FAMOUS ADVENTURES AND PRISON ESCAPES OF THE CIVIL WAR

PART 2

III. THE ESCAPE[11]

BY THOMAS H. HINES

On the 31st of July and the 1st of August, 1863, General John H. Morgan, General Basil W. Duke, and sixty-eight other officers of Morgan's command, were, by order of General Burnside, confined in the Ohio State Penitentiary at Columbus. Before entering the main prison we were searched and relieved of our pocket-knives, money, and of all other articles of value, subjected to a bath, the shaving of our faces, and the cutting of our hair. We were placed each in a separate cell in the first and second tiers on the south side in the east wing of the prison. General Morgan and General Duke were on the second range, General Morgan being confined in the last cell at the east end, those who escaped with General Morgan having their cells in the first range.

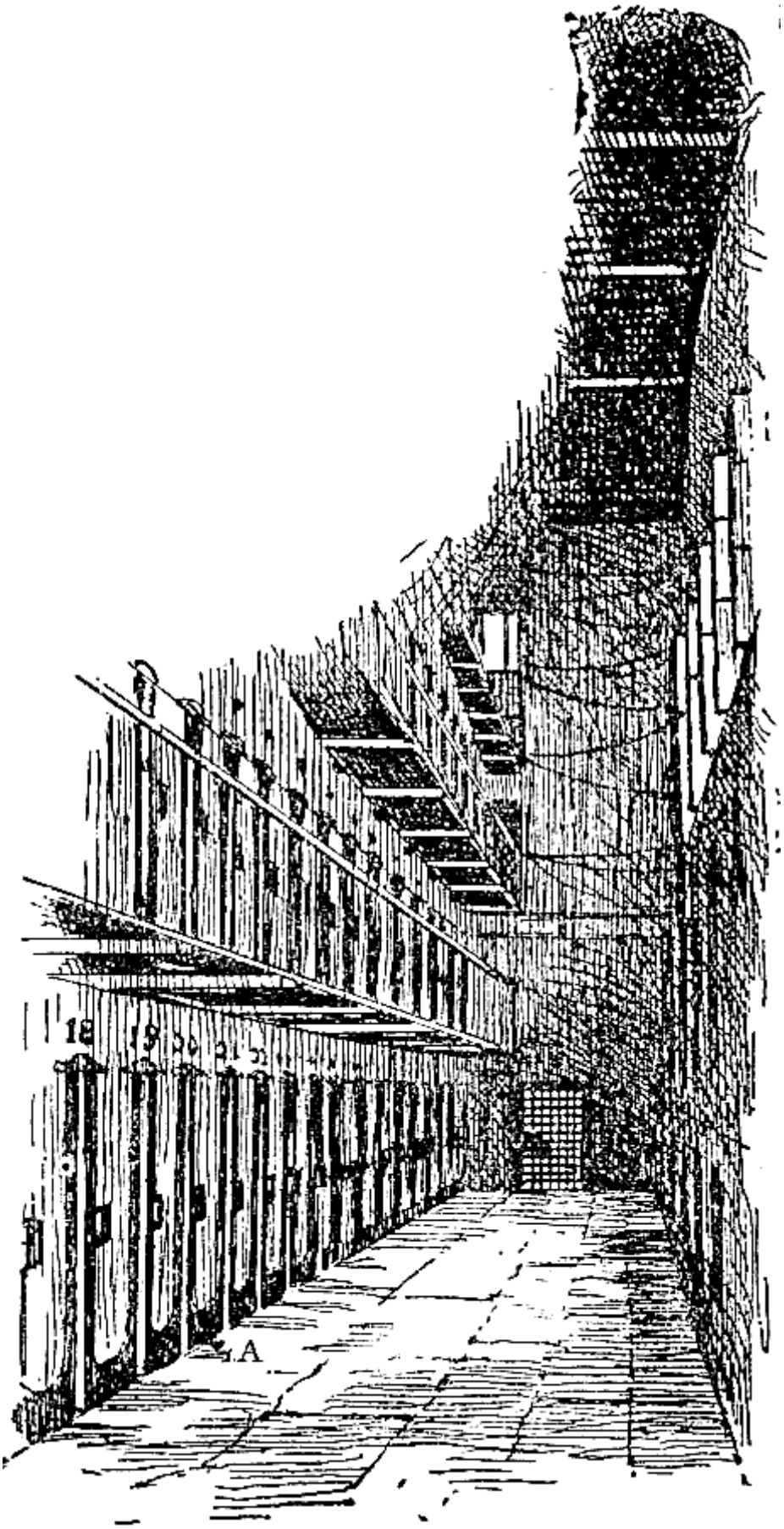
[11]Condensed from "The Bivouac" of June, 1885.

From five o'clock in the evening until seven o'clock in the morning we were locked into our cells, with no possible means of communication with one another; but in the day, between these hours, we were permitted to mingle together in the narrow hall, twelve feet wide and one hundred and sixty long, which was cut off from the other portion of the building, occupied by the convicts, by a plank partition, in one end of which was a wooden door. At each end of the hall, and within the partitions, was an armed military sentinel, while the civil guards of the prison passed at irregular intervals among us, and very frequently the warden or his deputy came through in order to see that we were secure and not violating the prison rules. We were not permitted to talk with or in any way to communicate with the convicts, nor were we permitted to see any of our relatives or friends that might come from a distance to see us, except upon the written order of General Burnside, and then only in the presence of a guard. Our correspondence underwent the censorship of the warden, we receiving and

he sending only such as met his approbation; we were not permitted to have newspapers, or to receive information of what was going on in the outside busy world.

