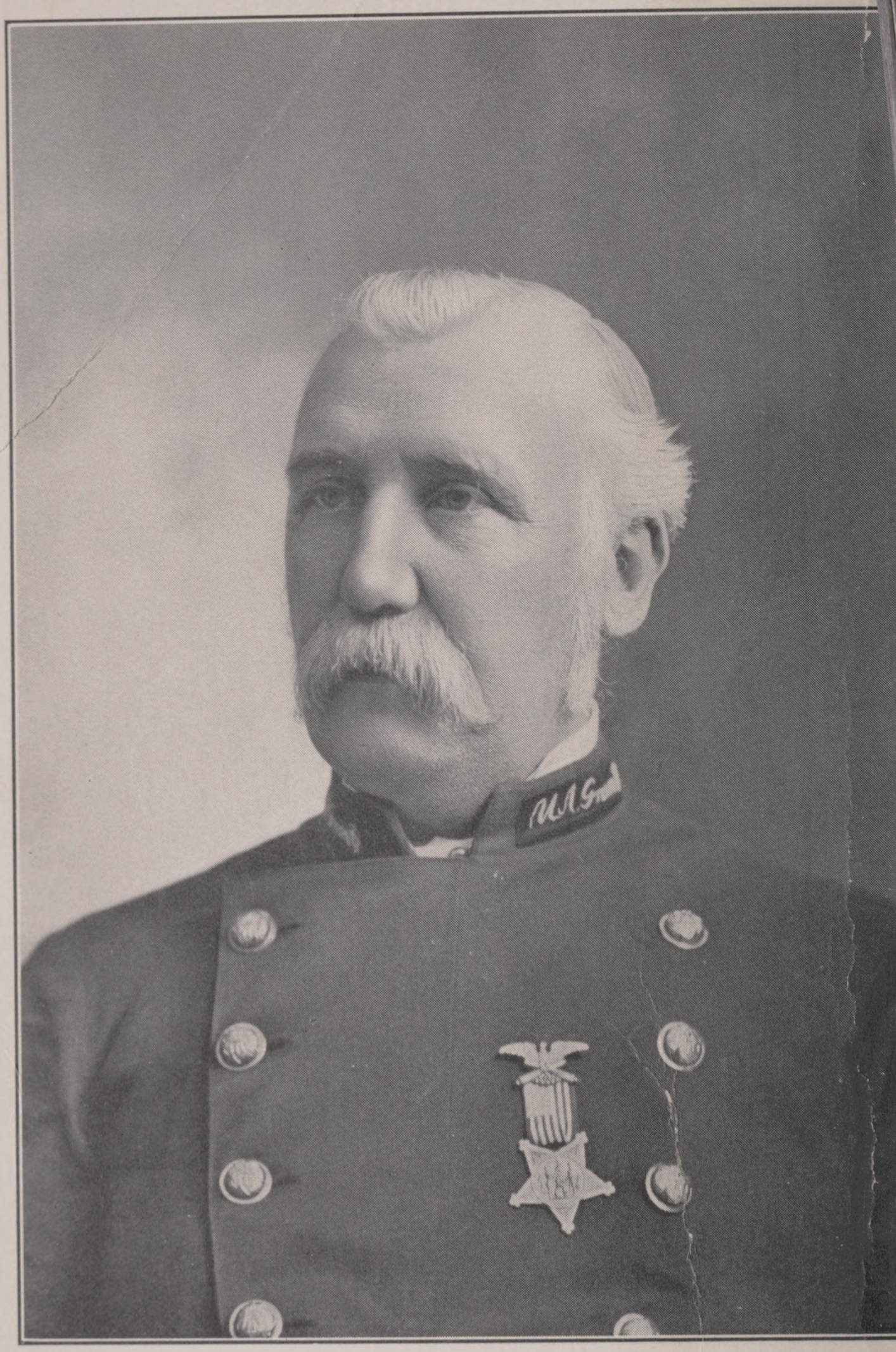

Arch'd McCowan

THE
PRISONERS OF WAR

A Reminiscence of the Rebellion

BY

ARCHIBALD McCOWAN

"War is hell"—GEN. W. T. SHERMAN.
"Let us have peace."—GEN. U. S. GRANT.

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PREFACE.

THIS story was begun shortly after the close of the Civil War and while my army experiences were comparatively fresh in my memory. This fact will account for the frequent use of the word "rebel" or its contraction "reb," now, after the lapse of a generation, softened into the more euphonious appellation "Confederate."

During the ten years following the surrender of General Lee the country was flooded with war stories, some of them of the most extravagant character. I saw that my modest little effort to narrate facts would stand small chance of success in competition with the highly-embellished imaginings of clever writers who had never seen a battlefield, except in pictures, so I laid my manuscript aside to await a more convenient season.

Most of the great leaders and some of the lesser have had their say; this little book presents the closing scenes of our tremendous struggle for unity and freedom from the standpoint of a private soldier.

A. McC.

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THE PRISONERS OF WAR.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

NEARLY twelve years have elapsed since the occurrence of the events here narrated, but they are as fresh in my memory as though they had happened but yesterday. The various incidents followed each other so rapidly, and occupied such a short space of time, that I am sometimes inclined to believe I must have been in a dream, but a glance at an empty sleeve quickly dispels that illusion, and brings back to my mind the stern reality of those eventful days. And now to my story.

It was the last day of September, 1864. Charley Fisher and I were in our tent eating our noontide meal of pork and hardtack, when Sergeant Dennis Mahony came in, and clapping Charley on the shoulder, said, "Now, my boys, it's come at last. There's been heavy

fighting all along the line, and our brigade is ordered up. We break camp in an hour."

"I'm glad of it," said Charley, "here we have been nearly a month, and nothing but drill, drill, drill, from morning till night."

"And yet," I said, "I don't think I shall ever make a good soldier. Why, only yesterday Lieutenant Dennison reprimanded me because I did not present arms properly."

The sergeant laughed. "Never mind, Andy, my boy, we'll teach you to present arms to the rebs." So saying, he left the tent for his duties elsewhere.

We finished our meal, and packing our traps, waited for the roll call.

While we are waiting I shall give the reader an account of ourselves.

Charles Fisher was the youngest son of a physician lately deceased, who had had an extensive practise in Edgetown, a beautiful village on the Hudson River. I said the doctor's practise was extensive, but it can scarcely be called lucrative, for at his death all his property was found to consist of the house in which he lived, together with ten acres of land, and a life insurance policy for $5,000. Besides Char-

ley, there were two other children, James and Ellen. At the time of his father's death, James had just left college, and had begun to assist the old doctor, so he succeeded to his practise, but with the consent of his mother and sister, he had abandoned it and opened a drug store in the village. Selling medicine paid better than prescribing it, and when I came to Edgetown, about a year before the opening of my story, James Fisher was doing a fair business, and supporting his widowed mother in comfort. Charley was studying law in ex-Judge Howard's office, but the young scamp was fonder of drawing inspiration from the bright eyes of Effie Howard, the judge's only daughter, than from Coke or Blackstone. As for myself, I need only say that I was an orphan, a native of Scotland, and a distant relative of the Fishers, our mothers having been cousins. Being a fair Latin scholar, and having gained a slight knowledge of medicine from my studies, James Fisher engaged me as his assistant, and I was getting quite proficient in my new calling when circumstances completely altered my career.

One warm evening in July, Charley came into the store and asked for his brother.

"Gone out," I answered.

"I'm glad of it, for I wanted to speak to you alone. How would you like to join the army?" he asked abruptly.

"How would I like it? Why, such a thought never entered my head. What makes you ask?"

"Only this. I see every day some of my friends going to the front, and I think I ought to do something for my country as well as others."

"Well, have you asked your mother?"

"No," said Charley, shaking his head, "that's where I hesitate. I'm afraid she would not consent. But I'm determined to go, and I thought if you would like to go, too, her consent would be easier to get."

"Have you said anything to James about it?"

"Yes, and he thinks I only do my duty. He says he would go himself if it were not for his business, which, as you well know, is all mother has to depend upon."

"Well, Charley, my boy, I'll think over it, and if James thinks it right and our mother gives her consent, I may go with you, for to tell

you the truth, I've often thought I would like to see this famous army of the Potomac."

Charley had just entered his twentieth year and was rather delicate than otherwise, but the stirring times had fired his soul, and his enthusiasm communicated itself to all around him. His mother gave a rather reluctant consent, but still it was a consent, and that was enough for Charley. And so it came to pass that we both enlisted in the volunteer army, and went forth to do battle for the Union.

Sergeant Dennis Mahony was a citizen of Edgetown, and had been Dr. Fisher's groom and gardener. He had been a member of the regiment since its organization, had been in innumerable battles and skirmishes, but had never been wounded. He was a short, thick-set man, about thirty-five years of age, and the strongest man in the regiment. Every one loved him, for Sergeant Dinny, as he was called, was always ready to do a good turn to a comrade. The sergeant loved Charley as if he were his own child, and Charley reciprocated the attachment, for the faithful Irishman had been in Dr. Fisher's service since Charley was a child and had once saved him from drowning.

CHAPTER II.

AT THE FRONT.

THE bugle sounded and the regiment was drawn up in companies. Three days' rations and forty rounds of ammunition were served to each man.

"Hurry up there, Humbugger," shouted the Sergeant to a German recruit, whose real name was Hamburgher, but which the boys found it easier to call Humbugger, "hurry up, or you'll get no rations."

"Just coming, Sergeant Dinny," answered the Dutchman as he picked up the last of his traps.

He was an odd-looking fellow; besides his arms and his knapsack he carried an extra pair of shoes flanked by a frying-pan, while a small hatchet dangled at his back.

"Do you intend to fight with all that rubbish around you?" asked the Sergeant.

"I guess so; them's all useful things, and I may need them."

"All right, my lad, go ahead."

Our regiment belonged to the Fifth Army Corps, and had been so badly cut up in the Wilderness and at the Weldon railroad that fully two-thirds of its present members were recruits, the most of whom had never been in a fight. After we had got fairly started, the Sergeant came up and marched beside us.

"Now, Charley," he said, "I want you to pay particular attention to what I am going to say. I know it will be the death of your mother, besides Miss Ellen, God bless her, if anything should happen to you, so I want you and Andrew to stick by me. I don't mean that I will be able to save you from the bullets, but I don't want to lose sight of you. Another thing I want to tell you: my experience has shown me that the brave soldier who does his duty has just as much chance as the coward who shirks and hides."

"I believe it," said Charley, "and where you lead I will follow. I'll do my duty, and if anything should happen, you'll carry my love to my mother and sister. But what's the use

of thinking of such things?" he added. "You have been in almost every fight, and have never got a wound."

"That's so," said Dinny. "Why, last month we lost seventy men in one night on the Weldon Railroad, and though the men on each side of me were killed, the only hurt I got was a knock on the face with one of the poor fellows' guns."

The day was very warm, and we were choked by clouds of dust, but after two hours' marching we came to where a stream crossed the road, and the regiment halted for a few minutes to give us a chance to fill our canteens. Again we started and marched on in silence; for the sound of guns was beginning to be heard, and as we advanced it grew louder and more unremitting. Soon we saw ambulances bringing in the wounded, some lying like dead men, others rolling and groaning in agony. I confess I felt sick at heart, and no wonder, for it was the first time I had seen the terrible reality of war. Charley, too, looked pale. "What an awful thing war is," he whispered to me.

"It is indeed," said the Sergeant, who

had overheard Charley's remark, "it made me sick the first time I saw a man killed, but the feeling soon wore off. You will soon get used to it, too. I don't think we'll do any fighting to-night," he continued, "for it is beginning to rain, and it will soon be dark."

It was as the Sergeant said; the rain fell in torrents, and it grew dark almost instantly. The firing, too, suddenly ceased and an awful stillness seemed to fall on everything.

We were halted in what seemed to me a large open lot surrounded on three sides by woods. There we were ordered to rest, and throwing myself down on the wet ground, I slept as well as if I had been in a feather bed.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTURED.

At the first streak of day we were aroused and set to work building breastworks.

A party of us were sent to fetch in fence rails and posts, but I had not gone twenty paces when I stumbled over a dead body. A thrill of horror went through me, for this was the first time I had come in contact with a dead man, and I thought how soon this poor fellow's fate might be my own.

As the daylight grew stronger I noticed quite a number of dead bodies, their uniforms showing that they had belonged to both armies. A battle had been fought on the same field the day before, and the bodies of the killed had not yet been removed, but what surprised and disgusted me most was the fact that the pockets of every one of these were *turned inside out*. Some villian—whether Union or Con-

federate I had no means of knowing—had been over the field during the night, robbing the dead, and I wondered that men could be found capable of such contemptible meanness.

After a couple of hours' hard work we had erected a substantial barricade, and we were all in good spirits as we sat down to breakfast. Having now a few minutes' leisure, I took the opportunity to look around. The first thing I noticed was that our company was on the extreme end of the line, and with the exception of the captain we were the outside men. On our right was the battlefield of yesterday with its dead still there. In front of this was a wood, the edge of which was nearly parallel with the end of our breastwork. In front of us was a large open space extending to the left for some distance and terminating in a low hill. This was Preble's Farm, for the possession of which both sides fought desperately two days in succession, but this I did not know till long afterwards.

So far I had not seen any signs of an enemy, and the rebels might be miles away for aught I knew. Judge, then, of my astonishment, when before I had finished my meal, a shower

of bullets flew amongst us, and the cries of the wounded filled the air.

"Down, men, down," I heard some one shout, and we rushed to the shelter of the breastworks.

"Now, boys, stick by me," whispered Dinny, "and just do as I do."

I raised my musket and fired at the advancing rebels, and then fell back to load. In my hurry and anxiety I forgot to tear the cartridge, and I had it rammed down before I remembered what I had done.

"What shall I do?" I cried in alarm, when all further anxiety was spared me on that score, for at that moment I fell, crushed to the earth by some heavy body falling on me, and before I could extricate myself we were surrounded and disarmed.

"Holy Virgin!" cried Sergeant Mahony, his face streaming with blood, "we are prisoners. Where's Charley?"

"Here I am," he cried, and turning round I saw him holding a canteen to the lips of poor Humbugger, who had been wounded in the thigh.

Just then a rebel officer riding past saw the

humane action, and stopping his horse, he said, to Charley, "You are a brave fellow to help a comrade when you might have escaped yourself."

"I never thought of that," said Charley innocently.

"What is your name?" asked the officer.

"Fisher, sir; Charles Fisher."

The rebel started as if he had been shot. "Where do you come from?" he asked.

"Edgetown on the Hudson," said Charley.

"I will see you again," he said, then raising his voice he shouted, "Sergeant Grill, take these prisoners to the rear, and treat them kindly; no tricks, mind," and off he rode.

"Wa'al if that ain't mean of the major, when I might have had a chance to get a good watch or somethin'," I heard the rebel grumbling to himself. "Come, Yanks, move lively, we can't stay here all day."

Sergeant Mahony had been struck by a bullet on the cheek, which laid bare the bone, and carried off part of his ear. It was a painful wound, though not serious, and it had staggered him, so that he fell over me, which led to our capture. Everything had happened so

quickly that I was quite bewildered. The rain was falling in torrents, and I was so wet and muddy I could scarcely support the weight of my clothes. We were escorted to the rear by Sergeant Grill, who asked me if I had a knife. I told him I had, but I wanted it myself.

"You may as well give it to me, for it will be taken from you at Petersburg," he said.

"Here, Sergeant," said Charley, "you are welcome to this knife, and now tell me who was that officer who spoke to me; his face seems familiar to me."

"That's Major Fisher," said the rebel, "the Colonel is wounded, so he is in command at present."

"You are a Carolina regiment, ain't you?"

"Yes, the most of my company belong to Wilmington, where the major lived."

"I believe that rebel officer is my uncle," whispered Charley to me. "You may have heard us speak of uncle Charles, my father's youngest brother."

"Perhaps he is. He seemed to take an interest in you and said he would see you again. Perhaps he will get us paroled."

"I don't know about that, but it is worth

trying. I never heard the reason why my uncle left home, but I know grandfather tried to find him out and induce him to come back. A friend of my father's once met him in St. Louis, and spoke to him. He asked kindly enough for his relations, but declined to give his address. That is all I know about him."

We had now reached a road, and we were met by other parties bringing in prisoners. I had a valuable ring on my finger, and from what Grill said I would likely get it taken from me, so I put it in my pipe and filled up the bowl with tobacco. Just as the rebel had predicted, we were searched at Petersburg, and then we were locked up in a large brick building close by a railroad. There were at least 1,000 men in the building, and as it had rained hard all day, we were soaked through. Cold, wet and hungry, we were left to pass the night as best we could, and it was the afternoon of the next day before we got anything to eat. Then a few mouldy biscuits were served out and we were put on board the cars for Richmond.

The train reached its destination some time during the night, but we were kept in the car

till daylight, a precaution taken, I suppose, to prevent any of the prisoners from escaping in the darkness. Shortly after sunrise we were ordered out, and after some delay in forming the ranks, while we stood shivering in the raw morning air, we were marched through a number of deserted-looking, grass-grown streets to the Libby Prison, where we were allowed to rest for a few hours. About the middle of the day we were again ordered out, and a couple of colored men came into the building carrying a good-sized tub filled with pieces of boiled meat steaming hot. Each of the negroes had a long fork with which he fished up the "chunks," handing them to the prisoners as they passed out.

"What's this?" asked Dinny, as he tried unsuccessfully to bite off a piece. "It must be the tenderloin of a mule, if 'tain't, I'm a Dutchman."

The negro grinned, but said nothing, and a rebel officer standing by ordered the sergeant to hold his tongue, and fall into the ranks. I was hungry enough to eat anything, but though I gnawed at my piece till my jaws ached, I could not bite a morsel off, and after trying

to suck some nourishment from the unsavory mess, I gave it up in despair, and threw the stuff into the gutter. A week later I would not have done such a foolish thing, but I had been a prisoner only forty-eight hours, and my appetite was as yet too dainty to relish such fare.

After twenty-four hours' travel over a railroad most wretchedly out of repair, we reached Greensboro, where we camped for the night in a large field near the track. I was desperately hungry, for the few crackers served out in the morning were barely sufficient for one meal, but I was lucky enough to gain the sympathy of one of the guards, who gave me a sweet potato in exchange for an old knife which the searcher at Petersburg had allowed me to keep, as it was not worth confiscating. After a night rendered sleepless by frequent showers, we were once more packed in the cars, and I was very glad to hear the guards say that we would soon be at our journey's end.

CHAPTER IV.

SALISBURY.

