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General Nelson's Scout  
, by Byron A. Dunn**

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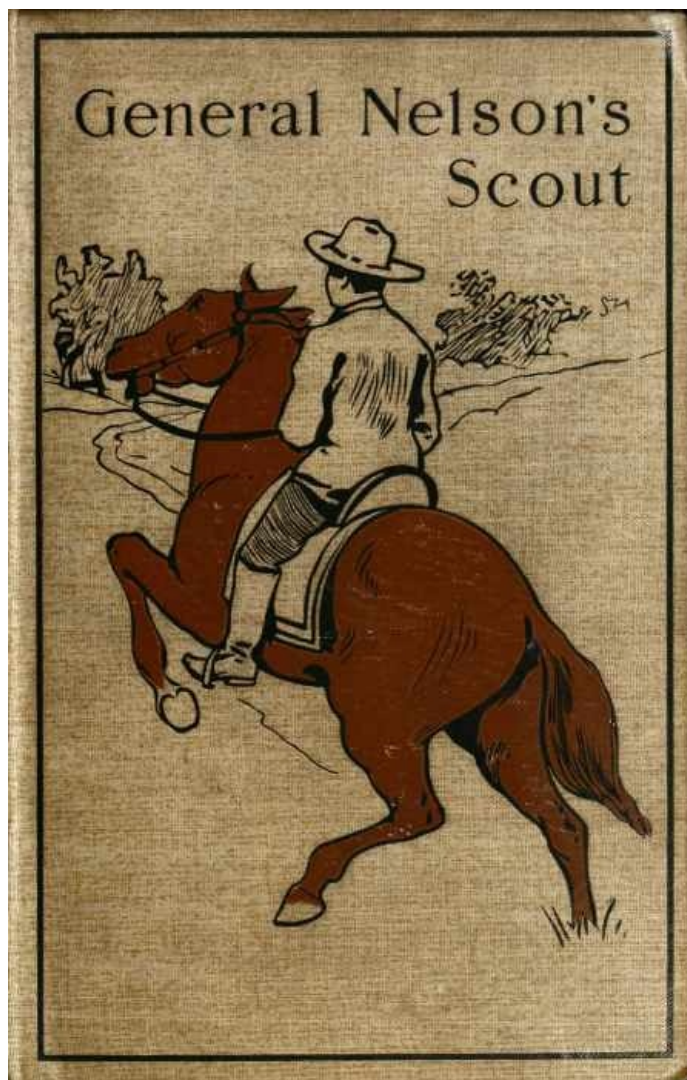
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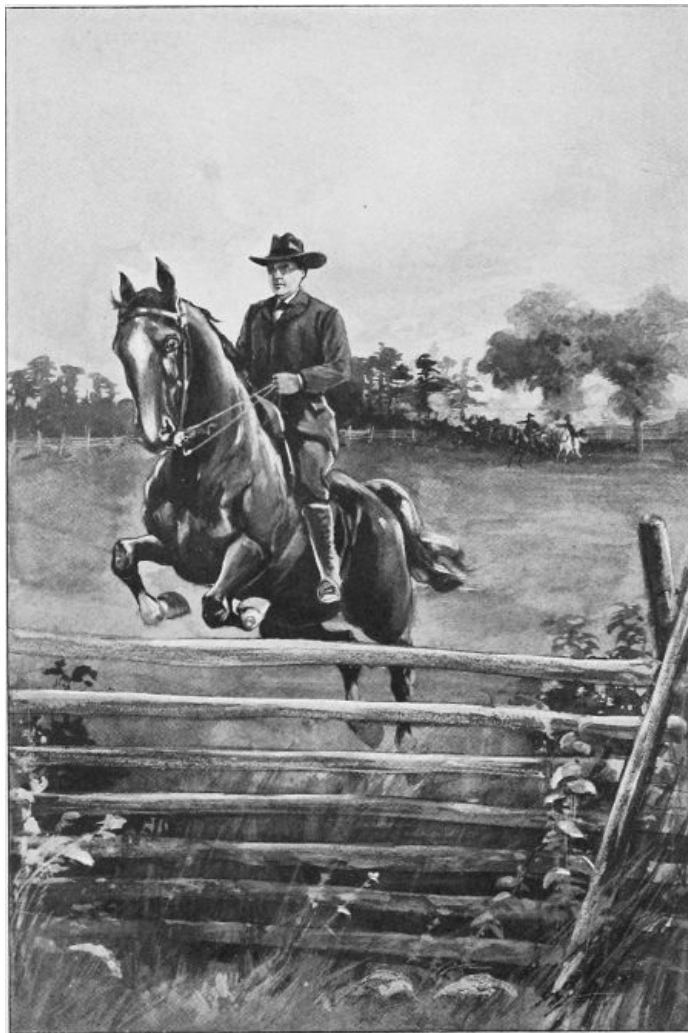
\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GENERAL NELSON'S SCOUT \*\*\*



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**GENERAL NELSON'S SCOUT**

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**As lightly as a Bird he cleared the Fence.**

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# General Nelson's Scout

BY  
Byron A. Dunn



Chicago  
A. C. McClurg and Company  
1898

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## General Nelson's Scout

[Pg 3]

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A. D. 1898

[Pg 4]

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TO  
Milton,

[Pg 5]

MY LITTLE SON,  
WHO WAS GREATLY INTERESTED IN THE STORY  
OF "GENERAL NELSON'S SCOUT,"  
WHILE BEING WRITTEN,  
AND WHO GAVE ME MANY VALUABLE HINTS,  
THIS VOLUME IS  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

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## INTRODUCTION.

[Pg 7]

Throughout the following pages the threads of history and fiction are closely interwoven. The plot of the story is laid in the dark and stormy days of 1861, amid the waving trees and blue grass fields of Central Kentucky.

No State wept more bitter tears at the commencement of the dreadful struggle between the North and the South than Kentucky. With loving arms she tried to encircle both, and when she failed, in the language of one of her most eloquent sons, "So intense was her agony that her great heart burst in twain."

Resolutions of neutrality did little good. Sympathies and beliefs are not controlled by resolutions or laws, and never can be. Kentucky was divided into two great hostile camps. The Secession element was very active, and the Union men saw the State slowly but surely drifting into the arms of the Confederacy.

Then it was that Lieutenant William Nelson of the United States navy, a well-known and very popular Kentuckian, asked the privilege of raising ten regiments of Kentucky troops. The request was granted, and Nelson at once commenced his task. Only a man of iron determination and the highest courage would have dared to undertake such a work. He became the object of the fiercest hatred and opposition,—even from many who professed to love the Union. But he never wavered in his purpose, and established a camp for his recruits at Dick Robinson, a few miles east of Danville.

[Pg 8]

Here it is that the story opens, and Nelson is the chief historic figure—a figure with many imperfections, yet it can be said of him as it was of King James V., in "The Lady of the Lake":

"On his bold visage middle age  
Had slightly pressed its signet sage,  
Yet had not quenched the open truth  
And fiery vehemence of youth;  
Forward and frolic glee was there,  
The will to do, the soul to dare."

All military movements chronicled in the story are historically correct. The riot in Louisville, the fight for the arms, the foiling of the plot, the throwing of the train from the track, are all historical incidents.

Every real character in the story is called by his true name. In this class belong Colonel Peyton and his son Bailie. The high character of the one and the eloquence of the other are not overdrawn.

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The story of Shiloh, as told, may be contradicted, but, the author believes, cannot be successfully controverted. Had it not been for General Nelson, Buell's army would never have reached the battlefield of Shiloh Sunday night.

Fred Shackelford and Calhoun Pennington, the heroes of the story, are children of the imagination, as well as their relatives and friends.

With this brief introduction, the author sends forth this little volume, hoping that the rising generation may not only read it, but enjoy it, and be somewhat enlightened by it.

Through bitter tears and dreadful carnage the Union was preserved; and through it all there has come a great blessing. Thoroughly united, the North and the South are vying with each other in upholding the honor of the flag. Shoulder to shoulder they stand, battling that the last remnant of tyranny may be driven from the New World.

B. A. D.

WAUKEGAN, ILL., June, 1898.

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## GENERAL NELSON'S SCOUT.

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### CHAPTER I. THE QUARREL AND THE OATH.

A short distance from Danville, Kentucky, on the afternoon of July 21, 1861, two boys might have been seen seated by the roadside under the branches of a wide-spreading oak. Near by, tethered to the stout rail fence which ran along the side of the road, were two spirited thoroughbred horses that champed their bits and restlessly stamped their feet, unnoticed by their young owners, who seemed to be engaged in a heated discussion.

The two boys were nearly the same age and size, and were cousins. Calhoun Pennington, who was the more excited of the two, was very dark, and his black hair, which he wore long, was flung back from a broad and handsome forehead. His countenance was flushed with anger, and his eyes fairly blazed with suppressed wrath.

His companion, Frederic Shackelford, was not quite as large as Calhoun, but his frame was more closely knit, and if it came to a trial of strength between the two, it would take no prophet to tell which would prove master.

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Frederic was as fair as his cousin was dark. His eyes were deep blue, and his hair had a decided tinge of red. The firm set lips showed that he was not only a boy of character, but of decided will. While his tones expressed earnestness and deep feeling, his countenance did not betray the excitement under which his cousin labored. Young as Frederic was, he had learned the valuable lesson of self-control.

So earnest did the discussion between the two boys become, that Calhoun Pennington sprang to his feet, and raising his clenched hand, exclaimed in passionate tones: "Do you mean to say that Kentucky is so sunk in cowardice that she will not enforce her proclamation of neutrality? Then I blush I am a Kentuckian."

"I mean to say," calmly replied Frederic, "that it will be impossible for Kentucky to enforce her ideas of neutrality. Kentuckians are no cowards, that you know, Calhoun; but it is not a question of courage. The passions aroused are too strong to be controlled. The North and the South are too thoroughly in earnest; the love of the Union on one side, the love of the rights of the States on the other, is too sincere. We could not remain neutral, if we wished. As well try to control the beating of our hearts, as our sympathies. We are either for the old flag, or against it."

"I deny it," hotly cried Calhoun; "you fellows who are always preaching about the old flag are not the only ones who love the country. It is we who are trying to keep it from becoming an instrument of oppression, of coercion, who really love the old flag. But I know what is the matter with you. Owing to the teachings of that Yankee mother of yours, you are with the Abolitionists, nigger-stealers, the mud-sills of creation, lower and meaner than our slaves. You had better go back to those precious Yankee relatives of yours; you have no business in Kentucky among gentlemen."

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Frederic's eyes flashed. He raised his clenched hand convulsively; then, with a tremendous effort, he controlled himself and slowly replied: "Calhoun, we have always been friends and companions, more like brothers than cousins; but if you value my friendship, if you do not wish me to become your deadliest enemy, never speak disrespectfully of my mother again. If you do, young as I am, I shall demand of you the satisfaction one gentleman demands of another. This refused, I shall shoot you like a dog."

For a moment Calhoun gazed in the countenance of his cousin in silence. In the stern, set features, the dangerous gleam of the eye, he read the truth of what he had heard. He was fully as brave as his cousin, and for a moment a bitter and stinging reply trembled on his lips; then his better nature conquered, and extending his hand, he said: "There, Fred; I didn't mean to hurt your feelings, much less reflect on the memory of your mother. From the North though she was, she was one of the best of women, and you know I loved her almost as much as you did yourself, for in many ways she was a mother to me. Forgive me, Fred."

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Fred grasped the extended hand, and with tears in his eyes exclaimed, "I might have known you did not mean it, Cal. You are too noble to say aught of one who loved you as my mother did. Forgive my hasty words."

"There is nothing to forgive, Fred; you did just right."

For a moment the boys remained silent, and then Fred resumed: "Cal, we must both try to be charitable. Simply to be for the North or the South does not make one a gentleman. True manhood is not measured by one's political belief. Your father is none the less a gentleman because he is heart and soul with the South. Calhoun, dark and fearful days are coming—have already come. Father will be against son, brother against brother. Members of the same family will become the deadliest enemies. Our beloved Kentucky will be rent and torn with warring factions, and the whole land will tremble beneath the shock of contending armies. Ruined homes will be everywhere; little children and women will flee to the mountains for safety."

"Not if Kentucky enforces her position of neutrality," broke in Calhoun. "The picture you draw is one you Unionists are trying to bring about. We, who would enforce neutrality, would avoid it."

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"Calhoun, don't be deceived. You know that in many parts of Kentucky it is dangerous now for a Union man to express his sentiments. Hundreds of Kentuckians have left to join the Confederate army. They do so boldly with colors flying and drums beating. On our southern border, armies are gathering ready to spring over at a moment's notice. Kentucky cannot, if she would, remain neutral. I feel, I know, evil times are coming—are now here. Calhoun, a few moments ago we came near having a deadly quarrel. I shudder as I now think of it. What if we had quarreled! What if one of us had killed the other, we who are like brothers! Oh, Calhoun! let us swear eternal friendship to each other. Let us promise to be careful and not say anything to each other that will rankle and hurt. We know not what will come, what the future has in store for us, or whither we shall be led. Let us swear to succor and save each other, even at the peril of our lives, if necessary. Wherever we may meet, let us meet as friends—each ready to protect the life and honor of the other. Let us swear it."

"Fred," slowly replied Calhoun, "it is a very strange compact you ask. It sounds like some old story of knight-errantry. You must be getting romantic. But when I think of how near we came to flying at each other's throats, if you are willing to make such a solemn compact, I am."

And there, on that July evening, under the spreading oak, the boys clasped hands and took a solemn oath to stand by each other, come what might; even unto death would they be true to each other.

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Little did either think what would be the outcome of that strange compact. Little did they realize that the day would come when that oath, if kept, would lead both into the very jaws of death—an ignoble and terrible death. That oath, under the spreading oak, on that July evening between two boys, was to become the pivot around which the fate of contending armies depended.

Calhoun was the first to speak after the making of the solemn compact. "Fred," he exclaimed, "now that we have sworn eternal friendship, it will not do for us to quarrel any more. Like the man and his wife they tell about, 'we agree to disagree.' But see how restless our horses are. They must be disgusted with our loitering. Let us have a race. See that tree yonder, nearly a mile away, where the Danville and Nicholasville roads cross? I can beat you to that tree, and if I do, the South wins."

"Done," cried Fred, for he had all the love of a true Kentucky boy for a horse race. "Now, Prince," said he, as he unhitched his horse, and patted his glossy neck, "you hear. This race is for the old flag. Win, or never hold up your head again."

"Selim," cried Calhoun, "how do you like that? It is the cause of the Sunny South that is at stake. Win, Selim, or I will sell you to the meanest Abolitionist in the North." [Pg 21]

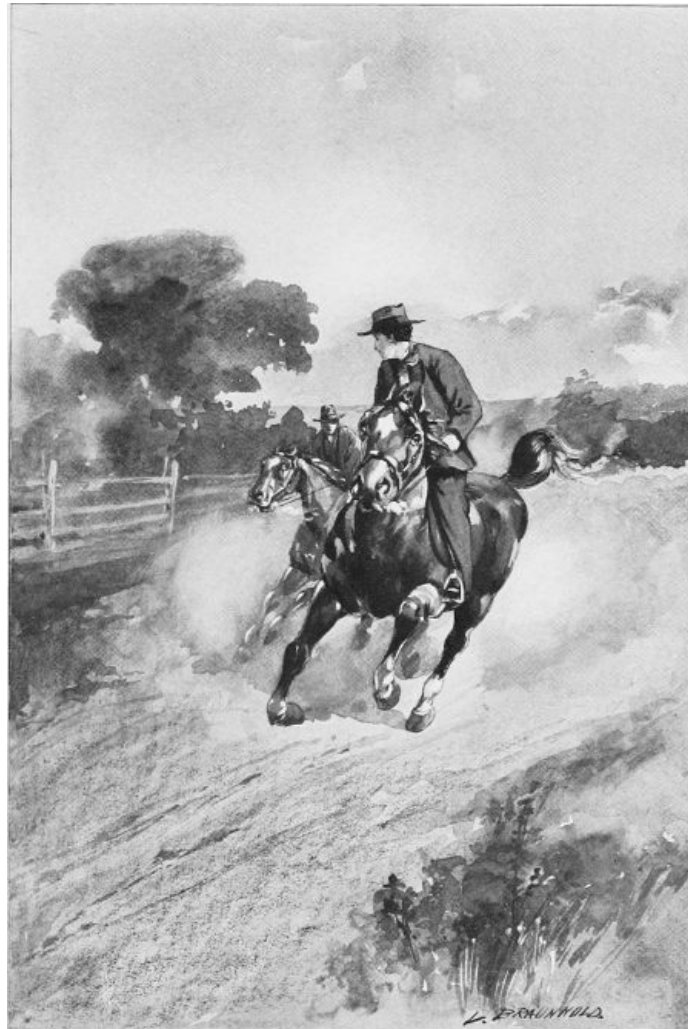
Both boys vaulted into their saddles, and at the word their steeds were away like the wind.

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## CHAPTER II. THE MEETING WITH NELSON.

[Pg 22]

Never was there a hotter race run in Kentucky. Neck and neck the horses ran, neither seemingly able to gain an inch on the other. The goal grew alarmingly near. Each rider bent over the neck of his flying steed, and urged him on with word and spur. The tree was scarcely twenty yards away. "Now, Prince, if ever," cried Fred. The horse seemed to understand. With a tremendous effort, he plunged forward, and passed the goal half a length ahead.



**He plunged forward, and passed the Goal half-a-length ahead.**

"Won!" cried Fred, but his huzzah died on his lips. The excitement of the race had made the boys careless, and they ran into a squad of horsemen who were passing along the other road. Fred came nearly unhorsing the leader of the squad, a heavy-set, red-faced man with bushy hair that stood up all around his large head. He was dressed in the uniform of an officer of the United States navy. As for Calhoun, he entirely unhorsed a black groom, who was bringing up the rear of the squad.

The darky scrambled to his feet unhurt, and forgetting his fright in his enthusiasm, shouted: "Golly, massa, dat was a race, suah. Dat a hoss woth habin'." Like a true Kentucky negro, he loved a fine horse, and gloried in a race. [Pg 23]

But with the officer, it was different. As soon as he could quiet his horse, he let fly such a volley of oaths that the boys sat on their horses too dumfounded to say a word. The officer swore until he was out of breath, and had to stop from sheer exhaustion.

At the first opportunity, Fred took off his hat and politely said:

"We beg a thousand pardons, sir, but I was racing for the old flag, and had to win, even if I had had to run over the commander-in-chief of the army, instead of a lieutenant of the navy."

"Lieutenant of the navy! lieutenant of the navy!" roared Nelson, for it was he, "I will show you, young man, I command on dry land, as well as on the water," and the air once more grew sulphurous.

"Really," dryly remarked Fred, "if you fight as well as you swear, Kentucky will soon be clear of rebels."

Nelson's companions roared with laughter. As for Nelson, his face twitched for a moment, and then he, too, commenced to laugh.

"It is a good thing for you, young man," he exclaimed, "that you don't belong to the army or I would have you tied up by the thumbs. As it is, will you tell me what you meant by saying that you were racing for the old flag and had to win?"

"Why, sir, my cousin, here, challenged me for a race, saying if he won the South would triumph; but if I won, the old flag would be victorious. So you see, sir, I had to win, even if I had had to run clear over you. You ought to thank me for winning the race, instead of swearing at me for jostling your dignity a little."

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Nelson chuckled.

All of this time Calhoun, after soothing his horse, had been a quiet spectator of the scene. He felt nettled over losing the race, and was not in the best of humor.

"So," said Nelson, turning to Calhoun, "you ran for the South to win, did you? Might have known you would have been beaten. What have you got to say for yourself, anyway, you --- little rebel?"

Calhoun's eyes flashed. Drawing himself proudly up, he said: "I am no rebel. I am a Kentuckian, and am for the neutrality of Kentucky."

"Neutrality of Kentucky," sneered Nelson; "of whom did you learn that twaddle, youngster? Neutrality is a plea of cowards to hide their disloyalty."

Calhoun grew deadly pale. He forgot everything in his passion, as he fairly hissed:

"And you are Lieutenant Nelson, are you? That recreant son of Kentucky, who, in spite of her pledge of neutrality, the pledge of a sovereign State, is violating that pledge by raising troops to subjugate a brave and heroic people. You are the Benedict Arnold of Kentucky. If I had my way, you would hang from the nearest tree. Cowards are they who would keep the pledge of neutrality given by the State? You lie, and boy that I am, I hurl defiance in your face," and tearing a riding glove from his hand, he hurled it with all the force he could summon into the face of the astonished Nelson.

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For a moment Nelson was speechless with rage; then mechanically he reached for the pistol in his holster. With a sharp exclamation, Fred spurred his horse between the angry man and Calhoun, and striking down Nelson's arm, cried: "How dare you! For shame, to shoot a boy!" Then turning to Calhoun, he gave the sharp command, "Go! go at once!"

Calhoun obeyed, and boy and horse were off like a shot; without a word of apology, Fred followed. Nelson made a movement as if to pursue, but at once reined up his horse. The look of anger soon passed from his face; he began to chuckle, and then to laugh.

Turning to one of his staff, he exclaimed: "Gad! Lieutenant, I came nearly forgetting myself and shooting that boy. It would have been an outrage. He has the grit, the true Kentucky grit. I am proud of both of those boys. I shall keep my eye on them. What soldiers they would make!"

Such was General William Nelson, fiery, erratic, and oftentimes cruel, but at all times ready to acknowledge true courage and manliness in his worst enemy. To him, more than to any other one man, does the government owe the fact that Kentucky was saved to the Union. In the face of the fiercest opposition he never faltered in his purpose of raising troops, and the most direful threats only nerved him to greater exertion.

[Pg 26]

The two boys looking back, and seeing that they were not pursued, brought their horses to a trot and began to talk of their adventure.

"Fred," said Calhoun, "you are the first to get in your work on that oath. I believe the brute would have shot me if it had not been for you."

"You certainly gave him great provocation, Cal. It was very ungentlemanly in him to attack you, a boy, as he did, but these are war times. My! but you did go for him, Cal; you really looked grand in your fiery indignation. I could not help admiring you, even if you were foolish. It is a wonder he did not shoot you, for Nelson is a man of ungovernable temper when aroused."



"He would have shot me, Fred, if it had not been for your brave interference. Come to think about it, I could not blame him much, if he had shot me; for I could not have offered him a greater insult than I did. I was hasty and excited; you were cool and collected. Fred, I thank you."

"No more of that, my boy. But, Cal, try and govern your tongue. Your hasty speech and temper will get you in serious trouble yet."

"I gave the villain no more than he deserved. There is no other man in Kentucky doing as much as Nelson to overthrow the sovereignty of the State; there is no other man doing as much to array one portion of our people against the rest; and if bloodshed comes, no man will be more to blame than he. He should be arrested and hanged as a traitor to Kentucky, and I am glad I told him so." [Pg 27]

"Calhoun," answered Fred, "you have heard neutrality talked so much you are blind to the real facts. Nelson was right when he said neutrality was but a blind for secession. If Kentucky is saved to the Union, it will be saved by the efforts of such men as he. There can be no middle ground; you must be for or against the Union."

"I confess," answered Calhoun, "while I have been talking neutrality, my real sympathy has been with the South. Down with coercion, I say, and death to all renegades like Nelson."

Fred smiled. "How about renegades like myself, Cal? But I am glad to hear you expressing your true sentiments; it shows you are honest in them, at least."

"Fred, why can't you think as I do? You are too honest, too brave, to side with Abolitionists and mudsills. They are a dirty, low, mischievous set, to say the least. There can be but one issue to the war. The whole dirty crew will run like cravens before the chivalric gentlemen of the South."

"Don't be too sanguine, Cal, about the running. Do you think such men as Nelson, Fry, Bramlette, Woodford, and a host of others I might name, are cowards?" [Pg 28]

"Oh! I didn't mean the few Kentuckians who are espousing the Union cause, but the riff-raff and scum of the North."

"You will find the men you call the 'riff-raff and scum of the North,' are just as earnest, just as brave, as the sons of the South."

"Do you think so?"

"Why not? Are we not of the same blood, the same language? This idea that the people of the South are a superior race to the people of the North is one simply born of our pride and arrogance. But you ask me why I side with the North. Because the North battles for the old flag; because it loves freedom. Cal, do you think a just God will ever let a Confederacy be successful whose chief corner-stone is human slavery?"

Calhoun flushed and muttered: "They are nothing but niggers, and the Bible upholds slavery."

"We will not argue that. My great-grandfather on my mother's side fell on Bunker Hill. Our great-grandfather fought at Yorktown; our grandfather was with Jackson at New Orleans. All fought under the old flag; all fought for freedom, not for slavery. Now, do you think I can raise my hand to help destroy the Union they helped to found, and then to perpetuate? I cannot do it. You think differently, but let us remember our oaths and be friends, even unto death."

"Do you think I can forget it, after what you have just done for me? But see, the sun is getting low; let us stop this discussion and hurry up." [Pg 29]

Judge Pennington, the father of Calhoun, resided in Danville, and the two boys soon cantered up to his door. Fred did not put up his horse, as he was to return home. After tea the boys sauntered down to the hotel to see what was going on. There they met Nelson and his party. Their first impulse was to go away, pretending not to notice him, but that would have been cowardly; so they walked up to him, apparently unconcerned as to what might happen. To their surprise, Nelson held out his hand, and laughingly said:

"How are you, my young Hotspurs; and so you want to see me hanged, do you?" addressing Calhoun. "Well, my boy, better men than I may be hanged before this trouble is over; and many as brave a boy as you will kiss mother for the last time. My boy, if it needs be that we must die, would it not be better to die under the folds of the old flag than under the bastard stars and bars?"

Calhoun turned away; he dared not trust himself to speak, so Fred, not to have his cousin appear rude, said: "Lieutenant, let me once more apologize for running into you. I am very sorry we were so careless."

"No apology is necessary, my son. A boy who runs a race for the Union and wins need not apologize. I would know you better, lad; Kentucky has need of all such as you."

Just then an orderly rushed up to Nelson and excitedly said something in a low tone. Nelson uttered an exclamation of surprise, turned abruptly, and rapidly walked to the telegraph office, where a dispatch was placed in his hands. He glanced at it, turned pale, and brave man though he was, his hand shook as though stricken with palsy. Silently he handed the dispatch to Colonel Fry, who stood by his side. As the Colonel read it, great drops of sweat stood out on his forehead. "Great God!" was all that he said. [Pg 30]

"Fry," said Nelson, huskily, "see Colonel Bramlette, who is fortunately in Danville; gather up all other Union officers that you may see, and meet me at once in my room at the hotel."

It was a group of panic-stricken officers who gathered in Nelson's room at the hotel. Here is the dispatch that had created such consternation:

CINCINNATI, July 21, 6 P. M.

LIEUTENANT WM. NELSON:

Our army has been disastrously beaten at Bull Run, and are in full retreat for Washington. That city may be in possession of the enemy before morning.

ANDERSON.

When the dispatch was read, not a word was spoken for a moment, and then Colonel Fry asked if it was not possible to keep the dispatch secret.

"No use," replied Nelson; "it has already passed through the hands of a score of disloyal operators."

"I knew," spoke up a young lieutenant, "that those miserable Eastern Yankees would not stand up before the Southern soldiers. We might as well disband and go home; all is lost." [Pg 31]

"Lost! lost!" thundered Nelson, turning on the young lieutenant like a tiger. "Go home, you craven, if you want to; all is not lost, and will not be lost until every loyal son of Kentucky is slain. We have enough men at Dick Robinson, poorly armed and equipped as they are, to hold Central Kentucky. With such colonels as Fry, Bramlette, Garrard Wolford, and the host of gallant officers under them, I defy the devil and all the Secessionists in the State to wrest Central Kentucky from us."

And with loud huzzahs the officers present swore to stand by Nelson, and come what might, they would hold Central Kentucky for the Union. How well that pledge was kept history tells.

"It is not for Central Kentucky, I fear," continued Nelson; "it is for Louisville. Can we save that city for the Union? It must be saved. The loyal men there must save it, at all hazards. They must know that we are standing firm in Central Kentucky. But how? The telegraph is in the hands of the enemy. Any word I sent would be known at once. Oh! I have it, Fry; send for that light-haired boy I was talking with at the hotel. Have him here right away."

Fred Shackelford was found just as he was mounting his horse to return home. Wondering what Nelson wanted with him, he accompanied the messenger to that officer's room, where they found him pacing up and down the apartment like a caged lion. [Pg 31]

"Where is your companion?" abruptly asked Nelson of Fred.

"At home; he lives here," answered Fred.

"Where is your home?"

"A few miles out on the Richmond road."

"Your name?"

"Frederic Shackelford."

"Frederic, you have a good horse?"

"Yes, sir; one of the best and fastest in Kentucky."

"Good; now Frederic, you told me that you loved the Union."

"Yes, sir. I promised my mother on her deathbed ever to be faithful to the old flag."

"Would Kentucky had more such mothers. A boy like you never breaks a promise to a mother. Frederic, do you want to do your country a great service, something that may save Kentucky to the Union?"

"What is it, sir?"

"To take some important dispatches to Louisville. Can you make Nicholasville by ten o'clock? A train leaves there at that hour for Lexington, thence to Louisville, arriving early in the morning."

Fred looked at his watch. "It is now seven," he said. "Yes, I can make Nicholasville by ten o'clock, if I have the dispatches right away."

"They will be ready in ten minutes," said Nelson, turning away.

In less than ten minutes the dispatches were given to Fred with instructions to place them at the earliest possible moment in the hands of James Speed, Garrett Davis, J. T. Boyle, or any one of a score of loyal Louisvillians whose names were handed him on a separate sheet of paper. [Pg 33]

Fred mounted his horse and rode away, and soon the swift beating of his horse's hoofs on the dusty turnpike died away in the distance.

## CHAPTER III. THE DAY AFTER BULL RUN.

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Could Frederic Shackelford reach Nicholasville in less than three hours? "Yes, it can be done, and I will do it," thought he as he urged his steed onward, and left mile after mile behind him. It was the test of speed and bottom of the best horse in Kentucky against time.

While Fred is making this desperate ride, our young readers may wish to be more formally introduced to the brave rider, as well as to the other characters in the story. Frederic Shackelford was the only son of Richard Shackelford, a prosperous Kentucky planter and a famous breeder of horses. Mr. Shackelford was a graduate of Harvard, and while in college had become acquainted with Laura Carrington, one of the belles of Boston, and a famous beauty. But Miss Carrington's personal charms were no greater than her beauty of mind and character. After the completion of his college course, Mr. Shackelford married Miss Carrington, and transplanted her to his Kentucky home. The fruits of this union were two children, Frederic, at the opening of this story a sturdy boy of sixteen, and Belle, a lovely little girl of twelve. Mrs. Shackelford was very happy in her Kentucky home. She was idolized by her husband, who did everything possible for her comfort. Yet, in the midst of her happiness and the kindness shown her, Mrs. Shackelford could not help feeling that there was a kind of contempt among native Kentuckians for New England Yankees. As the strife over slavery grew fiercer, the feeling against the North, especially New England, grew stronger. Many a time she felt like retorting when she heard those she loved traduced, but she hid the wound in her heart, and kept silent. But she could never accustom herself to the institution of slavery. She was a kind mistress, and the slaves of the plantation looked upon her as little less than an angel; but she could never close her eyes to the miseries that slavery brought in its train.

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She died a few days after Fort Sumter was fired upon. A few hours before she passed away she called Frederic to her bedside, told him how his great-grandfather had died on Bunker Hill, and asked him to give her a solemn promise to ever be true to the flag of his country.

"Remember, my son," she said, "that a just God will never prosper a nation whose chief cornerstone is human slavery."

These words sank deep into Frederic's heart, and were ever with him during all the dark and terrible days which followed. He readily gave his mother the promise she requested, and a few hours afterward she sank peacefully to rest.

As much as Frederic loved his mother, and as deeply as he grieved for her in the months and years that followed, he thanked God that she had been spared the misery and agony that would have been hers if she had lived.

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Mr. Shackelford was so prostrated by the death of his wife that for some weeks he paid no attention to the turmoil going on around him. He was an old line Whig in politics, but a stout believer in the rights of the State. He deplored the war, and hoped against hope that some way might be found to avert it.

Judge Horace Pennington, the father of Calhoun, was one of the most honored citizens of Danville. He was a veritable Southern fire-eater, and had nothing but contempt for anything that came from the North. But his integrity was as sterling as his politics were violent. He was the soul of honor and truth, and despised anything that looked like deception. He had no words too strong in which to express his contempt for the part Kentucky was taking in the great drama that was being enacted. When the State refused to join the Southern Confederacy his rage knew no bounds. He would have nothing to do with the plotting that was going on. "Let us go out like men," he would say, "not creep out like thieves." When the State declared for neutrality, he said: "The State is sovereign; she can do as she pleases, but it is a cowardly makeshift; it will not last."

The mother of Calhoun was a sister of Mr. Shackelford, but she died when Calhoun was a baby, and for years another Mrs. Pennington had presided over the Judge's household. For this reason much of the childhood of Calhoun had been spent at the home of his uncle, and thus it was that he and Frederic were more like brothers than cousins.

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The position of Kentucky, at the beginning of the great Civil War, was peculiar. She refused to furnish troops for the suppression of the rebellion; she refused to secede. Her governor was an ardent Secessionist; the majority of the members of the Legislature were for the maintenance of the Union. Her people were nearly equally divided. As a last resort the Legislature passed resolutions of neutrality, and both the Federal and Confederate governments were warned not to invade her sacred soil. For a time both governments, in part, respected her position, and sent no troops from other States into her territory. But the citizens of Kentucky were not neutral. They violently espoused the cause of one side or the other. Thousands of Kentuckians left the State and joined the armies of the Confederacy. All through the State the secession element was very active, and the Federal government saw it must take some action or the State would be lost to the Union. So Lieutenant William Nelson of the United States navy, and a native Kentuckian, was commissioned to raise ten regiments of Kentucky troops for service in the Union army. This movement met with the most violent opposition, even from many professed Union men, who claimed that Kentucky's position of neutrality should be respected. The militia of the State,

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known as "State Guards," was mostly officered and controlled by the Southern element. In opposition to the "State Guards," companies were organized throughout the State known as "Home Guards." The "Home Guards" were Union men. Thus Kentucky was organized into two great hostile camps. Such was the condition of affairs at the opening of this story.

It lacked just five minutes of ten o'clock when Fred reined in his reeking horse before the hotel at Nicholasville. Placing the bridle in the hands of the black hostler, and handing him a ten-dollar bill, Fred said: "I must take the train. This horse has been ridden fast and long. See that he has every attention. You know what to do in such cases."

"Trus' ole Peter fo' dat," answered the darky, bowing and scraping. "Youn' massa will hab his hoss bac' jes as good as ebber."

Fred just had time to catch the train, as it moved out from the depot. When Lexington was reached he had to make a change for Louisville. The news of the defeat of the Federal forces at Bull Run had reached Lexington, and late as it was the streets were thronged with an excited crowd. Cheers for Beauregard and the Southern Confederacy seemed to be on every tongue. If the Union had friends, they were silent. In the estimation of the excited crowd the South was already victorious; the North humbled and vanquished. It was now but a step before Washington would be in the possession of the Southern army, and Lincoln a prisoner or a fugitive.

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That the Union army had been defeated was a surprise to Fred. He now knew why Nelson was so urgent about the dispatches, and realized as never before that the nation was engaged in a desperate conflict. The cries of the mob angered him. "I wonder where the Union men are," he growled; "are they cowards that they keep silent?" And Fred was about to let out a good old-fashioned yell for the Union, regardless of consequences, when he recollected the mission he was on. It must not be; he must do nothing to endanger the success of his journey, and he bit his lip and kept silent, but his blood was boiling. Just before the train started two gentlemen came in and took the seat in front of him. They were in excellent humor, and exulting over the Confederate victory in Virginia. One of them Fred knew by sight. He was a prominent politician, and an officer of the State Guards. The other gentleman was not so distinguished looking as his companion, but his keen eyes gave his clear-cut features a kind of dare-devil expression. But beyond this, there was something about the man that would give one the impression that he was not only a man of daring, but of cool, calculating judgment, just the man to lead in a movement that would require both daring and coolness. As soon as they had seated themselves, the first gentleman, whom we will call Major Hockoday, turned to his companion and said:

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"Well, Morgan, isn't this glorious news? I knew those truckling Yankees could never stand before the gentlemen of the South. I hardly look for much war now. Washington will fall, and Lincoln will be on his knees before a week, begging for peace."

Major Hockoday's companion was no less a personage than John H. Morgan, afterward one of the most daring raiders and dashing cavalry leaders produced by the South.

Morgan did not answer for a moment, and then slowly replied:

"Major, I think that you politicians, both North and South, ought to show more sense than you do. There are those Northern politicians who have been declaring the war would not last for ninety days. The time is up, and the war has hardly begun. Now you fellows who have been associating so long with the dough-faces of the North, think the whole North is a truckling, pusillanimous set. In my business I have met another class in the North—thrifty and earnest. They are not only earnest, but brave; and not only brave, but stubborn. They will hold on like bulldogs. I fear the effects of this victory will be just opposite to what you think. It will make our people overconfident; it will tend to unify the North and nerve her to greater exertion."

"Nonsense, Morgan," replied Major Hockoday, "what ails you? You will hardly hear a peep from the Union men of Kentucky after to-morrow. The only thing I regret is that Kentucky has not taken her rightful place in the Southern Confederacy. We have talked neutrality so much, it is hard to get away from it."

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"Hockoday, like you, I think Kentucky has played the rôle of neutral too long—so long that she is already lost to the Confederacy, only to be retaken at the point of the bayonet. Central Kentucky is already in the hands of that devil, Nelson. Poorly organized as he is, he is much better organized than we. Gods! how I would like to be at the head of a cavalry regiment and raid that camp at Dick Robinson; and I would do it, too, if I had my way. But you politicians, with your neutrality, have spoiled everything."

"Look here, Morgan," replied Major Hockoday, a little nettled, "be reasonable. It was neutrality or worse. Look at the Union sentiment we had to contend with. The State absolutely refused to secede. The elections all went against us. The Legislature is against us. We had to take neutrality to keep the State from going bodily over to the Yankees—"

"That's it," broke in Morgan, "with your twaddle about State rights you allowed your hands to be tied. The Legislature should have been dispersed at the point of the bayonet, the election annulled, and Kentucky declared out of the Union. If we had done this two months ago, we would have been all right."

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"That is what we propose to do now," said the major. "See here, Morgan," and he lowered his voice to a whisper. Fred yawned, and leaned his head forward on the seat apparently for a good

sleep, but his ears were never more alert. He could only now and then catch a word something like this:

"Send message—Tompkins—Louisville—Knights Golden Circle—take Louisville—Stop at Frankfort—Send Captain Conway—All excitement—Bull Run—Louisville ours."

Fred leaned back in his seat, shut his eyes, and commenced to think hard. What did it mean? And this is the conclusion that he reached: That Major Hockoday was going to send a message from Frankfort to some one in Louisville; that there was to be an uprising of the Secessionists with the intention of capturing the city. "Oh!" thought Fred, "if I could only get hold of that message. Can I?" and again he fell to thinking.

In the rear of the car sat two men, one dressed in the uniform of a Federal officer; the other a sharp, ferret-looking man who would readily pass for a detective.

An idea came to Fred. He thought a moment, and then said to himself, "I don't like the deception, but it is the only way. If I have the opportunity, I will try it. I must have that message if possible. It may mean much to the Union cause; it may mean much to Louisville."

The train stopped at Frankfort, and Major Hockoday and Morgan alighted. On the platform stood a short, stumpy man with a very red face and a redder nose. [Pg 43]

"How do you do, Captain," said Major Hockoday, stepping up to him and shaking hands, at the same time slipping an envelope into his other hand, and whispering some hurried instructions into his ear.

"Trust me," said the captain; "I will see that your letter reaches the right person and in time."

Fred had followed Major Hockoday out of the car, took note of every movement, and heard every word that could be heard.

The bell rang, and the captain entered the car. There was a little delay, and Fred, who had got on the rear of the car, said to himself, "This little delay is a blessed thing for me, for it helps me carry out my plan." He waited until the train was getting under good headway, and then entered the car puffing and blowing and dropped into the seat beside the captain, where he sat panting as if entirely exhausted.

"You seem to have had a hard run for it, my boy," said the captain.

"Y-e-s,—had—to—make—it. Had—to—see—you," panted Fred, speaking in gasps.

"Had to see me!" exclaimed the startled captain. "I reckon there must be some mistake."

"No—mis-mistake. Wa-wait—until—I—catch—my—breath," and Fred sat puffing as if he had run a mile race. His companion eyed him not only in surprise, but with suspicion. [Pg 44]

After Fred had let sufficient time elapse to regain his breath, he said in a low tone: "You are Captain Conway of the State Guards, are you not?"

"Yes, but what of that?"

"You have just received an important letter from Major Hockoday to be delivered in Louisville."

Captain Conway stared at Fred in astonishment; then said in a fierce whisper, "How do you know that?"

"Don't get excited," whispered Fred; "don't attract attention, or all is lost. Listen! Hardly had the major placed the letter in your hands before he received the startling intelligence that he had been watched, and you spotted. Do you see those two men in the rear of the car, one in the uniform of a Federal officer, the other a keen looking fellow?"

Captain Conway turned quickly and saw the men, both of whom happened to be looking at him, and as the captain imagined with sinister designs.

"What of it?" he asked in a trembling voice.

"The gentleman seated by the side of the officer," continued Fred, "is a noted detective from Danville. The plan is to declare you a celebrated thief, and arrest you and take you off the cars at Eminence. Once off, they will search you, get your dispatches, and let you go."

"But there may be some on the train who know me."

"That will make no difference; they will claim they are not mistaken, and that you must prove you are not the person wanted before some magistrate." [Pg 45]

"What can I do? What did Major Hockoday say for me to do?" asked the now thoroughly frightened captain.

"He said that you should give me the letter, and for you to leave the train before it reached Eminence, thus giving them the slip."

"Boy, you are an impostor. It is simply a plot to get hold of the letter. Why did not Major Hockoday write me this order?"

"He had no time."

"I shall not give you the letter."

"Refuse at your peril. What do you think will happen when you are arrested and Major Hockoday's letter gets in the hands of his enemies. He will shoot you at sight for betraying him."

"How do I know you tell the truth?" asked the captain, visibly weakening.

"How did I know about the letter of Major Hockoday, if he had not sent me?" retorted Fred.

The captain grasped at the last straw. "To whom am I to deliver this letter?" he asked. He was in hopes that Fred could not answer.

"Tompkins," answered Fred, trembling, thinking his answer might be wrong.

The captain was convinced, yet sat silent and undecided. He glanced back; the men were still looking at him. He shivered, and then slyly slipped the letter into Fred's hand. The train stopped, and the captain arose and went forward as for a drink of water. At the door he hesitated as if still undecided. Fred's heart beat fast. Would he fail after all. No, he would jump from the train himself first. The bell rang for the train to start, and the captain turned as if to come back, at the same time glancing at the two gentlemen in the rear of the car. The detective-looking individual had arisen to his feet, and was reaching for his hip pocket.

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Captain Conway waited to see no more; he turned, bolted from the car, and plunged from the now moving train into the darkness.

The detective-looking gentleman drew a handkerchief from his pocket, wiped his perspiring face, and sat down again. On such little incidents do great events sometimes depend.

Fred drew a long breath. He had taken desperate chances, and won. For a moment he felt exultant, and then his face grew serious. He had always been the soul of truth and honor. "And now," he thought, bitterly, "I have been lying like a pirate." Had he done right? He hardly knew, and the wheels of the cars seemed to say, as they rattled along, "You are a liar, you are a liar," over and over again, until he leaned his head on the seat in front of him, and his tears fell thick and fast.

