line and told the boys to keep a sharp lookout. Two or three hundred yards farther on and the next signal was—a volley from Confederate muskets.

The skirmish was on. Whether we fired the first guns of that great campaign is no matter, but right here began the bloody Battle of the Wilderness.

A brisk firing at once opened along our entire front, and soon extended to Stone on our right. Charging and being charged, advancing and retiring, the immediate results were uncertain; but the net results were in our favor, for we pushed the enemy back a considerable distance and across a small clearing that lay in a narrow valley.

West of this valley the country, while not cleared, was open and free from underbrush. We halted upon the ridge on the east side of the valley, and exchanged shots with the Confederates, posted behind trees on the west side of the clearing. As we had no protection upon our left while the skirmishing was in progress, we sent fifty men of our line backward at an angle of about one hundred degrees with the front, to prevent a movement of the enemy to our rear.

It had been quite an hour since we started upon the advance, and about half that time since the firing began; but as yet we had no tidings from the line of battle that was to follow.

A desultory skirmish-firing continued far to the right, but no artillery or heavy musketry.

Chisman and I, unable to discover any Confederate force but their skirmish line, decided that we would charge across the clearing and try to gain the ridge on the other side of the little valley for further observation.

The charge was a determined one, but failed, being most stubbornly met by the enemy from his cover of trees and logs.

While in the clearing a bullet caught my horse in the fleshy part of the right rump and for a time made him unmanageable. He reared, plunged, and bolted down the valley at a dangerous speed, which I was able to check only after we had passed beyond the firing. When we got to the ridge on the east side of the valley I dismounted and carried my cap full of water from the brook in our near front and washed his wound, and this in a great measure subdued him.

Still the line of battle had not come, nor did any evidence appear that it ever would come. Soon after, however, Lieutenant Harry Mitchell, of our staff, arrived with information that the line was advancing as fsta as it could find its way through the bushes, but was bearing very much to the right, and with directions from Rice to hold our ground. Mitchell tarried but a moment and left us to return.

He had hardly passed out of sight when heavy musketry firing broke forth upon our right and considerably to our rear. As it continued its volume increased, and it was soon augmented with artillery farther north on the turnpike, until the whole woods resounded with the roar. And still there was no appear-

ance of the brigade that was to follow, and no appearance of a large force of the enemy in our front. Confused by the situation, I told Chisman that if he would remain with the skirmishers I would go in quest of the brigade.

Under a strong suspicion that our brigade was among the troops engaged, I headed my horse for the rear of the battle, and trotted off as fast as I could, dodging under the limbs and by the trees. After having gone perhaps five hundred yards, and when about to cross a rude wagon-way running east and west, I chanced to glance to my left; and there stood a man in the path, within thirty feet of me, with a musket hanging in his right hand. Not noticing him closely it occurred to me that here was a skulker from our skirmish line, and I addressed him sharply: "What are you doing back here, sir?" Whereupon he replied: "Are you a Yankee?"

A Confederate! Quick as thought I jerked my horse to the left, plunged both spurs into his sides, snatched my revolver from its holster, and in a twinkling was upon him. He threw his musket to his shoulder, but in his hurry failed to raise the hammer, and before

he could recover I dropped my revolver on his breast with a demand for his surrender. He dropped his gun, and I commanded him to double-quick to the rear. It was an intense moment. All manner of doubts and fears crowded upon me. I could not see fifty feet in any direction, except along the path. My distinct words with the stranger, my horse, my uniform were all tell-tales, and I thought I could hear as many rebels in the bushes as there were leaves upon the trees.

For the first hundred paces, as I hurried my man along, I wondered where the bullets might hit me in the back, and as they did not, or even come at all, I felt a sense of surprise.

My prisoner manifested great nervousness, as if he thought I would shoot him, and every few steps would look back at me with an appealing eye, until I assured him I would do him no harm if he would go as I directed.

At last he said: "My company captured one of your officers a few minutes ago."

"What sort of a looking man was he?" I inquired.

"He had on fine clothes, had a mustache, a red badge on his breast, and was riding a

roan horse." It was clear poor Mitchell had reported to the wrong man.

As we continued our course we met another line of skirmishers composed of Pennsylvania Buck Tails, leading Getty's Division to its position on Rice's left. We were within fifteen feet before we saw them, or they discovered us.

In a short interview with the officer in charge I turned over my prisoner and informed him that I had left a line of skirmishers fully a fourth of a mile farther out.

I now hurried along and rode in the rear of the nearest regiment engaged, which I found to be the One Hundred and Forty-seventh New York of our brigade. The battle was raging furiously. I met the wounded going back, some alone, others accompanied by more assistance than they needed. Four men carried a captain, and a fifth followed holding up his head. Colonel Miller had fallen, the Major had been carried back, and from the excited talk of the men it would seem that the entire regiment had been destroyed. Bullets were hissing and hitting everywhere. While I inquired for the General a bullet struck one of the party in the back, and he went down upon his face, dead.

The roll of musketry was incessant. Smoke was hovering in clouds among the trees, and it was only after a dozen efforts that I learned from a lieutenant that General Rice had lately gone up the line. Amid the din my horse was as wild as a ranger. I headed him into a slightly opened avenue and gave him rein, and he dashed frantically along through the timber, squatting and dodging at the sound of the bullets. While at full speed a ball struck him near my left leg. I saw him sink to his breast, saw his nose plough along the ground and double under his breast—and I saw or remembered no more.

Boardman, of the One Hundred and Forty-seventh, told me how it was. My horse was killed while at full speed in the rear of their regiment, and in falling threw me against a tree and then pitched headlong upon me. Soon after my misfortune our line of battle fell back, and in the movement the men freed me from the horse; but being unconscious and bleeding copiously from the mouth and nose, I was left upon the field as mortally wounded. Later in the day some of the same regiment, in passing the spot as prisoners, laid me upon a blanket and carried me to a Confederate field-hospital.

II

STANDING by the Orange Plank Road, at a point about four miles west of its intersection by the Germania Road, was an old wooden house called Parker's Store, built many years before in a clearing of three or four acres. It is known in history, not from its own importance but for the events that took place about it. All around it was the Wilderness. If Mr. Parker was a merchant and had customers, I can but wonder where they came from; for judging from appearances there were not a dozen families within as many miles radius. One large room, a broken counter, and some fragmentary shelving indicated the former character of the building. Business had been suspended and the place deserted many years, no doubt, for the floor was broken, much of the roof had fallen off, and here and there was a weather-board swinging by one end. Even the three or four acres that had once been subdued to the ploughshare had again yielded to the jack-oak and pine-bushes that were

making their encroachments to the very door-steps.

A small sluggish stream of water came out of the woods to the northwest, creeping over the roots and through the driftwood, and passed by a hundred yards to the east. At Parker's Store, on May 6, 1864, lay fifty Federal and one thousand Confederate soldiers, bleeding and dying. It was a Confederate field-hospital. Twenty wounded, mostly Federals, lay upon the floor of the old house wherever space could be found. All the others lay under the bushes and trees along the margins of the stream. All were too severely wounded to be transported farther South.

I awoke as if from sleep about 7 o'clock in the morning of the 6th, in the old house and tried but failed to get up. My left eye was entirely closed and I felt pain in my left breast and shoulder. I was evidently hurt, but knew not how or how much. The first thing that attracted my attention was a column of troops hurrying silently along the road. Their uniforms looked gray, but I thought the color might be due to my injured sight. I rubbed my eyes and tried it again, with the same result, and then turned upon my elbow

and looked around. Those immediately near had on blue, as also did a soldier bending over a prostrate form with a canteen.

"Soldier, come here. Am I a prisoner?"

"Yes," he replied.

I asked no more questions but lay back, and felt a little more willing to "give up the ghost" just then than I ever expect to be again. Mortally wounded as I felt, in the hands of the enemy, and denied the ministration of friends, with the thought that if I recovered I would be sent South in the hot season to some prison-pen, to starve or die of epidemic, I had absolutely no hope. What little life I seemed to have so painfully recoiled upon itself that I felt actual regret that the injuring force had not been a little stronger.

But I was not as seriously hurt as I thought. I had two broken ribs and a badly bruised head and shoulder, but it was the excessive loss of blood that made me feel so near the end. Had I been in a Federal hospital I should have been up in twenty-four hours, but mush and gruel and other compounds of corn-meal, and a bit of bacon daily, were three days in getting me upon my feet.

Though there were at least a dozen surgeons serving the wounded, it was late upon the second day before I received any attention whatever, and it was three days before my blood-stiffened garments could be taken off and washed. Even then I had no grounds for complaint, for the surgeons worked assiduously. The probe, the knife, and the saw were going day and night. A table, made of boards from the counter of the old house, stood by the brook in the shade of the sheltering trees, and had about it for several days the ghastly evidence of the work performed upon it.

Colonel Miller, of the One Hundred and Forty-seventh, lay within a few feet of me, with a bad breast-wound; and half a dozen other officers from our brigade variously wounded.

No guards were maintained at the hospital, only a picket and slight patrol. It was therefore apparent that strength and will were the only things necessary in order to escape.

Strength and a resolution to get away came hand in hand, and on the 15th I arranged with Lieutenant W. H. Shelton, of Battery D, First New York Artillery, for our flight.

Shelton was wounded in the knee. He was young and ambitious; had been but recently promoted, and the love of honor and for his battery were stronger than the fear of rebels, or of losing his leg by an eighty-mile tramp to Alexandria. He was the ablest Federal in the hospital, but I seriously doubted his physical ability to make the trip. He was determined to try, however, and we arranged to go at dark. During the day Shelton traded a jack-knife for a pone of corn-bread; Colonel Miller gave us a compass, and Lieutenant Hamilton a map of Virginia. I had nothing to give or trade. My sword, revolver, cap, knife, pocket-book, handkerchief, diary, even my tooth-brush, had all gone as booty to my captors.

When night came we received messages from our friends, said our adieus, and went off north into the woods.

There were no guards to give us trouble, and we bore to the east in the woods far enough to avoid the picket on the Plank Road. Assured that we had succeeded in this by the sight of a little fire the picket had burning by the roadside, we emerged from the timber to the Plank Road and set out in earnest. Shelton's wound was painful in

walking, and as a support he got a dry limb, which he used in poling himself along. Near the intersection of the Brock Road, where Hancock distinguished himself on May 6th, we found another field-hospital which we were enabled to avoid by the signal-fires. We continued eastward to the crossing of the Germania Road, and took the latter for Germania Ford, a distance of eleven miles from the starting-point.

At points the road was strewn with dead horses, and the noisome smell of decaying animals was constantly in our nostrils until we drew near the ford.

Our strength, stimulated by excitement and hope, lasted us wonderfully well. The farther and faster we went the smarter Shelton seemed to get. We captured a fire-fly and put it between the glass and face of our compass, to aid us in verifying the road. At about three o'clock in the morning we reached the river and sat down upon the bluff, one hundred yards from the ford, to wait for daylight to enable us to determine whether it was guarded.

Oh, that horrible May morning! Sick and sore, within the enemy's lines and probably within a hundred yards of his muskets,

the stillness of the night by this ill-omened river, the serious impressiveness of our situation made us cling together like two lost children, starting at every sound. To add to our horror, whippoorwills in countless numbers—whose song is said to be melodious, but which seemed to us on that night like the cries of so many devils—swept up and down that dismal river, screaming without ceasing their "Whippoorwill, whippoorwill, whippoorwill." Their discordant cries seemed very harbingers of evil.

As soon as it was light enough to distinguish an object on the other side, we pulled off our boots and crawled down to the ford. We listened for several minutes, but not a sign or sound of human being coming from the other side, we stepped into the water. At this moment we heard shouts behind us and saw a man beckoning and running after us.

Believing him to be an enemy we dashed through the shallow water to the other side, and, with boots in hand, ran for dear life over the hills and into the woods, entirely forgetting our disability.

Afterward we met this same man at Macon, Ga., himself a prisoner. He was Captain Bryant, of the Fifth New York Cavalry,

who was scouting the country with his company, and was on his way to the ford to post a picket while his company breakfasted and fed. If we had halted he would have safely conducted us to our lines.

Heretofore I had supported Shelton; now I shouted to him to wait. We continued to run for quite a mile, fearing pursuit, and took refuge in a bushy marsh between two hills. It was a favorable place to hide, being covered with a dense thicket, yet the spot where we rested was elevated and dry. It proved, however, to be in unpleasant proximity to a house, for we soon heard the murmuring of voices and laughing of children upon the hill.

We had not seen the house in the early morning and felt assured that its occupants had not seen us; but such nearness of human voices was very alarming.

It was too late, however, to look for a safer retreat, so we decided to make the best of what we had.

My exertions had reopened the wound in my breast, and I had a distressing hemorrhage. Shelton's knee also began to swell and pain him.

What seemed as hideous to us during the

day as the cry of the whippoorwills by night was the never-ending, never-varying croaking and chattering of the frogs.

They hopped about us and over us, and one ugly creature had the impudence to perch himself on my friend's back.

Two or three times snakes glided by us, shaking their tongues in our very faces, yet we felt that we dare not stir to destroy them. A dog, chasing a rabbit, ran upon us, stopped, stood, gazed — but, to his credit, turned away without barking.

All day long we heard the noises upon the hill and all day long we lay quiet. A cloud came up in the afternoon and poured torrents of rain down upon us for two hours. It saturated us from head to foot and the water even rose over our little island, but we took seats upon a log and held out until nightfall. Shelton's knee had swollen to twice its natural size and was feverish and painful; but after the rain he kept it constantly wet, which afforded some relief.

When evening came we left our hiding-place, and after a little rambling found and took the road for Kelly's Ford of the Rappahannock. The night was dark and the roads slippery and rough, but the increasing

hope of escape gave us strength to get along briskly.

Twice we met horsemen in the road, but by stepping to one side we eluded them. Once we met some citizens in a wagon, who had evidently been "picking up" in the Federal winter-quarters camps, and they were talking loud about Lee's successes as they drove within thirty feet of us.

Our aim for the night was to cross the Rappahannock at Kelly's Ford and reach Mrs. M's., a thirteen-mile journey, where I had previously placed a safe guard, and where I believed we should find some favor.

Several times I asked Shelton how he was getting along. "Oh, first rate," he always replied. But about midnight he began to hang heavier on my arm. I said nothing about it, thought nothing about it, for he had so often assured me that he was doing well that I had no doubt about it.

The hope of soon being over the Rappahannock, among trusty friends and in a country little infested with armed rebels, so completely occupied my mind that I could not think of the possibility of a calamity near at hand. Yet it came before morning and from a source little dreamed of.

"My knee is killing me. I can't go any farther," said Shelton about two o'clock in the morning.

We had travelled distance enough to have reached Kelly's Ford, but had taken the wrong road at the forks and were now three miles away.

After resting a half-hour on the wet ground we tried it again, but Shelton found it more difficult and painful to walk now than before. It seemed quite impossible to go at all, and in persisting in it he could see inevitable loss of limb. He gave up in despair. It was quite cold, and our clothing being yet wet, we decided to build a fire and remain by it till morning.

When daylight came we discovered a farm-house a short distance to the southwest with a column of smoke already ascending from the chimney. The surrounding country clearly showed the devastating touch of war. Though mostly farm lands not a fence was to be seen anywhere, not even about the houses and other farm-buildings.

We saw a woman chopping wood near the house, which encouraged us to believe that no man would be there, so we decided to go and throw ourselves upon the mercy

of the family. Having made our way by slow stages to the house, we found Mrs. Brandon, a widow, and her three daughters. Her only son was one of Jeb Stuart's troopers, and she was in sympathy with the South. We freely told her our whole story, who we were, how we were wounded, how captured, how we were trying to escape, and how much we needed her help.

Our Second Army Corps had left its winter-quarters in the neighborhood, partly on her farm, less than a month before, and her premises had been laid waste by it. Not a rail or valuable tree was left. The fields had all been cut by moving wagon-trains and drilling battalions; her domestic animals and fowls had been taken by marauding soldiers. Only her house and girls were left her.

Now we stood at her door asking help. While we talked, the memory of Yankee depredations and a woman's tender compassion struggled for the mastery within her. She recited her many wrongs in bitter terms, avowed they had nothing to eat but hard bread and salt meat abandoned by our soldiers when they left camp, and said she could not possibly keep us; but in the say-

ing it was manifest that that quality in a woman that cannot stand against human suffering was asserting itself. Ere long, without further word she opened the door and assisted us into the house.

Once there, the good woman set about ministering to our wants. Shelton's wound was tenderly dressed; then, after performing our morning toilet with a basin of clear water and a snowy-white towel, we sat down with the family to breakfast, to be regaled with a cup of genuine army-coffee.

After breakfast we were conducted to an upper half-story, consisting of one large unfinished room. In one corner a comfortable bed had been prepared for us, and in another was a pile of yellow corn, that afterward got us into trouble. Hanging to the rafters were bundles of medicinal roots, a large quantity of army-clothing picked up from our abandoned camps, and a variety of other domestic bric-à-brac.

Mrs. Brandon insisted upon sending for a neighboring physician, but we prevailed upon her not to do so by saying that all we needed was rest.

For four days we remained in that upper-room, a profound secret to everybody but the

family, though we had made no request that our presence be concealed. We were enjoined from coming below under any pretext. Our injuries received their attention several times each day. Their small variety of food, prepared in the daintiest forms, was regularly brought to us, and the girls would bring up story-books and read aloud for our entertainment during the long days.

Under these favorable conditions Shelton improved so rapidly that he thought he would be able to resume the journey.

But it was not to be so. About noon of the fifth day we were startled by the tramp of heavy boots up the stair, and a moment later a Confederate cavalryman stood upon the floor before us, quite as much astonished as we were. It was "Coot" Brandon, whose company had come within reach of home, and he had come upstairs for a feed of corn for his horse. Twice before since our arrival he had been at home, but his mother each time came up for his corn and kept him entirely ignorant of our presence.

His mother soon joined him upstairs, and after an introduction explained how she had undertaken to help us, how he might some day be in a like situation, how we were un-

able to perform any army service, and begged him not to report us to his officers. He promised her he would not, and after dinner came back upstairs with his mother and sisters, and we had several minutes of pleasant conversation.

The young man was very gracious in his manner, assured us of his friendship, commiserated our injuries, wished us success in our effort to escape, and in every way

> He was the mildest manner'd man
> That ever scuttled ship or cut a throat.

The very next morning he turned up again, this time with an officer, who exacted from us a parole not to leave the house for twenty-four hours, at the end of which time two men came with a led-horse to take us south.

The mother was much distressed at the bad faith of her son. She was so affected by it that at first she refused them admittance to the house, but when her protests proved of no avail, she proceeded to supply each of us, from her abundant "pick-ups" from our camps, with an overcoat, blanket, socks, extra shirt, and me a cap.

Shelton was assisted to mount the led-

horse, and with our supplies we bade adieu to our benefactress and started once more for the Rapidan.

I have never heard of Mrs. Brandon since that time, and probably never shall again, but I wish it to be remembered that, though a woman in sympathy with her State, despoiled of her property, and subjected to wrong and insult by Federal soldiers, yet her Christian charity was strong enough to rise above it all, and enable her, fervently, to do unto others as she would have others do unto her.

III

We were taken back across the Rapidan and toward Lee's army, which had by this time crawled near the North Anna. At Germania Ford a guard from the other side met us midway in the stream and demanded our boots. One fellow threatened to drown us if we did not pull them off before passing the river, and a second grasped Shelton by the foot and cried to his comrade:

"Dave, hold my hoss while I pull the boots off this d—d Yankee!"

But Dave wanted the boots too badly himself to co-operate, so the river was passed without the much-coveted treasure being secured by anyone. I do not blame them much for wanting Shelton's boots, for they were new, and an excellent pair, fine, high, and beautifully stitched, such as even Yankee soldiers would delight in pulling from the feet of Confederates, and just the kind every newly fledged lieutenant buys. Poor boy, he had scarcely worn his boots and straps a fortnight before his capture, and

to lose his first official clothes before they had lost their lustre was deplorable. He did not lose his boots here, however, but he lost what was worse—his straps and jacket. The lieutenant in command, a North Carolinian (and I am sorry I have forgotten his name), did not need the boots himself, and protected them, but the lustrous jacket suited him well for the summer's campaign, and with all complacency he stepped up with :

"Yank, pull off that 'ar coat. I want to try it on." Remonstrances were useless, so off it came, and in its stead went on a long-tailed, coarse, brown jean coat, which Shelton had on his back when he ran the gauntlet of the Confederate guard-line, in the October following.

I fared much better for the old, weather-beaten garments I had on were unenviable. This was the outpost of the enemy's videttes, and they were in communication with Lee's army, forty miles off—the posts standing about five miles apart. Here Shelton lost also his horse, and had to take it afoot to the next post. I managed to get along pretty well, but Shelton suffered great pain. His wound had been most painful for four or five days, and was still swollen; but I do not

remember his murmuring once, or asking any favor from the mounted guards.

We were reported to the next post, a receipt asked and given for two Yankees, and in fifteen minutes or less we were on the next five-mile stretch. By this time I was very much fatigued, my injuries were hurting me some; and had I not felt that it was "go and live, or stay and die," I certainly should have demanded some rest. But on we went without a halt, and I was as much spurred on by Shelton's pluck as by Confederate sabres.

He dragged along until endurance reached its limit, then without a complaint sat down in the road and said he could not walk any farther. The thoughtless guard tried to drive him with his sabre, and threatened to kill him if he did not move on.

As great as the impending danger seemed to be, as much as he suffered in body and mind, Shelton asked no respite, uttered no murmur nor requested any assistance or favor at the hands of his enemies. His fortitude was of a rare quality. After some parley the guard dismounted, put Shelton on the horse, and soon we were again under way.

On the way to the third post we were

taken across a part of the field of the Wilderness that had been fought twenty days before. It was dense forest on either side of the road, and we were informed that out of the vast number killed there, not a man or beast had been buried by either army. It was not enough that death should strike them low in battle. A devouring and relentless fire had swept over the field, burning the hair and garments from the dead and the hope of life from the wounded; and now, three weeks after, a thousand skeletons, in black, charred shrouds, with empty eye-sockets and glaring teeth, seemed to mock us and cry out, "We died in the flames!"

War has no conscience! The exigencies of battle are relentless. They hear no appeal from the suffering. On May 6th, while the Battle of the Wilderness raged, a fire was started in Hancock's front in the dry leaves that thickly covered the ground. The wind was against the Union side, and the flames, fanned by the winds, leaped and crackled through the jungle, sweeping the entire field between the lines, that had been fought over time and time again, and was strewn with the dead and wounded of both armies.

Rather than suspend hostilities to rescue

their own wounded from the fire, the Confederates, seeing their advantage, charged through the flames, at a moment when the Union troops were blinded and choked with the smoke, and thus temporarily carried from Hancock a position they had vainly striven for before.

Post No. 3 was a Confederate field-hospital a few miles south of the Wilderness battle-field. Here we were lodged for the night and shown the place where the old hero and patriot, General Wadsworth, had paid the price of his patriotism.

The hospital was near a little murky brook, with no shelter but the branches of the trees and no bedding but leaves. There were about four hundred wounded men grouped together there, among them twenty Federals, all badly wounded. Shelton's leg by this time was painful in the extreme, and I was suffering from pain and exhaustion, but was able to go to the brook for a canteen of water, and to dress my friend's wound. In the meantime, a negro in attendance had prepared us some mush, and after having eaten a liberal quantity—it was the first of anything we had eaten since leaving Mrs. Brandon's—we stretched ourselves together near

an old log, feeling the cords of friendship binding us even closer together, for we expected to be parted upon the following day.

That memorable night was full of unrest, for I expected to be driven farther south in the morning, a prisoner weak and suffering, and without even the presence of a Federal soldier to encourage me. This seemed enough, but, to add tenfold to my misery, my sleep was often broken by the moans or cries of the wounded, and the curses of the guards, or disturbed by alternate dreams of home and cruel jailors and horrid prison-pens. As much as I hated to see the dawn appear in the east that was to separate me from my friend, I could not wish to have it delayed.

Wakeful as we were, some rogue got Shelton's cap, and before he left they also got his boots. When we met again six weeks afterward at Macon, Ga., his embroidered cap was supplanted by an old greasy wool hat, his new jacket by one of brown jean, and his boots by a pair of sun-burned, sun-cracked, rusty brogans of the Southern Army pattern.

As Shelton was unable to move in the morning, when I had taken my allowance

of mush I said good-by, and resumed my march to Dixie. Feeble as I was, they marched me over eighteen miles before sundown, to Post No. 7, where I was receipted for by a Virginia captain, a rather clever fellow, who, at my request, kept me over night. I was weak when I sat down upon the grass; but after having drunk a cup of genuine coffee and eaten a piece of soft bread and cold ham, and taken a "few drops" of Virginia hospitality, I felt invigorated and talked an hour about the war. At eight o'clock I wrapped my blanket around me and slept soundly the entire night.

The next day I expected to reach Lee's head-quarters, and began to wonder how I should feel, or what I should see in that invincible Army of Northern Virginia that had been talked of so much since my capture. I was off again at 7 A.M., feeling better than on the day previous, and got along with more ease, for my guard was kind and let me rest frequently. About noon we reached Post No. 8, just after the relief had returned from picket. I do not know why I was moved along in such a hurry; but the officer in charge seemed determined that I should cover at once the remaining four miles to

the head-quarters of the army. The men had just fed their horses and were seating themselves for dinner when the officer, probably out of fear for his own haversack, called to one of his men to saddle his horse and report me to Colonel Richardson. This the man did not seem inclined to do until after dinner, and he was not at all polite in expressing himself. He swore he would not, and his officer swore he should.

To assist me in gaining the good graces of the soldier, I remarked to the officer that I was very tired, and should like mighty well to rest half an hour, while the guard cooked his dinner. But this did no good. His dignity rested upon his authority; he had commanded us to go, and go we should.

Sluggishly and sullenly the guard crawled into his saddle, persisting that he would not take me far, while he muttered to a companion near by:

"I 'low this d—d Yankee will try to escape when we come to them woods."

"Rack out here!" were his words—and I racked. "Faster"—and I quickened a little, all the time trying to appear as if I regarded his threats as mere jests, while in reality I was in the most abject terror.

This incident makes me smile now, but when it occurred there was anything but humor in it. Few know how I felt. The prisoner led to the place of execution and pardoned on the spot knows, and perhaps no other, for when I thought how angry he was, and how he might shoot me in the woods under pretence of my trying to escape, I had not whereon to hang a hope. My mind was as active as it was distressed. I thought of nearly everything, and decided that, if I were to escape his vengeance, I must flatter him into favor.