In the fall of 1864, the Confederate authorities at Richmond, finding themselves hard pushed by the armies of the Union, determined to send their prisoners to a place of greater safety than Libby or Belle Isle. Accordingly, on October 5, I found myself in company with some 1,500 other unfortunates at the gate of the Salisbury Military Prison. We were admitted through a wicket gate, one by one, and counted off as we passed through. It was quite dark by the time our party was admitted, but we managed to get a resting-place under one of the few trees in the yard, and I soon forgot my misery in sleep. The recollection of that sleep lingers in my memory to this day, it was so deep, so dreamless, so exquisitely refreshing. We were all in pretty good spirits as we walked around next morning taking a look at our new abode. It was simply an ob-

long lot containing about ten acres, and surrounded by a high wooden fence. There was a ditch about four feet wide and as many deep just inside the fence. This was called the dead line, because it was death to cross it. There was a large four-story brick building, which looked like a factory, and four or five smaller buildings at right angles with the large one, forming a square. In the large building rebel deserters were confined, while the others were used as hospitals and bakeries.

"It wouldn't be hard to get out of this," said I.

"Well, I don't know," answered the Sergeant, "but we'll know better by and by."

Just then a drummer came out of one of the brick buildings and beat a call, and immediately the wicket gate opened and some rebel officers came into the yard. When the drum ceased, one of the officers stepped forward a few paces and cried, "Non-commissioned officers step out." Twenty or thirty men, Dinny amongst them, stepped out and walked to where the officer stood. The result of the conference may be briefly stated thus: The prisoners were put into divisions of 1,000 men

under the command of a sergeant-major, and these were sub-divided into squads of 100 men under a sergeant. By good luck Dinny got a squad, which entitled him to double rations, a very great consideration in a place where we were allowed only enough to keep life in us. After an hour or two's work everything was arranged to the satisfaction of Major Gee, the commandant, and then rations were issued. There were at this time nearly four thousand men in Salisbury Prison, and carloads were arriving every day, which soon swelled the number to ten thousand, and as fast as they came in the prisoners were put into squads and divisions. Our rations consisted of corn or wheaten bread, which was generally served in the morning, and rice soup with an occasional piece of meat at noon. Sometimes the bread was omitted, sometimes the soup, and more than once we got nothing at all. The sergeant-majors were the best off of all the prisoners, for they had the run of the bakeries, and they generally managed to get enough to eat. The commissioned officers were kept by themselves as much as possible, and after a while they were taken to some other prison,

which one it was I never learned. There was at this time nearly 4,000 men and others were arriving every day. There were only two wells on the grounds, so we had to take flour barrels and carry water from a creek about a quarter of a mile from the prison. Dinny, as sergeant of the squad, could send any one he pleased, so he detailed Charley and I, and gave us particular instructions to keep our eyes open and note everything outside.

The prison was situated at the junction of two roads, a few hundred feet from the railroad, and the other two sides were flanked by woods. I saw that if we could escape at all the easiest way would be by getting either under or over the fence on the side next the forest, and I told Dinny so when I got back.

"Aha, my boys, you think so, eh? You forget the bloodhounds."

"Bloodhounds," I gasped, "do they really use bloodhounds to hunt prisoners with?"

"I am told they do," answered the Sergeant, "but we'll wait till we know more about it. The weather ain't cold yet, and as long as we get plenty to eat we need not care."

Our life was now monotonous enough. Every day was like the last, excepting that it grew colder. Tents had been issued, but not enough to accommodate more than two-thirds of the prisoners, so the others dug holes in the ground and covered them with sticks, brush, or anything they could lay hands on. We did the same, and the place we chose was about twelve feet from the dead line on the side facing the forest. Our object in so doing was, if possible, to dig our way under the stockade. The dead line was not more than four feet deep, so we dug a hole about the same depth.

The Sergeant climbed a tree, and with his knife, which he had managed to keep, he cut off some branches, and these formed the roof. We then covered it with brush and earth, and manufactured a door from barrel staves. We then dug a small hole about three feet deep, making seven feet from the surface, and commenced to dig forward toward the stockade. To insure ourselves against detection, we made a cover of staves for the hole, and covering this with earth, we made our fire on it through the day. Our only tools were

an old bayonet which Charley had found, and barrel staves. The dirt we carried out and scattered around the yard. It was exceedingly slow work, for we had to labor in the dark, and use great caution. After three weeks' hard work we found we had got about ten feet which would bring us to the edge of the dead line. Ten feet more would bring us outside the fence.

When we were captured Charley had a $50 greenback. This I pinned under the lining of his blouse, and it had escaped the searchers. Now it proved a good friend to us. Inside the prison Confederate money sold at five to one, so Charley got $250 for his greenback. We bought candles at the rate of three candles for five dollars Confederate money, and we continued our excavation with renewed energy. It was now toward the end of November and the weather was cold and wet. Living in such a hole began to tell on our health. Poor Charley was sick with diarrhœa, and was unable to do his share of the work. One day the Sergeant and I were walking in the yard just as the guard was being relieved. All at once I heard shouts followed by a few shots, and in

an instant the place seemed to be turned into a pandemonium.

The prisoners had revolted. Some daring fellows had attacked and disarmed the guard, a few old men who did duty at the various wells and hospitals. With the arms thus obtained they rushed to the great gate, and knocking down the guards made their escape into the woods. "Oh," I cried, "if Charley was only here, what a glorious chance."

In less than a minute from the first shot the stockade was lined with rebels firing as fast as they could on the defenseless crowd below. In vain the prisoners cried for quarter. For full fifteen minutes the firing continued, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Major Gee and his officers could make them desist. To make matters worse, a four-pounder gun was planted at one corner of the stockade and it poured a deadly shower of grape and canister, tearing everything in its path. The Sergeant had hold of my arm with a vise-like grip. When the firing commenced he stood behind a tree and ordered me to lie down and keep still. I obeyed, and there we remained while the storm of bullets whistled around us. That

bloody day's work summed up seventy-six killed and wounded. At length the firing ceased, and little by little we managed to get to our hut. We were both anxious about Charley, for the house was so near the stockade, that if he had gone out during the firing he would certainly be shot. Fortunately the back stood toward the fence, so that there was little danger of a ball going through the thick earthen roof.

Glad indeed we were when we found him just as we left him an hour before. He had been asleep when the firing commenced, and when he looked out and saw the prisoners running to their tents, he quickly crept back and closed the door.

We were too much agitated by the excitement we had undergone to feel like working at our tunnel that night, and well for us it was so, for just at dusk, we heard a knocking at the door, and a shrill voice ordered us to come out.

"How many men are here?" asked a young lieutenant.

"Three," said the Sergeant. "One very sick."

"Sick or well you must all come out till I search the place for weapons. Come, make haste, we can't stay here all night."

We came out leading Charley, who could scarcely stand, and the officer himself sprang into the hole. By great good luck the fire was still burning, so he did not see any sign of our subterranean operations, but he saw the gleam of the bayonet, and bringing it out, he asked where we got it.

"I found it," said Dinny, "and I used it to dig out the hole with." He added: "You can see it has not been on a gun for a long time. I hope you will leave it with us."

"No indeed," said the officer, "that's against my orders. Are you sure that it is all the arms you have?"

"It is, sir," answered the Sergeant.

"Well, then, get back to your hole, and don't leave it again to-night," and with that they marched off to visit some other unfortunate.

The loss of our bayonet was a very serious loss to us, as it left us with nothing but barrel staves to complete our tunnel.

"Bedad, I'll steal something from the bakery, see if I don't. I'll get square with them

rebs somehow," said Dinny, and sure enough he did, for two days after, when we were at the bakery drawing the squad's daily rations, Dinny saw an axe on the floor close by the hearth. Stooping down he cautiously drew it toward him, and dexterously slipping it into the canvas in which our loaves had been counted, he covered it with the bread, then crying out, " All right, go ahead," we left the bakery with our prize.

No one saw the transaction but the sergeant-major of our division, who was talking with the rebel officer of the day (whose back was toward us). The sergeant-major only smiled, but whether at some observation of the reb's or at Dinny's dexterity, I could not determine. At any rate we never heard any complaint about the ax, and we took care to hide it when out of use. With this tool we could do twice as much work as formerly, but one great difficulty was the want of ventilation in the tunnel. After working fifteen or twenty minutes we were quite exhausted.

About two weeks after the revolt, while we were at the bakery drawing the rations, who should we see but the young officer who had

searched our house. He was standing with his back to the fire, reading a paper. I saw it was the New York *Herald,* and at the head of it was a map, and I could see the word Tennessee in large letters. Happening to look round, his eye caught Dinny's, who was staring at him with no friendly expression.

"Ho, ho," said the reb, "you're the fellow that had the bayonet."

"What bayonet?" asked Dinny, innocently.

"Ho, ho, you can't come that game on me, I'm from New Orleans, I am; I'm no sneaking Yankee."

"I guess that's a Yankee newspaper you're reading, ain't it?"

"Yes," said he, rolling it up in a ball and throwing it into the fire. "Yes, curse it. I wish I could as easily destroy the place it came from."

The paper ball, instead of falling into the flames as the rebel intended, struck against a log and bounded into the canvas amongst our bread. The officer was too angry to take notice where it went, so I quickly covered it up, and making a sign to Dinny to come, we

slipped out, leaving the angry reb to vent his wrath on some one else.

"I could shoot that fellow," said Dinny when we got outside. "Sneaking Yankee indeed. I would ask nothing else than to meet him in a fair fight; we would see which was the sneak."

"Never mind him, Dinny," I said, trying to soothe my friend's temper, "I wouldn't care for what he says, he is only a boy. I've got the paper and it will be something to read to Charley."

The newspaper had a map of part of Tennesee and North Carolina, and showed where the Union and Confederate armies were operating at the time. We studied it all day, laying our plans to get into our own lines, for Dinny never doubted for a moment his ability to get out of prison. Altogether it was the pleasantest day we had spent in Salisbury.

CHAPTER V.

THE ESCAPE.

It was now well on in December and the weather was very cold. Snow had fallen once or twice, but not more than two inches. We worked hard at our tunnel, and had got it as far as the outer edge of the dead line, and another week's work would finish it, according to our calculations. One stormy evening just after roll-call, after we had, as usual, carefully secured the door, I scraped the embers off the hearth, and lifting off the cover, I descended into the hole. Lighting the candle I proceeded along the tunnel, which felt colder than usual, and instead of the stifling atmosphere, I could breathe as freely as if I were above ground. I had not gone many paces when I felt a puff of cold air on my face, and the candle went out. Rather alarmed at this unexpected occurrence, I hastily returned.

"Candle gone out?" whispered Dinny.

"Yes," I replied, and I told him what had happened.

He started as if he had been stung. "My God," he cried, "the tunnel must have caved. Wait here till I go and see," and he descended. In a few minutes he returned, and I knew by his quick breathing that something serious had happened.

"It has caved, sure enough," he said. "The dead line has fallen, and there's a foot of water in the tunnel. You see it has rained for two days, and the water has soaked through and loosened the earth.."

"What is to be done now?" I asked, without well knowing what I was saying, for I was bewildered by the strange turn our affairs had taken.

Charley had not yet spoken a word. "Don't you think we could dig out under the stockade?" he asked. "We are sure to be found out to-morrow, and we might as well try and get away to-night."

"I think we can manage it," said Dinny, cheerfully. "The storm makes more noise than we will, and it is our only chance. We have no time to lose, either. I'll go down again

and try my hand at the fence. You two keep still, and wait till I come back."

We sat there in an agony of suspense. The minutes seemed hours, and we did not exchange a word while the Sergeant was gone. The nearest approach to conversation was an occasional pressure of our clasped hands, for we seemed to know each other's thoughts without the aid of words. Had I been alone I believe I should have gone mad. At length to our great relief the sergeant returned, and his cheerful "All right," made my heart jump with gladness.

"Now boys," he said, "pack up. I've made a hole big enough for a horse to creep through. I wish I knew what time it was. The relief comes about 9 o'clock and it will never do to be caught by them."

In a few minutes we had everything ready, and Dinny, taking the ax, led the way. Without difficulty we got into the dead line, and Dinny had cut steps on the side next the stockade. Cautiously we raised ourselves, but there was little danger of being seen or heard, for the storm howled through the forest with a rush and noise far exceeding anything we

could do had we wished it. The night was as dark as a wolf's mouth, and indeed we could not have chosen a more favorable time for our purpose. We crawled through the hole under the fence and followed Dinny on our hands and knees a short distance into the woods.

The noise we made was entirely unheard amidst the uproar of the elements. The giant pines creaked and groaned as if in pain, and the stockade rocked to and fro as the wind smote it.

At length the Sergeant arose, and taking us by the hand drew us toward him, and whispered: "Charley, take hold of me, and you, Andy, take hold of Charley." In this manner we proceeded toward the road with a caution that would have done credit to Indians. We soon got to the road and walked in the direction of the depot. There was a freight train on the track, and the head light of the locomotive threw a glare right across the road.

"I guess we'll have to wait till that train leaves," said Charley.

"Indeed we won't," said Dinny, "that train's going west, and we are going with it;

come on," so saying he climbed the embankment.

It was a long train and the last car was some distance below the depot, so we walked down the track intending to get on it. Dinny, who was leading the way, suddenly stopped and whispered, "Bedad we're in luck, here's an open car; come boys, jump in."

Without another word we clambered in and crouched behind some barrels that occupied one end of the car. We had not been two minutes in our new berth, when I saw a gleam of light flash across the roof of the car, and I heard a voice muttering, "Confound it, that door's open again. Curse these Yanks' they've wrenched the bolt off." With that the door shut with a bang and we were in total darkness.

"Now, boys," said Dinny, "lay down and rest yourselves. We are all right so far; the bloodhounds we hear so much about won't track us this time."

Charley had already found a place to suit him, and I crept into another corner. While feeling my way, my hand came in contact with something soft and warm. I felt my heart

jump to my mouth, and just at that moment the train started. The jar threw me forward, and I fell with all my weight on the yielding mass. It struggled, and I heard a stifled voice cry, "Mercy, Massa, mercy. I'se only a poor nigger."

"A nigger," I ejaculated, inexpressibly relieved. "Dinny, there's a nigger in the car."

"A nigger, eh? Well, wait till I strike a light, there's no danger now;" so saying, he came toward us with the candle in one hand and the ax in the other.

The darkey was evidently frightened, for he cried again, "Mercy, Massa, I'se only a poor nigger."

"Well, I ain't going to hurt you; and now tell us who you are and what you're doing here? What's your name?"

"My name Sam, sah."

"Sam what?" asked the Sergeant.

"Nuffin' on'y Sam."

"And where are you going?"

"I'se goin' to dad's. Dad's a free nigger."

"Are you free, too?"

Sam hesitated, and seeing his embarrassment, Dinny said kindly, "Don't be afraid, we won't betray you."

Thus assured, Sam informed us that he belonged to a planter who (probably foreseeing the end of the war) had determined to sell his slaves; that Sam, getting wind of it, had run away, and had already traveled about fifty miles, that just a few minutes before we came in, he had seen the open car and had crept in.

"Have you anything to eat?" asked Dinny.

"I got some pork, but I ain't got no bread," he replied.

"Well, fetch along your pork, we have some bread."

The bread and pork was produced and we made a hearty meal, for meat of any kind was a great rarity with us.

"Now, boys," said the Sergeant, "try and get some sleep. I'll keep watch awhile."

We needed no second invitation, so stretching myself on the floor of the car, I soon fell asleep. I dreamed I was at sea, the ship was within sight of my native shore. Everything was gay and everybody in good spirits at the prospect of soon meeting beloved friends. A party of us were in the cabin drinking healths, and I was in the act of lifting a glass to my lips, when my arm was rudely seized, and I

heard a voice whisper, "Come, Andy, get up."

I woke and found Dinny shaking me to arouse me.

"I thought you would never wake," he said. "Now mind and wake me if the train stops." I rose and went to the door. It was a few inches open, so I looked out. The rain had ceased, but the wind still blew fiercely, and great masses of cloud rolled and tumbled across the sky, completely obscuring the moon. The wind was very cold, too, and it chilled to the heart, so I closed the door and leaned against it with the ax in my hand ready for any emergency. My dream came back to my mind, and I fell into a profound reverie. Again I was at home on my native hills. Old friends came and went. I heard familiar voices and saw familiar faces. How long I remained thus I could not tell, but I was aroused from my dreaming by the train slacking her speed, so I woke Dinny. The others got up too, and we opened the door ready to jump out when the train stopped.

"Do you know this place, Sam?" asked Dinny.

The darkey looked out and peered carefully around. "This is Dallas," he said. "'Tain't more'n ten miles to dad's."

"We'll get out here, then, and you'll guide us to your dad's."

Cautiously we got out, and followed Sam, who slid down the embankment and we crept under a fence which skirted a wood.

"Now, Sam, are you sure you know where we are?" asked Dinny.

"Yes, sah, I knows very well. I can get to dad's before daylight, but we'll have to wait till the cars leave, for we got to cross the track again."

"Where does your father live?"

"He lives in the Ridge."

"What, the Blue Ridge?"

"Yes, sah, the Blue Ridge. Dad's a free nigger and owns his own cabin. I knows every foot of this yere place for I was raised around here," said Sam, confidently. At that moment we heard the scream of a locomotive and a train came thundering along, and passed through without stopping. This was evidently the reason why our train had stopped, for as soon as the other had passed, she backed up

onto the main track, and started in its wake.

"Now look here, Sam," said Dinny when the track was clear, and we were preparing to start, "we are Yankee prisoners who have escaped from Salisbury, and we want to get across the Blue Ridge, into Tennessee. If you betray us to the rebels, by God, I'll murder you," and he brandished the ax in a threatening manner.

"Oh, don't, Massa Dinny," cried the negro in alarm. "I wouldn't do no such thing. I is afraid of the sogers myself."

"Well, go ahead and we'll follow you."

Accordingly Sam, closely followed by Dinny, clambered up the embankment, and he had just got on the track when I heard a deep voice challenge him, "Who goes there?" In an instant we dropped to the ground, and then I heard Sam say, "I'se only a poor nigger."

"Well, nigger, what are you doing here?"

The answer came in the shape of a blow that felled the sentry to the earth. Dinny had discharged the ax with all his force, and it struck him on the face and he fell without a groan.

"Quick, boys, quick," whispered the bold

sergeant, and in a twinkling we were across the track and into the woods on the other side. Dinny followed in a few seconds, bringing with him the sentry's musket and the ax. "I believe I've killed that fellow," he said, "he never moved after he fell."