Poor Fred! He had yet to learn that deception was one of the least evils of war.

The dawn of the long summer day was just beginning to brighten the east when the train rolled into the station at Louisville. Early as it was, the streets were full of excited men and boys, cheering for Jeff Davis and the South. Fred at once found his way to the home of one of the best known Union men of the city, whom we will call Mr. Spear. The household was already astir, and Fred's ring was at once answered by a servant, who cautiously opened the door and asked, "Who is dar?"

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"Is Mr. Spear at home?" inquired Fred.

"Yes, sah."

"Tell him a messenger from Lieutenant Nelson wishes to see him."

The servant withdrew, and in a moment returned, and throwing open the door, said, "Massa says, come right in, sah."

Fred was ushered into a large drawing-room, where to his surprise he met the inquiring gaze of more than a score of serious looking men. They were the prominent Union men of the city, conferring with a number of the city officials as to the best method of preserving peace and order during the day. The danger was great, and how to meet it without precipitating a conflict was the question which confronted them. Now all were interested in the message brought by Fred, and his youthful appearance caused them to wonder why Nelson had chosen so young a messenger.

"You have a message from Lieutenant Nelson, I understand," said Mr. Spear.

"I have."

"When did you leave Nelson?"

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"Last evening a little after seven," answered Fred.

"Where?"

"At Danville."

"Impossible; you are an impostor."

"You are mistaken. I rode to Nicholasville in time to catch the ten o'clock train to Lexington, thence to Louisville."

Those present looked at each other in surprise. The feat to them seemed scarcely possible.

"Your message," said Mr. Spear, "must be important to demand such haste. Where is it?"

"Here, sir," replied Fred, handing him the letter. Mr. Spear hastily tore it open and read:

I have just received news of the defeat of our forces at Bull Run. Even if Washington falls, we must not despair. Kentucky must be held for the Union. Thank God, I have organized enough troops to hold Central Kentucky against any force the disorganized rebels can bring against us. Our great danger is your city. Hold Louisville, if her streets run red with blood. Do not let the loyal officials be driven from power. Call on Indiana troops if necessary. Don't hesitate. Dare anything to save the city.

NELSON.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Spear, "the advice of Lieutenant Nelson should be followed to the letter. The city must be saved, peaceably if possible, by force if necessary."

There had been a few in the assembly who had hesitated on the expediency of using force, but the ringing words of Nelson had completely won them over. Louisville was to be held for the Union, come what might.

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"And now," said Mr. Spear, "in the name of the loyal citizens of our city, let us thank this brave boy."

Fred blushed, and then stammered, "This is not all, gentlemen." Then in a modest way, he told of his overhearing the conversation between Major Hockoday and Morgan, of his plan to get possession of the letter, and how well he had succeeded. "And here, gentlemen," he continued, "is the letter."

There was a murmur of astonishment, and Mr. Spear, taking the letter, broke it open and read:

LEXINGTON, KY., July 21st, 10 P. M.

J. T. TOMPKINS, LOUISVILLE, KY.

Honored Sir:—The news of the great victory in Virginia will kindle a flame from one end of Kentucky to the other. By the time this reaches you, I trust Washington will be in the hands of the Confederate army, and Lincoln a prisoner or a fugitive. Now is the time to strike. The State Guards are eager, but owing to the stand of the State regarding neutrality, it would not be wise for them to begin a revolution in favor of the South, as that action would bring the Federal troops down on us, and we are not strong enough yet to resist them. With you it is different. You are at the head of a powerful secret order known as "The Knights of the Golden Circle." The State is not responsible for your acts or those of your organization. During the excitement of to-morrow organize your order, and hurl the cowardly and traitorous city officials of Louisville from power. The State Guards will not do anything to prevent you, and many, as individuals, will help you. Act promptly fearing nothing. See that not a single Union rag is left waving in Louisville by to-morrow night.

Signed: MAJOR C. S. HOCKODAY,  
*State Guards.*

For a moment the men looked into each other's faces without a word; then there came a storm of indignation.

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"The cowardly, traitorous wretch!" was the exclamation heard on all sides. "Forewarned is forearmed," said Mr. Spear, grimly. "Gentlemen, I think we shall be fully prepared for Mr. Tompkins and his 'Knights of the Golden Circle,' What say you?"

"That we will!" was the cry of all. "Mr. Tompkins will get a warm reception."

Then they crowded around Fred and nearly shook his hand off. But he sat silent, and at last looking up with burning cheeks, stammered: "But—but, I lied—to Conway."

He said this so earnestly, and looked so dejected that the company at first did not know what to say; then they all burst out laughing.

This hurt Fred worse than a reprimand, and the tears came into his eyes. Mr. Spear seeing how it was, at once commanded attention, and said: "Gentlemen, our levity is ill-advised. This boy is as truthful as he is brave. As he looks at it, he has been guilty of an untruth." Then turning to Fred, he took him gently by the hand, and said: "Your action is but a fitting testimonial to your truthful nature. But be comforted. What you have done, instead of being wrong, was an act of the greatest heroism, and you deserve and will receive the thanks of every Union man."

"Do you think so?" asked Fred, faintly.

"I know so, and not only this, but your action may save hundreds of lives and our city from destruction. Let the good that you have done atone for the deception you practiced towards Captain Conway."

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Fred felt relieved. Then he was told he must have some rest after his terrible ride and the exciting events of the night. He was ushered into a darkened chamber, and not until after he had lain down, and the excitement under which he had labored began to pass away did he realize how utterly exhausted he was. Tired nature soon asserted itself, and he slept the peaceful sleep of the

young.

When Fred awoke, the house was very still. He looked at his watch, and to his surprise found it was after ten o'clock. Hurriedly dressing, he went downstairs, where he met Mrs. Spear, and when he apologized for sleeping so late, she told him she had orders not to awake him, but to let him sleep as long as he would. "But come," she said, "you must be nearly famished," and she led him into the dining-room where a tempting meal was spread.

What puzzled Fred was, that although it was so near midday, the house was darkened and the gas burning. Every shutter was closed tight. Mrs. Spear appeared nervous and excited, and the servants looked as though frightened out of their wits. Although everything was so still in the house, from out-of-doors there arose a confused noise as of the tramping of many feet, the mingling of many voices, and now and then the sound of wild cheering as of an excited mob. Fred looked inquiringly at Mrs. Spear. She smiled sadly and said:

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"This promises to be a terrible day for Louisville. But for the forbearance of the Union men, there would have been bloody fighting before this. The news of the Confederate victory in Virginia has crazed the rebel element. It is thought an effort will be made to overthrow the city government. If there is, there will be bloody work, for the Union element is prepared. Companies of men are in readiness all over the city to spring to arms at a moment's notice. I fear for my husband, I fear for all of our lives, for Mr. Spear is a marked Union man." She stopped, choked back a sob, and drawing herself proudly up, continued with flashing eyes: "But Louisville will be saved, if husband, house and everything go."

Of such metal were the loyal women of Kentucky. Fred hastily swallowed a cup of coffee, ate enough to appease his hunger, and announced his intention of going out on the street.

"You must not," said Mrs. Spear; "my husband left special word for you to remain indoors. There is danger out."

Fred smiled. "That is just the reason I shall go out," he answered, quietly.

"Then, if you must go," replied Mrs. Spear, "here is a weapon," and she handed him a superb revolver. "You may need it, but do not use it except to protect your own life, or the life of a Union man. This is the order given to all loyal citizens. Do nothing to provoke a quarrel; keep silent even if insulted, but if a conflict comes, protect yourself."

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Fred thanked her, promised to be careful, and went forth into the city. Through the principal streets, vast throngs were sweeping, acting as if bereft of reason. Everywhere the Confederate flag was waving. Union flags were being trailed in the dust and stamped in the mire. Cries for Jeff Davis, and groans for Lincoln were heard on every hand.

As time went on, the mob grew more violent. "Down with the Yankees!" "Kill the nigger-stealers!" "Kentucky is no abolition State!" "Death to the Lincoln hirelings!" were the cries which echoed and re-echoed through the streets. Soon stories of outrages, of private grounds being entered and flags torn down, of brutal beatings began to be heard. The Unionists began to gather in knots and resent insult. Yet each side seemed to dread the beginning of a real conflict.

Chief among those exciting the people was Tompkins, the head of the "Knights of the Golden Circle." He raged through the streets, defying all authority. Fred looked on the growing excitement with the blood swiftly coursing through his veins. His eyes blazed with fury when he saw the stars and stripes trailed in the dust of the street. He trembled with suppressed rage when he saw Union men reviled, insulted.

"It is true," he said, bitterly, to himself, "that Union men are cowards, miserable cowards, or they would resent these insults." But Fred was mistaken; braver men never lived than the Union men of Louisville, who endured the taunts and insults of that day, rather than provoke a conflict, the end of which no man could tell.

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After a time Fred found himself on a residence street where there was a break in the mob, and the street was comparatively quiet. During this quiet a young lady came out of a house, and hurriedly passed down the street. Suddenly a fragment of the mob drifted through the street, and she was caught in the vortex. On her bosom was pinned a small Union flag. A burly ruffian in the mob espied it, and rushing up to her, shouted: "Off with that dirty rag, you she-Lincolnite!"

"Never," she exclaimed, with a pale face but flashing eye.

"Then I will take it," he exclaimed, with a coarse oath, and snatched at the flag so roughly as to tear her dress, exposing her pure white bosom to the gaze of the brutal mob.

There was a howl of delight, and the wretch made bolder, cried: "Now for a kiss, my beauty," and attempted to catch her in his smutty arms. But the avenger was at hand. Fred had seen the outrage, and picking up a brick that happened to lie loose on the pavement, he sprang forward and dealt the ruffian such a blow on the side of the head that he fell like a log, striking the pavement with such force that the blood gushed from his nose and mouth.





**He dealt the Ruffian such a Blow that he fell like a log.**

"Kill the young devil of a Lincolnite!" was the cry, and the crowd surged towards Fred. But those in advance drew back, for they looked into the muzzle of a revolver held by a hand that did not tremble, and gazed into young eyes that did not waver. [Pg 55]

"The first man that attempts to touch her or me, dies," said Fred, in a clear, firm voice. The mob shrank back; then a fierce cry arose of "Kill him! kill him!"

"Take the young lady to a place of safety," said a low voice by Fred's side; then to the mob, "Back! back! or come on at your peril."

Fred looked, and by his side stood a stalwart policeman, a glistening revolver in his hand. Near him stood other determined men, ready to assist.

"Come," said Fred, taking the young lady's arm, and the two quickly made their way out of the mob, which, balked of its prey, howled in futile rage.

"I live here," said the young lady, stopping before a palatial residence. "My name is Mabel Vaughn. You must come in and let my mother thank you. How brave you were, and Policeman Green, too. How can I thank you both enough for what you did!"

"You must excuse me now," replied Fred, politely raising his hat; "but to-morrow, if possible, I will call, and see if you have experienced any ill effects from the rough treatment you have received. But I must go now, for I may be of some further use," and with a bow, Fred was gone.

"If he were only older, I would have a mind to throw Bob overboard," said the young lady to herself, as she entered the house. [Pg 56]

Going back to the scene of his adventure, Fred found that a great crowd had gathered around the place where he had knocked the ruffian down.

"What is this?" yelled Tompkins, coming up at the head of a multitude of followers.

"Shure," cried an Irish voice, "Big Jim is kilt intoirely, intoirely."

"Who did it?" demanded Tompkins, with an oath. No one knew. By this time Big Jim, with the aid of two companions, had staggered to his feet, and was looking around in a dazed condition.

"He will come around all right," said Tompkins. "To the City Hall, boys. Down with the rag floating there! Down with the city officials; let's throw them into the Ohio," and with frightful cries, the mob started for the city hall.

But the brave, loyal policeman, G. A. Green, the one who had assisted Fred, was before them. "Stop," he cried, "the first man who tries to enter this building dies."

With a curse, Tompkins rushed on with the cry, "Down with the Lincolnites!"

There was the sharp crack of a revolver, and Tompkins staggered and fell dead. His followers stood dumfounded. Before they could rally there stood around the brave policeman a company of armed men. This was not all; as if by magic, armed Home Guards appeared everywhere. The mob stood amazed. Then a prominent officer of the Home Guard came forward and said:

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"We do not wish to shed more blood, but the first blow struck at the city government, and these streets will run red with the blood of Secessionists. We are fully prepared."

Cowed, muttering, cursing, the mob began to melt away. The crisis was passed. The sun went down on one of the most exciting days Louisville ever saw—a day that those who were there will never forget.

The city was saved to the Union, and never afterward was it in grave danger.

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## CHAPTER IV. THE TRIP TO NASHVILLE.

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"Quite an adventure," said Mrs. Spear, to whom Fred had been relating his experience. "I am proud of you. Why, you are a regular hero."

"Hardly that," replied Fred, blushing.

"I am so glad it has ended well," continued Mrs. Spear; "you ran a terrible danger, and I should never have forgiven myself for letting you go out, if any evil had befallen you."

"I should never have forgiven myself if I had not been there to protect that brave young lady," answered Fred, firmly.

"Of course, a true knight must protect a fair lady," said Mrs. Spear. "And you were fortunate, Sir Knight, for Mabel Vaughn is one of the fairest of Louisville's daughters. It was just like her to brave any danger rather than conceal her colors. She is loyal to the core."

"She seems to be a very nice young lady," replied Fred, "and she is extremely pretty, too."

"What a pity you are not older," said Mrs. Spear, "so you could fall in love with each other and get married, just as they do in well-regulated novels."

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"How do you know that I am not in love with her now?" answered Fred, his eyes sparkling with merriment; "and as for my youth, I will grow."

"Oh! in that case, I am really sorry," replied Mrs. Spear, "for I think she is spoken for."

Fred assumed a tragic air, and said in bloodcurdling tones: "Where was the recreant lover that he did not protect her? Never shall my good sword rest until it drinks his craven blood."

Mrs. Spear laughed until she cried. "You will call on your lady love before you return?" she queried.

"Most assuredly, and it must be an early morning call, for I leave for home at ten o'clock."

The warmth of welcome given Fred by the Vaughns surprised him, and, to his astonishment, he found himself a hero in their eyes.

Miss Mabel Vaughn was a most charming young lady of eighteen, and when she grasped Fred's hand, and, with tears in her eyes, poured out her thanks, he felt a curious sensation about his heart, and as he looked into her beautiful face, he could not help echoing the wish of Mrs. Spear, "Oh, that I were older."

But this fancy received a rude shock when a fine looking young man, introduced as Mr. Robert Marsden, grasped his hand, and thanked him for what he had done for his betrothed.

"And to think," said Marsden, "that Mabel was in danger, and that you, instead of me, protected her, makes me insanely envious of you."

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"As for that, Bob," archly said Miss Mabel, "I am glad you were not there. I dare say Mr. Shackelford did far better than you would have done."

Marsden flushed and said nothing. Seeing he looked hurt, Miss Vaughn continued: "I mean you would have been so rash you might have been killed."

"Which would have been far worse than if I had been killed," said Fred, meekly.

"Oh! I didn't mean that, I didn't mean that!" cried Miss Vaughn, bursting into tears.

"Which means I ought to be kicked for uttering a silly joke," answered Fred, greatly distressed.

"Please, Miss Vaughn, let us change the subject. How did you happen to be on the street?"

"I had been calling on a sick friend a few doors away, and I thought I could reach home in safety during the few moments of quiet. My friend wanted me to remove the little flag from the bosom of my dress before I ventured out, but I refused, saying, 'I would never conceal my colors,' and I was caught in the mob, as you saw."

"And I shall consider it the happiest day of my life I was there," gallantly answered Fred. "And we must not forget the brave policeman."

"That I will not," replied Miss Vaughn.

"There is one good thing it has brought about, anyway," said Marsden. "Mabel has at length consented that I shall enter the army. She would never give her consent before. I shall wear this little flag that she wore yesterday on my breast, and it will ever be an incentive to deeds of glory, and it shall never be disgraced," and the young man's eyes kindled as he said it.

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"Oh! Robert, if you should be killed!" and the girl sobbed piteously. Had a shadow of the future floated before her? Months afterward that little flag was returned to her bloodstained and torn.

"Come, come!" said Mrs. Vaughn, "this will never do, rather let us rejoice that we are all alive and happy this morning. Mabel, give us some music."

Two or three lively airs dispelled all the clouds, and Fred took his leave with the promise that he would never come to Louisville without calling.

Fred's return to Nicholasville was without adventure. He wondered what had become of Captain Conway, and laughed when he imagined the meeting between the captain and Major Hockoday. He found Prince none the worse for his fast riding, and jumping gaily on his back, started for home, returning by way of Camp Dick Robinson. Here he met Lieutenant Nelson, who warmly grasped his hand, and thanked him for his services in delivering his message.

"But," continued Nelson, "I have heard rumors of your performing a still more important part, and securing papers of the greatest value to us. Tell me about it."

When Fred related his meeting with Major Hockoday and Morgan, and how he had wrung the dispatch from Captain Conway, Nelson nearly went into an apoplectic fit from laughter. Then he stood up and looked at the boy admiringly.

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"Fred," he said, "you have done what one man in a hundred thousand could not have done. The government shall know of this. Not only this; but if you will enter my service, not as a spy, but as a special messenger and scout, I will see that you are enrolled as such with good pay."

Fred shook his head. "You must remember, sir, I am but a boy still under the control of my father. I accepted the mission from you, which I did, on the impulse of the moment; and I fear when I return home, I shall find my father very much offended."

"Is your father a Union man?" asked Nelson.

"I do not know. My mother died but a few weeks ago, and since her death father has taken no interest in the events going on around him. I have never heard him express any opinion since the war really began. Before that he was in hopes it could be settled peaceably."

"Well, my boy, whatever happens, remember you have a friend in me. Not only this, but if you can arrange it amicably with your father, I may call on you, if at any time I have a very delicate mission I wish to have performed."

Fred thanked him, and rode on to his home. He found his father in very earnest conversation with his uncle, Judge Pennington, and Colonel Humphrey Marshall, a well-known Kentuckian. The trio were earnestly discussing the war, Judge Pennington and Colonel Marshall trying to convince Mr. Shackelford that it was his duty to come out boldly for the South, instead of occupying his position of indifference.

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When Mr. Shackelford saw Fred, he excused himself a moment, and calling him, said: "Where in the world have you been, Fred? I thought you were with your Cousin Calhoun, and therefore borrowed no trouble on account of your absence. But when your uncle came a few moments ago, and informed me you had not been there for three days, I became greatly alarmed, and as soon as I could dismiss my visitors I was going to institute a search for you."

"I am all right, father," answered Fred. "I have been to Louisville. I will tell you all about it when you are at leisure."

"Very well," replied Mr. Shackelford, and went back and resumed the conversation with his guests.

In the evening, when father and son were alone, Fred told where he had been, and who sent him. Mr. Shackelford looked grave, and said:

"Fred, this is a bad business. Since the death of your mother, I have taken but little interest in passing events. I have just awakened to the fact that there is a great war in progress."

"Yes, father," said Fred in a low tone, "war on the old flag. Which side should one be on?"

Mr. Shackelford did not answer for a moment, and then he said, with a troubled countenance: "I had almost as soon lose my right arm as to raise it against the flag for which my fathers fought. On the other side, how can I, a man Southern born, raise my hand against my kindred? Kentucky is a sovereign State; as such she has resolved to be neutral. The South is observing this neutrality, the North is not. Even now the Federal government is raising and arming troops right in our midst. This Lieutenant Nelson, to whom you have rendered such valuable services, is foremost in this defiance of the wishes of Kentucky. The raising and arming of Federal troops must be stopped, or the whole State will be in the throes of a fratricidal strife. Your uncle and Colonel Marshall are for Kentucky's seceding and joining the South. For this I am not prepared, for it would make the State the battleground of the contending armies. But the neutrality of Kentucky must be respected. Let me hear no more of your aiding Nelson, or you are no son of mine."

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"Father, you say Kentucky is a sovereign State. Is it right then for those who favor the South to try and force Kentucky into the Southern Confederacy against the will of a majority of her people?"

Mr. Shackelford hesitated, and then said: "As much right as the Unionists have to force her to stay in. But I do not ask you to aid the South, neither must you aid Nelson."

Mr. Shackelford drew a deep sigh, and then continued: "Your mother being a Northern woman, I suppose you have imbibed some of her peculiar ideas. This war is a terrible thing, Fred. Oh, God! why must the two sections fight?" And he turned away to hide his feelings.

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Under the circumstances, Fred thought it best not to say anything about his adventure with Captain Conway, or what happened in Louisville. But he readily promised his father he would do nothing to aid either side without consulting him.

"Now, Fred," said Mr. Shackelford, "this business being settled, I have another matter I wish to talk about. My business is in such shape it is of the utmost importance that I get some papers to your Uncle Charles in Nashville for him to sign. Mail, you know, is now prohibited between the two sections. To travel between the two States is becoming nearly impossible. It will soon become entirely so. Even now, the journey may be attended with great danger; and I would not think of asking you if it was not so important for your Uncle Charles to sign the papers. But as much as I would like to have you make the journey, I shall not command you, but let you exercise your own pleasure."

"Just the thing!" shouted Fred, his boyish enthusiasm and love of adventure aroused. "I shall enjoy it. You know a spice of danger adds enjoyment to one's journey."

"Well," said his father, "it is all settled, then, but be very careful, for they tell me the whole country is in a state of fearful ferment. One thing more, Fred; if you have any Union sentiment, suppress it entirely while you are gone. It will not do in Middle Tennessee; there are no Union men there."

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The next morning, after kissing his little sister good-bye, and promising his father to be very careful, Fred started on his journey. Nashville was about one hundred and sixty miles away, and he calculated he could reach it in three days. From Danville he took the main road to Liberty, thence to Columbia, where he stopped for the night. His next day's ride took him to Glasgow, then south to Scottsville. He found the whole country in a state of the greatest excitement; and passed numerous companies of Kentuckians going south to join the Confederate army. After leaving Columbia, he saw nothing but the Confederate flag displayed. If there were any Unionists, they did not let the fact be known.

Just over on the Tennessee side, as he passed into that State, was a large encampment of Confederate troops; and Fred was repeatedly asked to enlist, while many a covetous eye was cast on his horse. It was afternoon before he reached Gallatin, where he stopped for refreshments for himself and horse.

He found the little city a perfect hotbed of excitement. The people were still rejoicing over the victory at Bull Run, and looking every day for Washington to fall. To them the war was nearly over, and there was joy on every countenance. When it became known at the hotel that Fred was from Kentucky, he was surrounded by an eager crowd to learn the news from that State.

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In reply to his eager questioners, Fred said:

"Gentlemen, I do not know that I can give you anything new. You know that Kentucky has voted to remain neutral, but that does not prevent our people from being pretty evenly divided. Many of our most prominent men are advocating the cause of the South, but as yet they have failed to overcome the Union sentiment. The day after the battle of Bull Run there was a riot in Louisville, and it was thought that the friends of the South might be able to seize the city government, but the movement failed."

"Where did you say you were from?" asked one of the bystanders.

"From Danville," answered Fred.

"You are all right in that section of the country, are you not?"

"On the contrary," replied Fred, "a Lieutenant Nelson has organized a camp at Dick Robinson,

but a few miles from where I live, and is engaged in raising ten regiments of Kentucky troops for the Federal army."

The news was astounding, and a murmur of surprise ran through the crowd, which became a burst of indignation, and a big red-faced man shouted:

"It's a lie, youngster; Kentuckians are not all cowards and Abolitionists. You are nothing but a Lincolnite in disguise. Hang him, boys! hang him!" [Pg 68]

"You are right," said Fred, advancing on the man, "when you say all Kentuckians are not cowards. Some of them still have courage to resent an insult, especially when it is offered by a cur," and he dealt the man a blow across the face with his riding-whip with such force as to leave an angry, red mark.

The man howled with pain and rage, and attempted to draw a revolver, but stout hands laid hold of him, and he was dragged blaspheming away.

Meanwhile it looked as if there might be a riot. Some were hurraing for the boy; others were shaking their heads and demanding that Fred further give an account of himself. He had been called a Lincolnite, and that was enough to damn him in the eyes of many.

"What is all this fuss about?" cried a commanding looking young man, dressed in the uniform of a lieutenant of the Confederate army, pushing his way through the crowd.

"Oh, this hyear young feller struck Bill Pearson across the face with his ridin'-whip for callin' him a Lincolnite and a liah," volunteered a seedy, lank looking individual.

"Which seems full enough provocation for a blow. Bill is fortunate he hasn't got a hole through him," responded the young lieutenant.

"But maybe he is a Lincolnite," persisted the seedy individual. "He said Kentuck wouldn't 'cede, and that they was raisin' sogers to help whip we 'uns." [Pg 69]

"How is it, my boy?" asked the lieutenant, turning to Fred. "Who are you, and where did you come from?"

Fred explained what had happened; how he had been asked for news from Kentucky, and that he had told them only the truth. He then gave his name, and said he was on his way to Nashville to visit his uncle, Charles Shackelford.

"Fellow-citizens," said the young officer in a voice that at once commanded attention, "this young man informs me that he is a nephew of Major Charles Shackelford of Nashville, who is now engaged in raising a regiment for the Confederate service. No nephew of his can be a Lincolnite. (Here Fred winced.) As for the news he told, unfortunately it's true. Kentucky, although thousands of her gallant sons have joined us, still clings to her neutrality, or is openly hostile to us. It is true, that a renegade Kentuckian by the name of Nelson is enlisting troops for the Yankees right in the heart of Kentucky. But I believe, almost know, the day is not distant, when the brave men of Kentucky who are true to their traditions and the South will arise in their might, and place Kentucky where she belongs, as one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of Confederate States. In your name, fellow-citizens, I want to apologize to this gallant young Kentuckian for the insult offered him." [Pg 70]

The young lieutenant ceased speaking, but as with one voice, the multitude began to cry, "Go on! go on! A speech, Bailie, a speech!"

Thus abjured, Lieutenant Bailie Peyton, for it was he, mounted a dry-goods box, and for half an hour poured forth such a torrent of eloquence that he swayed the vast audience, which had gathered, as the leaves of the forest are swayed by the winds of heaven.

He first spoke of the glorious Southland; her sunny skies, her sweeping rivers, her brave people. He pictured to them the home of their childhood, the old plantation, where slept in peaceful graves the loved ones gone before.

Strong men stood with tears running down their cheeks; women sobbed convulsively. "Is there one present that will not die for such a land?" he cried in a voice as clear as a trumpet, and there went up a mighty shout of "No, not one!"

He then spoke of the North; how the South would fain live in peace with her, but had been spurned, reviled, traduced. Faces began to darken, hands to clench. Then the speaker launched into a terrific philippic against the North. He told of its strength, its arrogance, its insolence. Lincoln was now marshaling his hireling hosts to invade their country, to devastate their land, to desecrate their homes, to let loose their slaves, to ravish and burn. "Are we men," he cried, "and refuse to protect our homes, our wives, our mothers, our sisters!" [Pg 71]

The effect was indescribable. Men wept and cried like children, then raved and yelled like madmen. With clenched hands raised towards heaven, they swore no Yankee invader would ever leave the South alive. Women, with hysterical cries, beseeched their loved ones to enlist. They denounced as cowards those who refused. The recruiting officers present reaped a rich harvest. As for Fred, he stood as one in a trance. Like the others, he had been carried along, as on a mighty river, by the fiery stream of eloquence he had heard. He saw the Southland invaded by a mighty host, leaving wreck and ruin in its wake. He heard helpless women praying to be

delivered from the lust of brutal slaves, and raising his hand to heaven he swore that such things should never be.

Then came the reaction. His breast was torn with conflicting emotions, he knew not what to think. In a daze he sought his horse. A pleasant voice sounded in his ear.

"I think you told me you were going to Nashville." It was Bailie Peyton who spoke.

"Yes, sir."

"It is getting late. Will you not go with me to my father's and stay all night, and I will ride with you to Nashville in the morning?"

Fred readily consented, for he was weary, and he also wanted to see more of this wonderful young orator.

Colonel Peyton, the father of Bailie Peyton, resided some three miles out of Gallatin on the Nashville pike, and was one of the distinguished men of Tennessee. He opposed secession to the last, and when the State seceded he retired to his plantation, and all during the war was a non-combatant. So grand was his character, such confidence did both sides have in his integrity, that he was honored and trusted by both. He never faltered in his love for the Union, yet did everything possible to save his friends and neighbors from the wrath of the Federal authorities. It was common report that more than once he saved Gallatin from being burned to the ground for its many acts of hostility to the Union forces. War laid a heavy hand on Colonel Peyton; and his son the apple of his eye was brought home a corpse. Even then Colonel Peyton did not complain. He bound up his broken heart, and did what he could to soothe others who had been stricken the same as he.

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Fred was given a genuine Southern welcome at the hospitable mansion of Colonel Peyton. As for Bailie, the younger members of the household went wild over him, even the servants wore a happier smile now "dat Massa Bailie had cum."

After supper the family assembled on the old-fashioned porch to enjoy the cool evening air, and the conversation, as all conversations were in those days, was on the war. Bailie was overflowing with the exuberance of his spirits. He believed that the victory at Bull Run was the beginning of the end, that Washington was destined to fall, and that President Davis would dictate peace from that city. He saw arise before him a great nation, the admiration of the whole world; and as he spoke of the glory that would come to the South, his whole soul seemed to light up his countenance.

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Throughout Bailie's discourse, Colonel Peyton sat silent and listened. Sometimes a sad smile would come over his features at some of his son's witty sallies or extravagant expressions.

Bailie seeing his father' dejection, turned to him and said:

"Cheer up, father; I shall soon be back in Nashville practicing my profession, the war over; and in the greatness and grandeur of the South you will forget your love for the old Union."

The colonel shook his head, and turning to Fred, began to ask him questions concerning Kentucky and the situation there. Fred answered him truthfully and fully to the best of his knowledge. Colonel Peyton then said to his son:

"Bailie, you know how dear you are to me, and how much I regret the course you are taking; yet I will not chide you, for it is but natural for you to go with the people you love. It is not only you, it is the entire South that has made a terrible mistake. That the South had grievances, we all know; but secession was not the cure. Bailie, you are mistaken about the war being nearly over; it has hardly begun. If Beauregard ever had a chance to capture Washington, that chance is now lost by his tardiness. The North has men and money; it will spare neither. You have heard what this young man has said about Kentucky. He has told the truth. The State is hopelessly divided. Neither side will keep up the farce of neutrality longer than it thinks it an advantage to do so. When the time comes, the Federal armies will sweep through Kentucky and invade Tennessee. Their banners will be seen waving along this road; Nashville will fall."

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"What!" cried Bailie, springing to his feet, "Nashville in the hands of the Lincolnites. Never! May I die before I see the accursed flag of the North waving over the proud capitol of my beloved Tennessee."

He looked like a young god, as he stood there, proud, defiant, his eye flashing, his breast heaving with emotion.

His father gazed on him a moment in silence. A look of pride, love, tenderness, passed over his face; then his eyes filled with tears, and he turned away trembling with emotion. Had he a dim realization that the prayer of his son would be granted, and that he would not live to see the Union flag floating over Nashville?

That night Frederic Shackelford knelt by his bedside with a trembling heart. Bailie Peyton's speech, his enthusiasm, his earnestness had had a powerful influence on him. After all, was the North wrong? Was the South fighting, as Bailie claimed, for one of the holiest causes for which a patriotic people ever combated; and that their homes, the honor of their wives and daughters were at stake?

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"Oh, Lord, show me the right way!" was Fred's prayer.

Then there came to him, as if whispered in his ear by the sweetest of voices, the words of his mother, "*God will never permit a nation to be founded whose chief corner-stone is human slavery.*" He arose, strong, comforted; the way was clear; there would be no more doubt.

The next morning the young men journeyed to Nashville together. On the way Bailie poured out his whole soul to his young companion. He saw nothing in the future but success. In no possible way could the North subjugate the South. But the silver tones no longer influenced Fred; there was no more wavering in his heart. But he ever said that Bailie Peyton was one of the most fascinating young men he ever met, and that the remembrance of that ride was one of the sweetest of his life.

When a few months afterward, he wept over Peyton's lifeless body stretched on the battlefield, he breathed a prayer for the noble soul that had gone so early to its Creator.

Fred found Nashville a seething sea of excitement. Nothing was thought of, talked of, but the war. There was no thought of the hardships, the suffering, the agony, the death that it would bring—nothing but vain boasting, and how soon the North would get enough of it. The people acted as though they were about to engage in the festivities of some gala day, instead of one of the most gigantic wars of modern times. It was the case of not one, but of a whole people gone mad.

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Although Fred's uncle and family were greatly surprised to see him, he was received with open arms. Mr. Shackelford was busily engaged in raising a regiment for the Confederate service, and as Bailie Peyton had said, had been commissioned as major. Fred's cousin, George Shackelford, although but two years older than he, was to be adjutant, and Fred found the young man a little too conceited for comfort.

Not so with his cousin Kate, a most beautiful girl the same age as himself, and they were soon the closest of friends. But Kate was a terrible fire-eater. She fretted and pouted because Fred would not abuse the Yankees with the same vehemence that she did.

"What if they should come here?" asked Fred.

"Come here!" echoed Kate, with the utmost scorn. "We women would turn out and beat them back with broomsticks."

Fred laughed, and then little Bess came toddling up to him, with "Tousin Fed, do 'ankees eat 'ittle girls?"

"Bless you, Bessie, I am afraid they would eat you, you are so sweet," cried Fred, catching her in his arms and covering her face with kisses.

"No danger," tartly responded Kate; "they will never reach here to get a chance."

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"Don't be too sure, my pretty cousin; I may yet live to see you flirting with a Yankee officer."

"You will see me dead first," answered Kate, with flashing eye.

It was a very pleasant visit that Fred had, and he was sorry when the four days, the limit of his visit, were up. The papers that he had brought were all signed, and in addition he took numerous letters and messages back with him.

When leaving, his uncle handed him a pass signed by the Governor of the State.

"There will be no getting through our lines into Kentucky without this," said his uncle. "Tennessee is like a rat-trap; it is much easier to get in than to get out."

Fred met with no adventure going back, until he approached the Kentucky line south of Scottsville. Here he found the road strongly guarded by soldiers.

"Where are you going?" asked the officer in charge.

"To my home near Danville, Kentucky," answered Fred.

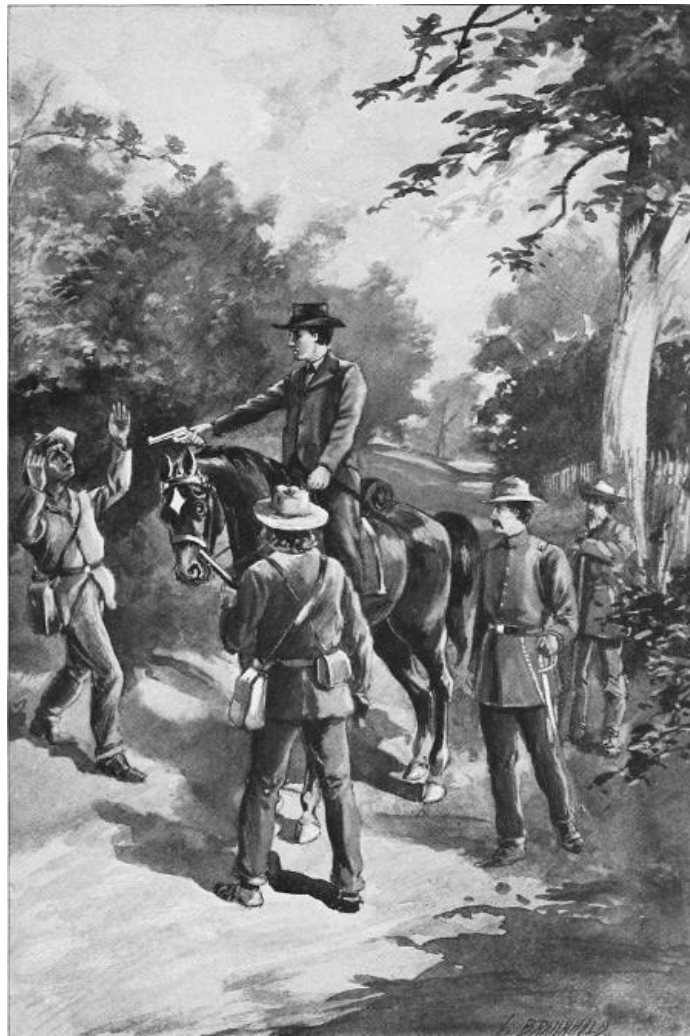
"No, you don't," said the officer; "we have orders to let no one pass."

"But I have permission from the Governor," replied Fred, handing out his pass.

The officer looked at it carefully, then looked Fred over, for he was fully described in the document, and handed it back with, "I reckon it's all right; you can go." And Fred was about to ride on, when a man came running up with a fearful oath, and shouting: "That's you, is it, my fine gentleman? Now you will settle with Bill Pearson for striking him like a nigger!" and there stood the man he had struck at Gallatin, with the fiery red mark still showing across his face.

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As quick as a flash Fred snatched a revolver from the holster. "Up with your hands," said he coolly but firmly. Pearson was taken by surprise, and his hands went slowly up. The officer looked from one to the other, and then asked what it meant.



**As quick as a flash Fred snatched a Revolver from the holster.**

Bill, in a whining tone, told him how on the day he had enlisted, Fred had struck him "just like a nigger." Fred, in a few words, told his side of the story.

"And Bailie Peyton said ye were all right, and Bill here called ye a coward and a liah?" asked the officer.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Bill, I reckon you got what you deserved. Let the gentleman pass."

With a muttered curse, Pearson fell back, and Fred rode on, but had gone but a few yards when there was the sharp report of a pistol, and a ball cut through his hat rim. He looked back just in time to see Bill Pearson felled like an ox by a blow from the butt of a revolver in the hands of the angry officer.

Once in Kentucky Fred breathed freer, but he was stopped several times and closely questioned, and once or twice the fleetness of his horse saved him from unpleasant companions. It was with a glad heart that he found himself once more at home.

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**CHAPTER V.  
FATHER AND SON.**

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Fred's journey to Nashville and back had consumed eleven days. It was now August, a month of intense excitement throughout Kentucky. It was a month of plot and counterplot. The great question as to whether Kentucky would be Union or Confederate trembled in the balance. Fred found conditions changed. Those who had been neutral were becoming outspoken for one side or the other. Thus it was with Mr. Shackelford. He was fast becoming a partisan of the South. Letters which Fred brought him from his brother in Nashville confirmed him in his opinion. In these letters his brother begged him not to disgrace the name of Shackelford by siding with the Lincolnites.

He heard from Fred a full account of his journey, commended him for his bravery, and said that he did what every true Kentuckian should do, resent an insult; but he should not have sent him had he known he would have been exposed to such grave dangers.

"Now, Fred," he continued; "you and your horse need rest. Do not leave home for a few days."



To this Fred readily assented. His cousin Calhoun came to see him, and when he told him how he had served the fellow in Gallatin who called him a liar, Calhoun's enthusiasm knew no bounds. He jumped up and down and yelled, and clapped Fred on the back, and called him a true Kentuckian, even if he didn't favor the South.

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"It seems to me, Fred, you are having all the fun, while I am staying here humdrumming around home. I can't stand it much longer."

"It isn't all fun, Cal. I might have been killed. Look at that hole through my hat."

"That's what I envy, Fred; I must be a soldier. I long to hear the singing of bullets, the wild cheering of men, to be in the headlong charge," and the boy's face glowed with enthusiasm.

"I reckon, Cal, you will get there, if this racket keeps up much longer," answered Fred.

"Speed the day," shouted Cal, as he jumped on his horse and rode away, waving back a farewell.

During these days, Fred noticed that quite a number of gentlemen, all prominent Southern sympathizers, called on his father. It seemed to him that his father was drifting away, and that a great gulf was growing between them; and he resolved to open his whole heart and tell his father just how he felt. The opportunity came sooner than he expected.

One evening his uncle, Judge Pennington, came out from Danville, accompanied by no less distinguished gentlemen than John C. Breckinridge, Humphrey Marshall, John A. Morgan and Major Hockoday. Breckinridge was the idol of Kentucky, a knightly man in every respect.

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They had come to discuss the situation with Mr. Shackelford. Ten thousand rifles had been shipped to Cincinnati, to be forwarded to Camp Dick Robinson, for the purpose of arming the troops there; and the question was should they allow these arms to be sent. The consultation was held in the room directly below the one Fred occupied, and through a friendly ventilator he heard the whole conversation.

Morgan and Major Hockoday were for calling out the State Guards, capturing Camp Dick Robinson, then march on Frankfort, drive out the Legislature, and declare the State out of the Union.

This was vigorously opposed by Breckinridge. "You must remember," said he, "that State sovereignty is the underlying principle of the Southern Confederacy. If the States are not sovereign, the South had no right to secede, and every man in arms against the Federal government is a traitor. Kentucky, by more than a two-thirds vote, declined to go out of the Union. But she has declared for neutrality; let us see that neutrality is enforced."

"Breckinridge," said Morgan, "your logic is good, but your position is weak. What about those arms?"

"Their shipment in the State would be a violation of our neutrality; the whole power of the State should be used to prevent it," answered Breckinridge.

"Oh! that General Buckner were here!" exclaimed Major Hockoday. "Now that he is gone, the State Guard is virtually without a head."

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"Where is General Buckner?" asked Mr. Shackelford.

"Hobnobbing with President Lincoln in Washington, or with President Davis in Richmond, I don't know which," answered Marshall, with a laugh.

"Oh! Buckner is all right," responded Breckinridge; "but he ought to be here now."

It was finally agreed that a meeting should be called at Georgetown, in Scott county, on the 17th, at which meeting decisive steps should be taken to prevent the shipment of the arms.

All of this Fred heard, and then, to his consternation, he heard his father say:

"Gentlemen, before you go, I want to introduce my son to you. I am afraid he is a little inclined to be for the Union, and I think a meeting with you gentlemen may serve to make him see things in a different light."

So Fred was called, and nerving himself for the interview, he went down. As he entered the room, Major Hockoday stared at him a moment in surprise, and then exclaimed:

"Great God! Shackelford, that is not your son; that is the young villain who stole my dispatch from Conway!"

"The very same," said Fred, smiling. "How do you do, Major; I am glad to see you looking so well. I see that the loss of that dispatch didn't worry you so much as to make you sick."

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"W-h-y why!" stammered the major, choking with rage, "you—you impudent young—" here the major did choke. He could say no more.

Fred rather enjoyed it, and he continued: "And how is my friend Captain Conway? I trust that he was not injured in his hurried exit from the cars the other night."

All the rest of the company looked nonplused, but Morgan, who roared with laughter.

"What does this mean?" sternly asked Mr. Shackelford of Fred.

"It means," answered Fred, "that I got the major's dispatches away from Captain Conway, and thus saved Louisville from a scene of bloodshed and horror. And, Major, you should thank me, for your scheme would have failed anyway. The Union men were too well prepared. I really saved any number of your friends from being killed, and there you sit choking with rage, instead of calling me a good boy."

"Leave the room, Fred," commanded Mr. Shackelford; "that you should insult a guest here in my own house is more than I can imagine."

Bowing, Fred retired, and the company turned to Major Hockoday for an explanation of the extraordinary scene. The major told the story and ended with saying: "I am sorry, Shackelford, that he is your boy. If I were you, I should get him out of the country as soon as possible; he will make you trouble."

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"I will settle with him, never fear," replied Mr. Shackelford, grimly.