"That officer of yours must be a heartless dog to treat you as he did back there," I said. "If an officer in our army were to abuse and curse one of his men as he did you, he would be at work on the Dry Tortugas in less than a month."

"Yes," said he, "he is a d—d rascal who drove a few niggers around before the war, and now thinks he must drive soldiers around the same way. The first time we get into a fight I bet I'll stop his fun."

"From what I have heard of you rebs, I supposed you were all such men as he, cruel and cowardly to a prisoner, but, verily, he is the only one I have met since my capt-

ure who has not treated me like a gentleman. What regiment do you belong to?''

"First Virginia Cavalry."

"Ah, I have heard of your regiment before. You fought our cavalry at Kelly's Ford. I have heard our men say that yours was the only regiment of Southern cavalry they feared, and moreover, when one of our wounded soldiers was captured at Kelly's Ford, and some North Carolinians had robbed him, a party of the First Virginia came up and made them restore everything they had taken, and since then your regiment has been held in high esteem in our brigade."

Thus the conversation went on and I could soon see that I was getting a hold on him. Nearly three years in the army had taught me that the way to gain a soldier's esteem and awaken his pride was to speak of the gallantry of his command; or if you wish to awaken his wrath, speak of its cowardice.

I made a perfect conquest, as the reader will perceive when I add, that before we had gone two miles of our journey, or before we had passed those much dreaded woods, I was mounted upon the horse, with the guard walking at my side.

Tim Harden was by all odds the roughest-mannered Confederate I encountered, but he was a faithful exemplification of the old maxim: "The harder the hull, the sweeter the kernel." When I reached his heart I found it full of kindness.

We found Colonel Richardson about three o'clock in the afternoon, snugly at rest in a marquee, with half a dozen well-dressed Confederate officers about him. I was led among them, receipted for as one Yankee, and the guard dismissed.

Colonel Richardson, raising his spectacles and pen, asked:

"What is your name and rank, sir?"

"———. My rank is first lieutenant."

"To what command do you belong, sir?"

"To the staff of General Rice."

"Indeed! It occurs to me that we have already here a relic of General Rice's head-quarters. Bob, go and bring Yank here."

Now I was in a quandary. A relic of General Rice's head-quarters, and an order to "go bring Yank here!" Was it possible that I was so soon to meet some one of my old companions? It was to me a moment of hope and doubt. My heart would bound

and then fall back again, and the suspense would have been intense had it not been for the many questions hurled at me by the curious crowd. While I was in the midst of an explanation, up dashed the negro Bob on a horse I knew as well as I did my brother. He was a most beautiful animal when I last saw him, a dark bay, a round, up-headed, spirited fellow, and the sound of a drum or band made him as proud and perfect a picture as ever was Bucephalus or Selim. He was quite a pet about head-quarters for his gentleness and tricks, and was ridden and lost by my friend Lieutenant Chisman. He was much jaded, and looked thin now, and when I spoke to him and called him by name, "Frank," the poor animal looked at me so piteously, that I could hardly restrain a tear. He was caparisoned exactly as when I last saw him on the field of the Wilderness, with the same bridle, breast-straps, saddle-bags, and even the identical holster on the horn of the saddle.

I said, "Did you get anybody with that horse?"

"We did, sir; his rider," and turning to his books showed me the record. There it was, in a heavy hand: "Homer Chisman,

First Lieutenant, I. G. General Rice, May 6th."

It came to pass in this way: Soon after I left him on the skirmish line, to see the General, and perhaps before I was placed *hors de combat*, a Confederate line of battle charged him from the rear. They had passed, unperceived, around the left flank. With a thousand rebel bayonets in his rear, he made a more desperate assault upon the skirmishers in his front, and not only drove them back but went through them. Chisman, sticking to his horse, cried to the subordinate officers to "rally to the centre," but only about fifty out of the four hundred rallied, including seven officers. The rest were all captured on the spot by the enemy in the front or in the rear.

This party of fifty in the rear of the Confederate army began wandering through the forest seeking our lines. They had little idea of the direction, and less of the position of the armies. Two or three times, Chisman relates, they were within sight of the enemy's line of battle. Confederates seemed to be everywhere. They would go this way, that way, and the other way, and every time find in their front a force of the enemy. Night

came upon them still in their lost condition; but they made another effort to escape. A line of the enemy challenged them, and because they would not, or could not, answer satisfactorily, fired, killing two or three. After this they selected what they then thought a safe place and waited till daylight.

With the morning came the enemy on all sides. They had at last realized that a band of lost Yankees were wandering among them and had prepared for their capture. By this time, however, the number had been reduced to forty, and most of them had thrown away their guns. They stood close together, waiting for the command to surrender. There was a roar and a crash from two sides, and many of the little band fell. Chisman, with his own hand, gave Frank to the man who gave the horse to Colonel Richardson.

It may seem selfish to state that, much as I regretted the misfortune of my friend, I could not possibly feel sorry that it had happened. Misery loves company; so the first question I asked was, would I be sent to the same prison with Chisman, and being answered in the affirmative, I felt substantially better from that moment.

Here I found plenty of blue-coats. Hard by was a squad of about five hundred, and among them twelve officers. It was the general rendezvous of the army, and additions were being made almost every hour. I spent a couple of hours in conversation with Colonel Richardson upon politics and the war. From him I first heard, what I afterward found to be quite a popular opinion in the South, that a republican form of government is a failure, and cannot endure; and if they succeeded in the war, which they surely would, they would not continue six months a republic, but would make Lee dictator, until they could select a royal family by ballot. As preposterous as this thing seemed to a Northerner, this man, who evidently did some thinking of his own, spoke of it with great earnestness and faith. In the evening I went down where the other prisoners were herded together, and looked carefully among them for a familiar face. I looked long and thoroughly, but failed to find anyone whom I had ever seen before. But a "fellow-feeling makes us wondrous kind," and I sat down with those strangers with pleasure, until Colonel Richardson came down and invited me to his tent. Under the circumstances I went,

not that I enjoyed his company, but to avoid the Colonel's displeasure. I never could appreciate the bravery or good sense of a prisoner who would stubbornly and offensively hold out against those who had his life in their hands. For my part, I accepted the situation and paid tribute to Cæsar. Nor did I lose anything by it that evening. Richardson sat me in the circle around his supper and offered me his canteen first. We freely discussed battles that had been fought, the merits of Grant as a commander, etc., but not a question was asked me concerning the strength of our army, or of Grant's plan of campaign. I should not have given him information upon these points, even if I had been able; this he knew, and his omission to ask for it was magnanimous.

It was here I saw the great chieftain, Robert E. Lee, a number of times. While we were eating, an elderly man, in plain gray dress, with a single orderly, came riding by on a poor, iron-gray horse.

"There goes the modern Napoleon," said one of the company, and he proceeded to tell how, at Spottsylvania, a few days before, he personally led a desperate but successful charge that had twice failed. And

for an hour these young officers continued to recite to me the merits of their intrepid leader. They readily accorded to him every creditable performance of the Army of Northern Virginia.

Incidents of his crafty manœuvre, heroism in battle, and tender regard for his troops were reeled off by the dozen with an enthusiasm that was truly admirable. Their devotion was pathetic, and so it was with his entire army, as far as my observation went.

Understanding this deep reverence for Lee by his army, and by it imparted to the South generally, the measure of his responsibility for a continuance of the war appears very great.

Perhaps no other fifty men did so much in holding up the Confederacy until 1865. Correspondingly, on the other hand, more widows and orphans should carry their tears and sighs to his door than to any fifty others; for had Lee—who in 1861 was and had been for more than thirty years an officer in the Federal army—taken sides with the Union, the *cause* would have been *lost* in 1862, and 200,000 loyal lives saved.

We left Lee's head-quarters for Gordons-

ville, five hundred of us, escorted by a squadron of Virginia cavalry. A day and a half's march brought us to the town, where we remained overnight and until nearly noon the next day.

In the meantime we received the attention of an interesting lame major, who bore the title of Provost Marshal. He was an exquisite gentleman. His long hair, generously lubricated with bear's-oil, rolled under at the bottom, and on his Prince Albert coat he had more gold lace than Lee and all his corps commanders. His was the painful duty of examining our pockets. We were called one by one into a small room, and while two brave guards with fixed bayonets stood over us the lame Major with superb politeness requested us to disgorge upon the table.

When this was not performed to the satisfaction of his grace it was suggested that one of the guards might assist us.

With the help of the guard we removed our boots and outer garments to be further inspected by the elegant Major. He claimed to take nothing but what the government furnished. In practice, his rule was to take from the enlisted man every woollen blanket

and whatever other property he wanted. From the officers he wanted money and maps; the one would bribe guards, the other facilitate an escape. The ivory-handled tooth-brush of Lieutenant Brown, a heavy artilleryman, was especially pleasing to the Major, and he threw it into his curiosity collection; so also was the silver tobacco-box of Captain Mahon; it would make a nice souvenir and was therefore confiscated.

At Gordonsville we took a lesson in starvation. We had had nothing to eat since leaving Lee's army, thirty-six hours before; and many as were the promises of rations when we got to Gordonsville, we lay around all the afternoon and until nine o'clock at night before they came. They were as follows: one pint of unsifted corn-meal measured by the sack, and two ounces of bacon to each man. Not a skillet or a pot to cook in, and not a splinter of wood to cook with. We were all hungry, very hungry; but our appetites were not generally sharp enough to take the raw, unsifted meal. Some of the men humorously insisted that the meal itself was good enough, but that to eat it without cooking was unpatriotic. Most of it was put in our pockets, and with our ration of meat in our

mouths to encourage our stomachs, we lay down to sleep.

Next morning we got nothing more to eat. Wood was promised every ten minutes, but failed to come. The men were inclined to make the best of it, however. I only remember one old Irishman, from a West Virginia regiment, who murmured a little for his dear wife's sake—"She would be so troubled if she knew how hungry he was." Much of the forenoon was spent in joking and talking about rich diets; but toward mid-day I noticed that a good many had been wrought up to the taking of a little of the uncooked meal.

At 12 M. we were put upon some open cars and started off for Lynchburg.

Nestling at the foot of the Blue Ridge, among spouting springs and countless shade-trees, Lynchburg looked alluring enough as we rode up. The many steeples, stretching high their heads from among the trees, as if to look over the mountains; the historic James, at this point scarcely more than a brook, the undulating streets, the antiquated architecture, and the few signs of war, created in us emotions quite hostile to the facts in our case. From the signs of freedom and

comfort all about, it was hard to believe that we were prisoners. Here the officers, fourteen of us, and the men were separated—the men taken to the Fair Ground, we to the lock-up. The latter place was a miserable den in the upper story of a solid brick block, with its north end facing the street. It had been fitted and used since the war to confine not only criminals against the State, but deserters from the army, and at this time we found in it every manner of men. They lodged us in an apartment 20 by 35 feet, with but two small single-sashed barred windows in the south end, that overlooked the sinks and back-yards of the street. To make the room as dark and dismal as possible, they had made a temporary board partition across the north end, thus cutting off a little room and shutting out the light and air from that direction. There were in the same room (in addition to our number) sixteen others, of a mongrel tribe of criminals, some of whom probably had not had a bath or clean clothes or a lungful of fresh air for twelve months. As a matter of course, they were all covered with vermin—so was the room. These wretches were never taken out for any purpose. Everything they received

was brought in to them, and a row of halves of whiskey-barrels was set along the blind end of the room, to breed death among them. The place reminded me of the horrors of the famous Black Hole of Calcutta, and the inmates were as dreadful as lepers. There was no light or ventilation save what little came through the narrow windows on the south, no stool or bench, and the floor was so covered with leakage from the barrels that we could neither lie nor sit down without getting befouled. To lie in the filth was most revolting to us, and we kept astir until our legs became swollen. As we took the polluted, fetid atmosphere into our lungs, it seemed like breathing the very shafts of death. We would crowd around the little apertures in the south end for fresh air, but upon the approach of a rancid criminal, disperse as if he were a scorpion. They kept us three days in this place.

While there the nearest I came to a pleasurable moment was when, reading the names upon the wall near one of the little windows, my eyes caught those of Chisman, Mitchell, Gill, Kellogg, and a half-dozen other friends from our brigade and division. I well-nigh shouted for joy when I saw them, and

thought that I was upon the same road, and would probably meet them within a few days.

Danville was our next point. This was a pleasant country-town of three thousand inhabitants, and had the signs of opulence. Three large cotton factories stood within a hundred yards of each other, and the massive piles of brick, as residences, told of a better past than present for Danville. We kindled no curiosity by our entry into the place. The cotton-factories had been prison-pens ever since the war began. Disarmed Yankees were common, and as we marched up-town in the middle of the street, five hundred of us, not a man turned to look at us curiously. We were locked up in one of the factories and fed.

At this point our guards were changed, for it was the dividing-line of departments, and we were transferred from the Department of Virginia to that of North Carolina. We gained nothing by the change, though; they had both been too long engaged in the business of guarding prisoners to find any novelty in it, or any occasion for special kindness or the cultivation of placid tempers.

Two days later we were again on the cars,

billed for Macon, Ga., the general rendezvous for Federal officers who were prisoners of war, while the enlisted men were bound for Andersonville.

Upon our arrival at Jamestown, N. C. (where our train stopped a few minutes on the switch until another train should pass), I was sitting in the back end of a box-car when someone came to the door and asked if there were any Indianians aboard. Someone answered affirmatively, and turning to me, said that a gentleman wanted to see me at the door. Guilford County and Jamestown are household words in many families of my county, and to me they were as familiar as the name of my own native village. Their close relation with many families in Indiana, and the many friends residing there, had given the place some reputation for Union men. This reflection awakened in me the thought that I might find a friend, so I went to the door.

A man in gray, with some lace about the neck, and a sinister look, softly accosted me :

"Are you from Indiana?"

"I am, sir."

"What part?"

"Hendricks County."

"Ah! why, it is from there I had hoped to find a man. And what part of Hendricks County?"

"Plainfield, sir."

"And your name?"

I gave it to him.

"Is it possible! Why, I've eaten at your mother's house a dozen times."

Surely, thought I, I am in luck. If the fellow has accepted my mother's hospitality he certainly will not deny the same to me, even under these circumstances.

He hurriedly asked me questions about families in Hendricks County, but more particularly about one that had held considerable property in North Carolina before the war.

"Are the boys in the Yankee army?" he asked me a half-dozen times in as many minutes.

"Now, wasn't Taylor in the Six Months', or the Ninety Days' Service, or the Thirty Days' Service?"

A little suspicious from the frequency of his questions, I asked him why he was so much concerned.

"Oh," said he, "I just wanted to know."

"Well," said I, "if Taylor was in the army, what would be the consequence?"

"Why, sir, I would confiscate his estate before night; that is what the consequence would be. We've already thrown Z.'s into the public crip, and the moment Taylor enters the Yankee army, his goes, too."

He not only had a mean object in view in questioning me, but tried to take the questionable advantage of leading me into familiarity by speaking of my mother's hospitality, which, by the way, I am glad to state, was all a fabrication.

On we went, via Salisbury, Charlotte, and Augusta. At the latter place we saw more signs of loyalty than we had before seen in the South. Here a family from New Jersey met us at the depot, where we stopped for an hour, and, with a few others, exerted themselves to relieve our hunger. They handed into the car in which I rode white bread, ham sandwiches, boiled eggs, and most delicious dewberry pies, without objection from our guards.

We arrived at Macon about the 10th of June. Upon entering the suburbs of the town the train stopped and put off the officers, then moved off to Andersonville with the

enlisted men. To the left of the railroad, about three or four hundred yards, an ominous inclosure at once attracted our attention. The fence, or wall, raised sixteen feet high, constructed closely of heavy upright boards, and surmounted by a causeway, had armed men at every twenty paces, sluggishly walking to and fro. Just before us was the gate, spanned from post to post by a broad, towering arch, showing on its curve, in huge black letters — black as the principle that wrote them there — "Camp Oglethorpe." This gate, though of wood, was a ponderous affair, and had already creaked behind thirteen hundred Federal officers, prisoners of war. Without command we started for the pen, for we knew it was our present destination, and that we would be driven if we did not go voluntarily; besides, notwithstanding it was a lock-up, we were right anxious to get inside, as well to see our friends we expected would be there as to get rid of such immediate contact with our guards. We were conducted first to the office of the prison, which stood but a few feet from the gate, and there halted and detained until preparations could be made within for another examination. It seems

clear to me that during the last years of the war the Confederates were determined that no prisoner should retain any valuable thing; not even his life, if they could devise some reasonable justification for taking it.

As thoroughly as they stripped us at Gordonsville, we were yet to be subjected to a more severe scrutiny at Macon. At Gordonsville, after search, we were permitted to go back into our company, and by slipping them from one to the other, managed to save a few things; but at Macon, as fast as robbed, we were sent into the prison.

Everything being ready, we were called inside by turns. They even required us to strip off our vests and trousers, and so ravenous were they for greenbacks, that every seam and double of our garments was examined with the greatest care. The few dollars that had been concealed up to this point were turned out here, for which the man in the sash executed and delivered a receipt with the utmost suavity. These receipts were too much of a mockery for Captain Todd, of the Eighth New Jersey, who at once tore his up in the face of the giver.

As we were examined and recorded, we passed through the gate. Captain Eagan and

Lieutenant Brown were the first to enter. And now followed something that I could not then understand. I should have had less trouble in the world if I had.

Immediately after the big gate slammed, some one inside shouted at the top of his voice, "F-r-e-s-h fish! F-r-e-s-h fish!" which was caught up all over the pen and re-echoed by many voices. "F-r-e-s-h fish! F-r-e-s-h fish!" resounded within until we could hear what seemed to be, and what really was, a thousand men rushing headlong to the gate, shouting those mysterious words. I, for one, did not like to hear it. It sounded like a very queer way to receive a friend in distress; so I decided that I would no longer fret to get inside.

"What does all that confusion in there mean, guard?" said a young Lieutenant at my side.

"Why, those are the old Libbyites, who have become so demoralized and starved that they kill and eat every fresh man that is put among them," replied the guard, earnestly.

"No, they don't!" exclaimed my friend.

"I'll be d—d if they don't," emphatically retorted the guard.

What we could hear from the inside was

by no means calculated to contradict this assertion. Such ejaculations as "Don't kill him;" "don't cut his throat with that case-knife;" "oh, let him say his prayers;" "oh, men, have some mercy—let his blanket alone;" "don't take his coat;" "his boots are mine;" "his haversack is mine;" "louder;" "put him on a stump," etc., etc., resounded in our ears. We had less faith in going into that den than Daniel had in going into the lions'.

But our turn came, and with it we thought our end. Lieutenant Smith Culver and myself were led to the gate together. We looked volumes at each other as the guard pounded the boards with the butt of his gun. The bolt glided back, the hinges creaked, the gate swung open, and then—there appeared before us a sea of ghostly, grizzly, dirty, haggard faces, staring and swaying this way and that. As we stepped in the noise of the crowd within hushed. We were frightened out of our wits. In we went, the writer in the rear. The dead-line was passed, and, sooner than I can tell it, my comrade was swallowed up in the chaotic mass. Something like a thunderbolt came down upon my shoulder, my blanket was

snatched away, I was seized by the arm, jerked head-long to one side, and somebody in a low voice, that I recognized, said: "For God's sake, follow me!" I did the best I could. He ran like a scared deer, and I like his shadow, skirting the crowd, across the pen, through the barracks, over bunks we went until we reached the centre of the prison, when, half-crazy, I exclaimed:

"Chiz, what's the matter?"

"Nothing, if you will follow me."

I followed into an old building on the east side of the prison, and sitting down with my boon companion, Chisman, upon the sill, he told me how it was. It all grew out of a mania for news. No newspapers were allowed inside the prison, and no letters containing army news. The starving of the mind is as maddening as the starving of the body. Those who have never been prisoners will little appreciate it. Penned up in the middle of the enemy's country, active operations going on in the armies, victories being won or lost, the rebellion failing or gaining, friends being killed or promoted; there was not a letter or newspaper, not a sentence or a syllable, to give the tidings. The anxiety for news was almost distracting

at times, for the dearth was not of a day, nor a week, but of a month. The only reliable information that came to the prison at all was brought there by the recent captures, and it is for this reason alone that such commotion arose among them when a new man arrived. The phrase "fresh fish" was a distinctive term used to distinguish the new prisoners from the Libbyites who were called "salt fish." The cry was always raised whenever there was a new arrival, and then everybody ran to see who it was, and hear the news. The crowding was beyond description. As many as could possibly hear a word, would edge themselves about the speaker, and those who could not hear, being vexed and mischievous, would sing out such remarks as the above to scare the fellow and make him remember his initiation into prison. I have often, too, seen men gather themselves, a dozen or two together, a few steps from one of these knots of listeners, and in concert go against them with a rush—suddenly shoving them, many times getting the object of interest under foot, and sometimes hurt. They would also lift him to a stump near the gate and demand a speech, and a hundred ply him with

questions without giving him the slightest chance to answer any.

The first day in such a prison is the hardest of one's life.

Chisman, hearing from those of my party, who went in first, that I was expected, took position at the gate and saved me much of the ordeal required of the others.

As a substitute for news all sorts of wild rumors were going about the prison: generally started by the guards for their own amusement. To illustrate: The prison authorities, to keep the guard upon the wall awake and watchful, required that the hours of the night should be cried by each one in consecutive order. Thus, at ten o'clock the cry would begin—"Post number one—ten o'clock, and a-l-l's well." "Post number two—ten o'clock, and a-l-l's well." "Post number three—ten o'clock, and a-l-l's well" and so on around the entire line. The guards upon the wall were without shelter.

Upon a certain night in July, when Sherman was known to be operating about Atlanta, and during a heavy rain that had been pouring down for an hour, eleven o'clock was announced by post number one crying out—"Post number one—eleven o'clock, and

a-l-l's well.'' When the cry reached number five he sang out—'' Post number five—eleven o'clock—Sherman's got Atlanta, and I'm w-e-t as hell ! ''

So groundless an announcement was taken up, and in five minutes the hum of voices was heard all over the camp discussing the trustworthiness of the news.

Among the thirteen hundred prisoners I found many friends—three of whom were from my own county. These last were all '' salt fish,'' having been prisoners about two years, most of the time in Libby.

If Captain Milton Russell's wife had seen her husband's long hair and beard, which, probably, had been untouched for two years, standing or hanging poetically about his head and face, the ends, from the direct rays of a southern sun, colored like the surface of a black sheep's wool in June ; his skin, from cooking in the sun and over pine-knots, the complexion of a smoked ham ; his trousers and jacket composed of three qualities of cloth, viz., army blanket, Yankee blue, and Confederate gray ; his hat wholly of Yankee overcoating ; his shoes, ditto ; strolling among the prisoners, begging for a chew or a pipeful of tobacco—she would, in my opin-

ion, have had scruples about her matrimonial judgment. She would, however, have felt better toward him had she known of but half the times he spoke of her and Sella.

There, too, was Lieutenant Thomas Dooley. He had been a prisoner long enough to grow a little demure, and was big enough to get the lion's share of food; for his physical state contradicted the old starvation story of Libby. He was dressed, however, more like a clown than a Federal officer.

Lieutenant Adair looked by odds the most forlorn of the three. His health had been bad, his patience worse, and had it not been for the encouragement of friends, he doubtless would have "gone to his rest" in the South.

I also found, besides Chisman and Mitchell, the "man on the roan horse," many other acquaintances from the Army of the Potomac. They all seemed glad to see me.

The prison at Macon was as comfortable as any I was in. It was situated south of the city, on a sandy inclined plain which had formerly been used as a county-fair ground and a small stream of water ran through the west end. There were probably three acres inclosed, and in the centre stood a large one-

story frame building, formerly the floral hall of the fair, but now the bedroom of two hundred men. We had shelter for the most part here, and some boards were given us for bunks. The water we never complained of, nor the wood, for they were reasonably plenty and reasonably good.

Our rations were claimed by the Confederates to be the same as those issued to their soldiers in the field, but if they were it is hard to understand how their army was sustained by them. They consisted, per man, of one pint of unsifted corn-meal a day, four ounces of bacon twice a week, and enough peas for two soup-dinners per week. This was all, and no means were furnished us to save or cook even this. From five to seven days' rations were issued at a time, and the prisoners must do the best they could to store them. This was imperfectly accomplished by tearing out linings and cutting off sleeves and legs of pantaloons.

But by careful management we contrived not to starve, nor even to suffer greatly from hunger. A few skillets and kettles, procured by various methods, were kept hot from morning till night. In my mess of four, we had but two meals per day. We carefully measured

out just two pints of meal, mixed it with water, without salt, baked it in a skillet, and then carefully cut it as nearly as possible into four equal parts, the cook getting for his work in baking first choice. We alternated in cooking, and by this plan never had any trouble in determining whose turn it was to bake the bread. Our soup-dinners were feast-days, and we were always careful to make soup enough to "fill" us on those occasions.

The suffering in our prison, and there was a good deal of it, resulted from thoughtlessness. A few men, being very hungry when rations were issued, would proceed to cook and eat inordinately, and even to wastefulness, apparently without the least thought of the future, and thus in two or three days consume the rations intended for five. I have seen this class of men wandering about the prison in tears begging crumbs, but getting nothing but curses for their imprudence. And what is said here in this respect is applicable to all the other prisons I was in.

To preserve order the prisoners were organized into squads of one hundred, with a nominal captain and orderly-sergeant, and

this one hundred was subdivided into squads of twenty with a commissary-sergeant, and then, again, subdivided into messes of four. By this means the rations and wood came first to the one hundred, then to the twenty, and then to the four.

The authorities at Macon called the roll of the prisoners in this wise: The officer of the day would come in each morning with twenty guards and deploy them across the north end of the pen, when all would begin whooping and hallooing and swearing to drive us to the south end. This being accomplished, an interval between the guards was designated as the place for the count, which was effected by our returning, one by one, through that interval, into the body of the inclosure.

Tunnelling was a big business at Macon. There were three tunnels under way at one time, and all came near being successful. One was ready to be opened up the last of June, but to accommodate the managers of the other two it was delayed until the night of the 3d of July, when the others would be ready. The three had capacity to let every prisoner out by midnight, and thus afford an interesting time in Georgia on the Fourth of

July. But the treachery of an Illinois Captain revealed the whole scheme, and our guards came in on the morning of the 3d without a guide and deliberately took possession of the holes. It is said that the Captain was promised a special exchange, and he probably got it, for, after the fact was learned by us through a negro, the traitor was taken outside and never appeared among us any more.