"Follow me," said Sam, "and look out for stumps."

We toiled on through the dark forest, over stumps, through brush, now up to the knees in a bog, then stumbling over logs and stones. Still on we toiled. I was almost dropping with fatigue, and poor Charley more than once begged us to leave him, and go on ourselves, but Dinny would encourage him to try a little longer. At length he fell over a stump and lay there unable to rise. Sam stopped and informed us that we were now in the mountains and quite near the road that led to his father's cabin.

"It ain't mor'n free miles. If Massa Charley is able to walk as far we can be there before daylight."

"Three miles," said Charley, despairingly. "I don't think I can walk half that distance."

"Don't give up the ship, my boy," said

Dinny, "it will be easier walking on the road, and I'll give you a lift."

We rested a few minutes and Dinny gave Sam his orders to keep a little in advance and be on his guard for strangers. "And are you sure the road is perfectly safe?" asked Dinny for the second time.

"Oh, yes, there ain't many people use this road."

"How long is it since you were here?"

"I dunno for sure, but it was before the war."

"Not since then," cried Dinny. "You will find things have changed; it is a chance if your dad is living. However we'll try the road, and it will be easier for Charley."

We started again, and a few minutes brought us to the road, if road it could be called. It seemed impossible that horses and wagons could travel over such ground, but the deep ruts proved that they did.

The wind had now fallen, and the sky was clear, and completely studded with stars. The cold was intense, but our hard exercise kept our blood in circulation. The road was very steep in places, and fearfully rough. Every

second we were stepping over the ankles into little frozen pools, and altogether it was a very uncomfortable journey. Towards the east, signs of approaching day were beginning to appear, when Sam again stopped, and told us that his dad's cabin was just a little distance. "I'll show you where to hide while I go to see de old folks." So saying he stepped to the left, and led us to where three large trees lay together on the ground. "These trees," said Sam, "have laid there ever since I can remember. I guess you will find room enough inside and I'll fetch you something to eat by and by."

Thankful for any kind of shelter, we crept under as far as we could. There was plenty of leaves and grass, and of these we gathered the dryest, and made a comfortable couch.

"Now, boys, go to sleep," said the Sergeant, "and I'll keep watch. I think we can trust that darkey. Ain't it lucky I got the reb's gun? I would have taken his ammunition too, but I could not get at it easily and I was afraid to lose time." I heard no more, for I fell asleep. When I woke Dinny was lying at my side fast asleep, and Sam was sitting at our

feet. Seeing me rise he made a sign to keep still, and pointed to some bread and meat on a tin plate.

"What time is it?" I asked.

"'Bout noon, eat," he said, pushing the plate toward me.

I was very hungry and made a hearty meal.

"Now," said Sam, "you keep watch, and I'll come back in the evening and bring something more to eat."

When he had gone I looked around to see what kind of place we were in. The daylight streamed in through a thousand crevices in the brush and rubbish that had accumulated around the fallen trees. One tree lay on top of the others almost longitudinally, forming a long, narrow chamber, large enough to hold twenty men. I leaned back with the gun between my knees, fully intending to keep a faithful watch, but before I was aware of it I fell fast asleep.

"You're a nice sentinel, ain't you?" said Sergeant Dinny when I awoke, but seeing my confusion he added kindly: "Well I mustn't blame you too much; you've had too much hard work for a recruit."

"Have I been asleep long?" I asked.

"At least two hours, for it is that time since I woke, and found you sitting there with the gun on your lap."

"Has Charley slept all that time?"

"Yes. Let him sleep all he wants, poor fellow, he'll be the better for it."

We sat and talked a long time till it began to grow dark. Charley woke up and ate the remainder of the food.

"You've had a good sleep, Charley," said Dinny, "how do you feel now?"

"First rate. I feel ready for another march."

We were beginning to be impatient for Sam to come, when that worthy made his appearance with a small parcel in his hand.

"Now, Massa Dinny," the faithful fellow said, "little Jackey he seen the sogers down the road a-coming this way and he hurried back to let me know, so I think you had better be going."

"Can't we stay here till the soldiers pass?"

"Not if they has dogs with 'em, they would scent you," said Sam.

We all felt the force of Sam's reasoning, so

we quickly got out, and followed him through the intricacies of the wood.

"Now, Massa Dinny," he said, for he always addressed him, knowing he was the leader. "I'll guide you to the road, you must follow it till you come to where the creek crosses it, then follow the stream till you come to the fall, then turn to the left hand, and you will get to the road again. It will save you more'n a mile."

"Why, I thought you intended to go with us," said Dinny, as we reached the wood, and Sam was bidding us good-by.

"No, sah, dad wants me to home, he says he got money enough to buy me hisself; niggers is cheap now."

Notwithstanding our evident peril, we could not resist laughing at this ludicrous remark of Sam's. It was very foolish and likely to cost us dear, for we heard shouts a little distance behind us. "De sogers, run for your lives," cried Sam in alarm, springing back into the darkness of the woods.

CHAPTER VI.

RECAPTURED.

We did not require Sam's advice, for before he had ended, we were off at the top of our speed. Charley was a little in advance and I was immediately behind, while the Sergeant brought up the rear. It was snowing quite hard, and the wind blew it in our faces, making it difficult for us to see our way. Suddenly Charley stumbled over some obstruction, and before he could recover himself I ran against him and we both fell heavily to the ground. Unfortunately, the ax which I carried flew out of my hand and struck poor Charley on the head, knocking him senseless.

"Oh, Dinny," I cried, "what shall we do now? I'm afraid I've killed Charley."

Before he could answer, we heard a loud shout, and a hoarse voice called out, "Halt there, or we'll fire."

"Run, Dinny, run," I cried, "leave us and save yourself."

"I can't leave Charley and you in this scrape," said the kind-hearted fellow.

"Yes, yes, you must; you can do us more good if you keep out of their hands."

"Bedad, that's so; keep your eyes open, for I'll be around," and he crept off into the dark forest.

In a few seconds our pursuers came up and the gruff voice again saluted us.

"Hello, who are you?"

I answered with a groan, for a pang shot through my right leg as I tried to rise. Just then Charley came to himself and asked for Dinny.

"Here I am," I answered quickly, and bending over as if to assist him, I whispered, "Be careful. Dinny's escaped."

With the assistance of our captors, we were lifted to our feet, and I was rejoiced to find that none of my bones were broken, though my leg was badly sprained, which made it painful to walk for some minutes. "Lean on me," said the man with the gruff voice in a kinder tone than he had hitherto used, "and now tell us where are the others?"

"What others?" I asked.

"Come, come, no fooling. You escaped from Salisbury last night, didn't you?"

"Well, supposing we did."

"Well, where are the other three men?"

"Other three? No other three came with us."

"Are you telling the truth?" asked the reb.

"I'll take my Bible oath that no other three escaped with us," I replied.

"Well, now, that's strange. Five men escaped from Salisbury last night, two from one squad, and three from another. The lieutenant has the list with their names, but he is down at the depot. It is too far to go to-night. I reckon I will have to stop at the nigger's till daylight."

While this conversation was going on we had been coming down the road, and had passed the place where Sam left us. My leg felt better, but I deemed it prudent to still feign lameness, and lean on my gruff guide for support. The snow had ceased, but the wind blew keen and cold, and the idea of a shelter was very acceptable, especially as it might give Dinny a chance to do something for us. A few

minutes more brought us to the shanty, and my gruff friend, who was the leader of the party, knocked loudly at the door.

"Who's dar?" asked a voice which I knew to be Sam's.

"Open the door, you black son of a chicken thief, open quick or I'll bust it in."

A bolt was withdrawn, and the door opened. The rebs poured in, taking care to push us in front. Our party consisted of four men and the sergeant and with the others in the room we nearly filled the small apartment. An old negro man and woman were sitting over the fire, but they rose as we entered and stood back respectfully to let the whites get to the fire.

"Why didn't you open sooner?" asked the sergeant.

"'Cause we'se afraid it was the Yankees come to cut our froats," answered Sam piteously.

The rebs laughed. "It will be a long time before the Yankees get here," said one.

"Unless as prisoners," said the sergeant. "Say, you nigger," he added, "get us something to eat, and lose no time about it."

"Yes, sah," said Sam. "I'se got some pork

and some corn meal and make some johnny cakes."

The old couple had retired to the other room, but the old woman now came back and went to work cooking supper for us. Sam went out and brought in a huge piece of bacon, and again he went out and after some delay he returned with an armful of firewood. I was sitting against one side of the fireplace, and as he stooped to fix the fire he gave me a significant look and whispered, " Massa Dinny all right."

Until now, Sam had studiously avoided my eye, and I was beginning to suspect that he had betrayed us, but these words dispelled my suspicions and raised a hope that Dinny would do something for our release. I turned to Charley, who was sitting opposite beside the Sergeant, and gave him a smile of encouragement. The rebel saw me, and looking kindly at me, he said, " Poor fellow, I feel kinder sorry for you, but I am afraid it will go hard with you."

" What? " I asked in surprise, for I thought he had overheard Sam's words.

" Oh, you know yourself. Which of you was it that killed the sentry down to the railroad last night? "

I was thunderstruck. The remembrance of that affair had entirely passed from my mind, and now that it was brought up so unexpectedly I could not utter a word in reply, but sat staring at my accuser.

"Ah, ha! it was you, then, was it? Your looks betray you."

"As God is my judge," I cried, springing to my feet, and raising my hand, "I am innocent of any such crime."

An incredulous smile passed over his features, but the solemnity of my assertion rather staggered him, and he asked in a more subdued voice, "Who was it then? Was it him?" looking at Charley.

"No, it was not him."

"Who was it then? Do you know who did it?"

I was expecting this question, and was prepared for it. Again rising to my feet and looking the sergeant square in the face, I said with all the emphasis I could command: "Now look here, Sergeant, you tell me that five prisoners escaped from Salisbury last night; I tell you they did not escape with us. You say a sentinel was killed by these prisoners and I say

that neither of us killed him. Now do you believe me?"

"I do," said the reb rising, "and there's my hand on't, and I am very glad of it," and he gave me a squeeze that brought the tears to my eyes.

To my great relief supper was now announced, and then Sam asked permission to withdraw to assist his old father, who was "bad with rheumatis," he said. "If you want anything just call me," he added.

"All right," said the sergeant, whom the supper had put in a good humor, "go ahead."

"Have you anything to drink?" asked the reb, as Sam came back to the kitchen for something he had forgotten.

"There's some apple-jack in the cellar, Massa, if that will do," he replied.

"Just the very thing we want, fetch it along." Sam lit a lantern and went out. He was gone perhaps ten minutes and the soldiers were getting impatient, when he returned with a small stone jar and some horse blankets. He laid the jar on the table and coming over to where Charley and I sat, he spread a blanket on the floor and handed me another one.

"You can sleep there," he said aloud, then lowering his voice he whispered, "don't drink. Now, Massa, if you please, I'se go to bed, for I has to rise early."

"All right, my boy, I'll attend to the prisoners, and see that the door is barred."

Sam mounted a rude ladder to a sort of attic, and the sergeant, taking the ladder away, cried to him, "I'll keep you there in case of accidents; the Yanks might try to escape."

All this time the rebs had been busy drinking, and now the sergeant offered me a cupful, but remembering Sam's caution I declined it.

"Temperate, eh?" he exclaimed. "You'll never make good soldiers till you can drink your share."

I replied that we were tired and wanted rest.

"Yes, yes, sleep all you can; it is a long march to the junction, and we must start at daylight."

The contents of the jar having been drunk, the rebs spread themselves before the fire, while the sergeant bolted the door, and placed the ladder against it. Then he sat down at the table and lighting his pipe, began to smoke. I could see him plainly through a hole in the

blanket, and I watched him intently, for from Sam's hint I had an idea that the liquor had been drugged, and I expected soon to see him fall asleep. Nor was I mistaken, for he soon began to nod, and by and by he laid his head upon the table, and I knew by his heavy breathing that he was unconscious. Still I was afraid to stir, or make the least noise till I was perfectly sure he was really asleep. We lay there perhaps an hour in this state of suspense, when Charley whispered, "I hear something below." I listened intently, when I felt as if I was being pushed up. With great caution we rose up, and pulling the blanket away found we had been lying on a trap door. At the same time the trap began to rise and Dinny's face appeared.

Hastily, but in perfect silence, we lifted the trap and descended to the cellar, the door of which stood open with the moonlight streaming in. We were soon outside, and on the road again, and we ran till we were out of breath.

"Oh, Dinny," cried Charley, "I am so glad."

"So am I, boy," said Dinny. "I didn't

think it would be such an easy job, but thanks to Sam we managed it. I hope he won't come to harm from the rebs."

"They can't blame him for our escape," I observed, "for they took away the ladder and left him as much a prisoner as we were."

"Yes, I know," he said laughing, "I heard it all. I was in the cellar all the time."

"Tell us all about it," said Charley. "I am curious to know how you worked everything so well."

"Oh, easy enough. You know I followed you, and when you went into the shanty I waited outside till I saw Sam come out. I followed him and found him coming out of the cellar. He knew me at once, and motioned me to go into the cellar. Next time he came he had a light and he showed me the trap door. I told him to contrive that you should lie there, so as to make sure of getting out that way. I asked him if the old folks slept sound. He said the old man had rheumatism and had to take something to make him sleep, but he couldn't tell me what it was so I asked him to let me see it. When he came for the apple-jack he brought a small bottle labeled laudanum, and told me the

old man sometimes took a teaspoonful. I knew well what it was for, I had seen Dr. Fisher prescribe it many a time, so I calculated five teaspoonfuls to a quart of spirits would make the rebs sleep and give us a chance to get away unobserved. I heard how nicely you bamboosled that thick-headed rebel sergeant. Bedad, Andy you ought to have been a lawyer."

"Well," I said, "I did not like to tell a deliberate lie, but at the same time I could not very well tell the truth, so I was compelled to equivocate."

"It was no murder anyhow," said Dinny, "he would have done the same to me."

"Were you not afraid of being overheard," asked Charley.

"Not a bit. We made up our plans at the end of the cellar under the old folks' room, and as soon as Sam left I went to the other end to listen to the conversation. When the rebs were fast asleep, Sam let me know by dropping something over the window which was right above the cellar door, and then I raised the trap. You know the rest."

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE MOUNTAINS.

We had now reached the brook, and following Sam's directions, we turned to the right and followed the course of the stream. At Dinny's suggestion we waded for a little distance, but the water was too cold, and the bed so uneven that we soon abandoned it. We now pursued our way in perfect silence. The road was fearfully rough, and our progress was necessarily slow, but still we toiled on, and after an hour's hard walking we heard the sound of falling water, so we crossed the stream below the falls, and soon had the satisfaction of getting back to the highway. "Let us rest here awhile," said the Sergeant, throwing himself down at the foot of a large tree. "I feel hungry now, don't you?"

"And thirsty too, I'll bet?"

"Yes indeed, we are," said Charley, "and my head pains me a good deal."

"Take a mouthful of this," said Dinny, handing Charley a bottle, "that's some of Sam's apple-jack, it will do you good."

Charley took a good pull and handed it to me. Only those who have been in a similar situation can appreciate the good that small quantity of stimulant did us. I felt like a new man, and I wondered that Dinny did not take some when I gave him back the bottle.

"I had my share before," he said, "and I want to save this for another time."

"I tell you what, boys," he continued, "that boy Sam is a jewel. I never was partial to niggers, but Sam has cured me, and I would not be ashamed to acknowledge him as my brother. Here's rations enough for three days, and surely before that we'll be out of these mountains."

"I hope so," said Charley, presently. "I don't think I can stand this fatigue much longer."

"Well, let us be going, we must get as far away from the rebs as we can."

The day dawned clear and cold. As nearly as I could judge we had been three hours on the road, and must have walked at least fifteen

miles. We were now in a peculiarly desolate region. A heavy mist hung over the face of the mountains, but as the daylight grew stronger the fog lifted and revealed to us the dreariest landscape I had ever looked on. All around, as far as I could see, the ground was covered with immense boulders, in some places singly and in others piled up to a height of fifty or sixty feet. Scrubby brush and dwarf pines were the only vegetation visible, and altogether it was a very picture of desolation. "Surely we can find a shelter amongst these rocks," said Charley, "my head aches as if it would split, and my legs as if they would sink under me."

"I've been looking for a place to rest ever since daylight," answered the Sergeant, "and I daresay we will find one among these rocks."

We left the road and clambered over the wet and slippery rocks in search of a safe retreat. There was no difficulty in finding one, but Dinny was not easily satisfied. He wanted to get where he could see the road without being seen, so we continued our search till we had found one.

"Here," cried the Sergeant, creeping under

an immense boulder that rested on two others, "this will do firstrate."

The cavern (if cavern it could be called) was about four feet high and large enough to hold six men comfortably. The bottom was a flat rock, slightly inclined and perfectly dry.

"Now, boys, my advice is for you to go to sleep right away and I'll keep guard."

This advice exactly coincided with our inclinations, for we were very tired, while the Sergeant seemed as fresh as if he had just got out of bed. I enjoyed a splendid sleep, and when I awoke Dinny was snoring at my side and Charley was on guard. He was watching something outside, and suddenly he drew back as if to screen himself from observation.

"What's the matter, Charley?" I asked, "do you see anything suspicious?"

"There's a troop of cavalry passing down the road. See."

About half a mile below our position a portion of the road was visible and I counted over twenty troopers as they rode past.

"These men can't be in search of us," said Charley.

"I guess not; they wouldn't send so many

men after a few prisoners. What made you draw back so suddenly?" I asked.

"Because one of them stopped and pointed right toward me. I actually thought he had seen me."

"Have you seen any others?"

"Not a soul. I've been on guard about three hours and these rebs are the first living beings I've seen. You had better eat your dinner now, for Dinny intends to leave before dark."

I had not time to finish my meal when another exclamation from Charley brought me to my feet.

"Here's more of them, coming up the road, and, good heavens! they have a dog. Dinny, Dinny."

The sergeant sprang up in such haste that he struck his head against the low roof of the cavern. With a muttered curse against low roofs in general, he asked what was the trouble.

"The rebs are after us and they have a dog with them," said the excited Charley.

"Well, well, keep cool, boys; we'll fool them yet. If they depend on their dog, he won't amount to much amongst these rocks."

While he was speaking we were gathering

our things together, and we crept quietly out of the cave, and followed the brave Dinny over the rocks in a direction opposite to the road. It was fortunate for us that it was daylight, or we never should have been able to make our way over such ground. Many of the boulders were twenty feet high, and seemed to hang on nothing. At length, after incredible exertion, we got to comparatively smooth ground and our advance was more rapid.