Many plans for escape, ingenious and desperate, were suggested, discussed, and rejected because deemed impracticable. Among them was bribery of the guards. This was thought not feasible because of the double set of guards, military and civil, who were jealous and watchful of each other, so that it was never attempted, although we could have commanded, through our friends in Kentucky and elsewhere, an almost unlimited amount of money.

On a morning in the last days of October I was rudely treated, without cause, by the deputy warden. There was no means of redress, and it was not wise to seek relief by retort, since I knew, from the experience of my comrades, that it would result in my confinement in a dark dungeon, with bread and water for diet. I retired to my cell, and closed the door with the determination that I would neither eat nor sleep until I had devised some means of escape. I ate nothing and drank nothing during the day, and by nine o'clock I had matured the plan that we carried into execution. It may be that I owed something to the fact that I had just completed the reading of Victor Hugo's "Les Misérables," containing such vivid delineations of the wonderful escapes of Jean Valjean, and of the subterranean passages of the city of Paris. This may have led me to the line of thought that terminated in the plan of escape adopted. It was this: I had observed that the floor of my cell was upon a level with the ground upon the outside of the building, which was low and flat, and also that the floor of the cell was perfectly dry and free from mold. It occurred to me that, as the rear of the cell was to a great extent excluded from the light and air, this dryness and freedom from mold could not exist unless there was underneath something in the nature of an air-chamber to prevent the dampness from rising up the walls and through the floor. If this chamber should be found to exist, and could be reached, a tunnel might be run through the foundations into the yard, from which we might escape by scaling the outer wall, the air-chamber furnishing a receptacle for the earth and stone to be taken out in running the tunnel. The next morning, when our cells were unlocked, and we were permitted to assemble in the hall, I went to General Morgan's cell, he having been for several days quite unwell, and laid before him the plan as I have sketched it. Its feasibility appeared to him unquestioned, and to it he gave a hearty and unqualified approval. If, then, our supposition was correct as to the existence of the air-chamber beneath the lower range of cells, a limited number of those occupying that range could escape, and only a limited number, because the greater the number the longer the time required to complete the work, and the greater the danger of discovery while prosecuting it, in making our way over the outer wall, and in escaping afterward.