The manner of making the subterranean avenues was simple, but slow. The beginning of each, at Macon, was under a bunk built a few inches from the ground. As soon as dark came, the boards composing the bunk were laid aside, and the work began. First, a hole three feet in diameter was sunk four feet perpendicularly into the ground; then from the bottom of this hole the tunnel proper would begin, at right angles, twenty inches in diameter, and pass horizontally along to the place of exit. The digging was mostly done with knives, but a spade or two figured in the business at Macon. The dirt was taken out in sacks, tied to the middle of a rope which was twice as long as the hole, and fastened by one end to the digger's leg. When he had dug up a

sackful of dirt, he would draw the sack in, fill it up, jerk his rope, and the man at the mouth would draw it out and empty it into another sack, or hat, or blanket, or whatever was available. The one who was to carry it off would then start, throwing a handful occasionally like wheat; carrying a little to the spring, where there had been recent digging, a little to the well, where fresh dirt was lying about; but the general depository was under the old floral hall. At the approach of daylight business would be suspended, the hole covered up, the bunk replaced, and two men probably asleep on it when the guards came in for their count.

As a sporadic instance of unexplained cruelty, I mention the following: The spring was within twenty feet of the dead-line, and it was no violation of orders to go to it at any time of the day or night. A German Captain, of the Forty-fifth New York, went to the spring for water at dusk on the seventeenth day of June, and was just beginning his return, when the guard nearest the point, without saying a word, or having a word said to him, deliberately shot him through the body, and he died an hour afterward.

A written appeal to the authorities to in-

vestigate the matter was answered, so it was reported, by promoting the homicide to be a sergeant, and giving him a thirty days' furlough. News of the reward was freely circulated among us—under pretence of the officer's having crossed the dead-line—as an example of reward to vigilant sentinels, and a caution to indiscreet prisoners.

Notwithstanding the failure of our tunnels, the Fourth of July was by no means forgotten by the prisoners. Captain Todd, of the Eighth New Jersey, had managed somehow to smuggle into prison a little six-by-ten Union flag.

Immediately after roll-call, the "magic little rag" was unfurled to the breeze and hoisted on a staff. In an instant the prison was in an uproar; shouts for the Union and cheers for the Red, White, and Blue broke forth from every quarter. The excitement was wonderful. Two or three hundred men formed in columns of fours and followed the little flag about the prison, making the walls reverberate the echoes of the inspiring song of "Rally Round the Flag, Boys." Then they marched into the floral hall for speaking. A rough structure by one of the pillars of the building, called a table, was used as a

rostrum, from which short speeches were made till late in the afternoon. They were of the most patriotic and radical order, interspersed always with some national air, sung by the entire audience.

The Confederates were a little troubled over this, and twice sent in a corporal's guard and demanded the flag ; but these were only laughed at, and sent away empty. A third time the officer of the day came in with a squad of men and bore orders from the commandant of the prison that the flag must be surrendered, peaceably or forcibly. Colonel Thorp, First New York Cavalry, was speaking at the time, and, turning to the officer, said :

"Lieutenant, be pleased to say to Captain Gibbs that the flag we are rejoicing under is the property of the prisoners, and that it will not be surrendered peaceably, and that if he attempts force, twenty minutes afterward we will be burning and sacking the city of Macon." (Cries of "That's it!" "We'll do it!" "Now's the time!")

The guards stood amazed only a moment, for when they heard such ejaculations from the crowd as "Kill the d—d rebels!" "Take their guns from them!" "Rally to

the gate!" they left the prison in a hurry, and it was the last time they ever demanded our flag, though its display was an every-day occurrence afterward.

About the 20th of June, while I was kneading dough in a camp-kettle, I heard the cry of "Fresh fish" at the gate. At this date I was "one of 'em," and without a moment's delay I was off to the gate, but not soon enough to get a place near the entrance through the dead-line. But from the spot I obtained I could see the two strangers as they came through the gate, and see that the youngest of them was my old comrade, Shelton, whom I left in the field-hospital, near the Wilderness. He limped a little yet, but his wound was nearly healed.

Right here let me stop and hunt up Chisman. He is to be closely identified with me in the rest of this narrative, and it may be of interest to the reader to know who and what he was. He was to me more than to most men, because we had slept together for nearly two years, doing duty the while as "Western men" on a "Down East" staff. Our relations had been the most intimate, and, as a matter of course, when we met at Macon we paired, and perhaps a little selfishly, too.

Chisman was a rare man—one of ten thousand—a companion for everybody; thirty years old, blue eyes, light hair, sandy beard, fair complexion, five feet ten inches high, and built like a prince. He was a great wag, conversed well, was quick in repartee, sang a good song, and told a most excellent story. He was famous in all his corps for these qualities. He was also lucky. As a mason of considerable degrees, he had fortunately found a brother, both at Gordonsville and Macon, and was admitted into prison with a good rain-coat and a valuable gold watch. This coat he sold to a guard at Macon for $100; the watch at Savannah, for $1,200, Confederate money. Another one of Chisman's rare qualities was his lack of selfishness—indeed, he had not enough even for self-protection; so in prison, among so many needy friends, it was found necessary, in order to preserve any of his funds, that I be made his banker, which office I accepted, and with a good degree of success in the preservation of his deposit.

Immediately upon our meeting at Macon, and the sale of the overcoat, we set ourselves about making the way for "something to turn up." With a $5 Confederate note we

bought a pint of salt, and sewed it up in a little sack, at both ends, so that we should not use it; with a similar note we bought matches, just five bunches, inch-square blocks, and likewise sewed them up; then, with still another, a quantity of needles and thread was procured, and for the most part sewed ditto; these three necessaries we then sewed up all together in an oil-cloth sack, and laid carefully away. With these in hand, if an opportunity ever offered for escape, we should not be prevented for want of preparation.

IV

DURING the latter part of July General Stoneman began his raiding around Macon, and, getting uncomfortably near, the authorities decided to send us farther south. On the 27th of July five squads, of one hundred each, filed out of prison, and were put upon the cars for Charleston. Two days afterward another five hundred were called for, and this time I was in the count. We were sent to Savannah, where we arrived in the afternoon of the 30th. As we were the first Yankees, armed or disarmed, ever in the city, the citizens manifested a great curiosity to see us. The afternoon was very fair, and the sea-breezes had begun to shake the boughs of the live oaks and moss-grown pines, as we rode in and disembarked on Liberty Street. Everybody was out to see the Yankees. The street through which we had to pass to the United States Marine Barracks was literally walled on either side with old men, women, and children, of all colors. We were not dressed for a recep-

tion, or a county-fair; but as we had no will in the matter, we felt no responsibility for our appearance. The weather was very warm, and besides, there were many men in the party who had been prisoners two years, and had no better clothes. Some had on nothing but trousers, some nothing but shirts, others but a little of both. Unshaven, hair untrimmed, bare-headed, barefooted, dirty, and with kettles, skillets, meal-sacks, rice-bags, bundles of old clothes, and various other bric-à-brac of prison-life in our hands, our style was novel if not fascinating. Formed in four ranks, we were received by a fancy guard, and started for the prison. But the crowd was so eager it was found necessary to halt us until the guard and police could clear the street to the sidewalks. This being accomplished, they led us through the gauntlet of curiosity, and as we progressed a hundred little boys ran shouting after us. Confederate bunting and mottoes were everywhere—on poles and ropes, in the windows, and in the hands of women and children. Among the many who lined the street was one young woman who, perhaps, had lost a lover by the Yankees, and wanted to show her hatred;

or perhaps it was simply the love of ostentation that brought the blush to her cheek before the Yankees passed. She was a luscious creature, painted and fixed up, and she stood at the street-crossing, in the front rank, leaning forward, with a sneer, flaunting her "bonnie blue flag" in our very faces. The indomitable Chisman came along, swinging an old blanket in one hand and a bag of meal in the other, and seeing the enthusiasm of the miss could but remember the seedy condition of his trousers. Turning himself rather unfashionably about, he remarked, with much gravity:

"Miss, if you've got time, I wish you would tack that rag on here," at the same pointing to a place that evidently needed something of the sort.

We were locked up in the United States Marine Barracks, where the First Georgia Volunteers had charge of us. This was the oldest regiment belonging to the State, having been organized and armed in January, 1861. They had been at the front since the beginning, and, becoming decimated, were sent home to rest and recruit.

Major, afterward Colonel, Hill took command of the prison; and I am pleased to

say that he and his officers and men, generally, treated us humanely and in marked contrast with the authorities at Macon. These were old soldiers and knew a soldier's lot, and how to sympathize with him as a prisoner. Hill enforced strict discipline in the prison, but it was as much to our comfort and convenience as to his. He gave us tents and boards for bunks, and plenty of rations of meat, meal, and rice, the two latter in a surplus, which he bought back from us at Government rates, paying in onions and potatoes. Besides, he furnished us with facilities for cooking, kettles and pans, and brick for Dutch ovens.

Our treatment at Savannah was as reasonable as could be expected, and during our six weeks' stay not a prisoner escaped.

The spirit of retaliation was rife at this time between the two contending forces. Five hundred Federal officers were already under fire of our own guns at Charleston, and it was thither we were sent on the thirteenth day of September. There is no date in all the calendar of time that had been by me so much thought of, and so much hoped for as the thirteenth day of September, 1864. No other date has ever

been, nor perhaps ever will be, the subject of so many doubts and so many happy anticipations; for it was the date that terminated my three years' enlistment as a soldier—it was the date on which my regiment was to leave the army for the embraces of their friends at home. With these reflections to discourage us, Chisman and I, members of the same regiment, stepped sadly into an old cattle-car bound for Charleston—the very fountain-head of the flood of treason that had engulfed the entire South.

The night of the 13th we slept in the Charleston jail-yard, and watched with delight the red streaks that followed our two-hundred-pound shells as they were shot forth from Batteries Gregg and Wagner every fifteen minutes, and came screaming over our heads to a full fourth of a mile beyond.

This was a part of the famous siege of Charleston; and in the late war here was, at least, one feature of uncivilized warfare—that of placing prisoners under fire of their own guns. Just across the bay, on Morris Island, between the two batteries above mentioned, was an uncovered stockade, in which were confined a thousand Confederate officers, to be mangled by their own brothers and

fathers if their shells varied a little from their aim. The thousand Federal officers now in the town were scattered about through the city, "as the exigences of the service required." I must say, to the credit of General Foster, the Federal commander on Morris Island, that he seemed excellently well informed of the various changes of our localities. The Charleston papers complained bitterly of the police and city guards, because they could make no explanation of the mysterious rockets that could be seen almost nightly in different parts of the city, and more especially immediately after the removal of a party of Yankees.

General Foster perhaps could have given a better explanation than any policeman or guard in the city, for if a party of prisoners were removed into a locality directly under the scourge, perchance not another shell would come near; while a few hours afterward they would open up with terrible effect on the very place they had left. One example: Eighty-six of us were taken from the jail-yard to the private residence of Colonel O'Connor, on Broad Street, and while there, nearly two weeks, not a shell struck nearer than an eighth of a mile. A party of Con-

federate officers, for convenience and safety, took quarters within a hundred yards of us. We were removed about noon, the Confederates remaining, and that night a two-hundred-pound shell from Foster's guns came crashing through the house, killing the provost marshal and a captain instantly, and badly wounding a lieutenant. During our confinement of about a month, the only casualty among us was one man slightly wounded in the hand.

The yellow fever broke out among us at Charleston. This is the king of terrors to the Southern people, and as he took hold on us with determined fatality, our guards became much alarmed. It was among us five days in the city, and it was reported that out of thirty cases among the prisoners, not one recovered. In this calamity we were visited by the Sisters of Charity. Every day after the fever broke out, and occasionally before, these pale-faced, devout, veiled creatures made their rounds of the prison, with their baskets of medicine and food for distribution among the sick. It was touching to see them moving about the prison in pairs, heeding none but the suffering, and ministering to them with that pious dignity and

tenderness characteristic of their order. The personal sacrifices of these women was surprising. Whether it was fanaticism, or rational devotion to Christian duty, is not for me to say, but theirs was the only faith strong enough to reach us; and in the day of final account it is not apt to go unrequited by the dispenser of just judgments.

Commandant Jones, on October 4th, succeeded in getting some cars, and away we went to Columbia, S. C., without letter or despatch, and fell upon that high place of treason like a thunderbolt; and had we been all armed, and commanded by Sheridan, we could hardly have surprised them more. The provost marshal, who seemed to be a pretty clever kind of an enemy, fretted and complained a good deal, insisting that it was an imposition so suddenly to send fifteen hundred prisoners to him, without even a chicken-coop, or a dozen men at his command. He at first refused a receipt to Cooper, the Charlestonian, for the prisoners, but after some altercation and compromise the matter was fixed up in such a way that Cooper could stay with his men and take charge of us until other arrangements could be made.

We were kept on the cars all night and suffered intensely from thirst. At Charleston, on the scorching hot day before, at noon, we were crowded, or, more properly, jammed, seventy men into each dirty cattle-car, with camp-kettles, coffee-pots, greasy skillets, meal-sacks, rice-bags, old clothes, and such other appendages as are found with prisoners of war, and not twenty men of the six hundred tasted water until six o'clock the following morning. At this hour we were taken from the cars and herded near the railroad like a drove of cattle, and our disembarkation was attended with about as much noise and confusion. Men were frantic with thirst. Some supplicating, some cursing, some threatening, made a din scarcely surpassed since Moses smote the rock in the wilderness, and the guards took no steps to relieve us. Our suffering was not long to endure, for heaven, in its mercy, soon opened up a copious fountain, which drenched us without as well as within.

Here, as well as everywhere in the South, we could see the effects of the rebellion. One side of our corral was marked by a half-dozen or more broken box-cars, which, becoming useless to the railroad, had been set

aside upon a spur. Each one of these old cars was tenanted by a family of refugees, most if not all of whom had seen better days no longer than two years before.

Upon our arrival at Columbia a telegram was sent to Hillsborough for a company of cadets, in school there, and in the afternoon of the same day about forty arrived and relieved the old Charlestonian guard that was over us. These boys, having been chosen from all parts of the Confederacy to be trained for heroes, now in their freshman year, thought well of themselves—too well, as the common soldiers thought—and they were hated by the Confederate regulars even worse than by the Yankees. They came down in their suits of fine gray cloth, paper collars, blacked boots, and white gloves, not only to guard the Yankee prisoners but to teach the common soldiers a touch of science in the profession. As they mounted guard each looked and felt the born prince, and every movement was by rule, till the rain came on again in the evening and melted their collars as well as their spirits; then they got mad at everything and everybody. One little fiend got so voracious for Yankee blood, so eager for a

loyal life upon which to climb into fame, that he took two full steps from his post to drive his bayonet through the leg of Lieutenant Clark, who was negotiating with a negro woman for a corn-pone. Not even a reprimand for this wanton assault ever came to the knowledge of the prisoners.

No suitable inclosure could be found for us in Columbia, and we were marched across the Congaree River, two miles west of the city, to an old barren field that had been abandoned many years, and was now sparsely overgrown with bushes from ten to fifteen feet high. These bushes were our only wood-supply, and, with a few exceptions, the second day saw their ashes scattered to the winds. This camp was large enough—probably six acres in all. There was no stockade, no fence, no water but from a brook, no shelter, not even for the sick, the first ten days. The well men never had any shelter except what they contrived with their blankets, etc. An avenue thirty feet wide was cut around the prison-camp through the bushes. Upon the outer edge of this avenue was maintained a line of sentinels, ten steps apart, and upon the inner edge was placed a line of pins standing about fifteen inches above the ground and

thirty feet apart. This latter was the famous dead-line that a prisoner crossed upon peril of his life.

This prison was known as Camp Sorghum; and I should not wrong the Confederates much were I to say that they did not give us enough of anything here but air, water, and room; but I will do them full justice, and add that they gave us also a pint of unsifted corn-meal and an abundance of sorghum-molasses for a day's rations, issuing from five to seven days' rations at a time.

I am faithful to fact when I say that during the month I stayed with them at Columbia they did not give us a single board or tent for shelter, nor an ounce of meat or bread. Excepting a half-pound of flour they gave each of us two or three times, and a couple of spoonfuls of salt as often with the meal and molasses, I have told it all. We had not even a pan, a skillet, a bucket, or a kettle in which to cook or save our rations; and had it not been that a few of these articles were clandestinely carried away from other prisons, or procured with private means, it is hard to imagine how we could have got along. As it was, if we put into the count flat rocks picked up on the ground, pieces of tin, scraps

of old iron, etc., we had a cooking-utensil to about every twenty men. The most valuable of any I saw in use was a disk of cast-iron, formerly the end of a steam-boiler—that would turn off at a single baking cakes enough for six men. This thing was kept on the fire half the time and accommodated a hundred men. The last baking I did in prison was upon it.

We had more trouble at Columbia in keeping our meal dry than at any other prison. It often rained, and there being no shelter whatever in the camp, the meal of many had to take the rain as it came. It often soaked and soured, but, rubbed out and dried, whether sweet or sour, it was relished; and about as well in one condition as the other when limited to one pint a day.

Some miners among the prisoners began digging and pan-washing along the margin of the branch, claiming they had found a gold-mine; but the discovery cost their friends more than it profited them, for the guards promptly contracted their line and placed the gold-mine outside.

Notwithstanding our exposure and want of the commonest necessaries at Columbia, there was a general disposition among the prisoners

to disregard the many grounds of complaint and make the best of things from a very small stock of material.

The sorghum-molasses, given us in such abundance, was the source of much amusement. Men would reduce great kettles full of it to wax, and from the wax make figures of every conceivable shape. They made it into balls and threw it at the guards after dark; made and hung effigies of Confederate celebrities; concealed it in their friends' blankets. When we got painfully hungry we tried hard to stand off the wolf with sorghum. We would mix our meal with sorghum, eat sorghum on our cakes, and consume any quantity of taffy. In short, we came well-nigh preserving ourselves in sorghum-molasses.

Games of all kinds were resorted to; some of science and skill, others of the most foolish sort. One in particular was as silly as it was full of fun. We called it "buzz." It went thus:

As many as a hundred men would gather themselves into a circle, set a "dunce-block" in the centre, a referee at one side, and then commence counting rapidly around to the right. Instead of calling numbers divisible

by seven, or multiples of seven, you should say "buzz;" as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, buzz; 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, buzz, etc., each man calling but one number. When a man called a number when he should say "buzz" he was caught, and as a penalty had to go to the dunce-block in the centre and sing a song or tell a story. Anyone who did not at once respond to the judgment of the referee was ejected from the circle, and his place supplied by some eager bystander.

This game, foolish as it may seem, produced many roars of laughter at Camp Sorghum; for the efforts of many men, with no attainments in either song or story, under the embarrassments of the occasion, were ludicrous indeed.

It was a dark night about October 20th, when a lot of us stood wet and shivering around a fire near the dead-line, that Shelton, suddenly buttoning up his brown jean coat, with emphasis said:

"I will die here now, or get out of this."

Before anyone in the company comprehended the remark, he shot like an arrow across the dead and guard lines, and was lost in the darkness. A half-dozen shots

were fired at him, but fortunately none took effect. He was captured ten days later, near the South Carolina coast, and returned; but upon a second effort in November he went through to our lines.

The Confederates were guilty of but few things less excusable than the hunting down of prisoners with dogs. In all civilized warfare there are certain rules of honor observed, among them this one: that if a prisoner escapes he shall have all the advantage of his own sagacity, by having nothing employed against him but the sagacity of his guards. In the war of the Rebellion the Confederates entirely ignored this rule by engaging every means against their prisoners, even to the perversion of brute-faculties that had been created for a good and noble purpose. They had a pack or two of these trained dogs at Columbia, which they tried to make as fierce and terrible as possible. They would keep them tied up through the day, and at evening bring them out upon the lawn before us, jumping and howling around their keeper for their food. It was these dogs that kept more prisoners within the guard-line than the six pieces of artillery trained on the camp; for if one should go out and

the dogs find his trail, he was sure to be caught, and apt to be torn to pieces.

One night in October, a lieutenant escaped. He was out five days when a two-horse wagon came rattling over the stones toward the camp and drove over the dead-line. Two guards got in, and two stood by and lifted out the body of the lieutenant. Life was still in it, but the gash in the side, and the horrible mangling of the throat and face, showed that it would soon depart. His captain brother, bending over him, piteously asked :

" Harry, what's the matter ? "

Only a whisper answered : " Dogs. Don't tell mother how it was."

Next morning, soon after daylight, they carried the young man a hundred yards to the north of the camp and buried him. This is all we ever knew about it.

V

By this time our number had swelled to fifteen hundred. We had no wood to supply our wants except what we provided ourselves, with the aid of seven miserable iron axes and carried a quarter of a mile upon our shoulders. A party of fifty or more men were each morning taken out of the camp to the head-quarters office, and there each one was required to deposit with the officer of the guard a written parole of honor not to escape that day while out getting wood. They then were turned loose with liberty to go half a mile from the camp without guard. It was something like freedom to get wood, and there was always a general rush to get on the detail. It was in one of these wood-parties that we made our second escape.

We had escape on the brain—had had it there since our capture, for that matter, but more intensely since the suspension of the exchange of prisoners, which had happened several weeks before and for which Secretary Stanton and even General Grant were se-

verely censured by many of the prisoners. Human nature is too weak to settle into contentment in such an environment as we were placed in at Columbia.

The nights were all cold (it was the rainy season); we were without any shelter and had only a limited supply of wood of the worst possible sort, consisting of green oak and pine.

The paroled wood-party were directed to a grove of timber a quarter of a mile distant, where they went with their axes and handspikes. Some would cut down and trim off the limbs from the small trees, others would carry the logs to the prison camp, and four, six, and even eight men were often well-loaded with a single log. These carrying parties were unattended by guards and were allowed perfect freedom in passing through the guard-line and to the inside of the dead-line, where they would throw their logs down and return to the woods for another load. The guards on duty were instructed to give particular attention to each wood-squad going in, and see to it that no prisoner from the inside went out with them.

The 4th of November, 1864, was a very bad day. It had been raining almost inces-

santly for thirty-six hours, with a brisk, cold, east wind blowing, and in the afternoon there was some snow driving through the rain. Probably not a dry thread could be found on all the 1,500 prisoners. Grouped together here and there around a little, smoky, green pine-wood fire, they sat wrapped in whatever clothing they might have—wet, cold, hungry, and disconsolate. It was one of the gloomiest times we saw in prison. With nothing to eat but meal and molasses, the meal wet and sour, winter approaching and no shelter, nor hope of exchange, everybody was blue and cross, and quarrels and blows were so frequent that they ceased to attract attention.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon of this day that, tired of yawning in one of the groups and to give my eyes a little freedom from the smoke, I went sauntering about the camp. While passing along the west side, I saw a wood-party of eight men come in with a log and go out again without being noticed by a single guard, so far as I could observe.

An idea and a ray of hope broke upon me and I hurried off to find Chisman. I found him where I expected to, sitting by a fire in

a perfect jam, smoking his brierwood pipe of huge dimensions. He looked unusually forlorn. Not a smile nor a word, and the only solace he seemed to feel was in the puffs of smoke that rapidly broke from his mouth.

"Chisman, come here."

"What do you want?"

"I think I see a chance."

"For what?"

"To get out of here."

"Oh, I have heard enough of your chances."

"But come and see for yourself."

And we walked off toward the side where the men were coming in with the wood. The wind still drove the rain and snow from the east, and the poor guards, old men and boys mostly, who were about as poorly clad as the prisoners, were standing with their backs to the east, shivering, while the wood-carriers were passing and repassing the guard-line.

"Now," said I, "what do you think of that?"

"Well, I am ready for anything," said Chisman. "They can only kill us and send us to ——, which will improve our condi-

tion, and I am ready to try it if you are." And so we started for our belongings.

I have said before that as soon as Chisman and I met at Macon we prepared "for something to turn up." In addition to our Macon stock of salt, matches, needles, and thread, we succeeded at Savannah in getting a sheet of tin from the roof of the hospital dead-house, which we gave to Lieutenant Holman, a regular wooden-nutmeg Yankee, from Vermont, who, with a couple of stones and an old knife, made two perfect pans out of it. They were five by eight inches by one inch and a quarter deep, and the corner joints were fitted so closely that they were proof against even hot grease. One of these pans was an accession to our outfit. At Charleston we had added a tin cup; at Columbia we captured a meal-sack from the rear of the Commissary while the guard whistled "Bonnie Blue Flag" in front, which not only made each of us a haversack, but a towel also.

On the iron disk we hurriedly baked what meal we had and tried to beg more, but failed.

We broke our design first to Lieutenant Fowler, who was on guard that day (for we

had to keep constant watch over our things to keep our fellow-prisoners from stealing them), and to a few other trusted friends, and then with salt, matches, needles and thread, tin pan, cup, towel, and bread enough for two days in our haversacks, we spread our blankets over all and started for the scene of action. A few friends followed behind and, as we went along, Chisman picked up a chip and said "Let the fates decide who shall try it first." Up went the chip—down it came—and it was my first trial.

We had not long to wait. A party of eight or nine men were approaching. I set out alone, aiming to reach the dead-line from the inside about the same time and place they would reach it from the outside. As we met I communicated my design in a low tone. They favored me, threw down their wood and gathered together while I glanced to the right and left to see that no guard was looking in my direction. In a moment I was in the party; and seizing a handspike from the hands of one of them, laid it across my shoulder, and we all started for the woods. My blanket was spread over my haversack and shoulders, but this created no

suspicion, for the day was so bad that every man who had a blanket had it on. There were two other blankets in the party I joined, and I walked out through the guard-line within ten feet of two Confederate muskets, and within easy range of fifty, without any guard being the wiser.

What a curious world this is. It will doubtless be thought that I felt happy when I got out of range of the Confederate muskets; but "my last state was worse than my first." I was more troubled now than when in the prison. My liberty was actually painful to me. I had doubt of Chisman's success, and there I was without restraint to go when and where I pleased if I could avoid the enemy. But to undertake the pilgrimage of two or three hundred miles through the enemy's country, without guide or companion, to be probably lost in some great swamp, or recaptured and murdered, or locked up in some county jail in the interior of the Confederacy, to suffer and to die alone, without the fact ever reaching my friends, was a task so stupendous in its outline that it was hard for me to find courage even to think about it; and I could not think of returning.

As we went out we met another party going in. I explained to them how I came out, and that Chisman would be found about the same place ready to enter upon a similar enterprise.

Chisman was a favorite with all who knew him, and I had a promise that he would be assisted. When we got to the woods I sat down on a log, with my back toward the prison, afraid to look around lest I should see the party coming back without my friend.

Someone said, "There comes a man over the hill that looks like Chisman," and as I turned suddenly about, to my great delight I saw the inimitable joker, with head erect and handspike on his shoulder, striding like a Weston, fully fifty yards ahead of his party.