"We must try and get to the road again," said Dinny, "or we shall get lost."

It was too dark to see, and the moon was low yet, so we sat down at the foot of a rock to rest ourselves, and arrange our plans. "Do you think it is safe for us to try the road?" asked Charley, nervously. "I don't like the idea of being hunted like a wild beast."

"I can't answer for the safety of it," replied the Sergeant, "but I think it is the best thing we can do under the circumstances."

Taking the pile of boulders for our guide, we calculated that by keeping to the right we should strike the road some distance above the place where we left it. The moonlight was now of good service to us, enabling us to pick

our way with comparative ease, and we soon reached the highway.

"Hush," said Dinny, as we stood at the foot of an immense rock that skirted the road. "I'll see if the coast is clear first. "All right," he whispered, after a hurried look up the hill. We had not proceeded ten paces when I was startled by a voice overhead, "Halt, there!" I turned and saw standing in bold relief against the bright sky the figure of a man in the act of raising his musket to his shoulder. Another instant and a ball whistled over our heads, and we flew up the road like startled deer, nor did we slacken our pace till a turn in the road hid us from our pursuers.

The shouts of the rebels were plainly heard, and we continued our way as fast as we could, for we knew it was our only chance of escape. To our great relief we heard the sound of water, and in a few minutes we came to a little stream that ran across the road.

"Wade," cried Dinny, stepping into the water, and we followed his example.

The water was very cold, but not more than five or six inches deep, and the bed was as even as the road itself. Our pursuers were not far

behind, as we could tell by their shouts and yells, and we strove to put as great a distance between them and us as possible. We had not gone far, however, when Charley began to fag.

"Oh, Dinny," he cried, "I can stand this no longer; I'm played out."

Dinny was in the rear, ready to shoot the first man that appeared.

"Make for that rock, then," he whispered, "it's our only chance."

This was a high rock a little to the right, which stood clear and sharp against the sky. This we began to ascend, assisted by the vines and roots which grew around it, and for the present we had an advantage over our enemies, for we were in the shade, while they would be compelled to show themselves before they could reach us. We now heard the baying of the dog, and I felt the blood leave my heart at the ominous sound.

"Oh, God," cried Charley, "it's all up with us."

The Sergeant spoke not a word, but kneeled with his gun ready, while we crouched close to the ground, and awaited events. We had not long to wait, for soon we heard the foot-

steps of our pursuers, and the louder baying of the dog. He had lost the trail in the water and was trying to find it. We could see the huge brute run thither and hither with his nose close to the earth, and at last he stood stock still just on the spot where we had left the stream. As the dog stopped with his nose on the ground as if to make sure that he had struck the trail, Dinny fired. I heard a howl and a splash, and in another moment a volley of bullets flew around us.

"Hurry up, Andy; we'll get the best of them yet."

With renewed hope I sprang forward, swinging myself up the stumps and vines. I was making my way through some vines which lay right across my path when I felt the ground give way beneath my feet, and I fell into an abyss. In my descent I struck against something, and I remembered no more.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAVE.

WHEN my senses returned I felt an aching pain all over my body, and Charley was bathing my face. I heard him say, "I'm afraid poor Andy is badly hurt."

"Oh, Charley," I groaned, "where am I?"

"Hush, Andy, you're all right now," said Dinny. "Keep perfectly still or the rebs will find us out. Are you much hurt?"

"Oh, yes, I'm sore all over. I'm afraid some of my bones are broken."

"Hush, keep still. I hear something."

We sat a few moments in perfect silence. I heard two or three shots and then all was still. Suddenly I heard a crashing overhead and a heavy fall just at my feet. An explosion followed which shook the cavern like an earthquake. One of the soldiers had fallen into the cavern and his gun had discharged itself. The flash revealed it all to us, and Dinny

seemed to comprehend it instantaneously, for he sprang onto the prostrate figure, and I heard him say in a hoarse whisper, "If you speak a word you're a dead man."

The fellow neither spoke nor moved. Charley and I went to assist Dinny if it should be necessary and we found the rebel lying rolled up like a ball, stone dead. He had broken his neck.

"Well, I'm glad of it," said the Sergeant, when assured the fellow was really dead. "I couldn't murder a poor fellow in cold blood. Here's a streak of good luck. Another gun and twenty rounds of ammunition." With extreme caution he loaded both weapons and gave one to Charley.

"We'll get to the other end of the cave," he said, "and if any more rebs come they'll get a warm reception. Andy, my lad, go first and lie down. I guess we'll have to stay here a day or two till you get over your fall."

I crawled to the end of the cavern where it was narrowest. I tried to sleep, but the pain in my side prevented me from enjoying that luxury. The cave seemed to me to be open at my end, for I felt cold puffs of wind occasion-

ally, but I did not want to disturb my comrades by complaining. I was in a half-sleeping condition when I heard a scratching close by me.

"Oh, dear," I exclaimed, "are the horrors of this night never going to end?"

"What's the matter, Andy?" asked Dinny.

"Look," I screamed in terror, for a couple of blazing eye-balls were glaring at me.

"A bear, I guess," said Dinny quietly, creeping toward me. "Don't fire, Charley, but take the ax. Now, Andy, get back and leave him to us."

The animal growled but did not offer to move. Dinny made a furious thrust at him with his bayonet. The beast roared and struggled and I saw his head vibrate from side to side, and his eyes dilate with rage and pain. "Now, Charley, give me the ax," cried Dinny, mad with excitement of the battle, and giving the beast thrust upon thrust. With the gun in one hand and the ax in the other, the combat was too unequal to last, and the bear soon succumbed to the brave Sergeant's prowess. "I wouldn't have risked firing at him, had he bit my hand off," said Dinny, when he recovered

his breath, " but we will have to prepare in case his mate comes. I guess this is their den, and what we took for the rear is really the entrance."

Dinny and Charley pushed the carcass back toward the entrance to block the path against any more visitors.

" If his mate does come she'll stop and examine it," said Dinny, " so we had better be on the alert. I wish it was day."

Daylight came at last, and showed us a long, narrow cavern. The place where I had fallen through was about fifteen feet from the floor, and the only place that admitted the light. Stems of vines hung downward, and the dead body of the rebel soldier lay just as he had fallen.

" How do you feel this morning?" asked Charley.

" I can scarcely tell," I answered. " I feel a pain in my side every breath I draw."

" Then some of your ribs are broken," he said. " I think I can do something for you. I have seen my father fix broken bones many a time."

I stripped myself according to Charley's di-

rections, then taking a strip of canvas for a bandage he strapped it around my body.

"Now take a full breath."

I did so, and he and Dinny pulled the bandage as tight as I could bear it.

"You'll have to wear that at least three weeks, till the bones knit again."

We now ate breakfast, and then my companions went to work at the bear.

"We can stay here a week, if necessary; we have plenty of fresh meat," said Dinny, dragging the carcass to the light.

The head was literally hacked to pieces.

Dinny skinned him and cut off the quarters.

"I would like a piece of that," he said, "but it wouldn't do to light a fire. I'll have to reconnoiter first; but before we do any more I shall bury this poor fellow," pointing to the dead soldier.

He dragged the body to the other end of the cave, and covered it with leaves and earth, then came back with the reb's jacket in his hand. "I'll wear this now," he said, "it will keep me warm, and I'll pass for a Johnny if I should happen to be seen. I am going to take a look around. Keep perfectly still till I come back."

Dinny crept through the narrow entrance where the bear came in. In about half an hour he returned with a canteen of water and some pieces of wood.

"There's not a soul to be seen," he said. "I've been down to the stream and I saw the dead hound, but nothing else. There are bloody tracks outside, so I think the bear had been wounded before he came here."

"Perhaps that was the shots we heard," said Charley.

"Very likely."

I was in so much pain that I took but little interest in the conversation, so I laid down and tried to sleep. Charley spread out the bear skin. It was a soft, warm bed, and at last I fell asleep. When I woke a fire was burning and a savory smell pervaded the cavern. We had a splendid supper of bear's steaks, and then I offered to keep guard while the others got some sleep.

The Sergeant seemed doubtful of my ability, but I assured him that I had had enough of rest to do me for some time, so he carefully extinguished the fire, and giving me strict injunctions to wake him if I heard anything, he lay

down beside Charley, who was already asleep. The night passed quietly, and they slept soundly. Dinny woke before daylight, and lighting a fire he cooked some bear meat.

"You see," he said, "I want to cook as much as will do us for some days, and we'll start to-morrow if you are able to walk."

"I think I will be; at least I hope so, for I am tired of staying in this dark hole."

The day passed quietly. Dinny went to the stream for water, and reported all quiet. Another night and day passed, and we were all ready for our journey. I felt stiff and sore, but a few minutes' exercise warmed my blood and I got along as well as the others.

CHAPTER IX.

'AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.

It was early in the afternoon when we left the cave, for Dinny wanted to get to the road before dark, and the entrance to the cavern being on the opposite side to the stream, it took us a little time to get around the hill. On the bank of the stream the dead dog still lay. He was an immense black hound, and I shuddered as I passed him. "What a savage-looking brute," said Charley.

"Yes, indeed," said Dinny. "It was better to kill him than a man."

We retraced our steps down the stream till we struck the road, then Dinny, taking the lead, cautioned us to keep our eyes open in case of a sudden surprise. My side pained me a good deal, but I forbore complaining, as I knew it would only annoy my companions. Just as evening was coming on we entered a

ravine. It was a narrow gap, the rocks on both sides rising perpendicular to the height of perhaps fifty feet. "We must hurry through this place," said the Sergeant, quickening his pace, "it would be awkward to meet the rebs here."

The ravine was nearly a quarter of a mile long, and we were turning a sharp curve toward the end, when we were startled by the sound of horses' feet, and before we had time to conceal ourselves a horseman came round the corner at a smart trot. To run was useless, for there was no place to hide ourselves. "About face," whispered Dinny; "it's our only chance. Don't speak a word, but leave it all to me."

"Halt there!" shouted the horseman, riding up.

We stopped, and the Sergeant, seeing he had an officer's uniform on, saluted.

"Who have you got there?" he asked.

"A prisoner, sir; an escaped prisoner from Salisbury."

"And who are you?" he asked, coming near. "Your voice is familiar to me. Ho! ho!" he shouted. "You are the Yankee ser-

geant, surrender," and, drawing a revolver, he leveled it at Dinny.

"Don't shoot, Captain," cried the Sergeant, stepping aside, "we uns ain't Yankees."

"Who are you then? Where do you belong?"

"We belong to the detachment down at the junction."

"You're a liar, I know you are the Yankee sergeant, take that."

A ball whistled by Dinny's ear, and without waiting for another, Dinny sprang at him with his musket clubbed, and struck him a terrific blow on the breast, which swept him off his horse as if he had been a child.

The pistol dropped from his hand, and I picked it up, while Charley caught the horse by the bridle. Dinny lifted the inanimate form, and laid it across the saddle.

"Get back to the wood, quick," he said, "perhaps he has comrades not far behind."

We hurried back to the end of the ravine, and entered the forest. It was nearly dark and snow was falling. We stopped under a pine tree, and Dinny lifted the officer off the horse and laid him on the ground.

"He won't trouble us again," said the Sergeant after a moment's pause. "I've cleared off old scores with him, and now I forgive him."

There was something so exquisitely ridiculous in the idea of forgiving a man he had just killed that I could not forbear laughing. Dinny turnd round and sharply asked what I was laughing at. Seeing he was annoyed, I answered that it was at his acuteness in pretending he was a genuine rebel who had caught a prisoner.

"Well, he's dead, sure enough, and I killed him in a fair fight. He fired at me first, so I have nothing on my conscience on that score. Now boys," he continued, "I have an idea that I think will help us. This reb's uniform will just about fit you, Andy. You will personate him for the time being, and if you are as smart as I think you are, we may be able to pass the lines. We must find out who and what he is if he has any papers about him. What do you think about it, Andy?"

I felt a repugnance at the idea of stripping a dead man, but Dinny overruled my objections.

"I'll fix it all right," he said. "You stay here till I bury him, and fetch the clothes."

"You are a nobby reb," said Dinny in admiration, when I had donned my borrowed plumage, "and as Charley has a pair of rebel pants I guess we'll pass in a crowd. Now let us see what is in the pockets."

In the breast pocket was a large pocketbook full of papers. Dinny lit a piece of candle, and hiding the light in his hat, I emptied the pocketbook. We knelt around the hat and examined the contents. There were two gold eagles and three five-dollar greenbacks, also a considerable sum of Confederate scrip. There were also two envelopes addressed to Lieutenant C. F. Pinckney. One contained a pass signed by Colonel Smith, commanding a bigade, and countersigned by the corps commander.

"The very thing we want," said Dinny, joyfuly. "We'll make our way sure."

The other envelope contained a letter which, as it has some connection with my narrative, I here copy in full. It was dated October 5, the very day we entered Salisbury Prison, and ran thus:

My Dear Nephew:

Your friend Captain Roberts called at my quarters yesterday, and delivered your communication. From some words he inadvertently dropped during our conversation, I have reason to believe he suspects something. For your own sake I would again caution you to be careful.

Colonel Syme died yesterday, so I am now in command. We took a number of prisoners in a skirmish on the 1st. One was named Charles Fisher, a private, 95th N. Y. See if that name is on the Salisbury list, and if so find him, and you will confer a favor by doing him any little kindness in your power. Good-by, my dear boy. God bless you. I would like to see you, but I am glad you are not at the front at present, for we have hard work keeping the Yankees back.

Your loving uncle,

Charles Fisher.

"Well, well, that beats all I ever heard," exclaimed Dinny, when he had finished reading the letter.

"I don't believe he took the trouble to find me," said Charley.

"No, indeed, he didn't; he could have found you easy enough had he tried. Every man's name and regiment are on the books. I have the list of my squad in my pocket now. He's gone now, poor fellow, and there's no need of saying any more about it. What are the other papers?"

One paper was a mass of figures of which we could make nothing, and the others were letters of no interest to us, so I just put them back in their places, but I kept the pass ready for immediate use.

"Now, Andy," said Dinny, "mount your steed, and remember I am Sergeant Brown."

Again we commenced our journey through the gap, and got through without meeting any one. The snow was falling fast, and our progress was necessarily slow. Charley mounted behind me, the Sergeant went a few paces ahead, and in this manner we traveled for some hours. To rest the horse we dismounted and walked, but the pain in my side soon compelled me to give it up, and remount my horse. I rode on in silence for a long time, Charley keeping close by my side, when I saw the Sergeant coming back. I stopped,

and Dinny coming up, whispered: "We are getting near a rebel camp. I saw lights a little below. I calculate it must be about 3 o'clock, and if we make haste we may get through before daylight. You must ride boldly forward, and if you are challenged show your pass, and try and get the countersign if possible. If you can get that, the rest is easy. Keep cool and steady. Remember you have a revolver, but rather use your sword. Now go ahead."

CHAPTER X.

FREE AT LAST.

With a beating heart, and an uneasy nervous feeling almost amounting to fear, I assumed the position of leader thus suddenly thrust upon me. Hitherto the Sergeant had been the unquestioned captain of the party, and we had followed him with all confidence, for I never doubted but that we should sooner or later get free by Dinny's ingenuity. But now that we were entering the lion's den, circumstances so ordered it that I should be the leader, and it was the feeling of responsibility that made me for the time being almost a coward. I rode along, keeping a sharp look-out on all sides, and forming plans for my guidance, I was startled by a tall figure suddenly stepping in front of me. My horse shied and nearly threw me, but by a strong effort I recovered my balance, and drew up.

"Who goes there?"

"A friend," I answered.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

I boldly advanced, feeling in my pocket for the pass.

"The countersign," said the sentinel, leveling his musket.

"I have no countersign, I have a pass," I said, presenting it to the reb.

"Sergeant of the guard," he shouted, and in a few seconds that officer came up.

"Here's an officer that ain't got no countersign, but has a pass. Here it is."

The sergeant took it and retired a little distance to where a fire was burning.

"That's all right," he said, giving me back the pass. "I'd know the General's pot-hooks among a thousand."

I was congratulating myself upon my good luck when Dinny whispered, "The countersign."

"Where is the General's headquarters?" I asked as calmly as I could, though my teeth were chattering with nervousness.

"A little distance to the left when you enter the town," he said.

"And the countersign? It is General Lee, isn't it?"

"No, it ain't General Lee, nor Stonewall Jackson neither. The General may give you the countersign if he likes, but I dursn't."

"Good night," I said, and rode on.

Again we were challenged, and allowed to pass, and we entered the town. We turned to the right hand, the direction opposite to the commanding officer's headquarters. Soldiers passed and repassed, but took no notice of us. Dinny stopped one and asked what regiment he belonged to.

"Forty-seventh Georgia," said the man; "we only came yesterday."

"I thought so," said Dinny, "I ain't seen you before."

We had not got far when a mounted officer came riding up, shouting, "Hallo, Pinckney!"

I took no notice, but felt for my revolver, for I did not know how I was going to get out of this scrape.

"Why, what's the matter, Pinckney?" he said. "Is that the manner you treat your friends?"

"You are mistaken, sir," I said, "I am not Pinckney."

"The deuce, neither you are; but that's his horse. I am sure of that."

"No, my friend; it was his horse, but it is mine now."

"Why, I was told just now that Pinckney had returned."

"So he has," I answered readily. "He has gone to the General's headquarters."

"The devil he has. And who are you, may I ask?"

"Lieutenant Smith, Forty-seventh Georgia Regiment, at your service. You are Captain Roberts, I believe." I said this at a venture, the name of Pinckney's friend coming into my mind.

"Yes, I am," he said, "and I am glad to make the acquaintance of any friend of Pinckney's. I have just come off guard, and I would like to see him before I turn in, for I expect we shall have some hot work to-morrow."

"What! is the enemy so near as that?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, indeed; the Yankee lines are not a mile from ours. But I must be going. Good night."

All this time I had been scheming how to

get the countersign without raising suspicion. As I grasped his hand an inspiration came to me, and in a tone of annoyance I exclaimed: "Oh, dear, I have forgotten the countersign. I will have to go back to headquarters, and perhaps be reprimanded by the General."

"Reprimanded," echoed Roberts; "I see you don't know 'Old Gunpowder.' He'll put you under arrest, and probably have you court-martialed. I suppose my coming upon you so suddenly has made you forget the countersign, so I will help you out of your scrape," and leaning over he whispered *"Tennessee."*

"So it is." I exclaimed, "how stupid of me to forget; but I won't forget your kindness, Captain Roberts. Good night."