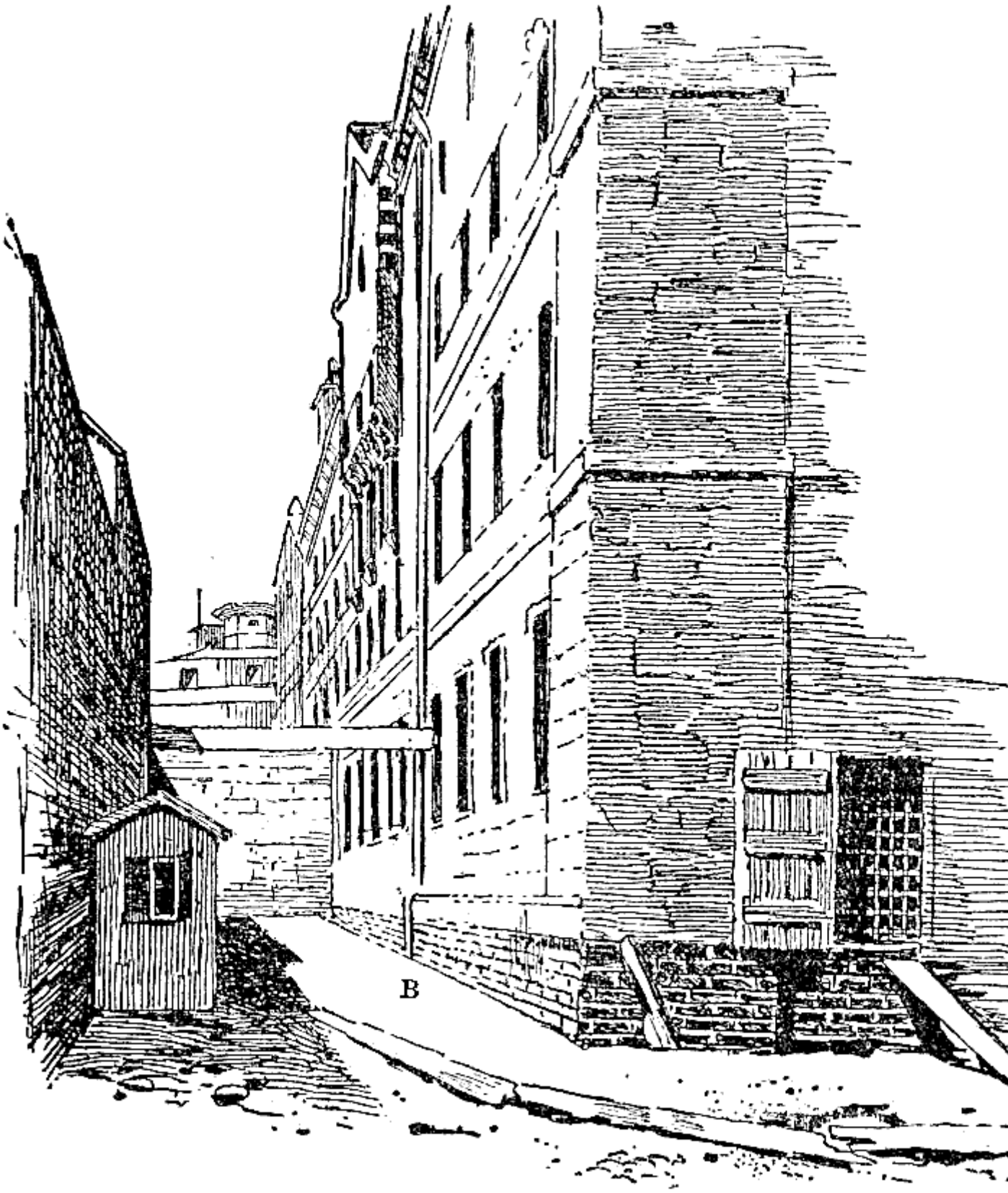


CORRIDOR

AND CELLS IN THE EAST WING.
A, CAPTAIN HINES'S CELL.

With these considerations in view, General Morgan and myself agreed upon the following officers, whose cells were nearest the point at which the tunnel was to begin, to join us in the enterprise: Captain J.C. Bennett, Captain L.D. Hockersmith, Captain C.S. Magee, Captain Ralph Sheldon, and Captain Samuel B. Taylor. The plan was then laid before these gentlemen, and received their approval. It was agreed that work should begin in my cell, and continue from there until completed. In order, however, to do this without detection, it was necessary that some means should be found to prevent the daily inspection of that cell, it being the custom of the deputy warden, with the guards, to visit and have each cell swept every morning. This end was accomplished by my obtaining permission from the warden to furnish a broom and sweep my own cell. For a few mornings thereafter the deputy warden would pass, glance into my cell, compliment me on its neatness, and go on to the inspection of the other cells. After a few days my cell was allowed to go without any inspection whatever, and then we were ready to begin work, having obtained, through some of our associates who had been sent to the hospital, some table-knives made of flat steel files. In my cell, as in the others, there was a narrow iron cot, which could be folded and propped up to the cell wall. I thought the work could be completed within a month.

On the 4th of November work was begun in the back part of my cell, under the rear end of my cot. We cut through six inches of cement, and took out six layers of brick put in and cemented with the ends up. Here we came to the air-chamber, as I had calculated, and found it six feet wide by four feet high, and running the entire length of the range of cells. The cement and brick taken out in effecting an entrance to the chamber were placed in my bed-tick, upon which I slept during the progress of this portion of the work, after which the material was removed to the chamber. We found the chamber heavily grated at the end, against which a large quantity of coal had been heaped, cutting off any chance of exit in that way. We then began a tunnel, running it at right angles from the side of the chamber, and almost directly beneath my cell. We cut through the foundation wall, five feet thick, of the cell block; through twelve feet of grouting, to the outer wall of the east wing of the prison; through this wall, six feet in thickness; and four feet up near the surface of the yard, in an unfrequented place between this wing and the female department of the prison.


B

EXTERIOR OF THE PRISON.
B—EXIT FROM TUNNEL.

During the progress of the work, in which we were greatly assisted by several of our comrades who were not to go out, notably among them Captain Thomas W. Bullitt of Louisville, Kentucky, I sat at the entrance to my cell studiously engaged on Gibbon's Rome and in trying to master French. By this device I was enabled to be constantly on guard without being suspected, as I had pursued the same course during the whole period of my imprisonment. Those who did the work were relieved every hour. This was accomplished, and the danger of the guards overhearing the work as they passed obviated, by adopting a system of signals, which consisted in giving taps on the floor over the chamber. One knock was to suspend work, two to proceed, and three to come out. On one occasion, by oversight, we came near being discovered. The prisoners were taken out to their meals by ranges, and on this day those confined in the first range were called for dinner while Captain Hockersmith was in the tunnel. The deputy warden, on calling the roll, missed Hockersmith, and came back to inquire for him. General Morgan engaged the attention of the warden by asking his opinion as to the propriety of a remonstrance that the general had prepared to be sent to General Burnside. Flattered by the deference shown to his opinion by General Morgan, the warden unwittingly gave Captain Hockersmith time to get out and fall into line for dinner. While the tunnel was being run, Colonel R.C. Morgan, a brother of General Morgan, made a rope, in links, of bed-ticking, thirty-five feet in length, and from the iron poker of the hall stove we made a hook, in the nature of a grappling-iron, to attach to the end of the rope.