There were two of the paroled detail, First Lieutenant Baker, Sixth Missouri Infantry, and First Lieutenant Goode, First Maryland Cavalry, who, seeing how easy it was for us to get out, decided that they would feign sickness, get their written paroles cancelled, go back into the prison, and then escape as we had done. They called upon the Confederate officer of the day, whom they found comfortably quartered in his tent, and, having

made out their disability to carry any more wood, asked for their paroles. The paroles were cancelled, but the weather was so inclement that, instead of going with them and seeing that they returned to prison, the officer simply directed them to go back inside, while he remained in his tent. Goode and Baker did not go back inside, but as they approached the camp sheered off, recovered from their ailments, came back to the woods, and were at liberty.

They had neither blanket nor rations—nothing whatever to assist escape but grit. Goode had been a prisoner twenty-two months, Baker eighteen. A corporal's guard passed among us occasionally to see that everything was going right, and when they were around, to escape suspicion, we industriously engaged in the wood-business. At five o'clock in the evening, when the drum beat at camp, Chisman and I went under one brush-pile, Goode and Baker under another, and those on parole went back to prison. I will never forget with what feeling Major Young, of our brigade, said: "Good-by, boys; be cautious, and if you get through, tell the people and the President how we are suffering."

How still we lay! Not a hand or a foot stirred, lest some passing enemy should hear the noise and find us; and we must stay there till dark, and until the soldiers were summoned to quarters. The cold, wet brush, and colder and wetter ground, chilled us to the very centre; but we clung the closer together, and shook the time away.

It seemed an age until tattoo. Some of that age we were at home telling of adventures to our friends; some of it we were being chased by hounds; some of it we were being recaptured and dragged back to prison; some of it we were drowning in vain attempts to swim unknown rivers in the dark.

A few minutes after tattoo had called the soldiers to quarters, Chisman and I, as noiselessly as possible, crawled from under the brush. Our aim was to slip away from Goode and Baker.

We had decided for many reasons that they could not join us; they were not well known; they were destitute, and we had nothing to divide. Two in the party were enough, would be company for each other, would leave fewer signs, and attract less attention if seen, and, above all, could subsist and hide easier. But Goode and Baker

heard us move, and when we stood upon our feet they were at our side. We had strong words, hot words, disgraceful words, under any other conditions ; but nothing seemed so dear to us then as success. They felt their weakness in their want of preparation ; we felt our security in being unattended. We would start and they would follow ; then another battle of words and threats of violence. We compromised, and decided to go together that night, and the next day arrange for a separation.

The night was very dark ; yes, dismally dark ; there was not a star or spot of clear sky anywhere. Overhead was drawn a black mantle of heavy clouds ; around were woods and a heavy atmosphere that, combined, most perfectly sustained the proverbial darkness of a South Carolina forest. We decided that the object for the first night should be to get as far away from Columbia as possible, in whatever direction seemed most practicable.

Off we started through the woods, nobody knew where or in what direction, slipping along like spirits on tiptoe ; in mortal terror, stopping every minute to listen ; starting at every rustling of the leaves ; squatting down

to hide from imaginary men; pushing each other forward to lead; and thus we went along through woods and fields for perhaps two miles until we struck a swamp. In one man splashed before we knew it was near. Now what must be done? We knew nothing of its length or breadth or situation. It was so dark we could not see a rod in advance. We had heard much of the alligators and horrid snakes infesting the Southern swamps, besides seeing something of them in our passage through the country from Savannah to Charleston.

The thought of setting foot on an alligator, or having a slimy snake play about our legs as we waded through, was not encouraging. The undergrowth of tangled bushes and cypress knees seemed to be next to impenetrable. We could not think of trying to wade it. The only thing to be done was to go around it, and to the right we started.

Tearing through bushes and briers, limbs striking in our faces and brushing off our caps; splashing in the water; slipping and falling over logs, was the unvarying business for the next hour. Now another body of water was found, not by the light nor by the noise it made, but by the failing of a stick in

Baker's hand to find support. It was evidently more than a swamp. From the nature of its edge it must be a river, yet a singular one to us; apparently on a perfect level with the plain; deep, dismal, without bank or bottom, creeping along as noiselessly as we wished to do. We got a pole in the darkness and sounded it, but the end leaped up from the depths without finding bottom. Next we struck a match in a hat, and the light fell upon the trees a hundred and fifty feet away. Sure enough, it was a river, and it looked as if it might be the Styx. There was no heart in our party stout enough to swim it, and that was the only way to get across. Then, of course, the swamp was wider and deeper at its junction with the river than where we first struck it. To go back the river-way would be to go toward Columbia, we supposed; so we must either cross the swamp at that place or go round it in the other direction. Disappointed, tired, and already disheartened at the prospects, we began to retrace our steps.

On we pushed as fast as we could; on, on, on; I cannot say how far we went or how long we went, but we went as far and as long as we could. The night was about spent.

The chickens in the neighborhood began to herald the approach of morning, and we were not yet three miles from Columbia, nor more than two from prison. Still the swamp confronted us with all its portents. Something must be done, and done quickly. We must either get farther away or return and surrender; not to be beyond that swamp by daylight was equivalent to recapture. "I favor a trial," says one. "I agree," echoed the others, and into the water we stepped. It was not so dark at this time. The clouds had broken up and were flying in fleecy clusters across the sky, and the woods roared with the gale that drove the autumn leaves by in armies. It was much colder, too. My blood chills yet when I think of the first hundred steps in that swamp.

The water was from six inches to three feet deep, and full of old logs and tangled bushes, and the bottom slimy for the most part, with here and there strips of vegetable growth. Pulling through the bushes, picking up our caps, climbing over logs and splashing down again into the water was a lively exercise, accelerated by the constant but not cheerful thought that the next step

might land us on the back of an alligator or send a dozen snakes around our bodies. Goode was an Irishman of short stature, and in an unlucky moment, as he stepped from a log back into the water, a slimy limb slipped up his leg. He thought it was a snake, and tried to commit suicide, but Chisman, who happened to be near, saved him. But we got along and through the swamp without misfortune greater than the irresistible temptation to use unevangelical language.

This much-dreaded obstacle overcome, we felt encouraged and made better speed. The forest was now not so thick, and, as it was light enough to select our way, we pushed on rapidly. A road was found coursing northwesterly that had the appearance of being little used, and we took it almost on a run. Our ardor exceeded our prudence, for, without believing it possible, we let a wagon, rolling over the soft sand, almost run over us. We leaped into the bushes to the right, and fell down upon our faces. The wagon stopped immediately opposite where we lay; men muttered a few words; then got out and, going to the rear of the wagon, struck a light. Raising to our hands and knees, we saw a negro approach-

ing us with a blazing pine-knot in his hand, stooping and gazing as he came, followed closely by a white man. Before they got close enough, however, to see us we ran away.

We feared all the following day that they would put dogs on our track.

Morning was now upon us and the next thing to be done was to hide for the day. In this our inexperience begat difficulties. We parleyed and disputed and actually quarrelled about what we should do and where we should go. One wanted this and another that, the third something else, and the fourth averred that all were wrong but him. It was not settled until broad daylight drove us to the side of a log in a cluster of alder bushes in an old field, and here we came near freezing. Our blood, hot from the exertions of the night, our clothing full of water from the swamp, the leaves on the ground by the log wet and frozen, to this inhospitable bed we went with nothing over us but a single blanket. As Chisman tucked his wet, freezing feet into the single fold of the blanket, he made some remark about the luxury of freedom and the beauties of defending the flag.

Not a suggestion of sleep came to us that

day, nor was a mention made of separation from Goode and Baker. The truth is, we felt about convinced that it would have been better for us all to have been drowned in the swamp the night before; and we longed for more rather than fewer friends.

Our experience, up to this time, had taught us that some sort of an organization was necessary to our successful escape, for so many self-reliant officers, all of the same rank, and all on duty at the same time, had not produced satisfactory results, and all day long we lay with our heads together by the old log, discussing and adopting in whispers a plan of organization, which we never had occasion to change, except in a few unimportant particulars.

We should take turns in acting as commander, the term of office of each to cover twenty-four hours, beginning and ending at 9 P.M. each evening. We should march upon the road, beginning not earlier than 9 P.M. and ending not later than 5 A.M. The commander should direct the time to begin our march, when to rest, and when and where to put in. His authority was to be supreme in all things, unless an appeal from it was sustained by a unanimous vote of the

other three. We were to march in single file, three paces apart, so as to keep the front of but one man exposed to the road, the commander in front, whose duty it was, among other things, to keep his eyes and ears constantly open, to catch the first sound or glimmer of an object that might approach from the front; number two, three paces behind, was to observe the same vigilance on the right; number three, to the left, and number four to give his entire attention to the rear. If we were passing the road where there were woods or weeds on either side, and the commander saw, or thought he saw, or heard, a human being approaching from the front, he was to turn his head to the rear and hiss gently, but sufficiently loud for the others to hear him, then move hurriedly to one side, the others following and preserving their intervals as nearly as possible, each to find a bush or a log, lie down upon his face, and observe the most perfect silence. Thus we should remain until something passed or until the commander concluded that he was mistaken, when he would hiss again, and we would all take our places, move back again to the road, and be off as before. If we were passing through an

open country where we could not hide, and the leader should see footmen coming, he was to turn back and hiss twice, when all should about-face and take the road back as fast as we could possibly walk. This we should continue until we came to a place where the commander thought we could hide, when he would hiss again and leave the road as before. Nearly all the persons that approached were negroes, and our backward business worked admirably.

If horsemen were seen coming, we were to leave the road in any kind of country, and if number two, three, or four should see an object approach in his direction, he must communicate the fact to the commander, who should take charge of the movement.

We depended mostly upon the negroes for direction and food, and applied for their assistance nearly every night. About ten o'clock, when everything was quiet, we would approach their quarters, all going up within two hundred yards, when two would stop, a third go within one hundred yards, and the commander go alone to the huts. The negroes were remarkably familiar with each other and the country for a radius of ten or fifteen miles. They seemed to be

acquainted with every peculiar tree, or stone, or cow-path, within that distance. If we were among a lot of negroes at night, before leaving we would ask them to give us the names of one or two of the oldest and most reliable negro acquaintances, ten, twelve, or fifteen miles ahead, or as far as we aimed to go that night. They were always able to give us the name, Joe, Jim, or Jerry, and to tell us precisely where to find them. Their descriptions were very minute, and would generally give the number of the cabin in the row, the position in relation to the cotton-gin, pig-pen, or massa's house, just the safest way to approach, whether there were any dogs, and, if so, how many and how fierce.

There was not an instance on the whole journey where we were misled by a negro's description.

Our leader would go to the cabin indicated, knock on the door till someone answered from within, then call out, gently, "Bob," "Bill," or whatever name had been given.

The negro always came to the door without further words, when the commander would ask him out to the side of the cabin,

and invariably, after the first few nights, the first thing he told him was that he was a Yankee, trying to escape from a rebel prison; that he had three companions near by, all nearly starved; and that our only hope of escape was through his aid, and if this was denied we should have to return to prison; that we could not rely upon finding friends among the whites; that we did not ask much from him, but that he should see his friends, such as could be trusted, and ask of each something, just what could be spared, and nothing more. A few words as to where we should hide and await the preparation of food, and the fellow would be off in perfect ecstasies to communicate his secret to his fellows.

Generally every adult negro on the plantation (house-servants always excepted) would be notified that some starving Yankee prisoners were outside, and this was enough to bring everyone out of his bed, to prepare his potatoes, ash or hoe cake, or bottle of sorghum. No lights were ever seen, and seldom any noise made while they were preparing their mites. It would take from thirty minutes to an hour to roast their potatoes and hoe-cakes; then they would begin slipping out to us,

four or five in a party. Sometimes twenty negroes, male and female, would come to us from one plantation, each one bringing something to give and lay at our feet—in the aggregate, corn-bread and potatoes enough to feed us a week.

The third man went up within a hundred yards, in order to receive and communicate a signal from the leader if he should be captured while at the huts. In case of a capture by four or a less number, he was to communicate certain signals by exclamations, when it was the bounden duty of the other three to go to the house and give themselves up, in the hope of finding an unguarded moment in which not only to relieve themselves but their comrade; but if he should be captured by any number greater than four, he must communicate other signals, warning his friends to leave him to his fate.

We agreed upon a story to tell in case of surprise, and each committed every part, that there might be no contradiction, but the leader was to do all the talking when it was possible. We were not to talk above a whisper, cough or sneeze when it could be avoided, nor group together in the road; but all conferences must be held in covert

places. This was about our organization and "plan of campaign," and we solemnly pledged to each other that we would faithfully perform and heartily co-operate in it.

It was night when these deliberations were concluded, and, although but six miles from Columbia and only four from prison, we saw not a living creature during the day to disturb us. The sky had cleared off and the night came to us bright and beautiful. It was Saturday, and soon after dark we began to hear in every direction the incomparable "Ya-hoo! Ya-hoo!" and songs of the darkies going to see their wives and sweethearts. We had no idea where we were, and but little in what direction from Columbia. Besides, we had not decided what point of our lines we would attempt to reach. Three were for any point on the railroad between Atlanta and Chattanooga, as most likely to be easily reached, owing to the absence of any large Confederate force. Chisman was for Knoxville, because he had more confidence in the reports of Union men in western North Carolina. However, it was agreed that we travel west the second night, and the following day reach a decision; so toward sunset we started.

Our course led through the fields, most of them in cultivation, but we were not long in finding a "big broad highway leading down," almost in the direction we wished to go. Not far off, coming down this road, was a negro, singing, at the top of his voice:

"Massa don't know nothin', don't know nothin'—
Don't know! don't know!"

We made up our minds before he reached us that he should know something. A conference with him could do us no harm if his race was as faithful as reported, and if they were treacherous and would betray us, the sooner we found it out the better, as it was impossible to get through without their aid.

Baker stopped in a fence-corner in the field, and the rest of us retired a short distance. That wonderful song came from a wonderful negro, who pitched it to a key that probably gave his wife, who lived up the river, notice of his coming.

His melodies were abruptly terminated when Baker accosted him.

"Good-evening, uncle. Where does this road go to?"

"Down to de ribber, sah."

"Ain't you afraid to be out so late at

night, lest those Yankees down at Columbia get out and capture you?"

"No, sah. I'se not afraid of dem folks."

"If you should meet one in the road here, don't you think you would run?"

"No, sah."

"Well, sir, I am a real Yankee myself, and want your help."

"Does you?"

"I have three companions over there in the field."

"Oh, I mus' be gwine."

"Hold on a minute. We won't hurt you. We're your friends."

"Oh, I'se not afraid; but I mus' be gwine."

The word "Yankee" had sent a thrill to the fellow's heart, notwithstanding his courage, and he kept retiring, first to the fence on one side, then to the fence on the other side, we following and assuring him of our friendship; he in turn assuring us, with resolute zeal, that he wasn't a bit afraid.

But the fellow was like all others of his race we afterward met, easily flattered and credulous, and when we once turned the key to his heart he was as completely in our service as if he had been a brother.

Ten minutes afterward he was planning what we should do, and where we should go to receive the colored folks from Beck's plantation, down on the river.

We went a half mile along the road with him, then he led us across the fields, round a hill, and into a grove in the rear of a long row of cabins. Hither he soon brought not less than twenty negroes.

This may seem to many a reckless adventure, so soon after our escape; and possibly it was, but it seemed then to us unavoidable. Trusting our secret to negroes, we felt was an experiment that had to be tried, or we would not have taken any chances; for, much as we had heard about the fidelity of the blacks, none of us felt especially willing to risk his liberty, if not his life, in their hands. We knew nothing of the topography of the country, nothing of the rivers and roads, and had hundreds of miles to travel in the night-time, without compass, guide, or map. We could get no information from the whites; we must therefore have it from the blacks.

Nearly every one of them brought us something to eat—a piece of corn-bread, a yam, or a bottle of sorghum. They were a

little shy at first, but our hand-shaking and familiar address soon gained their confidence.

This first conference was, in the main, like all subsequent ones. As one old woman came up, we arose and shook her hand, she at the same time asking :

"Now, is you Yankees ?"

"Yes."

"Do Massa Linkum want to free us cullud fokes ?"

"Yes."

"Well, de Lawd bress him ; I allus thought so."

This, at the time, greatly impressed and surprised me. I had not believed that the light of liberty had reached the ignorant blacks in the interior of the South. But we found it the only subject that interested them. They recited many stories and artifices employed by their masters to impress them to the contrary, but their desire for personal betterment was so strong that they had rejected the statements of the whites, and believed that their freedom was a necessary result of the war.

As a sample of the means resorted to by the Confederates to keep the slaves in igno-

rance and fear of the Federal army, I recall the following stories told us by this first party.

Their master had said that the Yankees were fighting to take the negroes from their masters in the South, to enslave them again in the North, where they would freeze to death, or were trying to catch them to sell them to Cuba for sugar. They also wanted them for breastworks in the army, and would tie them together, men and women, and drive them in front of their white regiments in battle. The Yankees often shot negroes out of their big cannon for disobedience, and would punch out the eyes of those who would lie down or try to get away in time of battle.

Such stories were not inclined to promote a good opinion of the North among the slaves, and, while they were generally disbelieved, there can be little doubt but that they had much influence in keeping down insurrection among them during the war.

A rod to the left of where I sat with my auditors was another group, evidently more pleased and interested than mine. I think the larger number were blooming maidens, who grouped themselves around Chisman,

and his discourse was evidently ruinous to mine. The giggling of his crowd, and frequent outbursts of laughter, suppressed with both hands over the mouth, were eminently embarrassing to my sedate remarks, and my congregation fell away, one by one, until I had not a listener. Goode and Baker had had a similar experience to mine.

Leaning against a tree I listened to Chisman on the Emancipation Proclamation:

"Why, there is not one of you boys or girls a slave now, if you only knew it. You are all as free as the birds. Mr. Lincoln has made a law that nobody in this country, white or black, shall be a slave any longer; and he has called Yankee soldiers enough into the field to make a wall around South Carolina, and to make your masters let you go. We were captured in Virginia while going through the country taking the negroes away from their masters, and you help us get back to our army, and we will be down here pretty soon to tell Mr. Beck that hereafter he must hoe his own cotton.

"As soon as the Yankees reach the negroes they set them free, and tell them to go where they please, and they go up North to our cities and farms, and they hire out to

work for the man who will give them the most money. Some of the boys work on farms, some in stores, some in shops, some run cars, some go to school and get to be doctors, and preachers, and lawyers; and the girls, they don't work in the fields at all up North, but go into families, and get five dollars a week, and get the money themselves, and all they do is to cook, and sew, and play on the piano. And, by gorry, you ought to see how the negro boys and girls dress up in the North when they go to church or picnics. The boys wear long black coats, high hats, high white collars, and gold watches; and the girls wear fine red dresses, and great big feathers and red ribbons on their hats, and they ride in buggies and carry the sweetest parasols.

"And the colored men save up their money and buy fine houses and big farms, and have horses and carriages, and servants of their own, just like the white people. Then, too, when Mr. Lincoln finds an old negro man or woman who cannot work any longer, he gives him a house and all he wants to eat and wear. Why, there is a place close to Washington where Mr. Lincoln has built houses for fifteen hundred old and crippled negroes, and is feeding and clothing them.

"And it's all a lie about you having to go into the Yankee army. The white people tell you that to scare you. You do as you please about it. The Yankees won't let the girls go into the army at all. They want them to stay at home and make the clothes for the soldiers.

"Mr. Lincoln hires all the boys that want to go into the army to fight their old masters, and gives them the nicest clothes, all just alike; blue coats with brass buttons all up before, black hats with a brass eagle on each side, a yellow cord around them, and tassels hanging down behind, and the prettiest new guns, bright as a new dollar, that have great spears on the end to stick the Rebels with. It would do you good to see a negro regiment in their new clothes, marching under their flags, all stepping to the music of a brass band. And in battle they fight like devils. When they see the Rebel soldiers they give a yell and go for them like a cyclone.

"They say they have got a colored general over in Tennessee, who rides a horse, and commands ten acres of men. [I think this last remark was suggested by a story told of General Logan.]

"Why, you ought not to work another

day for your master, unless he pays you for it.

"Every one of you boys ought to run away before sun-up; go North and make a lot of money, and after the war come down here and marry these girls, and take them North to live."

Afterward, when I suggested to Chisman the doubtful propriety of such inflammatory stories, he replied: "We must have the darkies for us, and I intend they shall be"; and they were.

We not only advised, but sought advice of them.

We broke to them our purpose of trying to reach our lines in Georgia, which they unanimously opposed.

They urged that we should by all means abandon the Georgia route; maintained that the country was full of swamps in the region of the Savannah River, that the river itself was impassable without a boat, and that no boat could be found. Then there was Hood's "big army" over there, and, worse than all, the Georgia negroes would not be our friends.

"Dey is all Secesh ober dar."

"Yes," said an old man called Abraham,

"you'ens had all better go to Knoxville; dey is no big armies up dat way, and de cullud folks am all for de Yankees; an' I was up to Newbury de tuder day, an' I heard de white folks talkin' 'bout de tories in Noff Carlina, an' dey meant by dat dat dey was for de Yankees."

This conference took place a quarter of a mile south of the Saluda River, which proved to be the mysterious stream we had met the night before, four miles nearer Columbia, and we gladly accepted the proposal of these people to cross the river here in their canoes, as it would be necessary to cross whichever route we took, Georgia or Knoxville.

We were an hour in getting to the river. It was starting and stopping, talking and listening, all the way, and even when we did get there, and the oarsmen were impatiently holding the boat to the bank, some of them still hung to us in the hope of hearing something more. Every brass button that could be spared from our clothes was cut off and given them as souvenirs.

Two big burly fellows were in the canoe to row us over, and many more would have gone if we had permitted. A few united strokes shot us to the other side; the boat

was tied up to a log, and the two negroes went with us a mile and a half to show us a road in the right direction.

We made good use of our legs until morning and were encouraged beyond all expectation. Our first adventure with the negroes had been a success; we had plenty of rations for two days and some idea of the country and distances.

It was after midnight when we left the river, and we must have gone not less than fifteen miles before four o'clock, along the road leading to Laurens, in a northwesterly course. We kept the road, but passed near no houses if we could conveniently go round them. Two or three packs of hounds, an appendage found at nearly every important plantation in South Carolina, were stirred up during the night, but they made no savage demonstrations.

As soon as the chickens began to crow and lights appear in the windows, we turned to hide in the thickest woods we could find. The leaves were just falling from the trees, and we effected our concealment in this way. As soon as it was light enough for us to see, we would select a secluded spot in the woods, gather a few leaves into an old fallen tree-

top, or among some logs, spread one blanket over the leaves, put all our belongings under our heads for pillows, and then lie down together on the blanket, and spread blanket number two over us, covering our heads and all with leaves, except a small hole to breathe through. In this manner we slept when we could, and listened when we could not sleep. I will venture the remark that for the first four days and nights out of Columbia I never slept one moment; and the rest of the party slept but little if any more. So intense was the excitement, so painful the suspense, so distracted was the mind upon subjects of escape, of recapture, and of home, that sleep could not find lodgement. We had not fully made up our minds what route we would take. The negroes had greatly discouraged us in our Georgia route, and between us and Knoxville lay two great ranges of mountains, which we could not cross upon the roads, though if snow fell we could not cross any other way, and it was already well into November. For further advice for the third night, we again called upon some negroes. We found them just as ready to help, just as credulous, and, to our surprise, of the same opinion about the safest

and most practicable route to take. They reaffirmed the stories of the loyal whites in North Carolina and of the disloyal blacks in Georgia. This conference cleared up all doubts, and when we left there our faces were toward Knoxville.

Twenty-three miles were now between us and Columbia, and we had less fear and more hope.

For the next three days and nights nothing worthy of special notice happened.

On the seventh day a little incident occurred that might possibly be to our credit to omit, but, trusting to the liberality of my readers and to the weight of extenuating circumstances, I shall proceed to give it.

It was at a point between Newberry and Laurens, and, as was our custom, we had gone into concealment in the forest before daylight.

When the first one awoke it was after sun-up, and there, to the great bewilderment of all, within six feet of our heads ran a beaten path that showed signs of considerable travel. What must be done? What could be done in safety? We felt certain that to be seen in South Carolina by a white man was to be caught. Here hounds trained to the business

of hunting down men were to be found at every mile. To get up and move through the woods in broad daylight was an exposure not to be thought of, and to lie there by that path seemed one but little less hazardous. We were in a painful dilemma. While we lay there debating in a whisper what we should do, Goode whispered, with an expression full of meaning :

"Oh, my God ! look."

In a second every eye glanced to the south, and there, within fifty yards of us, came a white man along the path, with a gun on his shoulder. No time to consult, no time to cover faces, no time to resolve; he was upon us in an instant.

Few can realize our feelings. There, within six feet of us, we saw the end of our liberty; but a single glance, and it would slip away. Heaven never read more thankful hearts than ours when he passed by without seeing us. He was an old man, and his eyes were perhaps a little dim, or his mind may have been more upon squirrels than on Yankees, for he carried one in his hand, and chased another before getting out of our sight. He gave us such a fright that we could not think of leaving our tree-top to hunt an-

other place; neither could we think of sleep any more that day, for, much as we tried, the thought of our narrow escape and the possibility of another such peril entirely overcame our efforts. We lay in great suspense, wishing for night and watching for men. About the fourth hour in the afternoon, which seemed to us about the fourth day, Baker turned his head from the north, and nervously whispered:

"Boys! boys! what shall we do? I see that same man coming right back this path."

This time he was a considerable distance off when first discovered, and we had time to think and determine. After he had passed in the morning we discussed his case fully, in the light of his having seen us, and unanimously agreed that it would have been a desperate case, and required a desperate remedy. We might swear him and let him go, we might beseech him, we might threaten him, we might force him to stay with us till night; but in either case he might and probably would put a pack of hounds on our track in an hour after his release.

I shall never believe it emanated from a bad heart when Goode observed:

"Dead men tell no tales."

"Shall we do that if he sees us?" came hesitatingly from Baker.

"Do what?"

"That which Goode spoke of this morning."

"Is it the safest thing?"

"Yes."

"Then, let us do the safest."

"What with?"

"His gun."

"Shoot him?"

"No; strike him."

An innocent man's blood is a heavy load to carry through life, but the horror of Rebel prisons, and the hope of liberty and home, surmounted all other considerations, and we were wrought up to a grave resolve, if he were so unfortunate as to discover us. Thrice happy for us and for him, he again passed us by unheeded.