I was nearly beside myself with joy at thus getting possession of the talisman that was to set us free. Had it been daylight, the rebel must have observed my nervousness, but he had not the faintest suspicion I was anything else than what I represented myself to be, and he fell into the trap without the slightest idea of his own indiscretion.

I called Dinny and whispered the countersign.

"Good, my boy. Now make haste, and let us get out of this cursed town."

As we came to the outskirts of the town Dinny again came up to me, and whispered, "Keep to the left."

I obeyed without hesitating, for I was sure that the keen-sighted Sergeant had some good reason for it, but before I had ridden a hundred yards I was challenged. The magic word passed us, and we were now outside the lines, and had only to pass the videttes. At Dinny's order we quickened our pace, and we had gone perhaps a quarter of a mile when I was again stopped by a sentinel, with the now familiar question. "Who goes there?"

"A friend," I answered confidently.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

I rode up and whispered, "Tennessee."

The soldier saluted, and bidding him good night, I was passing through, when he caught my horse by the bridle, saying, "Wait till I call the officer of the guard."

"Can't you read," I said, pulling out my pass.

"That may be all right," he said, "but I

wish you would wait till I call the officer of the guard."

"My good fellow," I said in desperation, "you don't know the harm you are doing keeping me here. I have a message to the Yankee commander and I must lose no time about it."

"Well, I suppose it is all right," he said, letting go the bridle, "but such a thing never happened to me before."

We went at an easy pace till we lost sight of the sentinel. "Now," said Dinny, "take Charley up behind you, and make for that light to the left."

We were not a moment too soon, for we heard a commotion in the rebel camp, so I put the horse to its utmost speed, and rode directly toward the light that showed where the Union troops were in camp, Dinny keeping up with us without any apparent difficulty. Shots were fired and I heard the sound of horses behind us. Suddenly Dinny stopped, and looking behind, I saw him raise his musket and fire. A few seconds more and Dinny passed us like a shot. He had thrown down his gun and accoutrements and he bounded ahead of us like a deer. The firing had alarmed the Union

sentinels, and we had not gone far when we heard the challenge of the sentinel, "Who goes there?"

"Friends," cried Dinny; "escaped prisoners."

"Advance, friends," and in another moment we were inside our own lines.

CHAPTER XI.

HOME AGAIN.

We were taken to the guard tent and reported to the officer of the guard.

"Escaped prisoners, eh?" he said, with a rather incredulous look, "I should rather have taken you for deserters, judging from your uniforms. No matter, you can rest yourselves here till morning, and then I'll send you to headquarters. Don't attempt to leave the tent," he added by way of caution as he went out. Shortly after daylight a soldier brought us coffee and crackers; a few minutes later we were marched to the General's quarters. The old General, seeing me in officer's uniform, addressed himself to me. I told who we were, when captured, and how we had made our escape, giving the Sergeant the credit to which he was justly entitled. At the close of my narrative the General shook us warmly by the hand,

and turning to Dinny, he said: "Sergeant Mahony, you are a hero. You deserve a commission, and if I have any influence at the War Office you shall have it. You say some of your ribs are broken," he added, turning to me. "That must be attended to. I'll send the doctor at once. You will have to stay a few days in camp till you get transportation. If you want anything just apply to me."

I thanked the kind-hearted officer, and said all we wanted was writing material to write to our friends.

We were now dismissed and furnished with new uniforms. The doctor examined me and put a proper bandage on me, giving me assurance that I should soon be as well as ever. Charley wrote home, giving an account of our adventures, and I sent by express the rebel uniform I had become possessed of in so novel a manner. We had been but two days in camp when we were ordered to depart. We reached Washington after a good deal of delay, and about three weeks after our escape we got back to our regiment. Sergeant Dinny reported our arrival to the officer of the day and we were taken to the Colonel. I was comparatively a

stranger to him, but Dinny had been his companion in arms for three years.

"Lieutenant Mahony," he said, shaking him warmly by the hand, "I congratulate you on your escape and also your promotion. Your commission arrived a week ago, and I am very glad of it, for I am greatly in need of good officers. We will meet you at mess and hear your adventures."

While Lieutenant Mahony was telling his story to the officers, Charley and I gave our version of it to a far more enthusiastic if less select audience. Many an exclamation of wonder and delight escaped our comrades, and when we came to the part of our narrative where Dinny pretended he was a rebel who had captured an escaped prisoner, the applause was terrific. Exclamations of "I knowed it; Sergeant Dinny is just the boy that could do it," were heard on all sides, and when we finished our story Dinny's popularity had increased a hundred per cent.

It was now our turn to ask questions. "Where was Smith? and Brown? and Jones?"

"Killed, wounded, missing."

"And poor Humbugger?" asked Charley. "Was he captured that day?"

"No indeed," they answered. "He looked too like a dead man for the rebs to trouble themselves about him, and he was found an hour afterward. He is now in the hospital."

A few days after we got back to the regiment, we received two months' pay and a furlough for thirty days. Lieutenant Mahony had no relatives and he preferred to stay with the regiment, so we went home by ourselves. The meeting between Mrs. Fisher and her son can be better imagined than described. Charley visited his old master, Judge Howard, and got an invitation to visit Mrs. Howard, the very thing the rogue wanted. I may as well state here that it was a lover's quarrel between Effie and Charley that led him to enlist in such haste. I did not know this till now.

Altogether this was the happiest month of my life, and it was with regret that we left Edgetown to face new dangers.

We reached our regiment on the 29th of March. The whole corps had been fighting all day, and our brigade had done its share. The poor fellows were tired out and glad to rest.

Our old friend Dinny, now Captain Mahony, received us with his old-time kindness and invited us to his tent to give him the news.

"I am very glad to see you again," he said, "and yet I feel sorry, too. The rebs know it is all up with them and they fight like devils. I never saw such fighting as there has been these last three days. We are actually worn out with fatigue. To-morrow we'll be at it again, and I hope you will keep by me. It can't last much longer, and we will all go home together."

We sat and talked till roll-call, then bade our friend good night.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LAST BATTLE.

We were aroused at daybreak, and after a hasty breakfast the regiment marched to the front, where the fighting had already begun. It was really the first battle Charley and I had been in, and the whistling of the shot and shell bewildered me. I loaded and fired at random, as I saw my comrades doing, and as the first nervous feeling wore off, I began to look about me with some composure. A rebel battery on a hill to the left, which at the commencement of the battle had been firing in another direction, now turned on us, and a rebel brigade poured a galling fire right into our midst. All at once I saw the rebs charge down the hill, and I knew the shock must soon come.

"Steady, my boys, steady," cried Captain Dinny, seeing his company beginning to waver. "Give them a warm reception and fire low."

The Confederates were led by an officer on horseback, and seeing Dinny at the head of the company he rushed at him. I saw no more of either of them, for just then the two columns came in collision. I fought and thrust, and thought of nothing but defending myself. I heard a shout of victory and I knew it came from the Union side. The rebs had been beaten back and we were already pursuing them. Again I saw the mounted officer trying to encourage his men to another effort. Captain Mahony was in advance of his company, cheering us on. The rebel officer at last succeeded in rallying his men, and they stood the shock bravely, and again there was a hand-to-hand encounter. Just then I saw the Confederate officer reel in his saddle, and without a moment's thought as to whether he was friend or foe, I rushed forward and caught him as he fell. He had been shot in the breast, and as I caught him the hot blood spouted all over me. I laid him on the ground and put my canteen to his lips. He opened his eyes, and seeing me he said faintly, "I thank you, my good fellow. I suppose I am your prisoner."

Before I could give an answer to this unex-

pected question, I felt a stinging pain in my elbow, and a feeling as if my arm was being seared with red-hot iron. A dizzy sensation came over my brain, and I sank on the ground beside the wounded rebel.

I recovered in a few seconds and rose up. My left arm hung lifeless at my side, the blood streaming down my sleeve. The field was now deserted save by the killed and wounded, and the ambulances were coming for their loads of sufferers. The wounded officer was looking at me pitifully. I told him I would send him assistance if I could, and left to get my wound dressed. The place used as an hospital was a small two-story frame building at the junction of two roads. There I found the regimental surgeon and his assistants hard at work. He cut my sleeve and felt the arm, then told me he would have to amputate it below the elbow.

"Oh, doctor," I cried, "can't you save it?"

"No, my good man, I can't. The bone is shattered all to pieces."

I need not sicken the reader with details. Suffice it to say that in half an hour I was minus my left arm. The pain I endured was intense. I lay in a corner of the room, but

sleep was out of the question. The groans and cries of the wounded were heard on every side, and after rolling and tossing on my bed I rose and paced the room, trying to forget my pain. It was now evening, and the sounds of battle had ceased. I went down-stairs to hear the news and perchance meet some wounded comrade. Looking around, I saw the wounded rebel gazing earnestly toward me, and making signs. At that moment Charley came in looking anxious and excited. Seeing me he ran forward, and taking my hand he burst into tears.

"What's the matter, Charley? Are you wounded?"

"No, no, but poor Dinny is killed."

"Oh God, is that so?"

"Too true; the rebel colonel cut him down."

"What, him?" I asked, pointing toward the cot of the wounded officer who was looking earnestly at us.

"That's the man," said Charley, recoiling.

The officer again made a sign to come forward. I felt a loathing, yet I could not resist the mute entreaty.

"Who is that youth?" he asked. "What is his name?"

"Charles Fisher, sir, private 95th New York Volunteers."

"Please bring him here; I want to see him."

Charley came over reluctantly. The officer held out his hand, but Charley refused it, saying, "I can't take the hand of the man that slew my best friend."

A look of pain and mortified pride passed over the face of the wounded man as he said, "Charles, I am your father's brother."

"What!" cried Charley, falling on his knees at the side of the cot, and unconsciously taking the hand he had but a moment before refused. "My uncle, can it be?"

"Yes, if your father's name is James Madison Fisher of Edgetown, N. Y."

"It is, it is," said Charley. "Oh, my uncle."

"Now listen to me attentively. I am wounded fatally, I cannot recover. I have no time to lose, and I want to do justice to my only brother."

"My father is dead," said Charley mournfully; "he died in 1860."

"Then I shall soon meet him," said the officer, musingly. "Please get writing materials," he added, turning to Charley.

While Charley was gone, Colonel Fisher asked me if Charley had not been taken prisoner. I told him we had both been captured at the same time, but made our escape.

"Ah, that is the reason poor Charley did not find him," he muttered to himself.

"You mean Lieutenant Pinckney," I said. "I——"

"What do you know of Lieutenant Pinckney?" he said, interrupting me. "Do you know who murdered him?"

"He was not murdered, he was killed in a fair fight. If it is any satisfaction to you to know," I continued in a whisper, "you killed the man that killed Pinckney." In a few words I told him of our escape, of our meeting with Pinckney, and the fatal result, at the same time I showed how Pinckney could easily have found Charley had he desired.

Before I got through with my narrative, to which the colonel paid the closest attention, Charley returned, bringing paper, pen and ink, and accompanied by the regimental surgeon. The doctor felt the wounded man's pulse, and shook his head.

"I know I am dying," said Colonel Fisher. "Will you please to write to my dictation."

The doctor with a sign of assent sat down by the bedside, and wrote the dying man's last will and testament. The will began by canceling all previous wills, and bequeathed all his real and personal property to his nephew Charles Fisher, of Edgetown, New York, excepting $10,000 to Maria Fisher, widow of James Madison Fisher, and the same amount to James and Ellen Fisher, his nephew and niece, and $10,000 to Andrew Murray. "Add," said the Colonel, "for his Christian kindness to a wounded enemy."

The paper was then read to the Colonel, and signed by him. The doctor and one of the hospital servants affixed their names as witnesses, and then Colonel Fisher requested the doctor to keep the will till such time as was convenient to carry it into execution.

"You have lost an arm while assisting me," said Colonel Fisher, "and it is the least I can do to provide for you; my nephew won't miss it. I feel I am dying; please fetch a clergyman."

Charley hurried away in search of the chaplain, and the dying officer lay back on his pillow with his eyes shut and his lips moving as

if in prayer. I sat still and watched him attentively. Suddenly he opened his eyes and asked for Charley. I told him he had gone for a chaplain.

"Come here. I have forgotten something," he said.

"Here's Charley coming with the chaplain," I said.

The clergyman took the dying man's hand. He opened his eyes and smiled. We all knelt around the cot while the clergyman prayed for the soul about to leave its mortal tenement. The dying colonel lay perfectly still, holding Charley's hand in his. When the chaplain concluded, we rose, but Colonel Fisher still held on to Charley. He muttered some words, of which all I could catch were boat-house and pine tree.

"His mind is wandering," whispered Charley.

The dying man heard the whisper, and made another effort to speak. He began, "Ninety-six—" when he was interrupted by a fit of coughing; he sat bolt upright in bed, a gush of blood burst from his mouth, a shiver passed over him and he fell back dead.

CHAPTER XIII.

A VISIT TO THE SOUTH.

THE last battle had been fought, the war was over, and the Southern Confederacy a thing of the past. It was the month of June, and my wound was nearly healed. The doctor had saved my elbow joint, and I did not miss my arm as much as I expected I would.

Charley had got home with a whole skin and an honorable discharge, and he employed his old master, Judge Howard, to attend to his inheritance. Amongst Colonel Fisher's papers were some letters from a lawyer in Wilmington, N. C. About six weeks after Charley's return, the business had been settled so far that his presence in Wilmington was necessary to the completion of the business. Mr. Howard gave us letters of introduction to Mr. Finch, the Wilmington lawyer, and next day we left Edgetown for the South. Arriving in

Wilmington, we took rooms at a hotel, and after refreshing ourselves we drove to Mr. Finch's office. The lawyer received us cordially, and he looked curiously at Charley as he shook hands, and bade him welcome to Wilmington. He was an elderly man whose age it would be difficult to guess, for though he was very gray, and much bent, his eyes were keen and bright and he walked with the steadiness of a soldier.

"You are remarkably like your uncle when I knew him first some twenty-five years ago," he said to Charley, when we were seated in his private office.

"Have you really known him so long," asked Charley earnestly. "I wish I had known him sooner, for I often heard father speak of him and wonder what had become of him."

"It is too long a story to tell just now; we have too much business to transact at present, but you shall hear it soon. I have been expecting you," he continued, "and I have everything prepared. Here are Mr. Fisher's papers," producing a japanned box and laying it on the table. "I have examined all excepting one sealed package."

"These," continued the lawyer, "are not worth much now, though they cost Mr. Fisher $30,000," and he handed Charley a bundle of Confederate States bonds. "Here is a will dated September 14, 1862, in favor of Charles F. Pinckney. This," he continued, taking up an envelope heavily sealed, "is the package I referred to as not having looked at. See how peculiarly it is directed, 'To my heir.' It was evidently intended for Mr. Pinckney, but it is equally applicable to you. Shall I open it?"

"Certainly," said Charley, "I am curious to know what it is."

The lawyer broke the seals and took out a small piece of paper. He looked at it, shook his head, and handed it to Charley.

"What's this?" said Charley, looking at Mr. Finch. "Really I cannot tell what it means."

"Can you make anything of it, Andy," said Charley, after turning the paper all possible ways, "I am sure I can't."

I took the paper, looked at it for an instant, than laying it on the table, I pulled my pocketbook (the one I had found in Lieutenant Pinckney's coat) out, and taking from it the

piece of paper covered with figures, I said, "Here is a fac-simile of it."

Mr. Finch took both papers and examined them closely, figure by figure.

"Both of these papers were written by Mr. Fisher, I am certain of that. Indeed, they were written at the same time and on the same sheet. See, the edges where they were torn apart fit exactly," and the lawyer laid the two pieces together. "It is evidently a cipher; perhaps the key may be found among the other papers."

One by one the papers were examined, but nothing that could give any clue to the cipher was found.

"My opinion is that the paper is a cipher relating to some movable property that Mr. Fisher secreted just before he left Wilmington," said the lawyer after a long pause. "The plate and jewelry and other valuables were removed from the Pines, as his estate is called, but I do not know where they were taken. I have asked the servants, but they know nothing about it, and so far I have been unable to find them. Perhaps when we go to the house we may find some clue."

The lawyer now rose, and opening a drawer he took out some papers and spread them on the table. "These," he said, "are receipts for $1,750. Mr. Fisher left $4,000 in gold in my hands when he went to the front, and he drew on me as he required. The balance is now in bank subject to my order, and as soon as convenient I shall turn it over to you, as the heir of Mr. Fisher. I believe these are all the papers."

While the lawyer and Charley were examining all these accounts, I took the papers I had found in Lieutenant Pinckney's pocketbook, and when Mr. Finch had got through I handed him a letter.

"That letter seems to allude to some secret," I said, "perhaps it may afford some clue to the mystery."

The lawyer took the letter, read and reread it slowly and carefully. "Captain Roberts, eh? I know a Captain Roberts, and if he knows anything about this cipher I think I can get it out of him. This Roberts has been here a good many times inquiring about the disposition of Mr. Fisher's estate. He introduced himself as the captain of young Pinck-

ney's company, and a particular friend of that gentleman. He would like to lease the Pines, he said, and asked permission to take a look at the place, which, of course, I granted. I was over there last Monday to get things put to rights for you and I saw Captain Roberts in the forest. He was looking on the ground as if he had lost something, but when he saw me he hurried to meet me, saying he was taking advantage of my permission to examine the place. It looks as if he had some object in view, and if he has I'll get it out of him. Now, gentlemen, if you will do me the honor to dine with me to-day, I shall give you the whole history of Colonel Fisher so far as I know it. Here is my card and the hour is 5 o'clock."

We then shook hands and parted.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LAWYER'S STORY.

"Now that we are alone," said Mr. Finch, when the tablecloth was removed and the servant had gone, "I'll tell you all I know of your uncle. But first fill your glass to drink to his memory. It was, I think, in 1840, I first knew Mr. Fisher. He was confidential clerk in the house of Burleigh & Co., at that time the largest cotton merchants in Wilmington. Mr. Burleigh, the head of the firm, was a gentleman of about fifty years of age. He lived at the Pines with his daughter, a young lady of about twenty years of age. He was a widower with three children, the eldest of whom, John C. Burleigh, was at Oxford University, for the old gentleman was of English extraction, and looked with contempt on American Universities. His other daughter was married to a New Orleans merchant, so he lived in the great house all alone with his

youngest child. Louisa was a beautiful girl and the favorite of the old gentleman. She had refused more than one offer of marriage, which rather surprised the father, as they were all unexceptionable in a money point of view. He, however, attributed it to her desire to remain at home, and he loved her still more for her devotion to him. He was soon undeceived. Mr. John, after his return from Europe, contracted a strong friendship for Mr. Fisher, the head clerk. The young men were both about the same age, and though Mr. Burleigh had had the advantage of a University education, Mr. Fisher's native taste and quickness made him almost his equal. He was a frequent visitor at the Pines, and the natural consequence was he fell in love with Louisa. She reciprocated his affection and they met clandestinely.