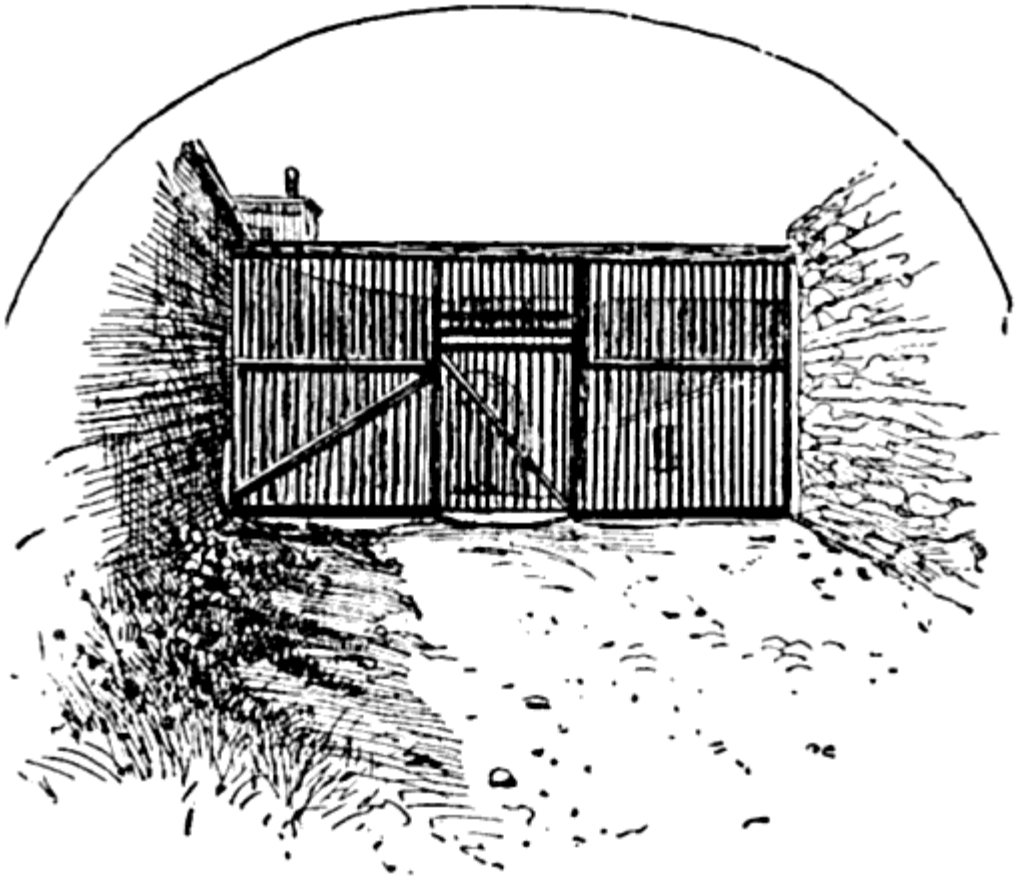
The work was now complete with the exception of making an entrance from each of the cells of those who were to go out. This could be done with safety only by working from the chamber upward, as the cells were daily inspected. The difficulty presented in doing this was the fact that we did not know at what point to begin in order to open the holes in the cells at the proper place. To accomplish this a measurement was necessary, but we had nothing to measure with. Fortunately the deputy warden again ignorantly aided us. I got into a discussion with him as to the length of the hall, and to convince me of my error he sent for his measuring-line, and after the hall had been measured, and his statement verified, General Morgan occupied his attention, while I took the line, measured the distance from center to center of the cells,—all being of uniform size,—and marked it upon the stick used in my cell for propping up my cot. With this stick, measuring from the middle of the hole in my cell, the proper distance was marked off in the chamber for the holes in the other cells. The chamber was quite dark, and light being necessary for the work, we had obtained candles and matches through our sick comrades in the hospital. The hole in my cell during the

progress of the work was kept covered with a large hand-satchel containing my change of clothing. We cut from underneath upward until there was only a thin crust of the cement left in each of the cells. Money was necessary to pay expenses of transportation and for other contingencies as they might arise. General Morgan had some money that the search had not discovered, but it was not enough. Shortly after we began work I wrote to my sister in Kentucky a letter, which through a trusted convict I sent out and mailed, requesting her to go to my library and get certain books, and in the back of a designated one, which she was to open with a thin knife, place a certain amount of Federal money, repaste the back, write my name across the inside of the back where the money was concealed, and send the box by express. In due course of time the books with the money came to hand. It only remained now to get information as to the time of the running of the trains and to await a cloudy night, as it was then full moon. Our trusty convict was again found useful. He was quite an old man, called Heavy, had been in the penitentiary for many years, and as he had been so faithful, and his time having almost expired, he was permitted to go on errands for the officials to the city. I gave him ten dollars to bring us a daily paper and six ounces of French brandy. Neither he nor any one within the prison or on the outside had any intimation of our contemplated escape.

It was our first thought to make our way to the Confederacy by way of Canada; but, on inspecting the time-table in the paper, it was seen that a knowledge of the escape would necessarily come to the prison officials before we could reach the Canadian border. There was nothing left, then, but to take the train south, which we found, if on time, would reach Cincinnati, Ohio, before the cells were opened in the morning, at which time we expected our absence to be discovered. One thing more remained to be done, and that was to ascertain the easiest and safest place at which to scale the outside wall of the prison. The windows opening outward were so high that we could not see the wall. In the hall was a ladder resting against the wall, fifty feet long, that had been used for sweeping down the wall. A view from the top of the ladder would give us a correct idea of the outside, but the difficulty was to get that view without exciting suspicion.

Fortunately the warden came in while we were discussing the great strength and activity of Captain Samuel B. Taylor, who was very small of stature, when it was suggested that Taylor could go hand over hand on the under side of the ladder to the top, and, with a moment's rest, return in the same way. To the warden this seemed impossible, and, to convince him, Taylor was permitted to make the trial, which he did successfully. At the top of the ladder he rested for a minute and took a mental photograph of the wall. When the warden had left, Taylor communicated the fact that directly south of and at almost right angles from the east end of the block in which we were confined there was a double gate to the

outer wall, the inside one being of wooden uprights four inches apart, and the outside one as solid as the wall; the wooden gate being supported by the wing wall of the female department, which joined to the main outer wall.