"Look here, Major," spoke up Morgan; "you are sore because that boy outwitted you, and he did you a good turn, as he said. If your program had been carried out, Louisville would be occupied by Federal troops to-day. Thank him because he pulled the wool over Conway's eyes. Ha! ha! two old duffers fooled by a boy!" and Morgan enjoyed a hearty laugh, in which all but Major Hockoday and Mr. Shackelford joined.

"And, Shackelford," continued Morgan, after he had enjoyed his laugh, "I want you to let that boy alone; he is the smartest boy in Kentucky. I want him with me when I organize my cavalry brigade."

"I am afraid, Morgan," said Breckinridge, "that you will be disappointed in that, though I hope not for Mr. Shackelford's sake. The boy looks to me as if he had a will of his own."

"Oh, he will come around all right," responded Morgan.

After making full arrangements for the meeting to be held in Scott county on the 17th, the company dispersed.

Hours after they had gone Fred heard his father restlessly pacing the floor.

"Poor father!" thought he, "like me, he cannot sleep. I wonder what he will say to me in the morning; but come what may, I must and shall be for the Union."

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At the breakfast table Mr. Shackelford was silent until the close of the meal, when he simply said, "Fred, I would like to see you in the library."

Fred bowed, and replied, "I will be there in a few moments, father."

When Fred entered the library, his father was seated at the table writing. There was a look of care on his face, and Fred was startled to see how pale he was.

Pushing aside his writing, he sat for some moments looking at his son in silence. At last he said:

"Fred, you can hardly realize how pained I was last night to hear what I did. I would not have thought it of you. But the past is gone. You are old enough to realize something of the desperate nature of the struggle in which the two sections of the country are engaged. For the past two weeks I have thought much of what was the right thing to do. I love my country; I love and revere the old flag. As long as the slightest hope remained of restoring it as it was, I was for the Union. But this is now hopeless; too much blood has been shed. Neither would the South, if granted her own terms, now go back to a Union she not only hates, but loathes. The North has no lawful right to use coercion. Kentucky, in her sovereign right as a State, has declared for neutrality; and it has been contemptuously ignored by the North. Nelson, a man to be despised by every patriot, has not only organized troops in our midst, but now seeks to have the Federal government arm them. Such true men as Breckinridge, Marshall, Buckner, Morgan, and a host of other loyal Kentuckians have sworn that this shall never be. General Buckner is now in Washington. If he ascertains that the Lincoln government will not respect the neutrality of the State by withdrawing every Federal officer and soldier, he is going to proceed to Richmond and offer his services to the Confederate Government. Once accepted, he will immediately form the State Guards into an army, and turn them over to the Confederacy. Regiments must be formed, and I have been offered the colonelcy of one of these regiments."

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Fred was startled, and stammered, "You—father—you?"

"Yes, my son, why not? If your mother had lived, it would have been different, but now I can go far better than many who have gone. I have arranged all of my business. I shall place Belle in school in Cincinnati. John Stimson, who has been our overseer for so many years, will remain and conduct the plantation. My only trouble has been to dispose of you satisfactorily. My wish is to send you to college, but knowing your adventurous disposition, and how fond you are of exciting and, I might add, desperate deeds, I am afraid you would do no good in your studies."

"You are right, father," said Fred, in a low voice.

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"This being the case," continued Mr. Shackelford, "I was going to offer to take you with me in the army, not as an enlisted soldier, but rather as company and aid to me. But from what I heard last

night, I do not see how this is possible, unless what you have done has been a mere boyish freak, which I do not think."

"It was no freak," said Fred, with an unsteady voice.

"So I thought. Therefore, the only thing I can do is to send you away—to Europe. What do you say, an English or a German university?"

"And you are really going into the Confederate army, father?"

"Yes, my son."

"And you want me to play the coward and flee my country in this her hour of greatest peril? Oh, father!"

Mr. Shackelford looked astonished, and then a smile of joy passed over his features; could it be that Fred was going with him?

"Not if you wish to go with me, my son."

Fred arose and tottered to his father, sank beside his knee, and looking up with a tear-stained face, said in a pleading voice:

"Don't go into the Confederate army, father; don't turn against the old flag." And the boy laid his head on his father's knee and sobbed as if his heart would break.

Mr. Shackelford was deeply moved. He tried to speak, but a lump arose in his throat and choked him; so he sat in silence smoothing the hair of his son with his hand as gently as his mother would have done. [Pg 89]

"What would mother say," at length sobbed the boy.

Mr. Shackelford shivered as with a chill; then said brokenly: "If your mother had lived, child, my first duty would have been to her. Now it is to my country. Neither would your mother, it mattered not what she thought herself, ever have asked me to violate my own conscience."

"Father, let us both stay at home. We can do that, you thinking as you do, and I thinking as I do. We can love each other just the same. We can do good by comforting those who will be stricken; and mother will look down from heaven, and bless us. We cannot control our sympathies, but we can our actions. We can both be truly non-combatants."

"Don't, Fred, don't tempt me," gasped Mr. Shackelford. "My word is given, and a Shackelford never breaks his word. Then I cannot stand idly by, and see my kindred made slaves. I must draw my sword for the right, and the South has the right. Fred, the die is cast. I go in the Confederate army—you to Europe. So say no more."

Fred arose, his face as pale as death, but with a look so determined, so fixed that it seemed as if in a moment the boy had been transformed into a man.

"Father," he asked, "I have always been a good son, obeying you, and never intentionally grieving you, have I not?" [Pg 90]

"You have, Fred, been a good, obedient son, God bless you!"

"Just before mother died," continued Fred, "she called me to her bedside. She told me how my great-grandfather had died on Bunker Hill, and asked me to always be true to my country. She asked me to promise never to raise my hand against the flag. I gave her the promise. You would not have me break that promise, father?"

"No, no, my son! Go to Europe, stay there until the trouble is over."

"She said more, father. Listen, for I believe her words to be prophetic: 'God will never prosper a nation whose chief corner-stone is human slavery.'"

"Stop, Fred, stop, I can't bear it. Your mother did not understand. This war is not waged to perpetuate slavery; it is waged to preserve the rights of the States guaranteed to them by the Constitution."

"Do not deceive yourself, father; slavery has everything to do with it. No State would have thought of seceding if it had not been for slavery. Slavery is the sole, the only cause of the war. It is a poor cause for noble men to give up their lives."

"We will not argue the question," said Mr. Shackelford, pettishly; "you will forget your foolishness in Europe."

"I shall not go to Europe." [Pg 91]

"What!"

"I shall not go to Europe."

"Do you dare to disobey me?"

"I shall not only not go to Europe, but I shall enter the army."

"The army! the army! What army?" asked Mr. Shackelford, dismayed.

"The Union army."

The father staggered as if a knife had pierced his heart. He threw out his hands wildly, and then pressed them to his breast and gasped: "Fred, Fred, you don't mean it!"

"I was never more in earnest in my life."

Mr. Shackelford's feelings underwent a sudden change. His face became purple with rage; love for his son was forgotten.

"Do that," he thundered, "do that, and you are no son of mine. I will disown you, I will cast you out, I will curse you."

"Father," said Fred, in a low tremulous voice, "if part we must, do not let us part in anger. Never have I loved you better than now; you do what you believe to be right; I do what I believe to be right. We both perform our duty as we see it. God will hold the one who blunders blameless. Let us then part in peace."

Mr. Shackelford, with white, drawn face, pointed to the door, and uttered the one word, "Go!"

"Oh, father, father, do not send me away with a curse. See, father," and he turned to his mother's portrait which hung on the wall, "mother is looking down on us; mother, who loved us both so well. How can you account to her that you have turned away her only son with a curse, and for no crime, but the one of loving his country."

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"Boy, boy, have you no mercy that you will not only break my heart, but tear it out by the roots."

"I am the one who asks for mercy, who pleads that you send me not away with a curse."

"Fred, for the sake of your mother, I will not curse you, but I will, if you remain in my sight. Here," and he went to his safe, opened it, and took out a package of money. "Here is \$1,000, take it and Prince, and begone. Go to that man, Nelson, who has seduced you. It is a heavy account I have to settle with him. Go before I forget myself and curse you."

For a moment Fred gazed in his father's face; there was no wrath, nothing but love in his look. Then he took the money and said: "Father, I thank you; I not only thank you, but bless you. May God protect you in the midst of dangers. Not a day shall pass but I shall pray for your safety. Good-bye, father."

He turned and went out.

Mr. Shackelford staggered towards the door. "Fred!" It was the cry of a repentant soul. The boy's footstep echoed outside along the hall, fainter and fainter.

The father groped blindly, as if about to fall.

"Fred, Fred, come back!"

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The outer door closed; his boy was gone.

Mr. Shackelford staggered backward and groaned, as if in mortal agony. Then his eye caught the portrait of his wife looking down on him. Raising his arms beseechingly, he cried: "Oh, Laura! Laura! What have I done? Don't look at me so; I didn't curse him. I would have called him back. My boy! my boy! Oh, God! Oh, God!"

It was with a heavy heart that Fred left the house. As he shut the door, he thought he heard his father call. He stopped and listened, but hearing nothing, he went on. Getting his horse, he rode to Danville. His little sister was visiting at Judge Pennington's, and he wanted to see her, as well as to bid farewell to his uncle, and see Calhoun. He had no idea but that his uncle would forbid him the house when he heard of his being cast off by his father.

He found Judge Pennington at home, and frankly told him what had happened, shielding his father as much as possible, and not sparing himself.

The judge went into a fearful passion.

"Why, why, you young jackanapes," he roared; "it's a horse-whipping you want, and you would get it if you were a boy of mine! Disowned you, did he? And drove you away? Well, he is a fool, too. A good tanning is what you need, and, by Jove! I have a mind to give it to you," and he shook his cane threateningly. "Going to join the Yankee army, are you? Join and be hanged, you idiot! A Shackelford in the Yankee army! I'll, I'll—" but the judge was too angry to say more.

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"Now, uncle, don't get in a rage; it's no use. My mind is fully made up. I shall join the Union army in some capacity."

"Get out of my sight, you young idiot, you!" thundered the judge.

Just then Calhoun came in. "What's the row?" he asked, looking from one to the other.

"Row, row!" sputtered the judge. "If you were as big a fool as your cousin there, I would skin you alive."

"Glad you have at last come to a full appreciation of my worth," coolly replied Calhoun. "For

years I have had the virtues of my cousin held up to me as a shining mark to follow. Now, I find I am saving my skin by surpassing him in the wisdom of this world. Congratulate me, dear father."

"Why, this fool says he is going to enlist in the Yankee army," foamed the Judge, pointing at Fred.

"And this fool says he is going to enlist in the Southern army," answered Calhoun, pointing to himself.

The judge was sobered instantly. "Calhoun, you don't mean it?" he asked.

"Yes, I do mean it," stoutly replied the boy. "Why not? Haven't you been talking for years of the rights of the South? Are you not doing everything possible to take Kentucky out of the Union? Haven't you encouraged the enlistment of soldiers for the South? Then why not I? Why am I better than others? Father, I don't want to quarrel with you as Fred has with his father, but I am going into the Southern army, and I hope with your blessing."

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The judge was completely sobered. Having his son go to war was so much different from having some one else's son go.

"Do not do anything rash, my son," he said to Calhoun. "When the time comes if you must go, I will see what can be done for you. As for you, Fred," he said, "you stay here with Calhoun until I return. I am going to see your father," and calling for his horse, the judge rode away.

It was afternoon before the judge came back. Calling the boys into a room for a private interview, he said: "Fred, I have been to see your father, and he is very much chagrined over your disobedience. His fierce anger is gone, and in its place a deep sorrow. He does not ask you to give up your principle, but he does ask that you do not enter the Federal army. You are much too young, to say nothing of other considerations. You should accept his proposition and go to Europe. We have come to this conclusion, that if you will go I will send Calhoun with you. That will be an even stand off. Calhoun wants to enter the Southern army, you the Northern, so neither section loses anything. You have both done your duty to your section, and both will have the pleasure and advantage of a university course in Europe. What do you say, boys?"

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"That it is a mean underhanded way to prevent me from entering the army," flared up Calhoun. "I hope Fred will not accept."

"Be careful, boy," said the judge, getting red in the face. "You will not find me as lenient as Mr. Shackelford has been with Fred. You will go where I say."

Calhoun's temper was up, and there would have been a scene right then and there if Fred had not interfered.

"Uncle," said he, "there is no use of Calhoun and you disagreeing over this matter. I shall not go to Europe; so far as I am concerned, it is settled. As for Calhoun entering the army, you must settle that between you."

Calhoun pressed Fred's hand, and whispered, "Good for you, Fred; you have got me out of a bad scrape. I think father will consent to my going in the army now."

The judge stared at the boys, and then sputtered: "Both of you ought to be soundly thrashed. But if Fred's mind is made up, it is no use pursuing the matter further."

"I am firmly resolved," answered Fred.

"Then," answered the judge, "I will say no more, only, Fred, my house is open to you. When you get sick of your foolish experiment you can have a home here. Your father refuses to see you unless you consent to obey."

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"I thank you, uncle," said Fred, in a low voice, "but I do not think I shall trouble you much."

In justice to Mr. Shackelford, it must be said it was by his request that Judge Pennington made this offer to Fred. Mr. Shackelford's heart had softened towards his son, and he did not wish to cast him off entirely. But the destiny of father and son was to be more closely interwoven than either thought.

Fred remained at his uncle's until the next day. He and Calhoun slept together or rather occupied the same bed, for they had too much talking to do to sleep. Both boys were romantic and fond of adventure. Both longed for the fierce excitement of war. They did not talk as enemies. They did not realize that they might face each other on the field of battle. They talked of their oath, and again promised to keep it to the letter.

They were like two brothers, each going on a long journey in different directions.

Their parting the next morning was most affectionate, and when Fred rode away he turned his horse's head in the direction of Camp Dick Robinson.

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## CHAPTER VI. THE FIGHT FOR THE ARMS.

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The soldiers that Nelson had gathered at Camp Dick Robinson were a nondescript set, not only in clothing, but in arms. Squirrel rifles and shotguns were the principal weapons. When he first began organizing his troops, Nelson had ordered guns and ammunition from the Federal government, and his impetuous spirit chafed at their non-arrival. Consequently he was not in the best of humor, and was mentally cursing the government for its exceeding slowness when Fred rode up to his headquarters.

Fred's ride had been anything but a pleasant one. That he had taken a desperate step for a boy of his age, he well knew. He passionately loved his father, and the thought that he had been disowned for disobedience was a bitter one. He strove to fight back the lump that would rise in his throat; and in spite of all his efforts to keep them back, the tears would well up in his eyes. But he never faltered in his determination. He had given himself, heart and soul, to the cause of the Union, and had no thought of turning back. Even if Nelson did not receive him, if it came to the worst he would enlist as a private soldier. Serve the Union he would.

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"A boy to see me," snapped Nelson, when an orderly reported that a boy was outside and wished to see him. "Tell him to go to the —."

The orderly reported to Fred Nelson's kind wish.

"Tell him," replied Fred, rather indignantly, "that Fred Shackelford wishes to see him."

The orderly soon returned, and ushered Fred into the presence of the irate officer.

"It is you, Fred, is it?" said Nelson, as our hero entered and saluted him. "I am sorry I told you to go where I did, but the truth is I am out of sorts. Have you any news to cheer me up?"

"News, General, yes; and quite important, if you do not already know it. But first," continued Fred, glancing at the star which glistened on Nelson's shoulder, "let me congratulate you. I see you are no longer Lieutenant Nelson of the navy, but General Nelson of the army."

"Yes," replied Nelson, with a twinkle in his eye, "I now command on land; so, young man, be careful how you try to ride over me."

Fred laughed as he thought of his first meeting with Nelson, and replied: "I shall never so forget myself again, General."

"Now," continued Nelson, "give me the news. You said you had something important to communicate."

"So I have if you are not already informed. You are expecting arms for your men, are you not?"

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"I am, and I am all out of patience because I do not receive them. They should have been here days ago. But what do you know about this?"

"I know that you will never receive them, if the friends of the South can prevent it; and that they are taking active measures to do."

"Tell me all about it," said Nelson, manifesting the greatest interest.

Fred then related all that he had heard at the meeting which took place at his father's house. Nelson's face grew very grave. Then he asked, "Where did you learn of all this?"

"Please do not ask me," replied Fred, in a low voice. "I can only say the information is absolutely correct."

"Never mind," said Nelson, kindly. "I think I understand. Your news is, indeed, important. The enemy must have spies watching every movement. You have again rendered me important service, Fred. How I wish you could take up with that offer I made you."

"That is what I have come for, General, if you will accept my poor services."

"What! has your father consented?" asked Nelson, in surprise.

Fred colored, and then replied: "I have no home; my father has cast me out."

"For what?"

"I had my choice to accompany him in the Confederate army or to go to Europe to attend some university. I refused to do either."

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Nelson knitted his brows a moment as if in thought, and then replied: "You were certainly right in refusing the first; I wonder at your father making you the proposition. The last was a very reasonable proposition, and a wise one. You should have accepted it. I am afraid I am to blame for your folly—for such it is. The offer I made you appealed to your boyish imagination and love of adventure, and caused you to go against the wishes of your father. Four or five years at some foreign university is a chance not to be idly thrown away, to say nothing about obeying the wishes of your father. As much as I would like your services, Fred, be reconciled to your father; go to Europe, and keep out of this infernal war. It will cost the lives of thousands of just such noble youths as you before it ends; and," he continued, with a tinge of sadness in his tone, "I sometimes think I shall never live to see it end. I am surrounded by hundreds of enemies who are hungering for my life."

"Your advice, General, is most kindly given," answered Fred, "and I sincerely thank you for what you have said; but it is impossible for me to accept it. It is all over between father and myself. He gave me \$1,000 and my horse, and told me to go my way. I love my father, but if I should now go back after what has passed, he would despise me, as I would despise myself. Father is the soul of honor; if I should play the craven after all that I have said, he would not only despise, but loathe me. Now I can hope that time may once more unite us. Be assured that though his heart may be filled with anger towards me now, if I prove myself worthy, he will yet be proud of his son."

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Nelson's heart was touched. He grasped Fred's hand, and exclaimed with much feeling: "You must have a noble father, or he could not have such a son. Yes, Fred, I will take you. Consider yourself attached to my staff as confidential scout and messenger. I do not wish you to enlist; you will be more free to act if you are not an enlisted soldier."

Fred warmly thanked the general for his expression of confidence, and announced himself as ready for orders.

Nelson smiled at his ardor, and then said: "I believe you stated that that meeting is to take place in Scott county the 17th?"

"Yes, sir."

"This is the 14th. You can make it all right. How would you like to go there, and see what you can learn?"

Fred's eyes kindled. "I can make it all right, but I am afraid some of them may know me."

"We will fix that all right," responded Nelson.

The next morning, a boy with jet black hair and hands and face stained brown rode away from General Nelson's headquarters. It would have been a close observer indeed that would have taken that boy for Fred Shackelford.

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It was on the evening of the 16th that Fred reached Georgetown. He found the little city full of excited partisans of the South. At the meeting the next day many fierce speeches were made. The extremists were for at once calling out the State Guards, and marching on Camp Dick Robinson, and capturing it at the point of the bayonet. But more pacific advice prevailed. Governor Magoffin was instructed to protest in the strongest language to President Lincoln, and to call on him at once to disband the troops at Dick Robinson. As for allowing the arms to be shipped, it was resolved that it should be prevented at all hazards.

When Fred arrived at Georgetown, he found at the hotel that he could procure a room next to the one occupied by Major Hockoday, and believing that the major's room might be used for secret consultations of the more violent partisans of the South, he engaged it, hoping that in some manner he might become possessed of some of their secrets. While the room engaged by Major Hockoday was unoccupied he deftly made a hole through the plastering in his room, and then with the aid of a sharpened stick made a very small opening through the plastering into the next room. He then rolled up a sheet of paper in the shape of a trumpet. By placing the small end of the paper in the small opening, and putting his ear to the larger end, he was enabled to hear much that was said, especially if everything was still and the conversation was animated. The result exceeded his most sanguine expectations. After the close of the public meeting, a number of the more prominent actors gathered in Major Hockoday's room.

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A heated discussion arose as to how Kentucky could the most quickly throw off her neutrality, and join her fortune to that of the Confederacy.

"Gentlemen," said Major Hockoday, "I believe every one present is a true son of the South, therefore I can speak to you freely. The first thing, as we all agree, is to prevent the shipment of these arms. Then if Lincoln refuses to disband the troops at Dick Robinson, the program is this: You all know that General Buckner has been in Washington for some time talking neutrality. In a measure he has gained the confidence of Lincoln, and has nearly received the promise that no Federal troops from other States will be ordered into the State as long as the Confederate troops keep out. Buckner has secretly gone to Richmond, where he will accept a commission from the Confederate government. He will then come back by way of the South, and issue a proclamation to loyal Kentuckians to join his standard. The State Guards should join him to a man. Then, if Lincoln refuses to disband the soldiers at Dick Robinson, the Confederate government will occupy the State with troops, claiming and justly, too, that the Federal government has not respected the neutrality of the State. The coming of the Confederate troops will fire the heart of every true Kentuckian, and all over the State Confederates will spring to arms, and the half-armed ragamuffins of Nelson will be scattered like a flock of sheep. By a dash Louisville can be occupied, and Kentucky will be where she belongs—in the Southern Confederacy. What think you, gentlemen, of the program?"

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A wild cheer burst from those present. Strong men embraced each other with tears streaming down their cheeks. They believed with their whole hearts and souls that the South was right, and that Kentucky's place was with her Southern sisters, and now that there seemed to be a possibility of this, their enthusiasm knew no bounds.

As for Fred, he drew a long breath. He knew that he had gained information of the greatest value to the Federal cause.

"It is time for me to be going," he said to himself. "Nelson must know of this as soon as possible."

As he passed out of the room, he came face to face with Major Hockoday.

The major stared at him a moment, and then roughly asked: "What is your name, and what are you doing here?"

"I see no reason why I should report to you," replied Fred. "I am a guest at this hotel, and am minding my own business. I wish I could say as much for you," and he walked away.

The major looked after him, his face red with anger, and muttered: "Strange! but if that boy didn't have black hair and was not dark, I should swear it was Fred Shackelford. I must find out more about him." [Pg 106]

But a gentleman came along just then and engaged him in conversation. As soon as he could disengage himself, the major examined the hotel register to find who occupied room 13. Opposite that number he found written in a bold, boyish hand:

"F. Carrington.... Louisville."

Fred's full name was Fred Carrington Shackelford, and he had registered his given names only. Major Hockoday made careful inquiry about the boy, but no one knew him. He had paid his bill, called for his horse, and rode away. More the people could not tell. Major Hockoday was troubled, why he hardly knew; but somehow he felt as if the presence of that black-haired boy boded no good to their cause.

All of this time Fred was riding swiftly towards Lexington.

General Nelson listened to his report not only with attention, but with astonishment.

"Fred," said he, "you are a marvel; you are worth a brigade of soldiers. I have been reporting all the time to the authorities at Washington that Buckner was heart and soul with the South; but they wouldn't believe me. Neither will they believe me now, but I can act on your information."

"Fred," continued the general, walking rapidly up and down the room, "I sometimes think there is a set of dunderheads at Washington. They think they know everything, and don't know anything. If Kentucky is saved, it will be saved by the loyal men of the State. Just think of their listening to Buckner instead of me," and the general worked himself into a violent rage, and it took him some time to cool off. Then he said: "I will try once more to hurry up those arms. I will send you tomorrow to Cincinnati as a special messenger. I will write what you have told me, and I want you to impress it on General Anderson's mind. Tell him to hurry, hurry, or it will be too late." [Pg 107]

The next morning Fred was on his way back to Nicholasville. From there he took the train for Cincinnati, at which place he arrived in due time. He delivered his dispatches to General Anderson, who, after reading them, looked at him kindly and said:

"General Nelson sends a young messenger, but he tells me of the great service you have performed and the valuable information you have gathered. It is certainly wonderful for so young a boy. Tell me more about it."

Fred modestly related what had occurred at Georgetown.

General Anderson listened attentively, and when Fred had finished, said: "You certainly deserve the credit General Nelson has given you. The information you received is of the greatest importance, and will be at once forwarded to Washington. In the mean time, we must do the best we can. General Nelson may think I am slow, but there is so much to do—so much to do, and so little to do with," and the general sighed. Fred observed him with interest, for he realized that he was talking to the hero who had defended Fort Sumter to the last. [Pg 108]

The general was broken in health, and looked sick and careworn, and not the man to assume the great burden he was bearing. It was with joy that Fred heard that the arms would be shipped in a day or two. But when the train carrying them was ready to start, Fred saw, to his amazement, that it was not to be guarded.

"That train will never get through," he thought. "It is funny how they do things."

Fred was right; the enemies of the government were not idle. Spies were all around, and they knew when the train was to start to a minute, and the news was flashed ahead. At a small station in Harrison county the train was stopped by a large mob, who tore up the track in front, making it impossible for it to proceed. There was nothing to do but to take the train back to Cincinnati, and with it a communication to the officials of the road that if they attempted to run the train again the whole track would be torn up from Covington to Lexington.

The railway officials, thoroughly frightened, begged General Anderson not to attempt to run the train again. The Southern sympathizers were jubilant over their success, and boldly declared the arms would never be shipped.

As for Fred, he was completely disgusted, and expressed himself so. [Pg 109]

"Well, my boy, what would you do?" asked General Anderson, smiling.

"Do! do!" answered Fred, excitedly. "I would send a regiment and a battery on a train ahead of the one carrying the arms, and if the mob interfered I would sweep them from the face of the



earth."

"Well said, my lad," replied Anderson, his face lighting up and his eyes kindling. "I feel that way myself, but a soldier must obey orders, and unfortunately I have different orders."

"What is the next move?" asked Fred.

"I have orders to load them on a steamboat, and send them up the Kentucky River to Hickman Bridge."

Fred looked his disgust.

"You don't seem pleased," said the general.

"Pleased!" blurted out Fred; "excuse me, General, but it is all foolishness. Have I not heard those fellows plotting? The boat will be stopped the same as the train."

The general turned away, but Fred heard him say, as if to himself: "I am afraid it will be so, but the government persists in tying our hands as far as Kentucky is concerned."

General Anderson's position was certainly an anomalous one—the commander of a department, and yet not allowed to move troops into it.

According to his orders, Fred took passage on the boat with the arms, but he felt it would never be permitted to reach its destination. His fears proved only too true. When the boat reached the confines of Owen county they found a great mob congregated on the banks of the river. [Pg 110]

"Turn back! turn back!" was the cry, "or we will burn the boat." The captain tried to parley, but he was met with curses and jeers.

Fred went on shore, and mingling with the mob, soon learned there was a conspiracy on the part of the more daring to burn the boat, even if it did turn back. Hurrying on board, Fred told the captain his only salvation was to turn back at once, and to put on all steam. He did so, and the boat and cargo were saved.

Once more the Confederate sympathizers went wild with rejoicing, and the Union men were correspondingly depressed.

But the boat made an unexpected move, as far as the enemy were concerned. Instead of proceeding back to Cincinnati, it turned down the Ohio to Louisville. Here the arms were hastily loaded on the cars, and started for Lexington. Fred was hurried on ahead to apprise General Nelson of their coming. Fred delivered his message to the general, and then said: "The train will never get through; it will be stopped at Lexington, if not before."

"If the train ever reaches Lexington I will have the arms," grimly replied Nelson. "Lexington is in my jurisdiction; there will be no fooling, no parleying with traitors, if the train reaches that city."

Then he turned to Colonel Thomas E. Bramlette, and said: "Colonel, take a squadron of cavalry, proceed to Lexington, and when that train comes, take charge of it and guard it to Nicholasville. I will have wagons there to transport the arms here." [Pg 111]

Colonel Bramlette saluted, and replied: "General, I will return with those arms or not at all."

The general smiled; he understood.

"May I accompany the colonel?" asked Fred.

"Certainly, if you wish," answered Nelson. "You have stayed by the arms so far, and it is no more than right that you should be in at the finish."

The enemy was alert, and the news reached Lexington that the train loaded with the arms and ammunition for the soldiers at Dick Robinson was coming.

Instantly the little city was aflame with excitement. The State Guards under the command of John H. Morgan gathered at their armory with the avowed intention of seizing the train by force. John C. Breckinridge made a speech to the excited citizens, saying the train must be stopped, if blood flowed.

In the midst of this excitement Colonel Bramlette with his cavalry arrived. This added fuel to the already intense excitement.

"Drive the Lincoln hirelings from the city!" shouted Breckinridge, and the excited crowd took up the cry.

A demand was at once drawn up, signed by Breckinridge, Morgan and many others, and sent to Colonel Bramlette, requesting him to at once withdraw from the city, or blood would be shed. [Pg 112]

Colonel Bramlette's lips curled in scorn as he read the demand, and turning to the messenger who brought it, said: "Go tell the gentlemen they shall have my answer shortly."

Writing an answer, he turned to Fred, saying: "Here, my boy, for what you have done, you richly deserve the honor of delivering this message."

Right proudly did Fred bear himself as he delivered his message to Breckinridge. Major Hockoday, who was standing by Breckinridge, scowled and muttered, "It's that — Shackelford

boy."

Captain Conway heard him, and seeing Fred, with a fearful oath, sprang towards him with uplifted hand. He had not seen Fred since that night he plunged from the train. His adventure had become known, and he had to submit to any amount of chaffing at being outwitted by a boy; and his brother officers took great delight in calling out: "Look out, Conway, here comes that detective from Danville!"

This made Captain Conway hate Fred with all the ardor of his small soul, and seeing the boy, made him so forget himself as to attack him.

But a revolver flashed in his face, and a firm voice said: "Not so fast, Captain."

The irate captain was seized and dragged away, and when the tumult had subsided Breckinridge said: "I am sorry to see the son of my friend, Colonel Shackelford, engaged in such business; but it is the message that he brings that concerns us." [Pg 113]

He then read the following laconic note from Colonel Bramlette:

LEXINGTON, Aug. —, 1861.

TO HON. JOHN C. BRECKINRIDGE, JOHN H. MORGAN AND OTHERS.

Gentlemen:—I shall take those arms, and if a drop of Union blood be shed, I will not leave a single Secessionist alive in Lexington.

THOMAS E. BRAMLETTE,  
*Colonel Commanding.*

There was a breathless silence; faces of brave men grew pale. There were oaths and muttered curses, but the mob began to melt away. The victory was won.

The train arrived, and Colonel Bramlette took charge of it without trouble. Just as the troop of cavalry was leaving Lexington, a boy came out and thrust a note into Fred's hand. He opened it and read:

TO FRED SHACKELFORD:

Boy as you are, I propose to shoot you on sight, so be on your guard.

CAPT. P. C. CONWAY.

Fred smiled, and handed the note to Colonel Bramlette, who read it and said: "Fred, you will have to look out for that fellow."

The journey back to Dick Robinson was without incident. The long looked for arms and ammunition had come. What rejoicing there was! What wild hurrahs! Plenty of arms and ammunition! It meant everything to those men surrounded as they were with enemies on every side. In the midst of the rejoicing, Fred was not forgotten. He and Colonel Bramlette were the heroes of the hour. The fight for the possession of the arms was over. General Nelson had won. [Pg 114]

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## CHAPTER VII. THE FOILING OF A PLOT.

[Pg 115]

Camp Dick Robinson was all excitement. General Nelson, the man of iron nerve, who, in the face of opposition from friends, the most direful threats from foes, saved Central Kentucky to the Union, had been relieved of his command and assigned to another field of labor. The new commander to take his place was General George H. Thomas.

To Fred the news that *his* general, as he had come to look upon Nelson, had been assigned to another command, was anything but pleasing. "But where Nelson goes, there will I go," was his thought. "After all," he said, bitterly, "what does it matter where I go. I am homeless and an outcast."

General Thomas, like Nelson, was a heavy, thickset man, but there the likeness ended. Thomas never lost his temper, he never swore, he never complained, he never got excited. He was always cool and collected, even under the most trying circumstances. He afterwards became known to his soldiers as "Pap Thomas," and was sometimes called "Slow-Trot Thomas," for the reason he was never known to ride his horse off a trot, even in the most desperate battle. [Pg 116]

When General Thomas reported to Camp Dick Robinson he and Nelson held a long consultation. Finally Fred was called into their presence.

"This, General, is Fred Shackelford, the boy of whom I spoke," said Nelson.

Fred saluted the new commander, and then respectfully remained standing, awaiting orders.

"Fred," continued General Nelson, "General Thomas and I have been discussing you, and I have been telling him how valuable your services have been. I fully expected to take you with me to my

new command, but both General Thomas and myself feel that just at present your services are very much needed here. This camp is very important, and it is surrounded with so many dangers that we need to take every precaution. You are not only well acquainted with the country, but you seem to have a peculiar way of getting at the enemy's secrets no other one possesses. There is no doubt but you are needed here more than at Maysville, where I am going. But we have concluded to leave it to you, whether you go or stay. You may be sure I shall be pleased to have you go with me. What do you say, Fred?"

Fred looked at General Thomas, and thought he had never seen a finer, grander face; but he had grown very fond of the fiery Nelson, so he replied:

"General Nelson, you know my feelings towards you. I appreciate your kindness. If I consulted simply my own wishes I should go with you. But you have pointed out to me my duty. I am very grateful to General Thomas for his feelings towards me. I shall stay as long as I am needed here, and serve the general to the best of my ability."

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"Bravely said, Fred, bravely said," responded Nelson. "You will find General Thomas a more agreeable commander than myself."

"There, General, that will do," said Thomas quietly.

So it was settled that Fred was to stay for the present with General Thomas.

The next day Generals Thomas and Nelson went to Cincinnati to confer with General Anderson, and Fred was invited to accompany them.

Once more he was asked to lay before General Anderson the full text of the conversation he had overheard at Georgetown. This he did.

"What do you think, General?" asked Thomas, who had listened very closely to the recital.

"I am afraid," replied General Anderson, "that the authorities at Washington do not fully realize the condition of affairs in Kentucky. Neither have they any conception of the intrigue going on to take the State out of the Union. No doubt, General Buckner has been playing a sharp game at Washington. He seems to have completely won the confidence of the President. It is for this reason so many of our requests pass unheeded. If what young Shackelford has heard is true, General Buckner is now in Richmond. He is there to accept a command from the Confederate government, and is to return here to organize the disloyal forces of Kentucky to force the State out of the Union. Now, in the face of these facts, what do you think of this," and the general read the following:

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EXECUTIVE MANSION, Aug. 17th, 1861.

HON. SECRETARY OF WAR.

My Dear Sir:—Unless there be reason to the contrary, not known to me, make out a commission for Simon B. Buckner as a Brigadier-General of volunteers. It is to be put in the hands of General Anderson, and delivered to General Buckner, or not, at the discretion of General Anderson. Of course, it is to remain a secret unless and until the commission is delivered.

A. LINCOLN.

During the reading, General Thomas sat with immovable countenance, betraying neither approbation nor disgust. But Nelson exploded like a volcano.

"Great God!" he roared, "are they all idiots at Washington? Buckner a Federal general! Oh! the fools, the fools! Give him his commission, Anderson, give him his commission, and then let Lincoln invite Jeff Davis to a seat in the cabinet. It would be as sensible," and then he poured forth such a volley of oaths that what he really meant to say became obscure.

When he had blown himself out, General Thomas quietly said: "Now, General, that you have relieved yourself, let us again talk business."

"I don't believe you would change countenance, Thomas, if Beauregard was placed in command of the Federal armies," replied Nelson, pettishly.

"Perhaps not," calmly replied Thomas. "But Central Kentucky needed just such fire and enthusiasm as you possess to save it from the clutches of the rebels, and if I can only complete the grand work you have begun I shall be content, and not worry over whom the President recommends for office."

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"You will complete it, General; my work could not be left in better hands," replied Nelson, completely mollified.

In a few moments Nelson excused himself, as he had other duties to perform.

Looking after him, General Anderson said: "I am afraid Nelson's temper and unruly tongue will get him into serious trouble yet. But he has done what I believe no other man could have done as well. To his efforts, more than to any other one man, do we owe our hold on Kentucky."

"His lion-like courage and indomitable energy will cover a multitude of faults," was the reply of

General Thomas.

Fred returned to Camp Dick Robinson with General Thomas, and he soon found that the general was fully as energetic as Nelson, though in a more quiet way. The amount of work that General Thomas dispatched was prodigious. Every little detail was looked after, but there was no hurry, no confusion. The camp began to assume a more military aspect, and the men were brought under more thorough discipline.

September saw great changes in affairs in Kentucky. According to the program which Fred had heard outlined at Georgetown, the Confederates began their aggressive movements. Hickman, on the Mississippi River, was occupied by the Confederate army under General Polk on the 5th. As swift as a stroke of lightning, General Grant, who was in command at Cairo, Illinois, retaliated by occupying Paducah on the 6th. General Polk then seized the important post of Columbus on the 7th. A few days afterward General Buckner moved north from Tennessee, and occupied Bowling Green. At the same time General Zollicoffer invaded the State from Cumberland Gap. All three of these Confederate generals issued stirring addresses to all true Kentuckians to rally to their support. It was confidently expected by the Confederate authorities that there would be a general uprising throughout the State in favor of the South. But they were grievously disappointed; the effect was just the opposite. The Legislature, then in session at Frankfort, passed a resolution commanding the Governor to issue a proclamation ordering the Confederates at once to evacuate the State. Governor Magoffin, much to his chagrin, was obliged to issue the proclamation. A few days later the Legislature voted that the State should raise a force of 40,000 men, and that this force be tendered the United States for the purpose of putting down rebellion. An invitation was also extended to General Anderson to assume command of all these forces. Thus, to their chagrin, the Confederates saw their brightest hopes perish. Instead of their getting possession of the State, even neutrality had perished. The State was irrevocably committed to the Union, but the people were as hopelessly divided as ever. It was to be a battle to the death between the opposing factions.

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Shortly after his return to Dick Robinson, Fred began to long to hear from home, to know how those he loved fared; so he asked General Thomas for a day or two of absence. It was readily granted, and soon he was on his way to Danville. He found only his Uncle and Aunt Pennington at home. His father had gone South to accept the colonelcy of a regiment, and was with Buckner. His cousin Calhoun had accompanied Colonel Shackelford South, having the promise of a position on the staff of some general officer. His little sister Bessie had been sent to Cincinnati to a convent school. The adherents of the opposing factions were more bitter toward each other than ever, and were ready to spring at each other's throats at the slightest provocation. Neighbors were estranged, families were broken, nevermore to be reunited; and over all there seemed to be hanging the black shadow of coming sorrow. Kentucky was not only to be deluged in blood, but with the hot burning tears of those left behind to groan and weep.

Fred was received coldly by his uncle and aunt. "You know," said Judge Pennington, "my house is open to you, but I cannot help feeling the keenest sorrow over your conduct."

"I am sorry, very sorry, uncle, if what I have done has grieved you," answered Fred.

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"No one can be really sorry who persists in his course," answered the judge. "Fred, rather—yes, a thousand times—had I rather see you dead than doing as you are. If my brave boy falls," and his voice trembled as he spoke, "I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that he fell in a glorious cause. But you, Fred, you——" his voice broke; he could say no more.

Fred was deeply moved. "Uncle," he softly said, "I admit you are honest and sincere in your belief. Why can you not admit as much for me? Why is it a disgrace to fight for the old flag, to defend the Union that Washington and Jefferson helped form, and that Jackson defended?"

"The wrong," answered Judge Pennington, "consists in trying to coerce sovereign States. The Constitution gives any State the right to withdraw from the Union at pleasure. The South is fighting for her constitutional rights——"

"And for human slavery," added Fred.

The judge's cheeks flamed with anger.

"Look out, Fred," he exclaimed, choking with passion, "lest I drive you from my door, despite my promise to your father. Don't go too far. You are not only fighting against the South, but you are becoming a detested Abolitionist—a nigger worshiper."

Fred felt his manhood aroused, but controlling his passion he calmly replied:

"Uncle, I will not displease you longer with my presence. The time may come when you may need my help, instead of my needing yours. If so, do not hesitate to call on me. I still love my kindred as well as ever; they are as near to me as ever. There is no dishonor in a man loyally following what he honestly believes to be right. I believe you and my father to be wrong—that your sympathies have led you terribly astray; but in my sight you are none the less true, noble, honest men. As for me, I answer for myself. I am for the Union, now and forever. Good-bye, uncle! May God keep all of those we love from harm," and he rode away.

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Judge Pennington gazed after him with a troubled look, and then murmured to himself: "After all, a fine boy, a grand boy! A Kentuckian all over! Would that he were on the right side!"

Upon Fred's return to headquarters he found General Thomas in deep consultation with his staff. Circulars had been scattered all over the State and notices printed in newspapers calling for a meeting of the State Guards at Lexington on the 20th. Ostensibly the object of the meeting was to be for a week's drill, and for the purpose of better preparing the Guards to protect the interests of the State. But General Thomas believed there was a hidden meaning in the call; that it was conceived in deceit, and that it meant treachery. What this treachery was he did not know, and it was this point he was discussing with his staff when Fred entered. The sight of the boy brought a smile to his face.

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"Ah, my boy!" he exclaimed, "I am glad to see you. We have a hard problem; it is one rather in your line. I trust you can solve it."

He then laid the circular before Fred, and expressed his opinion that it contained a hidden meaning. "There is no end to those fellows' plottings," he said, "and we are still weak, very weak here. With General Zollicoffer moving this way from Cumberland Gap, it would not take much of a force in our rear to cause a great disaster. In fact, a hostile force at Lexington, even if small, would be a serious matter."

Fred read the circular carefully, as if reading between the lines, and then asked:

"It is the real meaning of this call that you wish?"

"By all means, if it can be obtained," answered the general.

"I will try to obtain it," replied Fred, quietly. "General you may not hear from me for two or three days."

"May success attend you, my boy," replied the general, kindly, and with this he dismissed his staff.

"It has come to a pretty pass," said a dapper young lieutenant of the staff to an older member, "that the general prefers a boy to one of us," and he drew himself proudly up, as if to say, "Now, if the general had detailed me, there might have been some hopes of success."

The older member smiled, and answered: "I think it just as well, Lieutenant, that he chose the boy. I don't think either you or me fitted for that kind of work."

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The lieutenant sniffed and walked off.

Again a black-haired, dark-skinned boy left headquarters at Dick Robinson, this time for Lexington. Arriving there, Fred took a room at the leading hotel, registering as Charles Danford, Cincinnati, thinking it best to take an entirely fictitious name. He soon learned that the leading Southern sympathizers of the city were in the habit of meeting in a certain room at the hotel. He kept very quiet, for there was one man in Lexington he did not care to meet, and that man was Major Hockoday. He knew that the major would recognize him as the boy he met at Georgetown, and that meant the defeat of his whole scheme. Fred's first step was to make friends with the chamber maid, a comely mulatto girl. This he did with a bit of flattery and a generous tip. By adroit questioning, he learned that the girl had charge of the room in which the meetings of the conspirators were held.

Could she in any manner secrete him in the room during one of the meetings?

The girl took alarm. "No, youn' massa, no!" she replied, trembling.

"Not for five dollars?"

"Not fo' fiv' 'undred," answered the girl. "Massa kill me, if he foun' it out."

Fred saw that she could not be bribed; he would have to try a new tack. "See here, Mary," he asked, "you would like to be free, would you not, just like a white girl?"

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"Yes, massa, I woul' like dat."

"You have heard of President Lincoln, have you not?"

The girl's eyes lit up with a sudden fire. "Yes, Massa Linkun good; he want to free we 'uns. All de niggers talkin' 'bout dat."

