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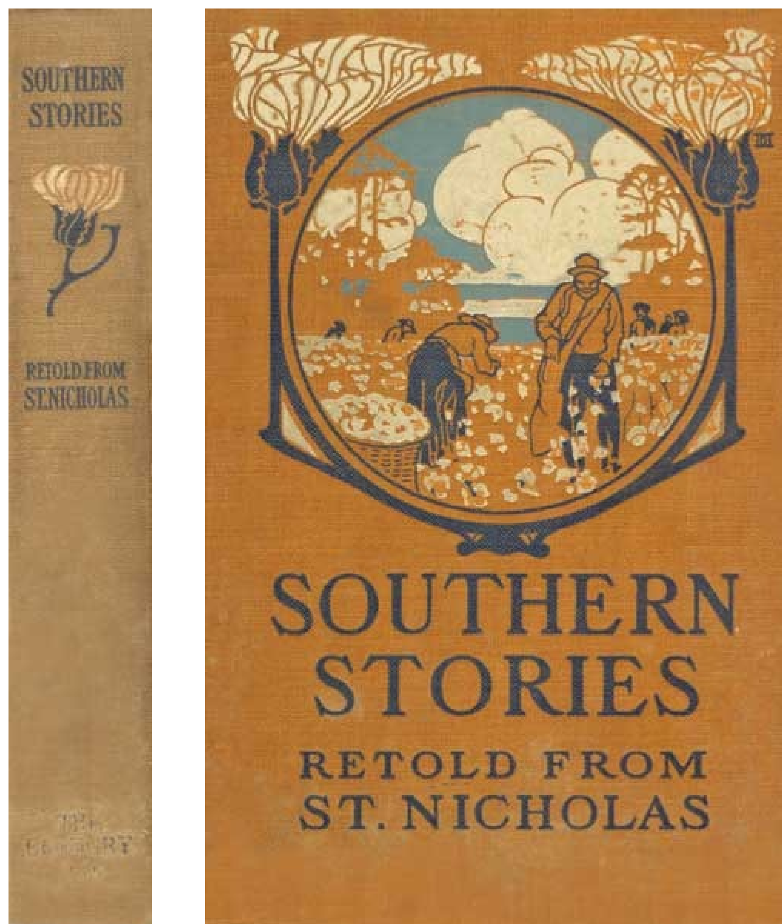

SOUTHERN STORIES

RETOLD FROM ST. NICHOLAS

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THE DE VINNE PRESS

A REAL UNCLE REMUS STORY.

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SOUTH

Beautiful is the land, with its prairies and forests of fruit-trees;
Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the bluest of heavens
Bending above, and resting its dome on the walls of the forest.

Longfellow.

HIS HERO

BY MARGARET MINOR

It was an October afternoon, and through Indian summer's tulle-like haze a low-swinging sun sent shafts of scarlet light at the highest peaks of the Blue Ridge. The sweet-gum leaves looked like blood-colored stars as they floated slowly to the ground, and brown chestnuts gleamed satin-like through their gaping burs; while over all there rested a dense stillness, cut now and then by the sharp yelp of a dog as he scurried through the bushes after a rabbit.

Surrounded by this splendid autumn beauty stood Mountain Top Inn, near the crest of the Blue Ridge in Rockfish Gap, its historical value dating from the time when Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, after a long and spirited discussion in one of its low-ceiled rooms, decided upon the location of the University of Virginia.

On the porch of this old inn there now sat a little boy, idly swinging a pair of sun-tanned legs. Occasionally he tickled an old liver-colored hound that lay dozing in a limp heap; but being rewarded only by toothless snaps at very long intervals, he finally grew tired of this amusement, and stretching himself out on his back, he began to dream with wide-open eyes. At these dream-times, when he let his thoughts loose, they always bore him to the very same field, and here his fancy painted pictures with the vivid colors of a boy's imagination: pictures so strong that they left him flushed and tingling with pride; again, pictures that brought a cool, choking feeling to his throat; and at times pictures that made his childish mouth quiver and droop. Among all of these thought-born scenes, at intervals there would stand out the real ones, scenes that were etched on the clean walls of his memory in everlasting strokes.

He never tired thinking of that first morning—that morning when all the world seemed gilded with sunshine and throbbing with martial music. His grandfather had lifted him up on one of the "big gate" posts to see the soldiers march by. With mingled feelings of admiration and childish envy he had watched them drill for many weeks, but they had never seemed such real, grand soldiers until now, as they came marching by with quick, firm steps, keeping time to the clear, staccato notes, marching off to real battle-fields. It was all so beautiful, splendid, and gay—the music, the soldiers, the people, the hurrahing! It stirred his sentient little body through and through with a kind of joy, and he thought it so strange that his mother's

eyes were full of tears.

Just a few days later he had listened eagerly to the sharp, crackling sound of guns and the rumbling thunder of cannon, so near that the air seemed to vibrate. He and another little boy had stood and talked in high, quick tones, bragging and predicting breathlessly the result of the battle as they used the term "our men."

Finally they climbed the tallest oak on the lawn, and strained their young eyes to see which was "gettin' whipped."

A little while after this he remembered following his father through the long hospital ward. Over the first bed he saw him stoop and loosen the white cotton bandages of a wounded man. On the next narrow cot there was a slender boy of fifteen, who lay with clenched hands watching the work of the surgeon. Then they passed a woman, who was gently bathing the forehead of a man whose soldier days seemed likely to come to an early end. [Pg 6]

Some weeks had gone by, when one day he followed a party of men to Marye's Heights. It was a short time after the battle of Fredericksburg. A light snow had fallen the night before, which the wind whirled and sifted about the dead, in a way that made them appear to be shuddering. Once a sharp gust blew the snow off a body lying on its face, and the boy's eyes filled. He scarcely heeded the talk of the men with whom he had gone. His thoughts were held fast by the awful scene which lay spread before his young eyes.

How often since then had the boy pictured himself a grown man, seated on just such a fine horse and following Lee! It was always Lee; in his dreamland through the heart of the battle he always followed General Robert E. Lee, his hero, whom he had never seen, but whom he had carried halo-crowned in his heart ever since he could remember.

[Pg 7] And then the very saddest day in his life had come—the day when the first news of Lee's surrender lay heavy on the hearts of the household. For a while he had followed his mother as she went silently, with closed white lips, from one duty to another. Finally he went out to seek comfort from Uncle Jake, whom he found sitting with his back propped against the side of the corn-crib, drawing little quick puffs of smoke from his pipe.

"Uncle Jake," he said, "Lee's just *had* to s'render."

"Yes, honey." And as he looked into Uncle Jake's little red, watery eyes, he saw no comfort there, and turned away.

Seven months had gone by since the war had ended; still, on this October afternoon, as the boy lay stretched out on the porch of the old inn, he dreamed his boyish dreams of romance and heroism.

Suddenly his attention was attracted by the sound of hoofs, and turning his head he saw a man riding slowly down the road. A new arrival at the inn was always most interesting. An eager light came into the boy's eyes as he watched the rider, who was now near enough for him to see how firmly he sat in his saddle. The man seemed a very part of the strongly built horse, which carried him with an ease that indicated long habit. [Pg 8]

A wiry little negro had also seen the approaching horseman, and was now hurrying across the lawn to meet him.

"May I spend the night here, my man?" asked the stranger.

"Yessuh—yessuh!" answered Uncle Jake, quickly, and opening the gate he stepped out and caught the bridle near the bit, as the horseman swung out of the creaking saddle to the ground.

"Uncle Jake, take the horse around to the stable!" called out the boy, who felt that the honors of hospitality rested on him, there being no one else in sight. Then he ran briskly down the walk to meet the stranger, who extended his fine, strong hand with a little smile, and said very kindly:

"How do you do, sir?"

"I'm well," replied the boy.

"And what is your name?"

"Jimmy."

"Jimmy? Well, Jimmy is a nice name," he said. Then he turned, and still held the boy's hand as he watched the little old negro, who stood with his head under the saddle-skirt, tiptoeing and straining in his effort to unfasten the girth. Finally, when he succeeded, he flung the saddle on the ground, and the horse, feeling relieved of his burden, first shook himself violently, and then expressed his comfort again and again in deep chest-tones. [Pg 9]

During all this time Jimmy's eyes had been fastened on the stranger's spurs, and a peculiar feeling of incredulity gradually filled his mind.

Silver, indeed! He could not fool him! No one was rich enough to have real silver spurs! So sternly did he resent what he thought to be an attempt at deception that he drew his small brown hand slowly out of the stranger's gentle clasp.

After slipping off the bridle from the horse's head and dropping it by the saddle, Uncle Jake led him away by his forelock to the stable, and Jimmy walked toward the inn with his guest, who said as they reached the steps:

"Jimmy, we will sit here for a while, and then I will go over to the stable and see about my horse."

As they sat down the old hound came cautiously down the steps, wheezing out a husky greeting.

"She is too old to hurt any one," said Jimmy.

"Is she yours?"

"No, sir. Tip's mine. Listen!" he exclaimed, as the sharp yelp of a dog again broke the stillness. "That's Tip! He goes off and runs rabbits all by himself."

"Perhaps he is after a fox."

"No, sir; Tip won't run a fox."

"Jimmy, can you tell from a dog's cry whether he is running a fox or a rabbit?"

"No, sir."

"Well, if he is trailing a rabbit he does not bark continually, but if he is after a fox he does; so you can always tell if you listen carefully."

"Never heard about that before," replied Jimmy, with a smile.

After this there followed a long pause, during which the stranger looked about inquiringly, then said:

"Jimmy, how long have you been living here?"

"Not very long. We refugeed over in North Carolina the first part of the war. Then we came back to Spottsylvania County while father was in prison. Why, we just came here after the s'render. You remember when Lee just had to s'render?" he asked, looking up into the stranger's face.

"'YOU REMEMBER WHEN LEE JUST HAD TO S'RENDER?' ASKED JIMMY."

The boy's mouth, as usual, quivered as he uttered the word "s'render," but the man did not appear to see this. He seemed to be looking at a far-off mountain peak. After a pause he replied, "Yes, I remember," as he arose and started toward the stable.

"I'll show you the way," said Jimmy.

"Thank you, sir," he answered gravely.

When they entered the stable the big gray horse greeted his master with some soft little nickerings. "Oh, he knows you without even looking!" exclaimed Jimmy, in tones expressing delight and surprise.

"Yes, he knows me pretty well," the man replied, as he looked with anxious sympathy at a saddle-galled place on the horse's back.

Jimmy had climbed up on the side of the stall, and was also looking with much interest. Suddenly he exclaimed: "I know what's good for that! Some stuff down in the bottom of the chalybeate spring."

He pronounced each syllable of the word "chalybeate" very clearly, for it was a newly learned word, and he was proud of his ability to use it.

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"Why, yes; the iron in it ought to be healing. How far is the spring?"

"Oh, just a little way; I'll show you," Jimmy replied, jumping to the ground and quickly opening the stable door. "Let me lead him," he added.

"Hadn't you rather ride him, Jimmy?"

"Yes, sir," he replied, in rather shy but pleased tones.

"All right," said the man, as he swung the little fellow up on the horse. "There! Sit farther back, so you will not hurt that galled place. Now I'll lead him, and you tell me in which direction to go."

"Down the road there, just on the other side of the ice-pond," said Jimmy, pointing in that direction as they moved off.

The boy was happy as he cupped his bare legs close around the body of the horse, and watched the square shoulders of the man who walked slowly ahead. He thought him exceedingly nice and kind, and his feelings in regard to the spurs were not nearly so intense. The desire to ask if they were real silver, though, was strong, but he felt that perhaps it would not be polite, so he said nothing.

[Pg 15]

After they had gone some distance Jimmy exclaimed, "There's the spring!" Then he slid quickly to the ground, and without other words knelt down and, baring one arm, dipped out of the bottom of the spring a handful of rust-colored flakes.

"This is what you put on his back," he said. "Just lay it right on. It doesn't hurt; it just feels cool."

The directions were quietly obeyed, and the horse made no movement, save a slight quiver of the skin, as if to shake off a fly.

"Uncle Jake says that doctors can't make any finer medicine than this," he said, as he scooped up another handful.

"Well, Jimmy, I am very much obliged to you, and I'm sure that my horse is also," said the stranger, as they started on back to the stable.

[Pg 16]

In the meantime the saddle left by Uncle Jake near the horse-rack had attracted the attention of a young man as he came through the front gate. After looking at it for a few minutes, idle curiosity prompted him to turn it over with his foot, and as he did so three bright brass letters—"R. E. L."—greeted him. He looked sharply at them at first, then his eyes dilated, and a little prickly thrill ran through him. "I wonder if it can be!" he said. Suddenly some convincing feeling seemed to fill his mind, and then he almost ran to the house. On reaching the steps, he sprang up them two at a time, and entered the hall, where he met Mrs. Claverly.

"Mrs. Claverly—" he began, and stopped.

"Well?" she asked, smiling at his hesitation. "What is it, Charley?"

"Ah, do you know, Mrs. Claverly, I think that General Lee is here." His voice was husky with excitement.

"General Lee! Where?" But without waiting for a reply, she stepped quickly to the door of the old-fashioned parlor, and exclaimed in soft, suppressed tones to a group of women sitting there:

"They think that General Lee is here!"

"What makes them think so?" asked a thin, gray-haired woman, as she hastily arose.

"Why," replied the young man, his tones now quite positive, "his saddle with 'R. E. L.' on it is out there by the gate."

"There he comes now," said one of the group, eagerly; "at least, I suppose that it is he."

"Let me see," said Mrs. Claverly, going rapidly to the window. "I saw him once at the Greenbrier White, and I am sure that I would know him. Yes, it is he!" she exclaimed, as she looked at the man coming slowly across the lawn, talking earnestly to the barefoot boy at his side. His thoughts were so completely occupied by what he was saying that not until he was quite near the inn did he see the group on the porch, and his face flushed slightly as he realized that they were there to greet him. Lifting his hat, he ascended the steps with bared head. Mrs. Claverly walked quickly forward, and extended her slim white hand.

"General Lee, I believe."

"Yes, madam," he replied gravely, as he bowed low over her hand.

At the sound of Lee's name Jimmy's eyes grew round, and filled with astonishment. For one brief moment he stood gazing up at the stately old soldier, whom every one was greeting, then he backed slowly away until he reached the door. There he stood another moment, seeing nothing but his hero.

Suddenly he turned and darted down the long hall, up the stairway, and into his mother's room.

"Mother!" he exclaimed in breathless wonderment, "mother! General Lee is downstairs, and he is just splendid, and—er—mother, he's just exactly like anybody else!"[1]

JERICHO BOB

BY ANNA EICHBERG KING

Jericho Bob, when he was four years old, hoped that one day he might be allowed to eat just as much turkey as he possibly could. He was eight now, but that hope had not been realized.

Mrs. Jericho Bob, his mother, kept hens for a living, and she expected that they would lay enough eggs in the course of time to help her son to an independent career as a bootblack.

They lived in a tumble-down house in a waste of land near the steam cars, and besides her hens Mrs. Bob owned a goat.

Our story has, however, nothing to do with the goat except to say he was there, and that he was on nibbling terms, not only with Jericho Bob, but with Bob's bosom friend, Julius Cæsar Fish, and it was surprising how many old hat-brims and other tidbits of clothing he could swallow during a day.

As Mrs. Bob truly said, it was no earthly use to get something new for Jericho, even if she could afford it; for the goat browsed all over him, and had been known to carry away even a leg of his trousers.

Jericho Bob was eight years old, and the friend of his bosom, Julius Cæsar Fish, was nine. They were both of a lovely black; a tallow-dip couldn't take the kink out of their hair, and the hardest whipping did not disturb the even cheerfulness of their spirits. They were so much alike that if it hadn't been for Jericho's bow-legs and his turn-up nose, you really could not have told them apart.

A kindred taste for turkey also united them.

In honor of Thanksgiving day Mrs. Bob always sacrificed a hen which would, but for such blessed release, have died of old age. One drumstick was given to Jericho, whose interior remained an unsatisfied void.

Jericho Bob had heard of turkey as a fowl larger, sweeter, and more tender than hen;

and about Thanksgiving time he would linger around the provision stores and gaze with open mouth at the noble array of turkeys hanging, head downward, over bushels of cranberries, as if even at that uncooked stage, they were destined for one another. And turkey was his dream.

It was spring-time, and the hens were being a credit to themselves. The goat in the yard, tied to a stake, was varying a meal of old shoe and tomato-can by a nibble of fresh green grass. Mrs. Bob was laid up with rheumatism.

"Jericho Bob!" she said to her son, shaking her red and yellow turban at him, "Jericho Bob, you go down an' fetch de eggs to-day. Ef I find yer don't bring me twenty-three, I'll—well, never mind what I'll do, but yer won't like it."

Now, Jericho Bob meant to be honest, but the fact was he found twenty-four, and the twenty-fourth was so big, so remarkably big.

Twenty-three eggs he brought to Mrs. Bob, but the twenty-fourth he sinfully left in charge of the discreet hen.

On his return he met Julius Cæsar Fish, with his hands in his pockets and his head extinguished by his grandfather's fur cap.

Together they went toward the hen-coop and Julius Cæsar Fish spoke, or rather lisped (he had lost some of his front teeth):

"Jericho Bobth, that 'th a turkey'th egg."

"Yer don't say so?"

"I think i'th a-goin' ter hatch." No sooner said than they heard a pick and a peck in the shell.

"Pick!" a tiny beak broke through the shell. "Peck!" more beak. "Crack!" a funny little head, a long, bare neck, and then "Pick! Peck! Crack!" before them stood the funniest, fluffiest brown ball resting on two weak little legs.

"Hooray!" shouted the woolly heads.

"Peep!" said turkeykin.

"It's mine!" Jericho shouted excitedly.

"I'th Marm Pitkin'th turkey'th; she laid it there."

"It's mine, and I'm going to keep it, and next Thanksgiving I'm going ter eat him."

"Think your ma'll let you feed him up for thath?" Julius Cæsar asked, triumphantly.

Jericho Bob's next Thanksgiving dinner seemed destined to be a dream. His face fell.

"I'll tell yer whath I'll do," his friend said, benevolently; "I'll keep 'm for you, and Thanksgivin' we'll go halvth."

JERICHO BOB AND JULIUS CÆSAR FISH PLANNING THEIR THANKSGIVING DINNER.