WITH IN THE WOODEN GATE.

On the evening of the 27th of November the cloudy weather so anxiously waited for came; and prior to being locked in our cells it was agreed to make the attempt at escape that night. Cell No. 21, next to my cell, No. 20, on the first range, was occupied by Colonel R.C. Morgan, a brother of General Morgan. That cell had been prepared for General Morgan by opening a hole to the chamber, and when the hour for locking up came, General Morgan stepped into Cell 21, and Colonel Morgan into General Morgan's cell in the second range. The guard did not discover the exchange, as General Morgan and Colonel Morgan were of about the same physical proportions, and each stood with his back to the cell door when it was being locked.

At intervals of two hours every night, beginning at eight, the guards came around to each cell and passed a light through the grating to see that all was well with the prisoners. The approach of the guard was often so stealthily made that a knowledge of his presence was first had by seeing him at the door of the cell. To

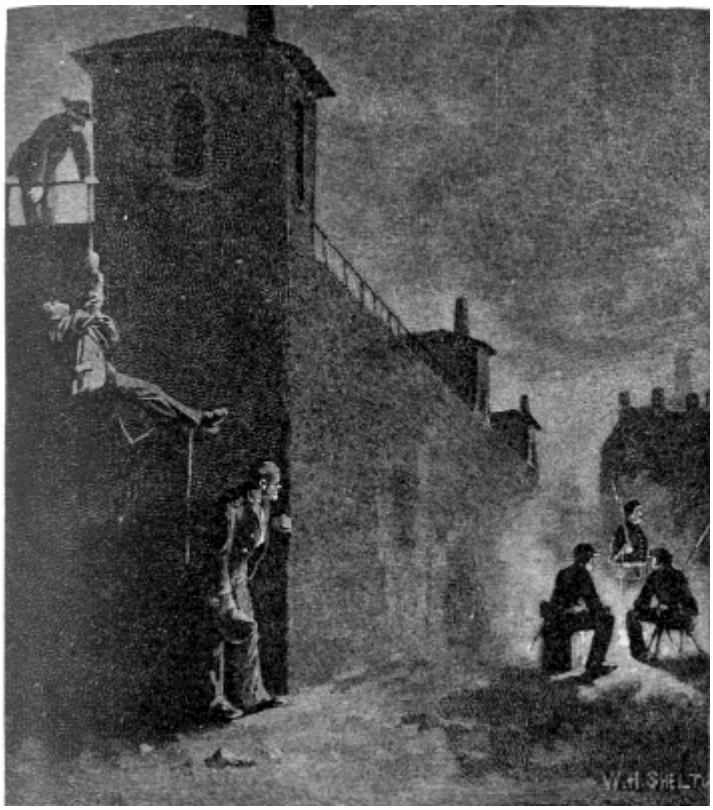
avoid a surprise of this kind we sprinkled fine coal along in front of the cells, walking upon which would give us warning. By a singular coincidence that might have been a fatality, on the day we had determined upon for the escape General Morgan received a letter from Lexington, Kentucky, begging and warning him not to attempt to escape, and by the same mail I received a letter from a member of my family saying that it was rumored and generally believed at home that I had escaped. Fortunately these letters did not put the officials on their guard. We ascertained from the paper we had procured that a train left for Cincinnati at 1.15 A.M., and as the regular time for the guard to make his round of the cells was twelve o'clock, we arranged to descend to the chamber immediately thereafter. Captain Taylor was to descend first, and, passing under each cell, notify the others. General Morgan had been permitted to keep his watch, and this he gave to Taylor that he might not mistake the time to go.

At the appointed hour Taylor gave the signal, each of us arranged his cot with the seat in his cell so as to represent a sleeping prisoner, and, easily breaking the thin layer of cement, descended to the chamber, passed through the tunnel, breaking through the thin stratum of earth at the end. We came out near the wall of the female prison,—it was raining slightly,—crawled by the side of the wall to the wooden gate, cast our grappling-iron attached to the rope over the gate, made it fast, ascended the rope to the top of the gate, drew up the rope, and made our way by the wing wall to the outside wall, where we entered a sentry-box and divested ourselves of our soiled outer garments. In the daytime sentinels were placed on this wall, but at night they were on the inside of the walls and at the main entrance to the prison. On the top of the wall we found a cord running along the outer edge and connecting with a bell in the office of the prison. This cord General Morgan cut with one of the knives we had used in tunneling. Before leaving my cell I wrote and left, addressed to N. Merion, the warden, the following:

CASTLE MERION, CELL NO. 20, November 27, 1863.—Commencement, November 4, 1863; conclusion, November 24, 1863; number of hours for labor per day, five; tools, two small knives. *La patience est amère, mais son fruit est doux.* By order of my six honorable Confederates. THOMAS H. HINES, *Captain, C.S.A.*