"Mary, I am a friend of Lincoln. One of his great men sent me here. The men who meet in that room are his enemies. They want to kill him."

The girl's eyes opened wide with terror.

"I am here trying to find out their plans, so we can keep them from killing Mr. Lincoln. Mary, you must help me, or you will be blamed for what may happen, and you will never be free."

The girl began to cry. "Massa will whip me to death, if he foun' it out," she blubbered.

"Your master will never find it out, even if I am discovered, for I will never tell on you."

"Dat so, massa?"

"Yes; I will swear it on the Bible."

Like most of her race, the girl was very superstitious, and had great reverence for the Bible. She

went and brought one, and with his hand on the book Fred took a most solemn oath never to betray her—no, not if he was torn to pieces with red-hot pincers.

Along toward night she came and whispered to Fred that she had been told to place the room in order. There was, she said, but one place to hide, and that was behind a large sofa, which stood across one corner of the room. It was a perilous hiding place, but Fred resolved to risk it. "They can but kill me," thought he, "and I had almost as soon die as fail."

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It was getting dark when Mary unlocked the door of the room and let Fred slip in. He found that by lying close to the sofa, he might escape detection, though one should glance over the top.

The minutes passed like hours to the excited boy. The slightest noise startled him, and he found himself growing nervous, and in spite of all his efforts, a slight tremor shook his limbs. At last he heard foot-falls along the hall, the door was unlocked, and some one entered the room. It was the landlord, who lit the gas, looked carefully around, and went out. Soon the room began to fill. Fred's nervousness was all gone; but his heart beat so loudly that he thought it must be heard. It was a notable gathering of men distinguished not only in State but national affairs. Chief among them was John C. Breckinridge, as knightly and courteous as ever; then there were Colonel Humphrey Marshall, John H. Morgan, Colonel Preston, and a score of others. These men had gathered for the purpose of dragging Kentucky out of the Union over the vote of her citizens, and in spite of her loyal Legislature. In their zeal they threw to the winds their own beloved doctrine of State rights, and would force Kentucky into the Southern Confederacy whether she wanted to go or not. Yet they were men of the highest character. They believed the South was right, that it was their duty to defend her, and that any means were lawful to bring about the desired end.

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Fred, as he lay in his hiding place, hardly dared to breathe. Once his heart ceased to beat when he heard Morgan say: "There is room behind that sofa for one to hide."

Colonel Marshall glanced behind it, and said: "There is no one there."

Then they commenced to talk, and Fred lay and listened to the whole plot. The State Guards were to assemble, professedly, as the circular stated, for muster and drill, but really for one of the most daring of *coups-de-main*.

The State arsenal at Frankfort was to be taken by surprise, and the arms secured. The loyal Legislature was then to be dispersed at the point of the bayonet, a provisional Legislature organized, and the State voted out of the Union. The force was then to attack Camp Dick Robinson, in conjunction with General Zollicoffer, who was to move up from Cumberland Gap; and between the two forces it was thought the camp would fall an easy prey. In the mean time, Buckner was to make a dash for Louisville from Bowling Green. If he failed to take it by surprise, all the forces were to join and capture it, thus placing the whole State in the control of the Confederates.

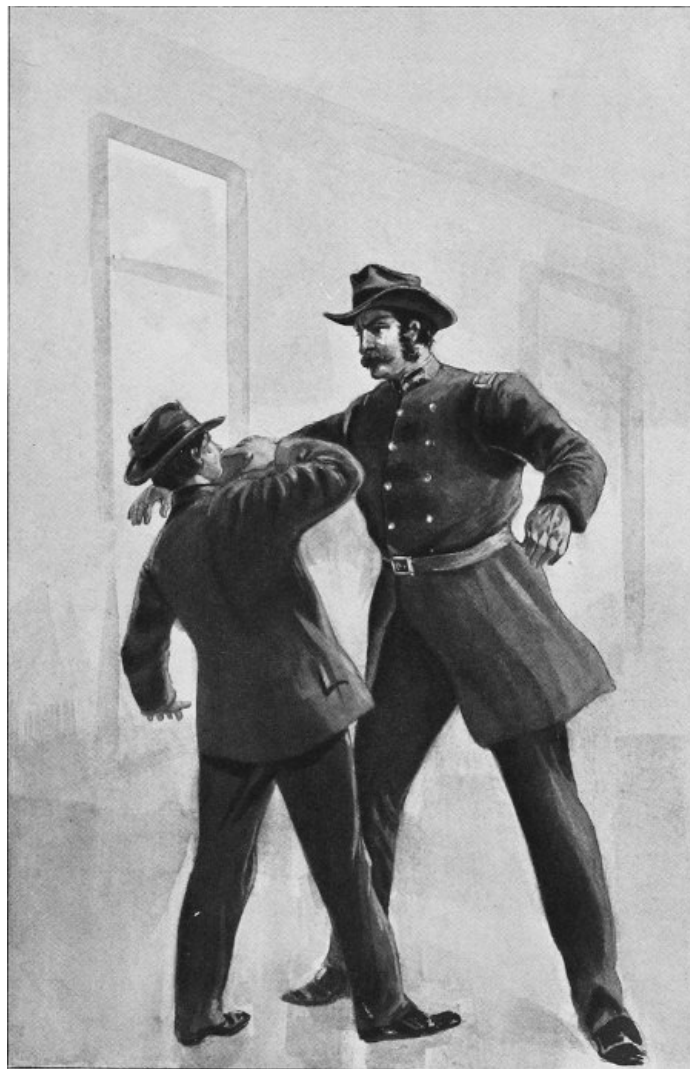
It was a bold, but admirably conceived plan.

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In an eloquent speech, Mr. Breckinridge pointed out that the plan was feasible. He said the ball once started, thousands of Kentuckians would spring to arms all over the State. The plan was earnestly discussed and fully agreed to. The work of each man was carefully mapped out, and every detail carefully arranged. At last the meeting was over, and the company began to pass out.

Fred's heart gave a great bound. He had succeeded; the full details of the plot were in his possession. Waiting until all were well out of the room, he crawled from his hiding place, and passed out. But he had exulted too soon in his success. He had scarcely taken three steps from the door before he came face to face with Major Hockoday, who was returning for something he had forgotten. The surprise was a mutual one.

"You here!" gasped the major. "Now I have you, you young imp of Satan," and he made a grab for his collar. But Fred was as quick and lithe as a cat, and eluding the major's clutch, he gave him such a blow in the face that it staggered him against the wall. Before he recovered from the effects of the blow Fred had disappeared.



**"You here!" gasped the Major, and he made a grab for his collar.**

"Murder! murder!" the major bawled. "Stop the villain!"

From all directions the guests came running. The major's face was covered with blood, and he truly presented a gory appearance. It was some time before the excitement subsided so the major could tell his story. It was that a young villain had assaulted and attempted to murder him. By his description, the landlord at once identified the boy as the one who occupied room 45. But a search revealed the fact that the bird had flown. It was also ascertained that the major had received no serious injury.

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By request of the major the meeting was hastily re-convened. There, in its privacy, he gave the true history of the attempted murder, as the guests of the hotel thought it. The major expressed his opinion that the boy was a spy. He was sure it was the same boy he had met in the hotel at Georgetown. "You know," he said, "that the landlord at Georgetown found a hole drilled through the plastering of the room that this boy occupied, into the one which was occupied by me and in which we held a meeting. I tell you, the boy is a first-class spy, and I would not be surprised if he was concealed somewhere in this room during the meeting."

"Impossible! impossible!" cried several voices, but nevertheless a number of faces grew pale.

"There is no place he could hide in this room, except behind the sofa, and I looked there," said Marshall.

"Are you sure you looked well?" asked Morgan.

"Quite sure."

"Gentlemen," said the landlord, "this room is kept locked. No one could have got into it."

"All I know," said the major, "I met him about three paces from the door, just as I turned the corner. When I attempted to stop him, he suddenly struck the blow and disappeared. If it was not for his black hair, I should be more than ever convinced that the boy was Fred Shackelford."

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"In league with the devil, probably," growled Captain Conway. "For if there was ever one of his imps on earth, it's that Shackelford boy. Curse him, I will be even with him yet."

"And so will I," replied the major, gently feeling of his swollen nose.

"Gentlemen," said John H. Morgan, "this is no time for idle regrets. Whether that boy has heard anything or not, we cannot tell. But from what Major Hockoday has said, there is no doubt but that he is a spy. His assault on the major and fleeing show that. So it behooves us to be careful. I

have a trusty agent at Nicholasville, who keeps me fully informed of all that transpires there. I will telegraph him particulars, and have him be on the watch for such a boy."

It was an uneasy crowd that separated that night. It looked as if one boy might bring to naught all their well-laid plans.

The next morning Morgan received the following telegram from Nicholasville:

JOHN H. MORGAN:

Early this morning a black-haired, dark-skinned boy, riding a jaded horse, came in on the Lexington pike. Without stopping for refreshments he left his horse, and procured a fresh one, which the same boy left here a couple of days ago, and rode rapidly away in the direction of Camp Dick Robinson.

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SMITH.

"That means trouble," muttered Morgan. "I must put all the boys on their guard."

Late in the afternoon of the 19th the following telegram was received by Morgan from Nicholasville:

JOHN H. MORGAN:

Colonel Bramlette with his regiment has just forcibly taken possession of a train of cars, and will at once start for Lexington. You are in danger.

SMITH.

That night Breckinridge, Marshall, Morgan and half a score of others fled from Lexington. Their plottings had come to naught; instead of their bright visions of success, they were fugitives from their homes. It would have fared ill with that black-haired boy if they could have got hold of him just then.

When Fred escaped from Major Hockoday, he lost no time in making his way to the home of one of the most prominent Union men of Lexington. Telling him he had most important dispatches for General Thomas, a horse was procured, and through the darkness of the night Fred rode to Nicholasville, reaching there early in the morning. Leaving his tired horse, and taking his own, which he had left there, he rode with all speed to Camp Dick Robinson, and made his report to General Thomas.

The general was both astonished and delighted. He warmly congratulated Fred, saying it was a wonderful piece of work. "Let's see," said he, "this is the 16th. I do not want to scare them, as I wish to make a fine haul, take them right in their treasonable acts. It's the only way I can make the government believe it. On the 19th I will send Colonel Bramlette with his regiment with orders to capture the lot. I will also have to guard against the advance of General Zollicoffer. As for the advance of General Buckner on Louisville, that is out of my department."

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"And there," said Fred, "is where our greatest danger lies. Louisville is so far north they are careless, forgetting that Buckner has a railroad in good repair on which to transport his men."

"Do you think he will try that?" asked Thomas.

"Why not?" answered Fred, and then he asked for a map. After studying it for some time, he turned to Thomas and said:

"General, I have a favor to ask. I would like a leave of absence for a week. I have an idea I want to work out."

Thomas sat looking at the boy a moment, and then said: "It is nothing rash, is it, my boy?"

"No more so than what I have done," answered Fred. "In fact, I don't know that I will do anything. It is only an idea I want to work on; it may be all wrong. That is the reason I can't explain it to you."

"You are not going to enter the enemy's lines as a spy, are you? If so, I forbid it. You are too young and too valuable to risk your life that way."

"No, General, at least I trust not. The rebels will have to get much farther north than they are now if I enter their lines, even if I carry out my idea."

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"Very well, Fred; you have my consent, but be very careful."

"I shall try to be so, General. I only hope that the suspicions I have are groundless, and my journey will prove a pleasure trip."

Thus saying, Fred bade the general good day, and early the next morning he rode away, taking the road to Danville.



## A DARING DEED.

Fred did not stop in Danville; instead, he avoided the main street, so as to be seen by as few of his acquaintances as possible. He rode straight on to Lebanon before he stopped. Here he put up for the night, giving himself and his horse a good rest. The country was in such a disturbed condition that every stranger was regarded with suspicion, and forced to answer a multitude of questions. Fred did not escape, and to all he gave the same answer, that he was from Danville, and that he was on his way to Elizabethtown to visit his sick grandfather.

One gentleman was exceedingly inquisitive. He was especially interested in Prince, examining him closely, and remarking he was one of the finest horses he ever saw. Fred learned that the man's name was Mathews, that he was a horse dealer, and was also a violent sympathizer with the South. He was also reputed to be something of a bully. Fred thought some of his questions rather impertinent, and gave rather short answers, which did not seem to please Mathews.

Leaving Lebanon early the next morning, he rode nearly west, it being his intention to strike the Louisville and Nashville railroad a little south of Elizabethtown. It was a beautiful September day, and as Fred cantered along, he sang snatches of songs, and felt merrier and happier than at any time since that sad parting with his father. Where was his father now? Where was his cousin Calhoun? And he thought of that strange oath which bound Calhoun and himself together, and wondered what would come of it all. But what was uppermost in his mind was the object of his present journey. Was there anything in it, or was it a fool's errand? Time would tell. As he was riding along a country road, pondering these things, it suddenly occurred to him that the landscape appeared familiar. He reined up his horse, and looked around. The fields stretching away before him, the few trees, and above all a tumbled down, half-ruined log hut. It was all so familiar. Yet he knew he had never been there before. What did it mean? Could he have seen this in a dream sometime? The more he looked, the more familiar it seemed; and the more he was troubled.

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A countryman came along riding a raw-boned spavined horse; a rope served for a bridle, and an old coffee sack strapped on the sharp back of the horse took the place of a saddle. Having no stirrups, the countryman's huge feet hung dangling down and swung to and fro, like two weights tied to a string; a dilapidated old hat, through whose holes stuck tufts of his bleached tow hair, adorned his head.

"Stranger, you 'uns 'pears to be interested," he remarked to Fred, as he reined in his steed, and at the same time ejected about a pint of tobacco juice from his capacious mouth.

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"Yes," answered Fred, "this place seems to be very familiar—one that I have seen many times; yet to my certain knowledge, I have never been here before. I can't understand it."

"Seen it in a picter, I reckon," drawled the countryman.

"What's that?" quickly asked Fred. "I have seen it in a picture? Where? What do you mean?"

"Nothin', stranger, only they do say the picter of that air blamed old shanty is every whar up No'th. Blast the ole place. I don't see anything great in it. I wish it war sunk before he war born."

"Why, man, what do you mean? You talk in riddles."

"Mean!" replied the native, expectorating at a stone in the road, and hitting it fairly. "I mean that the gol-all-fir'-est, meanest cuss that ever lived war born thar, the man what's making war on the South, and wants to put the niggers ekal to us. Abe Lincoln, drat him, war born in that ole house."

Fred reverently took off his hat. This then was the lowly birthplace of the man whose name was in the mouths of millions. How mean, how poor it looked, and yet to what a master mind it gave birth! The life of Lincoln had possessed a peculiar fascination for Fred, and during the presidential campaign of the year before the picture of his birthplace had been a familiar one to him. He now understood why the place looked so familiar. It was like looking on the face of one he had carefully studied in a photograph.

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"Reckon you are a stranger, or you would have knowed the place?" queried the countryman.

"Yes, I am a stranger," answered Fred. "Then this is the place where the President of the United States was born?"

"Yes, an' it war a po' day for ole Kentuck when he war born. Oughter to ha' died, the ole Abolitioner."

Fred smiled, "Well," he said, "I must be going. I am very much obliged to you for your information."

"Don't mention it, stranger, don't mention it. Say, that's a mighty fine hoss you air ridin'; look out or some of them fellers scootin' round the country will get him. Times mighty ticklish, stranger, mighty ticklish. Have a chaw of terbacker?" and he extended a huge roll of Kentucky twist.

"No, thank you," responded Fred, and bidding the countryman good day, he rode away leaving him in the road staring after him, and muttering: "Mighty stuck up! Don't chaw terbacker. Wonder if he aint one of them Abolitioners!"

It was the middle of the afternoon when Fred struck the railroad at a small station a few miles south of Elizabethtown. There was a crowd around the little depot, and Fred saw that they were greatly excited. Hitching his horse, he mingled with the throng, and soon learned that the train from the south had overdue several hours. To add to the mystery, all telegraphic communication with the south had been severed. Strike the instrument as often as he might, the operator could get no response.

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"It's mighty queer," said an intelligent looking man. "There is mischief up the road of some kind. Here Louisville has been telegraphing like mad for hours, and can't get a reply beyond this place."

Here the operator came out and announced that telegraphic communication had also been severed on the north.

"We are entirely cut off," he said. "I can learn nothing. We will have to wait and see what's the matter, that's all."

Just then away to the south a faint tinge of smoke was seen rising, and the cry was raised that a train was coming. The excitement arose to fever heat, and necks were craned, and eyes strained to catch the first glimpse of the train. At length its low rumbling could be heard, and when at last it hove in sight, it was seen to be a very heavy one. Slowly it drew up to the station, and to the surprise of the lookers-on it was loaded down with soldiers.

"Hurrah for Louisville!" shouted the soldiers, and the crowd took up the cry. It was Buckner's army from Bowling Green en route for Louisville by train, hoping thereby to take the place completely by surprise. So far, everything had gone well. Telegraphic communications all along the line had been severed by trusty agents; the Federal authorities at Louisville were resting in fancied security; the city was lightly guarded.

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Already General Buckner's hopes were high. In fancy, he heard his name on every tongue, and heard himself called the greatest military genius of the country. When the crowd caught the full meaning of the movement, cheer after cheer made the welkin ring. They grasped the soldiers' hands, and bade them wipe the Yankees from the face of the earth.

Fred took in the situation at a glance. This was the idea of which he spoke to General Thomas. He had an impression that General Buckner might attempt to do just what he was now doing. It was the hope of thwarting the movement, if made, that had led Fred to make the journey. His impressions had proven true; he was on the ground, but how to stop the train was now the question. He had calculated on plenty of time, that he could find out when the train was due, and plan his work accordingly. But the train was before him. In a moment or two it would be gone, and with it all opportunity to stop it. The thought was maddening. If anything was done, it must be done quickly. The entire population of the little village was at the depot; there was little danger of his being noticed. Dashing into a blacksmith shop he secured a sledge; then mounting his horse, he rode swiftly to the north. About half a mile from the depot there was a curve in the track which would hide him from observation. Jumping Prince over the low fence which guarded the railroad, in a few seconds he was at work with the sledge trying to batter out the spikes which held a rail in position. His face was pale, his teeth set. He worked like a demon. Great drops of perspiration stood out on his forehead, and his blows rang out like the blows of a giant. The train whistled; it was ready to start. Fred groaned. Would he be too late? Between his strokes he could hear the clang of the bell, the parting cheers of the crowd. He struck like a madman. The heads of the spikes flew off; they were driven in and the plates smashed. One end of a rail was loosened; it was driven in a few inches. The deed was done, and none too soon. The train was rounding the curve.

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So busy was Fred that he had not noticed that two men on horseback had ridden up to the fence, gazed at him a moment in astonishment, then shouted in anger, and dismounted. Snatching a revolver from his pocket, Fred sent a ball whistling by their ears, and yelled: "Back! back, as you value your lives!"

Jumping on their horses quicker than they dismounted, they galloped toward the approaching train, yelling and wildly gesticulating. The engineer saw them, but it was before the day of air brakes, and it was impossible to stop the heavy train. The engine plunged off the track, tore up the ground and ties for a few yards, and then turned over on its side, where it lay spouting smoke and steam, and groaning like a thing of life. It lay partly across the track, thus completely blocking it. The engineer and fireman had jumped, and so slowly was the train running that the cars did not leave the track. For this Fred was devoutly thankful. He had accomplished his object, and no one had been injured. Jumping on his horse, he gave a shout of triumph and rode away.

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But the frightened soldiers had been pouring from the cars. The two men on horseback were pointing at Fred and yelling: "There! there goes the villain who did it."

"Fire! fire!" thundered a colonel who had just sprung out of the foremost car. A hundred rifles blazed. Fred's horse, was seen to stumble slightly; the boy swayed, and leaned forward in his seat; but quickly recovering himself, he turned around and waving his hat shouted defiance.



**"Fire! Fire!" thundered a Colonel who had just sprung out of the foremost car.**

"Great heavens!" shouted a boy's voice. "That is Fred Shackelford, and that horse is Prince." It was Calhoun Pennington who spoke. The colonel who had given the order to fire turned pale, staggered and would have fallen if one of his officers had not caught him.

"Merciful God!" he moaned. "I ordered my men to fire on my own son."

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The officers gathered around General Buckner, who stood looking at the wrecked engine with hopeless despair pictured in every feature. His visions of glory had vanished, as it were, in a moment. No plaudits from an admiring world, no "Hail! the conquering hero comes." Utter failure was the end of the movement for which he had hoped so much. Surprise was now impossible. It would take hours to clear away the wreck. He groaned in the agony of his spirit, and turned away. His officers stood by in silence; his sorrow was too great for words of encouragement.

Then a most pathetic incident occurred. Colonel Shackelford tottered up to General Buckner, pale as death, and trembling in every limb. "General," he gasped, "it was my boy, my son who did this. I am unworthy to stand in your presence for bringing such a son into the world. Cashier me, shoot me if you will. I resign my command from this moment."

The soul of the man who refused to desert his soldiers at Fort Donelson, when those in command above him fled, who afterwards helped bear General Grant to his tomb, with a heart as tender as that of a woman, now asserted itself. His own terrible disappointment was forgotten in the sorrow of his friend. Grasping the hand of Colonel Shackelford, he said with the deepest emotion:

"Colonel, not a soldier will hold you responsible. This is a struggle in which the noblest families are divided. If this deed had been for the South instead of the North, you would be the proudest man in the Confederacy. Can we not see the bravery, the heroism of the deed, even though it has dashed our fondest hopes to the ground, shattered and broken? No, Colonel, I shall not accept your resignation. I know you will be as valiant for the South, as your son has been for the North."

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Tears gushed from Colonel Shackelford's eyes; he endeavored to speak, but his tongue refused to express his feelings. The officers, although bowed down with disappointment, burst into a cheer, and there was not one who did not feel prouder of their general in his disappointment than if he had been successful.

How was it at Louisville during this time? General Thomas had warned General Anderson, who had moved his headquarters to that city, that General Buckner was contemplating an advance. But it was thought that he would come with waving banners and with the tramp of a great army, and that there would be plenty of time to prepare for him. Little did they think he would try to

storm the city with a train of cars, and be in their midst before they knew it. When the train was delayed and telegraphic communications severed, it was thought that some accident had happened. There was not the slightest idea of the true state of affairs. As hours passed and nothing was heard of the delayed train, a train of discovery was sent south to find out what was the matter. This train ran into Buckner's advance at Elizabethtown, and was seized.

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Not hearing anything from this train, an engine was sent after it. Still there was no idea of what had happened, no preparations to save Louisville. This engine ran into Buckner's advance at Muldraugh Hill. The fireman was a loyal man and at once grasped the situation. He leaped from his engine and ran back. What could this one man do, miles from Louisville, and on foot! He proved a hero. Meeting some section hands with a handcar, he shouted: "Back! back! the road above is swarming with rebels."

The car was turned and started for Louisville.

How those men worked! Great streams of perspiration ran down their bodies; their breath came in gasps, and still the fireman shouted: "Work her lively, boys, for God's sake, work her lively!"

At last Louisville was reached, and for the first time the facts known. At once all was excitement. There was hardly a soldier in the city. Once more the devoted Home Guards, the men who saved the city from riot and bloodshed on July 22d, sprang to arms. General Rousseau was ordered from across the river. He had but 1,200 men. These, with the Home Guards, made a force of nearly 3,000 men. These men were hurried on board the cars, and sent forward under the command of General W. T. Sherman. Through the darkness of the night this train felt its way. On reaching Rolling Fork of Salt River the bridge was found to be burnt. Despairing of reaching Louisville, General Buckner had destroyed the bridge to delay the advance of the Federal troops. The danger was over. Louisville was once more saved. But how many American boys and girls know the name of the daring young man who tore up the track, or the brave fireman who brought back the news?[\[A\]](#)

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But how was it with Fred; had he escaped unhurt from that volley?

The stumble of his horse was caused by stepping into a hole, yet slight as the incident was, it saved Fred's life, for it threw him slightly forward, and at the same moment a ball tore through the crown of his hat. Another ball struck the crupper of his saddle, and another one bored a hole through Prince's right ear.

As soon as he was out of sight Fred stopped, and, ascertaining that no damage had been done, excepting the perforating of Prince's ear and his hat, he patted his horse's neck and said: "Ah, Prince, old boy, you are marked now for life, but it is all right. I shall always know you by that little hole through your ear."

Fred stopped that night at a planter's house, who at first viewed him with some suspicion; but when he was told of Buckner's advance, he was so overjoyed, being an ardent Secessionist, that there was nothing good enough for his guest.

The next day, when Fred rode into Lebanon, the first man that he saw was Mathews, who sauntered up to him, and said in a sarcastic tone: "It seems, young man, that you made a short visit to your poor sick grandfather. How did you find the old gentleman?"

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Fred shrugged his shoulders. "I changed my mind," he replied. "I didn't see the old gentleman; I concluded to come back. Things are getting a little too brisk up there for me. Buckner has advanced, and there may be some skirmishing around Elizabethtown."

"And so you run," exclaimed Mathews in a tone which made Fred's blood boil. All of this time Mathews had been carefully looking over the boy and horse, and quite a crowd had collected around them.

"Ah!" continued Mathews; "a round hole through your horse's ear, been bleeding, too; your saddle torn by a bullet, and a hole through your hat. Boy, you had better give an account of yourself."

"Not at your command," replied Fred, hotly. "And I deny your right to question me."

"You do, do you, my fine young fellow? I will show you," and he made a grab for Prince's bridle.

A sharp, quick word from Fred, and the horse sprang, overthrowing Mathews, and scattering the crowd right and left. Mathews arose, shaking the dust from his clothes and swearing like a trooper.

A fine-looking man had just ridden up to the crowd as the incident occurred. He looked after the flying boy, and nervously fingered the revolver in his holster. Then a smile came over his face, and he spoke to Mathews, who was still swearing and loudly calling for a horse to pursue Fred.

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"No use, Jim; you might as well chase a streak of lightning. That is the fastest horse in Kentucky."

Mathews looked at the man a moment in surprise, and then exclaimed: "Heavens! Morgan, is that you? How came you here?"

"Made a run for it night before last," replied Morgan with a laugh, "to keep from being nabbed by old Thomas. But what was the fuss between you and that boy? I wonder what he was doing out here any way? But, Mathews, he did upset you nicely; I think you rolled over at least six times."

"I will be even with him yet," growled Mathews.

"Oh! I have heard half a dozen men say that, myself included. But let's hear what the rumpus was about."

When Morgan heard the story, he said: "So Buckner is at Elizabethtown, is he? Well, that changes my plan. I was going to Bowling Green, but now I will change my course to Elizabethtown. But I would like to know what that boy has been doing. From what you say he must have been in a skirmish. Trying to throw a train off the track, perhaps; it would be just like him."

"But, Mathews," he continued, "the boy is gone, so let us talk business. I am going to raise a regiment of cavalry for the Confederate service, and I want you to raise a company." [Pg 149]

"That I will, John," said Mathews. "There is no other man I had rather ride under."

Fred laughed heartily as he looked back and saw Mathews shaking the dust from himself. Finding that he was not pursued he brought Prince down to a walk. "I could almost swear," he said to himself, "that I caught a glimpse of Morgan as I dashed through the crowd. Thomas surely ought to have him before this time. I wonder what it means."

As he was riding through Danville he met his uncle, Judge Pennington, who, to his surprise, greeted him most cordially, and would insist on his stopping a while.

"Where have you been, Fred?" asked the judge.

"Over towards Elizabethtown to see my sick grandfather," replied Fred, gravely.

"Fred, what do you mean?" asked his uncle, somewhat nettled.

"Well, uncle, I have been over towards Elizabethtown ostensibly to see my grandfather, but really to see what I could find over there."

"And what did you find?"

"I found Buckner's men as thick as hops, and I found a warm reception besides. Look here," and he showed his uncle the hole through his hat. "If you will go out and look at Prince, you will find a hole through his ear, and you will also find the saddle torn with a bullet. Oh, yes, Buckner's men were glad to see me; they gave me a warm reception." [Pg 150]

Judge Pennington looked grave. "Fred, are you telling the truth?"

"Yes, uncle."

"What did they fire on you for?"

"Oh, I side-tracked one of their trains."

The judge looked still graver. "Fred," said he, "you are engaging in dangerous business. Take care, or you will hang yet. I have heard of some of your doings. I had a visitor last night."

"What! not father, surely!"

"No, John H. Morgan."

"Then it was he I saw at Lebanon. I could hardly believe it."

"Why not, Fred?"

"Because—because—I thought—I thought he was in Lexington."

"It was because," answered the judge, severely, "that you thought he was a prisoner at Camp Dick Robinson. Ah, Fred, you were not as sharp as you thought. You foiled their plans; but, thank God! they have all escaped. One good has been accomplished. All pretense of neutrality is now at an end. These men will now be found in the ranks, fighting for the liberty of the South. As for Morgan, he will be heard from, mark my word."

"I rather like Morgan," said Fred. "He is a daring fellow, and sharp, too; yes, I believe he will be heard from." [Pg 151]

"Fred, Morgan thinks you have had more to do with finding out their plans than any other one person."

"Morgan does me too much honor," replied Fred, quietly.

The judge remained quiet for a moment, and then said: "My boy, I wish you could have seen Morgan before you had so thoroughly committed yourself to the other side. He has taken a great fancy to you. He believes if he could talk with you, you might be induced to change your mind. He says in the kind of work in which he expects to engage, you would be worth a brigade of men. Fred, will you, will you not think of this? You are breaking our hearts with your course now."

"Dear uncle," replied Fred, "I thank Morgan for his good opinion, and I reciprocate his opinion; for of all the men I have met, I believe he, most of all, has the elements of a dashing, successful leader. But as for his offer, I cannot consider it for a moment."

The judge sighed, and Fred saw that his further presence was not desirable, so he made his adieus, and rode away.

"So Mr. Morgan wants to win me over," thought Fred, "and that was the reason uncle was so nice. I think this last scrape has burnt the bridges between us, and they will trouble me no more."

Fred made his report to General Thomas, who heard it with evident satisfaction.

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"This, then, was your idea, Fred?"

"Yes, General, I in some way conceived the notion that Buckner would try to surprise Louisville just as he did try to do. I knew that trains were running regularly between Nashville and Louisville, and thought that a surprise could be effected. But the idea was so vague I was ashamed to tell you, for fear of exciting ridicule. So, I got my leave of absence and stole off, and if nothing had come of it, no one would have been the wiser."

General Thomas smiled, and said: "It was an idea worthy of a great general, Fred. General Anderson has much to thank you for, as well as the people of Louisville. But you must take a good rest now, both you and your horse. From appearances, I think it will not be many days before General Zollicoffer will give us plenty to do."

### FOOTNOTE:

[A] The name of the gallant young man who tore up the track was Crutcher; the author does not know the name of the fireman.

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## CHAPTER IX. A LEAP FOR LIFE.

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On October 7th General Anderson, at his own request, was relieved of the command of the Department of Kentucky, on account of continued ill-health. The next day General W. T. Sherman, a man destined to fill an important place in the history of the war, was appointed to the position. Both the Federal and the Confederate governments had now thrown aside all pretense of neutrality. Kentucky echoed to the martial tread of armed men.

At Maysville under General Nelson, at Camp Dick Robinson under General Thomas, at Louisville under General Sherman, and at Paducah under General Grant, the Federal government was gathering its hosts; while the Confederate government with its troops occupied Columbus, Bowling Green, Cumberland Gap, and the mountains of eastern Kentucky. General Albert Sydney Johnston, one of the ablest of the Confederate generals, was in supreme command, with headquarters at Bowling Green.

General Zollicoffer marched from Cumberland Gap early in the month, and assumed offensive operations.

When General Sherman took command, Fred was sent by General Thomas to Louisville with dispatches. General Sherman had heard of some of the exploits of the young messenger, and he was received very kindly. Sherman, at that time, was in the prime of life. Straight as an arrow, of commanding presence, he was every inch a soldier. He was quick and impulsive in his actions, and to Fred seemed to be a bundle of nerves. In conversation he was open and frank and expressed his opinion freely, in this resembling General Nelson. But the rough, overbearing nature of Nelson he entirely lacked. He was one of the most courteous of men.

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He would have Fred tell of some of his exploits, and when he gave an account of his first journey to Louisville, and his adventure with Captain Conway, the general was greatly pleased. Fred's account of how he discovered the details of the plot at Lexington was received with astonishment, and he was highly complimented. But the climax came when he told of how he had thrown the train from the track, and thus brought Buckner's intended surprise to naught. The general jumped up, grasped Fred's hand, and exclaimed:

"That, young man, calls for a commission, if I can get you one, and I think I can."

"General," replied Fred, "I thank you very much, but I do not wish a commission. I am now comparatively free. It is true, I am hired privately by General Nelson, and if I understand rightly I am getting the pay of a lieutenant; but I am not bound by oath to serve any length of time, neither could I have accomplished what I have if I had been a regular enlisted soldier."

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"You are right," said the general. "But remember, if you are ever in need of any favor, do not hesitate to call on me."

This Fred readily promised, and left the general, highly elated over the interview.

Before leaving Louisville, Fred did not forget to call on the Vaughns. He found Miss Mabel well, and he thought her more beautiful than ever. A sad, pensive look on her face but added to her loveliness. Only the day before she had bidden her betrothed farewell, and he had marched to the front to help fight the battles of his country. As she hung weeping around his neck, he pointed to

a little miniature flag pinned on his breast—it was the same flag that Mabel wore on that day she was beset by the mob—and said:

"Dearest, it shall be worn there as long as my heart beats. Never shall it be touched by a traitorous hand as long as I live. Every time I look upon it, it will be an incentive to prove worthy of the brave girl who wore it on her breast in the face of a brutal mob."

Then with one fond clasp of the hands, one long lingering kiss, he was gone; and to Mabel all the light and joy of the world seemed to go with him.

But the coming of Fred brought new thoughts, and for the time her eyes grew brighter, her cheeks rosier and laugh happier. The bright, brave boy who saved her from the mob was very welcome, and to her he was only a boy, a precious, darling boy. [Pg 156]

They made Fred relate his adventures, and one minute Mabel's eyes would sparkle with fun, and the next melt in tenderness. In spite of himself, Fred's heart beat very fast, he hardly knew why. But when he told with trembling voice how he had parted from his father, and how he had been disowned and driven from home, the sympathy of the impulsive girl overcame her, and with eyes swimming in tears, she arose, threw her arms around him, imprinted a kiss on his forehead, and murmured: "Poor boy! poor boy!" Then turning to her mother, she said, "We will adopt him, won't we, mother, and I will have a brother."

Then remembering what she had done, she retired blushing and in confusion to her seat. That kiss finished Fred; it thrilled him through and through. Yet somehow the thought of being a brother to Mabel didn't give him any satisfaction. He knew Mabel looked upon him as only a boy, and the thought made him angry, but the next moment he was ashamed of himself. He took his leave, promising to call the next time he was in the city, and went away with conflicting emotions.

Fred was really suffering from an attack of first love, and didn't know it. It was better for him that he didn't, for it was the sooner forgotten.

On his return to Camp Dick Robinson Fred found that General Thomas had advanced some of his troops toward Cumberland Gap. Colonel Garrard was occupying an exposed position on the Rock Castle Hills, and Fred was sent to him with dispatches. Fred found the little command in considerable doubt over the movements of General Zollicoffer. One hour the rumor would be that he was advancing, and the next hour would bring the story that he was surely retreating. Colonel Garrard feared that he would be attacked with a greatly superior force. [Pg 157]

Fred resolved that he would do a little scouting on his own account. Colonel Garrard offered to send a small party with him, but Fred declined the offer, saying that a squad would only attract attention, and if he ran into danger he would trust to the fleetness of his horse to save him.

Riding east, he made a wide detour, and at last came to where he thought he must be near the enemy's lines. In his front was a fine plantation; near by, in the woods, some negroes were chopping. These negroes he resolved to interview. His appearance created great consternation, and some of them dropped their axes, and looked as if about to run.

"Don't be afraid, boys," said Fred, kindly. "I only want to know who lives in yonder house."

"Massa Johnson, sah."

"Is he at home?"

"Not now, sah; he down to Zollicoffer camp."

"Oh, then General Zollicoffer is camped near here?"

"Yes, sah; 'bout two mile down de road." [Pg 158]

"Do any of the soldiers ever come this way?" queried Fred.

"Yes, sah; 'bout twenty went up de road not mo' than two hours ago. Den a capin man, he cum to see Missy Alice most ebber day."

"Thank you," said Fred, as he rode away. "I think I will pay a visit to Missy Alice myself."

Riding boldly up to the house, he dismounted. Before entering the house he accosted an old negro who was working in the yard, and slipping a dollar into his hand, said:

"Uncle, if you see any one coming either way, will you cry, 'Massa, your horse is getting away?'"

"Trus' me fo' dat," said the old man, grinning from ear to ear. "I jess make dat hoss jump, and den I yell, 'Massa, hoss gittin' way.'"

"That's it, uncle, you are all right," and Fred turned and went into the house, where he introduced himself as a Mr. Sandford, from Lexington. He had friends in Zollicoffer's army, and had run the gauntlet of the Federal lines to visit them. Could they tell him how far it was to General Zollicoffer's camp.

The ladies received him coldly, but told him the distance. But Fred was not to be repulsed. He was a good talker, and he tried his best. He told them the news of the outside world, and what the Yankees were doing, and how they would soon be driven from the State. This at once endeared him to the ladies, especially the younger, who was a most pronounced little rebel. Miss [Pg 159]

Alice was a comely girl, somewhere between twenty and twenty-five years of age, and by a little but well directed flattery Fred completely won her confidence. She inquired after some acquaintances in Lexington, and by a happy coincidence Fred knew them, and the conversation became animated.

At length Fred remarked: "I hope it will not be long before General Zollicoffer will advance. We are getting anxious up at Lexington; we want to see the Yankees driven into the Ohio."

"You will not have to wait long," replied the girl. "Captain Conway tells me they are about ready, and will advance on the 20th or 21st—" she stopped suddenly, bit her lip, and looked scared.

In all probability she had told something that Captain Conway had told her to keep secret. Fred did not appear to notice her confusion, and at once said: "Conway, Conway, Captain Conway. Is it Captain P. C. Conway of whom you speak?"

"Yes, sir," replied the girl, brightening up.

"Why, I know him, know him like a book; in fact, we are old friends—special friends, I may say. He would rejoice to find me here," and then he added mentally, "and cut my throat."

"A brilliant soldier, and a brave one, is Captain Conway," continued Fred, "and if he is given an opportunity to distinguish himself, it will not be long before it will be Major or Colonel Conway."

This praise pleased Miss Alice greatly, and she informed Fred that he would soon have the pleasure of meeting his friend; that she expected him every moment. [Pg 160]

Fred moved somewhat uneasily in his chair. He had no desire to meet Captain Conway, and he was about to make an excuse of going out to see how his horse was standing, when they were startled by the old negro running toward the house and yelling at the top of his voice: "Massa, massa, yo' hoss is gittin' away."

The sly old fellow had thrown a stone at Prince, and the horse was rearing and plunging.

Fred dashed out of the house; a party of horsemen was coming up the road, in fact, was nearly to the house. It was but the work of a moment for Fred to unhitch his horse and vault into the saddle, but the party was now not more than fifty yards away. At the head rode Captain Conway. They had noticed the horse hitched at the gate, and were coming at full speed to try and surprise the owner. The moment Conway saw Fred he knew him.

"Gods!" he cried, "Fred Shackelford, what luck!" and snatched a pistol from the holster and fired. The ball whistled past Fred's head harmlessly, and he turned in the saddle and returned the fire. It was the first time he had ever shot at a man, and even in the heat of excitement he experienced a queer sensation, a sinking of the heart, as though he were committing a crime.

Fairly and squarely the ball from his revolver struck the horse of Captain Conway in the forehead, and the animal fell dead, the rider rolling in the dust. [Pg 161]

Immediately all was excitement. His men stopped the pursuit, and, dismounting, gathered around the captain, thinking he was killed.

But he sprang to his feet, shouting: "A hundred dollars to the one who will take that young devil, dead or alive. Here, Corporal Smith, you have a fleet horse, let me take him," and jumping into the saddle, he was in pursuit, followed by all his men, except Corporal Smith, who stood in the road looking after them.

"What does it mean? What does it mean?" asked the two ladies, who stood on the veranda, wringing their hands, and very much excited.

"Blamed if I know," answered the corporal. "The sight of that young chap seemed to make the captain kinder crazy. The moment he caught sight of him, he called him by name, and banged away at him."

"You say the captain called him by name?"

"Yes."

"Well, he said he knew the captain, and that he was one of his best friends. I can't understand it."

The corporal had no explanation to offer, so went and took a look at the captain's horse. "Bang up shot," he remarked. "Right between the eyes."

In the meantime the pursued and the pursuers had passed out of sight up the road, enveloped in a cloud of dust.

"Remember, boys," shouted Conway, "a hundred dollars to the one who brings him down. Don't attempt to take him alive. Shoot him! shoot him!" [Pg 162]

But it was nothing but play for Fred to distance them, and he laughed to think that they expected to catch him. But the laugh suddenly died on his lips; he turned pale, and glanced hurriedly to the right and left. A high rail fence ran on each side of the road. The scouting party of which the negroes spoke was returning. Fred was between the two parties.

Captain Conway saw the other party, and shouted in triumph.



"Now, boys, we have him," and he spurred his horse forward, revolver in hand. There was a look of malignant hatred on his face, and he muttered: "Now, my boy, I will settle scores with you. I shall never take you back to camp. 'Captured a spy, killed while trying to escape.' Ha! ha! how will that sound!"

As for Fred, even in his extremity, his courage or his presence of mind never deserted him. He felt that to be captured by Conway was death, for had not the captain sworn to kill him on sight? His mind was made up; he would wheel and charge the captain's party. He would at least die fighting. Just as he was about to do this, he espied an opening in the fence on the left. As quick as thought he dashed through it, thinking it might afford a chance of escape. Too late he saw his mistake. The field was a perfect cul-de-sac, bounded on all sides by a high rail fence, the only opening the one he had come through.

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Through this opening the enemy poured, and when they saw the trap which Fred had entered, their shouts made the welkin ring. They were sure of their prey. Their shouts rang in Fred's ears like the tolling of a funeral bell. So must the bay of hounds sound in the ears of the hunted quarry.

Fred looked at the fence ahead of him. It was built of heavy rails, and full seven feet high. He rode straight for it. Bending over his horse's neck, Fred said: "Prince, it is a question of life or death. Do your best, old fellow; we can but fail."

The horse seemed to understand. He never faltered, never swerved. With distended nostrils, eyes flashing with excitement, and every muscle quivering, he gathered himself for the mighty spring. As lightly as a bird he cleared the fence, staggered as he struck the ground on the other side, then on again like the wind.

Fred turned in his saddle, and uttered a yell of defiance.

"Fire!" shrieked Conway. But the hands of his troopers were unsteady, and the shots went wild. Before his men could dismount and throw down the fence, Fred was beyond pursuit. Captain Conway fairly foamed at the mouth. He raved and swore like a madman.

"It's no use swearing, Captain," said a grizzled lieutenant. "I thought I knew something about horses, but that beat any leap I ever saw. Gad! I would rather have the horse than the boy."

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"Howly Virgin! it's the devil's own lape," said an Irishman in the company, and he crossed himself.

The baffled troopers returned crestfallen and cross. Captain Conway was so out of temper that even when the ladies asked him if his fall hurt him, he answered angrily.

"Captain," said Alice, somewhat ruffled by his manner, "what is it between that boy and you? He said he knew you, was in fact a dear friend of yours, but you no sooner saw him than you shot at him; and Corporal Smith says you called him by name, so you did know him."