Jericho resigned himself to the inevitable, and the infant turkey was borne home by his friend.

Fish, Jr., lived next door, and the only difference in the premises was a freight-car permanently switched off before the broken-down fence of the Fish yard; and in this car turkeykin took up his abode.

I will not tell you how he grew and more than realized the hopes of his foster-fathers, nor with what impatience and anticipation they saw spring, summer, and autumn pass, while they watched their Thanksgiving dinner stalk proudly up the bare yard,

and even hop across the railroad tracks.

But, alas! the possession of the turkey brought with it strife and discord.

Quarrels arose between the friends as to the prospective disposal of his remains. We grieve to say that the question of who was to cook him led to blows.

It was the day before Thanksgiving. There was a coldness between the friends which was not dispelled by the bringing of a pint of cranberries to the common store by Jericho, and the contributing thereto of a couple of cold boiled sweet potatoes by Julius Cæsar Fish.

The friends sat on an ancient wash-tub in the back yard, and there was a momentary truce between them. Before them stood the freight-car, and along the track beyond an occasional train tore down the road, which so far excited their mutual sympathy that they rose and shouted as one man.

At the open door of the freight-car stood the unsuspecting turkey, and looked meditatively out on the landscape and at the two figures on the wash-tub.

One had bow-legs, a turn-up nose, and a huge straw hat. The other wore a fur cap and a gentleman's swallow-tail coat, with the tails caught up because they were too long.

The turkey hopped out of the car and gazed confidingly at his protectors. In point of size he was altogether their superior.

"I think," said Jericho Bob, "we'd better ketch 'im; to-morrow's Thanksgiving. Yum!"

And he looked with great joy at the innocent, the unsuspecting fowl.

"Butcher Tham 'th goin' ter kill 'im for uth," Julius Cæsar hastened to say, "an' I kin cook 'im."

"No, you ain't. I'm goin' to cook 'im," Jericho Bob cried, resentfully. "He's mine."

"He ain'th; he'th mine."

"He was my egg," and Jericho Bob danced defiance at his friend.

The turkey looked on with some surprise, and he became alarmed when he saw his foster-fathers clasped in an embrace more of anger than of love.

"I'll eat 'im all alone!" Jericho Bob cried.

"No, yer sha'n't!" the other shouted.

The turkey fled in a circle about the yard.

"Now, look yere," said Julius Cæsar, who had conquered. "We're goin' to be squar'. He wath your egg, but who brought 'im up? Me! Who'th got a friend to kill 'im? Me! Who'th got a fire to cook 'im? Me! Now you git up and we'll kitch 'im. Ef you thay another word about your egg I'll jeth eat 'im up all mythelf."

Jericho Bob was conquered. With mutual understanding they approached the turkey.

"Come yere; come yere," Julius Cæsar said, coaxingly.

For a moment the bird gazed at both, uncertain what to do.

"Come yere," Julius Cæsar repeated, and made a dive for him. The turkey spread his tail. Oh, didn't he run!

"Now I've got yer!" the wicked Jericho Bob cried, and thought he had captured the fowl; when with a shriek from Jericho Bob, as the turkey knocked him over, the Thanksgiving dinner spread his wings, rose in the air, and alighted on the roof of the freight-car.

The turkey looked down over the edge of the car at his enemies, and they gazed up at him. Both parties surveyed the situation.

"We've got him," Julius Cæsar cried at last, exultantly. "You git on the roof, and ef you don't kitch 'im up thar, I'll kitch 'im down yere."

With the help of the wash-tub, an old chair, Julius Cæsar's back, and much scrambling, Jericho Bob was hoisted on top of the car. The turkey was stalking solemnly up and down the roof with tail and wings half spread.

"I've got yer now," Jericho Bob said, creeping softly after him. "I've got yer now, sure," he was just repeating, when with a deafening roar the express-train came tearing down the road.

For what possible reason it slowed up on approaching the freight-car nobody ever knew; but the fact remains that it did, just as Jericho Bob laid his wicked black paw on the turkey's tail.

The turkey shrieked, spread his wings, shook the small black boy's grasp from his tail, and with a mighty swoop alighted on the roof of the very last car as it passed; and in a moment more Jericho Bob's Thanksgiving dinner had vanished, like a beautiful dream, down the road!

What became of that Thanksgiving dinner no one ever knew. If you happen to meet a traveling turkey without any luggage, but with a smile on his countenance, please send word to Jericho Bob.

Every evening he and Julius Cæsar Fish stand by the broken-down fence and look up and down the road, as if they expected some one.

Jericho Bob has a turn-up nose and bow-legs. Julius Cæsar still wears his dress-coat, and both are watching for a Thanksgiving dinner that ran away.

HOW WE BOUGHT LOUISIANA

BY HELEN LOCKWOOD COFFIN

It is a hard matter to tell just how much power a little thing has, because little things have the habit of growing. That was the trouble that France and England and Spain and all the other big nations had with America at first. The thirteen colonies occupied so small and unimportant a strip of land that few people thought they would ever amount to much. How could such insignificance ever bother old England, for instance, big and powerful as she was? To England's great loss she soon learned her error in underestimating the importance or strength of her colonies.

France watched the giant and the pygmy fighting together, and learned several lessons while she was watching. For one thing, she found out that the little American colonies were going to grow, and so she said to herself: "I will be a sort of back-stop to them. These Americans are going to be foolish over this bit of success, and think that just because they have won the Revolution they can do anything they wish to do. They'll think they can spread out all over this country and grow to be as big as England herself; and of course anybody can see that that is impossible. I'll just put up a net along the Mississippi River, and prevent them crossing over it. That will be the only way to keep them within bounds."

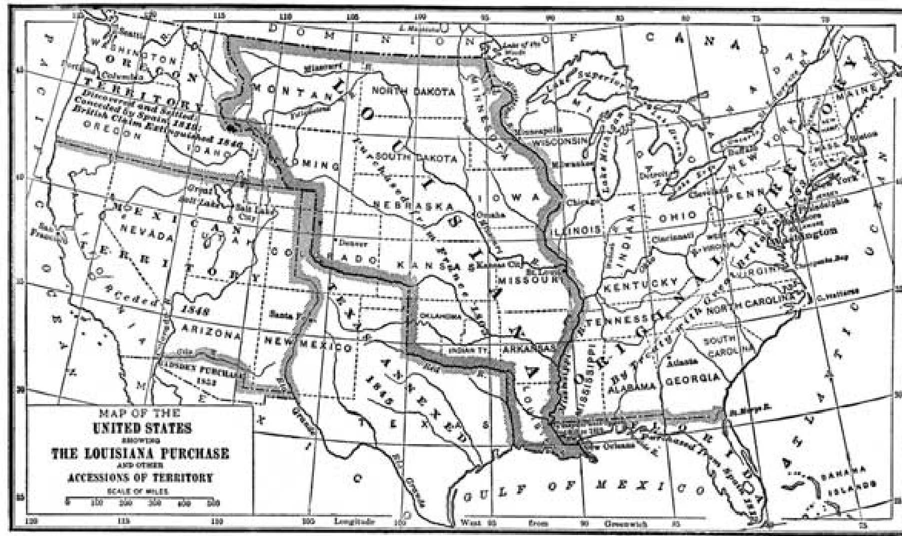
And so France held the Mississippi, and from there back to the Rocky Mountains, and whenever the United States citizen desired to go west of the Mississippi, France said: "No, dear child. Stay within your own yard and play, like a good little boy," or something to that effect.

Now the United States citizen didn't like this at all; he had pushed his way with much trouble and expense and hard work through bands of Indians and through forests and over rivers and mountains, into Wisconsin and Illinois, and he wished to go farther. And, besides, he wanted to have the right to sail up and down the Mississippi, and so save himself the trouble of walking over the land and cutting out his own roads as he went. So when France said, "No, dear," and told him to "be a good little boy and not tease," the United States citizen very naturally rebelled.

Mr. Jefferson was President of the United States at that time, and he was a man who hated war of any description. He certainly did not wish to fight with his own countrymen, and he as certainly did not wish to fight with any other nation, so he searched around for some sort of a compromise. He thought that if America could own even one port on this useful river and had the right of Mississippi navigation, the matter would be settled with satisfaction to all parties. So he sent James Monroe over to Paris to join our minister, Mr. Livingston, and see if the two of them together could not persuade France to sell them the island of New Orleans, on which was the city of the same name.

Now Napoleon was the ruler of France, and he was dreaming dreams and seeing visions in which France was the most important power in America, because she owned this wonderful Mississippi River and all this "Louisiana" which stretched back from the river to the Rockies. He already held forts along the river, and he was planning to strengthen these and build some new ones. But you know what happens to the plans of mice and men sometimes. Napoleon was depending upon his army to help him out on these plans, but his armies in San Domingo were swept away by war and sickness, so that on the day he had set for them to move up into Louisiana not a man was able to go. At the same time Napoleon had on hand another scheme against England, which was even more important than his plans for America, and which demanded men and money. Besides this, he was shrewd enough to know that he could not hold this far-away territory for any long time against England, which had so many more ships than France. He suddenly changed his mind about his American possessions, and nearly sent Mr. Monroe and Mr. Livingston into a state of collapse

by offering to sell them not only New Orleans but also the whole Province of Louisiana.



MAP OF THE UNITED STATES
SHOWING
THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE
AND OTHER
ACCESSIONS OF TERRITORY.

There was no time to write to President Jefferson and ask his advice, and this was before the days of the cable; so Monroe and Livingston took the matter into their own hands, and signed the contract which transferred the Louisiana territory to the United States for a consideration of $15,000,000. They were severely criticized by many of their own countrymen, and they had some doubts of their own about the wisdom of their action. You see, nobody knew then that corn and wheat would grow so abundantly in this territory, or that beyond the Mississippi there were such stretches of glorious pasture-lands, or that underneath its mountainous regions were such mines of gold, silver, and copper. Americans saw only the commercial possibilities of the river, and all they wanted was the right of navigating it and the permission to explore the unknown country to the westward. [Pg 32] [Pg 33]

But Jefferson and Monroe and Livingston builded better than they knew. All this happened a hundred years ago; and to-day that old Louisiana territory is, in natural resources, the wealthiest part of the whole United States. Without that territory in our possession we should have no Colorado and no Wyoming, no Dakotas, or Nebraska, or Minnesota, or Montana, or Missouri, or Iowa, or Kansas, or Arkansas, or Louisiana, or Oklahoma, or Indian Territory.

For all these reasons we owe our most sincere and hearty thanks to the patriotic and far-sighted men who were concerned in buying this territory for the United States. [Pg 34]

THE CITY THAT LIVES OUTDOORS

BY W. S. HARWOOD

When the wind is howling through the days of the mad March far up in the lands where snow and ice thick cover the earth, here in this city that lives outdoors the roses are clambering over the "galleries" and the wistaria is drooping in purplish splendor from the low branches of the trees and from the red heights of brick walls.

The yellow jonquils, too, are swelling, and the geraniums are throwing out their scarlet flame across wide stretches of greensward, while the violets are nodding at the feet of the gigantic magnolias, whose huge yellowish-gray buds will soon burst into white beauty, crowning this noblest of flower-bearing trees.

It is a strange old city, this city that lives outdoors—a city rich in romantic history, throbbing with tragedy and fascinating events, a beautiful old city, with a child by its side as beautiful as the mother. The child is the newer, more modern city, and the child, like the parent, lives out of doors. [Pg 35]

The people seem to come into closer touch with nature than the people of most other

portions of the land. The climate, the constant invitation of the earth and sky, seem to demand a life lived in the open. This city that lives outdoors is a real city, with all a city's varied life; but it is a country place as well—a city set in the country, or the country moved into town.

For at least nine months in the twelve, the people of this rare old town live out of doors nearly all the waking hours of the twenty-four. For the remaining three months of the year, December, January, and February, they delude themselves into the notion that they are having a winter, when they gather around a winter-time hearth and listen to imaginary wind-roarings in the chimney, and see through the panes fictitious and spectral snow-storms, and dream that they are housed so snug and warm. But when the day comes the sun is shining and there is no trace of white on the ground, and the grass is green and there are industrious buds breaking out of cover, and the earth is sleeping very lightly. Open-eyed, the youngsters sit by these December firesides and listen to their elders tell of the snow-storms in the long ago that came so very, very deep—ah, yes, so deep that the darkies were full of fear and would not stir from their cabins to do the work of the white people; when snowballs were flying in the streets, and the earth was white, and the "banquettes," or sidewalks, were ankle-deep in slush.

All the long years of the two centuries since this old city was born, a mighty river has been flowing by its doors, never so far forgetting its purpose to live outdoors as to freeze its yellow crest, stealing softly past by night and by day, bearing along the city's front a vast commerce on down to the blue waters of the Gulf, and enriching the city by its cargoes from the outer world and from the plantations of the upper river. Strangely enough, the great yellow river flows above the city, its surface being nearly thirty feet above the streets in time of flood. It is held in its course by vast banks of earth.

THE SPANISH DAGGER IN BLOOM.

It is a cold, drear March where the north star shines high overhead; but here, where it seems suddenly to have lost its balance and to have dropped low in the brilliant night, March is like June. It is June indeed, June with its wealth of grasses, its noble avenue of magnolias, its great green spread of live-oaks—most magnificent of Southern trees; June with its soft balm, and its sweet sunshine, and its perfume-laden air. And if you have never seen the pole star in the sky of the north, where the star is almost directly over your head, you cannot realize how strange a sight it is to see it so low in the sky as it is here.

There is a large garden in this city—it is, in fact, a part of the city proper. It was once

a beautiful faubourg, now known as the Garden District, where the people live outdoors in a fine old aristocratic way, and where all the beauty in nature seen in the other sections of the city seems to be outdone. Very many rare old homes are in this garden region, with its deep hedges and ample grounds, inclosed in high stone walls, and a wealth of flowers and noble courts and an abounding hospitality. But what, after all, are houses to a people that lives outdoors? Conveniences only; for such a people, better than houses are the air of the open, the scent of the roses, the blue of the Southern sky, the vast, strong sweep of the brilliant stars!

If we pause here along this street where run such every-day things as electric street-cars, we shall see on one side of the splendid avenue a smooth-paved roadway for the carriages, on the other a course for the horsemen, and in the center a noble inner avenue of trees set in a velvet-like carpet of grass; and here and there along the way, almost in touch of your hand from the open car window, appears the Spanish dagger, with its green, sharp blades and its snowy, showy plume. Not far away stands a lowly negro cabin, where the sun beats down hot and fierce upon a great straggling rose-bush, reaching up to the eaves, beating back the rays of the sun defiantly and gaining fresh strength in the struggle. On such a bush one day I counted two hundred and ninety roses. [Pg 40]

[Pg 41]
[Pg 42]

This city which lives outdoors must play most in the open, and in its noble park, with its vast stretches of bright green, here empurpled by masses of the dainty grass-flower, there yellowing with the sheen of the buttercup, one finds the tireless golf-players leisurely strolling over the links; from yonder come the cries of the boys at ball; and in the farther distance you may see through the frame-like branches of a giant live-oak the students of a great university hard set at a game of tennis. And yet—is it the air, or the race, or the traditions?—something it is which makes the sportsmen, like the spring, seem slow to move. [Pg 43]

FAR IN THE PINEY WOODS.

And here even the palms grow outdoors in the city yards. And should you go past the city's limits, and yet within seeing distance of its blue-tiled housetops, you will find the palms growing rank in the great swamps, which you must search if you care to hunt for the languid alligators—palms growing so thick and rank that it is quite like looking into some vast conservatory, with the blue dome of the sky for glass. And here grow the magnolias in their wild, barbaric splendor of bloom, and the live-oaks, mighty of girth and spread, draped in somber gray moss as if for the funeral of some god of the deep green wood. At the fringe of the swamp, tempting you until near to jumping into the morass after them, are the huge fleurs-de-lis, each gorgeous blossom fully seven inches across its purple top. [Pg 44]

To the north, somewhat apart from the reach of the treacherous river, lie the health-giving piny woods, and along the big, sullen stream the sugar plantations, some of them still the home of a lavish hospitality, some of them transformed into mere places of trade, where thrift and push have elbowed out all that fine gallantry and ease and ample hospitality of an earlier day—that hospitality which will ever remain a leading characteristic of the people. To be a Southern man or a Southern woman and to be inhospitable—that is not possible in the nature of things.

A PICTURESQUE FRONT IN THE FRENCH QUARTER.

It is, when all is said and done, on the gallery that this city lives most of its life—on the gallery even more than on the evening-thronged banquette, which is the sidewalk of the North, or the boulevards, or even the fragrant parks, where life flows in a fair, placid stream. Some there must be who toil by day in shop, or at counter, or in dim accounting-rooms, or on the floors of the marts where fortunes are made and lost in sugar or cotton or rice. For such the gallery is a haven of rest. If they must pass the earlier day indoors, for them the gallery during the long, late afternoon, and the ghost of a twilight, and the long evenings far into the starry night. The ghost of a twilight indeed—the South knows no other. Sometimes I have watched the long, splendid twilight come down over the wild Canadian forest—slowly delaying; creeping up the low mountains; halting from hour to hour in the glades below; shade after shade in the glorious sky of the west gradually merging into the dimness of the oncoming dusk; the moments passing so slowly, the day fading so elusively, until, at last, when even the low moon has hung out its silver sign in the west and the stars are pricking through, it is still twilight along the lower earth. And still farther to the north, around the globe in the far upper Europe, with the polar circle below you, it is like living on a planet of eternal day to sit through the northern light and feel about you the all-pervasive twilight of the land of the midnight sun. But the night is so hasty here, and the day is swift; and between them runs but a slender, dim thread.

OLD PLANTATION VILLA ON ANNUNCIATION STREET.

The gallery is a feature of every house in this city that lives outdoors, be it big or little, humble or grand, or lowly or mean. It is on the first floor or the second, or even the third, though the third it seldom reaches, for few people care for houses of great height. Indeed, there are hundreds of homes of but one story, full of the costliest tokens of the taste of an artistic people. And the soil below is so like a morass that ample space must be left between floor and earth; while as for cellars, I have heard of but two in all the great city. The gallery may run around the entire house, flanked [Pg 49] and set off by splendid pillars with capitals rich and ornate; it may run across one end of the residence and be a marvel of rich ironwork, as fine as art and handicraft can make it, with, mayhap, the figures of its field outlined in some bit of color, as gold or green; it may be but a single cheap wooden affair, paintless, dingy, dilapidated, weather-worn, and stained with neglect; but a gallery it is still, an important social feature of this outdoor life.