Having removed all trace of soil from our clothes and persons, we attached the iron hook to the railing on the outer edge of the wall, and descended to the ground within sixty yards of where the prison guards were sitting round a fire and conversing. Here we separated, General Morgan and myself going to the depot, about a quarter, of a mile from the prison, where I purchased two tickets for Cincinnati, and entered the car that just then came in. General Morgan took a seat beside a Federal major in uniform, and I sat immediately in their rear. The general entered into conversation with the major, who was made the more

talkative by a copious drink of my French brandy. As the train passed near the prison-wall where we had descended, the major remarked, "There is where the rebel General Morgan and his officers are put for safe-keeping." The general replied, "I hope they will keep him as safe as he is now." Our train passed through Dayton, Ohio, and there, for some unknown reason, we were delayed an hour. This rendered it extra hazardous to go to the depot in the city of Cincinnati, since by that time the prison officials would, in all probability, know of our escape, and telegraph to intercept us. In fact, they did telegraph in every direction, and offered a reward for our recapture. Instead, then, of going to the depot in Cincinnati, we got off, while the train was moving slowly, in the outskirts of the city, near Ludlow Ferry, on the Ohio River. Going directly to the ferry we were crossed over in a skiff and landed immediately in front of the residence of Mrs. Ludlow. We rang the door-bell, a servant came, and General Morgan wrote upon a visiting-card, "General Morgan and Captain Hines, escaped." We were warmly received, took a cup of coffee with the family, were furnished a guide, and walked some three miles in the country, where we were furnished horses. Thence we went through Florence to Union, in Boone County, Kentucky, where we took supper with Daniel Piatt. On making ourselves known to Mr. Piatt, who had two sons in our command, we were treated with the most cordial hospitality and kindness by the entire family. We there met Dr. John J. Dulaney of Florence, Kentucky, who was of great benefit in giving us information as to the best route. That night we went to Mr. Corbin's, near Union,—who also had gallant sons in our command,—where we remained concealed until the next night, and where friends supplied us with fresh horses and a pair of pistols each.



OVER THE PRISON WALL.

On the evening of the 29th of November we left Union with a voluntary guide, passed through the eastern edge of Gallatin County, and after traveling all night spent the day of the 30th at the house of a friend on the Owen County line. Passing through New Liberty, in Owen County, and crossing the Kentucky River at the ferry on the road to New Castle, in Henry County, we stopped at the house of Mr. Pollard at 2 A.M., December 1. Our guide did not know the people nor the roads farther than the ferry, at which point he turned back. Not knowing the politics of Mr. Pollard, it was necessary to proceed with caution. On reaching his house we aroused him and made known our desire to spend the remainder of the night with him. He admitted us and took us into the family room, where there was a lamp dimly burning on a center-table. On the light being turned up I discovered a Cincinnati "Enquirer" with large displayed head-lines, announcing the escape of General Morgan, Captain Hines, and five other officers from the Ohio penitentiary. The fact that this newspaper was taken by Mr. Pollard was to me sufficient evidence that he was a Southern sympathizer. Glancing at the paper, I looked up and remarked, "I see that General Morgan, Hines, and other officers have escaped from the penitentiary." He responded, "Yes; and you are Captain Hines, are you not?" I replied, "Yes; and what is your name?" "Pollard," he answered. "Allow me, then, to introduce General Morgan," I found that I had not made a mistake.

After rest and a late breakfast and a discussion of the situation, it was deemed inexpedient to remain during the day, as the house was immediately on a public highway, besides the danger of such unexplained delay exciting the suspicion of the negroes on the place. We assumed the character of cattle-buyers, Mr. Pollard furnishing us with cattle-whips to make the assumption plausible. Our first objective point was the residence of Judge W.S. Pryor, in the outskirts of New Castle. After dinner Judge Pryor rode with us some distance, and put us in charge of a guide, who conducted us that night to Major Helm's, near Shelbyville, where we remained during the day of the 2d, and were there joined by four of our command in citizen's dress. That night we passed through Taylorsville, and stopped on the morning of the 3d near Bardstown.

The night of the 4th we resumed our journey, and stopped on the morning of the 5th at Mr. McCormack's at Rolling Fork Creek, in Nelson County, thence through Taylor, Green (passing near Greensburg), Adair, and Cumberland counties, crossing Cumberland River some nine miles below Burkesville. We crossed the Cumberland, which was quite high, by swimming our horses by the side of a canoe. Near the place of crossing, on the south side, we stopped overnight with a private in Colonel R.T. Jacob's Federal cavalry, passing ourselves as citizens on the lookout for stolen horses. Next morning, in approaching the road from Burkesville to Sparta, Tennessee, we came out of a byway immediately in the rear of and some hundred yards from a dwelling fronting on the Burkesville-Sparta road, and screening us from view on the Burkesville end. As we emerged from the woodland a woman appeared at the back door of the dwelling and motioned us back. We withdrew from view, but kept in sight of the door from which the signal to retire was given, when after a few minutes the woman again appeared and signaled us to come forward. She informed us that a body of Federal cavalry had just passed, going in the direction of Burkesville, and that the officer in command informed her that he was trying to intercept General Morgan. We followed the Burkesville road something like a mile, and in sight of the rear-guard. We crossed Obey's River near the mouth of Wolf, and halted for two days in the hills of Overton County, where we came upon forty of our men, who had been separated from the force on the expedition into Indiana and Ohio. These men were placed under my command, and thence we moved directly toward the Tennessee River, striking it about fifteen miles below Kingston, at Bridges's Ferry, December 13. There was no boat to be used in crossing, and the river was very high and angry, and about one hundred and fifty yards wide. We obtained an ax from a house near by, and proceeded to split logs and make a raft on which to cross, and by which to swim our horses. We had learned that two miles and a half below us was a Federal cavalry camp. This stimulated us to the utmost, but notwithstanding our greatest efforts we were