"At last it was discovered, and poor Charles, as he was called, was discharged from his situation and told never to show his face again. Just about a week after, Louisa disappeared, but in a few days Mr. Burleigh received a letter from her saying that she had married Charles Fisher and asking for her father's for-

giveness. Mr. Burleigh burned the letter and never answered it. John Burleigh liked Mr. Fisher, and though his aristocratic ideas were averse to his sister's marrying his father's clerk, yet he tried to get his father to overlook the mesalliance, and forgive them, but Mr. Burleigh was stubborn and refused to yield. I was his law agent, so he came to me to alter his will, leaving out Louisa's name and transferring her portion to her brother.

"Miss Burleigh had $10,000 coming to her from the mother. That was now due, as it was to be given to her on her marriage, and Mr. Burleigh directed me to send her the money. 'It will give them a start in life,' he said, 'though it is more than the scoundrel deserves.'

"That was the only time I ever heard Mr. Burleigh mention their names. When the General Taylor was burned on the Mississippi some ten years ago, Mr. Burleigh and his son John were passengers and were among the lost. John had been married a few years, but had no children. At the time of his sad fate his wife was visiting her friends in the North. She was sole heiress of the Pines,

but she never came South again, and I was empowered to sell the estate at private sale, or failing, at auction. I advertised it extensively in the principal papers of the South, and among the answers I got was one from New Orleans written in a lady's hand and signed Louisa Fisher, requesting me to give the writer the first refusal of it. Her husband was on his way from Europe, and would communicate with me immediately upon his arrival. A week or two after I got this letter, a gentleman called at my office and sent in his card. It was your uncle. He had just returned from Europe and had come to purchase the estate. He paid the price asked, $175,000, stipulating that his sister-in-law should not be made aware of who the purchaser was.

"Mr. Fisher brought his wife to the home of her childhood and there they lived for some years. He was a cotton broker in New Orleans, but shortly after coming to the Pines he dissolved a direct connection with the firm, though still retaining an interest in it.

"I told you that Mrs. Fisher's elder sister was married to a New Orleans merchant. To that city Mr. Fisher took his wife, and with the

$10,000 she brought him he commenced business. He was shrewd and enterprising and in a few years he stood at the head of the cotton business in that city of cotton. Mrs. Pinckney had received her sister kindly, and the two families lived in harmony. Mr. Fisher soon made a name in mercantile circles, and his brother-in-law was the first to acknowledge it.

"When the war broke out, your uncle, who was tired of an idle life, wanted to join the army, but his wife dissuaded him from it, and he contented himself by equipping a company and loaning a large sum to the government, taking in exchange their bonds. Their children had died in infancy, and Mrs. Fisher, who had been in delicate health for some years, died in 1862. Shortly after her death, Mr. Fisher applied for a commission, and was assigned to the regiment he had helped to organize. Just before he left he made a will leaving the bulk of his fortune to his nephew, Charles Fisher Pinckney, whose parents were dead. Mr. Pinckey, senior, had been ruined during the panic of 1857, and that misfortune, coupled with the death of his wife a few

months previous, broke his heart. Mr. Fisher adopted the orphan boy and was in all respects a father to him. At the time of Mrs. Fisher's death, young Pinckney was in England. It was no easy matter getting home, for the whole coast was blockaded; however, he did manage to get to Wilmington, but his uncle had gone to the front. I believe they met in Richmond, and Mr. Fisher procured a commission for his nephew in a Louisiana regiment, but I never heard of him again till I got a letter from Colonel Fisher telling of his mysterious death. You know the rest."

We are silent for a few moments thinking over the strange story we had just listened to.

"Mr. Finch," I said, "you mentioned the boat-house to-day, the last words of Colonel Fisher were something about a boat-house and a pine tree."

"Indeed," said the lawyer, "he was probably thinking of something that had occurred there."

"It seemed to me that he was very anxious that we should understand him," I replied, "and he told me himself he had forgotten something."

"Well, I tell you what I think it would be. The plate and jewels, as I said before, are missing. Mr. Fisher told me he had put them in a safe place, and I supposed he had placed them in some bank, but no receipts can be found amongst his papers. Now my opinion is that he secreted them somewhere about his estate, and the paper of figures are the cipher telling of their whereabouts. I must get an interview with this Captain Roberts, for I think he knows something about it. To-morrow I will drive you over and put you in possession of your estate," he continued, addressing Charley. "There are a few negroes on the place, some of them old servants of the Burleigh family. Of course they are free now, and free enough they make themselves with whatever they can lay their hands on. I would advise you to keep them, as we can find plenty of work for them, and they are dangerous enemies to make. Mr. Fisher took two of his own servants with him when he went to the war but they never returned. I was told the colonel gave them their freedom; however, it doesn't matter now."

"Well," said Charley, "I am impatient to

see the Pines, so we shall be ready to accompany you at any time to-morrow."

The lawyer then appointed ten o'clock as the hour to meet at his office, and shortly after we returned to our hotel.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CIPHER.

I COULD think of nothing but the cipher. "What can it mean?" I kept asking myself. Charley's thoughts ran in the same direction, for he abruptly asked me, "Have you any idea what these figures can mean?"

"I have not," I answered, "unless, as Mr. Finch thinks, it relates to some hidden treasure; but I am determined to find out if I sit up all night."

"Well, my boy, I hope you'll succeed. As for myself, I must confess the old gentleman's wine has made me rather sleepy, or I would stay up with you."

"No, no, Charley, go to bed. I can work best alone. I'll require all my energies for the task."

As soon as I was alone I spread the paper on the table, and set myself seriously to work. I counted the figures and found exactly nine-

ty-nine. They ran as follows without stop or point:

205146552023519201561691451491452025199246552061815132312051854751291451562151208152119551192019945

"Ninety-nine," I muttered to myself. "Colonel Fisher's last words were ninety-six, but I can see no connection between them."

I counted the figures again. There were twenty-four 1s, fifteen 2s, and only three 3s. There were eight 4s, twenty-one 5s, six 6s, but only one 7. There were three 8s, ten 9s, and eight 0s.

With the figures thus analyzed, I sat and studied. I tried English, French, and Latin, the extent of my linguistic ability, but I could make nothing of it. I was so absorbed in my occupation that I took no note of the time, till I happened to look up and saw the clock on the mantel indicate half-past 1 o'clock. I had been three hours and I had got no clue yet.

"I'll try again," I said to myself, and I lit the cigar which I had laid down when I commenced my task. I took up the paper and

held it close to the light. For the first time I noticed that the figures 465520 came together in two places. I knew that the letter '*e*' occurs oftener in the English language than any other, and as there were twenty-four 1s, I had tried that for the letter *e*. I now tried another way. There were eight 0s, and they invariably followed a 2. Taking these figures for 20, what did that mean? They were the last figures of the six that came together twice. I wrote out the alphabet and underneath each letter I wrote a figure, beginning at 1, and so on to 26. Taking the letters thus, I found the figures would read n feet.

"Aha, I am on the track now," I exclaimed, joyously. The figures 2, 0, 5, were the first three, and these would indicate t, e, which prefaced to the others made the words, "Ten feet."

"Eureka! I have found it." The rest was easy enough. It was indeed the simplest kind of cipher and I wondered I had been so long at reading it. The words read, "Ten feet west of pine, ninety-six feet from water edge, line of boat-house, east side."

I undressed and went to bed determined to

surprise Charley in the morning. The weather was very hot, and the turmoil in my mind prevented me from sleeping. The words of the cipher were continually in my thoughts, and I longed for the morning that I could be able to verify them. But at last exhausted nature gave way and I slept.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN OLD FRIEND.

"WAKE up, old fellow, wake up." I started. Charley was standing at my bedside, half dressed.

"Come, Andrew, it is past 8 o'clock, and we must be at the office by 10."

"All right," I said, "I'll be ready in a few minutes."

"Did you find out the meaning of the cipher?" he asked.

"I think I have, but I'll explain it by and by."

On our way to the lawyer's I stopped at a hardware store, and purchased a builder's tape line and a pocket compass.

"What are you going to do with these things?" asked Charley.

"I'll explain everything when we get there. It is not worth while going over the same thing twice."

We were a few minutes before the appointed time, and the colored servant who took our cards returned, saying his master would be at leisure very soon.

"Sam," cried a clerk, as the darkey was leaving the room; "Sam, is that all the manners you've got? Don't you know enough to show the gentlemen into the ante-room?"

"'Scuse me, Massa Jones, I'se only a poor nigger."

The tone of voice and the expression were both familiar to me. I looked curiously at the negro, and sure enough there stood our old guide and friend, Sam.

"Why, Sam, is that you?" said Charley and I in the same breath, clasping the bewildered darkey by each hand.

"Of course it is. Don't you know us," asked Charley, laughing. "I really believe you have forgotten us."

"What, is dat you, Massa Charley and Massa Andy?"

"Indeed it is, and we are very glad to see you."

"Ain't Massa Dinny here too?" asked Sam.

"Poor Dinny is dead, killed in battle," said Charley, while a tear stood in his eye.

"I'se sorry to hear that, very sorry," Sam said with feeling. "Massa Dinny was the most smartest white man I ever seed."

"Are niggers as cheap as ever, Sam?" I asked.

"Niggers ain't worth nothin' now. They's all free. I knows niggers as earns two dollars a day," and Sam drew himself up as he mentioned his aristocratic acquaintance.

"And how did you get along with the soldiers that morning after we escaped?"

Sam laughed. "Ah, didn't they cut up when they found you was gone. I watched 'em through a crack in the floor, and the way they tore 'round was 'mazin'. The sargent he holler for me, an' I wake up in sich a hurry, I forget about the ladder and tumble through the hole. The sogers laugh to see 'dis nigger rub his shins." Here Sam chuckled, but his face became grave again as he continued: "Den some wanted to burn the cabin, and golly, they'd done it, too, on'y the sergeant he say I had'n't no hand in the pris'ners' 'scaping as I was a pris'ner myse'f. So they wouldn't wait for no bre'kfas', but askt for applejack, an' den they went off sw'aring they would

cotch you if it took a month." And Sam laughed again at the recollection.

We were much pleased to know that the honest fellow had come to no harm on our account, and I was on the point of asking some more questions, when a bell rang and he hurried away.

A gentleman came out of the private office, and Sam attended him to the door. Mr. Finch beckoned us to come in. He saluted us cordially, and apologized for keeping us waiting. "That was Captain Roberts, and I wanted to draw him out, but he knows no more than we do ourselves, though he pretends to. He says that Colonel Fisher buried a large amount of treasure in the forest, and he wanted to strike a bargain that he get one-half if he recovered it. But I put him off till I had seen you. From his manner I am of opinion that he does not know the precise spot, but still he may be of service, though I shall never consent to pay him such a percentage."

"Perhaps this will explain," I said, laying the cipher and the translation on the table.

The lawyer took the papers and read them

carefully. "Very good, indeed, and how do you make it read thus?"

"Easy enough," I answered, "For 1 read a and so on through the alphabet. It is the simplest kind of a cipher. I wonder that Colonel Fisher adopted it."

"Yes, it is," said the lawyer, "but he wrote for the information of his nephew, who was absent at the time."

"I believe that is what Colonel Fisher was trying to explain when he died," I said; "his last words were ninety-six."

"I have not the least doubt about it," said the lawyer. "I suppose you are all ready to accompany me to the Pines. The carriage will be here soon. I sent over this morning to tell the housekeeper we were coming, and everything is prepared for you."

"By the bye, Mr. Finch, where did you get that negro servant, Sam?" asked Charley.

"Sam," echoed the lawyer. "Do you know him? I have had him since last April. When the Union troops occupied the city, my own nigger got it into his head that he was free, so he quit my service without saying a word about it. This fellow Sam I picked up

in the street and took him in out of charity. He looked like an honest boy, and they are very scarce articles, as you will perhaps soon find out."

"He is an honest one, I'll vouch for that," said Charley warmly, "and he'll never want a friend while I live." Charley then explained to the astonished lawyer how he became acquainted with Sam, and the great service he had done to us, and he offered to take him into his service if Mr. Finch had no objection to part with him.

"I have no objection if Sam wants to go to you. He is a plantation hand and will be very useful out of doors, but he is not much of a house servant. However, there is plenty of time to settle that question. The carriage is at the door to take us to the Pines."

CHTPTER XVII.

THE PINES.

THE day was very warm, but a pleasant breeze tempered the heat somewhat, and we enjoyed the ride along the beautiful road.

"This is the Pines," said Mr. Finch, as the carriage turned into a private avenue lined with gigantic pine trees. We soon came in sight of the house, a handsome building of Philadelphia brick.

"What a beautiful place," said Charley proudly; "it is fit for the President.

"Indeed it is," said the lawyer; "it cost old Mr. Burleigh a heap of money. The old furniture is still there, for Mrs. Fisher would allow nothing to be disturbed. She wanted it to look like her old childhood's home. Poor lady, she died of a broken heart, because her father had never forgiven her." The old lawyer heaved a sigh. "But here we are at the

door, and there is old Aunt Chloe waiting to receive us."

The carriage stopped and we alighted. Eight or ten colored people were standing round, and an old negro woman with white cap and spectacles stood on the step.

"Here is your young master, Aunt Chloe," said Mr. Finch.

The old negress came forward and Charley took her outstretched hand, and pressed it warmly. She peered curiously into Charley's face, who stood the scrutiny laughingly. "You is very like what Massa was when he came here first a-courting Miss Louisa. We is all very glad to see you, Massa."

"Thank you, Aunt Chloe. I hope we'll be good friends."

We entered the house, the old lady bustling about and ordering the other darkeys to their work.

"This room is the library," said Mr. Finch, ushering us into a large apartment partially darkened. "Everything here is just as Mr. Fisher left it. You see the Pines is just far enough from Wilmington to be out of the way, and the Federal authorities took care

that no pillaging should occur when the city fell into their hands, consequently nothing has been disturbed or removed."

The old housekeeper now showed us through the house, at the same time giving us the history of each room. Some of the rooms were magnificently furnished and showed great taste combined with lavish outlay. There was a large garden in the rear of the house that led to a creek that flowed into the Cape Fear River. Beyond the stream was a pine forest, and a little distance to the left were the cabins of the negroes. After partaking of lunch, Mr. Finch proposed that we should now proceed to business. Some of the cabinets had their drawers sealed. These were opened and their contents examined.

"I see nothing to indicate where Mr. Fisher put his movables," said the lawyer, after every drawer and recess in the library had been ransacked. It is now 3 o'clock, and it is time I was going back to town."

"Can't you stay until to-morrow?" asked Charley. "It feels so queer to be left alone in this great house with so many strange negroes around."

"I do not know that I could do any good by staying. If you choose you can go back with me."

"Mr. Finch," I said, producing the tape measure, "I am curious to know if I have read the cipher right, and if you will please order some of the servants to get spades and picks we might try."

"Well," answered the lawyer, "I am curious about it myself. It would ease my mind very much if we could get a clue to this mystery, but we have no time to spare, so we will get down to the boat-house at once."

As we went out the lawyer ordered some of the negroes to follow us with spades and picks. The boat-house was a small shed built on a stone foundation, and extended a few feet into the water. It was situated on a bend of the stream just on the verge of the forest, and a rustic bridge crossed the stream immediately below it. The door of the house stood open, showing two boats inside, one of which was slung from the roof.

"This is the east side, I think," and I drove a nail into the wood exactly at the water edge. On this I securely fastened the end of my tape-

line, and we went into the forest, letting out the line as we went. The trees were so numerous it was difficult work to keep in a direct line, but with Charley's assistance I managed to get it tolerably straight. Two trees stood at ninety-six feet from the water, and neither of them were exactly in a direct line with the boat-house.

"This must be the one," I said, as I tightened the line. "It is nearly in line; don't you think so?"

My companions glanced along the line, while the darkies stood by in open-mouthed wonder. They agreed that it was the nearest to a direct line, and it measured ninety-six feet to an inch. Producing my pocket compass, I now measured ten feet to the west of the tree and drove a piece of wood into the ground.

"Now we're all ready for work," I said, looking at Mr. Finch.

"Dig," said the lawyer, and the darkies, who now began to comprehend what they were there for, seized their tools and began to work with vigor. After digging about three feet the picks struck something hard.

"Shovel out the earth," I cried, "and let us see what it is," and I was almost jumping in to assist them.

Charley, who was as much excited as myself, kept walking round the hole while the rubbish was being thrown out, but the old lawyer remained cool and collected, directing the negroes as he saw fit. The earth all out, a rock was seen that covered the whole of the opening.

"Dig round it," said the lawyer, "there is perhaps something underneath."

Again the negroes began their toil and plied pick and spade, but no edge could be found to the rock. The hole was now six feet in diameter, but still the rock covered it.

"It is useless proceeding any further," said the lawyer, "that rock must weigh some tons and no human power ever placed it there. Your cipher has not been properly translated, Mr. Murray."

"It must be right, sir," I answered with vehemence, "it can't be wrong. I have made a mistake in the locality, I confess, but I am convinced I have read the cipher aright."

"Well, well," said the lawyer, soothingly, "we have plenty of time to work. By and by,

when you get better acquainted with the place, you may be able to find it. I must now be going, and I will send Sam over in the morning with the baggage."

We went back to the house and Mr. Finch returned to the city.

"I can't make it out," said Charley when we were alone, "the thing reads so straight and to the point."

"Yes, indeed," I answered, "I don't believe any man could make a better sentence out of it. There is not a superfluous word nor a word wanting. There is some mistake somewhere, but it is not in the translation."

"Well, Andy, we'll try again to-morrow, as Mr. Finch said, we have plenty of time."

We sat on the veranda, and talked over our plans till it began to grow dark.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A DISCOVERY AND WHAT IT COST.