The boldest thing we did during the trip was to pass through the streets of Laurens. We were on the road leading to that place, and struck a stream of water running through its suburbs. In the darkness it appeared like a considerable river, and we wandered up and down the bank to find a canoe or some available stuff for a raft, without success. We

were all cowards when it came to the black portentous waters of an unknown river. Down below the ford, some distance, we found a railroad bridge on high trestlework stretching over the stream. It appeared to us that the only way to get over was to cross on the bridge or swim, and as we did not like to try the latter we started to do the former, after listening fifteen minutes for a guard. It was two o'clock in the morning, and everything in silence and slumber, when we crawled on hands and knees over the bridge and into the edge of the town. Now, thought we, it will be just as perilous to go round the town as to go directly through it; besides, if we go directly through we can keep our road, which we may have much trouble to find if we leave it. Off we started, one after the other, reaching out for dear life, in the middle of a street covered with loose sand, making no more noise than four cats. A lamp was burning at each street-corner and in many of the business-houses. These lights were vexatious, but the most embarrassing feature was the short legs of Lieutenant Goode, which were ill adapted to pedestrian matches, and unfortunately held the position of number two in the march. He was as will-

ing as could be desired, and his steps as frequent, but his measures were vastly inadequate to the occasion. Number one rapidly extended his interval, and numbers three and four closed theirs, and were then unkind if not cruel enough to take advantage of their longer legs and transpose the vigorous Irishman to the rear.

But we got through the town of four thousand inhabitants without any serious difficulty. Almost in the suburbs, and just after resuming our proper places, we came upon a half dozen persimmon trees loaded to the ground with ripe fruit. Our attention was called to them by their delicious fragrance, and I, being in the rear, could not forego the pleasure of stopping to gather a few in my hat. Chisman, being in the lead, was vexed at my conduct, and halted the march long enough to fire a volley of tender observations about the mistakes of nature in animal creation. But a handful of persimmons appeased the commander and closed the incident.

Two or three nights after leaving Laurens we got into trouble again. Goode turned out a negro from his sleep at ten o'clock at night and brought him out into a corn-field

for a conference. We told the fellow our whole story with the usual embellishments, but somehow it failed to arouse the customary enthusiasm in him. He heard us without any emotion, said his master was very hard on them, did not give them enough to eat, and that "Massa would cut his head off, sho'," if he ever found out that he had given Yankees aid.

This was the first time that we had met with discouragement from the blacks, the first time they had not manifested pleasure in helping us; it was a time, too, when we needed help more than usual, for I believe we were entirely out of provisions.

After much flattery for his prudence and caution, we prevailed upon him to promise to get us something to eat; but we must leave that field and let him hide us where he chose. This we did not hesitate to do, for the negroes had been so uniformly faithful that we had no doubts, and directed him to lead the way. Off we started, slipping through the corn and over fences, till we reached the barn-yard. We had never been hidden about buildings before, and such a retreat was not altogether in accord with our ideas of safety, yet it must be all right in a

friendly negro, and when he unlocked and opened the door to a log barn we followed him in without question.

The floor of our apartment was stuffed full of unbaled cotton, excepting a little space near the door, and the man requested us to lie down and be perfectly quiet until he came again. He then went out, shut the door, and went away. The cotton was so soft, so bed-like, that we all went to sleep and took quite a nap. When we woke up the negro had not yet returned. Suspicion began to creep upon us. What could delay him so long? We listened, pulled our way through the cotton to the cracks in the barn and looked out; but saw nothing, heard nothing. We were not more than three or four hundred yards from the planter's house, and there was a light in the window, though every negro hut was as dark as night. Could it be possible that the rascal had either abandoned or betrayed us? We could imagine no excuse for the long delay. If they had nothing to give, why did he not return to report? If they did have something to give, they had had plenty of time to prepare it.

The more we thought of it, the more frightened we were, and we all decided to leave

the barn and negro at once. We put on our accoutrements, picked up our sticks, and were ready for the march. When we tried to open the door—"Ye gods!" it was locked on the outside.

"No, no," said two or three voices at the same time, "it is not locked—he only closed it."

In an instant we were all pushing at that door as if it were coming in to crush us. Why we were so frenzied, why we crowded each other so, or why we did not combine our strength against it, I can give no reason now; but there was such distraction, such individual resolution to get out of that prison, that all reason was blind. We crowded around the door, pushing and blaming each other; dived into the loose cotton to the wall, hunting some hole for escape; then on top against the loft, with back and shoulder, we lifted with all force at the boards loaded heavily with hay; then back again to the door, where we accused each other of being guilty of knowing that the fellow locked the door, or of thinking the negro treacherous, without having the courage to say so. Each one felt that the other was responsible, or ought to be, for getting us into the trap, while the

truth was we had all gone in without a suspicion. We were "taken in," beyond all doubt. The door was locked, and for what purpose? Certainly to keep us there until he returned; and if he intended to return as a friend, why deem our confinement necessary? The case seemed clear; he had locked us there in that stronghold until he could gather force enough to capture us. If we ever got out of that barn safely, we would never trust another negro!

It seemed fully an hour after our suspicions were aroused before we heard footsteps approaching the barn. Tramp, tramp, tramp, they came, a half-dozen of them, with dogs growling around. Our hearts leaped to our mouths as the leader faintly whispered, "Shall we fight them?" Nobody answered, but we trembled from head to foot as the rusty lock creaked outside. We stood ready to be delivered when the door swung back. When it was opened, in stalked Joe, with four other black men, armed to the teeth—with corn-bread and roasted sweet-potatoes. Joe was acting in good faith all the time, and tried to explain his absence by saying that there had been a light in his master's window, and that they could not safely proceed with their

cooking until the white folks were all in bed. I think, however, from Joe's manner of conversation, that it took him about all the time he was gone to stir among the negroes and get back. We felt so good when we learned that the fellow had not been false that we did not even scold him for the fright he had given us; besides he had made considerable amends by the good quantity of excellent potatoes. We left there that night, however, firmly resolved never to get into such another snare, even if negroes did propose it.

VI

Our principal want the first few days out was meat. We could get from the negroes almost everything else we needed in sufficient quantities, but of meat we got none of any kind, from the fact that they had none themselves, nor had they, as a general rule, had any for two years, in consequence of the demands of the army. Our appetites cruelly teased us night and day for something to supply muscle. To meet this demand, two or three times, we visited hen-roosts with "felonious intent," but were each time disturbed by dogs, and out of distinguished consideration for the rest and quietude of these quadrupeds, we forebore any further enterprises of that sort. But a capital idea struck Goode one night, as we came upon a flock of geese sitting in the road.

"Say, boys! let's have a goose for tomorrow."

We could almost taste the savory "sentinel of Rome" in the very mention of him. Certainly, everybody was agreed, and the

leader led us back the road to prepare for a capture. The geese were sitting so close to a house that it was thought safer for us to drive them up the road out of hearing of the people. So at it we went, whispering "shoow, shoow, shoow," but the offended family, instead of walking quietly off at command, set up an uproarious "hut, tut, tut, tut," which succeeded in repulsing us completely. We fell back a few rods for another council, and this time it was decided that we should walk up abreast and simultaneously fire a volley of clubs into their ranks. Our walking-sticks were the very things, heavy enough to be deadly, and they were used. Whiz went the canes, bang against the fence one or two of them, and off went the geese, noisier than before, not one of them harmed. It was too bad, but enough to frighten us all away but Goode. The temptation was too great for the Irishman; he could not give up his "goose for to-morrow," and instead of running off up the road with the rest of us, he gathered his stick, and, singling out his gander, went for him. Up by the barn-yard gate they went, now across the road, now down the lane by the house, Goode's diminutive pot-legs plying vigorously, and

the old gander flapping and flopping, and making the night-silence shake with his "quack, quack, quack." Just as the enthusiastic young man was about to capture his prey, near the yard-gate, suddenly, like a peal of thunder, a pack of hounds broke from a kennel upon him. We heard the attack several hundred yards up the road, and anxiously awaited the result. The wonder is that the dogs did not tear him to pieces, for he took the right course to that end. Hardly had we turned about when we saw the frightened Irishman come flying up the road, a half dozen hounds at his heels, snapping and barking, and heard him piteously calling, in a subdued voice, "boys, boys," while, with a blanket in one hand and his cane in the other, he kept striking furiously to the right and to the left. As serious as was the occasion, gravity had more than it could bear. We were all convulsed with laughter.

"Drive off the d——d dogs!" he cried, as he ran into the midst of us, almost out of breath; "you'd laugh to see a man torn to pieces, wouldn't you?"

The dogs were as much frightened as Goode, for as soon as we showed fight with

our sticks they retreated rapidly. We called Goode "Goosey" afterward.

Meat was plenty enough after we learned how it was to be had. South Carolina, poor as it is for agricultural purposes, supplies a good many pigs, and they were fat and fine in the fall of 1864. A family of darling little porkers, weighing fifteen or twenty pounds each, might have been found almost any night, asleep with their mother, in a fence-corner or pen. It was a trifling matter to slip up and seize one of the little sleepers by the hind-legs and dash his brains out against the ground before he had time to squeal, or to take a heavy stick and knock him to his eternal sleep without waking him from his temporal. Then it was easy to bleed him with a jack-knife, and just as easy to carry him to the woods, skin, and cut out of his tender flesh whatever was desirable, and leave the carcass to the crows. Before going under the leaves for the day, and as soon as it was light enough to see we would provide a couple of stones, three inches in diameter, a tin cup of water, and quite a bundle of dry fagots from the bushes round about. With these at our heads we would go to sleep. During the day, when anyone waked

up and wanted something to eat, something warm and good, he would turn over on his face, set the Savannah tin pan upon two stones, place some dry fagots underneath, fire them with a match, put in his meat, well salted and washed, and in half the time he could get it at home he was eating his meat and potatoes, his corn-bread and gravy, with epicurean pleasure. This tin pan was a real treasure. We could fry meat, warm potatoes, and make scorched-bread coffee in it, all in the same half-hour, without washing.

One afternoon, a few miles northwest of Greenville, S. C., from our hiding in a large secluded wood, we saw a negro riding along a path and accosted him. He was delighted to meet us, and became so interested that before he left he requested the privilege of entertaining us at dinner that evening in the woods, near our place of concealment. We accepted.

The dinner was to be served at 9 P.M. He was a "yaller man" named Martin. Later in the afternoon Martin returned to us with the information that his boy Moses was "one of de smahtest boys in de Souf," and he had come to request us to allow Moses to join our party; he wanted him to

"go Noff to git larnin'." Not wishing to offend him, with a dinner in promise, we consented.

After graciously thanking us, Martin left, a very happy man, to prepare his son for the journey, saying that he had no shoes, and there were none in the family that he could wear. We seized upon this to impress upon the fond parent that Moses could not possibly go without shoes, as our route lay across the rugged mountains for more than a hundred miles.

The truth was, we never for a moment intended that the boy should go with us, as we believed a negro would be a serious impediment to us among the loyal whites of North Carolina, if there were any such to be found.

When dinner-time arrived Martin came for us, bringing with him his son, and proceeded at once to tell, in distressful tones, that he had been unable to get the boy shoes, and that he could not, therefore, become our companion. We complacently expressed our regrets, then followed him to dinner.

Under the hill, in a quiet little nook, we joined the dinner-party, composed of four middle-aged women and two other men.

After the usual salutations we surrounded the table, or rather the table-cloth spread upon the ground. There were four white plates, four cups and saucers, knives, forks, etc.; and to eat there was in the centre a nicely dressed hen, at one end a cord of ginger-bread, at the other a pot of steaming rye coffee, with pumpkin pies and other things intervening. Everything was well prepared and good, and if the merriment of our entertainers was to be received as evidence, we left them with a good opinion of Yankee capacity for food.

Our eyes were as heavy as our haversacks that night when we went upon the road. Goode was in front, and perhaps suffered his mind to recur too much to the little episodes of the evening, for he let two horsemen ride up within a hundred yards of our front before he hissed. To the left was a field, to the right an open forest, without any bushes or weeds; but the latter appearing to offer the best chances for our escape, Goode took it in a twinkling, and we after him. Twenty yards from the roadside we fell upon our faces, with heads to heels, to form the appearance of a log, and lay as still. I think the moon was shining, for it was light

enough to count the buttons upon the strangers' coats.

Chisman's heel struck me in the forehead when we heard the rattling of sabres. These belonged to two cavalrymen, and they had seen us, too. Just opposite where we lay, nearly breathless, they reined up their horses and stood gazing in our direction.

"Sam, I'll be —— if I didn't see a man."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm sure."

"Oh, I guess it might have been a cow."

"No, sir; I'll be —— if it wasn't a man."

"Well, if it was a man, where do you think he is by this time?"

"I don't know, but it was a man, sure."

"Well, it was somebody's nigger, if you did see one; le's go on."

We always thought they were afraid, or they would have ridden a little way into the woods; but when they rode on they had our full approbation. Goode lay for nearly a half hour after they left, before he could find heart enough to hiss us back upon the road. This incident was another stimulus to caution.

We longed much for the loyal whites of North Carolina, of whom we had heard so much all along the way, and we were now very near their border. We felt that as soon as we placed South Carolina at our backs our work would be almost done—that we would be nearly home. The night that we expected to pass the border we walked with perhaps more spirit than on any other occasion. We pushed right on, through branches, over the foot-hills, up the side of the Saluda Mountains, until about midnight, when we came upon a pillar of hewn limestone, standing four feet out of the ground, upon the summit, on the south face of which was inscribed "S. C., 1849," and on the north face, "N. C., 1849."

The nearer we approached North Carolina the more we had been assured of the loyalty of the people of the mountains, and that we would be safe when we got out of South Carolina. We merrily shook hands all around at the boundary stone, rested a few minutes, then skipped off down the mountain-side into North Carolina with hearts as light as homeward-bound school-boys.

It was well for us that we could not then lift the curtain that hid from us the events of

the next twenty days, or we should have felt like turning back to prison.

The first night after entering the State we had serious trouble among ourselves. We happened upon a negro who was going to start next morning for Asheville, sixty miles away. He was going to drive four mules, and fill up his wagon with stripped corn-blades with which to feed them. His master had a brother living four miles north of Asheville. This fellow entreated us to join him, and said he would cover us up in his wagon with the fodder, haul us to Asheville in two days, take us through town to his master's brother on the other side, getting there in the night, unhitch his mules and give them to us, steal another one from his master's brother, and we could all ride to the Yankees at Bull's Gap, twenty miles beyond, the same night. Two wanted to join the negro and two did not. Chisman and I thought that since we had comeso far successfully we had better not assume any unnecessary hazards to save a little labor and time. Baker and Goode thought it a rare chance. We all had confidence enough in the negro, but there were these difficulties apprehended by Chisman and myself: There were two

thousand Confederate troops at Asheville, and foraging parties were daily putting out on all the roads for many miles around. One of these parties might seize the fodder of the negro and find us underneath it, or might search the wagon for contraband goods; or someone might get into the wagon along the road to ride and come down on top of us. These were our principal reasons for objection; but, besides, we much doubted that the Yankees were only twenty miles from Asheville. Then, we also feared that if we were captured in company with a negro, it would be an excuse for the enemy to hand us over to the civil authorities, to be dealt with as kidnappers instead of prisoners of war. This last reason led to a spirited dispute, which, I am ashamed to say, culminated in blows, which came very near causing a division of the party. The matter was dismissed, or suspended, however, and we journeyed along as before, leaving the negro behind.

The next night began a chapter of troubles. We came to a respectable-looking farmhouse sitting very near the roadside. Houses of this class we had generally gone around, but since we were now in North Carolina, in

the land of the loyal, after listening a few minutes, the leader decided to move on past the house. It was about four o'clock in the morning and nothing seemed to be astir or awake as we moved up silently in the bright moonlight; but, when just opposite the front door, and when least expected, a pack of hounds broke from under the porch and were upon us in an instant. They were upon us too soon and too fierce and numerous for us to think of flying, so we hastily "rallied by fours," to use a military term, placed our backs together, thus facing in all directions, and began a vigorous battle with our clubs. While thus engaged, a man in his night-clothes opened the front door within thirty feet of us and stood there, afraid to speak or retire. We could less stand his eyes than the dogs, and immediately broke up our position of defence and ran off up the road, striking as we went.

Having reached the woods on the other side of the house and driven off the dogs, we stopped a moment for consultation. That we had been seen this time by a white man was certain, and that he had a pack of fierce hounds had also been amply shown. It was also nearly morning, and at daylight our

tracks could be easily recognized and scented. Again, what must we do? Everybody will say as we did: "Why, leave the road and get just as far away from there before day as possible, and in as puzzling a manner as possible."

At a short distance we came to a brook flowing across the road. We went up the stream perhaps a half mile; then, to elude the dogs, stepped into the water and waded down to the starting-point and to about half a mile beyond, where we left the water for the fields bordering and in sight of the road, which we kept as our guide till morning.

We labored hard for an hour and a half, and I think we must have walked or run at least five miles in that time; and we might have gone on even farther had we not come to a cross-roads, where there were a few unimportant houses about, including a blacksmith's shop and country store and, a short distance to the southwest, a rich-looking mansion, with two negro huts in the background. It was these negro huts that induced us to stop, for they had become distressingly scarce along the road; so much so that for the last two nights we had been bothered

about getting enough to eat ; and, as we expected soon to enter the heart of the Blue Ridge, this was perhaps the last opportunity we should have to get aid from the negroes. Somehow or other the " good Union people " we had heard so much about were always a little ahead.

We went into concealment as near to the huts as we dared and spent another day of extraordinary suspense and anxiety. Every dog that barked to the south of us was a hound following our trail ; every squirrel that leaped upon the leaves was a man's foot-fall. Nobody had anything to eat but shelled corn, yet nobody got hungry that day ; none of us had slept a moment the night before, yet nobody's eyes were closed or ears stopped for the twelve long hours we lay in a fallen chestnut tree-top. If one turned over or stretched out his legs, or drew them up so as to rustle the leaves, his three companions would rail at him. Although concealed in the midst of a forest, in an excellent place, and, perhaps, not a human being within a quarter of a mile all day, we could not get rid of our fright ; for those two eyes that had looked at us from the door the morning before, followed, haunted, and

stared at us all the time. They were in our eyelids, they were under the blanket, they were in the azure sky, everywhere, like devilish sentinels to ensnare us. But when night came we still lay under our leaves, unmolested by either dogs or men.

About ten o'clock our leader, with number two, started for the huts, dodging through the corn as but few times before. The expedition came near being abandoned after all, on account of our fright the morning before; but, fearing we could find nothing to eat in the mountains, we entered upon it as our last chance. A negro was found without much effort, and led out into the field for a consultation. For ten minutes after the party joined him he was frightened out of his wits, if he ever had any.

He was really a very stupid fellow with an impediment in his speech, which made it difficult to understand what he said. We made out, however, that the community was in a state of excitement over the appearance of four supposed Yankee fugitives, in the early morning before, at "Massa Ross's," and that Captain Pace, of the Home Guards, had his company out upon the roads that very moment watching for them; and more-

over the boy had a brother, Reuben, who "knowed a heep moah" and could tell us all about it.

"And where is Reuben?"

"Lawd bless you, he's on gua'd wid a gun watchin' at de cross-road foah de Yankees."

"Who put him there?"

"Massa Cap'n Pace. And I got to take his place in a half ouah."

The fellow said he would go and tell Reuben about our being down in the field, and he knew that Reuben would come to us, "for he do want to see de Yankees de wust."

We dismissed him after exacting from him a promise to break the secret to none but Reuben, and told him to send Reuben to us at the water-gap. A little doubtful of Reuben's admiration for Yankees, from the fact that he was standing guard to capture them, we withdrew fifty yards from the gap and lay down under some bushes to await development.

The night brought us the confirmation of our fears that the country was all astir over the appearance of men supposed to be Federal soldiers. Would it be prudent for us to lie within gunshot of the enemy and wait

for a negro to stack his gun and visit us, the very objects of his alarm, as a friend? If ever so desirous of helping us, how could he, with any safety to himself or us, in the very presence of the enemy, who were likely to call him at any moment for duty? But before us frowned the inhospitable mountains, more than a hundred miles across, and we could not think of entering them the last of November with scarce a pint of shelled corn to the man. Then, if we attempted to march that night without more reliable information than we had received, what moment might we not expect to be fired on or halted by some lurking lookout!

Under these discouraging circumstances we smoked and waited for the coming of Reuben, while the sharp, shrill notes of countless katydids poured forth unceasingly, reminding us of the whippoorwills of the Rapidan, and adding much to our loneliness.

"Listen," said Baker. "I hear somebody tramping through the stubble. It may be Reuben."

"Yes; I hear it plainly," responded all three; and soon the form of a monstrous-looking individual was seen slipping across

the field. Straight to the water-gap he went and whistled a few times gently.

Satisfied that it must be Reuben, we went to him. He was a very different man from the one who had been there before. Reuben was forty years old, he said—a laugh-and-grow-fat sort of a darky, round, and full of vanity; a regular Count Fosco, all the time in a silly laugh. In a perfect convulsion of laughter he seized our hands, two at a time, and gave them each a regular lover's squeeze, holding on and crushing away for a minute or two.

"What is the matter with you?" inquired Chisman, a little piqued.

"Why, you see, ole massa—ha, ha, ha, ha—old massa—ha, ha, ha, ha—has me tryin' to kotch you gemmen, for two hours—ha, ha, ha, ha——."

"Well hush up, you fool. Quit your laughing and tell us about it," replied Chisman, rather vigorously.

"What! Kotch you gemmen! Why, sah, I'd radder kotch my grandmudder runnin' from de debbil—ha, ha, ha."

"But, sir, we beg of you to quit laughing so, for someone may hear you and it may lead to our capture."

"What! Yoa capture! Why one of you gemmen might take a big rock and run ebry man home Massa Cap'n Pace's got, and me too, if I was on gua'd like I was. Ha, ha, ha, ha."

We were all out of patience with Reuben before we got enough laughter out of him to enable him to talk intelligibly. Then he proceeded in his way to tell us, as his brother had in part, how Massa Ross had seen four men, whom he took for Yankees, pass his house a little before daylight that morning. Captain Pace had been notified of this fact and had called out his company of men to watch for us that night, and had been assured by Ross that the strangers could hardly have passed the cross-roads, up by "my massa's," before light; and it was along the road from the cross-roads to Ross's that fifteen men were posted with guns to watch for somebody—evidently us.

The war having called every able-bodied male between sixteen and sixty into the army, the remaining old men and boys over the country were organized into emergency companies, and armed to repel raids, suppress insurrections, and for such other emergencies as might arise.

Pace was the captain of one of these companies, and his actions on this occasion, perhaps his first official duty, were ludicrously described by Reuben. He said the captain was mounted on an old white horse, and galloped from post to post, armed with a sabre, two revolvers, and a shot-gun, and once had a piece of artillery mounted behind him, but he took that back.

To be sure of a force adequate for the capture of four disarmed Yankees, the gallant Pace had called three or four trusty negroes to supply the places of absentees. Two or three times the brave captain rode up to Reuben with:

"Now, Reuben, remember to 'halt' them three times, and if they don't then stop, fire at 'em and aim low. Look carefully and be still, and if we don't catch the rascals to-night, why, call me a coward."

Reuben was just the man for us to see, for he had intelligence enough to advise and humor enough to cheer us. His first advice was not to think of trying to travel that night. He did not know how far the report had spread about there being Yankees in the country, and the Rebels might be on the lookout for us at some other point; people

were likely to be unusually watchful that night, anyhow, and he wanted to talk with us a "long time," and knew a place to hide us, for the next day, "that would puzzle our shadows to find us." We decided to remain as he advised, and the next thing was something to eat. For thirty-six hours we had had little but shelled corn, and now that we had agreed to lie over a day, and to be so securely hidden, we began to feel some promptings concerning a change of diet. Upon this point we sobered Reuben effectually, for we treated of a subject that vitally interested him.

"Can you give us something to eat, Reuben? We're mighty hungry."

"Oh, yes, sah; git you something to eat, sho; but, gemmen, massa mighty hard on us; doesn't gib us hardly nuffin to eat; but, gemmen, you shill have plenty to eat, if I has to steal fo' you—and, golly, I'se good at dat."

Then, remembering that he had been with us an hour, and that they might miss him up at the cross-roads, and involve him in suspicious circumstances, he hurried us off to a large shelving rock, covered with a chestnut-tree top, a place familiar to other darkies of

the plantation, and leaving us there, said that if he could not come again soon with something to eat, he would send another colored man.

Chuckling over the good joke of standing guard for us and hiding us, all in the same hour, Reuben started in a bear's gallop down the declivity to his post of duty, and we heard nothing more from him until after midnight, when he returned with a small piece of bread and three cold potatoes.

He explained that under the condition of things about the house it was unsafe for him to cook, but promised that next morning, in preparing his own breakfast, he would arrange bountifully for us. He remained but a few minutes, and we did not see him again until two o'clock the next afternoon, when he came slipping to us with six roasted sweet potatoes in the bosom of his shirt, and a multitude of apologies.

Neither the dinner nor the apologies were satisfactory. The promised breakfast had not come at all, and the late dinner was vastly inadequate to appease our hunger. We heaped complaints upon him, said that he had induced us to remain under promise that we should be provided for, and that we

were now hungrier than when he met us. He renewed his promise that at night we should be well supplied, and soon took his leave without a single laugh during his visit.

The rest of the afternoon was spent in discussing, in whispers, the comparative excellence of various foods. All the luxuries of the land were summoned before our imaginations.

We had a good time flirting with our fancies, but the outcome was not of a character to bring relief to our appetites.

About eight o'clock Reuben returned, with his brother and two women, bearing a small quantity of bread and potatoes and a pot of cabbage boiled with bacon, but by some misfortune the bacon had been lost in their journey through the woods—so they said.

"Golly, gemmen," said Reuben, we's got you's a pot of mighty good cabbage—we wus gwine to hab it for dinner to-morrow, but my wife said she'd cook it for youens."

There was the cabbage, submerged in the liquor and still warm and delicious. Too hungry to empty it into our tin pan or to make wooden forks to lift it out, too hungry to wait a moment for polite preparation, into

the liquor we went with thumbs and fingers, and they continued to go in and out with astonishing rapidity.

Big three-hundred-pound Reuben stood near by, "dumb as a sheep before her shearers," to see such a rapacious onslaught upon his pot of cabbage. He felt so sure that it would be enough for our suppers that when he saw it so hastily disappear, to be closely followed by the last of his bread and potatoes, he seemed to regard us as supernatural beings and surely as unwelcome guests. The poor fellow and his friends seemed much embarrassed, but said it was all they could spare ; and perhaps it was.

It was but six miles to the gap where Green River debouches from the peaks of the Blue Ridge, and where the road upon which we were travelling crowds between the river and the cliff in its course to Asheville, and where Reuben had informed us that the Confederates maintained a guard for the arrest of deserters and refugees. Eight miles farther on, at the village of Flat Rock, according to Reuben, was a military post, where a considerable force was kept for police duty throughout that mountain district.