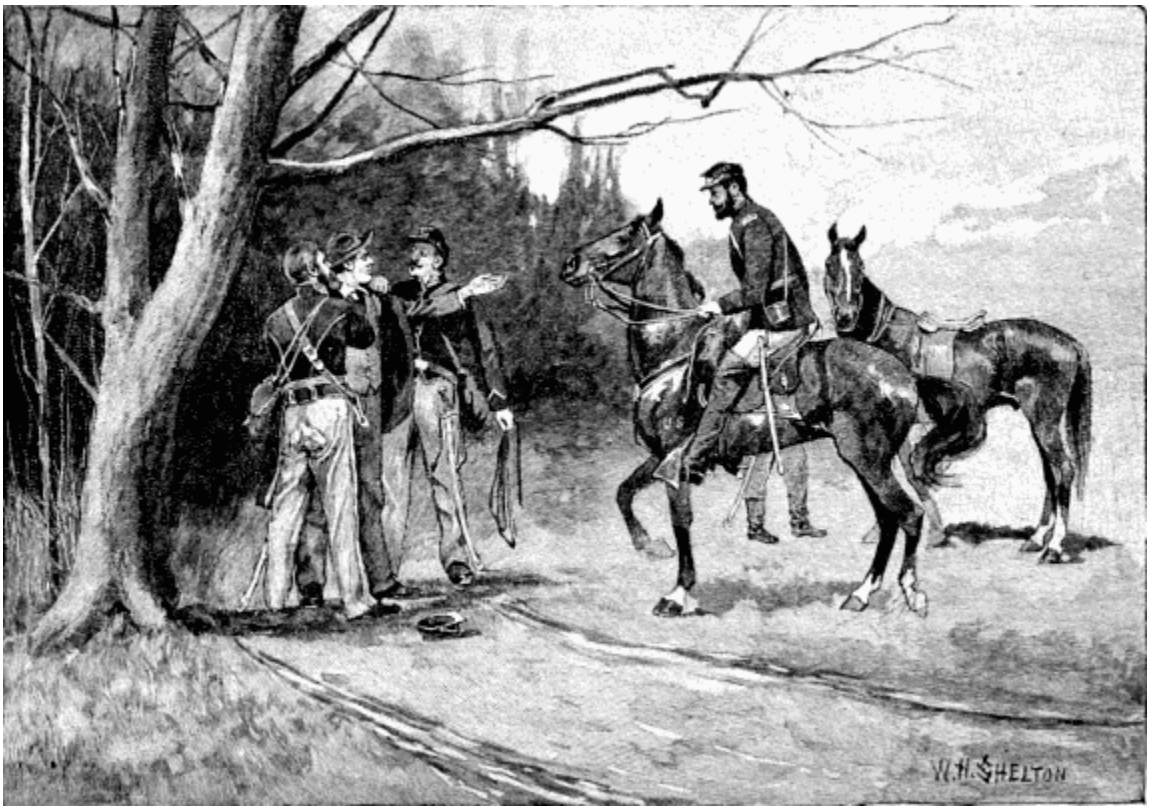
three hours in crossing over five horses and twenty-five men. At this juncture the enemy appeared opposite, and began to fire on our men.

"HURRY UP, MAJOR!"

Here General Morgan gave characteristic evidence of devotion to his men. When the firing began he insisted on staying with the dismounted men and taking their chances, and was dissuaded only by my earnest appeal and representation that such a course would endanger the men as well as ourselves. The men, by scattering in the mountains, did ultimately make their way to the Confederacy.

General Morgan, myself, and the four mounted men crossed over a spur of the mountains and descended by a bridle-path to a ravine or gulch upon the opposite side, and halted in some thick underbrush about ten steps from a path passing along the ravine. Not knowing the country, it was necessary to have information, or a guide, and observing a log cabin about a hundred yards up the ravine, I rode there to get directions, leaving General Morgan and the others on their horses near the path. I found at the house a woman and some children. She could not direct me over the other spur of the mountain, but consented that her ten-year-old son might go with me and show the way. He mounted behind me, and by the time he was seated I heard the clatter of hoofs down the ravine, and, looking, I saw a body of about seventy-five cavalry coming directly toward me, and passing within ten steps of where the general and his men were sitting on their horses. I