"Alice," replied the captain, "I do not intend to be rude, but I am all put out. That boy is a spy, a mean, sneaking spy. He should be hanged. It was he that discovered our plot at Lexington."

The girl held up her hands in dismay. "And I told him——" She stopped suddenly.

"Told him what?" demanded Conway.

"Oh! nothing, nothing; only what a good fellow you were."

The captain looked at her sharply, and said: "It is well you gave away no secrets."

Fred made his way back to camp with a thankful heart. He told Colonel Garrard of the intended attack, and then started back for the headquarters of General Thomas. It was a long and hard ride, and it was well in the small hours of the night when he arrived. The general was aroused and the news of the expected attack told. He quietly wrote a couple of orders, and went back to his bed. One order was to General Schoepf to at once march his brigade to the relief of Colonel Garrard at Rock Castle. The other was sent to Colonel Connell at Big Hill to move his regiment to Rock Castle, instead of advancing toward London as ordered.

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Both orders were obeyed, and both commands were in position on the 20th. General Zollicoffer made his expected attack on the 21st, and was easily repulsed. The battle was a small one; nothing but a skirmish it would have been called afterwards; but to the soldiers engaged at that time, it looked like a big thing. It greatly encouraged the Federal soldiers, and correspondingly depressed the soldiers of Zollicoffer's army.

Fred got back to Rock Castle in time to see the battle. It was his first sight of dead and wounded soldiers. And as he looked on the faces of the dead, their sightless eyes upturned to heaven, and the groans of the wounded sounding in his ears, he turned sick at heart, and wondered why men created in the image of God would try to kill and maim each other. And yet, a few moments before, he himself was wild with the excitement of battle, and could scarcely be restrained from rushing into it.

The next day the army advanced, and passed the place where Fred met with his adventure, and he thought he would make another visit to Miss Alice Johnson. But that young lady gave him a cold reception. She called him a "miserable, sneaking Yankee," and turned her back on him in disgust. He didn't hear the last of his call on Miss Johnson.

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Fred pointed out the place where his horse had leaped the fence, and officers and men were astonished, and Prince became as much a subject of praise as his rider. It was a common saying among the soldiers as he rode by, "There goes the smartest boy and best horse in Kentucky."

When Fred returned to Camp Dick Robinson, he found a letter awaiting him from General Nelson. The general was making a campaign against a portion of the command of General Humphrey Marshall in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky, and wrote that if Fred could possibly come to him to do so.

"Of course; go at once," said General Thomas, when the letter was shown him. "I am sorry to lose you, but I think Zollicoffer will be rather quiet for a while, and General Nelson has the first claim on you. I shall always be grateful to you for the service you have rendered me. I trust that it is but the beginning of still closer relations in the future."

It was fated that General Thomas and Fred were to be much together before the war closed.

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## CHAPTER X. IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

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To his dismay, Fred noticed that the letter of General Nelson was dated the 10th of October, and it was now the last of the month. For some reason the letter had been greatly delayed.

It was known that Nelson was already in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky; therefore no time was to be lost if Fred joined him. Much to his regret, Fred had to leave Prince behind. Afterwards he blessed his stars that he did, for if he had taken the horse he would have lost him forever.

Fred traveled to Cincinnati by rail, and then by boat up the Ohio to Maysville. He found that Nelson had not only been gone from Maysville for some days, but that there was no direct line of communication with his army. Nothing daunted, he determined to follow, and procuring a horse, he started on his journey alone and unattended, and against the advice of the officer in command at Maysville.

"Wait," said that officer, "until we send forward a train. It will be strongly guarded, and you will escape all danger of capture."

But Fred would not wait. He believed it to be his duty to join Nelson as soon as possible. By hard riding, he reached Hazel Green on the evening of the second day, and without adventure. Here he learned that Nelson's command had left the place only two days before, and was now supposed to be at or near Prestonburg, and there were rumors of fighting at that place.

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The next morning Fred pressed forward in high spirits, thinking he would overtake at least the rear of Nelson's army by night. Along in the afternoon four cavalymen suddenly confronted him, blocking the road.

As they all had on the blue Federal overcoat, Fred had not the remotest idea but that they belonged to Nelson's army, and riding boldly up to them asked how far the command was in advance.

"What command?" asked one of the party, who appeared to be the leader.

"Why, Nelson's command, of course," replied Fred, in surprise. But the words were hardly out of his mouth before four revolvers were leveled on him, and he was commanded to surrender. There was no alternative but to submit as gracefully as possible.

"Now, boys," said the leader, "we will see what we have captured. Examine him."

It must be borne in mind that Fred was dressed in civilian clothes, and therefore could not be taken prisoner as a soldier.

The soldiers, after going through his pockets, handed the contents to their leader.

"Ah," said that personage with a wicked grin, "young man, you may go along with us to Colonel Williams. For aught I know, these letters may hang you," and filing off from the Prestonburg road, they took a rough mountain road for Piketon.

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Fred afterward found that the four soldiers were a scouting party that had got in the rear of Nelson's army in the hopes of picking up some stragglers, their only reward being himself. As was said, the party consisted of four. The leader, Captain Bascom, was a hooked-nosed, ferret-eyed man, who frequently took deep draughts from a canteen containing what was familiarly known as "mountain dew"—whisky distilled by the rough mountaineers. Being half-drunk all the time added intensity to a naturally cruel, tyrannical disposition.

One of the soldiers named Drake was a burly, red-faced fellow, who seemed to be a boon companion of the captain; at least one took a drink as often as the other. Another of the soldiers answered to the name of Lyle; he was a gloomy, taciturn man, and said little. The remaining one of Fred's captors was a mere boy, not older than himself. He was a bright-eyed, intelligent looking fellow, tough and muscular, and from his conversation vastly above the station in life of his comrades before he enlisted. It was not long before Fred discovered that Captain Bascom

took delight in worrying the boy, whose name was Robert Ferror. In this he was followed to a greater or less extent by Drake. Not only this, but when they stopped for the night at the rude home of a mountaineer, Fred noticed that Bob, as all called him, was the drudge of the party. He not only had to care for the captain's horse, but to perform menial service, even to cleaning the mud from the captain's boots. As he was doing this, Bob caught Fred looking at him, and coloring to the roots of his hair, he trembled violently. It was evident that he felt himself degraded by his work, but seeing a look of pity in Fred's eyes, he fiercely whispered, "My mother's niggers used to do this for me," and then he cast such a look of hate on Captain Bascom that Fred shuddered. There was murder in that look.

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It was not until the evening of the second day of his capture that Piketon was reached. Along in the afternoon, away to the left, firing was heard, and every now and then, the deep boom of cannon reverberated through the valleys and gorges. Nelson was advancing on Piketon. It made Fred sick at heart to think that his friends were so near, and yet so far.

The knowledge that the Confederates were being driven seemed to anger Bascom, and he drank oftener than usual. Noticing that Bob was talking to Fred as they were riding along, he turned back and struck the boy such a cruel blow in the face that he was knocked from his horse.

By order of Bascom, Drake and Lyle dismounted, picked Bob up, wiped the blood from his face, and after forcing some whisky down his throat, placed him on his horse. At first he seemed dazed and could not guide his horse. He gradually came to himself, and when he looked at Bascom Fred saw that same murderous look come over his face which he had noticed once before. "Bascom has cause to fear that boy," thought Fred.

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When the party rode into Piketon they found everything in the utmost confusion. Preparations were being made to evacuate the place. The soldiers who had been in the fight came streaming back, bringing with them their wounded and a few prisoners. They reported thousands and thousands of Yankees coming. This added to the confusion and the demoralization of the troops.

The prisoners were thrown, for the night, in a building used as a jail. It was of hewn logs, without windows or doors, being entered through the roof, access being had to the roof by an outside stairway, then by a ladder down in the inside. When all were down, the ladder was drawn up, and the opening in the roof closed. The place was indescribably filthy, and Fred always wondered how he lived through the night. When morning came and the ladder was put down for them to ascend, each and every one thanked the Lord the rebels were to retreat, and that their stay in the noisome hole was thus ended. With gratitude they drank in mouthfuls of the fresh air.

The whole place was in a frenzy of excitement. Commissary stores they were not able to carry away were given to the flames. Every moment the advance of Nelson's army was expected. But as time passed, and no army appeared the panic somewhat subsided and something like order was restored.

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That night, the retreating army camped in a pine forest at the base of a mountain. The night was cold and rainy. Black clouds swept across the sky, the wind howled mournfully through the forest, and the cold pitiless rain chilled to the bone. Huge fires were kindled, and around them the men gathered to dry their streaming clothes and to warm their benumbed limbs.

Just before the prisoners were made to lie down to sleep, the boy, Robert Ferror, passed by Fred, and said in a low whisper:

"I will be on guard to-night. Keep awake! Lie down near the guard."

Fred's heart beat high. Was Robert Ferror going to aid him to escape? He watched where the guard over the prisoners was stationed, and lay down as close to him as possible. Soon he was apparently fast asleep, but he was never wider awake. At eleven o'clock Robert Ferror came on guard. He looked eagerly around, and Fred, to show him where he was slightly raised his head. The boy smiled, and placed his finger on his lips. Slowly Ferror paced his beat, to and fro. The minutes dragged slowly by. Midnight came. The officer of the guard made his rounds. Ferror's answer was, "All is well." Another half-hour passed; still he paced to and fro. Fred's heart sank. After all, was Ferror to do nothing, or were his words a hoax to raise false hopes? The camp had sunk to rest; the fires were burning low. Then as Ferror passed Fred, he slightly touched him with his foot. Instantly Fred was all alert. The next time Ferror passed he stooped as if he had dropped something, and as he was fumbling on the ground, whispered:

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"Crawl back like a snake. About fifty yards to the rear is a large pine tree. It is out of the range of the light of the fires. By it you will find arms. Stay there until I come."

Again the sentinel paced to and fro. It would have taken a lynx's eye to have noticed that one of the prisoners was missing, so silently had Fred made his way back.

One o'clock came, and Ferror was relieved. Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed, and still Fred was waiting. Had anything happened to Ferror? there had been no alarm.

"I will wait a little longer," thought Fred, "and then if he does not come, I will go by myself."

Soon a light footstep was heard, and Fred whispered, "Here."

A hand was stretched out, and Fred took it. It was as cold as death, and shook like one with the palsy. "He is quaking with fear," thought Fred.

"Have you got the revolver and cartridge belt?" asked Ferror, in a hoarse whisper.

"Yes."

"Then come." He still seemed to be quaking as with ague.

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Silently Ferror led the way, Fred following. Slowly feeling their way through the darkness, they had gone some distance when they were suddenly commanded to halt.

"Who comes there?" asked a stern voice. Ferror gave a start of surprise, and then answered:

"A friend with the countersign."

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

Ferror boldly advanced, leaned forward as if to whisper the word in the ear of the guard. Then there was a flash, a loud report, and with a moan the soldier sank to the ground.

"Come," shrieked Ferror, and Fred, horrified, sprang forward. Through the woods, falling over rocks, running against trees, they dashed, until at last they had to stop from sheer exhaustion.

The camp was in a wild commotion. Shouts and oaths filled the air. Men were heard crashing through the forest, escaping as they thought from an unseen foe. But when no attack came, and no other shot was heard, the confusion and excitement began to abate, and every one was asking, "What is it?" No one knew.

"The sound of the shot came from that direction," said the soldier who had taken the place of Ferror as guard.

"There is where I stationed Drake," said the officer of the guard. "I discovered a path leading up the mountain, and I concluded to post a sentinel on it. Sergeant, make a detail, and come with me."

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The detail was made, and they filed out in the darkness in the direction that Drake was stationed.

"We must have gone far enough," said the officer. "It was about here I stationed him. Drake! Drake!" There was no response.

"Strange!" said the officer. "It is not possible he has deserted, is it?"

He was groping around when he stumbled over something on the ground. He reached out his hand, and touched the lifeless body of Drake. A cry of horror burst from him. The body was taken up and carried back to camp. The officer bent over and examined it by the firelight.

"Shot through the heart," he muttered; "and, by heavens! his clothes are powder burned. Drake was shot not by some prowler, but by some one inside the lines. Sergeant, count the prisoners."

The prisoners, who had all been aroused by the commotion, were huddled together, quaking with fear.

The sergeant soon reported: "Lieutenant, there is one missing; the boy in citizen's clothes."

Colonel Williams, who had been looking on with stern countenance, now asked:

"Who was guarding the prisoners?" The colonel's tones were low and ominous.

"Scott, sir," replied the sergeant of the guard.

"Scott, here!" Poor Scott came trembling in every limb.

"Colonel," said Scott, shaking so he could hardly talk, "before God, I know nothing about the escape of the prisoner. I had not been on guard more than ten or fifteen minutes before the shot was fired. Up to that time, not a prisoner had stirred."

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"Did you notice the boy?"

"No, Colonel, I did not. I do not know whether he escaped before I came on guard or after the alarm. The sergeant will bear me witness that during the alarm I stayed at my post and kept the prisoners from escaping. The boy might have slipped away in the confusion, but I do not think he did."

"Whom did you relieve?" asked the colonel.

"Robert Ferror."

"Call Ferror."

The sergeant soon returned with the information that Ferror could not be found.

The colonel bit his lip. He cast his eye over the group of officers standing around him, and then suddenly asked: "Where is Captain Bascom?"

The officers looked blank, then inquiringly into each other's faces. No one had seen him during or since the alarm.

The sergeant of the guard hurriedly went to a rude tent where the captain slept. Pulling aside a

blanket which served as a door he entered the tent. A moment, and he reappeared with face as white as a sheet.

"He is dead!" his ashen lips shaped the words, but they died away in a gurgle in his throat.

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Captain Bascom had been stabbed through the heart.

The whole turmoil in camp was heard by Fred and Robert Ferror, as they stood panting for breath. Fred shuddered as the horrified cry of the officer of the day was borne to his ears when he stumbled on the dead body of the guard. The boys were bruised and bleeding, and their clothing was torn in shreds from their flight through the forest.

"It is all right now," said Ferror. "They can never find us in the darkness, but some of the frightened fools may come as far as this; so we had better be moving."

The boys slowly and painfully worked their way up the mountain, and at last the roar of the camp was no longer heard. They came to a place where the jutting rocks formed a sort of a cave, keeping out the rain, and the ground and leaves were comparatively dry. The place was also sheltered from the wind.

"Let us stay here," said Fred, "until it gets a little light. We can then more easily make our way. We are entirely out of danger for to-night."

To this Ferror assented, and the two boys crept as far back as they could and snuggled down close together. Fred noticed that Ferror still trembled, and that his hands were still as cold as ice.

The storm had ceased, but the wind sobbed and moaned through the trees like a thing of life, sighing one moment like a person in anguish, and then wailing like a lost soul. An owl near by added its solemn hootings to the already dismal night. Fred felt Ferror shudder and try to creep still closer to him. Both boys remained silent for a long time, but at length Fred said:

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"Ferror, shooting that sentinel was awful. I had almost rather have remained a prisoner. It was too much like murder."

"I did not know the sentinel was there," answered Ferror, "or I could have avoided him. As it was, it had to be done. It was a case of life or death. Fred, do you know who the sentinel was?"

"No."

"It was Drake; I saw his face by the flash of my pistol, just for a second, but it was enough. God! I can see it now," and he shuddered.

"Fred, do you despise me? You know I helped you to escape."

"No, Ferror; if I had been in your place, I might have done the same, but that would have made it none the less horrible."

"Fred, you will despise me; but I must tell you."

"Tell what?"

"Drake is not the first man I have killed to-night."

Fred sprang up and involuntarily drew away from him. "Ferror! Ferror! What do you mean?"

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"After I was relieved from guard, and before I joined you, I stabbed Captain Bascom through the heart."

A low cry of horror escaped Fred's lips.

"Listen to my story, Fred, and then despise me as a murderer if you will. You saw how Captain Bascom treated me. No slave was ever treated worse. My mother is a widow, residing in Tazewell county, Virginia. I am an only son, but I have two lovely sisters. I was always headstrong, liking my own way. Of course, I was humored and petted. When the war broke out I was determined to enlist. My mother and sisters wept and prayed, and at last I promised to wait. But about two months ago I was down at Abingdon, and was asked to take a glass of wine. I think it was drugged, for when I came to myself I found that I was an enlisted soldier. Worse than all, I found that this man Bascom was an officer in the company to which I belonged. Bascom is a low-lived, drunken brute. He used to live in our neighborhood. Mother had him arrested for theft and sent to jail. When he got out, he left the neighborhood, but swore he would have revenge on every one of the name. He surely has had it on me. I think he was in hopes that by brutal treatment he could make me desert, so he could have me shot if captured. When he struck me the other day, when I spoke to you, I resolved then and there to kill him."

"I know," replied Fred, in a low tone. "I saw it in your face."

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"God only knows what I have suffered from the hands of that man during the last two months. I have had provocation enough to kill him a thousand times."

"I know, I know," replied Fred; "but to kill him in his sleep. I would not have blamed you if you had shot him down when he gave you that blow. I should have done so."

"It would have been best," sobbed Ferror, for the first time giving way to his feelings. "Oh,

mother, what will you think of your boy!" Then he said, chokingly: "Fred, don't desert me, don't despise me; I can't bear it. I believe if you turn from me now, I shall become one of the most desperate of criminals."

"No, Ferror," said Fred; "I will neither desert nor judge you. You have done something I had rather lose my life than do. But for the present our fortunes are linked together. If we are captured, both will suffer an ignominious death. Therefore, much as I abhor your act, I cannot divorce myself from the consequences. Then let us resolve, come what may, we will never be taken alive."

Ferror grasped Fred's hand, and pressing it fervently, replied: "If we are captured, it will only be my dead body which will be taken, even if I have to send a bullet through my own heart."

After this the boys said little, and silently waited for the light. With the first gleam of the morning, they started on their way, thinking only of getting as far as possible from the scene of that night of horror. [Pg 181]

As the sun arose, the mountains and then the valleys were flooded with its golden light. At any other time the glorious landscape spread out before them would have filled Fred's soul with delight; but as it was, he only eagerly scanned the road which ran through the valley, hoping to catch sight of Nelson's advancing columns. But no such sight greeted him.

"They will surely come before long," said Fred. "By ten o'clock we should be inside of the Federal lines and safe."

But if Fred had heard what was passing in the Rebel camp he would not have been so sanguine.

Lieutenant Davis, officer of the guard, and Colonel Williams were in close consultation.

"Colonel," said the lieutenant, "I do not believe the Yankees are pursuing us. Those boys will take it for granted that we will continue our retreat, and will soon come down off the mountains into the road. Let me take a couple of companies of cavalry, and I will station men in ambush along the road as far back as it is safe to go. In this way I believe we stand a chance to catch them."

The colonel consented, and, therefore, before the sun had lighted up the valley, pickets had been placed along the road for several miles back.

The boys trailed along the mountain side until nearly noon, but the sides of the mountain were so seamed and gashed they made slow progress. Gaining a high point, they looked towards Picketon, and in the far distance saw an advancing column of cavalry. The sight filled them with delight. [Pg 182]

"There is nothing to be seen to the south," said Fred. "I think we can descend to the road in safety." So they cautiously made their way down to the road.

"Let us look well to our arms," said Fred. "We must be prepared for any emergency."

So their revolvers were carefully examined, fresh caps put in, and every precaution taken. They came out on the road close to a little valley farm. In front of the cabin stood a couple of horses hitched. After carefully looking at the horses, Ferror said: "Fred, one of those horses belongs to Lieutenant Davis. He has ridden back to see if he could not catch sight of us. Nelson's men will soon send him back flying."

Then a wild idea took possession of the boys. It was no less than to try and get possession of the horses. Wouldn't it be grand to enter the Federal lines in triumph, riding the horses of their would-be captors! Without stopping to think of the danger, they at once acted on the idea.

From the cabin came sounds of laughter mingled with the music of women's voices. The men inside were being pleasantly entertained.

Getting near the horses, the boys made a dash, were on their backs in a twinkling, and with a yell of triumph were away. The astonished officers rushed to the door, only to see them disappear down the road. Then they raged like madmen, cursing their fortunes, and calling down all sorts of anathemas on the boys. [Pg 183]

"Never mind," at last said Sergeant Jones, who was the lieutenant's companion in misfortune, "the squad down the road will catch them."

"Poor consolation for the disgrace of having our horses stolen," snapped the lieutenant.

The elation of the boys came to a sudden ending. In the road ahead of them stood a squad of four horsemen. Involuntarily the boys checked the speed of their horses. They looked into each other's faces, they read each other's thoughts.

"It can only be death," said Fred.

"It can only be death," echoed Ferror, "and I welcome it. I know, Fred, you look on me as a murderer. I want to show you how I can die in a fair fight."

Fred hardly realized what Ferror was saying; he was debating a plan of attack.

"Ferror," he said, "let us ride leisurely forward until we get within about fifty yards of them. No doubt they know the horses, and will be nonplused as to who we are. When we are close we will charge. It will be all over in a moment—safety or death."

Ferror nodded. He was as pale as his victims of the night before, but his eyes blazed, his teeth were set hard, every muscle was strained.

Just as Fred turned to say, "Now!" Ferror shouted, "Good-bye, Fred," and dashed straight for the horsemen. The movement was so sudden it left Fred slightly behind. The revolvers of the four Confederates blazed, but like a thunderbolt Ferror was on them. The first man and horse went down like a tenpin before the ball of the bowler; the second, and boy and man and both horses went down in an indistinguishable mass together.

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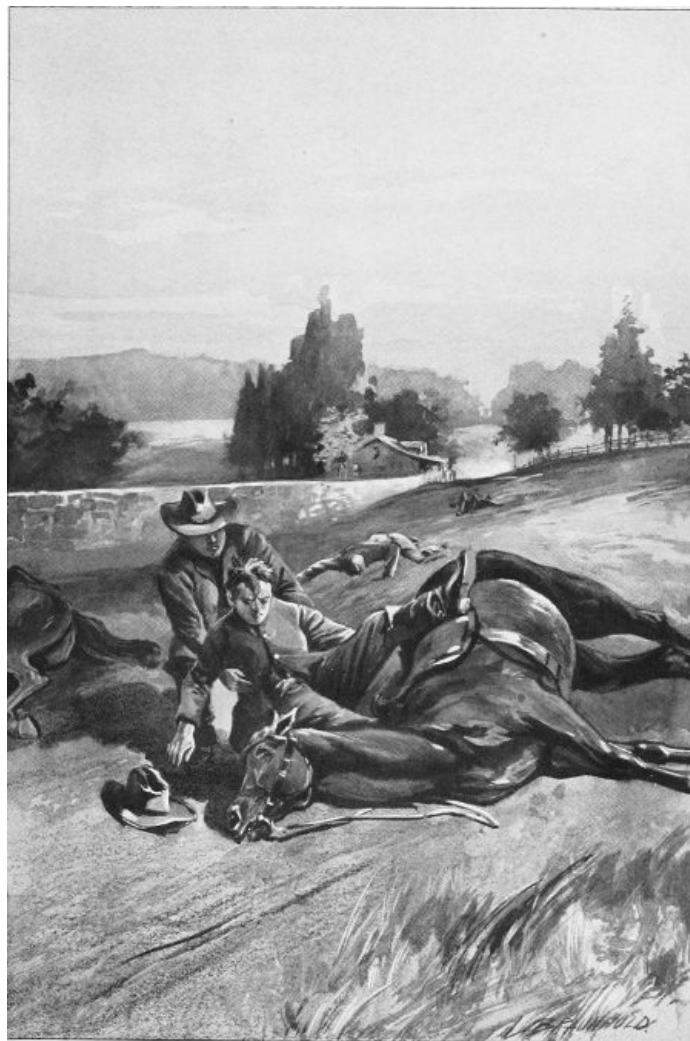
As for Fred, not for a second did he lose command of himself or his horse. He saw what was coming, and swerved to the right. Here a single Confederate confronted him. This man's attention had been attracted for a moment to the fate of his comrades in the road, and before he knew it Fred was on him. He raised his smoking revolver to fire, but Fred's revolver spoke first, and the soldier reeled and fell from his saddle.

The road was now open for Fred to escape, but he wheeled his horse and rode back to see what had become of his comrade. One Confederate still sat on his horse unhurt. Seeing Fred, he raised his pistol and fired. Fred felt his left arm grow numb, and then a sensation like that of hot water running down the limb. Before the soldier could fire the second time, a ball from Fred's pistol crashed through his brain, and he fell, an inert mass, in the road. The fight was over.

Of the two Confederates overthrown in the wild charge of Ferror, one was dead, the other was untouched by bullets, but lay groaning with a broken leg and arm. Fred turned his attention to Ferror. He lay partly under his horse, his eyes closed, his bosom stained with blood.

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Fred raised his head. "Ferror! Ferror!" he cried, with burning tears.



**Fred raised his Head, "Ferror! Ferror!" he cried.**

The boy opened his eyes and smiled. "It's all right, Fred—all right," he gasped. "That was no murder—that was a fair fight, wasn't it?"

"Oh, Ferror! Ferror!" moaned Fred. "You must not die."

"It is better as it is, Fred. I will not have that to think of."

He closed his eyes, and when he opened them again it was with a far-away look. He tried to raise himself. "Yes, mother," he whispered, and then his eyes closed forever.

The clatter of horses' hoofs, and the clang of sabers were now heard. Fred looked up; a party of Federal cavalry was bearing down upon him. They looked on the bloody scene in astonishment. A dashing young captain rode up. Fred pointed to young Ferror's lifeless body, and said: "Bring his

body back to Piketon with you. He gave his life for me. I am one of General Nelson's scouts."

Then everything grew black before him, and he knew no more. He had fainted from the loss of blood.

The rough troopers bound up his arm, stanching the flow of blood, and soon Fred was able to ride to Piketon. General Nelson received him with astonishment; yet he would not let him talk, but at once ordered him to the hospital. As for Robert Ferror, he was given a soldier's burial.

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A year after the war closed, Frederic Shackelford, a stalwart young man, sought out the home of Mrs. Ferror. He found a gray-haired, brokenhearted mother and two lovely young ladies, her daughters. They had mourned the son and brother, not only as dead, but as forever disgraced, for they had been told that Robert had been shot for desertion.

Fred gave them the little mementoes he had kept through the years for them. He told them how Robert had given his life to try and save him, and that the last word that trembled on his lips was "Mother."

The gray-haired mother lifted her trembling hands, and thanked God that her son had at least died the death of a soldier.

Learning that the family had been impoverished by the war, when Fred left, he slipped \$1,000 in Mrs. Ferror's hand, and whispered, "For Robert's sake;" and the stricken mother, through tear-dimmed eyes, watched his retreating form, and murmured: "And Robert would have been just such a man if he had lived."

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## **CHAPTER XI. CRAZY BILL SHERMAN.**

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Fred's wound was not a dangerous one. The ball had gone through the fleshy part of the arm, causing a great loss of blood; but no bones were broken, and it was only a question of a few weeks before he would be as well as ever.

The story of the two boys charging four Confederate cavalymen, killing three, and disabling the fourth was the wonder of the army. But Fred modestly disclaimed any particular bravery in the affair.

"It is to poor Bob Ferror that the honor should be given," he would say; "the boy that knowingly rode to his death that I might be saved."

Fred gave General Nelson the particulars of his capture and escape, and the general looked grave and said:

"If I had known I was going to place you in such extreme danger, I should not have sent for you. On account of the crime of young Ferror, you would have met with a most ignominious death if you had been recaptured; yet the charging on those four cavalymen was one of the pluckiest things I have heard of during the war. You deserve and shall have a good rest. I have just finished making up some dispatches for General Sherman, and you shall be my messenger. A dispatch boat leaves in the morning, and you shall go with it. When you get to Catlettsburg, you can take an Ohio river steamer for Louisville. The trip being all by water, will be an easy one, and as a number of sick and wounded will be sent away on the same boat, you will have good surgical attendance for your wounded arm. Here is a paper that will admit you to the officers' hospital when you get to Louisville. Take a good rest, you need it. I do not think it will be long before I, with my command, will be ordered back to Louisville. The enemy has retreated through Pound Gap into Virginia, and there is nothing more for me to do here. Stay in Louisville until you hear from me."

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The next morning found Fred on his way down the Big Sandy. The whole voyage was uneventful, and after a quick trip Fred once more found himself in Louisville. The rest and quiet of the voyage had almost cured the ill-effects of his experience, and with the exception of his wounded arm, which he was compelled to carry in a sling, he was feeling about as well as ever.

Once in Louisville, he lost no time in turning over his dispatches to General Sherman. He found the general surrounded by a delegation of the prominent Union men of the city. They seemed to be arguing with Sherman about something, and as for the general, he was in a towering rage, and was swearing in a manner equal to General Nelson in one of his outbreaks of anger.

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Fred was surprised to find the usually mild and gentlemanly officer in such a passion, but there was no mistake, he was angry clear through.

"There is no use talking, gentlemen," he was saying, as he paced the room with quick nervous tread, "I am not only going to resign, but I have already sent in my resignation. I will not remain in command of the Department of Kentucky another day; the command of the armies of the United States would not induce me to remain and be insulted and outraged as I have been."

"We are very sorry to hear it, General," replied the spokesman of the delegation. "We had great hopes of what you would accomplish when you were appointed to the command of the



department, and our confidence in you is still unabated."

"I am thankful," replied the general, "for that confidence, but what can you expect of a man bound hand and foot. They seem to know a great deal better in Washington what we need here than we do who are on the ground. This, in a measure, is to be expected; but to be reviled and insulted is more than I can stand. But if I had not resigned, I should be removed, I know that. Just let the newspapers begin howling at a general, and denouncing him, and every official at Washington begins shaking in his boots. What can be expected of a general with every newspaper in the land yelping at his heels like a pack of curs? If I wanted to end this war quickly, I would begin by hanging every editor who would publish a word on how the war should be conducted. It would be a glorious beginning."

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"Are you not a little too severe on the newspaper fraternity, General?" mildly put in one of the citizen delegates.

"Severe! severe! not half as severe as the idiots deserve. They think they know more about war, and how to conduct campaigns than all the military men of the country combined. Not satisfied with telling me how and when to conduct a campaign, they attack me most unjustly and cruelly, attack me in such a manner I cannot reply. Just listen to this," and the general turned and took up a scrapbook in which numerous newspaper clippings had been pasted. "Here is an editorial from that esteemed and influential paper, *The Cincinnati Commerce*," and the general read:

"It is a lamentable fact that many of our generals are grossly incompetent, but when incipient insanity is added to incompetency, it is time to cry a halt. Right here at home, the general who commands the Department of Kentucky and therefore has the safety of our city in his hands, is W. T. Sherman. We have it on the most reliable evidence that he is of unsound mind. Not only do many of his sayings excite the pity of his friends and ridicule of his enemies, but they are positively dangerous to the success of our cause. The Government should at least put the department in charge of a general of sound mind."

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"Now, if that is not enough," continued the general, with a touch of irony in his tones, "I will give you a choice clipping from the great *New York Tribune*."

"It is with sorrow that we learn that General W. T. Sherman, who is in command of the Department of Kentucky, is not in his right mind. It is said that the authorities at Washington have been aware of this for some time, but for political reasons fear to remove him. He is a brother of John Sherman, one of the influential politicians of Ohio, and United States Senator-elect. While the affair is to be regretted, the Government should not hesitate on account of political influence. General Sherman should be at once removed. That he is mentally unsound is admitted, even by his best friends. Let the administration act at once."

The whole company was smiling at the absurdity of the affair. Even the general had to laugh.

"I will read once more," said the general. "It is from the *Chicago Times*, and hits others as well as myself. Here it is:

"General Bill Sherman, in command of the Department of Kentucky, is said to be insane. We don't doubt it. In our mind the whole Lincoln Government, from President down, is insane—insane over the idea that they can coerce the South back into the Union. The only difference that we can see is that Bill Sherman may be a little crazier than the rest; that's all."

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"There," continued the general, "are only a few of the scores of extracts which I have from the most influential papers in the land. Of course the smaller papers have taken their cue from the larger ones, and now the whole pack of little whiffets are after me, snapping at my heels; and the good people believe the story because it is published. Hundreds of letters are being received at Washington, asking for my removal. My brother writes that he is overwhelmed with inquiries concerning me. I believe the War Department more than half believes I am of unsound mind. They are only waiting for an excuse to get rid of me, and I know that my resignation will be received with joy."

"General," asked one of the citizens present, "have you any idea of how the story of your insanity started?"

"Oh, yes!" replied the general. "When Secretary of War Cameron was here, I laid before him the wants of Kentucky, and among other things said that I needed 60,000 men for defensive work, but for offensive operations I should need 200,000. The Secretary spoke of it as an 'insane request.' Some reporter got hold of it, and then it went. The Secretary has never taken the pains to correct the impressions."

"Were you not a little extravagant in your demands?" asked another citizen.

"Not at all. The politicians at Washington have never yet recognized the magnitude of the war in which we are engaged. Then their whole life is office, and they are afraid of doing something that will lose them a vote. As for the newspapers, they would rather print a sensation than have us win a victory. My God! They have called me crazy so much they have alarmed my wife," and the general again indulged in another burst of anger. When he became calmer, he said: "Gentlemen, I thank you for your expressions of sympathy and confidence. I trust my successor will be more worthy than I," and he bowed the delegation out.

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Fred remained standing. The general noticed him, and asked: "Well, my boy, what is it? Why,

bless my soul, it's Fred Shackelford! Just from General Nelson, Fred?"

"Yes, General, with dispatches," and he handed them to him.

"I will read them when I cool off a little; I have been rather warm. I see your arm is in a sling; been in a skirmish?"

"Yes, General, a small one. The wound didn't amount to much; it is nearly well."

"You should be thankful it is no worse. Come in in the morning, Fred; I will have the dispatches read by that time."

Fred called, as requested, the next morning, and found the general calm and courteous as ever. The storm had passed away.

"General Nelson writes good news," said Sherman. "He reports he has entirely driven the Rebels out of the valley of the Big Sandy. He also tells me in a private letter of your capture and escape. He speaks of the desperate conflict that you and your comrade had with four Rebel cavalrymen. It was a most remarkable adventure. My boy, I shall keep my eye on you. I surely should ask for your services myself if I were going to remain in command of the department."

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"General, I am sorry to have you resign," answered Fred, hardly knowing what to say.

The general's face darkened, and then he answered lightly: "I do not think they will be sorry at Washington."

And they were not; his resignation was gladly accepted, and the general who afterward led his victorious army to Atlanta, and then made his famous march to the sea, and whose fame filled the world, retired under a cloud. And the injustice of it rankled in his breast and embittered his heart for months.

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## CHAPTER XII. A DESPERATE ENCOUNTER.

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The general appointed to succeed Sherman was Don Carlos Buell, a thorough soldier, and, like McClellan, a splendid organizer; but, like that general, he was unsuccessful in the field, and during what is known as the "Bragg-Buell campaign" in Kentucky in the fall of 1862, he entirely lost the confidence of his soldiers.

Buell's first attention was given to the organization of his army and the drilling of his soldiers. His labors in this direction were very successful, and the "Army of the Cumberland" became famous for its *esprit de corps*.

General Nelson, according to his predictions, was ordered back with his command to Louisville. Fred, now entirely well, was greatly rejoiced to once more see his old commander. But there was little prospect of active service, for the division was ordered into camp for the purpose of drilling and being perfected in military duties. Idleness was irksome to Fred, so he asked and obtained permission to join General Thomas, and remain until such time as Nelson might need his services.

General Thomas gave Fred a most cordial reception. There was something about the handsome, dashing boy that greatly endeared him to the staid, quiet general. Just now, Fred's presence was very desirable, for Zollicoffer was proving very troublesome, threatening first one point and then another, and it was almost impossible to tell which place was in the most danger. General Thomas' forces were greatly scattered, guarding different points, and he feared that at some of these places his troops might be attacked and overpowered. He had asked permission of Buell time and again to be allowed to concentrate his forces and strike Zollicoffer a telling blow, but each and every time had met with a refusal. Instead of being allowed to concentrate his force, he was ordered to move portions of his command here and there, and the orders of one day might be countermanded the next. Being December, the roads were in a horrible condition, and it was almost impossible to move trains, so that his army was being reduced by hard service which did no good. Fred could see that the general was worried. He would sit for hours buried in thought or poring over maps.

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All this time, Zollicoffer was ravaging the middle southern counties of Kentucky, threatening first London, then Somerset, then Columbia, then some intermediate point. The outposts of the army were often attacked, and frequent skirmishes took place. In the midst of this activity, Fred found congenial employment. He was kept busy carrying dispatches from one post to another, or on scouting expeditions, trying to gain information of the movements of the enemy. He frequently met squads of the enemy, and had many narrow escapes from capture; but the fleetness of his horse always saved him.

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Of all General Thomas' scouts, Fred obtained the most valuable information. While not venturing into the enemy's lines, he had a way of getting information out of the inhabitants friendly to the South that surprised even the general. Fred hardly ever made a mistake as to the movements of the opposing army.

If there was one thing that he loved more than another it was his horse. He had trained him to do anything that a horse could do. At a word he would lie down and remain as motionless as if dead. He would go anywhere he was told without hesitating, and his keen ear would detect the presence of an enemy quicker than the ear of his master. Fred had also perfected himself in the use of a revolver until he was one of the best shots in the army. He could ride by a tree at full gallop, and put three balls in a three-inch circle without checking his speed.

"My life," he would say, "may depend on my being able to shoot quickly and accurately."

On some of his scouts Fred would take a party with him, and there was not a soldier who did not consider it one of the greatest honors to be thus chosen.

One day near the close of the year Fred was scouting with a picked force of five men a few miles to the east and south of Somerset. As they were riding through a piece of wood, Prince suddenly stopped, pricked up his ears, listened a moment, and then turned and looked at his master, as if to say, "Danger ahead!"

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"To cover, boys," said Fred, in a low tone. "Prince scents trouble."

The party turned aside into the wood, and was soon completely hidden from view.

"Steady now," said Fred; "no noise."

"Are you sure your horse is as wise as you think?" asked one of the men.

"Perfectly sure; Prince never makes a mistake. Hark!"

The trampling of horses, and the jingling of sabers could plainly be heard, and soon a party of nine Confederate cavalymen came riding by. They had no thought of danger, and were laughing and talking, thinking not that death lurked so near them.

"The old traitor lives right ahead," they heard one say.

"We will learn him to harbor East Tennessee bridge-burners," said the leader with a coarse laugh.

"Will it be hanging or shooting, Sergeant?" asked a third. "I hope it will be hanging. It's such fun to see a Lincolnite hanging by the neck and dancing on air. Never shoot a man if you can hang him, is my motto."

Fred's men heard this conversation with lowering brows, and the muttered curses were deep if not loud, and five carbines were raised, but with a gesture Fred motioned them down. His men looked at him in astonishment, and there was disappointment on every face.

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As soon as the Confederates were out of hearing, so it was safe to speak, one of the men said with a sigh:

"Capt'in,"—the soldiers always called Fred captain when they were out with him—"I would hev give five dollars for a shot. I would hev fetched that feller that loved to see hangin', sure."

"I have strict orders," replied Fred, "to avoid fighting when I am out on these scouting expeditions. It is the part of a good scout never to get into a fight except to avoid capture. A scout is sent out to get information, not to fight; a conflict defeats the very object he has in view."

"That's so, capt'in, but it goes agin the grain to let them fellers off."

"I may have made a mistake," replied Fred, "in letting those fellows off. Come to think about it, I do not like what they said. It sounded like mischief."

"Worse than that, capt'in."

"We will follow them up," said Fred, "as far as we can unobserved. You remember we passed a pretty farmhouse some half a mile back; that may be the place they were talking about. We can ride within three hundred yards of it under cover of the forest."

Riding carefully through the wood, they soon came in sight of the place. Surely enough, the Confederates had stopped in front of the house. Four of them were holding the horses, while the other five were not to be seen. As they sat looking the muffled sound of two shots were heard, and then the shrieking of women.

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"Boys," said Fred, in a strained voice, "I made a mistake in not letting you shoot. Hear those shrieks? There is devil's work there. There are nine of them; we are six. Shall we attack them?"

"Aye! aye!" shouted every one, their eyes blazing with excitement.

"Look well to your weapons, then. Are you ready?"

"We are ready. Hurrah for the young capt'in!" they all shouted.

"Then for God's sake, forward, or we will be too late!" for the frenzied shrieks of women could still be heard.

They no sooner broke cover, than the men holding the horses discovered them, and gave the alarm. The five miscreants who were in the house came rushing out, and all hastily mounting their horses, rode swiftly away. The Federals, with yells of vengeance, followed in swift pursuit;

yet in all probability the Confederates would have escaped if it had not been for the fleetness of Prince. Fred soon distanced all of his companions, and so was comparatively alone and close on the heels of the enemy. They noticed this, and conceived the idea that they could kill or capture him. This was their undoing. Fred was watching for this very thing, and as they stopped he fired, just as the leader's horse was broadside to him. Then at the word, Prince turned as quick as a flash, and was running back. The movement was so unexpected to the Confederates that the volley they fired went wild.

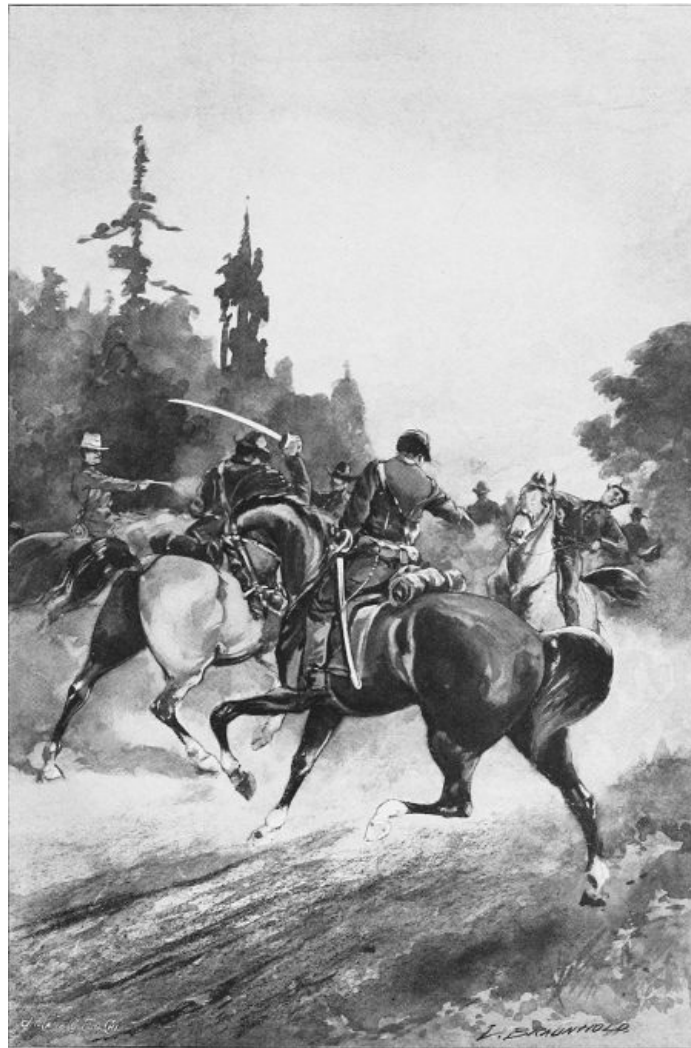
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As for the horse of the Confederate leader, it reared and plunged, and then fell heavily, pinning its rider to the ground. Two of his men dismounted to help him. When he got to his feet, he saw that Fred's companions had joined him and that they all were coming on a charge.