He gave us directions how we might avoid both of these places.

Disappointed, and discouraged in not being able to recruit our provisions, we decided to resume our journey with nothing in our haversacks but some corn we had parched through the day, trusting in Him who feedeth the ravens to show us something that would sustain life.

Captain Pace lived on the road yet before us, half a mile, and Reuben thought it judicious not to pass along by his house. We were disposed to act on his suggestion and bade our friends farewell, with no intention of disturbing the gallant warrior resting from his labors of the night before, if possible. So we pulled off over the hill until blockaded by ledges and laurels, and then went down in the valley near the road and tried it, but the briers and bushes confronting us there induced us to take the road by the gentleman's house at all hazards.

It was close at hand when we stepped into the highway, after ten o'clock.

We stopped several minutes to listen, but, seeing no light and hearing no noise, started quietly to pass. It was with a feeling of re-

lief that we cleared the house and stable without disturbing even the dog, and the leader was beginning to set his feet down with assurance, when suddenly he recoiled even back to number two, at the appearance of a man in his front, not twenty feet away.

So suddenly did this undesirable meeting come upon the leader, that he had neither time nor power to signal or take to flight. Meeting a man face to face upon a public highway, within two hundred yards of an officer's residence, was an event not prepared for, because not expected. The halting in front without signal caused the intervals to be closed up in an instant, and there we stood, breast to back, stiff and straight as four statues. The man was evidently as much frightened as we were, for, after halting a moment, he began to shy round us as far as the fence would let him, and when directly opposite our flank and still stepping sideways, he stammered out spasmodically:

"W-h-o a-r-e y-o-u?"

The leader, slowly stretching forth his hand and stick like a spectre, replied, in ghostly, guttural tone:

"M-o-v-e o-n."

The man picked himself up like a steel-trap and made an admirable flight up the road, where he precipitately entered Pace's gate and front door, and we never heard anything more of him.

Reuben had prepared us for considerable adventure that night, but for only a small portion of what was in store.

Six miles ahead was the Green River Gap, which if we found guarded, as we expected, we must pass by, closely hugging the river. Flat Rock and the pickets had to be passed by taking to the woods.

After our thirty-six hours' rest we hurried on with good speed, and two hours brought us beneath the frowning heights of the Blue Ridge.

We found Green River a small stream with rocky bottom and swift, noisy current. A wooden bridge across the stream was reached a short distance from the Gap, which Reuben had informed us was not guarded, and, having confidence in his statement, we ventured over it after a slight reconnoissance. Across the bridge, our road put off a short distance to meet another highway that came there to get through the mountains, then curved round to the pass and narrow defile

described to us as the guards' station. As we approached the spot, we saw a flickering light by the roadside.

From our point of view the river and the road at the fire seemed almost one, and our hearts grew faint.

Mountains are dismal things in the night. There they were before us, apparently reaching half-way to heaven, and forming what seemed to us at that moment an unsurmountable wall between hope and home. To scale their rugged heights in the night was out of the question.

To pass that bayonet in the road was very full of peril, and would not have been attempted if there had been any other course open to us. But there was none ; and clinging to the river, to the very water's edge, we glided like a mist up the stream, squatting at every roll of a pebble or crack of a weed.

We approached within a hundred feet of the guard, rested upon our knees, watched, listened, and whispered.

The soldier had a little fire built against the side of the cliff, and was sitting with his back to the river, his head resting upon his hands and knees and his gun lying across

his lap, as if asleep. In this position we watched him five minutes, then decided to try to slip by him.

At it we went, sliding and dragging ourselves along, feeling every inch of the way for loose stones or dry weeds, breathing as noiselessly as the rocks, with eyes all the time fixed upon the man, who might at one time have stretched himself up and driven us through with his bayonet.

We thus successfully passed him, regained the road, and headed for Flat Rock.

The moon came up after midnight, and when we got into the neighborhood of Flat Rock it was well up into the heavens, breaking out ever and anon through the hurrying clouds. We left the road for a mile-and-a-half pull through the woods in passing the village. The tangled underbrush and rough surface we encountered made our progress so slow and difficult that we became much discouraged, and two or three times consulted whether we should not brave the road. But after crossing one that led to the right, Chisman and Goode, who were in the rear, came rushing breathlessly forward with the information that we had come near running over a man sitting by the road, Chisman

averring that he could have struck him over with his cane if he had had a mind. This incident served to make us continue our course through the woods.

Thus we kept on until we felt assured that we had cleared the village, but our anxiety to reach the neighborhood of Hendersonville that night, where Reuben had told us we should find some negroes and food, might have misled our judgment. At all events we entered the road too soon.

Ahead of us a short distance we at once perceived in the moonlight an old dilapidated building of some sort, sitting by the roadside. We stopped and listened several minutes, as was our custom, but upon hearing and seeing nothing, went along unsuspiciously in our regular order. But there were eyes upon us much nearer than we thought. The old building sat with its end to the road, and very near it, like a toll-house, and just as the leader came up with it—I tremble now as I write it—out stepped four men at our very side. The moment our eyes fell upon them we saw that one had a sword at his side, and the other three had cartridge-boxes on. Of course we all stopped mechanically, for the surprise had

paralyzed us. The man with the sword spoke:

"Good-morning, gentlemen."

The leader responded, "Good-morning, sir."

"Are you travelling?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where are you going?"

"Going home, sir."

"Where do you live?"

"Up in the north part of Henderson County."

"You are soldiers, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir."

"What regiment do you belong to?"

"Eighteenth North Carolina."

"Where is your regiment now?"

"It's at Charleston."

"Who's your colonel now? I believe I don't know."

"James Dawson."

"Were you all in the fight at John's Island the other day?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, yes, I believe your colonel was wounded there—wasn't he?"

"Well, I don't know whether you would consider him wounded or not; his horse was

killed and fell on him and bruised him badly, so that he has not been on duty since."

And so the questions and answers proceeded in a friendly spirit for some time, until I began to recover, and feel some hope that he might let us pass. Every question was promptly answered, and not the slightest disposition shown by our inquisitor to challenge the truthfulness of the answers. Our scheme was working well, as we thought, but as we began to indicate a start the officer drew his sword and said, "Well, we'll keep you till morning, anyhow."

I was resigned; so was Chisman and Baker; and everybody else would have been under the circumstances but Goode. He alone saw the opportunity. Little did we think, as his short legs vexed us in the streets of Laurens, or as we often laughed at him about the gander, that he was yet to be our deliverer. He stood behind, dumb as the rocks, until he saw that he was going to be surrendered; then he bolted back the road like a wild horse, the rest of our party following at the same pace. We heard the officer crying out, "Halt! halt!" and commanding his men to get their guns, but unheeding we went like the wind till we reached

the bushes and plunged into them; nor did we stop then, but onward we hurried, over logs and ledges, through bushes and briers, stopping not to listen for our pursuers. We had heard the negroes say that when the Rebels got after the Union men the latter always ran to the mountains. Not knowing what better to do, we broke for one also.

It was a spur of the Blue Ridge, known locally as Glassy, apparently isolated from the general range, and standing off and towering a thousand feet above the wooded hills that surround it, like a colossal sentinel. To this mountain, a mile away, we ran without a single stop. At its base we sat down upon a log for consultation.

It was now about three o'clock in the morning. The wind had risen to quite a gale, and the clouds were thickening up fast. We deemed it certain that our adventure with the guard would cause the entire post to be aroused and put upon the lookout.

What direction our road continued among the hills or peaks we had not the slightest information of. Even where the village lay, or whether we had passed it, was impossible to determine from the apparently unbroken forest.

We decided to make no further effort to pass the place that morning, but to scale the mountain for observation the following day. If dogs were to be put upon our trail they could follow us in one direction as well as the other.

We were much fatigued by our exertions and the excitement of the night, though not a single reference was made to our condition or the dilemma that involved us. We discussed the solution with reference only to safety and subsistence.

Having reached a conclusion, we began to drag ourselves leisurely up the side of Glassy. The wind was from the northeast, and at four o'clock it was raining. At five o'clock it was pouring in torrents. At seven o'clock snowing.

We had reached the summit and had been standing around the trunks of the trees seeking shelter for two hours when the snow came. Chisman and I were wrapped in our blankets, but Goode and Baker stood shivering in hardly enough clothing to cover their bodies.

Everyone was wet as wet can be, and the rapidly falling temperature had chilled us through and through. It was a blue time. For many minutes at a time not a word was

spoken as the merciless wind howled and swayed the stunted trees over our heads and lodged the driven snow in crusts on our sides and in our hair. Then Goode and Baker said they must have a fire or perish. Chisman and I said they could not have a fire, for the smoke would betray us. They gathered sticks and logs to the side of a cliff, and would have fired them had we not prevented it by force. They piteously begged for fire, but we sternly refused them.

In the extremity of human endurance there is neither conscience nor compassion; so we felt and so we acted.

Daylight disclosed to us the condition of the country for miles around. To the west and north were innumerable wooded hills or peaks, with here and there a small clearing, and two or three pretentious-looking mansions. But neither the village nor our road, which had been our chief purpose in coming onto the mountain could be discovered.

Our failure to discover the line of our road, or our position with respect to the village of Flat Rock, added much to our discomfiture, and it was discussed whether we had not better leave the mountain and make our way over the wooded hills until we at least found

our road, as it was probable we should be unable to find it after night. The situation was so confounding that we did not decide upon anything that day. Our condition was truly deplorable. Having had insufficient food for three days, and nothing at all to eat since the evening before but parched corn, exhausted by the heavy night's march, sleepy, wet, freezing, driven from our course to an unknown mountain by our enemies, lost without a guide, compass, or map, and the snow coming down as a certain snare to our feet, we were in great distress. All the forenoon we lingered about the bleak summit, now sitting, now leaning against a tree, now walking to another.

There comes a time in the affairs of all men when life loses its value. To us, it then seemed near at hand. It was a time when the stoutest heart must surrender.

We must have food, we must have warmth, we must have information; and yet it seemed that we could have nothing but capture or death.

To have gone from our hiding in South Carolina and given ourselves up would have been a great trial, but our passionate desire to escape, fed as we approached the

North by the hope of success, put such a consideration in western North Carolina entirely beyond even question ; and unsurmountable as the difficulties appeared, such an alternative was not mentioned.

It ceased snowing about ten o'clock, and by noon the clouds had sufficiently broken up to let the warm rays of the sun drop down upon us for a few seconds at a time, though the wind had abated nothing of its fury.

At one o'clock we all sat down by the south face of a sheltering rock, Chisman and I wrapped in one blanket, and Goode and Baker in the other, and, leaning against the rock, actually slept two hours. In the meantime the clouds had cleared away, and the snow had been rapidly melting ; an hour later it was all gone.

We had neither seen nor heard a human being during the day. After all it was a question whether the storm had not shielded us from dogs and men.

Refreshed by sleep, our spirits revived, but with them came the keen tooth of hunger.

We wandered about near the summit looking for chestnuts or wild grapes, but found none.

In the evening we discovered, near the

base of the mountain, upon its southwest face, a small cove that had in it a clearing in which we could see was some sort of growing vegetation, that we decided was turnips.

Then we discussed the merits of turnips—tender, sweet, juicy, purple-topped turnips—there was nothing better under the sun!

Observing no house near, the temptation grew so strong that about five o'clock we determined to slip down through the bushes and get some.

Having arrived within a short distance of the patch, we discovered that the crop was cabbages instead of turnips; so disappointment brooded over us again.

However, cabbages were good enough, and we wanted them as much as we did the turnips. Goode was detailed to get a supply, and he sallied forth, leaving the rest of us concealed in the laurel-bushes at the head of the cove. He cautiously crawled through the pole-and-brush fence, and while engaged in cutting off the first head of cabbage a white woman hallooed at him from the opposite side of the patch. Her presence being entirely unsuspected made the shock so great as to cause the Irishman to leave broken

in the cabbage the only knife-blade in the party, and come rushing headlong back to the bushes without the slightest effort at a reply to the woman, and with the unique exclamation, as he dashed in, "And it is thim winches that would capture us now."

Meanwhile we had observed from our hiding three white women, instead of one, who continued to shout after Goode all manner of accusations, in a merry, friendly spirit.

The girls stood a few minutes in conversation, then, laughing and talking loudly among themselves as they came, headed round the fence in our direction. It was quite evident from their manner that they were coming directly to the bushes where we were. We were not long in deciding what to do. If we ran off up the mountain they would see us all and give out the fact. The three women could not capture us, and, after we had talked with them, they could only give out the fact. Now was the opportunity to investigate the Union sentiment in the mountains. To my lot fell the task of leading in the conversation. On they came in their giggling glee to within twenty feet of us, when they stepped into an avenue that

opened full upon all of us sitting on a log. Expecting to see a neighbor's boy, when they saw four careworn, repulsive-looking strangers, they shrank back and began a hasty retreat. Hurriedly leaving the log, I addressed them:

"Halloo, girls! Don't be frightened—we won't hurt you."

"Who are you?" they inquired.

"We are soldiers."

"What kind of soldiers?"

"Confederate soldiers, of course."

"Well, you ought to be engaged in better business."

"What better business can we be at?"

"Picking huckleberries."

"Why, I believe you're a Yankee."

"No, I ain't," said my interlocutor; "but I'm no Secesh."

"How's that; not a Yankee and not a Secesh. What are you?"

"I believe in tendin' to my own business and lettin' other people's alone."

"But would you have the Yankees overrun the South, steal our negroes, and rob us of our property?"

"Yes, if you don't quit this fightin' and killin'. You all fetched on this war. For a

few niggers you've driven this country to war, and force men into the army to fight for you who don't want to go, and you've got the whole country in such a plight that there's nothin' goin' on but huntin' and killin', huntin' and killin', all the time.''

And so she continued to earnestly denounce the war, and the South as the responsible agent, until we felt assured that it was safe to disclose our identity.

Then I continued: "Girls, I have told you falsely. We are not Confederate soldiers, but Yankee soldiers, who have escaped from a Rebel prison at Columbia, and are trying to reach our lines at Knoxville; we are also very cold and very hungry, have lost our way, and, most of all, want to find some Union man who will guide us through the mountains. Can you help us?'' We also referred to running into the guard at Flat Rock the night before, which incident they had heard discussed during the day, and which cleared their minds of all suspicion that we were impostors.

By this time our party had all left the log and had joined the girls, who stood close together in the open.

We came together as old friends meet, with exuberant hope, and a feeling of utter

dependence on the one side and an earnest sympathy on the other. They did not declare their sympathy nor avow their friendship, but there was in their simple manner, in the silent language of their eyes—that could not be false—that which assured us from the outset that they were absolutely true.

They at once expressed themselves confident of being able to find us a guide to Knoxville, and said they would do all for us they could. Martha, who generally spoke for the sisters, then addressing the youngest, a bright-eyed girl of sixteen, said: "Alice, run down to the house and see if you can get something for these gentlemen to eat."

The shy young girl, who had not spoken a word, received the request with a merry sparkle of the eye, that bespoke her pleasure in the doing, and, turning quickly about, sprang away down the mountain. She went as only the cheerful go, skipping with nimble feet over logs and ledges, swaying her lithe body through the bushes, intent upon her cherished purpose of speedily bringing relief.

While Alice was gone, Martha proceeded to tell us how thickly we were beset with dangers, and that she thought she could extricate

us, stating that there were about sixty Confederate soldiers at Flat Rock, who were scouring the country for the arrest of deserters. Half the community were zealous Rebels, and they were under suspicion of being in sympathy with Yankees, and were closely watched. Their brother Alex had deserted from the Confederate army, and had been concealed by them for eighteen months, and they would undertake to conceal us until they could procure a guide—if we would promise to be careful and do as they directed in all things. We felt like falling at her feet.

In the meantime Alice returned, bearing in her dainty checked apron two thick corncakes, baked three in a skillet, with the prints of the baker's fingers in the upper crust, even yet a little warm from the dinner, and having been sandwiched with a liberal supply of butter.

The bread was good enough for a prince, but the dear girl made us laugh for joy as she handed us each two large red apples, large as tin cups, the richest, the juiciest, the sweetest queen of the orchard.

The ardor with which we despatched our food impressed them and quickened their

sympathies in our behalf. "Yes," said Martha, "we will go to-night and see if we can't find you a guide, and the weather is so cold we will arrange to take you into our house after dark." Going into their house to spend the night was not in accord with our ideas of safety, but we had promised to obey directions, and held our tongues.

It was near sundown when the girls left us to prepare for our hiding, and before going they pointed out a place where we should meet them at dark.

When they had gone we returned to our log in the bushes and summed up the situation. It seemed full of hope. Not one of the party suggested a doubt of the faithfulness of the girls; none was felt, nor could be felt, from the unmistakable evidence we had seen. We entirely forgot our chilled condition in our transports of joy in being under the care and guidance of friends.

VII

THE surname of our new friends was Hollingsworth. There were five sisters, all at home. Their only brother, Alex, had been forced into the Confederate army, had deserted after six months, and been concealed by the sisters for eighteen months, but had become so tired of hiding that he had surrendered himself, returned to the army, and was at that time in the trenches at Petersburg, Va. The two older sisters, Mary Ann and Elisha, were married, and as their husbands were both in the Confederate army, they had returned home during their husbands' absence. Martha was twenty-four, Elizabeth was twenty-two, and Alice sixteen years of age.

Their father and mother were old and feeble, and were tenants of Colonel Charles G. Memminger, who, from February, 1861, to June, 1864, was Secretary of the Confederate Treasury. His palatial residence stood but a mile from the Hollingsworth home.

Elizabeth was in the service of the Memmingers.

A little after dark, Martha and Mary came for us. They had arranged to take us to the garret of their dwelling, and told this sort of story about their father: They said he was an old man and loved the Union, but he lived in a Rebel neighborhood, was tenant of a Rebel landlord, and had already been arrested a time or two upon suspicion of harboring deserters and refugees, and if anything should come of our concealment in their house, they wanted their father to be able to swear that he knew nothing at all about it. They therefore enjoined upon us that we should be quiet and circumspect about the house unless we had notice that their father was away.

We started for the house, following thirty paces behind, with instructions that if we heard them shout "Who are you?" we should quickly hide. Thus they led us up in the rear of an old log building that stood in the same enclosure with the house, and not more than a hundred feet away to the south. Here we crouched while the girls called up Tige, their fierce dog, and hastened into the house with him. In another moment

Martha was back with the unwelcome intelligence that a company of neighbors, all Southern sympathizers, were in the house, and that we could not enter until they had gone. Then she conducted us to the north side of the old building, and, gently opening the door that faced the dwelling, told us to enter, and be as quiet as possible.

We found the place nearly filled with stripped corn-blades, which were quickly made into a soft, warm bed. Here we lay huddled together for an hour, listening to the merry peals of laughter up at the house, when a gentle tapping took us to the door, to find Elisha (whom the sisters called Lisha) with a pot of steaming-hot rye-coffee. Handing it, with a tin cup, through the door, she hurried back to the house. Our bodies had been so long chilled that after drinking this hot coffee—quite a pint to the man—our nerves went into such a riotous state that to prevent a noisy rustling of the fodder we had to leave our bed and stand upon our feet. We really felt colder than when upon the mountains. It seemed as though our joints would shake asunder, and our jaws pounded away with such persistent energy that, despite our situation, it provoked some

mirth. Chisman afterward affirmed to the girls that he had to place his head between the logs of the barn to keep his jaws from shaking out his teeth.

The girls were much more exercised for our comfort than we were. In fact, our condition had so vastly improved that the cold but little concerned us, and we should have been quite willing to quit our shelter for the sharp, crisp night-air, if it had been necessary to the forwarding of our journey.

About eleven o'clock Martha slipped to our door to inform us that they had perfected arrangements to take us into the house at once. This was a story-and-a-half cottage, with its front side facing the old building where we lay. There was a single door in the middle, that opened into a hall, directly in front of which rose the stairway.

She instructed us to draw off our boots, and when they began singing at the door, with belongings in hand we were to run, one at a time, to the door, into the hall, up the stairs, and into the left-hand room, making the least possible noise; but if they suddenly stopped singing before all had entered, the one *en route* should hastily retreat to the fodder.

We put ourselves in order and patiently awaited the signal. We had not long to wait. Soon there broke from the door indicated such a stream of melodies as is seldom heard away from the mountains; loud, clear, vigorous, ringing and swelling out upon the night-air like the chiming of bells, the words chosen being those of Dr. Hart's old familiar hymn, "Come Ye Humble Sinners, Poor and Needy."

One by one we shot up to the house, and, as I bounded along, I could but smile at the words of the old song, never before so well appreciated, and which seemed fully as pertinent to the occasion as to the person.

Up the stairs we hurried and into the room as directed, and there, "God bless the women, every one," in the absence of a stove, in the middle of the room sat a large iron kettle full of live coals. Falling to our knees and bending our half-frozen bodies over the genial heat, we felt toward our benefactresses all the gratitude our poor hearts could hold.

The singers were Martha, Mary, and Elizabeth, while Lisha entertained the visitors, and Alice stood guard in the hall to see

that none of them came to witness the performance.

As soon as we were housed above, one of the girls shouted, "Oh, let's quit this, it's too cold," and through the hall and into the room below they ran, scolding the company for their want of appreciation of the serenade.

Fun went on downstairs until midnight before the visitors took their leave. Soon afterward the girls came upstairs, went into their own chamber, rustled about awhile, then came on tiptoe into ours.

Their old mother soon followed, to bid us welcome to her house, bearing in her hand two letters from her son Alex, who was in the Confederate army.

Sitting upon the floor around the kettle of coals, we resumed our discussion of the guides. Martha had already told us upon the mountain that they were bad men, though not by nature — and having been forced into the Confederate army, and soon deserting, they had been chased about the mountains for two years, sleeping in caves, barns, or wherever they could, getting their food from the woods, and by theft for the most part; they had become demoralized,

daring, and desperate, and had many crimes charged to them. Furthermore, the Confederate Government had a standing offer of a reward of $1,000 for the arrest of the leader of the gang, who was the one depended on to become our guide. She had also informed us that they were well-armed, and that their long experience in hiding had made them very adroit in eluding their pursuers.

The description given of the men convinced us that they would make safe guides, if not agreeable companions, and we urged the girls to make an effort to bring us together with that object in view.

Among the scant furniture of the room I had observed that the bed was rather peculiarly constructed. A temporary staff had been nailed to each post, ascending to within three inches of the ceiling, and stretched over the tops of these staffs was a white muslin canopy.

When it was finally decided that we should retire for the night, the girls rose and carried the bed to the other corner of the room, thus uncovering a scuttle-hole to the garret. Placing a chair upon a table, one of them mounted it and drew a ladder from

the garret, by which we were requested to ascend to our beds.

We went up, drew the ladder after us, the bed below was slipped back to its place, and the girls put off to bed—so we thought. But Martha and Lisha, at that time of night, left their home and walked six miles through the mountains and back again, in search of the guide they had promised. They had not intimated to us that they contemplated the journey that night, nor had we expected it before the following day.

Without request or promise of reward, they made this journey in the night, through wild woods infested with prowling guards and bandits, and for strangers bound to them by no stronger ties than those which link the great human family. These girls of the mountains, under the stimulating spirit of the war, did this, and cheerfully did it.

Next morning, as soon as their father left for his work, the girls came up, lifted the bed aside, and invited us down to breakfast.

While we ate, Martha informed us of their trip the night before, and that the man they had gone to see was off with his gang on a marauding expedition into Georgia, and

would probably not return for a week. But it was arranged with his sister that as soon as he returned she should bring us word whether the brother would see us.

For four days and nights we remained in that upper room and garret awaiting information from our guide, amusing ourselves in the meantime with old papers and books, and entertaining such company as was admitted to see us. Delicate as their secret was, the girls could not keep it. Every trusted friend in the vicinity had notice and was over to call on us. Girls curious to see the Yankees called every day, and a one-legged man with a bottle of white whiskey in his pocket also called to pay his respects.

Upon the third morning I ventured downstairs to get a bottle of ink that was in the room below, upon the bureau. Having procured it, while carelessly returning and about half-way up the stairs I heard the outside door open at my back, and, turning around, looked the old gentleman straight in the eyes. I sprang upstairs to inform the boys of what had happened.

He walked rapidly through the hall into the family-room and demanded of Martha to know "who that man was he saw going

upstairs." She answered him with a hearty laugh that "it was Alice dressed up in Alex's clothes to haul wood." Whether the old man believed the answer or whether he thought best not to investigate remains in doubt, but that was the last of the incident.

While there I wrote a paper addressed "To any Federal soldiers who may come this way," certifying therein what the family had done for us, which certificate we all executed by signing our names, with rank and place of service, and left with them as a possible protection against our troops.

In the afternoon of the fourth day the sister of our expected guide came over and told us that her brothers had returned and would see us that night in the mountains, and that she and her companion had come to conduct us to them.

A very foolish notion now took possession of our girls, for they held that we could not leave their house without some sort of a social frolic, and they had decided upon a candy-pulling. We protested that it might lead to our discovery, but all to no purpose; nothing short of a candy-pulling would do. To add to our nervousness over the matter,

it was well known that "Grandmother" Kerkendal had come to stay all night, and she was reputed among the girls to be a notorious gossip; a Union woman, but so constituted that she could not keep anything she knew, even if the telling would injure her friends.

The girls said they would manage the old woman, even if they had to lock her up in the closet. So nothing would go but a candy-pulling.

Accordingly, when night came they built two big fires below, one in the best room, "put on" a gallon of sorghum, and thus began preliminaries.

Grandmother soon became impressed that some unusual event was about to happen. "What's all this goin's on mean?" we heard her inquire, as she passed from the family-room into the best one.

"Oh, Liza and Jane have come to visit us, and we're just goin' to have a little fun," answered one of the girls.

"When I was a gal we pulled wax a heap about sugar-makin' time, but we ginerally had boys to help us."

"Well, how do you know but we'll have boys to help us?"

"I guess if you git any boys in these parts to help you, they'll be mighty little ones."

The old lady seated herself in the room with the girls and, to their great discomfiture, proceeded to tell funny stories about "pull-in' wax" in her girlhood. When their taffy was done and poured out in the plates, they suggested that she might find it more agreeable in the other room, with their father and mother, but she thought not. She wanted to see if they "pull wax now like they did when she was a gal." She had not "seed the like for so long." The mother went in and invited the old woman to go into the other room with her and let the girls have their foolishness to themselves, but the old woman declined. The girls, losing their temper at her obstinacy, finally requested her to go into the other part of the house, as they wished to be alone.