Over the gallery grow the roses; out near at hand a bignonia-vine lifts its yellow flare aloft and throws down a fluttering shower of bell-like blooms, and all the air is heavy with the scents of the South. So through the long evening the people sit upon the gallery and chat or read or sing or doze or plan or discuss their family affairs. By day the galleries are protected with gay-colored awnings or those filmy woven sheets of reeds which keep out the glare and let through the light and the fragrant breeze. Children make of the gallery a play-house; young people here entertain their friends; the elders discuss the affairs of a nation or dwell on that wonderful past through [Pg 50] which this ancient Southern city has come tumultuously down through the lines of Castilian and Saxon and Gaul.

OLD SPANISH HOUSES.

If you should take your map of the United States and run your finger far down its surface until it rested upon the largest city in all the beautiful South, and the metropolis of a vast inner empire which holds two civilizations, one French-Spanish, one American, both slowly, very slowly, merging through the centuries; or, better still, if you should stroll along the streets on a sweet March day, peering into its curious quarters, watching the beautiful little children and the dark-eyed men and

the gaily dressed women and all the throngs of people, city people who can never long remain away from the green fields and the noble old trees and the scent of the roses—then you could not fail to hit upon this charming old place, New Orleans—in many ways the most interesting of all the cities in America, the beautiful city that lives outdoors.

QUEER AMERICAN RIVERS

BY F. H. SPEARMAN

I wonder if my readers realize what a story of the vast extent of our country is told by its rivers?

Every variety of river in the world seems to have a cousin in our collection. What other country on the face of the globe affords such an assortment of streams for fishing and boating and swimming and skating—besides having any number of streams on which you can do none of these things? One can hardly imagine rivers like that; but we have them, plenty of them, as you shall see.

As for fishing, the American boy may cast his flies for salmon in the Arctic circle, or angle for sharks under a tropical sun in Florida, without leaving the domain of the American flag. But the fishing-rivers are not the most curious, nor the most instructive as to diversity of climate, soil, and that sort of thing—physical geography, the teacher calls it.

A LIVE-OAK WITH SPANISH MOSS.

For instance, if you want to get a good idea of what tropical heat and moisture will do for a country, slip your canoe from a Florida steamer into the Ocklawaha River. It is as odd as its name, and appears to be hopelessly undecided as to whether it had better continue in the fish and alligator and drainage business, or devote itself to raising live-oak and cypress-trees, with Spanish moss for mattresses as a side product.

In this fickle-minded state it does a little of all these things, so that when you are really on the river you think you are lost in the woods; and when you actually get lost in the woods, you are quite confident your canoe is at last on the river. This confusion is due to the low, flat country, and the luxuriance of a tropical vegetation.

To say that such a river overflows its banks would hardly be correct; for that would imply that it was not behaving itself; besides, it has n't any banks—or, at least, very few! The fact is, those peaceful Florida rivers seem to wander pretty much where they like over the pretty peninsula without giving offense; but if Jack Frost takes such a liberty—presto! you should see how the people get after *him* with weather-bulletins and danger-signals and formidable smudges. So the Ocklawaha River and a score of its kind roam through the woods,—or maybe it is the woods that roam

through them,—and the moss sways from the live-oaks, and the cypress trees stick their knees up through the water in the oddest way imaginable.

In Florida one may have another odd experience: a river ride in an ox-cart. Florida rivers are usually shallow, and when the water is high you can travel for miles across country behind oxen, with more or less river under you all the way. There are ancient jokes about Florida steamboats that travel on heavy dews, and use spades for paddle-wheels.

But those of you who have been on its rivers know there is but one Florida, with its bearded oaks and fronded palms; its dusky woods, carpeted with glassy waters; its cypress bays, where lonely cranes pose, silently thoughtful (of stray polliwogs); and its birds of wondrous plumage that rise with startled splash when the noiseless canoe glides down upon their haunts.

MOSS-DRAPED LIVE-OAKS.

Every strange fowl and every hideous reptile, every singular plant and every tangled jungle, will tell the American boy how far he is to the south. Florida is, in fact, his corner of the tropics; and the clear waters of its rivers, stained to brown and wine-color with the juices of a tropical vegetation, will tell him, if he reads nature's book, how different the sandy soil of the South is from the yellow mold of the great Western plains.

Such a boy hardly need ask the conductor how far west he is if he can catch a glimpse of one of the rivers. All the rivers of the plains are alike full of yellow mud, because the soil of the plains melts at the touch of water. These are our spendthrift rivers, full to the banks at times, but most of the year desperately in need of water. It is only with the greatest effort that they can keep their places in the summer: there is just a scanty thread of water strung along a great, rambling bed of sand, to restrain Dame Nature from revoking their licenses to run and turning them into cattle-ranches.

No wonder that fish refuse to have anything to do with such streams, and refuse tempting offers of free worms, free transportation, and protection from the fatal nets. Fancy trying to raise a family of little fish, and not knowing one day where water is coming from the next!

Not but what there is water enough at times; only, those rivers of the great plains, like the Platte and the Kansas and the Arkansas, are so wasteful of their supply in the spring that by July they are gasping for a shower. So, part of the year they revel in luxury, and during the rest they go shabby—like shiftless people.

But the irrigation engineers have lately discovered something wonderful about even these despised rivers. During the very driest seasons, when the stream is apparently quite dry, there is still a great body of water running in the sand. Like a vast sponge, the sand holds the water, yet it flows continually, just as if it were in plain sight, but more slowly of course. The volume may be estimated by the depth and breadth of the sand. One pint of it will hold three quarters of a pint of water. This is called the underground flow, and is peculiar to this class of rivers. By means of ditches this water may be brought to the surface for irrigation.

Scattered among the foot-hills of the Rockies are rivers still more wilful in their habits. Instead of keeping to their duties in a methodical way, they rush their annual work through in a month or two; then they take long vacations. For months together they carry no water at all; and one may plant and build and live and sleep in their deserted beds—but beware! Without warning, they resume active business. Maybe on a Sunday, or in the middle of the night, a storm-cloud visits the mountains. There is a roar, a tearing, a crashing, and down comes a terrible wall of water, sweeping away houses and barns and people. No fishing, no boating, no swimming, no skating on those treacherous rivers; only surprise and shock and disaster!

So different that they seem to belong in a different world are the great inter-mountain streams, like the Yellowstone and the Colorado.

They flow through landscapes of desolate grandeur, vast expanses compassed by endless mountain-ranges that chill the bright skies with never-melting snows. The countless peaks look down on the clouds, while far below the clouds wind valleys that the sunlight never reaches. Twisting in gloomy dusk through these valleys, a gaping cañon yawns. Peering fearfully into its black, forbidding depths, an echo reaches the ear. It is the fury of a mighty river, so far below that only a sullen roar rises to the light of day. With frightful velocity it rushes through a channel cut during centuries of patience deep into the stubborn rock. Now mad with whirlpools, now silently awful with stretches of green water, that wait to lure the boatman to death, the mighty river rushes darkly through the Grand Colorado Cañon.

No sport, no fun, no frolic there. Here are only awe-inspiring gloom and grandeur, and dangers so hideous that only a handful of men have ever braved them—fewer still survived.

Grandest of American rivers though it is, you will be glad to get away from it to a noble stream like the Columbia, to a headstrong flood like the Missouri, or an inland sea like the Mississippi; on them at least you can draw a full breath and speak aloud without a feeling that the silent mountains may fall on you or the raging river swallow you up.

In the vast territory lying between the Missouri River and the Pacific Ocean the rivers are fast being harnessed for a work that will one day make the most barren spots fertile. Irrigation is claiming every year more of the flow of Western rivers. Even the tricksy old Missouri is contributing somewhat to irrigation, but in the queerest possible way.

With all its other eccentricities, the Missouri River leaks badly; for you know there are leaky rivers as well as leaky boats. The government engineers once measured the flow of the Missouri away up in Montana, and again some hundred miles further down stream. To their surprise, they found that the Missouri, instead of growing bigger down stream, as every rational river should, was actually 20,000 second-feet[2] smaller at the lower point.

Now, while 20,000 second-feet could be spared from such a tremendous river, that amount of water makes a considerable stream of itself. Many very celebrated rivers never had so much water in their lives. Hence there was great amazement when the discrepancy was discovered. But of late years Dakota farmers away to the south and east of those points on the Missouri, sinking artesian wells, found immense volumes of water where the geologists said there would n't be any. So it is believed that the farmers have tapped the water leaking from that big hole in the Missouri River away up in Montana; and from these wells they irrigate large tracts of land, and, naturally, they don't want the river-bed mended. Fancy what a blessing it is, when the weather is dry, to have a river boiling out of your well, ready to flow where you want it over the wheat-fields! For of all manner of work that a river can be put to, irrigation is, I think, the most useful. But isn't that a queer way for the Missouri to wander about underneath the ground?

THE WATERMELON STOCKINGS

BY ALICE CALDWELL HEGAN

(Author of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch")

"Jes' look at dat ornery little nigger!" exclaimed Aunt Melvy, as she deposited a basket of clothes on the cabin floor. "I lef her to clean up, an' to put de 'taters on to bile, an' to shoo de flies offen de twinses, an' I wisht you 'd look at her!"

Nell Tracy, who had come down with Aunt Melvy from the big house on the hill, viewed the culprit ruefully. 'Mazin' Grace was Aunt Melvy's eighth daughter, and had been named for her mother's favorite hymn, which began "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound." She was very short and very fat, and her kinky hair was plaited into ten tight pigtails, each of which was bound with a piece of leather shoe-string. At present she sat with her back propped against the door, her mouth wide open, and slept peacefully while the flood of her mother's wrath passed over her. [Pg 66]

"'MAZIN' GRACE SLEPT PEACEFULLY."

[Pg 67] "Oh, but, Aunt Melvy, won't you please let her come?" begged Nell, throwing off her sun-bonnet and letting down a tangle of yellow curls. "I have n't got anybody to play with me. Mother drove to town with father, and she said I was to get 'Mazin' Grace to stay with me."

"Why, I'se gwine to let her come, honey," said Aunt Melvy, "co'se I is. I wouldn't mek you cry fer nothin'! Only, I'se gwine to whup her fust. She ain't 'sponsible on her word, dat's what's de matter wid her. She done 'low to me she would n't wink her eyeball while I was gone. What you think I ketch her doin' one time?" Aunt Melvy's voice sank to a whisper. "She sewed, on a Sunday! She knowed as well as me dat w'en she gits to heben she'll hab to pick out ebery one ob dem stitches wid her nose."

Nell looked at the sleeper's round pug-nose and wondered how she would ever be able to do it. But it was no use thinking of the punishment in the next world, when an immediate whipping was promised in this; consequently she turned the whole battery of her eloquence upon Aunt Melvy, who in the end gave in. [Pg 68]

"'AND I AM GOING TO WEAR THE WATERMELON STOCKINGS,' CRIED NELL."

Ten minutes later the two little playmates were skipping down the avenue under the shady old beech-trees where their fathers had played together in the long ago. [Pg 69]

"Is yer maw gwine lemme tek you to de Christian an' Debil Society?" asked 'Mazin' Grace, as they skirted the house, and made their way into the back yard.

"Yes," cried Nell, gleefully, "and I am going to wear the watermelon stockings!"

If 'Mazin' Grace had not been so black, a cloud might have been seen passing over her face. She was the sharer of all Nell's woes, and of all but one of her joys. The exception was the possession of the watermelon stockings.

These were a sort of heirloom among the children of the family, and were regarded with reverence and pride. They were of a peculiar shade of pink silk, with clockwork up the sides and sprays of white flowers embroidered over the instep. A long time ago they had belonged to Cousin Mary, who was quite a big girl now, and she had sent them to Uncle Robert's boy up in Ohio. He learned to waltz in them, and in time sent them to little Agnes in Virginia, who wore them for a year on state occasions, then sent them back to Kentucky to little Cousin Nell.

[Pg 70] If ever a tempted soul longed for a forbidden treasure, 'Mazin' Grace longed for the watermelon stockings. "Effen they was mine, I'd give you one anyways," she argued with Nell, but to no avail.

In the back yard stood a big old chicken-coop, which had been cleaned out and nicely whitewashed for the children to use as a play-house. It had an upstairs and a downstairs, and a square little door that fastened on the outside with a wooden peg. Nell could climb in easily; but 'Mazin' Grace was too fat, and after many efforts she had given up, contenting herself with watching the play from outside.

To-day a doll funeral was in progress, and Nell, moving comfortably about inside the coop, arranged the broken bits of china in a spool-box, tied a sweeping piece of crape on her biggest doll, and allowed her imagination full swing in depicting the grief of the doll family.

'Mazin' Grace, sitting under the apple-tree outside, took little interest in the proceedings. The hot sun beat down on the long stretch of blue-grass, and up from the creek came the warm odor of mint; a fat old bumblebee hummed close to her head, but she did not stir. She was thinking about the watermelon stockings. [Pg 71]

"NELL TIED A SWEEPING PIECE OF CRAPE ON HER BIGGEST DOLL."

Presently she began to move stealthily toward the coop, watching Nell cautiously from the corner of her eyes. "Ain't nobody to home but me an' her," she whispered to herself, "an' there wouldn't nobody know, an'—" With a deft movement she closed the small door and fastened it with the wooden peg. Then she turned, and, leaving the unconscious prisoner, sped softly up the garden path, through the basement, and up the stairs.

In Mrs. Tracy's bedroom was a wide old mahogany dresser with big glass knobs that seemed to glare unwinking reproof at 'Mazin' Grace as she opened the bottom drawer.

"Dis heah is where dey stays at," she said, tossing aside ribbons and laces in her eagerness. "Oh, goody, goody! Heah dey is!"

Tearing away the tissue-paper, she gazed with delight at the coveted stockings. The knobs might glare as much as they liked; the sparrows might scold themselves hoarse on the window-sill; 'Mazin' Grace was lost in the rapture of the moment, and refused to consider consequences. She traced the pattern of the embroidery with her stubby finger, she rubbed the silk against her cheek, and even tied one stocking around her head and stood on tiptoe to see the result in the mirror. The more she handled them the more reckless she became.

"I 'spect I 'se gwine to try dese heah stockin's on!" she said, with a giggle, as she drew the silken lengths over her bare, dusty feet. "Gee Bob! Ain't them scrumptious! I look lak a shore-'nuff circus lady!"

"CATCHING HER RAGGED SKIRTS IN EITHER HAND, SHE BOWED LOW TO HER IMAGE."

She tipped the mirror in order to get the full reflection, and stood for a moment entranced. Then catching her ragged skirts in either hand, she bowed low to her image, and, after cutting a formal and elaborate pigeonwing, settled down to a shuffle that shook the floor. Music and motion were as much a part of 'Mazin' Grace as her brown skin and her white teeth. All Aunt Melvy's piety had failed to convince her of the awful wickedness of "shaking her foot" and "singing reel chunes." She danced now with utter abandon, and the harder she danced the louder she sang: [Pg 74]

"Suzanne Goffin, don't you cry;
Take dat apron from your eye.
Don't let de niggers see you sigh;
You'll git a pahtner by an' by."

The small figure with its flying pigtails swayed and swung, and the pink legs darted in and out. Backward, forward, right glide, left glide, two skips sidewise. Her breath was almost gone, but she rallied her forces for a grand finale. With a curtsy to the bedpost and hands all around, she dashed into the rollicking ecstasy of the "Mobile Buck":

"Way up yonder in de moon,
Yaller gal lickin' a silver spoon.
Cynthy, my darlin', who tol' you so?
Cynthy, my darlin', how do you know?"

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As she dropped panting on the floor, something arrested her attention. She held up her head and sniffed the air. It was a familiar odor that roused her conscience as nothing else could have done. Something burning usually meant that she had failed to watch the stove, and that catastrophe usually meant a whipping. She scrambled to her feet and ran to the window. Over across the road, the big barn where Mr. Tracy stored his grain was wrapped in flames. The wind was blowing from that direction, and it fanned the smoke into 'Mazin' Grace's eyes.

"Gee! Dat was a spark of fire," she cried, as she snatched her hand from the window-sill. She climbed out of the window upon the porch, and looked anxiously up and down the road. Nothing was to be seen save the long stretch of empty turnpike, with the hot sun beating down upon it. As she turned to go back inside the window, she stopped, horrified. On the cornice of the roof above her a glowing ember was smoldering dangerously. 'Mazin' Grace wrung her hands.

"Mammy said I was gwine to git burned up fer bein' so wicked. An' Marse Jim's house, what's belonged to we-all sence de wah! An' de settin'-room where we hangs up our stockin's ebery Christmas! An' dere ain't nobody to take keer ob it all but me! [Pg 76]

Oh, Lordy! Lordy! what mus' I do?—what mus' I do?"

As she stood there, wild-eyed and tearful, a thought made its way through the kinky hair into her bewildered brain. She darted back into the house, and reappeared with a broom.

"I'se gwine up dat ladder," she said with grim determination, "an' I'se gwine to sweep dem sparks off. An' effen I can't sweep 'em off I kin spank 'em out."

The fire at the barn was now raging; great volumes of smoke swept toward the house, heavily laden with live embers. 'Mazin' Grace, choking and frightened, wielded her broom with telling effect; no sooner did a spark touch the roof than it was brushed off into the long grass below. But they were coming faster and faster, and, watch as she would, she could not keep some of them from igniting the dry shingles. From side to side she scrambled, sweeping, beating, fighting the fire with all the strength in her little body. Her eyes smarted fiercely, her feet were bruised, the heat was suffocating; but 'Mazin' Grace never thought of deserting the post: she worked, as she had danced, with all her might and main, pitting her puny strength valiantly against that of the flames.

[Pg 77]

"FROM SIDE TO SIDE SHE SCRAMBLED, SWEEPING, BEATING, AND FIGHTING THE FIRE."