At Charley's request old Aunt Chloe had put up two beds in one of the large rooms, for we felt strange in our new abode and preferred to be together. It was a beautiful evening, but very close and warm. We sat at a window enjoying the landscape by the light of the new moon. By and by Charley retired, but I did not feel inclined to sleep so I sat still. I felt so chagrined at my failure that I could think of nothing else. "I'll take a stroll down to the creek, before going to bed," I said to myself, so I lit a fresh cigar, and stepped softly on to the veranda. Treading over the graveled walk as lightly as possible, for fear of awaking Charley, I took the road to the stream. The forest looked dark and no sound could be heard but the occasional bark of a dog. I walked past the boat-house, and across the little rustic bridge that spanned the creek, which

at this place was not more than twelve or fifteen feet wide. I had taken the precaution to bring my revolver with me, so feeling perfectly secure, I walked a few steps into the dark forest and sat down at the root of a pine tree.

I had been there but a few minutes, silently puffing my cigar, when I thought I heard footsteps approaching, and listening intently for a few seconds, I heard voices. The persons seemed to be coming toward where I sat, so I shrank close to the tree, intending to let them pass without making them aware of my presence. They stopped before they got to my tree, and I heard one say, "Are you sure this is the place?"

"No, sah, I ain't, not quite sartin, for you know Massa blindfolded us before he brought us, but I 'members I saw the boat-house through the trees, and I think it was just about here."

"Well, now, we must try and get it to-night or that d—d Yankee may find it; he is on the track now."

"Yes, Massa Roberts, but they's on the wrong side of the creek."

"Come, come, no names. Call me Tom, or Dick, or anything you like, but not that name. We are on an equality for the time being. Now try and locate the place. Take a good look around so as to make no mistake."

"Ah, Roberts, eh?" I ejaculated. "I'll spoil your little game soon. We'll see if the Yankee is not as sharp as the Southerner." I waited till they should commence digging, that I might get away unobserved, but they walked backward and forward muttering to each other, of which I caught a word here and there.

At length, to my dismay, they came directly toward me. The moon threw a fitful and uncertain light, but I could distinguish the two dark figures approaching. I had very little time to make up my mind what to do, but I pulled out my pistol, and stepping boldly forth from the shade of the tree, I walked briskly toward the bridge.

Alas, I had not gone half a dozen steps when I stumbled over a log, and before I could regain my feet, I felt myself seized by the shoulder, and a hoarse voice hissed in my ear, "Who are you, and what are you doing here?"

"None of your business," I shouted, "let me up or it will be worse for you."

"Stop your noise or I'll murder you. Here, Jim, fetch that rope."

He grasped me by the throat. I struggled and twisted, but it was of no avail; I was in the grasp of a giant. Fortunately I still held on to the pistol, and I managed to turn my hand so as to cover my assailant. I cocked it and fired. He gave a cry of pain and I felt his hold relax. I sprang up, but at that instant I got a fearful blow from behind and I fell back insensible. When my senses returned, I found myself alone just where I had fallen. I felt a terrible pain in my head and an oppressive sense of weight on my brain. I heard shouts in the wood, and I could distinguish Charley's voice calling my name. I tried to answer, but my tongue refused to articulate a word. I endeavored to rise, but could not raise my head. I felt with my hand to see if I was bound, but I could find nothing to prevent me from rising. While feeling around, I touched the pistol, which had fallen at my side. I caught it up and cocking it I fired in the air. Again I fainted, and I remembered nothing more.

CHAPTER XIX.

ELLEN.

I was lying in the room I had quitted on that unlucky night. I had just opened my eyes and I saw three persons sitting at one of the windows in earnest conversation.

"The crisis is now past and he may be considered out of danger," I heard some one say.

"God be praised for all his mercies."

I started. Was that an angel's voice? I looked. A female was kneeling on the carpet with her eyes uplifted in attitude of prayer.

"Ellen."

She flew to the bedside. "Dear Andrew," she said, and burst into tears.

I drew her unresisting form toward me, and kissed her. She returned the embrace, and quickly recovering herself she retired blushing and confused. It was the first time our lips had met and I now knew she loved me.

Charley now came forward, and taking me

kindly by the hand he said: "You've had a hard struggle, Andy, but you'll soon be well again. The doctor says you are out of danger now."

"Yes, Mr. Murray," said an elderly gentleman, "I may say you have passed through the worst. But he must be kept quiet for a few days longer," he continued, addressing Ellen, who was blushing and trembling at the foot of the bedstead. "No long conversations or excitement of any kind. Good-by, my dear sir," and he quitted the room accompanied by Charley.

"Dear Ellen, how did you get here?" I asked. She smiled as she answered, "You must ask no questions, but just go to sleep, and I'll stay by you till Charley returns."

From that day my recovery was rapid. Every day Ellen or Charley would sit for hours in the room, but they conversed very little, saying it was the doctor's orders.

One day Charley told me I should be allowed to leave the bed next day, and that Mr. Finch was coming over to see me."

"Tell me, Charley, how long have I lain here?"

"Nearly five weeks. You lay between life and death for three weeks."

"I wish you would tell me all about it, Charley," I said beseechingly, for I could not realize that I had been so long ill.

"I just came in for that purpose," he said. "The doctor said I could tell you now, and prepare you for to-morrow."

"To-morrow, what's to happen to-morrow?"

"Oh, nothing much. Mr. Finch is coming over to hear from your own lips an account of your accident and a description of your assailants, that steps may be taken for their arrest."

"Oh, that's it, is it? I know well who it was, but never mind that just now. Tell me all that happened since, and how Ellen comes to be at the Pines. Did you send for her?"

"I did," said Charley, smiling. "You raved so much of Ellen, that I concluded to send for her, and I am glad I did. The doctor says her nursing did you more good than his skill. I believe, Andy, you are in love with her, and I know she loves you."

"Charley," said I, "come here." He came close up, and taking his hand, I continued:

"You have discovered my secret. I never breathed a word of love to Ellen, although I have long loved her. When I returned from the war a poor maimed wretch"—here I raised my mutilated arm—"I determined to crush my passion and try to forget her, but I could not. You say she loves me. The knowledge makes me very happy, for what am I that I should aspire to her love?"

"Why, Andy, you are raving. I don't believe you are in your right mind yet. You have lost an arm, but that does not incapacitate you from following your profession. You have, or at least will soon have, $10,000. Ellen will have the same, and the day she becomes your wife I shall give her a dower of $10,000 more. Now, Andy, I must leave you, for I see you are excited. I'll see you again in the evening, and in the meantime I shall sent Ellen to keep you company."

In a few minutes Ellen entered the room She evidently thought I was asleep, for she moved softly across the floor and sat down at a window, and I lay watching till she should look round. She did at last, and seeing my eager look, she came forward to ask if I wanted anything.

"My dear Ellen, I do. I want your love. I have long loved you, but I never had the courage to tell you, for I am only a poor maimed soldier." Here I broke down, nor could I for worlds have uttered another word.

Ellen threw her arm around my neck and sobbed on my shoulder.

"Dear Ellen," I cried in alarm, "have I offended you?"

"Oh, no, no; it was thinking of that cruel wound that made me weep. Yet, dear Andrew, I love you better as you are, for——"

"For what, dear?" I asked, seeing she hesitated.

"Because you need it more."

She sat till twilight holding my hand in hers. We scarcely spoke a word, our hearts were too full for utterance. Charley, according to his promise, came in the evening and told me all that had happened since my accident.

"I awoke," he said, "just in time to see you step on to the veranda. I called after you but you did not answer. I lay still awhile, but I began to be uneasy about you, so I rose and dressed. I went out on the veranda and looked around, when I heard a shot fired, so I

immediately aroused the servants, and hurried into the forest. We shouted again and again, but no answer came. I was very much alarmed, especially when I heard a second shot, but it led us to the place and we found you lying, to all appearance, dead. We brought you into the house and I sent for a doctor. He examined you all over, and said you had been struck with a heavy dull instrument on the head. Your head was tremendously swelled, so he applied himself to reduce the swelling. Your wounded arm was hurt and the artificial arm broken. The doctor's theory was that you had instinctively raised your arm to protect yourself from the blow, and that it had saved your skull from being fractured.

Next day you were in a high fever. Your head was shaven and everything done to keep the fever from the brain. You raved continually and called on Ellen, and then you would mention Roberts and the treasure that was hid and many other things of which no one could make anything. Your calling so much on Ellen decided me to send for her, so I telegraphed that you were sick and I requested mother to spare her for a few weeks. As the

doctor said, it was as much Ellen's nursing as his skill that brought you through, and nothing but love could have done as much. Though I am her brother, I say you have a treasure, and I hope and believe you appreciate her value."

"I am afraid I do not," I said. "I am not worthy of her."

"Nonsense, man, you don't know what you are saying. To-morrow the lawyer will be here, so brush up your memory and let us see that your brain is as good as ever. Good night."

CHAPTER XX.

THE EXAMINATION.

JUST before noon Mr. Finch arrived, accompanied by another gentleman, whom he introduced as Hon. Alexander Dayton, a justice of the peace. We were in the library, and when the party got seated, Mr. Finch, addressing me, said: "Mr. Murray, this cowardly assault on you has created a great deal of excitement in the neighborhood, for the people are naturally indignant that a gentleman on his first visit to the South should have been treated so murderously. Besides, some of the Northern papers have got hold of it, and made matters worse by exaggeration. I myself read in a New York paper that a gentleman from that State, on his taking possession of some property near Wilmington, had been attacked by some ex-rebels, friends of the former owner, and nearly killed, at the same time commenting on the spirit of hostility to Northerners still

prevailing in the South. It is for the purpose of setting the truth before the public, and at the same time bringing the offenders to justice, that this gentleman has come to take your account of the circumstances attending the assault.

"The doctor says that your mind is now in its normal condition, but if you feel you are not equal to that task, we will postpone your examination."

"I believe I am able to answer any question you may ask. I have a perfect recollection of the whole affair."

"Well, then," said the justice, "we will swear you, and take your evidence."

I took the prescribed oath and then I related the whole affair just as it occurred.

"So you swear your assailant's name is Roberts?"

"It is. I heard his companion call him by that name, and he once told me himself that Roberts was his name."

"Do you know his motive for attacking you?"

"I think it was because he suspected me of eavesdropping."

"Then it was not revenge for supposed injuries to himself or his friends?"

"Oh, no, it could not be that; for I am sure he did not know who I was."

"Now, doctor," said the justice, "we will take your evidence."

My curiosity was aroused, for I could not understand how the doctor knew anything about it. The doctor's story was to this effect.

"A few minutes before I was called to attend Mr. Murray, a tall, black-bearded man came into my office to get a wound dressed. He said he had been attacked by a negro, and shot in the arm. It was an ugly wound and the ball had passed through the muscles near the shoulder. While examining the wound, my servant brought in one of the Pines servants. The man seemed greatly excited and could scarcely tell his errand, but I understood from him that one of his new Massas had been found in the woods murdered. 'Do you know anything of this?' I asked the man whose wound I had been dressing, but when I turned round he was gone. Neither the negro servant nor I had seen him leave the apartment. It was a very warm evening and the office win-

dow was open, so he had stepped out that way. When I came to attend Mr. Murray I examined the pistol, and I came to the conclusion that at short range it would produce just such a wound as my mysterious patient had, and that, coupled with his sudden departure, decided me to repeat it to the authorities."

"Well," said the justice, "your evidence corroborates Mr. Murray's, so I will at once issue a warrant for the arrest of this Roberts and his negro confederate, name unknown."

When the justice and the doctor had retired, Mr. Finch, approaching me confidentially, asked what had induced me, a perfect stranger, to venture into the forest so late at night?"

"I can scarcely give a reasonable answer to that question," I said. "It was a beautiful moonlight night, and I just thought I would take a stroll before going to bed."

"You did not go to look for the buried treasure," he said playfully.

"Well no, not exactly," I answered hesitatingly, "yet I must confess my failure to find it was on my mind, and I was revolving some method of reconciling the cipher with the surroundings. However, I did make a discovery."

"Rather an awkward discovery, I should say," said the lawyer drily, "to be set upon and nearly killed."

"That is so, but what I refer to is this:

"Roberts told his companion that we were on the track of the treasure and the negro answered, 'Yes, but they are on the wrong side of the creek.' Now if you have time we might go to-day and try again."

"No, no, my dear sir, not to-day. You forget you are an invalid, and besides, I cannot spare the time. Let me see—this is Tuesday. In a few days you will be more able to go around, so if you have no objection, I'll say Saturday. I'll come over early and spend the day with you."

"That's all very well, Mr. Finch, but in the meantime these socundrels may get the start of us and dig it up."

"No danger of that," said the lawyer. "They will give this locality a wide berth for some time to come. Roberts is not such a fool as to stay around Wilmington with a warrant out against him, so you may rest easy on that score."

"Very well, sir, you know best. Let it be Saturday."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE TREASURE.

THE weather was lovely, and I grew strong and well. Every day Ellen and I walked in the garden, or, accompanied by Charley, took a sail on the creek.

Charley was in a fever of impatience to get at the hidden treasure, and could scarcely be persuaded to wait till Saturday. At last Saturday came, and true to his appointment Mr. Finch arrived at the Pines early in the forenoon. Everything had been prepared and in a few minutes we were on our way to the forest. I was still on the sick list, and therefore debarred from taking an actual share in the proceedings, so Ellen and I went as spectators. A line was stretched across the creek parallel with the east side of the boat-house. There was no difficulty in finding the exact edge of the stream, for the boat-house was situated just

above a bend of the stream where it entered the forest, and the banks were built up to prevent their washing away. Charley fastened the tape measure to the rope and proceeded into the forest.

"I guess this is the right tree," he said, glancing along the line with a critical eye. It measured just exactly ninety-six feet and was perfectly in a line with the boat-house.

"That must be the tree, there is no other within twenty feet of us. Now get the compass and find the west."

The compass was brought out and ten feet measured off.

"Begin here, Sam," said Charley, to our old friend, who, I ought to have mentioned, had entered our service and who was now Charley's confidential servant. "Begin here." And the stalwart darkey began to dig as if his life depended on his efforts.

They had dug about three feet when the pick struck something hard.

"Another rock," said Charley anxiously.

"Looks like a paving stone, Massa," said Sam, clearing away the earth, and disclosing a large flat stone. This the negro soon re-

moved, and right underneath we saw a pine box about two feet square with an iron handle on top.

"Aha," said Charley in ecstasy, "we have found it at last."

I glanced at the lawyer's face to see what he thought of it, and the look of pleased surprise more than repaid me for his former incredulity.

With little difficulty the laborers got the box out and carried it to the house.

A screwdriver opened the box, and disclosed another box of rosewood, beautifully inlaid though somewhat tarnished. It was locked, but the key hung to a chain, rendering force unnecessary to open it. What a sight met our astonished gaze when it was opened. Gold coins, valuable plate, jewels, diamonds, the value of which none of us had the least idea.

"These diamonds," said Mr. Finch, opening a case containing a splendid necklace and earrings, "were Mrs. Fisher's. I have seen her wear them once or twice. I believe they cost $10,000."

"How do you like these, Ellie?" said Charley, handing a pair of bracelets to his sister.

"What lovely jewels," said Ellen. "I never saw anything like them before."

"Wouldn't you like to wear them?" he asked.

"They are too gay for me," she said, blushing with pleasure. "I would be afraid of losing them."

"Well, I shall keep them for you in the meantime, but remember they are yours."

There were nearly $5,000 in gold coin, most of it being $10 and $20 pieces, with a number of English sovereigns and a few Spanish doubloons. There were also bills of exchange on a New York bank for $25,000, and a bank book showing a deposit of $15,000 in the Bank of England. Altogether there was property to the amount of $150,000.

The lawyer took a list of the items, and when he had finished, he congratulated Charley on his good fortune, at the same time giving me the full credit of the discovery.

"What a splendid bargain Captain Roberts would have made had I agreed to his proposition," he said. "Why, he would have earned about $75,000."

"I don't believe he knew the place, or why

should he have asked the negro to show it."

"Possibly not," answered the lawyer, "but with the prospect of earning such a sum he would have found it had he to dig the whole forest up."

"Well, well, never mind," said Charley, laughing. "We found it without his assistance, and I am perfectly willing to pay Andrew any sum he may think his discovery worth. I feel that I am entitled to do so, considering he nearly lost his life on account of it."

This proposition of Charley's was something unexpected. The thought of getting a reward never entered my mind. I had studied out the cipher merely from curiosity, and I felt piqued at my first failure to find the treasure not so much on account of the property itself as from a feeling of disappointment self-esteem. I answered Charley that I neither expected nor desired any reward, but he cut me short, saying:

"I know that perfectly well, but nevertheless you have just put me in the possession of a large sum which otherwise I might never have had, and I think it is only just that you should

share it. Mr. Finch, you are a lawyer, I'll leave it to you to decide if Andrew agrees to abide by your decision."

"Certainly, Charley, if you wish it."

"Well," said the old lawyer, slowly, "I'll think over it and give you my opinion in a day or two. I am going to New York next week, and I'll take these bills at the same time. I shall make arrangements with the Bank of Endland's agents to get your money deposited there. You know there are three legacies of $10,000 each to be paid out of Mr. Fisher's estate, and we can't pay them till we get these bills cashed. I have a large amount of other business to transact in New York, but I have been so busy since the close of the war that I could not possibly leave Wilmington till now. I intend to leave next Thursday, but I shall see you before I go."

"Charley, dear," said Ella that same evening as we sat together on the veranda enjoying the fresh balmy air laden with the scent of a thousand flowers, "I have been thinking I ought to go home. The last letter we had from James said that mother was ailing. If Mr. Finch has no objection, I should like to ac-

company him to New York. It will be much more pleasant than traveling alone."

"A good idea, Ellie. I'll speak to him about it. I dare say he will be very glad of such a nice companion. Andrew and I will be home before Thanksgiving."

Next day was Sunday and Charley drove over to Wilmington to church. At dinner he told us that he had seen Mr. Finch, who was delighted at the prospect of traveling to New York with Miss Fisher. "He is to be over on Wednesday to get the papers, so you have plenty of time to prepare for your journey, Ellie dear."

"Mr. Finch is a dear, good old gentleman, and I shall try and make the journey as pleasant as I can."

"Andrew and I will feel lonely without you," said Charley, "but I know mother needs you much more than we do, and besides we shall soon be all together again. Come, let us take a turn in the garden."

Charley lit a fresh cigar and strolled off through the garden, Ellen and I following. It was a lovely evening, the twilight coming on, and the bright moon already shedding her soft light on the grateful earth.

"Ellen, dear," I said, pressing her arm close in mine, "I am very sorry you have to leave us, but I know it is your duty to go, and I want to tell you my plans and ask your opinion about them. I must write to your mother and ask her permission to our union. I ought to have written sooner, but I saw no immediate necessity for it, so I have delayed from day to day."

"Mother knows about it, Andrew. Charley wrote some time ago, and she is very much pleased with her new son, as she called you in her letter. I thought he had shown you the letter; it came last evening."