Then they soon had us below, the door locked, the windows blinded, one of the girls in the yard on picket, and taffy sticking to every finger in the room. We had pulled so much sorghum at Columbia that we were adepts in the business, and astonished the girls by our skill in handling it; but when Chisman, in showing them a little Columbian

science, got a half-pound of soft wax in his hair, I thought Alice would go into a spasm.

We endeavored to keep our fun quiet, but sufficient noise reached the ears of the unwelcome visitor in the other room to arouse her suspicion, and she inquired if she did not hear men's voices. Our good mother assured her that she did not hear any voice but that of the girls, and slipped out into the yard to tell the picket to caution us to make less noise.

The caution was communicated, but soon forgotten, and again the old lady declared she heard men's voices, and this time insisted upon coming into our room to see if there were not men in the party. Again the good mother interposed, and assured the old lady that it would make the girls mad if she interrupted them, then hurried out to inform the sentinel that we should surely be discovered if the noise continued. Immediately upon receiving this second warning we began hasty preparations to leave.

I shall never forget our parting from the Hollingsworths. It was not in tears, nor in multitudinous acknowledgments, but there was a gratitude felt and a sympathy reciprocated that marks but few occasions. They

had found us in the last moments of expiring hope. They had attended us for days with more than sisterly care, and had filled us with a new life and a new hope. All that we left in return, or could leave, was our sincere thanks and the written certificate of their treatment. Poor, indeed, but all that was expected or desired.

Eliza Vance (for such we will call her) and her cousin, who had come to conduct us to the guide, led off for the mountains. The excitement created by our début at Flat Rock having now subsided, it was not thought necessary by our guides to observe special caution, as our way led over an unfrequented trail through the woods. In fact, we had no time to look or to listen if we were to keep up with the girls, for they hurried along with a speed I could never understand. They could jump a bigger brook and walk a smaller log than any of us, and could get up a cliff or over a log while we were planning how.

We covered six miles in about an hour and a half. As we were silently following the girls along a ragged wood crest, Eliza Vance suddenly turned back to us and requested that we stop till she waked the boys up.

Then as she proceeded we saw ahead of her two dark objects lying upon the ground, under the spreading branches of a chestnut-tree. Nearing them, she called, "Jack." Instantly two stout forms sprang to their feet, with guns in hand, and shouted, "Halt! Who are you?"

"Why, Jack, you know who I am," returned his sister.

"What are you doing here?"

"You know. We've brought the Yankees over from Hollingsworth's."

"How do you know they're Yankees?"

"Why, they say they are."

"They are liars. They're nothing but d——d spies, and we'll feed 'em to the bears on this very mountain."

"Come here," he commanded, with a savagery unexcelled; the two meeting us halfway, with their guns lying across their left forearms, and the locks clicking as they came.

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?" Jack demanded.

He was informed that we were escaping Yankee officers in quest of a guide to Knoxville.

"Every word you utter is a lie," he again

broke forth. "We've learned who you are; you're d——d Rebels come here to arrest us, and you may proceed to business."

We promptly chorused a denial.

"Drap them clubs, and up with your hands," he roared.

Instantly eight hands were in the air. And as Lem stood with his gun at a ready, Jack examined our pockets and boot-legs for arms, and finding none, growled:

"No arms; yes, rigged up like d——d sneaks."

Then the two withdrew a short distance and held a whispered conversation. While they held it we had little to talk about. We felt we had made a mistake.

Soon they returned and Jack resumed: "Well, we feel our safest course would be to put you to sleep, but we have decided to try you a little further.

"Put your hands on this gun (holding out his musket) and swear that you are Yankees and not spies."

We rushed for the gun-barrel, each anxious to be first, and then Jack proceeded to administer a sort of incoherent oath, in which he did the principal part of the swearing, and in which he made it perfectly clear

that they would shoot us without benefit of clergy if we gave the slightest evidence of not being what we professed.

As we withdrew our hands from the gun, Jack commanded Lem to hand us the canteen. Lem complied, and each of us held the canteen to his mouth, though, as we afterward found out in talking it over, we were utterly unable to tell whether we drank anything, either whiskey or water. We were more concerned about the contents of the muskets than of the canteen.

After the canteen was honored, Jack invited us to seats on the ground, and dismissed the girls with orders to meet us next morning at sun-up, at the Devil's Boot, with breakfast for six. He then introduced the subject of our visit. He said he had led a number of parties through the mountains to Knoxville, and could lead us; but added in the most vigorous English that he did not believe we had the slightest desire to go to Knoxville. Our insistence that we had, seemed only to invite a volley of oaths; and so we listened, and he continued to swear until he had worked off his surplus energy. Then he stated that if they could be assured we were not spies, but Yankees, they would

conduct us to Knoxville for $400 in gold. We didn't haggle about the price, but promptly agreed to pay it. Where we were to get the gold we didn't exactly know, but we promised it all the same, and would have promised $4,000 just as readily, and paid it for that matter, if we had had the money.

If any reader should be curious to know the general appearance of these men, I would say, first fix in your mind an untutored man, thirty-five years old, six feet high, weight one hundred and eighty pounds, in a suit of coarse, home-made clothes; his skin dark, but not as dark as his long hair that grew down almost to his eyes, nor as dark as his beard that covered most of his face; his black eyes set deep in his head, under a pair of heavy, closely knitted brows, and, though seldom fixed directly at you, his glare withering when it did come. Imagine his wool hat all full of holes, his Springfield rifle, bright as steel can be, lying across his left arm, with his right hand on the hammer and trigger, and it will do for a picture of Jack Vance.

Then think of a younger man, but twenty-one, with shorter hair, an almost beardless face, and in most ways more honest-looking than his brother; more stoutly built, though

not so tall, with a milder eye, a more intelligent look, and, but for his talk, not easily taken for as bad a man; and this will be enough to suggest the outlines of Lem Vance.

Having met with such uniform kindness from the Hollingsworths, our reception by the Vances was a surprise; in fact, for the first few hours we devoutly wished we had never seen them, and came near blaming those who had placed us in their hands.

We concluded our negotiations for the trip to Knoxville, but our guides refused to give us an answer as to when we should start.

With no definite understanding as to details, and the night being cold and frosty, we walked, under our guides' direction, two miles, to somebody's stable-loft, where we all slept until the chickens began crowing for day.

We then left the mow, having first turned the hay over, to leave no sign, and wended our way two and a half miles through the mountains, to the Devil's Boot, where we were to have our breakfast. Hardly a dozen words had been spoken between us and our guides from the first interview until we sat down to wait for our breakfast. They ap-

peared morose and disinclined to hold any conversation with us.

Their mother, a short, stout woman of sixty, brought the breakfast. She had eight sons, four or five of whom were followers of Jack.

Unlike her sons, she at once admitted us to her confidence, possibly for an opportunity to brag about her boys, which she proceeded to do in a good old-fashioned way.

Seated on a log, patting the ground with her broad stubby foot, she entered upon a long narrative of Jack's daring exploits. Lem also came in for a share, so did Zeke and the others. She was apparently quite as proud of Jack, at the head of eight outlaws, as if he had been at the head of an army. She seemed sweetly unconscious that the acts she described might put her boys in the penitentiary, if not upon the scaffold, dwelling upon them as if actual sympathy with the South was a complete justification for any sort of lawlessness, and particularly of the right to plunder.

While we listened to their mother's praises of them, Jack and Lem were a hundred yards away, stretched out upon a rock slab, sunning themselves like two contented bears.

Later in the morning their sister and two or three other girls came to see us for a visit of several hours. During this visit, in a conversation held aside with Eliza, I asked if she knew why her brothers would not start with us at once if they were going at all. She answered by saying that Dr. H. was reputed to have $102 in silver, and the boys said they would not leave the vicinity until they got it—that Dr. H. was away, and it was uncertain when he would return.

I communicated this fact to my companions, and after a consultation it was decided, to avoid further delay, that I should propose to Jack and Lem to add $102 to their compensation. This decision was reached without my full approbation. I thought the proposition ought to be submitted, but was not satisfied of the propriety of submitting it myself. Our experience with the men the night before had not impressed me with a lofty opinion of their gentle manners, and how they would receive my invasion of their sister's confidence on a matter of questionable import had enough uncertainty about it to make me entirely willing to relinquish the office to one of the others. But I got together enough courage

to approach them with the proposition. "No, sir," answered Jack with sufficient emphasis to remove all inducement to argument. "We're not goin' to leave these parts till we git that $102 from the d——d Rebel, and if you'ens is in a hurry, and don't want to wait till we'ens is ready, why jist put out any time you please, and let this be the last on it."

For nine wearisome hours we lay around upon that mountain. Jack and Lem were but seldom in our company, but the dear girls almost constantly shed their sunshine upon us. They supplied us bountifully with such food as the country afforded, and generously divided their tobacco with us. It was interesting to see a maiden of twenty draw from her pocket a long twist of home-grown tobacco and "pass it around," perhaps everyone in the circle biting at the same end. It looked so sociable.

The mother also remained several hours, and it was from her that we learned more about the boys than from anyone else.

Since the Confederates had driven them from their home-pursuits, they would turn the war to their advantage, and make Rebels and Rebel sympathizers pay for their time.

She and they expressed inveterate hate for all Rebels, and, right or wrong, scrupulously regarded everyone a Rebel who had any valuables or lived in a painted house.

They now lived on spoils, or rather hoped to live on them, for it was the business of the gang to roam over the country for many miles, sacking "fine houses," and it was on an expedition of this sort that they were absent when we met the Hollingsworth girls.

Something to eat was the least consideration, as they only occasionally took a ham, or some other such edible luxury.

Money was their chief object, but they never left behind jewelry or silverware. Of the latter, it was said, they had an abundance, from teaspoons to water-pitchers, from which they hoped to realize largely after the war. It was also reported that they had a cave in the mountains where they stayed in bad weather and stored their plunder, and where from sticks stuck in crevices they had suspended a large collection of costly silver, all tarnished and black, that had once been the dazzling splendor of hospitable boards. They also had an unabridged dictionary, and a family Bible or two, but the strangest article mentioned to

me was a life-size oil-painting of Washington, damp and covered with mould, that had probably cost the owner $200, but, no doubt, could have been had from the present possessors for fifty cents.

They had lived in the mountains for two years, and had not slept in a house or eaten at a table in that time.

There were many such gangs as this in the mountain districts of the South during the war, or perhaps not exactly such gangs, but men who banded together for mutual protection and lived in the mountains to keep out of the Rebel army. Generally they were composed of as loyal, honest men as the country afforded, men with a common cause inoffensively avoiding military service.

By the outrages of the Vance gang, the good men who were dodging from the army out of loyal and patriotic motives were much more harassed than they otherwise would have been, and we afterward learned that there was a bitter feud between the Vances and others in adjoining counties.

About 3 P.M. information was received through the women that the subject of our delay had returned home.

Jack sent Lem to the top of a certain

peak to fire two shots, one from a musket, the other from a rifle, as a signal for the gang to assemble.

The first to report was a red-headed man of thirty, wearing a cap made by himself from the skin of a red fox, with the full tail hanging down behind. Soon after came two younger men, one a bright-eyed youth, who evidently belonged to better society and more honest business, but his companion looked every inch the bandit. He had unkempt hair, a low forehead, small black eyes, high cheek-bones, and a costume that no honest man would have the courage to wear.

His coat was made from the skin of a bear, dressed with the hair on, and so arranged that the forelegs of the animal formed the sleeves, with the paws hanging down over the hands, showing the claws of the veritable beast. The head and face of the animal formed a sort of hood for the covering of the head and face of the wearer, when he so desired.

Around his neck, bear-skin and all, gathered into a great bow-knot in front, was the unseemly spotted skin of a rattlesnake. Another member wore a rolled striped turban, encircled with eagle feathers.

The object of the summons was explained to be Dr. H.'s $102 in silver; which met with the hearty concurrence of them all.

There was one thing we did not agree to, and that was that our party take guns and go with them. Against this we protested most earnestly. We had in us no spirit for pillage and felt no desire for the romance of robbing, and probably murdering; and our zeal in protesting was all the more animated when they brought out, probably from their cave, four rusty guns and said we must go.

Our Irishman, as he submissively received his rusty piece, looked very much as though he wished himself back in Columbia. It is also probable that we all wished the same thing. But the bright-eyed youngster became enlisted in our behalf, and urged upon his companions the injustice and impropriety of making us go against our will. He said we could very truly have no interest in the matter; that we could not wish to punish and rob a man that had done us no harm; that there were plenty of them for the work, and that it was as unnecessary as it was unjust to impose upon us the hazard of engaging in the expedition. His timely intercession succeeded in having us excused from

going, but did not protect us from the most intolerant abuse, and unwarranted insinuations that we were Rebel spies. The friendly youngster was detailed to stay with us, and at dark the others were on their way to Dr. H.'s.

The result of the expedition we gathered from a random conversation among themselves next morning. When they reached the house of the doctor he and his family were still sitting around the fire, unsuspectingly enough. The ruffians marched up near the window and, without the least notice, fired a full volley through the window; then charged into the house with empty guns. Fortunately no one was hit, and, more fortunately still, the doctor had escaped by running out the back way into the woods. Upon entering, they found no one but the wife and two daughters, in mortal terror, and when they said that the doctor was not about the house, the bandits proceeded to ransack it from cellar to garret. Under the bed, upstairs, they found two negro men concealed, as much frightened as the ladies. Satisfied that the doctor was not about the house, they then took a rope, which they had procured for the purpose, and tied it around the wife's

neck, and threatened to hang her if some of them did not tell where the $102 in silver was. In this they failed, but abandoned their inhuman treatment only after one or both of the girls had fainted with fright.

Having failed to get the money, they were determined they would not fail in some barbarous fun; so they brought the negroes, whom they had taken from under the bed, into the sitting-room, in presence of the ladies, and made one pat and the other dance for their amusement. They goaded them on for a straight hour, without one moment's cessation, and when, from exhaustion, they would moderate their activity a little, the heartless bystanders would bring down their guns and command them to "go into it, or we'll shoot you on the spot." Thus they kept them at it till they both sank to the floor.

Tired of this, they plundered the bureaus and cupboard and retired.

Early next morning (Saturday) Dr. H. went to Flat Rock and told the story of the outrage to the commander of the post, whereupon a heavy guard was transported in wagons, in great haste, to hunt the offenders. The first we knew of this movement was

about eleven o'clock in the morning. At this time we were impatiently lounging on the side of the mountain, waiting for a decision from our guides, when we saw the mother coming running toward us without bonnet and with dishevelled hair, crying, and calling "Jack." The guards had made a *coup de main* into the vicinity and had really captured their brother, living three miles off, and had tied him, hands and feet, and thrown him into a wagon, to be hauled to Flat Rock.

The event was a lucky one for us, for it frightened our party, and from the entreaties of the mother they consented to start at once for Knoxville, or as soon as they could possibly get provisions enough for the trip, which would require ten days. The mother gave directions to be ready to start at 3 P.M., and to go at once two miles farther into the mountains, to a certain "cove." She would get help of the neighbors, and meet us with all the provisions that we required.

Jack and Lem left us for some time to hide their favorite guns in a hollow tree, to keep the rust from ruining them, and when they returned each had two revolvers buckled around his waist.

It was hard to tell which of us was the most anxious for three o'clock and the meat and bread to come. Soon after three the mother was with us again, more frightened and distressed than before, for the guards had in the meantime searched her house and stable, and had taken all the meat and nearly all the bread she had prepared. The corn-bread two of the neighbors had furnished, and a little dried beef, were all she brought, though the former included one corn-pone which was said to contain exactly a peck of meal.

We turned our backs that afternoon to these people with few regrets, for, though the women had been uniformly kind to us, there yet prevailed among them such a spirit of ruffianism and such wild customs that we had no desire to prolong our stay.

Again under way for home, and this time behind two experienced guides, our hopes of success grew lively, too lively for the pleasure of our guides, for we would crowd upon their heels and be sent back every few minutes with some terrible oath. At dark we went down off the mountains and took the road, to enable us to make seventeen miles that night, to Jack's brother-in-law's, where

we expected to increase our supply of provisions.

Nine miles ahead was the French Broad, and in crossing the river we anticipated some trouble. Our only hope was in finding one of two canoes reported to be hidden along its banks; for the river at the point was rough, which made it dangerous to swim or attempt to cross on a poorly constructed raft. We wandered for half an hour up and down the bank of the noisy stream, hunting the canoes, but without success.

Then our guides decided that we should go four miles up-stream to cross on a bridge supposed to be there. But when we reached the point we found nothing of a bridge but two rows of piles stretching across the river, with ten-inch sleepers still adhering to the top of each row. The rest of the bridge had been swept away months before by high waters, and there had been no steps taken to rebuild it. To cross upon these sleepers seemed practicable, so onto them we climbed. Though a little nervous all the while, by crawling along on our hands and knees we got along admirably until within thirty feet of the opposite shore, when, to our great

discomfiture, we found that some ruthless hand had rolled the last sleeper from each row into the river. This was too bad—within thirty feet of the other side, and yet too far to get there. For several minutes we sat in a quandary, not knowing whether to retreat or sit there wishing. In the meantime we discovered that the sleeper which had been rolled off above still lay beneath, against the piles, with one end resting on some driftwood on the shore, the other buoyed by the water against the piling. Baker, who happened to be in front—and there was no changing about on that narrow log—concluded that he would swing under and slide down the pile to the water and examine the feasibility of getting over on the floating log. Under he swung, down the pile he glided, and planted his foot cautiously on the log; into the water it went, Baker sticking bravely to it until he was buoyed; then he let go the pile, made one step forward, then another, and by the time he reached the next pile he was raised almost entirely out of the water, and walked triumphantly out to the other side. Now that Baker was over, we all must be, and as he had crossed on the floating log, all could cross, so at it

we went in turns. All were soon on the other side but the Irishman ; he was not so successful. I have neglected to mention that he was the custodian of the peck pone of bread; and that was more than his share of the freight, but because he was tough and willing we were disposed to place the honorable duty upon him. He carried his charge in a haversack prepared by the donor of the bread.

Goode was behind, and when the rest of us got to the other side, there he sat on top, holding tenaciously to the sleeper, and the big pone holding to him, insisting that it was no use trying, for he knew that he could not cross on that tottering log. Generally he was the bravest of the party, but somehow or other he had an aversion for water that was marked throughout the whole trip. We promised to help him with a pole ; still he could not be persuaded, and, becoming a little vexed, we threatened to stone him off the sleeper if he did not try, for we could not be delayed there all night by his cowardice. He would much rather have charged a battery than attempted the crossing, but when we alluded to his cowardice he decided upon drowning or reaching the

bank. Quick as a sailor could have done it, he was under the sleeper, clinging like a flying-squirrel with his short legs and arms to the pile; down he glided a little way and, to his utter dismay, there lay the pone still on top, and the strap of his haversack fast on a splinter. He asserted that he would strip it off his shoulder and let it go; we declared we would drown him if he did. He was in great distress, but concealed it like a stoic. Again he pulled himself up the pile an inch at a time until he reached the sleeper; then holding on with his legs and one hand he employed the other in getting down the pone. Cautiously he proceeded, but in an unguarded moment the horrid pone came tumbling off and jerked the unhappy boy down the pile into the water to his neck. If we had not felt concerned about his life sure enough now, we should have been unable to render any assistance for laughter, but, as it was, Chisman ran out on the floating log with a pole and soon had our unfortunate comrade wringing his clothes on the bank, and another item to laugh about at our leisure.

We had yet twelve miles to go to reach the brother-in-law's, and it was our desire

to make that distance before daylight, so we tarried no longer than was necessary to wring our clothes and pour the water out of our boots. Our guides, being fresh and skilled in night-walking, moved along rapidly and continued through the entire twelve miles without stopping a moment to rest.

"The honest watch-dog" bayed us at John Burton's before the chickens called out the morning, and the family were all asleep, but through Jack we soon got a welcome admission into the house. The fruitful home of Mr. Burton, a cabin of but one room, we found sitting down between two mountains in the midst of a farm of just seven acres, and boasting the very "magnificent distance" of six mountain-miles to the nearest neighbors. Upon entering the house it had more the appearance of a juvenile asylum than anything else. There were two bedsteads, and pallets to the right of us, pallets to the left of us, pallets all around, and children in regular ratio from one to twenty-one asleep upon them. It was with difficulty that we crowded our way through and arranged ourselves on an old bench before the fireplace, occupying nearly all one end of the house. Having first built us a

good fire, our host went to the bedsteads, and, turning out his wife from one and his son-in-law and his wife from the other, insisted that we four strangers occupy them for the rest of the morning. This we did not wish to do. Men of our habits, with wet and dirty clothes, would vastly have preferred sleeping on the floor before the fire, and we told the old gentleman so, but the more we excused ourselves the more he insisted that he had plenty of girls that could wash easier than we could lie on the boards. So into the beds we went.

Next morning the family were up early, big and little, crowding and whispering that four Yankees were "asleep in the beds." "Does they look like pap?" said one little urchin to his mother.

It will be remembered that it was the arrangement to increase our supply of provisions at this place fully one-half, and, strange to say, we found this large family without a pound of meat or breadstuffs in the house, and they talked of the circumstance as nothing uncommon. The nearest mill was twelve miles, and the nearest neighbor six, but by eight o'clock two boys got in with a half-bushel of borrowed meal. In the meantime

our two guides and the host had gone to the mountains for meat, and soon after the boys returned with the meal they came down the mountain dragging after them a hog they had shot. This hog they skinned like a beef, at the foot of the mountain, and carried the meat to the house on a pole.

At eight o'clock breakfast was in process of preparation; at ten it was ready, and we were called to eat. Breakfast consisted of coffee made from parched meal, corn-bread, and fresh pork. The hams of the hog were boiled outdoors in an iron kettle.

The entire table-service consisted of six plates, two of them tin; three knives worn to a point; two forks with broken prongs, and one large antediluvian dish. No cloth, no chairs, but stools; no cups and saucers, but as substitutes for the latter the coffee was served in small, round gourds neatly dressed. There were no apologies, no embarrassment, no complaint about hard times. The cheery host and hostess went merrily chatting about the table, cutting and helping plates with that air of natural, easy, generous welcome that made their simple breakfast refresh their guests in a degree not felt at the tables of the formal rich.

The family prepared us a large quantity of meat and what bread they could spare, and had us ready to resume our journey by eleven o'clock. But for some reason our guides were disposed to be tardy, and it was quite noon before we left Burton's; then it was in a slow, careless manner, resting every mile longer than it took us to walk that distance. But what troubled us the most were the frequent private conferences of our guides.

They would walk together in advance, muttering to each other, sometimes swearing audibly, seldom speaking to us, until their conduct became the source of much annoyance. Half the afternoon was spent without a dozen words being exchanged between us and those upon whom we so much depended. Then Jack feigned sickness, and Lem began to talk discouragingly of the prospects. He had heard of so many people perishing in the snow; our way lay over the roughest of the mountains, upon the dividing ridge, as they called it, for a hundred and thirty miles; the clouds already looked like snow, we had not half enough food for the trip, etc.

Very much disheartened we trudged along, up and down, up and down the mountain-peaks, and succeeded before sunset in reach-

ing a crest of Mount Pisgah, reputed among the natives of western North Carolina to be the second highest mountain in the Alleghany range, and from whose summit the eye can see five States, namely, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, and Virginia. On this mountain, directly in our course, apparently within a mile and a half, but in reality seven miles away, we saw a heavy smoke. The guides became more uneasy than ever at the appearance of this. They said that it was reported that the Confederate Government had enlisted a number of Cherokee Indians from a civilized remnant of the tribe still inhabiting the mountain district of western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee, and had them guarding the mountain trails and passes. They withdrew and consulted twenty minutes; then climbed a tree and averred that they could see men moving about the fires seven miles away, also that they knew no other route than over that particular mountain. They also spoke pathetically of the outlaw's penalty, of the terrible result if they should be captured, and were of the opinion that no rational man would try to pass that mountain with the indications of

danger that could so clearly be seen. As for them, they would, for no inducement, attempt it now, but if we would return home with them and stay through the winter until the next spring, they would be sure to take us through. No anticipated danger could dissuade us from our purpose of going ahead, for dangers were all around us, behind us and on all sides, apparently equal to those in front. So we were all of one mind, not to go an inch backward while there was no actual restraint from taking one toward home. We combined our efforts to encourage our guides, dwelt upon their inevitable suffering if they returned home to spend the winter, assured them that we would pay them promptly and see that they got comfortable quarters for the winter in Knoxville if they did not wish to go home with us. If they abandoned us on that mountain what would become of us? Not one of us knew anything about the mountain courses, more than their general direction, not one of us could distinguish the dividing ridge from the spurs, not one of us could tell north from south in that wild region after the sun went down; but with all this before us we could not think of going back forty or fifty

miles to live three or four months with that gang of robbers. We not only offered to increase their compensation to any sum they might fix, but we begged, even besought them not to turn back; but hearts full of fear or minds full of distrust hear nothing and grant nothing, and as distressing as it was to us, we parted, they to go home, we —we knew not whither.

VIII

Off to the right, six or seven miles, we could see in a narrow valley a strip of cultivated land following some stream, and here and there a column of smoke rising from a house.

Feeling the necessity for a guide to be absolute, and hoping to find one in the settlement to the right, we started down the side of Pisgah in a hurry, for the shades of night had already begun to gather in the valley. It was nearly dark when we got down the mountain. In the very point of the valley, where it was not more than a hundred yards wide, crouching at the foot of the great Pisgah, and where South Hominy Creek is nothing more than a gurgling rivulet, sat a rude little cabin, quiet as a tomb, and but for the form of a man engaged near the door we should have pronounced it unoccupied. Crawling up to within fifty yards to make observations, we were soon satisfied that the stooped and stiffened form before us was that of an old man; and Baker, having on a full

suit of Confederate uniform, was sent over to talk to him.

We hoped thus to obtain the gentleman's political principles, in disguise. Baker, being in gray uniform, could approach him directly on the point. If he proved a Rebel, Baker would excuse himself and retire; if a Union man, he would call the rest of us to aid in convincing him that we were also. Baker summarily accosted Uncle Jimmy Smith, for such was his name, a diminutive, bent old man, with—

"Grandpa, are you a Rebel or a Union man?"

"What, sir?" replied Uncle Jimmy, straightening himself up.

"I want to know whether you are a Rebel or a Union man."

"What do you want to know that for?"

"Oh, I have heard you called both, and, as I was passing, I just thought I would ask you."

"Well, sir, if it will do you any good to know, I will tell you that I was born under the old Government, I have lived eighty-two years under it, and I am an old man now, and I want no better to die under. If this is not enough, I will add further, if you

are a Rebel soldier you will relieve me by passing on."