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But courage does not always bring success. Just when the fire at the barn began to subside, and the sparks ceased to fall on the roof, a tiny column of smoke began to curl up from the gabled roof of the porch. 'Mazin' Grace clambered down the ladder, and, sitting astride of the angle, worked her way outward toward the fire. She could not carry the broom, but if she could only reach the blaze perhaps she could beat it out with her hands! Excitement gave her fresh strength. On either side the roof sloped abruptly, but she worked her way on, inch by inch. Two shingles had caught—three! The smoke had changed into a blaze. Leaning over as far as she dared, 'Mazin' Grace stretched out her hand toward the flame. She could not reach it.

With a cry of terror and despair, she fell forward on the ridge; all her courage and strength suddenly deserted her—she could only cling there face downward, and sob and sob as if her heart would break. "Effen our house burns down, I want to die too," she whispered. "But Miss Lucy an' Marse Jim won't never know how I tried to take keer on it. 'Deed I did."

Up from the creek came the faint perfume of the mint; the sparrows scolded in the beech-trees. Nellie, who had broken her prison bars, called again and again from the playground, while slowly but surely up the roof crawled the ever-increasing flames. But 'Mazin' Grace heard nothing, saw nothing; she lay unconscious on the roof, an absurdly pitiful little figure in her ragged dress and pink silk stockings.

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It was six weeks before 'Mazin' Grace's burns were sufficiently healed for her to walk. Mr. Tracy, hearing of the fire on his farm, had driven home just in time to save the child's life. His porch was completely destroyed; but the old homestead, with its host of memories and associations, stood intact—a monument to the faithfulness of a very naughty little girl.

Almost the first time 'Mazin' Grace was allowed to go out, she took Nell to the "Christian an' Debil" Society. She limped as she walked, for her feet were still tender from the recent blisters; but, in spite of the pain, her smile was one of unalloyed

bliss. Two pairs of sturdy little legs were keeping step in two new pairs of watermelon stockings.

[Pg 80]

The "'Gator"

BY CLARENCE B. MOORE

The alligator, or "'gator," as it is usually called throughout its home, the Southern States, is an object of great curiosity at the North. Every winter many tourists visit Florida and carry back baby alligators, together with more or less magnified accounts of the creature's doings and habits, and their stories are probably the cause of this very widespread interest.

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[Pg 82]

Though the alligator is rapidly disappearing from the banks of the lower St. John's River, in Lake Washington and in the Saw Grass Lake (where that river has its source), and in waters still farther south, they are still to be found in almost undiminished numbers, and are hunted for a living by native hunters. They are commonly sought at night, by torch-light, for in this way they can be approached with the utmost ease.

[Pg 83]

THE ALLIGATOR HUNTERS IN THEIR CAMP.

A rifle-ball will readily penetrate an alligator's hide, although there exists an unfounded belief to the contrary. The creatures will "stand a deal of killing," however, and frequently roll off a bank and are lost even after being shot through and through.

The alligator builds a nest of mud and grass, and lays a large number of oblong white eggs, but the little ones when hatched often serve as lunch for their unnatural papa, and this cannibalism, more than the rifle, prevents their numbers from increasing. The alligator is not particular as to diet. I once found the stomach of a ten-footer to be literally filled with pine chips from some tree which had been felled near the river's bank! They are fond of wallowing in marshes, and many a man out snipe shooting has taken an involuntary bath by stumbling into their wallows. In dry seasons alligators will traverse long distances overland to reach water, and travelers have come suddenly upon alligators crawling amid prairies or woods, in the most unexpected manner. The alligator as a rule is very wary, but at times sleeps quite soundly. I saw one struck twice with an oar before it woke.

[Pg 84]

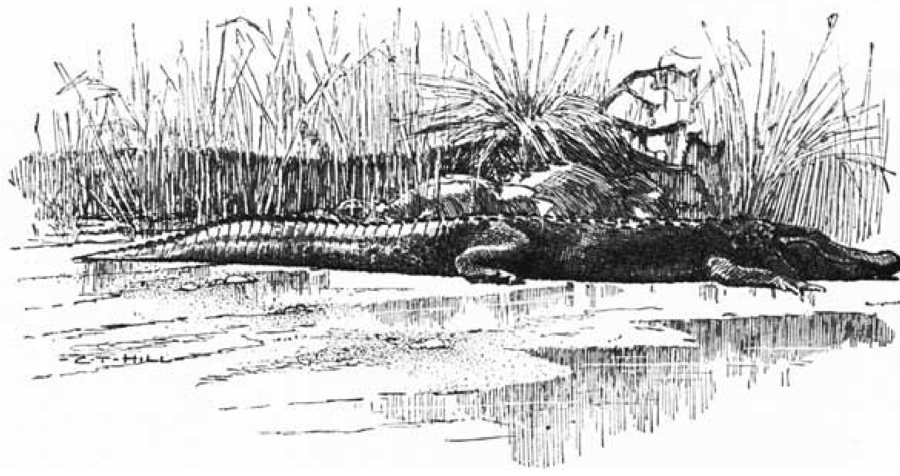
The Haunt of the "Gator".

There is a very prevalent impression that the alligator differs from the crocodile in that one moves the upper jaw and the other the lower. Such, however, is not the case. Both animals move the lower jaw, though the raising of the head as the mouth opens sometimes gives the appearance of moving the upper jaw only. But alligators and crocodiles differ in the arrangement of the teeth, and the snout of the crocodile is more sharply pointed. [Pg 85]

The hides are salted to preserve them and are shipped to dealers in Jacksonville, where those less than six feet long are worth a dollar, while for those which exceed this length twenty-five cents extra is allowed. A fair estimate of the number of alligators killed for sale in Florida alone, and not counting those shot by tourists, would be ten thousand annually. One hears very conflicting reports as to the length of large alligators. A prominent dealer in Jacksonville said that out of ten thousand hides handled by him none were over twelve feet long. I am told that at the Centennial, side by side with a crocodile from the Nile, there was shown an alligator from Florida sixteen feet in length.

Years ago near a place called Enterprise, on a point jumping into Lake Monroe, during all bright days a certain big alligator used to lie basking in the sun. He was well known to the whole neighborhood. The entire coterie of sportsmen at the only hotel used to call him "Big Ben," and proud hunters would talk, and even dream, of the time when a well-aimed rifle-shot would end his long career. But Big Ben was as cunning as a serpent, and whenever any one, afoot or afloat, came unpleasantly near, he would slide off into the water,—which meant "good-by" for the rest of the day. [Pg 86]

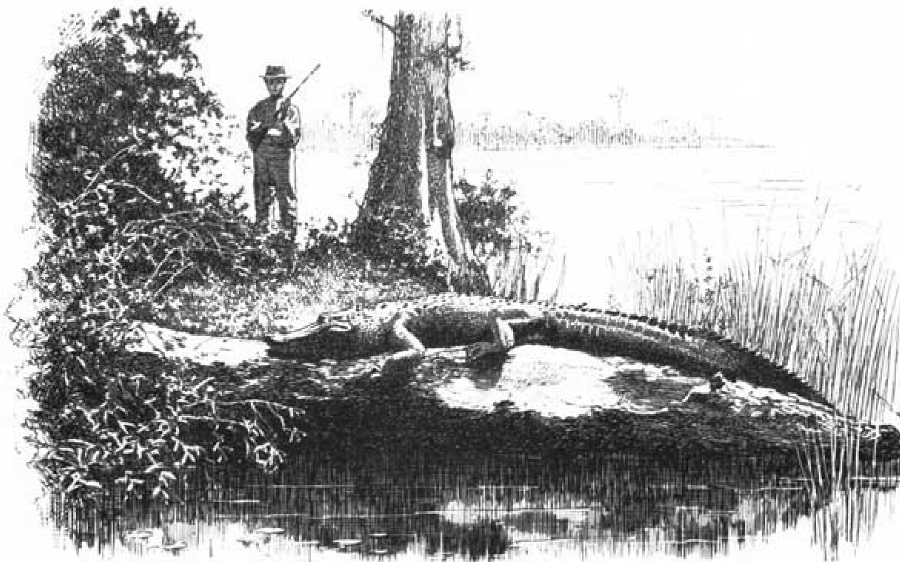
[Pg 87] One fine morning one of these sportsmen, paddling up the lake, luckily with his rifle in his canoe, came upon Big Ben so sound asleep that he stole up within range and put a bullet through the alligator's brain. What to do next was a problem. He could not tow the monster all the way to Enterprise with his small canoe. A bright idea struck him. He put his visiting-card in the beast's mouth and paddled swiftly back. A number of hunters were at the wharf, and the slayer of Big Ben hastened to inform them with apparent sincerity that while out paddling he had come within easy range of the "'gator," who was, no doubt, still lying motionless on the point. A flotilla of boats and canoes, manned by an army with rifles, instantly started for the point. To avoid confusion it was unanimously agreed that all should go down together, and that the entire party, if they were lucky enough to find Big Ben still there, should fire a volley at the word of command. As they approached the point, the hearts of all beat quickly; and when, with straining eyes, they saw Big Ben apparently asleep and motionless upon the bank, even the coolest could scarcely control his feelings. The boats were silently drawn up within easy shot, and the word was given. Bang, bang! went a score of rifles and Big Ben, riddled with bullets, lay motionless upon the point! With a cheer of triumph the excited sportsmen leaped ashore, and fastening a rope around the dead alligator, speedily towed him to Enterprise. There the original slayer awaited them upon the wharf. When Big Ben was laid upon the shore, opening the animal's mighty jaws he disclosed his visiting-card, and thanked them most politely for their kindness in bringing his 'gator home for him. [Pg 88]



A QUIET NAP ON THE RIVER BANK.

[Pg 89]
[Pg 90]

I once met with a curious adventure. Man is rarely attacked by alligators in Florida, except by the female alligator called upon to defend her young. Some years ago, in a small steamer chartered for the purpose, I had gone up a branch of the St. John's beyond Salt Lake until we could proceed no farther, because the top of the river had become solid with floating vegetation under which the water flowed. We tied up for the night, and shortly after were boarded by two men who said that their camp was [Pg 91] near by and that they shot alligators and plume-birds for a living. One of the men carried his rifle, a muzzle-loader, and from its barrel projected the ramrod, which had become fast immediately above the ball while loading. He intended to draw it out after they should return to camp.



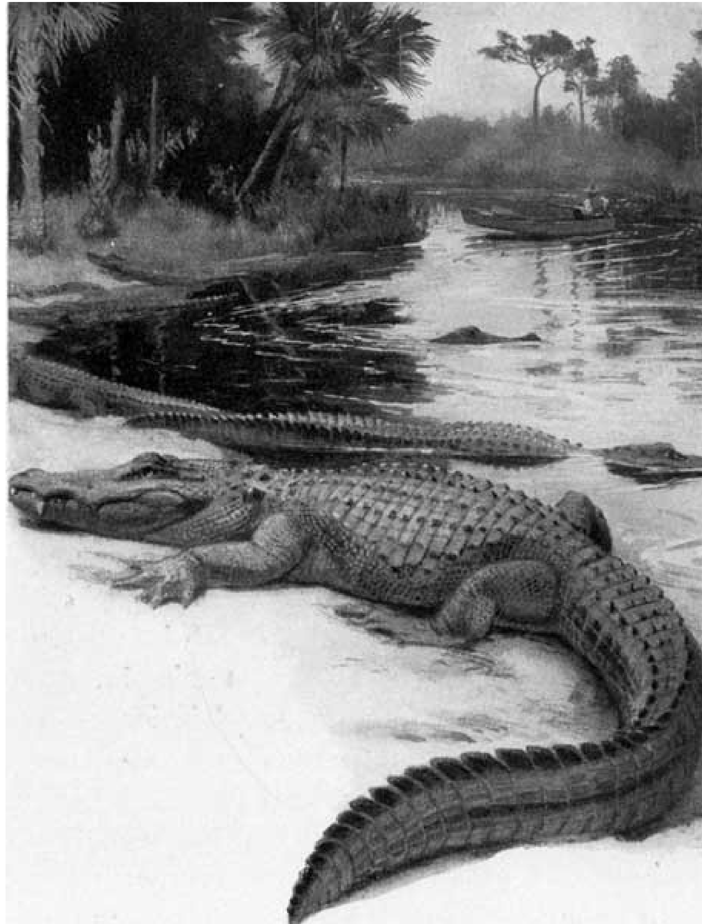
CATCHING AN ALLIGATOR ASLEEP.

We went ashore with these men to look at an alligator's nest near by, and were filling our pockets with baby-alligators, when we heard a grunting sound and saw an alligator eight or nine feet long coming directly at us. With the exception of the man already referred to, we were all unarmed and affairs began to look a little unpleasant, for the creature evidently meant mischief. When it was within a few feet, the man with the rifle, knowing that he alone had a weapon, took deliberate aim and fired bullet, ramrod, and all down the 'gator's throat. The animal turned over twice, and rolling off the bank, sank out of sight.

The alligators of the Amazon River in South America are very numerous, and owing to scarcity of hunters attain a very great size. In the upper waters apparently they are entirely unaccustomed to the report of firearms, and if not actually hit will lie still [Pg 92] while shot after shot is fired. The largest I ever killed and measured was thirteen feet and four inches in length; but this was much smaller than many which I shot from dugouts and canoes too far away from shore to tow them in.

Buried an inch deep in one of these dead alligators I once found a piraña, that troublesome fish which makes swimming in some parts of the Amazon a risky matter. It bores into flesh very much after the manner of a circular punch, and when it starts, its habit is to go to the bone. The piraña of course could not penetrate the hide of the alligator, but entering by the bullet-hole it had turned to one side and partially buried itself in the flesh. I have seen men bearing very ugly scars, the results of wounds

inflicted by the piraña while they were bathing. If this fish is cut open after having bored its way into an animal a solid round mass of flesh will be found inside corresponding to the hole it has made, showing that the fish really bores its way in.



ONE OF THE "BIG FELLOWS."

[Pg 93]
[Pg 94]

It is said that the alligator of the Amazon is more likely to attack man than its brother of our Southern States. The captain of a small steamer running between Iquitos and Para, told me that on the preceding trip he had carried to a doctor a boy who had lost his arm from the bite of an alligator, while allowing his arm to hang in the water from a raft. The same captain, however, also informed me that he had been treed by one of these animals and compelled to remain "up a tree" for some time; so that I have some hesitation in quoting him as an authority upon the nature and habits of these alligators. The flesh of young alligators is considered a delicacy in Brazil and is regularly sold in the markets. [Pg 95] [Pg 96]

THE EARTHQUAKE AT CHARLESTON

BY EWING GIBSON

On Tuesday, the 31st of August, 1886, every one in Charleston, South Carolina, complained of the severe heat and sultriness of the air. Not a breath cooled the atmosphere, parched by the burning summer sun's rays. In the afternoon the usual sea breeze failed to appear, and there was no relief from the intense closeness and almost overpowering warmth. The sky was clear, but with a misty, steamy appearance which reminded one strongly of glowing, tropical countries.

As the night came on, the absence of the glare of the sun was the only relief to the parched and panting population. Seated in the parlor of a large three-storied brick house in the central portion of the city, I spent the evening after tea conversing with two friends who had called to see me. After a few hours of pleasant conversation, one of my friends said it was time to leave. Taking out his watch, he continued, "Six minutes of ten, and—*what is that?*" A low, deep rumbling noise as of thunder, only beneath instead of above us, coming from afar and approaching us nearer and nearer, muttering and groaning, and ever increasing in volume,—it was upon us in an instant. [Pg 97]

The massive brick house we were in began to sway from side to side—gently at first with a rhythmical motion, then gradually increasing in force, until, springing to our feet, we seized one another by the hand and gazed with blanched and awe-struck faces at the tottering walls around us. We felt the floor beneath our feet heaving like the deck of a storm-tossed vessel, and heard the crashing of the falling masonry and ruins on every side. With almost stilled hearts we realized that we were in the power of an earthquake. The motion of the house, never ceasing, became now vertical. Up and down it went as though some monstrous giant had taken it in his hands as a plaything and were tossing it like a ball for his amusement. Recalling our dazed senses, and staggering to our feet as best we could, with one accord we rushed down the steps leading to the front door, and, grasping the handle, turned it. In vain—the door was jammed, and we were compelled to wait like rats in a trap until the shock had passed!

Concentrating its energies into one final, convulsive effort, the huge earth-wave passed and left the earth palpitating and heaving like a tired animal. There came crashing down into our garden-plot the chimneys from the house in front of ours. Fortunately the falling bricks injured none of us. Making another trial, we succeeded in opening the door and rushed into the street.

Now there came upon us an overpowering, suffocating odor of sulphur and brimstone, which filled the whole atmosphere. We were surrounded by a crowd of neighbors—men, women, and children—who had rushed out of their houses, as we had done, and who stood with us in the middle of the street, awaiting they knew not what.

Suddenly there came again to our ears the now dreaded rumbling sound. Like some fierce animal, growling and seeking its victim, it approached, and we all prepared ourselves for the worst. The shock came, and for a moment the crowd was awed into silence. Fortunately this shock was not nearly so severe as the first. The earth became still once more, and the roaring died away in the distance.

STREET SCENE DURING THE CHARLESTON EARTHQUAKE.

How the people shunned their houses and spent that and succeeding nights in the streets, private gardens, and on public squares, is well known from the many accounts given in the daily and illustrated papers at the time.

So perfectly still and calm was the air during the night, that a lamp, which was taken out in the open air burnt as steadily as though protected in a room, and no flickering revealed the presence of a breath of wind.

Again, some strong and powerful buildings in certain portions of the city were wrecked completely, while others older and undoubtedly weaker passed through the shock unharmed. A house on one corner was perfectly shattered, while, just a few hundred feet away, the house on the opposite corner was not damaged in the slightest except that a little plastering was shaken down.

Knowing that a city with a population of sixty thousand had been wrecked in every direction by an earthquake, one would expect the death-list to be enormous; but not more than about forty were killed outright, and but a few more were wounded. Had the shock occurred in the daytime, when the streets were thronged, the loss of life must have been terrible.

[Pg 102]

HIDING PLACES IN WAR TIMES

BY J. H. GORE

For some years after the close of our Civil War, the attention of our people was chiefly occupied with a study and recital of the most prominent battles, the decisive events, and the acts of famous officers. But when these bolder features of the war panorama had been examined and discussed, more time was taken to look at some of the details, to call up the minor incidents, to bestow meed of praise upon privates, or to record the littles that made up the much.