"Indeed, he did not, but I am happy to hear that Mrs. Fisher is satisfied, and I must write and thank her.

"And now for my plans. You are aware that Colonel Fisher left me $10,000. Well, I intend to invest one-half in the drug business. It is the only business I feel qualified for. Had I both arms I could do a hundred things, but I have resolved to offer myself as partner with your brother. Edgetown is a thriving place and I think can easily support us, but if James does not wish a partner I shall try some other place. Five thousand dollars will start

a fair business, and the balance can support us till it is established. Now, what do you think of that plan?"

"I think it is the best thing that could be devised," she said without a moment's hesitation. "I am sure mother will be delighted with it, and I cannot see why James should object. I often heard him say how much he missed you when you went to the war. I shall have $10,000 too, if it is required."

"What's all this about?" cried Charley, coming back. "Some plot, I suppose. I thought you were going to give me your company?"

"Well, Charley, sit down and I will disclose our plot, as you call it."

"Now what do you think of it?" I asked after telling him our plans.

"Good enough, I dare say, but perhaps I can suggest something better. I hope to be able to offer you inducements to live here, but it will be time enough when everything is settled."

Next day Charley received a note from Mr. Finch requesting him to call at the office, and advising him to bring his money and valuables to deposit in bank.

"I was just thinking of that myself," he remarked as he finished reading the note. I do not feel at ease with such an amount of valuable property in the house. I have scarcely slept a wink these two nights thinking about it. Great riches bring great cares, and I am just beginning to find it out."

"That may be so," I said, laughing at his serious manner, "but I know plenty of men who would be glad to have the riches, and take the risk of the care."

"Oh, I don't grumble at my good fortune. I was only repeating a maxim I have often heard, but never fully understood till now."

"Well," I asked, "are you going to Wilmington or not? Mr. Finch's wagon is still at the door, and I suppose he is waiting for you."

"Why, so it is; the letter said so," he said, starting up. "I guess I'll take Sam with me to look after the box till I get it safe in the bank."

"Dear Ellen," I said, when we were once more alone, "have you thought over my plans?"

"Yes, dear; Charley and I had quite a long talk about it. He wants us to stay here, but

I told him I never could live so far away from mother. She is getting old and feeble and requires me near her."

"Yes indeed," I said. "Charley won't miss us when he brings Effie here as his wife. I like the North best, although the Pines is a very pretty place to live in."

"I think there's no place like home," said Ellen. "I never was so long away from mother and I begin to feel homesick."

"What do you say to a row on the river? The fresh air will do you good. It will be the last time we shall sail together for a long time."

"I should like it very much," she said. "I'll get my sun-bonnet and be back in a moment," and away she skipped humming "Home, Sweet Home."

Charley had got back before we returned from our excursion, and was standing on the veranda watching for us.

"Come along," he cried, "the dinner bell rang ten minutes ago. Where have you been?"

"I must ask your pardon for keeping you waiting," I replied. "I coaxed Ellen to take

a row on the river, and it was so nice and cool on the water that we were loath to leave it."

"Humph. You might have waited till I got back. I'm as hot as a nigger."

Dinner over the servants left the room, and Charley, producing a sealed envelope, handed it to his sister.

"This is Mr. Finch's written opinion," he said, "and I want you to read it. I know nothing of what it contains, but I pledge myself to abide by it, and so does Andrew," he added, looking at me.

"Certainly," I replied laughing. "I have nothing to lose, but perhaps something to gain, by that transaction."

Ellen broke the seal and read as follows:

"After carefully considering the subject and getting disinterested advice, I have come to the conclusion that Mr. Andrew Murray is entitled to $15,000, or ten per cent. of the property discovered through his ingenuity."

"Fifteen thousand dollars!" I gasped, for the magnitude of the reward completely took away my breath. "Fifteen thousand. It cannot be; read it again."

"Why can't it be?" said Charley. "Mr.

Finch is a cautious man, and he thinks so and so do I. I am glad of it, and as I said before, I would abide by the decision."

We all sat silent for a few minutes, when Charley, leaning over the table toward me and speaking very seriously, said: "Andrew, answer me one question. Would you go through the last two months' experience for fifteen thousand dollars?"

A shudder passed through my frame. "Not for worlds," I answered.

"Enough said. You have fairly earned your reward, and the first thing I do when I get the money will be to give you a check for that amount."

When we returned from seeing Mr. Finch and Ellen depart on their journey North, the house looked as if all the sunshine had gone out of it. It is a question whether Charley or I felt Ellen's absence most, for she was his only sister, and dear to him as any sister possibly could be; and I—well, I felt lonely. That evening Sam requested an interview with Charley, and on being ushered into the library where we were sitting smoking in silence, he said he had come to ask advice.

"It's just this, Mass' Charley. Dat Wash, when I tole him this mornin' to get the kerridge for Miss Ellen, he say, he don' take orders from no low-down plantation nigger, as hasn't on'y one name. Den I say my name as good as your'n, an' he say as how folkses calls him Wash, but his full proper name is Wash'tin Burley."

"Washington Burleigh, eh? He must be one of the old family's servants. And so he looks down on you because you are plain Sam?"

"Yes, sah, I 'spects he does."

"What was your father's name?"

"'Bijah, sah. Old mass'r allus called him Uncle 'Bijah."

"And what was your old master's name?"

"Johnson, sah, but they's too many niggers of that name now. I knows three or four already."

"Samuel Johnson is a very fine name," said Charley, "and it has a smack of learning about it, too. Well, Sam, what do you say to Ridge? You came from the Blue Ridge. Let me see —Samuel B. Ridge—how does that strike you?"

"Golly, Mass' Charley, that a good name; no other nigger called that, I don' b'lieve. Say it again, sah, so I don' forget it."

"Samuel—B.—Ridge. I will enter your name on the books as such, and when you join a church you can be baptized. I will write it for you," and turning to his desk Charley wrote the name in large, plain letters and handed the paper to Sam.

"Golly, dat my name?" cried the delighted darkey, gazing at it with wonder and awe.

"Yes, Sam, that is your full name, and I hope you will soon be able to write it yourself. When I return from the North, I will give you lessons in reading and writing. You have the advantage of Wash now, for he has only two names, while you have three."

Sam's face was a study while Charley was speaking. "Huh!" he said, "I'se par'lyze dat nigger the next time he 'sult me 'bout my name."

"I will see Wash myself, and let him understand that you have entire charge of the stables, and that he must take orders from you," said Charley, and Sam withdrew grinning with delight. This little piece of comedy helped to

raise our spirits, and we took a more cheerful view of things. The few intervening weeks would soon pass away, and we would be reunited to our loved ones.

Mr. Finch returned to Wilmington early in November, having finished all the business connected with Colonel Fisher's estate.

CHAPTER XXII.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

It was now the middle of November, and we were preparing for our long-looked-for visit to the North. Mr. Finch had returned from New York, having settled Colonel Fisher's affairs, and paid the legacies. Together with the sum which the lawyer had awarded me for finding the buried treasure, I was worth $25,000, a snug little sum for a young man to begin the world with. Therefore, it was with light hearts and well-filled wallets we left Wilmington for the North, and we reached Baltimore without accident or mishap.

It was evening of the second day when we reached the Susquehanna River, and there the cars were run on an immense boat and ferried across. Charley was dozing in his seat, so I lit a cigar and stepped out on deck to get a breath of fresh air and take a look at the sur-

roundings. It was beginning to grow dark, and the wind whistled fiercely on the river, driving the low-lying clouds before it. I was leaning over the side looking at the rushing waters, and dreaming of Ellen, when I felt myself seized from behind, and a blanket thrown over my head. The suddenness of the attack quite overpowered me, and before I could recover my self-possession, I was lifted off my feet and pushed over the side of the vessel. "Are they going to throw me overboard?" rushed through my mind. With the strength of despair I kicked and struggled, but I was in the grasp of a giant, and I felt myself slowly but surely pushed further over the side. With a mighty effort I got my hand—my solitary, good right hand—free, and I grasped my assailant by the hair. He struck and struggled, but I clung to him with the tenacity of death itself, and we fell together into the river. On coming to the surface, I was rejoiced to find that the blanket in which I was enveloped had become disengaged and my head was free. I looked around, but could see nothing of my assailant, though I saw the ferry boat nearing her slip. I was an excellent swimmer, and un-

der ordinary circumstances I could have easily reached the shore, but the severe struggle had weakened me considerably, and the coldness of the water chilled me to the heart. I felt I could not keep afloat long, but life was sweet and I endeavored to do what I could to prolong it. I shouted again and again, but no answer came.

"Have I escaped so many times," I cried in the bitterness of my feelings, "to die a dog's death at last? Shall I never see friends and home again? Never see Ellen?" The thought of Ellen raised fresh hope in my bosom. I shall not die. Surely some one saw the struggle on the boat. Charley will soon miss me. I shall be saved. Again I raised my voice and shouted, "Help, help! Oh, joy, they hear me, they see me." A dark body came swiftly toward me, and a gruff but kindly voice bade me cheer up. My senses were fast leaving me, but I felt myself dragged from the water and I sank into insensibility.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A MYSTERY CLEARED UP.

I HAD had a narrow escape. Charley told me so, the doctor said the same, and I knew it myself. I am certain I could not have kept afloat a minute longer, and had not succor arrived at the moment it did, these lines would never have been written.

"But who was my assailant, and what was his motive?" I had not a single enemy in the world that I knew of, yet it was evidently malice and not plunder that animated my would-be assailant. It was surely a case of mistaken identity."

These thoughts ran through my mind all night, and even the soothing medicine I had taken could not lull me into complete forgetfulness. At last I fell asleep, and when I woke the bright sunlight was streaming in through the half-shaded windows, and Charley was sitting at the bedside reading the morning papers.

"Well, Andy, old fellow, how do you feel this morning? All right, eh?"

"I cannot tell yet," I answered. "I feel a queer kind of buzzing in my head, as if a swarm of bees had built their nest inside."

Just then some one knocked at the door and on Charley's answering "Come in," a brisk little gentleman entered.

"Good morning, doctor," said Charley, "you are early around, aren't you?"

"Well, yes. I was anxious to see my patient and find out if he knows the person who assaulted him."

"I haven't the slightest idea, doctor," I answered. "I think I must have been mistaken for some other person."

"Possibly, possibly, that might be the case; but do you know any person of the name of J. I. Roberts?"

"Roberts, Roberts. I knew one man of that name and I have good reason to remember him. Was it he that attacked me last night?"

"Really I could not be certain, but a man's body was found in the river this morning, and from some papers found in the pockets we have

reason to believe his name was J. I. Roberts."

"Was he a tall man with long black hair and beard?"

"Exactly; that's a true description of the drowned man, and he had been in a severe struggle, as the marks on his face and limbs testified. Had he any reason to consider you his enemy?"

"Well, perhaps he had. I know I had good reason to consider him mine." And I gave the doctor an account of our previous meeting in the forest at the Pines.

"Then, doubtless, it was revenge he sought, and your escape is little less than a miracle."

"I thank God for my escape," I answered reverently, "yet I never did this man any injury. He was the assailant in every instance, and I merely acted in self-defense."

"That is very true, my dear sir," said the doctor. "No one can blame you. It is an instance of divine retribution. Would you like to see the body?"

"Oh, no, no," I answered, shuddering. "I would I could forget that such a person ever existed."

"Well, well, my dear sir, don't excite yourself. Your nerves are a little shaken, but you'll be all right soon. If you feel able I would recommend you to take the noon train, which will enable you to reach your destination to-night. Once amongst your friends you will soon recover."

This advice exactly coincided with my wishes, and Charley was as anxious as myself to get home. We reached Edgetown without further mishap, and we both agreed to say nothing about my late adventure, but love's eyes are sharp. Ellen saw something ailed me, and I had to tell her the whole story after enjoining her to secrecy.

"What a wicked man!" she exclaimed. "How could any one be so cruel, but his designs came to naught, and he himself fell into the pit he digged for another. May God have mercy on him."

"Amen."

CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCLUSION.

THANKSGIVING was spent in the good old orthodox fashion; then we began to look forward to Christmas and make preparations for the double wedding which was to take place the 26th.

One day I had occasion to go to New York, and while passing down Broadway, near the City Hall, I observed a man wearing a soldier's cap, peddling cakes on one of the side streets. The man happening to turn his face toward me, I noticed the figures 95 on the front of his cap.

"What!" I exclaimed, "one of my old regiment, and with a wooden leg, too. Who can it be?"

I went up to him and saw at a glance it was Hamburgher, the poor fellow who was wounded in our first battle.

"Hello! Humbugger, is that you?"

He looked at me curiously, then exclaimed, as he grasped my outstretched hand, "Andee, ain't it?"

"Yes," I replied, "but I am sorry to see you reduced to this."

"Vell, I must do somedings, I haf a vife and two childrens already to keep, and my pension don't more as pay the rent."

"But have you no trade or business you could work at?"

"Vun-legged bakers ain't wanted much, so I bakes my cakes at home, and sells 'em through the day. It is better as that, anyhow, ain't it?" and he pointed to a one-armed wretch dressed like a sailor, who was sitting on the opposite corner, grinding a doleful tune out of a dilapidated hand-organ.

It pained me to the heart to see this honest fellow struggling so bravely against adversity, yet I felt proud of his sturdy independence, and that *he*, and not the other was my friend. *He* at least was no beggar, *he* gave value for the pennies received, and all he asked from the public was patronage, just as the millionaire dry goods merchant across the street did every day of his life. I felt interested in my old

comrade, and wished to know more of him, so I asked for his address, saying I would call in the evening when he would be at home.

Hamburgher's abode was in an East Side tenement, and there I found him busy at his baking. He gave up his work at once, and we sat down together and talked about old times, about Sergeant Dinny, and Charley and the rest of our comrades, and then I got him to talk of himself. In his quaint style he informed me that he was not so badly off as some old soldiers he knew, as he had nearly three hundred dollars in the bank, saved from his pay and bounty money, and that he was trying to save five hundred so as to start a bakery of his own.

"Will five hundred dollars start you in business?"

"I guess it will. There's a bakery in the next block for sale, and all they ask is five hundred dollars."

"But why should the baker want to sell out if the business pays?"

"'Cause he's dead already, and his wife no more wants to keep it."

I thought for a few moments, then I said: "I would like to assist you in this matter,

Hamburgher. See this woman to-morrow and make the best bargain you can. Charley and I will lend you what money you need, and you can pay it back when you are able. We will be in the city next Monday and will bring the money with us, so be sure you are at home when we call."

"And you will lend me the money, you say? That will be grand. It won't take me long to pay it back."

"Yes, we'll loan you the money. Charley is rich, and I have a little myself, so rest easy on that score. We'll be here Monday and fix it for you."

I had been so long with Hamburgher that it was nearly midnight when I got home. All the family except Charley had retired, and after the first greetings, he said he had something to show me.

"And I have something to tell you, but I guess both can keep till to-morrow. I am very tired."

"I think you would like to see it to-night; indeed, I am sure you would."

"Very well, let us see it," I answered wearily. We entered the room and Charley

turned up the light. I started as if I had seen an apparition, for there standing upright against the wall, was a life-size portrait of Dennis Mahony, looking just as he did when I first knew him.

"Isn't it like him?" whispered Charley.

"As like as life; poor Dinny!"

Charley echoed both sigh and exclamation, and we sat for some moments silently gazing on the likeness of our dead comrade, then I asked: "When and where did you get this? You never told me of it."

"I told no one. I wished to surprise you. I gave the order to a portrait painter before we went South. You see, I had a photograph of Dinny, taken when he was home on furlough two years ago. At first I thought of having him painted as a captain, but I concluded that he would always be Sergeant Dinny to us, so I let it go as it was."

"I like it better as it is," I replied, "it looks more natural."

Again we relapsed into silence, broken at length by Charley asking if I remembered where we were this time last year.

"Digging our way out of Salisbury, I guess. We always worked at night."

"No, Andy, we were beyond that. This time a year ago we were in the car with Dinny and Sam. This is the anniversary of our escape."

"Is that so? I had quite forgotten."

Charley was in a reflective mood. "If any one," he continued, "had come into our hut that night, and prophesied that in a few months Dinny would be killed, you wounded, and I become owner of a splendid property in one of the Rebel States, I would not have believed him, would you?"

"I would not, it sounds too much like a romance."

"The ways of Providence are mysterious," continued the young moralist. "To think of Dinny—a true hero, if ever there was one—after passing safely through four years of danger, being killed in the very last battle, and you maimed for life, while I, the least worthy, should not only come back without a scratch, but in possession of a fortune. It is scarcely credible."

"Yes," I added, "and poor Humbugger tramping along Broadway with his wooden leg peddling cakes at a penny a piece," and then I related my day's adventures and told Charley of my promise to assist our old comrade.

"I am glad you included me," he said. "We will go shares in this venture. Poor Humbugger! He was the best-natured fellow I ever knew. But I see you are tired out, Andy, so you had better go to bed. Mother will scold me for keeping you up so late. Good night."

"Good night."

The following Monday Charley and I went to New York to keep our appointment with Hamburgher. We found our old comrade all ready, dressed in his best clothes and wearing a government artificial limb, instead of the wooden pin he had on the day I met him. A few hours later he was in full legal possession of the widow's bakery, and we returned to Edgetown with the consciousness of having done a good turn to a worthy man.

The double wedding took place on the 26th of December. Charley was united to his beloved Effie and Ellen became my wife. There is little more to tell. Charley immediately took his young bride to her beautiful Southern home, while I settled in Edgetown, where I have since remained. The bulk of my fortune I invested in real estate, and it has proved a good investment, as Edgetown has nearly

doubled its population in ten years, and what was unproductive land in 1865, is now covered with blocks of houses. Once a year at least Charley comes North, and I sometimes visit him at the Pines. The last time I was there I was amused at hearing a young colored woman calling out, "Here you, Dinny Mahony, come right into the house," and a little wooly-headed fellow of five or six years who was rolling on the grass with half a dozen others, ran towards her. I was surprised at hearing the name of my old friend applied to a little darkey, but my surprise vanished when Sam himself came to the door and invited me into his cottage. He was a great admirer of Mass'r Dinny, and had named his eldest son after him. Sam is still the same faithful fellow, and Charley puts the greatest confidence in him, and has given him entire charge of the plantation. Moreover, Charley has taught him to read, and write and cipher, and Sam has proved an apt scholar, as his accounts show. Charley is doing a good work encouraging education and thrift among his employees, and his people are amongst the happiest and most contented negroes of the South.

THE END.

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