"Here, Simmons!" he yelled. "Let me have your horse. You take to cover. Now, boys, stand firm; there are only six of them. Here is for old Tennessee!"

But it takes men of iron nerve to stand still and receive a charge, and the Federals were coming like a whirlwind.

The Confederates emptied their revolvers at close range, and then half of them turned to flee. It was too late; the Federals were among them, shooting, sabering, riding them down. The fight was short and fierce. When it was over, eight Confederates lay dead or desperately wounded. Of the six Federals, two were dead and two were wounded. Only one Confederate had escaped to carry back the story of the disaster.



**The Federals were among them, shooting, sabering, riding them down.**

One of the wounded Confederates lay groaning and crying with pain, and Fred going up to him, asked if he could do anything for him.

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The man looked up, and then a scowl of hate came over his face.

"It's you, is it?" he groaned, and then with an oath said: "I will have you if I die for it," and attempted to raise his revolver, which he still clutched.

As quick as a flash Fred knocked it out of his hand, and as quick one of Fred's men had a revolver at the breast of the desperate Confederate. Fred knocked the weapon up, and the shot passed harmlessly over the head of the wounded man.

"None of that, Williams," said Fred. "We cannot afford to kill wounded men in cold blood."

"But the wretch would have murdered you, capt'in," said Williams, and then a cry went up from all the men. "Kill him! kill him!"

"Mercy! mercy!" gasped the wretch.

Fred looked at the man closely, and then said: "You are Bill Pearson, the man I struck with my riding-whip at Gallatin."

"Yes; mercy! mercy!"

"You miserable wretch," said Fred, contemptuously. "By good rights I ought to blow your brains out, but your carcass is not worth the powder. Live, if you can."

Just then Fred noticed a countryman who had been attracted by the sound of the firing, and motioned to him to approach. He came up trembling, and looked with wonder on the dead men and horses.

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"My good man," said Fred, "here are some wounded men that should be looked after. Can you not do it, or get word to their command?"

"I reckon I kin," slowly replied the countryman. "Must had quite a fought."

"Yes," replied Fred; "and this reminds me, boys, we had better get away from here. We do not know how many of the enemy may be near."

The wounds of the two Federals who had been hurt were bound up, and they were helped on their horses. The bodies of the two dead were then tenderly placed on two of the Confederate horses which were unhurt, and the mournful cavalcade slowly moved away.

Going back to the house which the Confederates had entered, a distressing sight met their view.

On a bed, the master of the house lay dead, shot to death by the murderers. By the bedside stood the wife and two daughters, weeping and wringing their hands. The face of the widow was covered with blood, and there was a deep gash on her head where one of the wretches had struck her with the butt of his revolver, as she clung to him imploring him not to murder her husband.

The pitiful sight drove Fred's men wild, and he had all that he could do to prevent them from going back and finishing the wounded murderers.

"You did wrong, capt'in, in not letting me finish that red-handed villain who tried to shoot you," said Williams.

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With broken sobs the woman told her story. Her husband had a brother in East Tennessee, who had been accused by the Confederate authorities of helping burn railroad bridges. He escaped with a number of Union men, and was now a captain in one of the Tennessee regiments.

"They came here," said the woman, "and found my husband sick in bed, so sick he could not raise a finger to help himself. They accused him of harboring his brother, and of furnishing information, and said that they had come to hang him, but as he was sick they would shoot him. And then," sobbed the woman, "notwithstanding our prayers, they shot him before our eyes. Oh, it was dreadful!" and the stricken wife broke completely down, and the daughters hung over the body of their murdered father, weeping as if their hearts would break.

Fred was deeply moved. He told the sobbing women that he would at once report the case, and have her husband's brother come out with his company. "We will also," said Fred, "leave the bodies of our two dead comrades here. If you wish, I will send a chaplain, that all may have Christian burial. And, my poor woman, your wrongs have been fearfully avenged. Of the nine men in the party that murdered your husband, but one escaped. The rest are dead or terribly wounded."

"Thank God! thank God!" said the women, raising their streaming eyes to heaven. Even the presence of death did not take away their desire for revenge. Such is poor human nature, even in gentle woman.

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"War makes demons of us all," thought Fred.

The story of that fight was long a theme around the camp fire, and the three soldiers who survived never tired of telling it. As for Fred, he spoke of it with reluctance, and could not think of it without a shudder. Fifteen men never engaged in a bloodier conflict, even on the "dark and bloody ground" of Kentucky.

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## CHAPTER XIII. THE MEETING OF THE COUSINS.

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General Thomas sat in his headquarters at Lebanon looking over some dispatches which Fred had just brought from General Schoepf at Somerset. His face wore a look of anxiety as he read, for the dispatches told him that General Zollicoffer had crossed to the north side of the Cumberland river and was fortifying his camp at Beech Grove.

"I may be attacked at any moment," wrote General Schoepf, "and you know how small my force is. For the love of heaven, send me reinforcements."

The general sat with his head bowed in his hands thinking of what could be done, when an orderly entered with dispatches from Louisville. Thomas opened them languidly, for he expected nothing but the old story of keeping still and doing nothing. Suddenly his face lighted up; his whole countenance beamed with satisfaction, and turning to Fred he said:

"My boy, here is news for us, indeed. General Buell has at last consented to advance. He has given orders for me to concentrate my army and attack Zollicoffer at the earliest possible moment."

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Fred could not suppress a hurrah.

"General," he exclaimed, "I already see Zollicoffer defeated, and hurled back across the Cumberland."

General Thomas smiled. "Don't be too sanguine, Fred," he said; "none of us know what the fortune of war may be; we can only hope for the best. But this means more work for you, my boy. You will at once have to return with dispatches to General Schoepf. Everything depends on his holding his position. Somerset must be held at all hazards."

"I am ready to start this minute with such tidings," gayly responded Fred. "Prince, poor fellow, will have it the hardest, for the roads are awful."

"That is what I am afraid of," replied the general. "I hope to be with Schoepf within a week, but, owing to the condition of the roads, it may take me much longer."

Within an hour Fred was on his way back to Somerset. It was a terrible journey over almost impassable roads; streams, icy cold, had to be forded; but boy and horse were equal to the occasion, and in three days reached Somerset.

How was it with General Thomas? His week lengthened into three. He commenced his march from Lebanon on December 31st; it was January 18th before he reached his destination. The roads seemed bottomless. The rain poured in torrents, and small streams were turned into raging rivers. Bridges were swept away, and had to be rebuilt. The soldiers, benumbed with chilling rain, toiled on over the sodden roads, cheerful in the thought that they were soon to meet the enemies of their country.

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General Schoepf received the news of General Thomas' advance with great satisfaction.

"If I can only hold on," he said, "until Thomas comes, everything will be all right."

"We must show a bold front, General," replied Fred, "and make the enemy believe we have a large force."

"It's the enemy that is showing a bold front nowadays," replied General Schoepf, with a faint smile. "They have been particularly saucy lately. They have in the last few days, cut off two or three small scouting parties. But what worries me the most is that there is hardly a night but that every man on some one of our picket posts is missing. There is no firing, not the least alarm of any kind, but the men in the morning are gone. It is a mystery we have tried to solve in vain. At first we thought the men had deserted, but we have given that idea up. The men are getting superstitious over the disappearance of so many of their comrades, and are actually becoming demoralized."

"General, will you turn this picket business over to me?" asked Fred, quietly.

"Gladly," replied the general. "I have heard much of your ability in ferreting out secret matters. Your success as a scout I am well acquainted with, as you know. I hope you will serve me as well in this matter of the pickets, for I am at my wits' end."

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"Well, General, to-morrow I will be at your service, and I trust you will lose no more pickets before that time," and so saying Fred took his leave, for he needed rest badly.

The next morning, when Fred went to pay his respects to the general, he found him with a very long face. "Another post of four men disappeared last night," he said.

Fred gave a low whistle. "Well, General, if possible, I will try and solve the problem, but it may be too hard for me."

"Have you any idea yet how they are captured?" asked the general.

"None at all. I must first look over the ground carefully, see how the men are posted, talk with them, and then I may be able to form an idea."

Fred's first business was to ride out to where the post had been captured during the night. This he did, noting the lay of the ground, carefully looking for footprints not only in front, but in the rear of where the men had been stationed. He then visited all the picket posts, talked with the men, learned their habits on picket, whether they were as watchful as they should be—in fact, not the slightest thing of importance escaped his notice.

On his return from his tour of inspection, Fred said to General Schoepf, "Well, General, I have my idea."

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"What is it?" asked the general, greatly interested.

"Your pickets have been captured from the rear, not the front."

"What do you mean?" excitedly asked the general.

"I mean that some of the pickets are so placed that a wary foe could creep in between the posts and come up in the rear, completely surprising the men. I think I found evidence that the men captured last night were taken in that way. I found, at least, six posts of which I believe an enemy could get in the rear without detection, especially if the land had been spied out."

"You astonish me," said the general. "But even if this is so, why does not the sentinel give the alarm?"

"He may be in such a position that he dare not," answered Fred.

"What do you propose?"

"That a double force be put on the posts, half to watch the rear. It will be my business to-night to see to that."

"Very well," replied General Schoepf. "I shall be very curious to see how the plan works, and whether your idea is the correct one or not."

"I will not warrant it, General," replied Fred, "but there will be no harm in trying."

Just before night Fred made a second round of the picket posts, and made careful inquiry whether any one of the posts had been visited during the day by any one from the outside. [Pg 211]

All of the posts answered in the negative save one. The corporal of that post said: "Why, a country boy was here to sell us some vegetables and eggs."

"Ah!" replied Fred. "Was he a bright boy, and did he seem to notice things closely?"

"On the contrary," said the corporal, "he appeared to be remarkably dull and ignorant."

"Has the same boy been in the habit of selling vegetables to the pickets?" asked Fred.

Come to think about it, the corporal believed he had heard such a boy spoken of.

Then one of the men spoke up and said:

"You know Rankin was on the post that was taken in last night. He had a letter come yesterday, and I took it out to him, and he told me of what a fine supper they were going to have, saying they had bought some eggs and a chicken of a boy."

"Jerusalem!" suddenly exclaimed the corporal, "that boy to-day walked to the rear some little distance—made an excuse for going; he might not have been such a fool as he looked."

"Thank you," replied Fred. "Corporal, I will be here a little after dark with a squad of men to help you keep watch. In the mean time keep a sharp lookout."

"That I will," answered the corporal. "Do you think that boy was a spy?" he then asked, with much concern. [Pg 212]

"I don't know," answered Fred. "But such a thing is possible. But if any trouble occurs on the picket line to-night, it will be at this post."

That night Fred doubled the pickets on six posts which he considered the most exposed. But the extra men were to guard the rear instead of the front. The most explicit instructions were given, and they were cautioned that they were to let no alarm at the front make them relax their vigilance in the rear. Thirty yards in the rear of the post where he was to watch Fred had noticed a small ravine which led down into a wood. It was through this ravine that he concluded the enemy would creep if they should try to gain the rear of the post. Fred posted his men so as to watch this ravine. To the corporal who had charge of the post, he said:

"My theory is, that some one comes up to your sentinel, and attracts his attention by pretending to be a friend, or perhaps a deserter. This, of course, will necessitate the sentinel's calling for you, and naturally attract the attention of every man awake. While this is going on, a party that has gained the rear unobserved will rush on you and be in your midst before you know it, and you will be taken without a single gun being fired."

The corporal and his men looked astonished.

"Zounds!" said one, "I believe it could be done."

"Now," continued Fred, "if you are hailed from the front to-night act just as if you had not heard of this. I will take care of the rear." [Pg 213]

When everything was prepared the soldiers, wrapped in their blankets, sat down to wait for what might come. So intently did they listen that the falling of a leaf would startle them. The hours passed slowly away. There was a half-moon, but dark clouds swept across the sky, and only now and then she looked forth, hiding her face again in a moment. Once in a while a dash of cold rain would cause the sentinels to shiver and sink their chins deeper into the collars of their great coats.

Midnight came, and still all was quiet. The soldiers not on guard lay wrapped in their blankets,

some of them in the land of dreams.

Off in the woods the hoot of an owl was heard. Instantly Fred was all attention. A few minutes passed, and again the dismal "Whoo! whoo!" this time much nearer. Fred aroused his men. Instantly they were all attention, and every sense alert.

"Have you heard anything?" whispered the sergeant, next to him.

"Nothing but the suspicious hooting of an owl," whispered back Fred. Then to the soldiers, "Perfectly still, men; not a sound."

So still were they that the beatings of their hearts could be heard. Again the dismal hoot was heard, this time so near that it startled them.

Then from the sentinel out in front came the short, sharp challenge, "Who comes there?"

He was answered immediately. "A deserter who wishes to come into the lines and give himself up." [Pg 214]

"Stand! Corporal of the guard!"

The corporal went forward to receive the deserter. Now there came the sound of swiftly advancing footsteps in front of the rear post, and dim figures were seen through the darkness.

"Fire!" shouted Fred.

Seven rifles belched forth their contents, and for a moment the flashes of the guns lighted up the scene, and then all was dark.

There were cries of pain, hoarse yells of surprise and anger, and then a scattering volley returned.

"Use your revolvers," shouted Fred, and a rapid fire was opened.

"Fall back!" shouted a voice from the darkness. There were a few more scattering shots, and all was still.

The deserter, who was so anxious to give himself up, the moment the alarm was given fired at the sentinel and vanished in the darkness.

The sound of the firing created the wildest commotion in camp. The long roll was beaten; the half-dressed, frightened soldiers came rolling out of their tents, some without their guns, others without their cartridge boxes; excited officers in their night clothes ran through the camp, waving their bare swords and shouting: "Fall in, men, for God's sake, fall in."

It was some minutes before the excitement abated, and every one was asking, "What is it? what is it?" [Pg 215]

The officer of the day, with a strong escort, came riding out to where the firing was heard. Being challenged, he gave the countersign, and then hurriedly asked what occasioned the firing.

"Oh," cheerfully responded Fred, "they tried to take us in, and got taken in themselves."

An examination of the ground in front of where Fred's squad was stationed revealed two Confederates still in death, and trails of blood showed that others had been wounded.

"You can go to your quarters," said Fred to his men. "You will not be needed again to-night; and, Lieutenant," said he, turning to the officer of the day, "each and every one of these men deserves thanks for his steadiness and bravery."

"I hardly think, General," said Fred, the next morning, as he made his report, "that your pickets will be disturbed any more."

As for General Schoepf, he was delighted, and could not thank Fred enough.

For three or four days things were comparatively quiet. Then a small scouting party was attacked and two men captured. The next day a larger party was attacked and driven in, with a loss of one killed and three wounded. The stories were the same; the leader of the Confederates was a young lieutenant, who showed the utmost bravery and handled his men with consummate skill.

"I wish," said General Schoepf to Fred, "that you would teach this young lieutenant the same kind of a lesson that you taught those fellows who were capturing our pickets." [Pg 216]

"I can try, General, but I am afraid the job will not only be harder, but much more dangerous than that one," answered Fred.

"This same young lieutenant," continued the general, "may have had a hand in that picket business, and since he received his lesson there has turned his attention to scouting parties."

"In that case," replied Fred, "it will take the second lesson to teach him good manners. Well, General, I will give it to him, if I can."

The next morning, with eight picked men from Wolford's cavalry, Fred started out in search of adventure.



"Don't be alarmed, General," said Fred, as he rode away, "if we do not come back to-night. We may take a notion to camp out."

Many of their comrades, with longing eyes, looked after them, and wished they were of the number; yet they did not know but that every one was riding to death or captivity. Yet such is the love of adventure in the human breast that the most dangerous undertakings will be gladly risked.

After riding west about three miles Fred turned south and went about the same distance. He then halted, and after a careful survey of the country ahead, said: "I think, boys, it will be as well for us to leave the road and take to the woods; we must be getting dangerously near the enemy's country."

The party turned from the road and entered a wood. Working their way through this, skirting around fields, and dashing across open places, after making a careful observation of the front, they managed to proceed about two miles further, when they came near the crossing of two main roads. Here they stopped and fed their horses, while the men ate their scanty fare of hard bread and bacon.

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They had not been there long before a squadron of at least 200 Confederate cavalry came from the south, and turning west were soon out of sight.

"I hardly think, boys," said Fred, "it would have paid us to try to take those fellows into camp; we will let them go this time," and there was a twinkle in his eye, although he kept his face straight.

"Just as you say, capt'in," replied one of the troopers, as he took a chew of tobacco. "We would have gobbled them in if you had said the word."

A little while after this a troop of ten horsemen came up the same road, but instead of turning west they kept on north. At the head of the troop rode a youthful officer.

One of the soldiers with Fred was one of the number that had been attacked and defeated two days before by the squad of which they were in search.

"That's he, that's the fellow!" exclaimed the soldier, excitedly.

Fred's breath came thick and fast. What he had come for, fate had thrown in his way.

"They are only one more than we!" he exclaimed.

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"If they were double, we would fight them," cried the men all together.

"Let them pass out of sight before we pursue," said Fred. "The farther we get them from their lines the better."

"Now," said Fred, after they had waited about five minutes. A ride of a few minutes more brought them into the road. Halting a moment, Fred turned to his men and said:

"Men, I know every one of you will do your duty. All I have to say is obey orders, keep cool, and make every shot count. Forward!"

With a cheer they followed their gallant young leader. After riding about two miles, Fred reined up and said: "They have not dodged us, have they, boys? We ought to have sighted them before this. Here is where we turned off of the road. By heavens! I believe they noticed that a squad of horsemen had turned off into the woods, and are following the tracks. Let's see," and Fred jumped from his horse, and examined the tracks leading into the woods.

"That's what they did, boys," said he, looking up. "I will give that lieutenant credit for having sharp eyes. Now, boys, we will give him a surprise by following."

They did not go more than half a mile before they caught sight of the Confederates. Evidently they had concluded not to follow the tracks any farther, for they had turned and were coming back, and the two parties must have sighted each other at nearly the same moment.

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There was the sharp crack of a carbine, and a ball whistled over the Federals' heads.

"Steady, men," said Fred. "They are coming."

But he was mistaken. The young lieutenant who led the Confederates was far too careful a leader to charge an unknown number of men. Instead of charging the Confederates dismounted, and leaving their horses in charge of two of their number the rest deployed and advanced, dodging from tree to tree, and the bullets began to whistle uncomfortably close, one horse being hit.

"Dismount, and take the horses back," was Fred's order. "We must meet them with their own game." The two men who were detailed to take the horses back went away grumbling because they were not allowed to stay in the fight.

Telling them to keep well covered, Fred advanced his men slightly, and soon the carbines were cracking at a lively rate.

But the fight was more noisy than dangerous, every man being careful to keep a tree between himself and his foe.

"This can be kept up all day," muttered Fred, "and only trees and ammunition will suffer. I must

try something else."

Orders were given to fall back to the horses, and the men obeyed sullenly. A word from Fred, and their faces brightened. Mounting their horses, they rode back as if in disorderly retreat. [Pg 220]

As soon as the Confederates discovered the movement, they rushed back for their horses, mounted, and with wild hurrahs started in swift pursuit of what they thought was a demoralized and retreating foe.

Coming to favorable ground, Fred ordered his men to wheel and charge. So sudden was the movement that the Confederates faltered, then halted.

"Forward!" cried their young leader, spurring his horse on, but at that moment a chance shot cut one of his bridle reins. The horse became unmanageable, and running under the overhanging branches of a tree, the gallant lieutenant was hurled to the ground. His men, dismayed by his fall, and unable to withstand the impetuous onslaught of the Federals, beat a precipitate retreat, leaving their commander and two of their number prisoners in the hands of their foes. Two more of their men were grievously wounded. Three of the Federals had been wounded in the mêlée.

Fred dismounted and bent over the young lieutenant, and then started back uttering an exclamation of surprise and grief. He had looked into the face of his cousin, Calhoun Pennington. Hurriedly Fred placed his hand on the fallen boy's heart. It was beating. There was no sign of a wound on his body.

"Thank God! He has only been stunned by the fall," exclaimed Fred.

In the mean time the five remaining Confederates had halted about a quarter of a mile away, and were listening to what a sergeant, now in command, was saying. [Pg 221]

"Boys," he exclaimed, "it will be to our everlasting shame and disgrace if we run away and leave the lieutenant in the hands of those cursed Yankees. Some of them must be disabled, as well as some of us. Let us charge and retake the lieutenant, or die to a man in the attempt."

"Here is our hand on that, Sergeant," said each one of the four, and one after the other placed his hand in that of the grim old sergeant.

But just as they were about to start on their desperate attempt, they were surprised to see Fred riding towards them, waving a white handkerchief. When he came in hailing distance, he cried:

"Men, your gallant young leader lies over here grievously hurt. We are going to withdraw," and wheeling his horse, he rode swiftly back.

Fred hastily made preparations to withdraw. One of his men was so badly wounded that he had to be supported on his horse; therefore their progress was slow, and it was night before they reached camp. Fred made his report to General Schoepf and turned over his two prisoners. The general was well pleased, and extended to Fred and the soldiers with him his warmest congratulations.

"If you had only brought in that daring young lieutenant with you your victory would have been complete," said the general.

"I hardly think, General," said Fred, "that you will be troubled with him any more. He was still insensible when we left, and with my three wounded men and the two prisoners it was well-nigh an impossibility for us to bring him in." [Pg 222]

"I know," replied the General, "and as you say, I think we have had the last of him."

"I sincerely hope so," was Fred's answer as he turned away, and it meant more than the general thought. Fred had a horror of meeting his cousin in conflict, and devoutly prayed he might never do so again. He slept little that night. Every time he closed his eyes he could see the pale face of his cousin lying there in the wood, and the thought that he might be dangerously hurt, perhaps dead, filled him with terror. "Why," he asked himself over and over again, "did the fortune of war bring us together?"

Let us return to the scene of the conflict, and see how Calhoun is getting along. The Confederates received Fred's message with surprise.

"That lets us out of a mighty tough scrape," remarked the sergeant. "We must have hurt them worse than we thought."

"Don't know about that," answered one of his men who was watching the Federals as they retired. "There is only one of them who appears to be badly hurt; and they have poor Moon and Hunt in limbo, sure."

"Better be prisoners than dead," answered the sergeant. "But, boys, let us to the lieutenant. It's strange the Yanks didn't try to take him back." [Pg 223]

When they reached Calhoun, he was already showing signs of returning consciousness, and in a few minutes he was able to sit up and converse.

"Where are the Yankees?" was his first question.

"Gone."

"Then we whipped them after all," and his face lighted up with joy.

"Can't say that we did, Lieutenant," answered the sergeant; "but they left mighty sudden for some reason."

Calhoun looked around on his men with a troubled countenance. "I see only five of you," he said; "where are the rest?"

"Two are back nursing wounds," answered the sergeant. "Sheldon is hit, so hard hit I am afraid he is done for. As for Moon and Hunt, they have gone off with the Yanks."

"Prisoners?"

The sergeant nodded.

The tears rolled down the cheeks of the young officer. "Boys," he said, chokingly, "I believe I have lost my grip. There was that last picket affair that went against us, and now we are all broken up in a fair combat."

"Don't take on, Lieutenant," said the sergeant, soothingly. "It was that chance bullet that cut your bridle rein that did the business. If it hadn't been for that we would have wiped them out, sure. As it is, we are thankful they didn't take a notion to lug you off." [Pg 224]

"Perhaps they thought I was dead."

"No, they didn't," replied the sergeant, and then he told Calhoun what had happened.

"What kind of a looking man was the leader of the Yanks?" asked Calhoun.

"He was a boy, no older than yourself. He was mounted on a magnificent bay horse with a star in the forehead.

"I see it all," sighed Calhoun. "The leader of that party was my cousin, Fred Shackelford. He knew me, and he spared me. Boys, help me on my horse. I am badly shaken up, but not seriously hurt. We will square accounts with those fellows one of these days."

And the little party, bearing their wounded, sadly wended their way back to the Confederate camp.

For the next few days the weather was so bad and the roads in such a terrible condition that both armies were comparatively quiet. Nothing as yet had been heard from the advance of General Thomas, and General Schoepf began to be very uneasy. At last Fred offered to ride toward Columbia, and see if he could not get some tidings of the missing column. The offer was gladly accepted, and Fred set out. He met with no adventure until about fifteen miles from Somerset, when he suddenly came face to face with a young soldier, and he supposed a Federal, as he wore a blue great coat. But a second look caused a cry of surprise to burst from Fred's lips, and at the same time the supposed Federal soldier snatched a revolver from the holster. The cousins were once more face to face. [Pg 225]

"Put up your revolver, Calhoun," cried Fred. "Is that the way you greet your cousin?"

For a moment Calhoun gazed on Fred in silence, then raising his hand in courtly salute, he suddenly turned his horse, and jumping him over a low fence, disappeared in a copse of wood.

Fred was on the point of raising his voice to call him back, when it flashed upon him that Calhoun had been playing the spy, and that he dare not stop, even for a moment.

"He was only stunned after all, when he was hurled from his horse," thought Fred. "I am so glad; a heavy load has been lifted from my mind. I am also glad he has gone now. It would have been extremely awkward for me to have found out he was a spy, and then let him go."

It was with a lighter heart that he pursued his journey, but he had gone but a short distance when he met a courier from General Thomas with dispatches for General Schoepf. He was informed that the advance of General Thomas was but a short distance in the rear. A few moments more and Fred was in the presence of his general.

"Ah, Shackelford!" said Thomas, "I am glad to see you. How is everything at Somerset?"

"All right, General, only General Schoepf has been sorely worried over your non-appearance."

"I do not wonder. The march has been an awful one, and has taken three times as long as I expected. But we will be at Logan's Cross Roads to-night, where I shall halt to concentrate my army. If the enemy does not retreat, we may look for a lively time in about three days." [Pg 226]

"The lively time, General, may come before three days," answered Fred, significantly.

"How is that?" asked Thomas, looking surprised.

"The Rebels may conclude," answered Fred, "to attack you before you can bring up the rest of your force, or get aid from Somerset. Fishing Creek is very high; I had to swim it. It will be almost impossible to get infantry or artillery over."

"I have thought of that," replied the general, smiling. "I shall try and be ready for them if they come."

## CHAPTER XIV. THE BATTLE OF MILL SPRINGS.

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Fred was right in his surmise that Calhoun had been acting the part of a spy. He had been playing a very dangerous game, and had been successful. Disguised as a country boy, he had boldly entered Columbia, and in a great measure had fathomed the plans of General Thomas. It was a matter of common report that as soon as the army could be concentrated, General Zollicoffer would be attacked. Calhoun had made a careful estimate of the strength of Thomas' army, and when met by Fred he was taking an observation of his order of march, and how long it would take the rear brigade to reinforce the advance brigade, if it should be attacked.

The sudden meeting with Fred was a surprise to him. But when he heard Fred's voice he knew his life was in no danger; yet he dare not tarry, even for a moment, and so escaped as we have seen.

No sooner was he out of sight of Fred than he checked his horse. "That was a lucky escape," he said to himself. "If I had to meet any one, it was fortunate I met Fred. Poor fellow! I wonder what he thought of me! I would so much like to have a talk with him, but it would have been madness to have stopped, and then it would have placed him in a very awkward predicament. Selim, old boy," continued he, patting his horse's neck, "we have work yet before us; we must see where General Thomas camps."

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It was early on the morning of January 18th that Calhoun rode into the Confederate camp at Beech Grove. Without changing his mud-bespattered garments, he at once sought the quarters of Major-General G. B. Crittenden, who had been placed in chief command of the army.

"Ah, Lieutenant," exclaimed the general, "I am glad to see you. I have been thinking of you, and blaming myself for permitting you to go on your hazardous adventure. He who acts as a spy takes his life in his hands."

"It is an old saying that 'all is well that ends well,'" Calhoun answered, smiling. "You ought to have seen what a splendid country bumpkin I made; and I have succeeded beyond my most sanguine expectations. I have very important news for you, General. General Thomas is now encamped at Logan's Cross Roads, only ten miles away. He will wait there for his rear brigade, and also for reinforcements from Somerset. He has only one brigade with him, numbering not much over 4,000 men."

Calhoun then went on and gave General Crittenden the full details of the strength of the Federal army, saying that he thought the rear brigade of Thomas' army could not reach Logan's Cross Roads for at least two days, and that owing to the height of water in Fishing Creek he believed it impossible for Thomas to receive reinforcements from Somerset.

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"If these forces all combine, General," continued Calhoun, "they will so far outnumber us that it would be madness to risk a battle. To-morrow Thomas will be isolated; his force is inferior to yours. I believe he can be crushed."

"You think that your information as to numbers and position is absolutely correct, do you?" asked the general.

"I do, General," answered Calhoun. "If you attack General Thomas in the morning I am confident you will attack with a superior force."

"It is either that or a disastrous retreat," said the general, gravely. "I will call a council of my officers at once. I wish you to appear before them."

"As soon as I can get off some of this mud I will be ready," answered Calhoun.

The council was called, and General Crittenden laid the facts before his officers. Calhoun was asked a great many questions, to all of which he gave full and sufficient answers. The council, without a dissenting voice, voted to attack Thomas the next morning.

It was nearly midnight when the Confederates marched out of their entrenchments, General Zollicoffer's brigade having the advance. Calhoun acted as aid on the staff of General Crittenden. The distance, ten miles, made a fearful night march, considering the roads. Calhoun afterwards said that it was one of the worst marches he ever made. The night was dark and gloomy. A cold drizzling rain fell that chilled the soldiers to the very bone. Through the rain and the mud for hour after hour the brave men of the Confederacy toiled on, animated by the hope that they would soon meet and hurl back in inglorious defeat the men whom they considered ruthless invaders of their soil. It took nearly seven hours to march that ten miles, every step being taken through mud and water, sometimes nearly knee deep.

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Just as the gray shadows in the east betokened the ushering in of the short January day, the crack! crack! of guns in front told that the Federal pickets had been alarmed. The sharp reports of those guns as they echoed back along the mud-stained ranks caused the weary soldier to forget his weariness. The cold was no longer felt, the excitement of the coming battle sent the blood tingling through the veins.

It is time to turn now to General Thomas and his little army that lay encamped at Logan's Cross Roads in the darkness and shadows of that gloomy night. Couriers had been sent back to hurry up the rear brigade; orders had been sent to General Schoepf to at once forward three regiments, but General Thomas well knew if he was attacked in the morning none of these reinforcements would reach him.

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The general sat in his tent, listening to Fred giving an account of what had happened at Somerset during the three weeks he had been there. He was especially interested in the account Fred gave of his picket fight.

"That, Shackelford," said the general, "was strategy worthy of a much older head. Your little fight was also admirably managed."

"I had rather it had been against any one than my cousin," answered Fred.

"Such things cannot be avoided," answered Thomas, with a sigh. "This is an unhappy war. I am a Virginian, and must fight against those who are near and dear to me."

Fred did not answer; he was thinking of his father.

The general sat as if buried in deep thought for a moment, and then suddenly looking up, said:

"Shackelford, you know when we were going into camp this evening that you said you feared an attack in the morning."

"I am almost positive of it, General," was Fred's reply.

"Will you give me your reasons?"

"Because the enemy is well posted and must know that you mean to attack them when your forces are consolidated, and your army will be so strong they cannot hope to stand before it. I am also of the opinion that they are well informed of your isolated position here; that one of your brigades is two days' march in the rear, also that owing to the high stage of water in Fishing Creek it will be impossible for General Schoepf to reinforce you for a day or two. I also believe that the enemy has a fair estimate of your exact strength."

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During this speech of Fred's the general listened intently, and then said: "You have a better idea of my actual position than I trust most of my officers have, but you said some things which need explaining. On what grounds do you base your belief that the enemy are so well acquainted with my situation and strength?"

"No positive proof, General, but an intuition which I cannot explain. But this impression is also based on more solid ground than intuition. Yesterday, just before I met your advance, I met a man in our uniform. When he saw me he jumped his horse over a fence and disappeared in a wood. I am almost certain he was a spy. To-day I caught a glimpse of that same man in the woods yonder on our right."

Thomas mused a moment, and then said: "If the Confederate general fully knows our situation and strength, he is foolish if he does not attack me. But if he does, I shall try and be ready for him."

The general then once more carefully examined his maps of the country, gave orders that a very strong picket should be posted, and that well in advance of the infantry pickets cavalry videttes should be placed, and that the utmost vigilance should be exercised.

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Then turning to Fred, he said: "If your expectations are realized in the morning, you may act as one of my aids. And now, gentlemen," said he, turning to his staff, "for some sleep; we must be astir early in the morning."

In the gray light of the early morning, from away out in front, there came the faint report of rifles. Nearer and more rapid grew the firing. Early as it was, General Thomas and staff had had their breakfast, and every soldier was prepared.

General Manson, in command of the advance regiments, came galloping back to headquarters.

"General," he said, "we are attacked in force."

"Go back," replied General Thomas, without betraying any more excitement than if he were ordering his men out on review, "form your men in the most advantageous position, and hold the enemy until I can bring up the rest of the troops."

In a trice aids were galloping in every direction. Fred found enough to do. The fitful reports of guns in front had become a steady roll of musketry. The loud mouth of the cannon joined in, and the heavy reverberations rolled over field and through forest. In an incredibly short time every regiment was in motion towards where the heavy smoke of battle was already hanging over the field.

Of all the thousands, the general commanding seemed the most unconcerned. He leisurely mounted his horse and trotted toward the conflict. His eye swept the field, and as the regiments came up they were placed just where they were needed. His manner inspired every one who saw him with confidence.

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To Fred the scene was inexpressibly grand. This, then, was a battle. The wild cheering of men,

the steady roll of musketry, the deep bass of cannon, thrilled him with an excitement never felt before. The singing of the balls made strange music in his ears. Now and then a shell or solid shot would crash through the forest and shatter the trees as with a thunderbolt. Soon a thin line of men came staggering back, some holding up an arm streaming with blood, others hobbling along using their guns as crutches. A few, wild with fear, had thrown away their guns, and were rushing back, lost to shame, lost to honor, lost to everything but an insane desire to get out of that hell of fire.

Fred was a born soldier. At first there was a lump in the throat, as if the heart was trying to get away, a slight trembling of the limbs, a momentary desire to get out of danger, and then he was as cool and collected as if on parade. Through the storm of balls he rode, delivering his orders with a smiling face, and a word of cheer. General Thomas noticed the coolness of his aid, and congratulated him on his soldierly qualities.

On the left, in front of the Fourth Kentucky Regiment, the battle was being waged with obstinate fury. Colonel Fry, seeing Fred, rode up to him, and said: "Tell General Thomas I must have reinforcements at once; the enemy is flanking me."

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Away went Fred to deliver the order.

"Say to Colonel Fry," said Thomas, "that I will at once forward the aid required. Until the reinforcements come, tell him to hold his position at all hazards."

The message was delivered. Fry compressed his lips, glanced along his line, saw the point of greatest danger, and quickly ordered two of his left companies to the right, leading them in person, Fred going with him.

An officer enveloped in a large gray coat suddenly rode out of the wood, and galloping up to them shouted: "For God's sake, stop firing! You are firing on your own men."

Just then two other officers rode up to the one in a gray cloak. Seeing Colonel Fry and Fred, they at once fired on them. Colonel Fry was slightly wounded, but Fred was untouched. As quick as thought both returned the fire. The officer at whom Fred fired reeled in his saddle, then straightened up and galloped to the rear. Colonel Fry fired at the officer in the gray cloak. He threw up his arms, and then plunged headlong to the ground.

The bullet from Colonel Fry's pistol had pierced the heart of General Zollicoffer.

The battle now raged along the entire line with great fury. The lowering clouds grew darker, and the pitiless rain, cold and icy, fell on the upturned faces of the dead. The cruel storm beat upon the wounded, and they shivered and moaned as their life's blood ebbed away. The smoke settled down over the field and hid the combatants from view, but through the gloom the flashes of the guns shone like fitful tongues of flame. Then the Federal line began to press forward, and soon the whole Confederate army was in full retreat.

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**The Battle now raged along the entire line with great fury.**

It was at this time that Fred's attention was attracted to a young Confederate officer, who was trying to rally his men. Bravely did he strive to stay the panic, but suddenly Fred saw him falter, sway to and fro, and then fall. Once more did the Confederates try to rally under the leadership of a young mounted officer, but they were swept aside, and the battle was over.

Fred's first thought was for the young Confederate officer whom he saw fall while trying to rally his men. There was something about him that seemed familiar. Could it be Calhoun? Fred's heart stood still at the thought. Fred soon found the object of his search. He was lying on his side, his head resting on his left arm, his right hand still grasping his sword, a smile on his face. As Fred looked on the placid face of the dead, a groan burst from him, and the tears gushed from his eyes. With his handkerchief he wiped away the grime of battle, and there, in all his manly beauty, Bailie Peyton lay before him. Fred's thoughts flew back to that day at Gallatin. No more would those eloquent lips hold entranced a spellbound audience. No more would his fiery words stir the hearts of his countrymen, even as the wind stirs the leaves of the forest.

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Tenderly did Fred have him carried back and laid by the side of his fallen chieftain. Both were given the honor due them. As soon as possible the remains of both were forwarded through the lines to Nashville.

It was not the city that Fred saw in August. Then it was wild and hilarious with joy, carried away with the pomp and glory of war. Zollicoffer was the idol of the people of Tennessee; Bailie Peyton of its young men. That both should fall in the same battle plunged Nashville in deepest mourning.

When the bodies arrived, it was a city of tears. Flags floated at half-mast; women walked the streets wringing their hands and weeping bitter tears. Their idols lay dead. Poor Nashville! She was to drink still deeper of the bitter cup of war.

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**CHAPTER XV.  
A FIGHT WITH GUERRILLAS.**

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Back over the ten miles that they had marched through the darkness and rain, the Confederate army fled in the wildest confusion. Swift in pursuit came the victorious army of Thomas. Before night his cannon were shelling the entrenchments at Beech Grove. There was no rest for the hungry, weary, despondent Confederates. In the darkness of the night they stole across the river, and then fled, a demoralized mob, leaving everything but themselves in the hands of the victors.

The next morning an officer came to Fred and said one of the prisoners would like to see him.

"One of the prisoners would like to see me," asked Fred, in surprise. "What for?"

"I don't know," answered the officer. "But he is a plucky chap; it's the young lieutenant who headed the last rally of the Rebs. He fought until he was entirely deserted by his men and surrounded by us; he then tried to cut his way out, but his horse was shot and he captured."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Fred. "It must be Calhoun," and he rushed to where the prisoners were confined.

"Calhoun!"

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"Fred!"

And the boys were in each other's arms.

"Cal, you don't know how glad I am to see you," exclaimed Fred.

"Bonds and all?" answered Calhoun, with a dash of his old spirits.

"No," said Fred; "like St. Paul, I will say 'except these bonds.' But Calhoun, I must have a good long talk with you in private."

"Not much privacy here, Fred," said Calhoun, looking around at the crowd that was staring at them.

Fred went to General Thomas and told him that his cousin was among the prisoners, and asked permission to take him to his quarters. The permission was readily given, and the boys had the day and night to themselves.

How they did talk, and how much they had to tell each other! First Fred had to tell Calhoun all about himself.

When he had finished Calhoun grasped his hand and exclaimed: "Fred, I am proud of you, if you are fighting with the Yanks. How I would like to ride by your side! But of all your adventures, the one with poor Robert Ferrer touches me deepest. Poor fellow! he should have lived. He must have had a great deal of pure gold about him, notwithstanding his cowardly crime."

"He did," sighed Fred, "he did; and yet I can never think of the assassination of Captain Bascom without a shudder. On the other hand, I can never think of Ferrer's death without tears. As I think of him now, I am of the opinion that the indignities heaped upon him had, in a measure, unbalanced his mind, and that the killing of Bascom was the act of an insane person. But, Cal, I hate to talk about it; that night of horrors always gives me the shivers. So tell me all about yourself."

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"There is not much to tell," answered Calhoun. "You know I left Danville with your father for Bowling Green. Owing to the influence of my father, I was commissioned a second lieutenant and given a place on the staff of Governor Johnson. You know a provisional State government was organized at Bowling Green, and G. M. Johnson appointed Governor. When General Buckner tried to capture Louisville by surprise, and you objected by throwing the train off the track, I was one of the victims of the outrage. I recognized you, just as your father ordered the volley fired."

"My father!" gasped Fred. "My father! did he order that volley fired at me?"

"Yes; but he did not know it was you when he gave the order. When I called out it was you, he nearly fainted, and would have fallen if one of his officers had not caught him. He wanted to resign then and there, but General Buckner would not hear of it. Really, Fred, I think he would have ordered that volley even if he had known you; but if you had been killed, he would have killed himself afterward."

"Poor father!" sighed Fred. "He loves me even if he has disowned me."

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"Well," continued Calhoun, "to make a long story short, I became prodigiously jealous of you. You were covering yourself with glory while I was sitting around doing nothing. It was awful dull at Bowling Green. As Zollicoffer appeared to be the only one of the Confederate generals who was at all active, I asked and received permission to join him, where I was given a roving commission as a scout. If I do say it, I made it rather lively for you fellows. At length I hit upon a nice little plan of capturing your pickets, and was quite successful until you found it out and put an end to my fun."

"Calhoun," exclaimed Fred, in surprise, "was it you with whom I had that night fight?"

"It was, and you came near making an end of your hopeful cousin, I can tell you. Out of seven men, I had two killed and four wounded. Only one man and myself escaped unhurt, and I had three bullet holes through my clothes. That put an end to my raids upon your pickets, and I confined myself to scouting once more. Then came that unlucky fight with you in the woods. Fred, I must congratulate you on the way you managed that. Your retreat showed me your exact strength, and I thought I could wipe you off the face of the earth. Your sudden wheel and charge took us completely by surprise, and disconcerted my men. That shot which cut my bridle rein took me out of the fight, and perhaps it was just as well for me that it did. When I came to and found out what had been done, I at once knew you must have been in command of the squad, and

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if I could I would have hugged you for your generosity."

"Cal," replied Fred, his voice trembling with emotion, "you can hardly realize my feelings when I saw you lying pale and senseless there before me; it took all the fight out of me."

"I know, I know," answered Calhoun, laying his hand caressingly on Fred's shoulder. "I was badly shaken up by that fall, but not seriously hurt. Now, comes the most dangerous of my adventures. When I met you in the road, I——"

"Stop!" broke in Fred, "not another word. Of course you were on one of your scouting expeditions."

A curious look came over Calhoun's face, and then he said, in a low voice: "You are right, Fred; I was on one of my scouting expeditions," and he shuddered slightly.

"Fred," suddenly asked Calhoun, "is there any possible way for me to keep from going to prison?"

"Sometimes prisoners give their parole," answered Fred. "I will see what can be done."

The next morning General Thomas sent for Fred, and said that he was about to send some dispatches to General Buell at Louisville. "And," continued he, "owing to your splendid conduct and the value of the services you have rendered, I have selected you as the messenger. Then, in all probability, it will be very quiet in my front for some time, and General Nelson may have more active work for you. You know," he concluded with a smile, "I only have the loan of you."

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Fred heartily thanked the general for the honor bestowed, and then said: "General, I have a great boon to ask."

"What is it?" asked the general, kindly. "If possible I will grant it."

"You know my cousin is here a prisoner. He is more like a brother than a cousin—the only brother I ever knew. The boon I ask is that you grant him a parole."

"Bring him here," said the general.

Calhoun was sent for, and soon stood in the presence of the general.

"An officer, I see," said the general, as he glanced Calhoun over.

"Yes, sir; Lieutenant Calhoun Pennington of Governor Johnson's staff," answered Calhoun, with dignity.

"What were you doing up here if you are one of Johnson's staff?" asked the general.