The sacrifices of the women and children at home have been repeatedly referred to in general, but seldom do we see mention made of their daily privations, the petty but continual annoyances to which they were subjected, and the struggle they made to sow and reap, as well as the difficulties they met in saving the harvested crops.

The hiding-places here described were all in *one* house. This house was in Virginia, near a town which changed hands, under fire, eighty-two times during the war—a town whose hotel register shows on the same page the names of officers of both armies, a town where there are two large cities of the fallen soldiers, each embellished by the saddest of all epitaphs—"To the unknown dead." Out from this battered town run a number of turnpikes, and standing as close to one of these as a city house stands to the street was the house referred to—the home of a widow, three small children, a single domestic, and, for part of the time, an invalid cousin, whose ingenuity and skill fashioned the secret places, one of which was on several occasions his place of refuge. [Pg 103]

With fall came the "fattening time" for the hogs. They were then brought in from the distant fields, where they had passed the summer, and put in a pen by the side of the road. And although within ten feet of the soldiers as they marched by, they were never seen, for the pen was completely covered by the winter's wood-pile, except at the back, where there was a board fence through whose cracks the corn was thrown in. Whenever the passing advance-guard told us that an army was approaching, the hogs were hurriedly fed, so that the army might go by while they were taking their after-dinner nap, and thus not reveal their presence by an escaped grunt or squeal. Fortunately, the house was situated in a narrow valley, where the opportunities for bushwhacking were so great that the soldiers did not tarry long enough to search unsuspected wood-piles. On one occasion we thought the hogs were doomed. A wagon broke down near the house, and a soldier went to the wood-pile for a pole to be used in mending the break. Luckily, he found a stick to his liking without tearing the pile to pieces. This suggested that some nice, straight pieces be always left conveniently near for such an emergency, in case it should occur again. [Pg 104]

The house had a cellar with a door opening directly out upon the "big road," and never did a troop, large or small, pass by without countless soldiers seeking something eatable in this convenient cellar. It was never empty, but nothing was ever found. A partition had been run across about three feet from the back wall, so near that even a close inspection would not suggest a space back of it; and being without a door, no one would think there was a room beyond. The only access to this back cellar was through a trapdoor in the floor of the room above. This door was always kept covered by a carpet, and in case any danger was imminent, a lounge was put over this, and one of the boys, feigning illness, was there "put to bed." In this cellar apples, preserves, pickled pork, etc., were kept, and its existence was not known to any one outside of the family. [Pg 105]

The two garrets of the house had false ends, with narrow spaces beyond, where winter clothing, flour, and corn were safely stored. The partition in each was of weather-boarding, and nailed on from the inner side so as to appear like the true ends, and, being in blind gables, there was no suspicion aroused by the absence of windows. The entrance to these little attics was through small doors that were a part of the partition, and, as usual in country houses, the clothesline stretched across the end from rafter to rafter held enough old carpets and useless stuff to silence any

question of secret doors. Several closets also were provided with false backs, where the surplus linen of the household found a safe hiding-place.

In such an exposed place a company of scouts, or even a regiment, could appear so unexpectedly that it was necessary to keep everything out of sight. Even the provisions for the next meal had to be put away, or before the meal could be prepared a party of marauders might drop in and carry off the entire supply. In the kitchen a wood-box of large size stood by the stove. It had a false bottom. In the upper part was "wood dirt," a plentiful supply of chips, and so much stove-wood that the impression would be conveyed that at least there was a good stock of fuel always on hand. The box was made of tongued and grooved boards, and one of these in the front could be slipped out, thus forming a door. Into this box all the food and silverware were put. No little ingenuity was needed in making this contrivance. The nails that were drawn out to let this board slip back and forth left tell-tale nail-holes, but these were filled up with heads of nails, so that all the boards looked just alike. I remember once a soldier was sitting on this box while mother was cooking for him what seemed to be the last slice of bacon in the house. She was so afraid that he would drum on the box with his heels, as boys frequently do, and find that the box was hollow, that she continually asked him to get up while she took a piece of wood for the fire. It was necessary to disturb him a number of times before he found it advisable to take the proffered chair, and in the meantime a hotter fire had been made than the small piece of meat required.

Of course it was advisable to have at least scraps of food lying around—their absence at any time would have aroused suspicion and started a search that might have disclosed all. The large loaves of bread were put in an unused bed in the place of bolsters; money, when there was any on hand, was rolled up in a strip of cotton which was tied as a string around a bunch of hoarhound that hung on a nail in the kitchen ceiling; the chickens were reared in a thicket some distance from the house, and, being fed there, seldom left it.

Although this house was searched repeatedly, by day and by night, by regulars and by guerrillas, by soldiers of the North and of the South, the only loss sustained were a few eggs, and this loss was not serious, for the eggs were stale.

ST. AUGUSTINE

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON

The city of St. Augustine, on the eastern coast of Florida, stands in one respect preeminent among all the cities of the United States—it is truly an old city. It has many other claims to consideration, but these are shared with other cities. But in regard to age it is the one member of its class.

Compared with the cities of the Old World, St. Augustine would be called young; but in the United States a city whose buildings and monuments connect the Middle Ages with the present time, may be considered to have a good claim to be called ancient.

After visiting some of our great towns, where the noise and bustle of traffic, the fire and din of manufactures, the long lines of buildings stretching out in every direction, with all the other evidences of active enterprise, proclaim these cities creations of the present day and hour, it is refreshing and restful to go down to quiet St. Augustine, where one may gaze into the dry moat of a fort of medieval architecture, walk over its drawbridges, pass under its portcullis, and go down into its dungeons; and where in soft semi-tropical air the visitor may wander through narrow streets resembling those of Spain and Italy, where the houses on each side lean over toward one another so that neighbors might almost shake hands from their upper windows, and are surrounded by orange-groves and rose-gardens which blossom all the year.

St. Augustine was founded in 1565 by Pedro Menendez de Aviles, who was then Governor of Florida. Here he built a wooden fort which was afterward replaced by the massive edifice which still exists. St. Augustine needed defenses, for she passed through long periods of war, and many battles were fought for her possession. At first there were wars in Florida between the Spanish and the French; and when the town was just twenty-one years old, Sir Francis Drake captured the fort, carrying off two thousand pounds in money, and burned half the buildings in the town. Then the Indians frequently attacked the place and committed many atrocities; and, half a century after Drake, the celebrated English buccaneer Captain John Davis captured and plundered the town.

Much later, General Moore, Governor of South Carolina, took the town and held it for three months, but was never able to take the fort. In 1740 General Oglethorpe, Governor of Georgia, attacked St. Augustine, planting batteries on the island opposite, and maintaining a siege for forty days; but he was obliged to withdraw.

Three years later he made another attack, but succeeded no better. Even now one can see the dents and holes made in the fort by the cannon-balls fired in these sieges.

In 1819 Florida was ceded to our Government, and St. Augustine became a city of the United States.

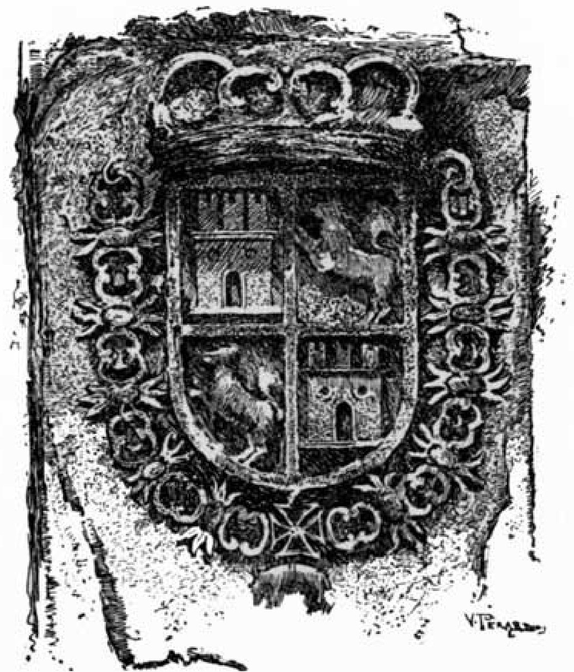
Approaching St. Augustine from the sea, the town looks as if it might be a port on the Mediterranean coast. The light-colored walls of its houses and gardens, masses of rich green foliage cropping up everywhere in the town and about it, the stern old fortress to the north of it, and the white and glittering sands of the island which separates its harbor from the sea, make it very unlike the ordinary idea of an American town.

In the center of the city is a large open square called the Plaza de la Constitucion, surrounded by beautiful live-oaks and pride-of-India trees, with their long, hanging-mosses and sweet-smelling blossoms.

Most of the streets are narrow, without sidewalks, and from the high-walled gardens comes the smell of orange-blossoms, while roses and other flowers bloom everywhere and all the time.

At the southern end of the town stands the old Convent of St. Francis, which is now used as barracks for United States soldiers.

The old palace of the governor still stands, but now contains the post-office and other public buildings. There was once a wall around the town, and one of the gates of this still remains. There is a tower on each side of the gateway, and the sentry-boxes, and loopholes through which the guards used to look out for Indians and other enemies, are still there. Along the harbor edge of the town is a wall nearly a mile long, built at great expense by the United States Government as a defense against the encroachments of the sea. This is called the sea wall, and its smooth top, four feet wide, is a favorite promenade. Walking northward on this wall, or on the street beside it, if you like that better, we reach, a little outside of the town, what I consider the most interesting feature of St. Augustine. This is the old fort of San Marco, which, since it came into the possession of our government, has been renamed Fort Marion.



THE SPANISH COAT-OF-ARMS.

The old fort is not a ruin, but is one of the best-preserved specimens of the style of fortification of the Middle Ages. We cross the moat and the drawbridge, and over the stone door-way we see the Spanish coat-of-arms, and under it an inscription stating that the fort was built during the reign of King Ferdinand VI of Spain, with the names and titles of the dons who superintended the work. It took sixty years to build the fort, and nearly all the work was done by Indians who were captured and made slaves for the purpose. Passing through the solemn entrance, we come to an open square surrounded by the buildings and walls of the fort, which, in all, cover about an acre of ground. On the right is an inclined plane which serves as a stairway to reach the ramparts where the cannon were placed. The *terre-plein*, or wide, flat surface of the ramparts, makes a fine walk around the four sides of the fort from which we can have views of land and sea. At each corner was a watch-tower, three of which remain; and into these one can mount, and through the narrow slits of

windows get a view of what is going on outside without being seen himself. At one end of the fort is the old Spanish chapel, and all around the square are the rooms that used to be occupied by the officers and the soldiers. Into the chapel the condemned prisoners used to be taken to hear their last mass before being marched [Pg 114] up to the north rampart and shot.

Down in the foundations of the fort are dungeons into which no ray of sunlight can enter. After the fort came into the possession of our government, a human skeleton was found in one of the dungeons, chained to a staple in the wall; and in another dungeon, without door or window and completely walled up, there were discovered two iron cages which had hung from the walls, each containing a human skeleton. The supports of one of the cages had rusted away, and it had fallen down, but the other was still in its place. A great many romantic stories were told about these skeletons, and by some persons it was supposed that they were the remains of certain heirs to the Spanish throne whose existence it was desirable utterly to blot out. One of the skeletons was that of a woman or girl. The cages and skeletons have been removed, but we can go into the dungeons if we take a lantern. Anything darker or blacker than these underground cells cannot be imagined. I have seen dungeons in Europe, but none of them were so hopelessly awful as these.

[Pg 115] In another part of the fort is a cell in which Osceola, the celebrated Indian chief, was once imprisoned, in company with another chief named Wild Cat. There is a little window near the top of the cell, protected by several iron bars; and it is said that Wild Cat starved himself until he was thin enough to squeeze between two of the bars, having first mounted on the shoulders of Osceola in order to reach them. Whether the starving part of the story is true or not, it is certain that he escaped through the window.

When I last visited San Marco, it was full of Indian prisoners who had been captured in the far West. Some of them were notorious for their cruelties and crimes, but in the fort they were all peaceable enough. It was one of these Indians, a big, ugly fellow, who lighted me into the dungeon of the skeleton-cages.

This fort, which is in many respects like a great castle, is not built of ordinary stone, but of coquina, a substance formed by the accumulation of sea-shells which, in the course of ages, have united into a mass like solid rock. On Anastasia Island, opposite St. Augustine, there are great quarries from which the coquina stone is taken, and of this material nearly the whole town is built. It is interesting to visit one of these quarries, and observe how in the upper strata the shells are quite distinct, while the [Pg 116] lower we look down the more and more solid and stone-like the masses become.

The harbor of St. Augustine is a portion of the sea cut off by Anastasia Island. Southward, the Matanzas River extends from the harbor; and in all these waters there is fine fishing. On the sea-beaches there is good bathing, for the water is not too cold even in winter. St. Augustine is an attractive place at all seasons of the year, and its three superb hotels—the Ponce de Leon, the Alcazar, and the Cordova—are among the most celebrated in America. In winter people come down from the North because its air is so warm and pleasant, and in summer people from the Southern States visit it because its sea-breezes are so cool and refreshing. It is a favorable resort for yachts, and in its wide, smooth harbor may often be seen some of the most beautiful vessels of this class.

St. Augustine is not only a delightful place in which to stay, but it is easy to reach from there some points which are of great interest to travelers. The great St. John's River is only fourteen miles away, and is connected with the town by a little railroad. [Pg 117] At Tocoi, the river terminus of the railroad, people who wish to penetrate into the heart of Florida, with its great forests and lakes and beautiful streams, can take a steamer and sail up the St. John's, which, by the way, flows northward some two hundred miles. In some parts the river is six miles wide, resembling a lake, and in its narrow portions the shores are very beautiful.

About forty miles above Tocoi the Ocklawaha River runs into the St. John's, and there are few visitors to St. Augustine who do not desire to take a trip up the little river which is in many respects the most romantic and beautiful stream in the world. At Tocoi we take a small steamboat which looks like a very narrow two-story house mounted upon a little canal-boat, and in this we go up the St. John's until we see on the right an opening in the tree-covered banks. This is the mouth of the Ocklawaha, and, entering it, we steam directly into the heart of one of the great forests of Florida. The stream is very narrow, and full of turns and bends. Indeed, its name, which is Indian, signifies "crooked water"; and sometimes the bow of the boat has even to be pushed around by men with long poles. Of course we go slowly, but no one [Pg 118] objects to that, for we do not wish to hurry through such scenery as this. On each side we see green trees with their thick evergreen foliage, with vines and moss hanging from many of them, and the ground beneath covered with the luxuriant shrubbery which grows in these warm regions.

Sometimes we can see through the trees into the distant recesses of the forest, and then again we are shut in by walls of foliage. Now and then we may see an alligator

sunning himself on a log, and as our boat approaches he rolls over into the water and plumps out of sight. Water-turkeys, whose bodies are concealed in the bushes, run out their long necks to look at us, presenting the appearance of snakes darting from between the leaves; while curlews, herons, and many other birds are seen on the banks and flying across the river. In some places the stream widens, and in the shallower portions near the banks grow many kinds of lilies, beautiful reeds, and other water-plants. For long distances there is no solid ground on either side of the river, the water penetrating far into the forest and forming swamps. Near the edge of the river we frequently see myriads of tree-roots bent almost at right angles, giving the trees the appearance of standing on spider-legs in the water. [Pg 119]

Sometimes the forest opens overhead, but nearly all the way we are covered by a roof of green, and at every turn appear new scenes of beauty and luxuriance. Occasionally the banks are moderately high, and we see long stretches of solid ground covered with verdure. There is one spot where two large trees stand, one on each bank, close to the water, and the distance between the two is so small that as our boat glides through this natural gateway there is scarcely a foot of room to spare on either side.

Although the river is such a little one that we are apt to think all the time we are sailing on it that we must soon come to the end of its navigation, we go on more than a hundred miles before we come to the place where we stop and turn back. The trip up the Ocklawaha requires all the hours of a day and a great part of a night; and this night trip is like a journey through fairyland. On the highest part of the boat is a great iron basket, into which, as soon as it becomes dark, are thrown quantities of pine-knots. These are lighted in order that the pilot may see how to steer. The blazing of the resinous fuel lights up the forest for long distances in every direction, [Pg 120] and, as may easily be imagined, the effect is wonderfully beautiful. When the fire blazes high the scene is like an illuminated lacework of tree-trunks, vines, leaves, and twigs, the smallest tendril shining out bright and distinct; while through it all the river gleams like a band of glittering silver. Then, as the pine-knots gradually burn out, the illumination fades and fades away until we think the whole glorious scene is about to melt into nothing, when more sticks are thrown on, the light blazes up again, and we have before us a new scene with different combinations of illuminated foliage and water.

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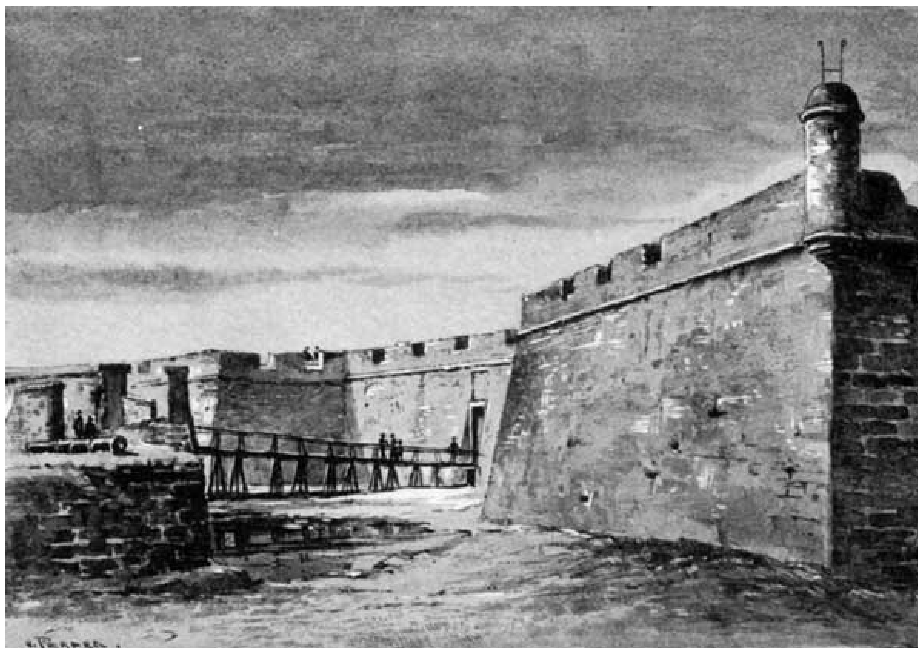
It often happens that during the night our little steamer crowds itself to one side of the river and stops. Then we may expect to see a splendid sight. Out of the dark depths of the forest comes a glowing, radiant apparition, small at first, but getting larger and larger until it moves down upon us like a tangle of moon and stars drifting through the trees.