When we went rather hastily up, upon Baker's whistle and motion, Uncle Jimmy was much agitated, for he thought he had brought down some punishment upon himself by his acknowledgment. And now we had a tough time of it. We believed that he was a Union man and knew ourselves to be, but the trouble was in persuading him to the same opinion. It did not seem strange to us that he should appear incredulous after hearing the facts he detailed. There had been that very day a company of Confederates in the settlement, "after the boys," as he called them; by whom he meant the Union boys who were "lying out" to avoid service in the Confederate army.

They had been betrayed by just such strangers as we were. Ten days before, two men, representing themselves as brothers, named Muse, came to "the boys" on South Hominy Creek and implored protection. They said they lived over in Transylvania County, and, having deserted from the Rebel army to keep from fighting against the Union, it was impossible for them to remain

about home and escape arrest; that, knowing the facilities for hiding among the rugged peaks in Buncombe, they had come to beg a home with them for a few months, hoping to be able to compensate the friends for their board after the war was over. The credulous and hospitable boys received the Muses into their confidence without a suspicion.

It was Sunday evening that we went into the settlement, and on the evening before the Muse boys had disappeared, though no serious apprehensions were felt, on account of the probability of their being among some of the friends in the neighborhood. Thoughtless of the dangers that were gathering, "the boys" drew their blankets around them in their mountain-beds, to be awakened at dawn next morning by the militia sweeping like an avalanche upon them, led by the perfidious Muses.

Up and at it, for liberty and life, from rock to tree and tree to rock they fought through all that Sunday, wounding and being wounded.

By this unexpected raid, the whole settlement was intensely excited, and, as a result, Uncle Jimmy Smith believed that we were but a part of that Rebel force and were feign-

ing to be Yankees for some such purpose as the Muses had wrought. So he vehemently asserted, and the earnestness with which he expressed his determination not to be betrayed, as the boys had been, was quite embarrassing to us. Uncle Jimmy urged us to go along and let him alone; he was too old to be punished, as well as too smart to be deceived. Happily Baker remembered that he had his commission in the Sixth Missouri Federal Infantry in his pocket.

"Can you read writing, Grandpa?"

"Yes."

"Well, here is my commission as First Lieutenant in the Yankee army; examine it, if you please."

The reading of that paper alone by the dim firelight in the house, convinced the old gentleman that we were really Federal soldiers. He then became very gracious and lost not a moment in hurrying us off to hide, lest the Rebels should be still in the neighborhood and drop in upon us at any moment.

Uncle Jimmy was poor, very poor, living with his daughter while her husband was away in the Confederate army; yet he was rich enough to have a good warm supper

spread out before us in the bushes before eight o'clock.

Uncle Jimmy informed us that he thought Henry K. Davis, "one of the boys," and rather the leader among them, so far as directing movements went, would undertake to guide us to Knoxville. He represented Davis to be a young man with a high sense of honor, and said, to our encouragement, that he had been twice through the mountains to Knoxville and was at that time very desirous of leaving the South altogether for the North, if he could get some company.

To see Kim (that was the name Davis bore among his neighbors) was now our hearts' desire, and I believe we asked Uncle Jimmy to conduct us three miles that night to the neighborhood of George Peoples, where it was expected we might find him. But the old man could not do it, for his eyes failed him after night, and he had run about so much through the neighborhood during that day of excitement that he was nearly exhausted. He promised, however, to be off with us next morning by daylight, if we would stay where we were.

We made no attempt to sleep that night; did not even spread our blankets. The de-

sertion of our guides, the effect of the day's raid upon our prospects, the meeting expected to-morrow with Kim Davis and his men, were all subjects to be discussed.

With the much-delayed dawn came Uncle Jimmy, tottering up the mountain with a basket on his arm and a gun on his shoulder.

"What's the old man want with that gun?" anxiously inquired Goode.

"I can't imagine," said Baker.

"I think I know," said Chisman; "he looks to me like a Knownothing executioner hunting for Irishmen. Take heart, my boy; I'll plant a sprig of cashew at your head and write to your mother."

Uncle Jimmy explained it in another way. "You see," said he, "the Rebels were all over the settlement yesterday, and some of them may be lurking about here yet. My old gun can do us no harm, and if we should happen to get captured, I thought by having my gun I might shield myself and make your case no worse by telling the Rebels I had captured you and was taking you to them; then, as I return through the mountains, I may get a chance at a turkey, or a squirrel or two."

George Peoples was a Mason, and Chisman thought he might use the "mystic chord" to our advantage; he was also a man of information and eminently loyal. For these reasons it was thought prudent that we be conducted to his neighborhood and placed under his direction till a conference could be had with Davis.

We ate a hearty breakfast from the basket and set out. Uncle Jimmy's activity surprised us; indeed he came near surpassing all of us. Though he swayed like an old tree loose at the roots, he had a wonderful capacity for getting over space. I do not think he walked a step the whole distance; it was a half run all the way. With his body bent forward at an angle of forty-five degrees, he went as rapidly through the mountains as a trained youth, stopping only now and then to look or listen, with upturned ear.

George Peoples was not at home, but his estimable lady was, and she directed Uncle Jimmy to conduct us to a certain gorge, and said she would see that we lacked for nothing until Kim Davis could be found. The old gentleman led us up the rocky gorge, into a cluster of laurel-bushes, and, exhorting us to keep on the alert during the day, set out to

hunt for Davis, with the promise to report that night if possible.

About noon two little girls came up with our dinner, and in the evening they came again to tell us that their mother would expect us to take supper at the house a little after dark, and that their brother, Wash, one of Davis's gang, would be there to see us.

At dark we went down, doubting nothing. Wash met us at the barnyard fence, and astonished us by saying that he had been hiding all day on the same mountain, but a few hundred yards above us, and that he had seen us several times moving about in the bushes, and two or three times had picked up his musket to shoot, thinking we were militia.

Mrs. Peoples soon announced supper, and after the ordinary salutations requested us to make haste to eat it and get back to the mountains, for she was always in mortal fear when any of the boys were about the house. A little girl was posted on each side of the house to watch, when we went to our seats at the table. Mrs. Peoples had many questions to ask, so had Wash, and the conversation was running glibly and merrily along, when suddenly one of the little girls

came dashing into the house, stammering in a frenzied manner: "The militia are coming through the garden."

Up to that moment we claimed to be at least average men in agility, but ever after that we had a modified opinion of ourselves in this respect.

Wash was sitting on a bench next to the wall, hemmed in at both ends, when the alarm was given. On top of the bench, over the table, and out of the house, the back way, he sprang, quicker than we could drop our pumpkin pie to follow him. We rushed out in panic, only to get a glimpse of him as he dashed across the barnyard toward the mountain. Not wishing to lose him if we were to be pursued by the Rebels, and hoping to gain something on a straight run, we threw down whatever encumbered us, and put into action our very best effort, but only to see ourselves more outdone than at the first. Before we got half-way across the barnyard, Wash was over the fence on the other side, flying up the mountain like the shadow of a hurrying cloud.

We four had hardly entered the woods when we heard Mrs. Peoples from the house gently call, "Wash," and there being no

answer, she called again, much louder than before. This time Wash answered, away up the mountain, three or four hundred yards ahead of us.

"Come back, Wash; it's all right."

Wash joined us again at the foot of the mountain, and the first thing he did was to excuse himself for his rather informal manner of leaving. He said he had been chased so much and had had such narrow escapes that when they got after him now he had but little command of his judgment. It was otherwise concerning his legs.

We all went back to the house to learn the cause of our alarm, and as we approached the fence dividing the house from the barnyard, discovered three men sitting there, with their guns lying on their laps in a careless way. When we stopped, one of them said, "Come on;" and Wash, being satisfied of their friendly intentions, led the way up to them.

They were Kim Davis on the right, Wash Curtis in the middle, and Mitch Warren on the left, sent to us by the ever-faithful Uncle Jimmy. There were no introductions, not even a general mention of names. Kim was satisfied that we were the

men he had come to see, and we had a suspicion that he was the man we needed.

Jumping off the fence, Kim said: "Let's go up into the mountain and have a talk. This place is too much exposed."

He led the way to the identical gorge we had spent the day in, and, seating ourselves, he and his companions proceeded to catechise us as severely as the Vances, but in a manner vastly more civil. Their procedure was eminently cunning and sagacious, and it is hard to believe that men could have told them a falsehood and escaped discovery.

The examination having elicited nothing against us, Kim became free to talk upon the desired subject.

"Yes, sir; I have made up my mind that I would like to go North, if I had any assurance of getting through the Northern army into the country, where I could throw away my gun. I am tired of this war, this man-killing, out of the army as well as in the army. I have but little at stake in the contest anyhow; have no negroes to save, nor much property to protect, and I'm so tired of hunting men's lives and hiding to save my own that I don't want to go into either army at this date. Your offer is liberal, but

if I go with you it will be as a companion, and not as a servant. This is the only condition to be considered: That you guarantee to me that when I have conducted you to Knoxville, you will conduct me north of the Ohio River, and protect me from the army."

The bargain was soon struck, but it grieved us to hear Mr. Davis say that he could not be ready to start before the following Sunday. We were not disposed to complain, however, for this time we felt confident that we were dealing with an honest and honorable man, who would act by us as he agreed.

It was soon arranged that we should be conducted back to the neighborhood of Uncle Jimmy and Evaline his daughter, where we were to remain during the week of preparation, as that was regarded as the best and most private place to hide in of any in the settlement.

That night, however, we slept in the woods, near Kim's father's, and the next morning before daylight we went to his house for breakfast. Asbury and Margaret A. Davis, Kim's parents, were getting old, and both were very much concerned about the safety of their son. They would have been much pleased with our arrangements with

Kim if they could have dismissed from their minds a suspicion that we might be spies seeking to lead him away for capture. But amid the many dangers that surrounded him at home, and with all their doubts and fears, I never heard that either of them opposed his embarking upon the trip. Next morning we went back to Uncle Jimmy's and were placed in his care for the week, the necessary provisions being furnished by Kim and his friends. Kim then took his leave, but first exhorted us to be of good cheer, for he would be ready promptly.

As it was in Henderson County, so it was in Buncombe, with regard to the number of girls that visited us while at Uncle Jimmy's; nor did they come with empty hands or empty pockets. There are Rachel and Polly, and Matilda and Minerva, and Lucy and Sarah, whose fair forms even yet flit before me with hands full of chestnuts, choice apples, or other luxuries for us. Scarcely an hour passed in the day that some good thing was not laid at our feet from the hands of some loyal girl; and when they washed and mended up our miserable old rags till they were comfortable, we could have called them the kindest women in the world, if it had not

been for the sisters in Henderson County. As it was, they were as kind as kind can be.

Notwithstanding that we were among friends, and had plenty to eat, it seemed a long time until the next Sunday morning. It was home that held our hearts, many hundred miles away, over the wild, rugged, trackless mountains. No flowers nor fair women could quell our yearnings to be with friends at home, where we could lie down in peace and speak of these times as bygones.

Kim was back from Haywood County, where he had gone "to fix some business" (which, by the way, was only to afford an opportunity to his friends to watch our movements for a week), long before his time, and was punctually at Uncle Jimmy's Saturday evening, ready to lead us to his father's. Sunday morning, December 4, 1864, we shook the frost from our blankets before three o'clock, and went to the house to arrange the preliminaries for starting. There was much trouble on this occasion in the Davis family. Asbury and Margaret were both fond parents. They had spent many sleepless nights, and shed many tears, when they knew their son was shivering in the moun-

tains or being chased by blood-thirsty Rebels; and the offer of $1,000 reward for his arrest by the authorities at Asheville had made the fond parents dote on him all the more. They had watched him and hidden him for two years with dreadful solicitude, and now he was about to go from under their roof, perhaps forever, to a strange land, with strangers whom they nor he had ever seen or heard of a week before. These strangers may be spies decoying Kim out to murder him, or they may all be captured on the way, or maybe they will draft him into the Union army, and he will get killed in battle, or maybe they will cast him off without money or friends, as soon as they get to the North. Such forebodings of evil crowded into the minds of these loving parents, particularly into the mother's, who went about the house with streaming eyes, fitting us out with everything necessary to the trip.

At seven o'clock in the morning the last words were spoken, and we started across the field loaded like pack mules with sweet-cakes and boiled ham.

Mitch Warren and Wash Curtis, loath to part with their companion, went with us a couple of miles into the mountains. The

course we aimed to take, because of its greater safety, would make the distance to Knoxville one hundred and sixty miles, over the roughest and wildest mountains in the range, hence we could hope to travel only by daylight. Kim had been raised among the mountains, and had chased deer and bears over them so often that he was not only active, but never made a mistake in direction. Our travelling now was very different from what it was with our former guides. We went right along without discord or jealousy, driving ahead all the time in daylight, and sleeping together as boon companions during the night.

It would be hardly possible for men to work harder than we did during the seven days occupied by that trip. Our strength was employed to its utmost capacity every day. It was up and down, up and down the mountain-peaks all the time; lifting ourselves up one side and pounding our joints together down the other. It makes my bones ache yet to think of the mountain called Sandy Mush. Running back across a public highway that comes through the pass to the French Broad to indicate our travel in the opposite direction we then faced about and

climbed up the almost vertical side of the mountain for half a mile, all the time as much exposed to the gaze of any passer-by as if we had been climbing a flag-pole on a public square. Every muscle was called into action, and for the first hundred jumps I was in the van. I gave out, not for want of resolution, but strength. It was so steep that it really made my head swim to look backward, and I never would have gotten up if it had not been for the huckleberry bushes and the fear of Rebel eyes. Before the rest of us were half-way up, Kim was lying on the top shooting pebbles over our heads into the road below. He ran up like a squirrel.

There, too, is Old Baldy, the only really dangerous mountain that we passed, and we had to pass it to keep our course. The peak of Baldy, though rising but a little higher than its neighbors, stood like a mighty wall one hundred and fifty feet from top to base, with sides nearly perpendicular, and the crest, for eight hundred yards, but from four to ten feet wide. A single step to the right or left, in a few places, would have dashed us to pieces on the rocks below. We passed the place, too, by moonlight, the first man getting on top from the shoulder of his comrade,

then pulling the rest up, and sliding down at the other end on a pole.

On the night of the 9th of December we slept in a house within seven miles of Knoxville. It was the home of a Mr. Dunn, an officer in our army, and was a kind of general rendezvous for the Union men of that country. There were a half-dozen loyalists there that night, mostly traders to and from Knoxville. Next morning, when we turned our faces toward the mountains that we had left but eighteen hours before, we could but feel grateful to Him who regardeth the lilies of the field, for they had cast about them a heavy mantle of snow, and their avenues were closed for the winter.

One gentleman who spent the night at Mr. Dunn's was on his way to Knoxville to market a couple of mules. Chisman, always on the alert for number one, saw him during the night with reference to a ride to the city, and in his arrangements did not forget his companion of ninety-nine troubles. Immediately after breakfast we each boarded one of the divinely honored family, without saddle or bridle, but with excellent rope halters, and trotted briskly off. We looked back once to our compan-

ions trudging through the mud on foot, and wished they too had mounts, but wished more, it must be confessed, to be ourselves in Knoxville. The master of the mules, a good-humored man, let us have things pretty much our own way, and we spared neither rein nor switch till the towers of stanch old Knoxville loomed up in the distance; then we gave up our mules and sat down by the roadside to wait for the rest of our party. They soon came up, a little vexed because we had ridden over five muddy miles without exchanging with them.

On the next range of hills, nearer the city, we came upon a party of men sitting around a fire. When they failed to challenge us, Goode shouted, "Who sits there?" "Eighth Michigan Cavalry" was the reply. "Then give me a chew of Yankee tobacco, if you please." They were the Federal pickets! We only tarried long enough to answer a few general questions about our escape, and to ask a few concerning the military situation. It was sadly disappointing to hear that Hood was besieging Nashville, and that he had destroyed all railroad communication with the North. But our cup of happiness still seemed full

enough, to find once more Yankee bayonets at our backs, and Yankee friends in our front. We talked glibly as we walked on, splashing through the mud. In the midst of our glee, we reached the top of a hill a half mile from town, and there, spread out before us in a grand panorama, was the city of Knoxville with her fortifications. To the left was the loved old flag, floating gloriously from the parapet of Fort Johnson. There was the Tennessee, with her steamers smoking at the wharves. There was the long bridge stretching across her turbid waters. There was the park of army-wagons. There was the tented field. There were Federal soldiers on parade. We stood a moment in silence, and looked congratulations at each other. We did not fall down and give up the ghost; we did not go into ecstasies. We did not hug each other, as some have done; we did not cry; we simply felt good and went on.

As we approached the river a well-dressed man came dashing up to us upon a horse, with the air of a lord. He was a steamboat-captain and accosted us with—

"Boys, do you want work?"

"Well, sir," answered Chisman, "

don't know; what kind can you give us?"

"I want to hire four or five good strong hands for a few days to load my boat."

"Really," returned Chisman, "we can hardly accept your kindness. We are United States army officers, and the Government will probably have something for us to do."

In a few minutes we had crossed the bridge and stood at the foot of Gay Street, parleying. We felt that our wardrobes were not in a suitable condition to appear in the streets of a fashionable city; yet it was necessary to reach the headquarters of General Carter, the commandant of the Department.

Chisman stood upon the uppers of a pair of Southern army brogans, bound to his feet with bark. His trousers were knickerbockers composed in equal parts of Yankee blue, brown jean, and North Carolina linsey, artistically bound at the knees to give pleasing effect to his calves. His sack-coat was rather good, and his cap tolerable; but such hair and whiskers were never seen on an honest man with opportunities.

Our eccentric Irishman was the poorest one of all. Poor fellow, he had left his last

leather in the mountains, and on our way through Sevier County, Tennessee, had begged the legs of a pair of trousers, which he had swaddled around his feet. The tracks that he made in the mud were unique, but no fault of his. He had been a prisoner for twenty-two months, and had changed trousers but once in that time.

The frame of those he had on was gray, but, like Chisman's, had been repaired "fore and aft." One day as we lay in the woods in North Carolina (and for which I never did forgive him), he took my Columbia towel, and, without my advice or consent, made an important addition to one of the legs.

He had on a buttonless gray jacket, out at the elbows, and fully two inches too short. His hat I have no recollection of, but I do remember that when his long body and short legs struck a military attitude he appeared a most picturesque trooper.

As for Baker, he was the best-dressed one of the party, having had a coat given him in North Carolina and been an adroit financier in prison. The writer was next best. He had the worst hat of any, it having no crown at all, and but the fossil re-

mains of a pair of boots, but, excepting his head and his feet, he was comfortably but not gaudily attired. Kim, so recently from the supervision of his mother, was well enough to do.

Sunday seemed to be our transition day all along the journey. No important change in our affairs occurred on any other day. It was Sunday that we found the Union girls on the mountain in Henderson County; it was Sunday that the Vances deserted us on Pisgah, and that we found Uncle Jimmy Smith; it was Sunday that Kim Davis started with us from Buncombe County; and it was on Sunday that we stood in Gay Street, Knoxville, ready to report to General Carter. It was just church-going time, too, and the bells were ringing out from every steeple in the city when we got our courage to the sticking-point of making our way through the streets to the head-quarters of the General.

Goode scraped the mud off his rags, the best he could, with a splinter; Chisman pulled down his trousers; I pinned in the crown of my hat; and with Baker, the most genteel of any, in the lead, we took our accustomed Indian file up the sidewalk. Not

one of us expected to blush or lose his temper in passing through the streets, nor did he, but our début was not made eminently agreeable by the loitering soldiers. They, as a rule, never are scrupulously severe in their practice of politeness when in the field.

On this occasion they ruthlessly roasted us from start to finish. One slouchy-looking corporal, who was eating a pie which he held in his hand, cried out, "God, Sam, see that menagerie." A youngster at the crossing exclaimed, "The last of the Mohicans, by Joe." Another shouted at Chisman, "Say, uncle, your calves are out;" another at Goode, "Johnnie, your feet's wet." And so it went.

There were no replies, for we all knew too well the end of a soldier's tongue to make retort.

Before long we stood at the door of General Carter's head-quarters.

"Sentinel, be kind enough to say to the General that there are four army officers who want to see him at the door."

"Where are they?" mischievously inquired the boy.

"We are they, sir," replied Baker.

"Rats!" quietly observed the youth, and,

addressing another soldier who was blacking his shoes on a box, continued:

"Orderly, go tell the General there are some refugees waiting to see him down here."

"No, sir," exclaimed Chisman, "tell him that four United States officers, just escaped from prison at Columbia, are waiting to see him."

General Carter received us kindly. After hearing and noting down our report of the condition of the South, and the prisoners, he gave us an order on the Quartermaster for whatever articles of clothing we might want; then an order to be received into the Officers' Hospital, for subsistence and lodging.

At the Quartermaster's we each took a soldier's suit complete, from trooper's boots to high-topped hat, and, with the things under our arms, reported to the surgeon in charge of the Officers' Hospital. First we were shown to the bath-room, where we were soon joined by four stout negroes, with soap, towels, and flesh-brushes, and after an hour of alternate perspiration and refrigeration, we came out in our new, clean clothes, feeling very much improved by the exercise. Our next stopping-place was the barber-shop, where the tonsorial art was applied to our

faces and heads, and then we went to the telegraph office. I lived longer and lived happier than I ever did before or since, in the same length of time, as the following went over the wires:

KNOXVILLE, TENN., Dec. 10, 1864.

E—— H——

Plainfield, Ind.:

Escaped—Well—Will try and be home for Christmas.

* * *

Sure enough, the only railroad connection with the North had been destroyed by Hood, whose great army, after the battle of Franklin, was still lying south of Nashville, menacing the city. It seemed, therefore, that the only way to reach the North that winter was by a further march of one hundred and seventy miles to Nicholasville, Ky., via Cumberland Gap. This was perilous on account of the guerrilla bands that infested the regions of the Gap, north and south. There were in Knoxville, at the time, a number of people who wanted to get North, some citizens, some discharged soldiers, and more than a dozen escaped prisoners, chiefly from Salisbury, N. C.

Among the number were two army pay-

masters who had been cut off by Hood, with a considerable amount of money in their possession, which they each kept in an iron safe of about 500 pounds. To induce us to assist them to the North with their money, they proposed to pay to each escaped prisoner two months' pay, upon affidavit, if we would organize a company and guard them through the Gap to the railroad. We wanted the money, and we wanted to get North, so we set about the organization, assisted by Captain Grant, of a Wisconsin regiment, who had escaped from Salisbury, and by Friday evening, December 15th, we had a company of sixty people, citizens and soldiers, armed and provisioned for the march. Under orders from General Carter we went into a corral of convalescent horses and selected therefrom sixty of the best mounts, and early Saturday morning, December 16th, we marched out of Knoxville, under command of Captain Grant, convoying our paymasters, each with his 500-pound safe in an army-wagon drawn by six mules.

Many army-trains had recently passed over the same route, and we encountered the worst possible roads from the very outset. For great stretches the axles of the wagons would

drag in the mud, which so exhausted the frail animals that they required rest every few minutes. Frequently, too, the teams would stall, entirely unable to turn a wheel until the men dismounted and, standing in solid line upon each side of the wagon, in mud to their knees, lifted and pushed the load along.

Some of the men, who felt under no obligation to the paymasters, actually rebelled against lifting at the muddy wagons, and came near being expelled by Grant. The paymasters were abused by all for the work they had imposed upon the anxious company. For the most part the road was the same over the entire distance of sixty miles from Knoxville to the Gap, and it required six days to make the trip, arduously struggling along twelve hours each day.

There was a military post at the Gap, which place we reached, after dark, December 21st, and, being a nominal officer in the company, while I was engaged in locating the command for the night, Chisman employed himself in looking around the post. While thus engaged he unexpectedly met an old friend in Captain Schenck, who had formerly served for a season upon our divis-

ton staff in the Army of the Potomac, and who was at the time quartermaster of the post. The meeting was a joyous one, and in a short time our entire party, including Kim Davis, our guide, was at Schenck's head-quarters having a good time.

We had orders to turn in our horses at Crab Orchard, Ky., ninety miles farther on, and to reach the railroad we must stage twenty miles farther to Nicholasville. It was now December 21st.

Anxious as we were to reach home for Christmas, it seemed impossible to do so, on account of the exhausted condition of our animals and the pesky paymasters.

While expressing our regrets to Captain Schenck, he suggested in a quiet way that he had that day received from the North a consignment of fresh horses for the cavalry, and that he had receipted for them, but a horse was a horse, on paper. The suggestion being very agreeable to us, in less than ten minutes we had decided to swap horses with Schenck, desert our company, and make a dash for Crab Orchard. Schenck ordered our breakfast for three o'clock. In discharging my duties, with respect to our company, I had received the countersign of the post. After

our three-o'clock breakfast, escorted by Schenck's colored boy, we led our wretched mounts to the Captain's corral, and exchanged them for fat, strong horses, and while Grant and his gallant fifty-five peacefully slept, one of his officers and five of his command reined up for a gallop to the stage. A few miles out we were halted by the pickets. I advanced with the countersign, and thence we had a merry, muddy, uneventful ride to Crab Orchard, which place we reached on the evening of the 23d.

The next morning at four o'clock, with the mercury near zero, we took the stage for Nicholasville, where we arrived for the morning train, and shortly before midnight of the same day, December 24th, registered at the Gipson, in Cincinnati.

Chisman was the only one to get home for Christmas. We reached Cincinnati too late for a train to Indianapolis, and, there being no Sunday trains, could not get one till the following midnight.

I had a sumptuous Christmas dinner in Cincinnati with friends, whose kind attentions were excessive, but my eagerness to make glad that dear mother, who, with bleeding heart, was waiting and watching

for my coming, so oppressed me that the day was long and wearisome, with all its kindnesses.

Years have now passed, and the war has collapsed and the armies have been dissolved.

Kim Davis lived with my brother until September, 1865. Then he went back to North Carolina to visit his parents. One day in November, as he rode with his father along the highway, he met one of the Muse boys, who had so wickedly betrayed him on the Sunday we arrived in his vicinity. Muse, recognizing Kim, shouted, "Halloo, Davis! The war's over; how are you?" extending his hand.

Kim, failing to see the final adjustment, declined the proffered hand, drew his revolver and commenced firing at the rascal, who sprang from his horse and escaped without injury. A week later Davis was arrested upon a charge of assault and battery with intent to kill, tried, and sentenced to three months in jail. The Governor pardoned him, however, before the sentence was fully served. Davis then returned to Indiana, married, and settled down.

Lem Vance, one of our first guides, is serving a life-sentence in the penitentiary for homicide.

In June, 1897, we visited the Hollingsworth sisters, and found them all alive—all married and happy in their mountain homes, with large families about them.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library