"I was here on special duty."

"Lieutenant, your cousin has asked as a special favor that you be granted a parole. He says that you reside in Danville, and as he is going to Louisville, he would like to have you accompany him as far as your home."

"General," answered Calhoun, "you would place me under a thousand obligations if you would grant me a parole; but only on one condition, and that is that you effect my exchange as quickly as possible."

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The general smiled. "I see," said he, "that you and Shackelford are alike; never satisfied unless you are in the thickest of the fray. I think I can satisfy you."

The parole was made out, and Fred and Calhoun made preparations to start for Danville. Never did two boys enjoy a ride more than they did.

In spite of bad roads and bad weather, the exuberance of their spirits knew no bounds. They were playmates again, without a word of difference between them. As far as they were concerned, the clouds of war had lifted, and they basked in the sunlight of peace.

"I say, Fred," remarked Calhoun, "this is something like it; seems like old times. Why did this war have to come and separate us?"

Fred sighed. "The war, Calhoun," he answered, "has laid a heavier hand on me than on you, for it has made me an outcast from home."

"Don't worry, Fred; it will come out all right," answered Calhoun, cheerily.

On the morning of the second day the boys met with an adventure for which they were not looking. Even as early in the war as this, those roving bands of guerrillas which afterward proved such a curse to the border States began to appear. It was somewhat of a surprise to the boys when four men suddenly rode out of the woods by the side of the road, and roughly demanded that they give an account of themselves.

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"By whose authority do you stop us?" indignantly demanded Fred.

"By my authority," answered the leader, with a fearful oath.

"And your authority I refuse to acknowledge," was the hot answer.

"See here, young man, you had better keep a civil tongue in your head," and as the leader said

this he significantly tapped the butt of his revolver.

Calhoun here interposed. "What is it you wish?" he asked.

"I wish to know who you are, and where you are going, and that —— quick."

"That is easily answered," replied Calhoun. "As you see by my uniform, I am a Confederate officer. I am on parole, and am on my way to my home in Danville, there to wait until I am regularly exchanged."

"A fine story," said the leader. "And I suppose your companion is also in the Confederate service."

"Not at all," replied Fred, quietly. "I am in the service of the United States."

"You are, are you?" sneered the man. "I think both of you are Lincolnites. We will have to search you, and I think in the end shoot you both."

"Here is my parole," said Calhoun, his face growing red with anger.

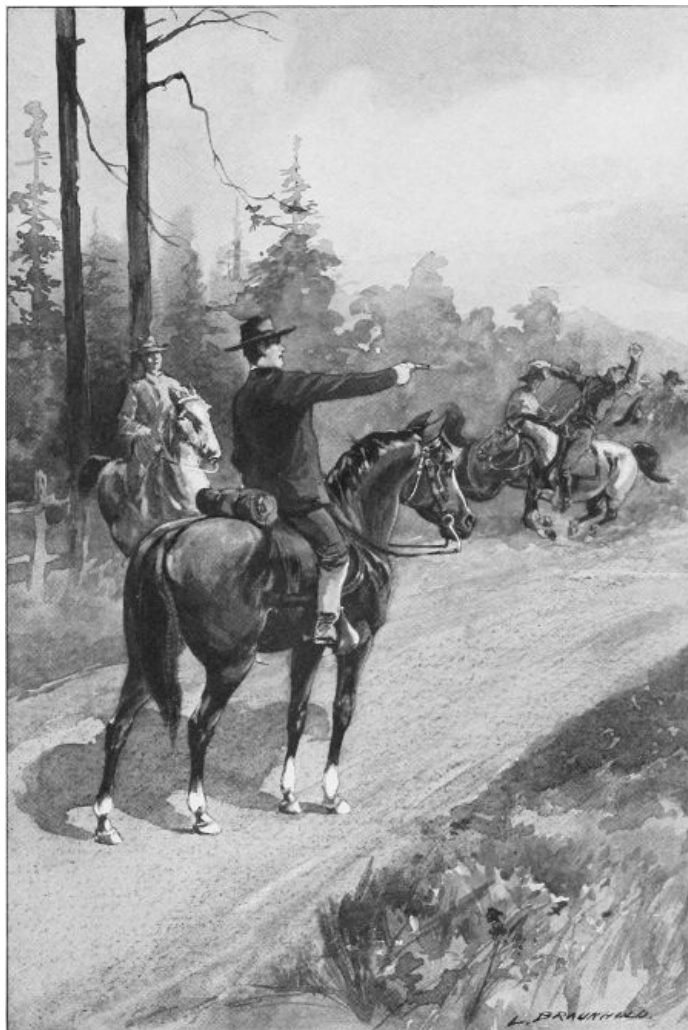
The man took it, glanced it over, and then coolly tore it in two, and flung it down.

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"Any one can carry such a paper as that. Now, climb down in a hurry. We want them horses, and we want you. Boys, it will be fun to try our marksmanship on these youngsters, won't it?" and he turned to his companions with a brutal laugh.

But the guerrillas made a great mistake; they thought they were only dealing with two boys, and were consequently careless and off their guard.

With a sharp, quick look at Calhoun which meant volumes, Fred quickly drew his revolver. There was a flash, a report, and the leader of the guerrillas dropped from his horse. With a startled oath, the others drew their revolvers, but before they could raise them there were two reports so close together as almost to sound as one, and two more of the gang rolled from their horses. The remaining one threw up his hands and began to beg for mercy.



**Fred drew his Revolver, and the Guerrilla dropped from his horse.**

"You miscreant you," exclaimed Calhoun, covering him with his revolver. "I ought to send a ball through your cowardly carcass, to be even with my cousin here; for he got two of you, while I only got one."

"Oh, mercy! mercy!" begged the trembling wretch. "I have a wife and children."

"You have; then so much the worse for the wife and children."

"I am not fit to die," he blubbered.

"That is plain to be seen," answered Calhoun. "Now off that horse!"

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The fellow obeyed with alacrity.

"Now hand me your weapons—butts first, remember."

The pistols were handed over.

"Now pick up that parole your leader tore and threw down, and hand it to me."

This was done.

Calhoun sat eyeing him a moment, and then continued: "I ought to shoot you without mercy, but I believe in giving a dog a chance for his life, and so I will give you a chance. You mount your horse, and when I say 'Go,' you go. After I say 'Go' I shall count five, and then shoot. If I miss you, which I don't think I shall, I shall continue shooting as long as you are in range; so the faster you go, the better for you. Now, mount."

The man looked appealingly at Calhoun, but seeing no mercy, mounted his horse as quick as his trembling limbs would let him. His face was white with fear, and his teeth fairly rattled they chattered so.

Calhoun reined his horse around so he was by the fellow's side. Then he shouted "Go!"

The man gave a yell of terror, bent low over his horse's neck and was off like a shot. Calhoun with a chuckle fired over him, and the fellow seemed to fairly flatten out. Four times did Calhoun fire, and at each report the flying horseman appeared to go the faster.

As for Fred, he was convulsed with merriment, notwithstanding the grewsome surroundings.

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"Leave these carrion where they are," said Calhoun in response to a question from Fred as to what disposition they should make of the dead. "That live companion of theirs will be back when we are gone."

They rode along in silence for a while, and then Calhoun suddenly said: "Fred, how I wish I could always fight by your side. It's a pity we have to fight on different sides."

"Just what I was thinking of, Cal," answered Fred; "but we have the satisfaction of knowing we have fought one battle together."

"And won it, too," shouted Calhoun.

They reached Danville in due time and without further adventure. To say that Judge Pennington was surprised to see them riding up together would be to express it mildly; he was astounded. Then he had his arms around his boy, and was sobbing, "My son! my son!"

"And Fred, too," said the judge, at last turning from welcoming his son. "I am truly glad to see you, my boy. But how in the world did you two happen to come together?"

And so the whole story had to be told, and the judge listened and wondered and mourned over the defeat of the Confederates at Mill Springs.

"My boy," said the judge, with tears glistening in his eyes, "at least I am glad to know that you did your duty."

"Aye! he did that, uncle," exclaimed Fred. "If all the Confederates had been like Calhoun, we might not have won the victory."

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"Unless all the Federals had been like you," responded Calhoun gallantly.

The judge would have both boys tell him the full particulars of their adventures, and listened to their recital with all the pleasure of a schoolboy. But when they were through, he shook his head sadly, and said: "Boys, you can't keep that pace up. You will both be killed. But I am proud of you, proud of you both, if Fred is fighting for that horrible Lincoln."

It was a happy day Fred spent at his uncle's. It seemed like old times. If bitterness was felt towards him it was not shown.

When it was noised about that both Calhoun and Fred had returned, they were besieged with callers. The story of the battle of Mill Springs had to be told again and again. Colonel Fry was one of the influential citizens of the city, and especially were they eager to hear the particulars of his killing General Zollicoffer.

Fred concluded to ride his horse to Louisville, instead of riding to Nicholasville or Lebanon and taking the cars from one of those places.

"I must have Prince wherever I go after this," he said.

"Hello! my boy, is that you?" asked General Nelson, as Fred rode up to his headquarters after a very prosaic journey of three days.

"It is no one else, General," laughed Fred, as he dismounted. "Here I am, here is my good horse, Prince, and here is a letter to you from General Thomas."

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Nelson took the letter, read it, and looking up smiling, said: "I see you still keep up your habit of doing something unusual. Thomas speaks in the highest terms of your work. Then you were at Mill Springs?"

"Yes, General."

"Glorious victory! glorious victory! the first real victory we have gained. Did you bring full dispatches with you?"

"Yes, General; I have voluminous dispatches for General Buell. I was so eager to see you I stopped before delivering them."

"Ah, my boy, I believe you do think something of bluff old Nelson after all, even if he has a devil of a temper," and the general kindly patted the boy on the head.

Fred's eyes filled with tears. "You know, General," he said, brokenly, "that you took me in, when my father cast me out."

"For the good of the country, my boy, for the good of the country," said the general brusquely. "But, come, Fred, I will ride over to General Buell's headquarters with you. I would like to see General Thomas' full report of the battle."

They found General Buell in the highest of spirits, and Fred was given a warm welcome. He looked over General Thomas' report, and his whole face beamed with satisfaction. He asked Fred a multitude of questions, and was surprised at the knowledge of military affairs which he showed in his answers. [Pg 251]

"I think, General," said General Buell, turning to Nelson, after he had dismissed Fred, "that you have not overestimated the abilities of your protégé. In a private note General Thomas speaks in the highest terms of him. I shall do what you asked."

"Thank you, General," said Nelson. "Somehow I have taken wonderfully to the boy."

What it was General Buell was to do for Fred, that individual was in ignorance.

While in Louisville many of Fred's leisure moments were spent at the hospitable home of the Vaughns. Mabel's betrothed was now at the front, and it was astonishing how much note paper that young lady used in writing to him.

"You don't write that often to your brother," said Fred, smiling.

"My brother?" asked Mabel, looking up in surprise.

"Yes, your humble servant; didn't you adopt me as a brother?"

Mabel burst out laughing. "Oh!" she replied, "one doesn't have to write so often to a brother. Lovers are like babies; they have to be petted. But to change the subject, where does my knight-errant expect to go for his next adventure?"

"I don't know," answered Fred. "Things appear to be rather quiet just now." [Pg 252]

But events were even then transpiring that were to take Fred to a different theater of action.

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## **CHAPTER XVI. FORT DONELSON.**

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Commodore Foote and General U. S. Grant sat conversing in the headquarters of the latter at Cairo, Illinois. The general was puffing a cigar, and answered in monosyllables between puffs.

"You have heard nothing yet, have you, General," the commodore was asking, "of that request we united in sending to General Halleck?"

"Nothing," answered Grant, moodily.

There was silence for some time, the general apparently in deep thought. The commodore broke the silence by asking:

"You went to see him personally once on this matter, did you not?"

"He ungraciously gave me permission to visit St. Louis in order to see him, after I had begged for the privilege at least half a dozen times," Grant answered.

"And you laid the matter before him in all its bearings?"

"I tried to."

"What did he say?"

"Say! he struck me."

"Struck you?" asked the commodore, starting in surprise. [Pg 254]

Grant smiled. "I mean," said he, "that he struck me metaphorically. I don't believe he would have hurt me as badly, if he had really struck me. I was never so cut in all my life. I came away feeling that I had committed an unpardonable sin from a military standpoint."

"Then he would not hear to the proposition at all?"

"Hear it! He would not listen to me. I came away resolving never to ask another favor of him. Yet so anxious am I to make this campaign that, as you know, I swallowed my pride and united with you in making the request that we be allowed to make the movement."

"It is strange," replied the commodore, "that he should ignore both our requests, not favoring us even with a reply. Yet it seems that he must see that Fort Henry should be reduced at once. If we delay, both the Cumberland and the Tennessee will be so strongly fortified that it will be almost impossible to force a passage. Everything is to be gained by moving at once. Everything may be lost by delay."

"Even a civilian ought to see that," replied Grant, as he slowly blew a cloud of smoke from his mouth, and watched it as it lazily curled upward.

"The truth of it is," Grant continued slowly, as if weighing every word, "too many of us are afraid that another general may win more honor than we. Then there are altogether too many separate commands. Now, here are Buell and myself; each with a separate command, yet both working for the same object. I should either be subject to the command of Buell, or he should be subject to my orders. We are now like two men trying to lift the same burden, and instead of lifting together, one will lift and then the other. Such a system can but prolong the war indefinitely."

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"General," said the commodore, earnestly, "I sincerely wish you had the supreme command here in the West. I believe we would see different results, and that very soon."

Grant blushed like a schoolgirl, fidgeted in his seat, and then said: "Commodore, you do me altogether too much honor. But this I will say, if I had supreme command I should not sit still and see the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers fortified without raising a hand to prevent it. Neither do I believe in letting month after month go by for the purpose of drilling and organizing. The Government seems to forget that time gives the enemy the same privilege. What is wanted is hard blows, and these blows should be delivered as soon as possible. Sherman was right when he asked for 200,000 men to march to the Gulf, yet he was sneered at by the War Department, hounded by every paper in the land, called insane, and now he is occupying a subordinate position. The war could be ended in a year. No one now can tell how long it will last."

Just then a telegram was placed in Grant's hands. He read it, and his whole face lighted up with pleasure.

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"You look pleased," said the commodore. "The telegram must bring good news."

Without a word Grant placed the telegram in the hands of the commodore. It was an order from General Halleck to move up the Tennessee as soon as possible and capture Fort Henry.

"At last," said the commodore, his face showing as much pleasure as did Grant's.

"At last," responded Grant; and then, quickly, "Commodore, we may have done an injustice to General Halleck. There may be good reasons we know not of why this order should not have been made before. Commodore, be ready to move with your fleet to-morrow."

"That soon?" asked the commodore.

"That soon," responded Grant.

"General, I shall be ready; and now good-bye, for both of us have much before us. But before I go, let me congratulate you. I believe that success and great honor await you," and with these words the commodore withdrew.

The next day, with 15,000 men, General Grant was steaming up the Tennessee.

General Buell sat in his headquarters at Louisville. General Nelson, accompanied by Fred, had dropped in to see his general, and at the same time to give vent to some of his pent-up feelings.

"It's a shame, a shame!" he fumed, "for us to sit here and let the Rebels fortify Bowling Green and Dover and Columbus, and build forts to blockade the Tennessee, and we not raise a finger to prevent it."

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Buell smiled at his irate general, and asked: "And what would you do, Nelson?"

"Do!" roared Nelson, "do! I would strike, and strike hard. I would give them precious little time to build forts."

Before General Buell could answer, an orderly entered with a telegram. He read it, and turning to Nelson, said:

"Well, General, you can cease your fuming. This telegram is from General Halleck. He tells me he has ordered General Grant up the Tennessee to reduce Fort Henry, and he wants me to co-operate as much as possible in the movement."

Nelson was on his feet in an instant.

"General," he exclaimed, "I have a favor, a great favor to ask of you."

Buell smilingly answered: "I think I know what it is without your asking. You want me to send your division."

Nelson bowed.

"I do not see how I can spare so many men; you know we have Johnston at Bowling Green to look after."

"But General," answered Nelson, "the Tennessee and Cumberland must be defended. In all probability the most of Johnston's army will be transferred there."

"In that case, General," answered Buell, "I will remember you. Your division shall be the first one sent." [Pg 258]

"Thank you, General, thank you," replied Nelson. "I only wish I knew I was going."

"As it is now," continued Buell, "I shall order General Crittenden to send Cruft's brigade. That brigade is near the mouth of Green river. There is no force of the enemy, in any number, before them, and the brigade can well be spared. I shall send no more men unless it is absolutely necessary. I shall at once dispatch an officer to General Crittenden with necessary orders."

"General," now spoke up Fred, "like General Nelson, I have a request to make, and by your kindness I hope to meet with better success."

"Ah!" said Buell, "you wish to carry the orders. If Nelson has no objection, I think I can grant that request. The general has told me something of your history, Mr. Shackelford. General Thomas also speaks in the highest terms of you."

"You can go if you wish, Fred," answered Nelson. "I only hope I shall soon be with you."

So it was settled, and before night Fred and his good horse Prince were on their way down the Ohio. Fred not only carried dispatches to General Crittenden, but he had personal letters both from General Buell and General Nelson to General Cruft commending him to the latter officer.

Disembarking at Owensboro, Fred made a swift ride to Calhoun, the headquarters of General Crittenden. He delivered his dispatches to the general, and at once sought the headquarters of General Cruft. The general read Fred's letters, and then said: "You are very welcome, Mr. Shackelford; you may consider yourself as one of my staff until such time as General Nelson may join us." [Pg 259]

Soon orders came to General Cruft to at once prepare to join Grant.

It was nearly noon on February the 14th when the fleet on which General Cruft's brigade had embarked arrived at Fort Donelson. The place had already been invested two days, and some severe fighting had taken place. The weather, from being warm and rainy, had suddenly turned cold on the afternoon of the 13th, and Fred shivered as he emerged from the comfortable cabin of the steamboat and stepped out on the cold, desolate bank of the river. The ground was covered with ice and snow, and the scene was dreary in the extreme.

Now and then the heavy reverberation of a cannon came rolling down the river, and echoed and re-echoed among the hills. A fleet of gunboats lay anchored in the river, the mouths of their great guns looking out over the dark sullen water as though watching for their prey. General Cruft's brigade was assigned to the division of General Lew Wallace, which occupied the center of the Federal army. Back in the rear little groups of soldiers stood shivering around small fires, trying to warm their benumbed limbs, or to cook their scanty rations.

The condition of the soldiers was pitiable in the extreme. There were no tents; but few had overcoats, and many on the hard, muddy march from Fort Henry had even thrown away their blankets. In the front lines no fires could be lighted, and there the soldiers stood, exposed to the furious storm of sleet and snow, hungry, benumbed, hardly knowing whether they were dead or alive. Such were the heroes who stood for three days before Donelson. [Pg 260]

As Fred looked on all this suffering, he wondered at the fortitude with which it was endured. There were few complaints from the soldiers; they were even cheerful and eager to meet the foe.

About three o'clock the gunboats came steaming up the river and engaged the Confederate batteries.

It was a most sublime spectacle, and held Fred spellbound. The very heavens seemed splitting, and the earth shook and trembled from the heavy concussions. Nearer and nearer the gunboats came to the batteries until it seemed to Fred the great guns were vomiting fire and smoke into each other's throats.

During the fight Fred noticed a small, thickset man sitting on his horse intently watching the fight. His countenance was perfectly impassive, and one could not tell by watching him whether he sympathized with friend or foe.

For two hours the conflict raged. The boilers of the Essex had been blown up, the other boats were bruised and battered and torn by the great shots which had struck them, and were helplessly drifting down the stream. The gunboats had been defeated. From the Federal side [Pg 261]

there went up a great groan of disappointment, while from the Confederate lines there arose the wild cheers of victory.

The silent man on horseback turned and rode away. Not a sign, not a word that he was disappointed.

"Who is that man?" asked Fred of an officer standing by him.

"That, young man," was the answer, "is General Grant. He must be awfully cut up, but he does not show it."

Fred turned and looked after Grant as he rode slowly away. "There," thought Fred, "is a man who is going to make his mark in this war. In some of his actions he reminds me of General Thomas. Nothing seems to excite him."

Night and darkness came. On the frozen ground, without tents or fire, the soldiers once more made their beds. The wind sighed and moaned through the bare branches, as if weeping at the suffering it caused. Many, to keep from freezing, never lay down, but kept up a weary march, so that the blood might circulate. The long hours dragged slowly along.

Over in the Confederate lines all was activity. A council of war was held, and it was resolved that in the morning they would cut their way through the lines of steel which Grant had thrown around them. All preparations were made, every order given, and then they waited for the light of morning—the last morning that hundreds would ever see. [Pg 262]

It was hardly light when Fred was awakened by the fitful sound of musketry over on the right. In front of Wallace's division only the report of a rifle of a picket was heard now and then. Hurriedly eating a little breakfast, he mounted his horse and reported to General Cruft for duty. The men were all standing at arms, but there was nothing for them to do. But over on the right the rattle of musketry grew more intense, the roll of heavy volleys began to be heard, and then the deep-voiced cannon joined in the chorus. Louder and louder grew the din of the conflict. The smoke of battle began to ascend above the treetops like smoke from a burning coal-pit. The sound of battle came nearer, the roll of musketry was incessant, the thunder of cannon never ceased.

An officer wild with excitement came spurring his foaming horse up to General Wallace.

"General McClernand wants help," he gasped. "The whole Rebel army has attacked his division."

"I have orders from General Grant to hold this position at all hazards," replied Wallace. "I must have orders from him."

To Grant's headquarters the officer rides in frantic haste. The general was away; he had started at five o'clock to see Commodore Foote, who had been wounded in the battle of the night before, and was on board of one of his gunboats, and the boats lay some five or six miles below.

Would not some one of his staff give orders to send reinforcements to McClernand. No; none would take the responsibility. The officer groaned, and rode back to McClernand with the heavy tidings. [Pg 263]

Minutes go by, the thunder of battle is terrific. The Federals are being driven. The exultant cheering of the advancing foe is heard above the roar of conflict.

Another officer, with his horse bleeding from wounds, his hat gone, and tears streaming down his face, rides to General Wallace. "For God's sake, help!" he gasps, "or everything is lost; we are flanked, we cannot hold out longer."

Then General Wallace said: "I will take the responsibility; help you shall have." And with his face lighted up with joy the officer dashed back to tell McClernand that help was coming.

An order comes to General Cruft to at once march his brigade to the scene of action. No sooner is the command given than the brigade is on the way. Soon shot and shell are crashing overhead, and singing bullets begin to cut the twigs of the bushes around. Now and then a soldier falters and goes down. A smooth-faced, florid man rides up to General Cruft. "I am Colonel Oglesby," he says; "my brigade is being flanked on the right. Let me lead you in position; my men are nearly out of ammunition." And then as calmly as if on parade Colonel Dick Oglesby leads Cruft's brigade to the relief of his men. Soon the brigade is in the midst of the conflict. Here and there Fred rides carrying orders. The excitement of battle is on him, and he feels no fear. [Pg 264]

Oglesby's brigade is out of ammunition. Sullenly his men fall back, leaving over 800 of their number dead and wounded on the field, but his left regiment refuses to go. The colonel, a large, dark man, with hair as black as midnight, eyes like flaming stars, rages up and down the line like a lion. Fred gazes on him in admiration. He is typical of war incarnate.

"Who is he?" Fred asks of a wounded soldier hobbling back.

"Colonel John A. Logan," is the answer.

At last his men are out of ammunition, and Logan, bleeding from two wounds, is obliged to lead his regiment back. Another regiment takes its place, and after a dreadful conflict, is compelled to fall back, leaving over 300 of their number dead and wounded.

Cruft's brigade was now on the extreme right, cut off from the rest of the army. The enemy

pressed upon them; a withering volley sent them reeling back. "Charge!" was the order. Fred spurred forward, and seizing the colors of a Kentucky regiment, shouted: "Now, boys, for the honor of old Kentucky."

The enemy flew before them like frightened sheep. But on either flank the enemy pressed, and the brigade, combating every foot, was forced back.

The enemy had gained the desired end; McClernand's division was out of the way, the road to retreat was open. Why was it not taken advantage of? Because of the imbecility of Generals Floyd and Pillow.

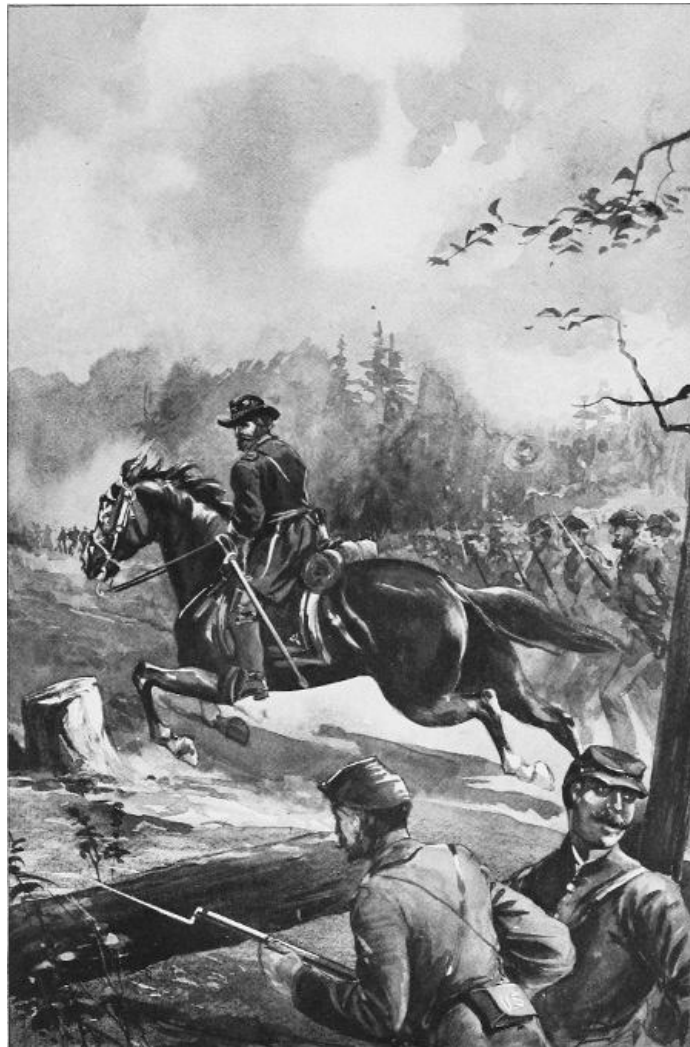
[Pg 265]

Broken, and with a third of its number dead and wounded, McClernand's division is driven back on Lew Wallace. Officers, stunned with the disaster, come wildly galloping through Wallace's lines, shouting, "All is lost! all is lost!"

Wallace changes front to meet the exultant, advancing foe. Firm as adamant his lines stand. In the faces of the charging Confederates his men pour their crushing volleys. The enemy waver, reel, then go staggering, bleeding back.

Where is Grant all of this time? In conference with Commodore Foote on board of a gunboat six miles down the river. He is too far away to hear the roll of musketry, and the thunder of artillery he thinks but cannonading between the two lines. It is past noon when the conference is ended and he is rowed ashore. There stands a staff officer with bloodless face and shaking limbs. In a few words the story of the disaster is told. Without a word Grant listens, and then mounts his horse. The iron shoes of his steed strike fire on the frozen ground as he gallops back. He arrives just as the foe is repulsed by Wallace's division. His eye sweeps the field.

"Why, boys," he cries, "they are trying to get away; we mustn't let them."



**"Why, boys, they are trying to get away; we mustn't let them."**

The words act like magic as they are borne along the lines. Cartridge boxes are replenished, and the soldiers, who a few moments before were in retreat, are now eager to advance. The lines are re-formed and the army sweeps forward. This time it is the Confederates who are pressed back, and soon the open road is closed. The chance to escape is forever gone; Fort Donelson is doomed.

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Darkness once more came, and with it another night of cold and suffering. The early morning light showed a white flag floating from the ramparts of the fort. Donelson had surrendered. Cold and hunger were forgotten, as the soldiers in their joy embraced each other, and their shouts of victory rose and fell like the swells of the ocean. The first great victory of the war had been won.



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## CHAPTER XVII. AFTER THE BATTLE.

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The sun arose once more on Donelson. The storm of the elements, as well as of battle, had passed away. But the horrors of war remained. On the frozen ground lay the dead with white, pinched faces. Scores of the wounded had perished from cold and exposure. Some who still breathed were frozen to the ground in their own blood. The cold had been more cruel than the bullets.

Fred rode over the battlefield seeking the body of an officer in one of the Kentucky regiments whom he had seen fall. The officer was a friend of his father's. Where the last fierce struggle took place before the brigade fell back, Fred found him. He was half-reclining against a tree, and from its branches the snow had sifted down, as though trying to blot out the crimson with a mantle of white. The officer had not died at once, for the frozen hand held a photograph in its iron grasp—that of a happy, sweet-faced mother holding a cooing babe. It was the photograph of his wife and child.

With a sob Fred turned away, sick—sick at heart. He was choking with the horror that he saw.

Fred's gallant act in leading the charge had been noticed by General Cruft, and at the first opportunity he highly complimented his youthful aid. But to Fred it now all seemed like a dream—something not real. Could it be that only yesterday he was in that hell of fire, eager only to kill and maim! He sickened at the thought.

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In the afternoon he went to see the prisoners mustered. As they marched along with downcast eyes, Fred saw a well-known form among the officers which sent every particle of blood from his face. Quickly recovering himself, he sprang forward, exclaiming, "Uncle Charles!"

Major Shackelford looked up in surprise, a frown came over his face, but he held out his hand, and said, "Fred, you here?"

"Is—is father—a—prisoner—or—killed?" Fred's voice trembled, then broke; he could not articulate another word.

"Your father is not here, thank God!" replied his uncle. "He is with Johnston at Bowling Green."

"Thank God!" echoed Fred.

He now noticed for the first time a young lieutenant, his neat uniform soiled and torn, and his eyes red with watching.

"Why, Cousin George, you here, too?" exclaimed Fred, holding out his hand.

The young lieutenant drew back haughtily.

"I refuse," said he, "to take the hand of a traitor to his State and kindred."

The hot blood flew to Fred's face, and he was on the point of making an angry retort, but controlling himself, he replied, "As you please," and turned away.

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"Uncle Charles," he said, "I know you will not be so foolish. I am sorry—so sorry—to see you here. Can I do anything for you?"

The major groaned. "No, Fred, no. I am heartbroken. Oh! the disgrace of it! the disgrace of it!"

"Of what, uncle?"

"Of the surrender."

"You surely fought like heroes," gently replied Fred. "There is no disgrace in brave men bowing to the inevitable."

"And that fight was the worst of it," bitterly replied the major. "Every noble life lost was a useless sacrifice, sacrificed to the imbecility of our generals. But, Fred, this surrender means more; it means the giving up of Nashville. Oh, my family! my family! What will become of them? They will be wild with fear; they will flee penniless—flee I know not where."

Fred remained in deep thought for a moment, then looking up, said: "Uncle, do you really fear for Aunt Jennie and the children?"

"I do. Nashville will be wild—terror-stricken; there is no knowing what will happen."

"Uncle, if you wish, I will go to Nashville. Even if the city is taken, there will be no danger. Your property will be safe if not deserted. As you say, the greatest danger is in flight."

"Can you reach Nashville, Fred?"

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"I think I can."

"Then go, and God bless you. I will write a letter to Jennie."

"Also write a statement for me," said Fred, "saying I am your nephew, and that I am trying to reach your family in Nashville. It may be useful to me."

A little later the letters were placed in Fred's hands, and bidding his uncle a most affectionate farewell, he went to make preparations for his journey. The next morning, provided with an order from General Grant giving him permission to pass outside of the lines, he started. When he was well beyond the pickets, he tore up his pass, thus destroying any evidence that he was ever connected with the Federal army.

He had not ridden many miles before he began to overtake straggling Confederate soldiers who had escaped from Donelson. Along in the afternoon he suddenly came upon three cavalymen. The horse of one had given out, and the three were debating what was best to do. Seeing Fred, and noticing that he was well mounted, one of them said: "There comes a boy, a civilian, on a fine hoss. Why not confiscate him for the good of the cause?"

"Just the thing!" exclaimed the other two. Without warning, Fred found himself covered by three revolvers.

"Come, young man," said one of the soldiers, threateningly, "off of that hoss, and be quick about it, too." [Pg 271]

"What does this mean?" said Fred, trying to keep cool.

"It means the Confederate States of America have use for that hoss; so climb down quick, and none of your lip."

"But, gentlemen——"

"No buts about it," broke in the soldier fiercely. "Do you mean to say you refuse to contribute a hoss to the cause? You ought to be in the ranks yourself instead of whining about a hoss. You must be a Lincolnite or a coward. Get off, or I will let daylight through your carcass."

There was no use parleying; so without saying a word Fred dismounted. The soldier in great glee, congratulating himself on his good fortune, mounted. Prince laid back his ears, and a wicked gleam came into his eyes, but as Fred said nothing, the horse made no objection.

"Say, boy," exclaimed the soldier, "you can have my hoss there; it's a fair trade, you see," and with a laugh and a jeer they rode away.

Fred let them go a short distance, when he suddenly gave a peculiar short whistle. Prince gave a great bound, then wheeled as quick as lightning. His rider was thrown with prodigious force, and lay senseless in the road. At full speed the horse ran back and stopped by the side of his owner, quivering with excitement. Fred vaulted into the saddle, and with a yell of defiance dashed back in the direction he had come. Coming to a cross road, he followed it until he came to a road leading in the direction he wished to go. [Pg 272]

"Hi! Prince, old fellow, that was a trick those fellows weren't on to," said Fred, patting the glossy neck of his horse. "You did it capitally, my boy, capitally."

Prince turned his head and whinnied as if he knew all about it.

Towards evening Fred fell in with some of Forest's troopers who had escaped from Donelson and were making their way to Nashville.

The officer in command asked Fred who he was and where he was going, and was frankly told.

"I know Major Shackelford well," replied the officer, "an honorable man and a gallant soldier. I shall be happy to have you accompany us to Nashville."

Fred preferred to make more haste, but remembering his adventure, resolved to run no more risk, and so gladly accepted the invitation.

The news of the surrender of Fort Donelson had become known, and the whole country was wild with terror. Consternation was depicted in every countenance. For the first time the people of the South began to realize that after all they might be defeated.

When Fred entered Nashville the scene was indescribable. The whole city was terror-stricken. Women walked the streets wringing their hands in the agony of despair. Every avenue was blocked with vehicles of all kinds, loaded with valuables and household goods. The inhabitants were fleeing from what they considered destruction. Sobs and groans and piteous wails were heard on every side. Could this be the same people he had seen a few months before? Through the wild confusion, Fred rode until he reached the door of his uncle's house. He found the family preparing for hasty flight. [Pg 273]

"Aunt Jennie, how are you?" exclaimed he, holding out his hand.

Mrs. Shackelford gave a shriek, and then exclaimed: "Fred Shackelford! where did you come from?"

"From Donelson and Uncle Charles," replied Fred.

Mrs. Shackelford turned as white as death, tottered, and would have fallen if Fred had not caught her.

"Is—is—Charles killed?" she gasped.

"Calm yourself, Aunt Jennie; both Uncle Charles and George are well."

"Why—why did you come then? What has happened?"

"They are prisoners."

"Prisoners!" wailed Mrs. Shackelford, and tears came to the relief of her pent-up feelings. "Oh! they will die in some Northern prison, and I shall never see them again."

"Cheer up, Aunt Jennie. In all probability they will be exchanged in a few weeks or released on parole. Here is a letter from Uncle Charles. It will do you good to read it," and he handed her the letter her husband had written. [Pg 274]

When she had read it, she became calmer, and said, "He wishes me to stay here."

"By all means, Aunt Jennie," replied Fred. "Stop these preparations for flight; be discreet, and you will be as safe in Nashville with the Northern soldiers here as if they were a thousand miles away."

Just then Kate came in, her vivacity all gone, and her eyes red with weeping.

"Why Fred, you here?" she asked in surprise and with some hauteur. "I thought you had turned Yankee. When I heard of it I vowed I would never speak to you again."

"But you see you have," replied Fred, smiling.

"Are you sure the Yankees are coming?" she asked, ignoring Fred's remark.

"Perfectly sure."

"Oh! oh! oh! what will we do?"

"Drive them back with broomsticks," replied Fred, mischievously.

"What!" asked Kate, opening her eyes in astonishment.

"My pretty cousin, didn't you tell me when I was here that if the Yankees ever dare come near Nashville the women would turn out and beat them back with broomsticks?"

"You horrid thing!" exclaimed Kate. "I will never speak to you again; so there!" and she turned her back on him.

But when Kate learned that Fred had just come from her father and brother she was eager enough to talk, and Fred had to tell the story of Donelson over and over again. As they were talking, the clatter of horse's hoofs attracted the attention of the family, and Fred, glancing out of the window, saw his father dismounting before the door. The sight completely unnerved him. He arose trembling in every limb, and gasped: [Pg 275]

"Aunt Jennie, my father! I cannot meet him; he has forbidden it," and he passed into another room.

Colonel Shackelford entered, and was warmly greeted by his sister-in-law. He had but a moment to stay, as his regiment was on the retreat, and the Federals were reported in close pursuit.

"I see," said he, "you have prepared for flight. I trust that you will accompany my command until you reach a place of safety."

"We were going," replied Mrs. Shackelford, "but have changed our minds. I have just received a letter from Charles, who is a prisoner, and he has advised me to stay."

"Charles a prisoner, and a letter from him! How did you receive it?" Colonel Shackelford asked in surprise.

Mrs. Shackelford hesitated a moment, and then answered, "Fred brought it."

The colonel started violently, and then asked in a broken voice, "Fred here?"

"Yes."

"How did he come? Tell me all about it." [Pg 276]

So Mrs. Shackelford had to tell all she knew.

"I will see him," said the colonel.

Fred was told his father wished to see him; his heart gave a great bound, as he rushed into the room with the cry of "Father!" on his lips, and was about to spring into his arms when the stern command of "Stop!" rooted him, as it were, to the floor.

"Before you call me father," said the colonel, sternly, "I want to know whether you have repented of your folly, or whether you are here as a spy. If I thought the latter, as sure as there is a God in

heaven I would be tempted to give you up to the authorities to be hanged."

If a dagger had pierced Fred's heart it would not have caused him keener pain than the words of his father. He stood for a moment as if deprived of the power of speech. Then the angry surges of an outraged nature came to his relief, and his whole soul arose in protest to the indignity put upon him.

"I have neither repented of my folly, as you call it," he replied fiercely, "nor am I here as a spy. I came here on an errand of mercy at the earnest request of Uncle Charles. Denounce me as a spy if you choose; the act can be no more cruel than your words," and Fred turned and left the room.

"Richard," sobbed Mrs. Shackelford, "are you not too severe with the boy? At extreme peril to himself he brought a letter from Charles, and his coming has been a great comfort to me."

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Colonel Shackelford passed his hands before his eyes, and then groped for a chair as if he had been smitten with blindness.

"Jennie," he replied in a low voice, trembling with emotion, "you do not know the agony the course of that boy has caused me. Perhaps I was too severe just now. Tell him I did not mean it. But I am half-crazed over the terrible disaster at Donelson. In a few days, at the most, the Northern horde will be here in Nashville. But," and his face lighted up with enthusiasm, "all is not lost, Jennie; we will soon be back. I know something of the plans of General Johnston. The army will concentrate somewhere along the line of the Memphis and Charleston railroad, probably at Corinth, and then before Grant and Buell can combine we will crush them in detail. They think Donelson has broken our spirit; they will find out differently."

Fred being only in the next room, heard these words, and they made a deep impression on his mind.

Colonel Shackelford soon took his leave, bidding his sister-in-law keep up courage, as the Northern army would soon be hurled back.

The panic in Nashville kept up until February 25th, when, to Fred's joy, General Nelson's division came steaming up the river, and the city was occupied by the Federal army. The stars and stripes once more floated over the State capitol, and never again were they hauled down.

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The alarm in Nashville in a great measure subsided, and business once more resumed its way.

As for Fred, his delight at meeting General Nelson so soon was unbounded. He had come to look upon him almost as a father, and the fiery old fellow returned his affection.

Fred told the general of his aunt, and received the promise that he would see that she was not molested or annoyed in any manner, and this promise was religiously kept.

As long as he remained in Nashville Fred made his home at the house of his aunt, and, notwithstanding his Yankee proclivities, became as great a favorite with his cousin Kate as ever. When the time came for Buell to advance, the family parted with Fred almost as affectionately as though he had been one of them; and their sincere prayers followed him that he might be preserved from the dangers of war.

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## **CHAPTER XVIII.**

### **"WE BOTH MUST DIE."**

[Pg 279]

A few days after the surrender of Fort Donelson General Grant was relieved of his command, and was even threatened with arrest. General Halleck, in his headquarters at St. Louis, had worked himself into a fit of what he considered most righteous anger. General Buell had ordered one of Grant's divisions to Nashville, and Grant had taken a trip to that city to find out the reason for the order. During his absence some irregularities had occurred at Donelson, and Grant was most viciously attacked by some anonymous scribbler, and then by the press. He was accused of being absent from his command without leave, of drunkenness, of maintaining no discipline, and of refusing to forward reports.

There was some ground for the last complaint. The telegraph operator at Fort Henry was a Confederate in disguise. He coolly pocketed Halleck's dispatches to Grant. He held his position for some days, and then fled south with his pocket full of dispatches. General Grant was relieved of his command, and General C. F. Smith, a gray-haired veteran, who smoked a cigar as he led his men in the charge at Donelson, was appointed in his place. The feeling against Grant was so bitter at headquarters, that General McClellan telegraphed to General Halleck to arrest him if he thought best.

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The hero of Donelson deeply felt his disgrace, yet wrote to General Smith:

"Allow me to congratulate you on your richly deserved promotion, and to assure you that no one can feel more pleasure than myself."

Even General Halleck was at length convinced of the injustice he had done Grant, and restored him to his command on March 13th.

In the mean time Grant's army, under Smith, had been gathering at Pittsburg Landing, and Buell's army had been concentrated at Nashville. The two armies were to concentrate at Pittsburg Landing, and then move on Corinth, where the Confederates were gathering in force.

Not a thought seemed to have entered the minds of the Union generals that the army at Pittsburg Landing might be attacked before Buell could come up. Halleck, Grant, Buell, Smith, Sherman—all seemed to rest in fancied security. If the possibility of an attack was ever spoken of, it was passed by as idle talk.

General Buell commenced his forward movement from Nashville on March 15th. General A. D. McCook's division had the advance, General Nelson's division came next. The bridge over Duck river near Columbia was found burned. Buell set to work leisurely to rebuild it. It took days.

But to return to Fred. Just before the army left Nashville, General Nelson placed in his hands a parchment. [Pg 281]

"This," said Nelson, "is what General Buell and myself were talking about in Louisville as a small reward for your service. Take it, my boy, for you richly deserve it."

It was a commission as captain, and detailed him as an independent scout, subject to the orders of General William Nelson.

"Why, General," stammered Fred, "I didn't want this. You know, you told me it was better for me not to enlist."

"I know," responded Nelson, "but as you are with the army so much, it is better for you to wear a uniform and have a rank that will command respect."

So Fred became "captain" in earnest.

During his conversations with Nelson, Fred told him what he had heard his father say to his aunt about Grant and Buell being crushed in detail, and the general became thoroughly imbued with the idea that the army at Pittsburg Landing was in grave danger. No other general shared this fear. He chafed like a caged tiger at the delay in crossing Duck river. At length he sought Buell, who laughed at his fears, and said that he would not move until the bridge was completed. In vain Nelson begged and pleaded.