This is nothing but another little steamboat coming down the river with its lighted windows and decks, and its blazing basket of pine-knots. There is just room enough for her to squeeze past us, and then her radiance gradually fades away in the [Pg 123] darkness behind us.



FORT MARION—VIEW FROM WATER-BATTERY.

We travel thus, night and day, until we reach Silver Springs, which is the end of our journey. This is a small lake so transparent that we can see down to the very bottom

of it, and watch the turtles and fishes as they swim about. A silver coin or any small object thrown into the water may be distinctly seen lying on the white sand far beneath us. The land is high and dry about Silver Springs, and the passengers generally go on shore and stroll through the woods for an hour or two. Then we reëmbark and return to St. Augustine as we came.

It must not be supposed that St. Augustine contains nothing but buildings of the olden time. Although many parts of the town are the same as they were in the old Spanish days, and although we may even find the descendants of the Minorcans who were once its principal citizens, the city now contains many handsome modern dwellings and hotels, some of which are exceptionally large and grand. Hundreds of people from the North have come down to this city of orange-scented air, eternal verdure, and invigorating sea-breezes, and have built handsome houses; and during the winter there is a great deal of bustle and life in the narrow streets, in the Plaza, and on the sunny front of the town. Many of the shops are of a kind only to be found in semi-tropical towns by the sea, and have for sale bright-colored sea-beans, ornaments made of fish-scales of every variety of hue, corals, dried sea-ferns, and ever so many curiosities of the kind. We may even buy, if we choose, some little black alligators, alive and brisk and about a foot long. As to fruit, we can get here the best oranges in the world, which come from the Indian River in the southern part of Florida, and many sorts of tropical fruits that are seldom brought to Northern cities.

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If St. Augustine were like most American cities, and had been built by us or by our immediate ancestors, and presented an air of newness and progress and business prosperity, its delightful climate and its natural beauties would make it a most charming place to visit. But if we add to these attractions the fact that here alone we can see a bit of the old world without leaving our young Republic, and that in two or three days from the newness and busy din of New York or Chicago we may sit upon the ramparts of a medieval fort, and study the history of those olden days when the history of Spain, England, and France was also the history of this portion of our own land,—we cannot fail to admit that this little town of coquina walls and evergreen foliage and traditions of old-world antiquity occupies a position which is unique in the United States.

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CATCHING TERRAPIN

BY ALFRED KAPPES

In the shoal waters along the coast south of Cape Henlopen, terrapin are caught in various ways. Dredges dragged along in the wake of a sailing vessel pick them up. Nets stretched across some narrow arm of river or bay entangle the feet of any stray terrapin in their meshes; but these require the constant attendance of the fisherman to save the catch from drowning. In the winter, in the deeper water, the terrapin rise from their muddy quarters on mild sunny days and crawl along the bottom. They are then taken by tongs, their whereabouts being often betrayed by bubbles.

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The method shown in the drawing is resorted to only in the spring and in water not over a foot or two in depth. Turtles will rise at any noise, and usually the fisherman only claps his hands, though each hunter has his own way of attracting the terrapin. One hunter whom I saw when I made the drawing uttered a queer guttural noise that seemed to rise from his boots.

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CATCHING TERRAPIN IN THE SPRING.

Whatever the noise, all turtles within hearing—whether terrapin or "snapper"—will put their heads above water. Both are welcome and are quickly sold to the market-men. The snapper slowly appears and disappears, leaving scarcely a ripple; and the hunter cautiously approaching usually takes him by the tail. The terrapin, on the contrary, is quick, and will descend in an oblique direction, so that a hand-net is needed unless he happens to come up near by. If he is near enough the man jumps for him. The time for hunting is the still hour at either sunrise or sunset. [Pg 130]

"LOCOED"

(*A story of a Texan girl.*)

BY EDWARD MARSHALL

ohn Fredding had laughingly taken his sister Martha as a partner in his Texas saddle store. She made a good partner although she was only thirteen years old. There were other women on the ranch (the saddle store was only an adjunct of the big cattle-ranch itself), but the grandmother was very old, and the servant-girl was Welsh and would not learn to speak more English than was required in the daily routine of housework.

Not far away was the town of Amarilla (pronounced Ah-ma-ree-ah). There were plenty of women and girls there, but Martha knew none of them well except the preacher's daughter, Scylla. Martha and Scylla were great friends. They saw each other as often as Martha could get time and permission to ride in to Amarilla. Scylla could seldom visit the ranch, for she was an invalid. When she had been a very little girl, a horse had kicked her. She was ill for many weeks, and after the doctor had told her parents that she would live, he had added that she might never have full use of her right side again. It was partially paralyzed. [Pg 131]

But Martha was seldom lonely. For in the daytime there was always something to do around the ranch or store. She had her pet calf to attend to, for one thing. He was given to her by a cow-boy who bought a saddle from her brother one day, and who cried that evening when Martha played "Home, Sweet Home" for him on her guitar. The calf was in several respects remarkable. In the first place, he was almost black—an unusual thing among Texas cattle. In the second place, he was not quite black, for he had a white spot on his forehead shaped almost exactly like Martha's guitar. That was why they called him "Gitter." In the third place, Martha had taught him several tricks. He had learned to low three times when he was thirsty, and twice when he was hungry; he would stand on his hind legs and paw the air with his front legs for a moment when Martha cried, "Up, Gitter!" and he would lie down and roll over on the grass when she commanded "Down, Gitter!" She had a cat that would climb up on her shoulder whenever he got the chance, and a clever dog that liked the cat. She [Pg 132]

had two horses, also. One of them was an ordinary "cow-pony," but the other was a big black Spanish horse who seemed to love Martha as well as she loved him. When she was on his back he never varied his long, swinging, graceful gallop by jumping or shying, but if any one else rode him, he was apt to make them hold fast when he went around corners. His name was "Dan." Martha thought almost as much of the cow-pony, though, as she did of Dan, and called him "Texas," after the great State she lived in.

Her brother, too, did many things to make her happy. In the long winter evenings he often read to her for hours, or taught her new airs on the guitar, of which he was a master; and sometimes, when summer came, they took long rides off on the prairie together. These occurred when there was a band of cow-boys camped near by, and John generally combined business with pleasure by talking with them about cattle and saddles. But that did not detract at all from Martha's enjoyment of the rides. She always carried her guitar swung over her shoulder by a strap when she went out with her brother to see the cow-boys.

"SOMETIMES WHEN SUMMER CAME THEY TOOK LONG RIDES ON THE PRAIRIE TOGETHER."

The little girl's life was a queer one, but then, she was a queer little girl and among queer people. For instance, there was "Mister Jim," who came up to the store every few weeks to lay in supplies. Mister Jim was one of the men who were hired to keep wild animals out of the Cañon. The Cañon was a favorite place for Amarilla's excursions and picnics, and was very beautiful; but it communicated with other cañons into which picnics could never penetrate, and in which there were wild beasts of many kinds. To prevent these unpleasant visitors from wandering where they were not wanted, men were stationed at various places to shoot them. Mister Jim was the one nearest to Martha's home, and he was Martha's stanch friend. He never went to the ranch without some gift for her—the soft pelt of an animal he had shot, the gay wings of a strange bird, or some crystal or stone he had found in his explorations of the Cañon. Martha returned his admiration. He lived in a cave, and that interested her—she thought she might like to try it herself some time. She considered his clothes very grand and impressive. In the Cañon he wore a leather suit; but when he visited the ranch he was always dressed in black velvet trimmed with gold braid, and wore a high, pointed hat wound with red ribbons like those of the seldom-appearing Mexican cow-boys, only much finer.

But the "loco men" were Martha's favorites. There were three of them—Big Billy, Little Billy, and One-eyed Saylo. Why Saylo was called "one-eyed" was a mystery, for he had two of the very best eyes for spying the hated loco-weed ever known in that region. Loco-weed grows, when unmolested, to a height of sixteen or eighteen inches, and its queer leaves shine and sparkle in the sunlight like silver and crystals. Its effects on horses or cattle that happen to eat it are worse than deadly. One good, big meal of loco-weed will ruin an animal forever.

A locoed horse, once locoed, is locoed until he dies. Apparently he may recover wholly, but he is not a safe animal to ride, for at any moment he may stagger and fall, or go suddenly mad. A locoed horse is almost certain to show it when he becomes heated by rapid traveling or hard work. The great danger from locoed cattle is, that they will begin to tumble around in the midst of a herd and frighten their fellows into a stampede.

As it can work such ruin, in order to avoid the danger of having their animals locoed, the ranchmen, in those regions where the weed is plentiful, hire men to search for it,

cut it down, and destroy it. Of these men who make their living in searching for the dreaded loco-weed and destroying it wherever found were Big Billy, Little Billy, and One-eyed Saylo.

One summer night John told Martha to get her guitar, while he saddled Texas and his own pony for a ride. In a few moments they were galloping over the prairie on their way to a cow-boy camp about three miles away. When they reached it, they found all the five men, but one, rolled up from top to toe in their tarpaulins, and asleep on the prairie. The one who was awake welcomed them in effusive cow-boy style, and then with a "Wake up, you-uns! Yar's John Fredding an' 'is little woman!" kicked each of his sleeping companions into consciousness with his foot. They were all glad to see John and Martha, for they knew them of old.

In the twinkling of an eye the smoldering fire was livened into a cheery blaze, the visitors' ponies were picketed, and the men were grouped around Martha and the fire. For a little while John talked business with them; but, before long, one of the men arose and, deferentially taking off his broad hat to Martha, asked her if she wouldn't give them a "chune." The music of her guitar was indescribably sweet, there in the little oasis of light in the prairie's desert of darkness, and for a time the men sat silently, with their hands clasped about their knees, enjoying it. Then she struck into a rollicking cow-boy song, and they joined in shouting it out. It is a favorite among the cow-boys of southern Texas, and begins thus:

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I'd rather hear a rattler rattle,
I'd rather do a Greaser battle,
I'd rather buck stampeding cattle,
Than
Than to
Than to fight
Than to fight the bloody In-ji-ans.

I'd rather eat a pan of dope,
I'd rather ride without a rope,
I'd rather from this country lope,
Than
Than to
Than to fight
Than to fight the bloody In-ji-ans.

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After that came "I'm Gwine Back to Dixie," and "'Way Down Upon the Suwanee River," and then John said it was time to start home again. Loud were the protests of the cow-boys, and when John and Martha went, the whole party went with them except one man, who was left to watch the cattle. They were "full of sing," as one of them put it, and it was a jolly ride back to the ranch. When it was finally reached, the cow-boys gave them a "send-off" that could have been heard a mile away. They shouted and yelled like the wild "In-ji-ans" they had sung about, and as they wheeled around to gallop back to camp, they fired all the charges in their revolvers into the air as a parting courtesy. Then there was a mad scamper of horses' hoofs, the yells grew fainter, and the cow-boys were gone.

When John went into the house he found two letters which had been brought up by some passing friend from Amarilla. One of them was from an old schoolmate of his, who had become a professor in a Northern college, asking for some loco-weed, to be added to the college botanical collection. The other was from Scylla's father, saying that if it would be convenient he would bring his little daughter out to the ranch in a few days for a long-promised visit to Martha. This second letter sent Martha to bed a very happy little girl.

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Several days passed before Scylla arrived at the ranch; but when she did come there was great rejoicing. After she was comfortably ensconced in her wheeled chair on the porch, she held a mimic reception. John and Martha did the honors, and every human being within call was introduced to the little invalid. In the store there were a dozen leather-decked cow-boys, and Scylla felt quite like a queen as each one scrambled up to her, and with his broad sombrero in one hand took her tiny fingers in the other as he turned red and tried to say something polite. Nor did her impromptu court end with that. After the introductions were over, all the visitors sat down on the porch or the grass before it, while Martha exhibited her pets to her friend. Gitter, the calf, was put through all his tricks, the cat was placed in Scylla's poor little arms, where he purred contentedly, and the dog chased sticks thrown by whoever could find any to throw. After Gitter had been led away, Martha came up from the stables with her two horses—Texas and Dan. Big black Dan was inclined to frisk a bit and jump about at the unusual scene; but little Texas worked his way right into Scylla's heart by marching steadily and straight up to her, despite Martha's laughing pulls on the lariat looped about his neck. With ears pricked forward, he made friendly overtures to the new-comer on the spot. He poked his nose into her lap

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and rubbed it against her hands and ate sugar from her fingers.

MARTHA RIDES DAN OVER THE HURDLE.

"Oh, I wish I could ride him!" said Scylla.

"He never was so cordial before, not even with me," said Martha.

Then she suddenly thought of something, and after intrusting her horses to one of the cow-boys, went and talked it over in whispers with her brother, Scylla's father, and the doctor, who had been discussing politics together on one end of the porch. After this mysterious conversation had lasted a little while, Martha danced back to Scylla, so happy that she "just *had* to hop."

"Oh, Scylla!" she exclaimed, "you *can* ride him. Your papa says so and the doctor says so and Brother says so. John is going to fix up one of my saddles for you with an extra strap to keep you from falling, and Texas likes you so much he will be gentle and careful as he can be, I know. And the doctor says he thinks it will do you good, if John and I keep close by you all the time, so there won't be any danger."

The following days at the ranch were very pleasant ones for Martha and her visitor. In the morning after the work was done—Martha always did some of the light house duties—they would watch with never-flagging interest the great herds of cattle as they were driven on their way for shipment from Amarilla, and gossip as girls do. Sometimes the cattle passed quite near to the house, but oftener they were half a mile or more away on the prairie—sometimes so far that the great herds seemed to be mere black blots moving over the dun brown of the Texas grass.

Every afternoon the two girls went riding, escorted either by John or one of the men employed about the ranch. John had fixed one of Martha's saddles so that poor little Scylla could not fall, and Texas seemed to bear his tiny burden with more than ordinary care. At first they rode very slowly, and for only a few moments at a time; but Scylla gained strength daily, and by the end of the second week had improved so much that she could ride for an hour without great fatigue, and Texas was occasionally allowed to start his gentle gallop.

It was as they were returning from one of these rides that Scylla's sharp eyes spied the figure of a horseman rushing out to them from the ranch. He waved his hat and yelled, firing his revolver between whoops and generally conducted himself like a madman. Martha recognized him at once.

"It's One-eyed Saylo," she said. "He always acts like that—he thinks it wouldn't be showing proper respect to a lady unless he wasted half a dozen cartridges and showed off his horsemanship."

Saylo acknowledged his introduction to Scylla with great ceremony, and then told John that he had come to bring the loco-weed for the college professor. By dint of much searching and hard riding he had gathered a gunny-sack full of it.

Then, as they rode slowly toward the ranch, he told John how the cattle in the whole region seemed to be getting "panicky." All the cow-boys he had met had had the same story to tell. It was only by the most careful handling that they were able to keep their herds from stampeding.

By this time the little cavalcade had reached the ranch. After Scylla had been lifted from the saddle and carried to her seat on the porch, Martha, full of the irrepressible good spirits of a healthy girl, had a long frolic with her big black horse. She took his saddle off, and let him enjoy the luxury of a long roll on the grass, and then she made him do all his tricks. First he shook hands with great dignity—"just to show that this

was friendly fun," Martha said. Then she replaced the saddle, clambered to its easy seat, and put him through his paces. He walked, slow and stately, with much self-consciousness, as a real Spanish horse should; he trotted, he loped, he paced, and went single-foot, greatly to the admiration of the three spectators. Martha kept her seat with perfect ease and grace.

Two posts near the house Martha had turned into the uprights of a jumping-hurdle with bars which could be placed at various heights. Over these bars that afternoon, Dan, with Martha sticking to his back like a burr, jumped many times, surpassing, to the delight of both girls, his previous best record.

John, in the meantime, was busy in the shop, where One-eyed Saylo had followed him to gossip with the workmen about the all-absorbing topic of saddles and bridles. Martha had finished her fun, led Dan away and picketed him, and was sitting by Scylla's side talking about that happy day when health and strength should have come back to the preacher's little daughter, when the men came out again. The gunny-sack of loco-weed was lying at the side of the porch, and both girls watched John and Saylo with interest as they shook out and examined its contents. [Pg 147]

"So they all want some of this stuff to look at an' study, up No'th, do they?" said Saylo, and added: "I reckon we-all wouldn't be so over-flowin' with grief ef they'd take all th' loco thar is in th' State o' Texas."

Just then the Welsh servant blew loud and long on a great tin horn, and they all went in to supper. Saylo and John had picketed their ponies, Saylo intending to ride in to Amarilla that night, and John having in view a visit to the camp of cow-boys four or five miles away. Martha had tethered Texas near the other ponies, because he was "such a sociable little beast."

It was nearing sundown when supper was over. One-eyed Saylo vaulted into his saddle after elaborate good-bys and went off toward Amarilla in a wild canter, and John prepared to start off on his saddle mission to the cow-boys. His pony and Texas stood with heads hanging dejectedly down, close together, as far away from the house as their long lariats would let them go, when John, carrying on his arm a new saddle that he wanted to try, went toward them. As he walked away from the house he called cheerily: "Come, Mattie,—want to go along?" [Pg 148]

"Oh, no; I'll stay here with Scylla to-night," she answered.

"Why can't she go too?—it's too nice an evening to stay at home. I'll ride as slow as you like, and it isn't far."

Both girls were delighted at this.

"Isn't he good to poor little me!" Scylla exclaimed to Martha as John fixed her on Texas's back.

Martha ran around, brought Dan, and in a very few moments they were riding leisurely toward the setting sun.

The evening was perfect. As the great, clean-cut disk of the sun dropped slowly below the far-off edge of the prairie, the breeze that had been busy all day rustling the prairie-grass died away, and the silence was so complete that they all stopped involuntarily "to listen to it." They had ridden until they were three or four miles from the ranch, when they paused again, this time to hear the crooning of far-away cow-boys. They were between two great herds of cattle. One, on the left, was half a mile away; and the moon, which now shed a great white light over the prairie showed it only as a black mass. Those cattle had been "bedded" for the night—that is, two cow-boys had ridden around and around them driving them closer together so that they would be easy to watch, and much less likely to be restless. The other herd was a little nearer, and the cow-boys were bedding it as the trio from the ranch approached. The camp-fire flickered between the riders and the herd, and its flaring light seemed to make the cow-boys and cattle nearest it lurch back and forward in and out of the gloom while their changing shadows danced fantastically over the prairie. Here the three riders paused again to listen. Closer by, the cow-boys' crooning would have sounded harsh and unmusical, but at this distance it shaped itself into a plaintive, minor melody that was very pleasing. For many moments they waited and enjoyed it in silence. Then suddenly a quick gust of wind and a low, muttering rumble of thunder made them turn quickly and look at the sky behind them. [Pg 149] [Pg 150]

A bank of dead black clouds was rising on the eastern horizon.

John stopped, gazed at it ruefully for a moment, and said:

"There's a big thunder-storm coming; but we can get home all right before it strikes us. You girls ride slowly back. I'll rush to the camp and tell the boys to stop in in the

morning. I'll overtake you before you've gone far."

With that he was off at a brisk canter toward the herd.

Martha and Scylla did as he told them. The rising but still distant clouds, lighted on their edges by the moon, added greatly to the beauty of the night, and both the girls appreciated the sight. They walked their horses and talked girlish nonsense. John had promised to take Martha to the North the next winter, and she told Scylla some of the wonderful things she had heard about the great cities and the curious things to be seen up there.

Suddenly Scylla interrupted her with:

"Martha, I believe there's something the matter with Texas—he's trembling all over."

"Oh, I guess not," said Martha; "he's just tired. Texas has had a pretty hard day of it. But yet, he doesn't often get tired."

She rode up close to Scylla and put her hand on Texas's neck. It was wet with sweat, although he had hardly gone faster than a walk since he had left the ranch.

And, sure enough, he *was* trembling slightly.

"There is something the matter with him, I know," said Scylla.

"Stop a minute and take my reins; I'll get off and see what it is," said Martha. "You're right. Texas is trembling like a leaf. Perhaps we'd better wait here for John."

There was an anxious little quaver in her voice as she dismounted and, going in front of Texas, took his head between her hands. There was no longer any doubt that the horse was sick, and very sick. His eyes closed sleepily, and his head dropped low. Then he suddenly began to sway and totter on his feet.

"Oh, Martha, I'm afraid!" cried Scylla.

Martha was badly frightened, too, but she acted instead of saying anything. She rushed to Scylla's side and hastily unbuckled the straps that held the weak little body in the saddle.

"Quick, jump into my arms!" she commanded as the last buckle fell jinglingly downward and Texas gave another alarming sidewise lurch. With more strength than she supposed she had, she half lifted, half pulled Scylla out of the saddle and eased her, almost fainting, to the ground. It was none too soon, for in an instant more Texas had fallen with a groan and lay quiet on the prairie.

This lasted only for a few seconds; then with an unsteady stagger the little horse scrambled to his feet. For another instant he stood quiet; then he began to tremble again and looked around toward the girls. But the pony's eyes had changed; they were wild and blood-shot. With a mad snort he started off on a wild run into the gloom.

For a moment the girls were too surprised to speak. Scylla was sobbing on the ground, and Martha stood by her. She had the reins of Dan's bridle in her hand, and gazed dumfounded after the rapidly-disappearing Texas. Finally she turned to her companion:

"Oh, Scylla," she said, "I'm so glad I got you off his back!"

"What do you think is the matter with him?" Scylla asked.

"I can't imagine, unless—yes, that's it—he's locoed! Oh, my poor little Texas! My dear, gentle little pony! You ate that loco-weed Saylo brought for the college professor!"

Now Martha was crying, too, for she knew that her pony was lost to her.

"They—they left it lying by the porch," she went on, "and—you ate it while we were at supper. Oh, my little Texas!"

Martha had forgotten everything but her grief, but soon she remembered that there was a storm coming and that Scylla must be taken home in some way. At first she tried to lift her to Dan's high back, but she was not strong enough. Then she thought of his education, and commanded him to lie down. He was nervous and excited and did not, at first, obey her, but finally she coaxed him into getting down on his knees. Then, with great pains and trouble, she pulled and lifted Scylla into the saddle. As Dan struggled to his feet again, it was hard work to keep the little invalid from falling, but it was done. Then Martha led him slowly toward the ranch. The exciting events that had just passed had made her nervous, and for the first time in a long while she felt afraid.

"Oh, I wish John would hurry and catch up with us!" she exclaimed. "Please don't fall, Scylla—hang on to the pommel tight."

Scylla, who had stopped crying, told Martha not to worry, that she would not fall; and the slow journey over the prairie continued silently for a minute or two. Every once in a while Martha turned back and looked toward the flickering camp-fire of the cow-boys. An exclamation of surprise was drawn from her when she failed to see it shining in the distance, and she stopped. Then, faintly, she heard shouts and the thumping of racing hoofs on the prairie.

"John is coming at last," she said.

But then she realized that more than one animal's hoofs were drumming desperately on the turf. While she stood wondering if some of the cow-boys were coming home with John, she heard the hoof-beats merge into a steady roar. Even the shouts of the men which she had just heard were drowned in this dull, threatening rumble. For just an instant she thought it was thunder, and then her quick reasoning told her the truth.

The herd had stampeded!

That she and Scylla were directly in its path she was certain, for the camp-fire had, a moment before, been between them and the herd and was now invisible. It had either been trampled out or was hidden by the advancing mass of cattle.

"JUST THEN ANOTHER FLASH CAME AND SHOWED A COW-BOY LEANING FAR OVER THE NECK OF HIS PONY, RIDING FOR HIS LIFE."

Martha well knew what it meant to be in the path of a stampede; but, strangely enough, all her fear left her. She was puzzled, that was all. Had she been alone, she could easily have escaped by jumping on Dan's back and riding hard. Dan could have distanced the cattle, even when they were stampeding. But now she had helpless Scylla to take care of.

The advancing thunder-clouds had wholly hidden the moon and put the prairie in inky darkness. At first Martha thought of starting Dan away with Scylla and trusting to Providence to keep the little invalid on his back, while she remained to face the danger alone; then she thought of trying to ride with her. But she knew Scylla could not possibly keep her place in the saddle of the horse while he ran, even if she herself should mount him too and try to hold Scylla on.

She stepped back to Scylla's side. There was a deathly doubt in her heart as to whether she was doing the right thing; but she had made a desperate resolve. Scylla had heard the thunder of the approaching herd too, and was too frightened to speak. Martha held her arms up toward her just as the first flash of lightning came.

"Come, Scylla," she said, "slide off into my arms. The herd has stampeded and is coming toward us, but I will try to save us both."

Without a word Scylla did as she was told, and in a few seconds was half kneeling, half lying on the ground.

Then Martha struck Dan as hard as she could with her flat hand.

"Hey up, Dan!" said she, "run! run! *You* needn't stay here, too!"

The horse galloped off into the darkness.

Just then another lighting-flash came and showed a cow-boy leaning far over the

neck of his pony, riding for his life. He passed only a dozen yards from them, but did not see them. Behind him Martha could dimly see two or three other riders coming toward them at desperate speed, while still beyond she caught a glimpse of the tossing horns and lurching heads of the cattle.

Without a moment for thought, and as coolly as if she had nothing in the world to fear, she bent over trembling Scylla, unfastened the waistband of her dress-skirt and pulled it deftly from under her. Then she quickly removed her own and took one of the bright-colored garments in each hand.

Just then the storm broke furiously. The night was suddenly lighted by lightning-flashes that followed one another so closely they seemed to make one long, lasting flare. The cow-boys had all passed, and Martha saw that the herd was scarcely two hundred yards away.

She stepped directly in front of Scylla's prostrate form and raised the skirts.

"Scream, Scylla, scream!" she cried.

Then, while the driving rain fell in torrents, and the lightning made the prairie as light as day, she stood straight up and waved those skirts wildly about her head, and shouted at the top of her voice.

She was dimly conscious that her shouts shaped themselves into a prayer that her brother was safe, and that the herd might divide and pass them. Her face was as pale as paper. Her long hair was tossed about by the wind, and by her own violent motions.

The foremost of the cattle was only a hundred yards away now. She could see the lightning shining on his horns and in his red, rolling eyes. He was coming straight toward her. Louder she shouted and more wildly she swung the skirts. Would he crush her, or would he turn aside? She felt an almost overpowering impulse to turn and run away, but that would mean certain death. Her only hope was to keep her position firmly, and to swing her skirts and scream. If the first steer swerved and passed her, his followers might do so too.

He seemed of mammoth proportions as he lurched toward her. His head was lowered, and his great hoofs pounded the ground like trip-hammers. Closer! Closer! He was not twenty feet away. His big, crazy eyes seemed to look straight into hers. Closer! Closer!—Then he changed his course a trifle. In an instant he had passed her like a great fury. Others were only a few feet behind him, and back of them was the compact mass of the herd. She screamed louder and redoubled her waving. The thunder in the heavens, and the thunder of the hoofs, drowned her voice so that she could not even hear it herself. A dozen cattle passed her. Fifty cattle passed her. She was in the midst of the herd which seemed to make a solid, living wall on each side of her. The earth trembled beneath the hammering of the hoofs. Her throat seemed ready to burst, and she was certain that no sound came from her lips. It seemed a long time since that first one had plunged toward her, but still the maddened beasts advanced with lowered heads and lunging bodies. They did not seem to turn aside, and each instant she expected to be struck down and trampled under their feet. She could not even try to scream any longer, but still she waved the skirts.

At last, slowly, she saw that the herd was thinning. Short gaps began to appear between the animals. She knew that the herd had nearly passed. Then the living walls on each side melted away behind her, and only stragglers were left. Then these, too, were gone. The stampeding herd had passed her, and she was still alive.

She turned dizzily toward Scylla.

The little invalid—the cripple—was standing straight up, close behind her. For a second Martha doubted her eyes. The storm still raged, and she thought it was a vagary of the lightning. She held her hands out, though, and convinced herself that it was true. Scylla was standing on her feet, for the first time in many years. The two girls threw their arms around each other, and sank to their knees on the prairie. As they said a prayer of thanks together, the uneven glare of the lightning, which had kept up almost uninterruptedly ever since a few seconds before the cattle reached them, died away. One or two feeble flashes followed, and then the storm had passed.

Martha took Scylla's face between her hands and kissed her. Then she said:

"Wasn't it awful?"

"Oh, Martha," Scylla answered, "I thought every second that we'd be killed, but there you stood as brave as a lion, and waved those dresses right in the faces of the cattle. You saved both our lives. I lay here on the ground for a minute after you took my skirt, and then I got up."

"You *got up*, Scylla! How could you, all alone?"

"I don't know, Martha, but I felt as if I *must*. I tried to rise once, and fell back. Then

the cattle came and I tried again, and all the weakness seemed to be gone, and I stood right up behind you and stayed there while the herd went by. I don't feel as I used to—I feel as if the paralysis had all gone. See, I can get up again,—don't help me,—all alone."

And, sure enough, Scylla scrambled to her feet. She stood a little unsteadily on them, but she stood. They were so glad it was true that they did not try to understand it.

After Scylla's new-found strength had been rejoiced over for a moment, they began to wonder how they could get home. They knew that they could not walk—Martha was terribly tired, and Scylla, even if she could stand up, was not equal to the long tramp back to the ranch, of course. They were dripping wet. The elation that followed their escape, and the discovery of Scylla's great good fortune, was followed by a nervous breakdown on the part of both girls, and they cuddled in each other's arms on the wet grass, sobbing and frightened, to wait for morning to come.

Hardly half an hour had passed before they heard horses. Martha stood up and saw the shadowy form of a rider away off to the right. She tried to scream, but her overstrained voice was hoarse and husky. Scylla called out as well as she could, but the horseman rode on. By and by they changed their course, however, and came near enough for the girls to make their presence known.

As the horses approached, Martha recognized in the foremost one the big black form of Dan. Her brother John was on his back, and with him were men from the ranch.

There were tears in the eyes of the big men as they lifted the girls in their arms, and started home. They had not expected to find them alive.

Before they went to sleep, the thrilling story of Martha's bravery had been fully told, and to it had been added the news of Scylla's strange recovery.

The next day the doctor was called in to see about it. He gravely shook his head, and said it was strange, but that such things had happened before. The great mental excitement of the stampede had wrought what seemed a miracle.

Her recovery after that was rapid. When John and Martha went North the next winter, Scylla went with them, and was able to walk about almost as easily as Martha herself.

A few days after the stampede, the bruised body of poor Texas was found where he had been trampled to death by the herd. What was left of the loco-weed that had wrought his ruin was burned, and the Northern college professor is still without his specimens.

A DIVIDED DUTY

BY M. A. CASSIDY

The Magill residence was situated near the highways connecting Knoxville and Chattanooga. Encamping armies had burned every splinter of fencing, and so the cleared space was thrown into one great field, encircled by a gigantic hedge of oak and pine. Near the center of the cleared land, on a little eminence, was a farm-house. It was a long, one-story building, running back some distance, its several additions having been constructed as the family required more room. A little to the right, and extending the full length of the house, was a row of negro cabins—there being a passway between the two as wide as an ordinary road. The yard sloped gently to the roadway and railroad; near the latter, another rise began, which extended back to the woodland and commanded an extensive view of the surrounding country.

One afternoon, early in the autumn of 1864, Mrs. Magill and her son Harry, a comely lad of thirteen, sat on the front veranda, and talked of what a happy reunion there would be when their loved ones should return from the war. And on this glorious autumnal afternoon the hearts of the widow and her son were happy in anticipation.

Mrs. Magill had two sons in the war. One wore the Blue, the other the Gray. John, the eldest of three boys, had enlisted in Wheeler's Confederate cavalry, in the second year of the war; and, a year later, Thomas had joined the Federals under General Burnside at Knoxville. Both were known as brave and dashing soldiers, and both had been promoted, for gallantry, to captaincies. This family division was a source of great grief to Mrs. Magill. Dearer to her than Union or Confederacy were her children; and from their youth she had trained them in the ways of peace. And now, in their manhood, two of them, under different flags, were arrayed against each other in a deadly and unnatural strife. She often heard from both her soldier boys, and their inquiries after the welfare of each other were full of tenderness. Harry, as is usual with younger brothers, fairly worshiped both of them. He was no less

troubled than his mother when they went away to fight on opposite sides. Their contrary action left him in doubt as to which side he should take. Every boy of his acquaintance was ardent in espousing one side or the other. But what could he do, since he had a brother in each army? Should he become a rebel, Thomas might be displeased; and he loved Tom too well to willfully incur his displeasure. Should he decide to remain loyal to the Union, John might resent it; and he could not think of offending one whom he held in such high esteem. "What shall I do?" he asked himself a great many times a day. The war spirit in him was becoming rampant, and must have scope. He at length took the perplexing question to his mother. She promptly advised him to remain neutral. But somehow Harry got it into his head that neutrality was something very different from manliness. So he made up his mind to be one thing or the other, or—happy thought!—why not be both? And, after puzzling over the question a long time, he settled on the novel idea of making himself half "Rebel" and half "Yankee." In pursuance of this plan, he persuaded his mother to make him a uniform, half of which should be blue, and the other half gray. She made it of a Federal and a Confederate overcoat; and Harry was a queer-looking little fellow as he went about the country, clad in his blue-gray uniform, the U. S. A. buttons on one side, and the C. S. A. on the other. The boys called him a "mongrel"; and neither the Federal nor Confederate commands of boy soldiery would allow him in their ranks. This was a source of great mortification to Harry; but he was seriously in earnest, and fully resolved to carry out his campaign of impartial affection. His being cut by the other boys, who could afford to take a decided stand because they did not have a brother on each side, reduced him to the necessity of playing "war" (about the only game indulged in by Southern boys at this time) alone. When he put up his lines of corn-stalk soldiers, to play battle, it was observed, by his mother, that both sides always won an equal number of victories. Harry was not sure that the war could ever end at this rate of even fighting; but arrayed as he was, in the colors of both armies, his inclination was to be true to both. There were generally tears in his mother's eyes, when she saw that two of the corn-stalk soldiers, the tallest and straightest of them all, representing John and Thomas, were always left standing, even after the most furious of contests, in which all the others had fallen.

Harry had left off playing quite early, on the afternoon of which I write, and had joined his mother on the veranda. They had not been long together when something unusual attracted their attention.

A short distance down the railroad a body of cavalrymen had dismounted, and soon they were as busy as ants, tearing up the track. One squad preceded the others and loosened the rails by drawing the spikes; then came another squad that placed the ties in great heaps; after this came a third that kindled fires beneath them. The ties were rotten and dry, and, in a very few moments, there were scores of bright, hot fires. Soon the rails were at a red heat near the center, the ends being comparatively cool. While in this state a number of men would take the rails and bend them around telegraph poles or any solid objects that were near. The soldiers twisted the rails into fantastic shapes; and when they were through with their work of destruction, they seemed perfectly satisfied that none of the old material could be used in reconstructing the road. Harry and his mother had observed the operations of these men with much interest for some time, when suddenly they saw one of them mount his horse, and ride toward the house.

"He is a rebel!" exclaimed Harry, who stood watching the approaching horseman.

"Surely you are mistaken, Harry. There can be no Confederates here," said Mrs. Magill, "the Federals are too near."

While yet the soldier was some distance from the house, the boy's face lighted up with joy, as he exclaimed:

"Oh, mother, I do believe it's John!"

"John? Where is he?" asked his mother, running to where the boy stood.