"Why, Nelson, what's the matter with you any way?" at length asked Buell.

"Matter? I will tell you," snapped Nelson. "Here we have been puttering with this bridge for nearly a week, and all this time the force at Pittsburg Landing is in danger of being attacked and annihilated." [Pg 282]

Buell leaned back in his chair, and looking quizzically at Nelson, said:

"You seem to know more about it, General, than either Halleck or Grant. Halleck telegraphed me that there is no danger of the force at Pittsburg Landing being attacked."

"I don't care what Halleck telegraphs," roared Nelson, now thoroughly aroused. "I tell you there is; I feel it, I know it."

"How do you know it?" asked Buell, showing considerable interest.

"Why sense tells me. Look at the situation. A small force encamped only twenty miles from Corinth, where Johnston is concentrating his army. Johnston is a fool if he doesn't attack, and no one yet has ever accused him of being one. General, give my division the advance; let me ford Duck river."

Buell was really fond of Nelson, despite his rough, overbearing ways, and after some hesitation gave him the required permission. The life of General Grant might not read as it does now, if that permission had been withheld.

On the morning of March 29th Nelson's division forded Duck river, and started on its forced march for Savannah, on the Tennessee river. On this march Nelson showed no mercy to stragglers, and many were the curses heaped upon his head. He was no favorite with his troops. [Pg 283]

One day Fred found a boy, no older than himself, lashed behind a cannon. The lad belonged to an Indiana regiment that in some manner had incurred the displeasure of the general, and he was particularly severe on members of this regiment if found straggling. The boy in question had been found away from his command, and had been tied by his wrists to a cannon. Behind this gun he had to march through the mud, every jolt sending sharp pain through his wrists and arms, and if he should fall life itself would be imperiled. It was a heartless, and in this case, cruel punishment. Fred noticed the boy, and rode up to him and asked him his name, and he gave it as Hugh Raymond. He was a fine-looking fellow, and seemed to feel deeply his humiliation. He was covered with mud, and the tears that he could not hold back had left their dirty trail down his cheeks. Fred went to Nelson, begged for the boy's release, and got it. It was but few requests that Nelson would not grant Fred.

When Nelson started on his march to Savannah he expected to reach that place on April 7th. But once on the march his eagerness increased, and he resolved to reach Savannah, if possible, by the 4th, or at least the 5th of the month.

On the morning of the third day's march Fred met with an adventure that haunted him for years afterward. He never thought of it without a shudder, and over and over again he lived it in his dreams, awaking with a cry of agony that sounded unearthly to those who heard it.

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General Nelson and staff had put up at the commodious house of a planter named Lane. They were most hospitably entertained, although Mr. Lane made no secret of the fact that he was an ardent sympathizer with the South.

In the morning, as Fred was about to mount his horse to resume the march, he discovered that he had left his field-glass in the room he had occupied during the night. On returning for it, he heard voices in the next room, one of which sounded so familiar that he stopped a moment to listen, and to his amazement recognized the voice of his cousin Calhoun. What could it mean? What was he doing there? One thing was certain; he had been exchanged and was once more in the army. Calhoun and Mr. Lane were engaged in earnest conversation, and Fred soon learned that his cousin had been concealed in the house during the night.

"Have you learned what you wished?" Fred heard Mr. Lane ask.

"I have," replied Calhoun, "thanks to your kindness. I heard Nelson say he would rush his division through, and that he wanted to be in Savannah by the 5th. That is two days sooner than we expected. Johnston must, shall strike Grant before that time. I must be in Corinth within the next twenty-four hours, if I kill a dozen horses in getting there. Is my horse where I left him, at the stable in the woods?"

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"He is," replied Mr. Lane; "and well cared for and groomed. But breakfast is ready; you must eat a hearty meal before you start."

Fred realized that the fate of an army was at stake. Something must be done, and that something must be done quickly. Slipping out of the house, he took a look around. Back of the house about a half a mile distant was a thick piece of wood. A lane led through the fields to this wood. No doubt it was there that Calhoun's horse was concealed.

Fred quickly made up his mind what to do. Mounting his horse, he rode rapidly away until out of sight of the house; then, making Prince jump the fence, he rode through the field until he reached the wood, and then back nearly to the lane he had noticed. Tying his horse, he crept close to the path, and concealed himself. He had not long to wait. He soon saw Calhoun coming up the path with quick, springing steps. To Fred's great joy he was alone. He let him pass, and then stealthily as an Indian followed him. Calhoun soon reached the rude stable, and went in.

"Now, my hearty," said he, as he patted his horse, "we have a long hard ride before us. But we carry news, my boy—news that may mean independence to the Sunny South."

Strong arms were suddenly thrown around him, and despite his desperate resistance and struggles, he soon found himself lying on his face, his hands held behind his back and securely tied. His ankles were then firmly bound together. When all this was done he was raised to his feet and a voice said:

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"Sorry, Cal, but I had to do it," and to Calhoun's amazement his cousin stood before him, panting from his exertion.

For a moment Calhoun was speechless with astonishment; then his rage knew no limit, and bound as he was, he tried to get at his cousin.

"I reckon," said Fred, quietly, "that I must make you more secure," and taking a stout strap he lashed him securely to a post.

"Is this the way you keep your oath?" hissed Calhoun, and he spat at Fred in his contempt. "Loose me, you sneaking villain, loose me at once, or I will raise an alarm, and Mr. Lane and his men will be here, and they will make short work of you."

Just then the notes of a bugle, sweet and clear, came floating through the air.

"Do you hear that, Cal?" answered Fred. "You had better raise no alarm; McCook's division is passing, and I have but to say a word and you swing."

Calhoun ground his teeth in impotent rage. At last he asked:

"Fred, what do you want? Why do you use me so? Have you not sworn to guard my life as sacredly as your own?"

Fred stood looking at his cousin a moment, as if in deep thought; then an expression of keenest pain came over his face, and he said in a strained, unnatural voice:

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"Calhoun, believe me, I would I were dead instead of standing before you as I do now."

"I should think that you would, if you have a vestige of honor left," answered Calhoun, with a sneer. "An oath, which an honorable man would hold more sacred than life itself seems to be lightly regarded by you."

"I shall come to that directly," replied Fred, in the same unnatural tone. To him his voice sounded afar off, as if some one else were talking.

"Now, Calhoun, listen; you have a secret, a secret on which the fate of an army depends."

"How do you know that?" asked Calhoun.

"I know. I heard you and Mr. Lane talking. Calhoun, you have been playing the spy again. Hark! do you hear the tramp of McCook's columns. If I did my duty I would cry, 'Here is a spy,' and what then?"

Calhoun's face grew ashen; then his natural bravery came to his rescue.

"I defy you," he exclaimed, his eyes flaming with wrath. "Hang me if you will, and then in the sight of God behold yourself a murderer worse than Cain."

"Calhoun, once more I say, listen. The information that you have you shall not take to Johnston. Now, see how I trust you. What I do now would hang me instead of you, if Buell knew. But I trust you with more than life; I trust you with my honor. Give me your sacred word that you will keep away from Corinth until after Buell and Grant have joined forces; promise as sacredly that you will not directly or indirectly divulge in any manner to any person the knowledge you have gained, and I will release you."

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Calhoun looked Fred in the face, hesitated, and then slowly answered: "You seem to think I have more honor and will keep an oath better than yourself. I shall make no such promise."

Fred staggered back. "Calhoun," he cried, "you do not, you cannot mean it. You do not know what you say. Promise, for the love of heaven, promise!"

"I will not promise, I will die first," replied Calhoun, doggedly. A faint hope was arising in his mind that Fred was only trying to frighten him; that he had only to remain firm, and that, at the worst, Fred would only try to keep him a prisoner.

Calhoun's words were to Fred as a sentence of death. He sank on his knees, and lifted his hands imploringly.

"Calhoun," he moaned, "see me, see me here at your feet. It is I, not you, who is to be pitied. For the love we bear each other"—at the word "love" Calhoun's lips curled in contempt—"for the sake of those near and dear to us, for the honor of our names, promise, oh, promise me!"

"I tell you I will not promise. See, I spit on you, I despise you, defy you."

"Then you must die," replied Fred, slowly rising to his feet.

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Again Calhoun's face grew ashen. "Fred, you will not give me up to be hanged?" he asked, tremulously.

"No, Calhoun, your dishonor would be my dishonor. I cannot keep my oath, and have you hanged as a spy."

"What will you do then?" asked Calhoun.

"I shall shoot you with my own hand."

"Great God, Fred!" gasped Calhoun, shuddering. "You do not, cannot mean that?"

"It is the only way I can keep my oath and still prevent you from carrying the news that would mean destruction to Grant's army."

"Fred! Fred! you are a demon; you mock me. How can you keep your oath by murdering me?"

"Calhoun, I swore to consider your honor as sacred as my own, to value your life as highly as my own, to share with you whatever fate might come. I shall keep my oath. After I put a bullet through your heart, I shall put one through my own brain. *We both must die.*"

Calhoun's face seemed frozen with horror. He gasped and tried to speak, but no words came.

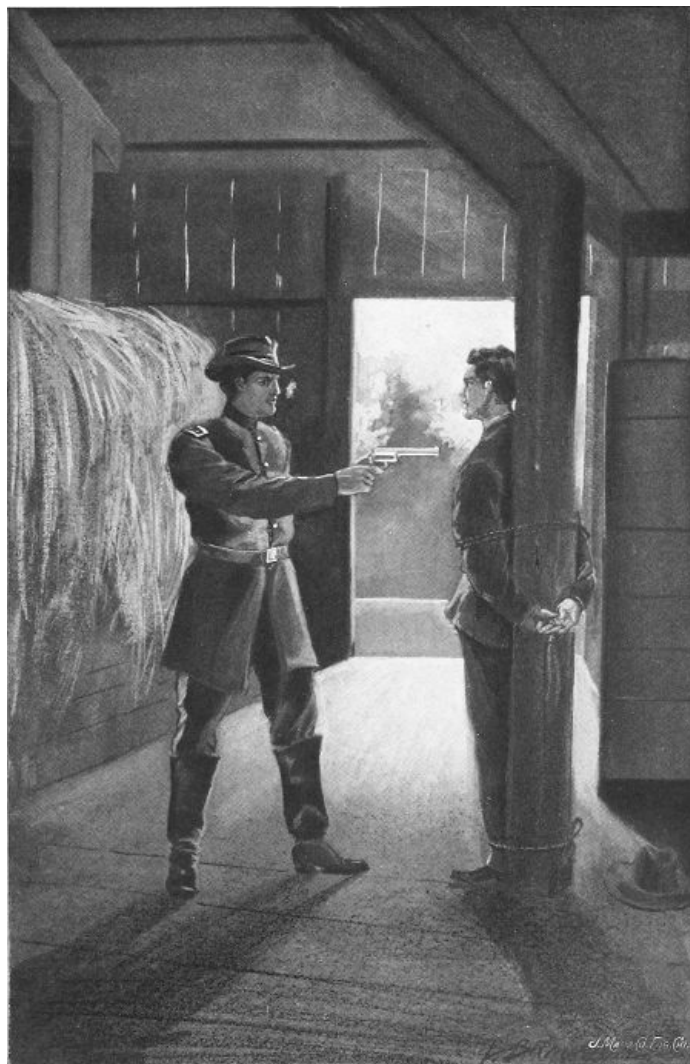
"Calhoun," continued Fred, in a tone that sounded as a voice from one dead, "would that you had promised, for it can do no good not to promise. Forgive me, as I forgive you. Now, say your prayers, for in a moment we both will be standing before our Maker."

Fred bowed his head in silent prayer; but Calhoun, with his horror-stricken face, never took his eyes from off his cousin.

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"Good-bye, Calhoun," said Fred, as he raised his revolver.

"For God's sake, don't shoot! I promise." The words seemed to explode from Calhoun's lips.



**"For God's Sake, don't shoot! I promise."**

For a moment Fred stood as motionless as a statue, with the revolver raised; then the weapon dropped from his nerveless hand, and with a low moan he plunged forward on his face.

So long did he lie in a swoon that Calhoun thought he was dead, and called to him in the most endearing tones. At last there was a slight quivering of the limbs, then he began to moan; finally he sat up and looked around as one dazed. Seeing Calhoun, he started, passed his hand across his brow as if to collect his thoughts, and said, as if in surprise: "Why, Calhoun—" Then it all came back to him in its terror and awfulness, and he fell back sick and faint. Rallying, he struggled to his feet, tottered to Calhoun, and cut the bonds that bound him.

"Go, go, Cal!" he whispered. "It will not do for us to be found here together."

The two boys clasped hands for a moment, then each turned and went his separate way.

When Fred joined Nelson an hour later the general looked at him sharply, and asked: "What's the matter, Fred? Are you sick? You look ten years older than you did yesterday."

"I am not really sick, but I am not feeling well, General," replied Fred; "and I believe, with your permission, I will take an ambulance for the rest of the day." [Pg 291]

"Do, Fred, do," kindly replied Nelson, and for the rest of the day Fred rode in an ambulance, where he could be alone with his thoughts.

That evening he asked General Nelson when he expected the division would reach Savannah.

"By the 5th, if possible, on the 6th anyway," answered the general.

"Make it the 5th, General; don't let anything stop you; hurry! hurry!" and thus saying, Fred walked away.

Nelson looked after him and muttered: "I wonder what's the matter with the boy; he hasn't appeared himself to-day; but it may be he will be all right in the morning. I shall take his advice and hurry, anyway."

The next day Nelson urged on his men with a fury that caused the air to be blue with oaths. And it was well that he did, or Shiloh would have never been reached in time to aid the gallant soldiers of Grant.

Buell saw no need of hurrying. He thought it would be a fine thing to concentrate his whole army at Waynesborough and march into Savannah with flying colors, showing Grant what a grand



army he had. He telegraphed General Halleck for permission to do so, and the request was readily granted. In some manner it became known to the Confederate spies that Buell's army was to halt at Waynesborough, and the glad tidings were quickly borne to General Johnston, and when that general marched forth to battle he had no expectation that he would have to meet any of Buell's men.

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General Buell hurried forward to stop Nelson at Waynesborough, according to his plan; but to his chagrin he found that Nelson, in his headlong haste, was already beyond Waynesborough, and so the plan of stopping him had to be given up.

When General Nelson's advance was a little beyond Waynesborough, a party engaged in the construction of a telegraph line from Savannah to Nashville was met. A telegram was handed their general, which read:

TO THE OFFICER COMMANDING BUELL'S ADVANCE:

There is no need of haste; come on by easy stages.

U. S. GRANT,  
Major-General Commanding.

Nelson read the telegram, and turning to Fred said:

"This is small comfort for all my hurry. I wonder if I have made a fool of myself, after all. Buell will have the joke on me, sure."

"Better be that way than have you needed and not there," answered Fred.

"If we are needed and are not there, Grant can only blame himself," was Nelson's reply.

At noon on April 5th Ammen's brigade, the advance of Nelson's division, marched into Savannah.

Colonel Ammen reported his arrival, and said:

"My men are not tired; we can march on to Pittsburg Landing if necessary."

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The answer was: "Rest, and make your men comfortable. There will be no battle at Pittsburg Landing. Boats will be sent for you in a day or two."

There was to be a rude awakening on the morrow.

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## CHAPTER XIX. SHILOH.

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"The sun of Austerlitz" was neither brighter nor more glorious than the sun which arose over the field of Shiloh Sunday morning, April 6, 1862.

Around the little log chapel, wont to echo to the voice of prayer and song of praise, along the hillsides and in the woods, lay encamped the Federal army. The soldiers had lain down the night before without a thought of what this bright, sunny Sabbath would bring forth. A sense of security pervaded the whole army. From commander down to private, there was scarcely a thought of an attack.

"I have scarcely the faintest idea of an attack," wrote Grant to Halleck on April 5th.

On the evening of the same day Sherman wrote to Grant: "I do not apprehend anything like an attack upon our position."

Yet when these words were written the Confederate army was in battle array not much over three miles distant.

But there was one general in the Federal army who was uneasy, he hardly knew why. He was little known at the time, he never held a distinguished command afterward; yet it was by his vigilance that the Federal army was saved from surprise, perhaps from capture. This general was Prentiss. A vague idea that something was wrong haunted him. The ominous silence in front oppressed him, as something to be feared. Then on Saturday a curious fact occurred. An unusual number of squirrels and rabbits were noticed dodging through the line, and they were all headed in one direction—toward Pittsburg Landing. What had startled them? It set General Prentiss thinking.

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To guard more surely against surprise Prentiss posted his pickets a mile and a half in front of his lines, an unusual distance. At three o'clock Sunday morning he sent three companies of the Twenty-fifth Missouri out on a reconnoitering expedition. These three companies followed a road that obliques to the right, and a little after daylight met the enemy's advance in front of Sherman's division. Thus the battle of Shiloh opened.

When the first shots were fired, Preston Johnston, son of the Confederate commander, looked at his watch, and it was just fourteen minutes past five o'clock.

This little advance band must have made a brave fight, for Major Hardcastle, in command of the Confederate outposts, reports that he fought a thousand men an hour. It was after six o'clock when the general advance of the whole Confederate army commenced, and the pickets along the line of Prentiss' and Sherman's divisions were driven in. Preston Johnston states that it was seven o'clock when the first cannon shot was fired. It was eight o'clock before the engagement became general along the whole line, and at that time portions of Prentiss' division had been fighting for nearly three hours.

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General Grant was at breakfast in Savannah, nine miles away, when he was startled by the booming of cannon in the direction of Shiloh. Hastily writing an order to General Nelson to procure a guide and march his division up the river to a point opposite Pittsburg Landing, Grant left his breakfast half-eaten, and boarding his dispatch boat was soon steaming up the river. His fear was that the isolated division of General Lewis Wallace, which lay at Crump's Landing, had been attacked. Finding this not to be the case when he reached Crump's, he bade Wallace hold his division in readiness and to await orders, and steamed on.

The roar of cannon had become almost continuous. Turning to Rawlins, his chief-of-staff, Grant said:

"Rawlins, I am afraid this is a general attack. I did not expect it. Prentiss' and Sherman's divisions are in front, and both are composed of raw troops; but if we can hold them until Wallace and Nelson come we are all right."

"It is a pity you did not order Wallace up when you were there," answered Rawlins.

"Yes," answered Grant, "but I couldn't make up my mind it was a general attack. I am not entirely sure yet."

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"It sounds very much like it," replied Rawlins, grimly.

When Grant reached the landing the battle was raging furiously, and all doubts as to its being a general attack were removed from his mind. Already the vanguard of what was afterward an army of panic-stricken men had commenced gathering under the river bank.

A staff officer was sent back immediately to order General Wallace to come at once. Grant then set to work quickly to do what he could to stem the tide, which was already turning against him. Two or three regiments which had just landed he ordered to points where they were the most needed. He then rode the entire length of the line, encouraging his generals, telling them to stand firm until Wallace and Nelson came, and all would be well.

He found Sherman engaged in a terrific conflict. Some of his regiments had broken at the first fire, and fled panic-stricken to the Landing. Sherman was straining every nerve to hold his men firm. Oblivious of danger, he rode amid the storm of bullets unmoved, encouraging, pleading, threatening, as the case might be. Grant cautioned him to be careful, and not expose himself unnecessarily, but Sherman answered: "If I can stem the tide by sacrificing my life, I will willingly do it."

Then turning to Grant, he said, with feeling: "General, I did not expect this; forgive me."

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"Forgive you for what?" asked Grant, in surprise.

"I am your senior general," answered Sherman. "You depended on me for reports; I quieted your fears. I reported there was no danger of an attack. I couldn't believe it this morning until my orderly was shot by my side, and I saw the long lines of the enemy sweeping forward. Forgive me."

Grant was greatly moved. "There is nothing to forgive," he said, gently. "The mistake is mine as well as yours. Neither did I expect this attack. If I had, I could have had Buell here. As it is, Wallace and Nelson will soon be here, and we will whip them; never fear."

"God grant it!" fervently replied Sherman.

By ten o'clock Prentiss had been pushed back clear through and beyond his camp, and had taken position along a sunken road. General W. H. L. Wallace's division came up and joined him on the right. This part of the field was afterward known as the "Hornet's Nest."

Here Grant visited them, and seeing the strength of the position, told them to hold it to the last man.

"We will," responded both Wallace and Prentiss.

Bravely did they keep that promise. For hours the Confederate lines beat against them like the waves of the ocean, only to be flung back torn and bleeding.

The roar of battle was now terrific. Both flanks of the Federal army were bent back like a bow. Every moment the number of panic-stricken soldiers under the bank grew larger.

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Noon came, but no Lew Wallace, no Nelson. Turning to an aid, Grant said: "Go for Wallace; bid him hurry, hurry."

Everywhere, except in the center, the Confederates were pressing the Union lines back. But the desperate resistance offered surprised Johnston; he had expected an easier victory. Many of his

best regiments had been cut to pieces. Thousands of his men had also fled to the rear. The afternoon was passing; the fighting must be pressed.

A desperate effort was made to turn the Federal left flank, and thus gain the Landing. Like iron Hurlbut's men stood, and time after time hurled back the charging columns. At last the Confederates refused to charge again. Then General Johnston placed himself at their head and said: "I will lead you, my children."

The effect was electrical. With wild cheers his men pressed forward; nothing could withstand the fury of the charge. The Federal left was crushed, hurled back to the Landing in a torn, disorganized mass.

But the brave leader fell mortally wounded. For a time the Confederate army stood as if appalled at its great loss. The thunder of battle died away, only to break out here and there in fitful bursts. But the respite was brief, and then came the final desperate onslaught.

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With features as impassive as stone, Grant saw his army crumbling to pieces. Officer after officer had been sent to see what had become of General Lew Wallace; he should have been on the field hours before. With anxious eyes Grant looked across the river to see if he could catch the first fluttering banner of Nelson's division. There was no aid in sight.

An officer rides up, one of the messengers he had sent for Wallace. Grant's face lights up. Wallace must be near. But, no. The officer reports: "Wallace took the wrong road. I found him five miles further from the Landing than when he started. Then he countermarched, instead of hurrying forward left in front. He lost much precious time. Then he is marching so slow, so slow. He will not be here before night."

For an instant a spasm of pain passed over Grant's face. "He countermarched; coming slow," he said, as if to himself, "Great God, what does he mean?" and then all was calm again.

Turning to Colonel Webster, he said: "Plant the siege guns around the Landing. See that you have every available piece of artillery in position."

And it was only this frowning line of artillery that stood between Grant's army and utter rout.

"Have you any way of retreat mapped out?" asked General Buell of Grant. Buell had come up from Savannah on a boat, and was now on the field, viewing with consternation and alarm the tremendous evidences of demoralization and defeat.

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Turning to him as quick as a flash, Grant replied: "Retreat! retreat! I have not yet despaired of victory."

Both the right and left wings of Grant's army were now crushed back from the center. Around the flanks of W. H. L. Wallace and Prentiss' divisions the exultant Confederates poured. Well had Wallace and Prentiss obeyed the orders of Grant to hold their position. From ten o'clock in the forenoon until nearly five o'clock in the afternoon their lines had hurled back every attack of the enemy. The Hornet's Nest stung every time it was touched. But now the divisions were hemmed in on every side. The brave Wallace formed his men to cut their way out, and as he was cheering them on he fell mortally wounded. No better soldier than Wallace fell on that bloody field. As for the two divisions, they were doomed.

General Grant sits on his horse, watching the preparations for the last stand. An officer, despair written in every lineament of his face, rides up to him.

"General," he says, "Sherman reports that he has taken his last position. He has but the remnant of one brigade with him and what stragglers he has gathered. His slender line cannot withstand another attack."

"Go back," quietly said Grant, "and tell Sherman to hold if possible; night is most here."

McClermand's division had been standing bravely all day, and had furnished fewer stragglers than any other division in the army, but now an orderly with a pale face and his left arm resting in a bloody sling, came spurring his reeking horse up to Grant, and exclaimed:

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"General McClermand bade me report, that after his division had most gallantly repulsed the last charge of the enemy, for some unaccountable reason, the left regiments broke, and are fleeing panic-stricken to the Landing."

"Go tell McClermand," said Grant, "that he has done well, but he must hold out just a little longer. Wallace will be here shortly."

General Hurlbut, his face black with the smoke of battle, rode up. "General," he said, in a broken voice, "my division is gone, the whole left is gone; the way to the Landing is open to the enemy."

"General," replied Grant, without a quiver, "rally what broken regiments and stragglers you can behind the guns, close up as much as possible on McClermand, and hold your position to the last man."

Now there came roaring past a confused mass of white-faced officers and soldiers commingled, a human torrent stricken with deadly fear.

"All is lost! All is lost!" they cry. "Prentiss and Wallace have surrendered."

Grant's face was seen to twitch. "Oh, for Lew Wallace, for Nelson, or for night," he groaned.

From across the river there came to his ears the sound of cheering. Grant looked, and there among the trees he saw the banners of Nelson's regiments waving. [Pg 303]

Hope came into his eyes; his face lighted up.

"Go, go!" he cried to his aids, "go to Sherman, to McClernand, to Hurlbut. Tell them to hold! hold! hold! Help is near."

But if Grant had known it the danger had already passed; for Beauregard had given orders for his army to cease fighting. Night was coming on, the capture of W. H. L. Wallace's and Prentiss' divisions had disarranged his lines, and thinking that he was sure of his prey in the morning, he had given orders to withdraw.

One brigade of the Confederate army did not receive this order, and when Nelson's advance crossed the river this brigade was charging the line of cannon on the left. These cannon were entirely unprotected by infantry, and Grant himself placed Nelson's men in line as they arrived.

The Confederate brigade was advancing with triumphant shouts, when they were met with a withering volley and sent reeling back. Then, to his surprise, the commander found that of all of the Confederate army his brigade was the only one continuing the fight, and he hastily fell back. The battle for the day was over.

Alone and practically unaided the brave soldiers of the Army of the Tennessee had fought the battle of Sunday and saved themselves from capture. To them belongs the glory.

The battle of Monday was mainly the fight of the Army of the Ohio. Without its aid Grant could never have been able to turn defeat into victory, and send the Confederate hosts in headlong flight back to Corinth. There would have been no advance Monday morning if Buell had not been on the field. The whole energy of Grant would have been devoted to the saving of what remained of his army. [Pg 304]

The terrible conflict of the day had left its impress on the Army of the Tennessee. There was but a remnant in line capable of battle when night came.

The generals of divisions were so disheartened that the coming of Buell failed to restore their spirits. Even the lion-hearted Sherman wavered and was downcast. Grant found him sitting in the darkness beside a tree, his head buried in his hands, and his heart full of fears. He had fought as generals seldom fight. Three horses had been shot under him, and he had received two wounds. When Grant told him there was to be an advance in the morning, he sadly shook his head and said: "No use, General, no use; the fight is all out of the men. I do not possibly see how we can assume the offensive."

"Look here, Sherman," replied Grant. "Remember how it was at Donelson. If we assume the offensive in the morning a glorious victory awaits us. Lew Wallace is here; Buell will have at least 20,000 fresh troops on the field. The Confederates, like ourselves, are exhausted and demoralized. If we become the aggressors, success is sure." [Pg 305]

Sherman became convinced; his fears were gone, his hopes revived.

Why was it that the fiery and impetuous Nelson was so late in getting on the field? He was only nine miles away early in the morning, and had received orders from Grant to move his division opposite Pittsburg Landing. If there had been any roads there would have been no excuse for his delay. But a heavily timbered, swampy bottom lay between him and his destination. The river had been very high, overflowing the whole bottom, and when the water had receded it left a waste of mud, from which all vestige of a road had disappeared. To plunge into that waste of mud and wilderness without a guide would have been madness. A guide, though Grant said one could easily be found, could not be secured. So Nelson sent a staff officer to see if he could find a practicable route. This officer did not return until noon. All of this time the division lay listening to the booming of cannon and eager to be led to the fray. As for Nelson, he fretted and fumed, stormed and swore at the delay.

"The expected has come," he growled, "and here I am doing no more good than if I were a hundred miles away. Might have been on the field, too, if Grant had not kept saying, 'No use hurrying!' I knew they were a set of fools to think that Johnston would sit down at Corinth and suck his thumbs."

At length a guide was found who said he could pilot the division through the bottom, but that the route was passable only for horsemen and infantry; the artillery would have to be left behind. The division started at one o'clock, the men keeping step to the music of the thunder of cannon. [Pg 306]

"This beats Donelson," remarked Fred, as the roar of artillery never ceased.

"My boy," replied Nelson, "the greatest battle ever fought on this continent is now being waged. God grant that we may get there in time. It was rumored at Savannah that the Confederates were sweeping everything before them."

"Your division will surely give a good account of itself," said Fred, looking back, his eyes sparkling with enthusiasm. "See how eager the men are, and how well they keep closed up, notwithstanding the mud. Half of them are mourning because they think the battle will be over

before they get there."

"No danger of that," replied Nelson. "The question is, shall we be in time."

Soon the roll of musketry began to be heard; then the cheers of the combatants. A quiver of excitement ran along the lines, and every soldier grasped his musket with a firmer hold. As they approached the river cannon balls began to crash through the treetops above them; then was heard the peculiar whir of the minie ball when it is nearly spent—so close was the fighting to the river.

To Fred's surprise, he saw numerous skulkers dodging through the timber on the same side of the river as himself. In some manner they had managed to get across the river; not only this, but the boats which came to ferry Nelson's troops over were more or less crowded with these skulkers, who would have died rather than be driven off. In the river were seen men on logs making their way across, and some of these men wore shoulder straps. [Pg 307]

So incensed were Nelson's soldiers at the sight of such cowardice that they begged for permission to shoot them.

As they landed, Fred stood aghast at the sight before him. Cowering beneath the high bank were thousands upon thousands of trembling wretches. It was a dense mass of shivering, weeping, wailing, swearing, praying humanity, each one lost to shame, lost to honor, lost to everything but that dreadful fear which chained him soul and body.

As Nelson's advance brigade forced its way through the panic-stricken throng, they were greeted with, "You are all going to your death! You are all going to your death!"

"Back! back!" roared Nelson, purple with rage. "Don't touch my men; you contaminate them; don't speak to them, you cowards, miscreants, you should be swept from the face of the earth."

And in the fury of his wrath, Nelson begged for the privilege of turning cannon on them.

With firm, unwavering steps, and well closed up, the division pressed their way up the bank, and there were soldiers in the ranks who looked with contempt on the shivering wretches below the hill, who themselves, the next day, fled in terror from the awful destruction going on around them. So little do we know ourselves and what we will do when the supreme moment comes. [Pg 308]

Afterward the great majority of the soldiers who cowered under the bank at Shiloh covered themselves with glory, and hundreds of them laid down their lives for their country.

Fred always remembered that night on the battlefield. From the Landing came the groans and shrieks of the wounded, tortured under the knives of the surgeons. The night was as dark and cloudy as the day had been bright and clear. About eleven o'clock a torrent of rain fell, drenching the living, and cooling the fevered brows of the wounded. Fred sat against a tree, holding the bridle of his horse in his hand. If by chance he fell asleep, he would be awakened by the great cannon of the gunboats, which threw shells far inland every fifteen minutes.

At the first dawn of day Nelson's division advanced, and the battle began. Fred acted as aid to Nelson, and as the general watched him as he rode amid the storm of bullets unmoved he would say to those around him: "Just see that boy; there is the making of a hero."

About eleven o'clock one of Nelson's brigades made a most gallant charge. Wheeling to the right, the brigade swept the Confederate line for more than half a mile. Before them the enemy fled, a panic-stricken mob. A battery was run over as though the guns were blocks of wood, instead of iron-throated monsters vomiting forth fire and death. In the thickest of the fight, Fred noticed Robert Marsden, the betrothed of Mabel Vaughn, cheering on his men. [Pg 309]

"Ah!" thought Fred, "he is worthy of Mabel. May his life be spared to make her happy."

On, on swept the brigade; a second battery was reached, and over one of the guns he saw Marsden fighting like a tiger. Then the smoke of battle hid him from view.

On the left Fred saw a mere boy spring from out an Indiana regiment, shoot down a Confederate color-bearer, snatch the colors from his dying grasp, wave them defiantly in the face of the enemy, and then coolly walk back to his place in the ranks.

General Nelson saw the act, and turning to Fred, said: "I want you to hunt that boy up, and bring him to me after the battle."

But the brigade paid dearly for its daring charge. A strong line, lying down, let the frightened fugitives pass over them; then they arose and poured a deadly volley into the very faces of the charging column. Cannon in front and on the flank tore great gaps through the line. The brigade halted, wavered, and then fled wildly back, leaving a third of its number dead and wounded.

By three o'clock the battle was over; the Confederates were in full retreat, and the bloody field of Shiloh won. [Pg 310]

As the firing died away, Fred sat on his horse and shudderingly surveyed the field. The muddy ground was trampled as by the feet of giants. The forest was shattered as by ten thousand thunderbolts, while whole thickets had been leveled, as though a huge jagged scythe had swept over them.

By tree and log, in every thicket, on every hillside, dotting every field, lay the dead and wounded. Many of the dead were crushed out of all semblance of humanity, trampled beneath the hoof of the warhorse or ground beneath the ponderous wheels of the artillery. Over 20,000 men lay dead and wounded, Confederate and Federal commingled.

But Grant's army was saved. The fondest hopes of the Confederates had been blasted; instead of marching triumphantly forward to Nashville, as they hoped, they retreated sullenly back to Corinth.

But the battle brought the war to the hearts of the people as it had never been brought before. From the stricken homes of the North and the South there arose a great wail of agony—a weeping for those who would not return.

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## **CHAPTER XX.** **"MY SON! MY SON!"**

[Pg 311]

On Monday morning, just as the first scattering shots of Nelson's skirmishers were heard, Calhoun Pennington presented himself before the Hon. G. M. Johnson, Provisional Governor of Kentucky, on whose staff he was. When the Confederates retreated from Bowling Green Governor Johnson accompanied the Kentucky brigade south, and although not a soldier he had bravely fought throughout the entire battle of the day before.

The Governor and General Beauregard were engaged in earnest conversation when Calhoun came up, and both uttered an exclamation of surprise at his forlorn appearance. He was pale and haggard, his eyes were sunken and his garments were dripping with water, for he had just swum the Tennessee river.

"Great heavens! is it you, Lieutenant?" cried Johnson, and he caught Calhoun's hand and wrung it until he winced with pain.

"It is what is left of me," answered Calhoun, with a faint smile.

"You don't know," continued Johnson, "how glad I am to see you. I had given you up for lost, and bitterly blamed myself for allowing you to go on your dangerous undertaking. Where have you been? What has kept you so long?"

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"First," answered Calhoun, "I must speak to General Beauregard," and, saluting, he said: "General, I bring you heavy news. Buell has joined Grant."

Beauregard started and turned pale. "I feared it, I feared it, when the Federals opened the battle this morning. I was just telling the Governor as you came up that Grant would never have assumed the offensive if he had not been reinforced."

"Oh!" said Calhoun, "if I had only been a couple of days earlier; if you had only attacked a couple of days sooner!"

"That was the calculation," answered Beauregard, "but the dreadful roads retarded us. Then we did not expect Buell for two or three days yet. Our scouts brought us information that he was to halt at least a couple of days at Waynesborough."

"So he was," answered Calhoun, bitterly; "and he would have done so if it had not been for that renegade Kentuckian, General Nelson. He it was who rushed through, and made it possible for Buell to be on the field to-day."

"Do you know how many men Buell has?" anxiously inquired Beauregard.

"Three strong divisions; I should say full 20,000."

Beauregard groaned. All visions of victory were dissolved. "I thank you, Lieutenant, for your information, although it is the knell of defeat. Yesterday we fought for victory; to-day I shall have to fight to save my army." So saying he mounted his horse and galloped rapidly to the scene of action.

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"This is bad news that you bring, Lieutenant," said the Governor, after Beauregard had gone. "But tell me about yourself; you must have been in trouble."

"Yes, Governor, serious trouble. At first I was very successful, and found out that Nelson expected to be in Savannah by April 5th. I was just starting back with this important information, information which meant victory for our cause, when I was suddenly set upon and captured before I had time to raise a hand. I was accused of being a spy, but there was no proof against me, the only person who could have convicted me being a cousin, who refused to betray me; but he managed to hold me until my knowledge could do no good."

"It looks as though the hand of God were against us," solemnly responded Johnson. "If you had not been captured, we would surely have attacked a day or two earlier, and a glorious victory would have awaited us. But now——" the Governor paused, choked back something like a sob, and then continued: "There is no use of vain regrets. See, the battle is on, and I must once more take my place in the ranks and do my duty."

"Must do what, Governor?" asked Calhoun in surprise.

"Must fight in the ranks as a private soldier, as I did yesterday," replied the Governor calmly.

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"I shall go with you," replied Calhoun.

So side by side the Governor and his aid fought as private soldiers, and did yeoman service. Just before the battle closed, in repelling the last furious charge of the Federals, Governor Johnson gave a sharp cry, staggered, and would have fallen if he had not been caught in the arms of Calhoun. Loving hands carried him back, but the brave spirit had fled forever. Thus died the most distinguished private soldier that fell on the field of Shiloh.

One of the first acts of Fred after the battle was over was to ride in search of Robert Marsden. He found him lying in a heap of slain at the place where the battery had been charged. A bullet had pierced the center of the miniature flag, and it was wet with his heart's blood. Reverently Fred removed the flag, closed the sightless eyes, and gave orders that the body, as soon as possible, be sent to Louisville.

As he was returning from this sad duty, he thought of the errand given him by General Nelson to hunt up the boy whom they saw capture the colors. Riding up to the regiment, he made inquiry, and to his surprise and delight found that the hero was Hugh Raymond.

"Hello, Hugh! don't you remember me?" asked Fred, when the boy presented himself.

"Yes, sir," replied Hugh, respectfully. "You are the young officer who got me released when General Nelson tied me to the cannon. I have never ceased to feel grateful towards you."

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"Well, Hugh, General Nelson wants to see you again."

Hugh opened his eyes in wonder. "Don't want to tie me up again, does he?" he asked, with a shiver.

"I expect so. He saw you capture that flag and he is awful mad; so come along."

"General," said Fred, when he had found Nelson, "here is the brave boy who captured the colors."

"That was a gallant act, my boy," kindly remarked Nelson, "and you deserve the thanks of your general."

"It was nothing, General," replied Hugh. "It just made me mad to have them shake their dirty rag in my face, and I resolved to have it."

This answer pleased Nelson immensely. He noticed Hugh more closely, and then suddenly asked: "Have I not seen you somewhere before, my boy?"

"Yes, General," replied Hugh, trembling.

"Where?"

"On the march here, when you tied me by the wrists to a cannon for straggling."

Nelson was slightly taken back by the answer; then an amused look came into his face, and he said, in a bantering tone: "Liked it, didn't you?"

"Liked it! liked it!" exclaimed Hugh, with flaming eyes. "I was just mad enough at you to kill you."

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"There is the boy for me," said Nelson, turning to his staff. "He not only captures flags, but he tells his general to his face what he thinks of him." Then addressing Hugh, he continued: "I want a good orderly, and I will detail you for the position."

So Hugh Raymond became an orderly to General Nelson, and learned to love him as much as he once hated him.

Now occurred one of those strange psychological impressions which science has never yet explained. A feeling came to Fred that he must ride over the battlefield. It was as if some unseen hand was pulling him, some power exerted that he could not resist. He mounted his horse and rode away, the course he took leading him to the place where Trabue's Kentucky brigade made its last desperate stand.

Suddenly the prostrate figure of a Confederate officer, apparently dead, attracted Fred's attention. As he looked a great fear clutched at his heart, causing it to stand still. Springing from his horse, he bent over the death-like form; then with a cry of anguish sank on his knees beside it. He had looked into the face of his father.



**Springing from his Horse, he bent over the death-like form.**

"Oh! he is dead, he is dead!" he moaned.

Bending down, he placed his ear over his father's heart; a faint fluttering could be heard.

"It beats! he lives! he lives!" he cried, joyously.

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With eager eyes he searched for the wound. A ball had shattered Colonel Shackelford's leg, and he was bleeding to death.

For Fred to cut away the clothing from around the wound, and then to take a handkerchief and tightly twist it around the limb above the wound was the work of a moment. The flow of blood was stopped. Tenderly was Colonel Shackelford carried back, his weeping son walking by his side. The surgeon carefully examined the wounded limb, and then brusquely said: "It will have to come off."

"Oh! no, no, not that!" cried Fred, piteously.

"It's that, or his life," shortly answered the surgeon.

"Do it then," hoarsely replied Fred, as he turned away unable to bear the cruel sight.

When Colonel Shackelford came to himself, he was lying in a state-room in a steamboat, and was rapidly gliding down the Tennessee. Fred was sitting by his side, watching every movement, for his father had been hovering between life and death.

"Where am I? What has happened?" Colonel Shackelford faintly asked.

"Dear father," whispered Fred, "you have been very sick. Don't talk," and he gave him a soothing potion.

The colonel took it without a word, and sank into a quiet slumber. The surgeon came in, and looking at him, said: "It is all right, captain; he has passed the worst, and careful nursing will bring him around."

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When the surgeon was gone Fred fell on his knees and poured out his soul in gratitude that his father was to live.

When Colonel Shackelford became strong enough to hear the story, Fred told him all; how he found him on the battlefield nearly dead from the loss of blood; how he bound up his wound and saved his life.



"And now, father," he said, "I am taking you home—home where we can be happy once more."

The wounded man closed his eyes and did not speak. Fred sank on his knees beside him.

"Father," he moaned, "father, can you not forgive? Can you not take me to your heart and love me once more?"

The father trembled; then stretching forth his feeble arm, he gently placed his hand on the head of his boy and murmured, "My son! my son!" and they mingled their glad tears together. In the old Kentucky home Fred nursed his father back to health and strength.

But another sad duty remained for Fred to perform. As soon as he felt that he could safely leave his father, he went to Louisville and placed in Mabel Vaughn's hands the little flag, torn by the cruel bullet and crimsoned with the heart's blood of her lover. The color fled from her face, she tottered, and Fred thought she was going to faint, but she recovered herself quickly, and leading him to a seat said gently: "Now tell me all about it."

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Fred told her of the dreadful charge; how Marsden, in the very front, among the bravest of the brave, had found a soldier's death; and when he had finished the girl raised her streaming eyes to heaven and thanked God that he had given her such a lover.

Then standing before Fred, her beautiful face rendered still more beautiful by her sorrow, she said:

"Robert is gone, but I still have a work to do. Hereafter I shall do what I can to alleviate the sufferings of those who uphold the country's flag. In memory of this," and she pressed the little blood-stained flag to her lips, "I devote my life to this sacred object."

And binding up her broken heart, she went forth on her mission of love. She cooled the fevered brow, she bound up the broken limb, she whispered words of consolation into the ear of the dying, and wiped the death damp from the marble brow. Her very presence was a benediction, and those whose minds wandered would whisper as she passed that they had seen an angel.

Calhoun Pennington bitterly mourned the death of his chief. He afterward joined his fortune with John H. Morgan, and became one of that famous raider's most daring and trusted officers.

For some weeks Fred remained at home, happy in the company and love of his father. But their peace was rudely disturbed by the raids of Morgan, and then by the invasion of Kentucky by the Confederate armies.

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After the untimely death of Nelson, Fred became attached to the staff of General George H. Thomas, and greatly distinguished himself in the numerous campaigns participated in by that famous general. But he never performed more valiant service than when he was known as "General Nelson's Scout."

THE END.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK GENERAL NELSON'S SCOUT \*\*\*

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