"Why, there, on the horse! He's coming home! He's coming home!" And thus exclaiming, Harry danced around the veranda like an Indian lad in a first war-dance. Then he ran to meet his brother in gray. Mrs. Magill was thrilled with sensations of joy and fear: joy, because she was about to see again her eldest son, after a painful separation of two years; fear, because of the nearness of the Federals. When within a short distance of his brother, Harry stopped and waited there, prepared to give the military salute due one of his brother's rank. But that salute was never given; for almost at the same instant that Harry stopped, Captain John Magill reined up his horse quite suddenly, drew a pistol from its holster, and looked suspiciously toward a clump of trees on the hill-top. Harry turned his eyes to learn what had startled his brother. He beheld a score or more of men in blue uniforms, partly concealed by the clump of trees; and it was evident that these were the vanguard of a larger body of Federals. Captain John Magill wheeled as suddenly as he had halted, and galloped back to the Confederates engaged in demolishing the railroad. As fast as he could run, Harry followed. Mrs. Magill comprehended the situation; and, spell-bound, she stood on the veranda, with arms outstretched, a statue of anguish and expectancy.

When Captain John Magill reached his comrades, he gave the alarm, and "there was mounting in hot haste." [Pg 172] The two hundred raiders had time only to form an irregular line of battle, when twice as many Federals appeared on the hill-top. It was evident that there was going to be a lively skirmish. Harry singled out John, who rode up and down the line giving commands, and running to him, he clasped him around a leg with both arms, enthusiastically exclaiming:

"Howdy, John! Don't you know me?"

The young captain looked down at the joy-beaming face of his little brother, but, as he had never seen the little fellow in his fantastic uniform, for a moment failed to recognize him.

A shade of disappointment flitted over Harry's face as he said:

"I am your little brother Harry; and I'm just as much Rebel as Yankee."

Captain John Magill laughed as he leaned over and grasped Harry's hand.

"Why, Harry! What on earth are you doing here? Get up behind me, and I will gallop home with you before the firing begins," said John, evidently alarmed for the boy's safety. Placing his foot on that of his brother, Harry clambered up behind. By this time the lines were in range of each other, and a lively fusillade at once began. Harry [Pg 173] behaved manfully under fire, and entreated his brother to allow him to stay until the fight was over. But the elder brother was intent on taking him to a place of safety, so putting spurs to his horse he rode swiftly toward the house. His plan was to return the boy to his mother, and then rejoin his comrades. But the Confederates did not know his intentions; and seeing their Captain making his way rapidly to the rear, with this strangely-clad boy behind him, they of course thought him retreating, and they followed pell-mell.

Captain John Magill saw the effect of his movement, and, halting, made an effort to rally his men. But the Confederates were thoroughly stampeded, and they dashed madly away. The shouting Federals were now at close range, and the bee-like song of the bullets could be heard on every side. Hastily placing Harry in front of him, to shield him as much as possible from the enemy's fire, he followed his men, now some distance in advance. When they reached the house, Mrs. Magill stood pale and motionless, expecting every moment to see her children fall. Glancing back, Captain John Magill saw that a moment's delay would make him a prisoner; so as he dashed [Pg 174] past his mother he cried out, "Don't be uneasy. I'll take care of Harry"; and then he was gone like the wind, his pursuers not a hundred yards behind him. Then a complete change came over Mrs. Magill. Impelled by the great love of a mother, she ran into the yard, and stood calmly in the way of the advancing Federals, whose course lay between the cabins and the house—as if to stop, with her frail form, the impetuous charge.

On they came like a hurricane. The mother did not move. Her eyes were closed and her lips compressed. Very near her sounded the hoof-beats. A moment more and she expected to be trampled to death beneath those hurrying feet; but she hoped—yea, and prayed—that her death might somehow delay the Federals until her sons should escape.

"Halt! Halt!" The command was in thunder tones, and was echoed and re-echoed along the charging line. The soldiers pulled with all their might on the bits, and many a horse was thrown back on his haunches. Opening her eyes Mrs. Magill saw that the Federal captain, bending over her from his saddle, was her son Thomas.

[Pg 175] "Oh, Thomas!—would you kill John and Harry!" she exclaimed, and then fell fainting in his arms. Laying her tenderly on the veranda, he directed a surgeon to attend her, and mounting his horse, rode rapidly in the direction taken by his brothers. Soon he saw them a quarter of a mile ahead. Taking a white handkerchief he held it aloft, and digging the spurs deep into his horse's flanks, he rode with increased speed, all the time hallooing at the top of his strong voice. John heard; but, thinking it a summons to surrender, he urged his horse forward, hoping to gain the sheltering wood. But the horse, in attempting to jump across a washout, stumbled and fell; and John found himself rolling on the ground with Harry in his arms. Rising, he placed Harry behind him, and drew his sword, determined to sell their lives dearly. Imagine his surprise when he beheld but one pursuer, and that one holding on high an emblem of peace. In a moment more, he recognized his brother. Their meeting was affectionate. Harry was beside himself with joy. He had really been under fire, with "sure-enough bullets" singing about his ears! This was something of which none of the boys who had scorned his blue-gray uniform could boast!

[Pg 176] "Our brother is a brave little fellow. He did not once flinch when your bullets were singing around us," he heard John say to Thomas, and this praise elated the boy very much.

"Let us return to mother. She is very anxious," said Thomas.

John gazed inquiringly at his brother in blue.

"You need have no fear," said Thomas. "I will be responsible for your safety."

So the two soldier brothers, leading their horses, and each holding one of Harry's hands, walked up to the house.

"I see you wear the gray, Harry; that's right," said John, with a malicious glance at Thomas.

"He is true blue on this side," said Thomas, laughing heartily, as the ludicrousness of Harry's uniform dawned upon him.

An affecting meeting was that between mother and sons; and something on the cheeks of the brave men who were present "washed off the stains of powder."

When parting time came, the sun rested, like a great ruby, above the circling wood of crimson and gold; and when the brother in blue stood hand in hand with the brother in gray, all nature seemed to smile in anticipation of the time when a fraternal grasp should reunite the North and South.

This day was the turning-point in Harry's life. Thenceforth all his inclinations were to become a soldier. After the war, he was educated by John and Thomas; and, passing his examination triumphantly over three of the boys who had derided him, he was appointed to West Point. He is now Lieutenant Henry Magill, U. S. A.

His brothers still treasure the little blue-gray uniform as the memento of a "divided duty."

THE "WALKING-BEAM BOY."

BY L. E. STOFIEL

In 1836 the steam-whistle had not yet been introduced on the boats of the western rivers. Upon approaching towns and cities in those days, vessels resorted to all manner of schemes and contrivances to attract attention. They were compelled to do so in order to secure their share of freight and passengers, so spirited was the competition between steamboats from 1836 to 1840. There were no railroads in the West (indeed there were but one or two in the East), and all traffic was by water. Consequently steamboat-men had all they could do to handle the crowds of passengers and the tons of merchandise offered them.

Shippers and passengers had their favorite packets. The former had their huge piles of freight stacked upon the wharves, and needed the earliest possible intelligence of the approach of the packet so that they might promptly summon clerks and carriers to the shore. The passengers, loitering in neighboring hotels, demanded some system of warning of a favorite steamer's coming, that they might avoid the disagreeable alternative of pacing the muddy levees for hours at a time, or running the risk of being left behind.

Without a whistle, how was a boat to let the people know it was coming, especially if some of those sharp bends for which the Ohio River is famous intervened to deaden the splashing stroke of its huge paddle-wheels, or the regular puff, puff, puff, puff, of its steam exhaust-pipes?

The necessity originated several crude signs, chief among which was the noise created by a sudden escapement of steam either from the rarely used boiler waste-pipes close to the surface of the river, or through the safety-valve above. By letting the steam thus rush out at different pressures, each boat acquired a sound peculiarly its own, which could be heard a considerable distance, though it was as the tone of a mouth-organ against a brass-band, when compared with the ear-splitting roar of our modern steamboat-whistle. Townspeople of Cincinnati and elsewhere became so proficient in distinguishing these sounds of steam escapement that they could foretell the name of any craft on the river at night or before it appeared in sight.

It was reserved for the steamboat *Champion* to carry this idea a little further. It purposed to catch the eye of the patron as well as his ear. The *Champion* was one of the best known vessels plying on the Mississippi in 1836. It was propelled by a walking-beam engine. This style of steam-engine is still common on tide-water boats of the East, but has long since disappeared from the inland navigation of the West. To successfully steam a vessel up those streams against the remarkably swift currents, high-pressure engines had to be adopted generally. In that year, however, there were still a number of boats on the Mississippi and Ohio which, like the *Champion*, had low-pressure engines and the grotesque walking-beams.

One day it was discovered that the *Champion's* escapement-tubes were broken, and

[Pg 181]

no signal could be given to a landing-place not far ahead. A rival steamboat was just a little in advance, and bade fair to capture the large amount of freight known to be at the landing.

"I'll make them see us, sir!" cried a bright boy, who seemed to be about fourteen years old. He stood on the deck close to where the captain was bewailing his misfortune.

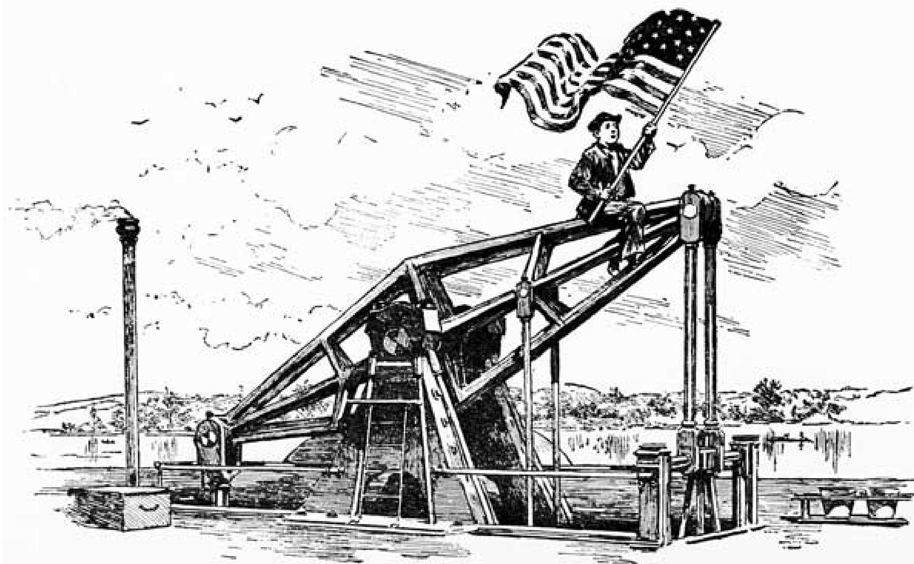
Without another word, the lad climbed up over the roof of the forecastle, and, fearlessly catching hold of the end of the walking-beam when it inclined toward him with the next oscillation of the engine, swung himself lithely on top of the machinery. It was with some difficulty that he maintained his balance, but he succeeded in sticking there for fifteen minutes. He had taken off his coat, and he was swinging it to and fro.

The plan succeeded. Although the other boat beat the *Champion* into port, the crowd there had seen the odd spectacle of a person mounted on the walking-beam of the second vessel, and, wondering over the cause, paid no attention to the landing of the first boat, but awaited the arrival of the other.

The incident gave the master of the *Champion* an idea. He took the boy as a permanent member of the crew, and assigned him to the post of "walking-beam boy," [Pg 182] buying for him a large and beautiful flag. Ever afterward, when within a mile of any town, the daring lad was to be seen climbing up to his difficult perch, pausing on the roof of the forecastle to get his flag from a box that had been built there for it. By and by he made his lofty position easier and more picturesque by straddling the walking-beam, well down toward the end, just as he would have sat upon a horse.

This made a pretty spectacle for those upon shore who awaited the boat's arrival. They saw a boy bounding up and down with the great seesawing beam. For a second he would sink from view, but up he bobbed suddenly, and, like a clear-cut silhouette, he waved the Stars and Stripes high in the air with only the vast expanse of sky for a background. The vision was only for an instant, for both flag and boy would disappear, and—up again they came, before the spectator's eye could change to another direction! This sight was novel—it was thrilling! [Pg 183]

"I used to think if I could ever be in that young fellow's place, I would be the biggest man on earth," remarked a veteran river-man. Like thousands of others along the Mississippi and Ohio, he remembered that when a child he could recognize the [Pg 184] *Champion* a mile distant by this unique signal.



"HE WAVED THE STARS AND STRIPES HIGH IN THE AIR."

After a while, though, other steamboats operating low-pressure engines copied the idea, and there were several "walking-beam boys" employed on the rivers, and their flags were remodeled to have some distinctive feature each. It was a perilous situation to be employed in, but I am unable to find the record of any "walking-beam boy" being killed or injured in the machinery. On the other hand, the very hazard of their duty, and the conspicuous position it gave them, made them popular with passengers and shippers, and so they pocketed many fees from Kentuckians, confections from Cincinnati folks, bonbons from New Orleans Creoles, and tips from Pittsburgers.

But at length, in 1844, the steam-whistle was introduced, and the "walking-beam boys" were left without occupation. [Pg 185]

THE CREATURE WITH NO CLAWS

BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS

"W'en you git a leetle bit older dan w'at you is, honey," said Uncle Remus to the little boy, "you'll know lots mo' dan you does now."

The old man had a pile of white oak splits by his side and these he was weaving into a chair-bottom. He was an expert in the art of "bottoming chairs," and he earned many a silver quarter in this way. The little boy seemed to be much interested in the process.

"Hit 's des like I tell you," the old man went on; "I done had de speunce un it. I done got so now dat I don't b'lieve w'at I see, much less w'at I year. It got ter be whar I kin put my han' on it en fumble wid it. Folks kin fool deyse'f lots wuss dan yuther folks kin fool um, en ef you don't b'lieve w'at I 'm a-tellin' un you, you kin des ax Brer Wolf de nex' time you meet 'im in de big road."

"What about Brother Wolf, Uncle Remus?" the little boy asked, as the old man paused to refill his pipe. [Pg 186]

"Well, honey, 't ain't no great long rigamarole; hit's des one er deze yer tales w'at goes in a gallop twel it gits ter de jumpin'-off place.

"One time Brer Wolf wuz gwine 'long de big road feelin' mighty proud en high-strung. He wuz a mighty high-up man in dem days, Brer Wolf wuz, en 'mos' all de yuther creeturs wuz feared un 'im. Well, he wuz gwine 'long lickin' his chops en walkin' sorter stiff-kneed, w'en he happen ter look down 'pon de groun' en dar he seed a track in de san'. Brer Wolf stop, he did, en look at it, en den he 'low:

"'Heyo! w'at kind er creetur dish yer? Brer Dog ain't make dat track, en needer is Brer Fox. Hit's one er deze yer kind er creeturs w'at ain't got no claws. I'll des 'bout foller 'im up, en ef I ketch 'im he'll sholy be my meat.'

"Dat de way Brer Wolf talk. He followed 'long atter de track, he did, en he look at it close, but he ain't see no print er no claw. Bimeby de track tuck 'n tu'n out de road en go up a dreen whar de rain done wash out. De track wuz plain dar in de wet san', but Brer Wolf ain't see no sign er no claws. [Pg 187]

"BRER WOLF MAKE LIKE HE GWINE TER HIT DE CREETUR, EN DEN——"

"He foller en foller, Brer Wolf did, en de track git fresher en fresher, but still he ain't see no print er no claw. Bimeby he come in sight er de creetur, en Brer Wolf stop, he did, en look at 'im. He stop stock-still and look. De creetur wuz mighty quare-lookin,' en he wuz cuttin' up some mighty quare capers. He had big head, sharp nose, en bob tail; en he wuz walkin' roun' en roun' a big dog-wood tree, rubbin' his sides ag'in it.

Brer Wolf watch 'im a right smart while, he act so quare, en den he 'low:

"'Shoo! dat creetur done bin in a fight en los' de bes' part er he tail; en w'at make he scratch hisse'f dat away? I lay I'll let 'im know who he foolin' 'long wid.' [Pg 188]

"Atter 'while, Brer Wolf went up a leetle nigher de creetur, en holler out:

"'Heyo, dar! w'at you doin' scratchin' yo' scaly hide on my tree, en tryin' fer ter break hit down?'

"De creetur ain't make no answer. He des walk 'roun' en 'roun' de tree scratchin' he sides en back. Brer Wolf holler out:

"'I lay I'll make you year me ef I hatter come dar whar you is!'

"De creetur des walk roun' en roun' de tree, en ain't make no answer. Den Brer Wolf hail 'im ag'in, en talk like he mighty mad:

"'Ain't you gwine ter min' me, you imperdent scoundul? Ain't you gwine ter mozey outer my woods en let my tree 'lone?'

"Wid dat, Brer Wolf march todes de creetur des like he gwine ter squ'sh 'im in de groun'. De creetur rub hisse'f ag'in de tree en look like he feel mighty good. Brer Wolf keep on gwine todes 'im, en bimeby w'en he git sorter close de creetur tuck 'n sot up on his behime legs des like you see squir'ls do. Den Brer Wolf, he 'low, he did: [Pg 189]

"'Ah-yi! you beggin', is you? But 't ain't gwine ter do you no good. I mout er let you off ef you 'd a-minded me w'en I fus holler atter you, but I ain't gwine ter let you off now. I'm a-gwine ter l'arn you a lesson dat 'll stick by you.'

"Den de creetur sorter wrinkle up he face en mouf, en Brer Wolf 'low:

"'Oh, you nee'n'ter swell up en cry, you 'ceitful vilyun. I'm a-gwine ter gi' you a frailin' dat I boun' you won't forgit.'

"WELL, SUH, DAT CREETUR DES FOTCH ONE SWIPE DIS AWAY, EN 'N'ER SWIPE DAT AWAY."

"Brer Wolf make like he gwine ter hit de creetur, en den——" [Pg 190]

Here Uncle Remus paused and looked all around the room and up at the rafters. When he began again his voice was very solemn.

—"Well, suh, dat creetur des fotch one swipe dis away, en 'n'er swipe dat away, en mos' 'fo' you can wink yo' eyeballs, Brer Wolf hide wuz mighty nigh teetotally tor'd off 'n 'im. Atter dat de creetur sa'ntered off in de woods, en 'gun ter rub hisse'f on 'n'er tree."

"What kind of a creature was it, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy.

"Well, honey," replied the old man in a confidential whisper, "hit want nobody on de topside er de yeth but ole Brer Wildcat."

FOOTNOTES

[1] This story is based upon the personal experience of one who related it to the author.

[2] The volume of rivers is measured by the number of cubic feet of water flowing past a given point every second. The breadth of the river is multiplied by its average depth, and the ascertained speed of the current gives the number of cubic feet of water flowing by the point of measurement each second. This will explain the term second-feet.

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