saw that my own escape was doubtful, and that any halt or delay of the cavalry would certainly result in the discovery and capture of General Morgan. I lifted the boy from behind me and dashed to the head of the column, exclaiming, "Hurry up, Major, or the rebels will escape!" He responded, "Who are you?" I answered, "I belong to the home-guard company in the bend: hurry, or they are gone." We dashed on, I riding by the major at the head of the column about half a mile, when we came to where a dry branch crossed the road, and, as it had been raining that day, it was easily seen from the soil that had washed down from the side of the mountain that no one had passed there since the rain. Seeing this, the command was halted, and the major again demanded to know who I was. I replied that I was a member of General Morgan's command. "Yes,—— you! You have led me off from Morgan; I have a notion to hang you for it." "No, that was not General Morgan. I have served under him two years and know him well, and have no object in deceiving you; for if it was Morgan, he is now safe." "You lie, for he was recognized at the house where you got the ax. I would not have missed getting him for ten thousand dollars. It would have been a brigadier's commission to me. I will hang you for it." Up to this time I had taken the situation smilingly and pleasantly, because I did not apprehend violence; but the officer, livid with rage from disappointment, directed one of his men to take the halter from his horse and hang me to a designated limb of a tree. The halter was adjusted around my neck, and thrown over the limb. Seeing that the officer was desperately in earnest, I said, "Major, before you perform this operation, allow me to make a suggestion." "Be quick about it, then." "Suppose that *was* General Morgan, as you insist, and I have led you astray, as you insist, wouldn't I, being a member of his command, deserve to be hung if I had not done what you charge me with?" He dropped his head for a moment, looked up with a more pleasant expression, and said, "Boys, he is right; let him alone."



CAPTAIN HINES OBJECTS.

I was placed under guard of two soldiers and sent across the river to camp, while the officer in command took his men over the mountain in search of General Morgan, who succeeded in making good his escape. The next evening the major returned with his command from his unsuccessful pursuit. He questioned me closely, wanting to know my name, and if I was a private in the command, as I had stated to him at the time of my capture. Remembering that in prison the underclothing of Captain Bullitt had been exchanged for mine, and that I then had on his with his name in ink, I assumed the name of Bullitt.

On the evening of the second day in this camp the major invited me to go with him and take supper at the house of a Unionist half a mile away. We spent the evening with the family until nine o'clock, when the major suggested that we should go back to camp. On reaching the front gate, twenty steps from the front veranda, he found that he had left his shawl in the house, and returned to get it, requesting me to await his return. A young lady of the family was standing in the door, and when he went in to get the shawl, she closed the door. I was then perfectly free, but I could not get my consent to go. For a moment of time while thus at liberty I suffered intensely in the effort to determine what was the proper thing to do. Upon the one hand was the tempting offer of freedom, that was very sweet to me after so many months of close confinement; while, on the other hand was the fact that the officer had treated me with great kindness, more as a

comrade than as a prisoner, that the acceptance of his hospitality was a tacit parole and my escape would involve him in trouble. I remained until his return. He was greatly agitated, evidently realizing for the first time the extent of his indiscretion, and surprised undoubtedly at finding me quietly awaiting him. I had determined not to return to prison, but rather than break faith I awaited some other occasion for escape. Notwithstanding all this, something excited suspicion of me; for the next morning, while lying in the tent apparently asleep, I heard the officer direct the sergeant to detail ten men and guard me to Kingston, and he said to the sergeant, "Put him on the meanest horse you have and be watchful or he will escape." I was taken to Kingston and placed in jail, and there met three of our party who had been captured on the north side of the Tennessee River at the time we attempted to cross. They were R.C. Church, William Church, and—— Smith. After two days' confinement there, we were sent under guard of twelve soldiers to the camp of the 3d Kentucky Federal Infantry, under command of Colonel Henry C. Dunlap. The camp was opposite the town of Loudon, and was prepared for winter quarters. The large forest trees had been felled for a quarter of a mile around the camp, and log huts built in regular lines for the occupation of the troops. We were placed in one of these huts with three guards on the inside, while the guards who delivered us there were located around a campfire some ten steps in front of the only door to our hut, and around the whole encampment was the regular camp guard. The next day, as we had learned, we were to be sent to Knoxville, Tennessee, which was then General Burnside's headquarters; and as I knew I would there be recognized, and, on account of my previous escape, that my chances for freedom would be reduced to a minimum, we determined to escape that night.

It was perfectly clear, the moon about full, making the camp almost as light as day; and as the moon did not go down until a short time before daylight, we concluded to await its setting. The door of the cabin was fastened by a latch on the inside. The night was cold. We had only pretended to sleep, awaiting our opportunity. When the moon was down we arose, one after another, from our couches, and went to the fire to warm us. We engaged the guards in pleasant conversation, detailing incidents of the war. I stood with my right next the door, facing the fire and the three guards, and my comrades standing immediately on my left. While narrating some incident in which the guards were absorbed, I placed my right hand upon the latch of the door, with a signal to the other prisoners, and, without breaking the thread of the narrative, bade the guards good night, threw the door open, ran through the guards in front of the door, passed the sentinel at the camp limits, and followed the road we had been brought in to the mountains. The guards in front of the door fired upon me, as did the sentinel on his beat, the last shot being so close to me that I felt the fire from the gun. Unfortunately and unwittingly I threw the door open with such force that it

rebounded and caught my comrades on the inside. The guards assaulted them and attempted to bayonet them, but they grappled, overpowered, and disarmed the guards, and made terms with them before they would let them up. All three of these prisoners, by great daring, escaped before they were taken North to prison.

In running from the camp to the mountains I passed two sentinel fires, and was pursued some distance at the point of the bayonet of the soldier who had last fired at me. All was hurry and confusion in the camp. The horses were bridled, saddled, and mounted, and rapidly ridden out on the road I had taken; but by the time the pursuers reached the timber I was high up the mountain side, and complacently watched them as they hurried by. As I ran from my prison-house I fixed my eye upon Venus, the morning star, as my guide, and traveled until daylight, when I reached the summit of the mountain, where I found a sedge-grass field of about twenty acres, in the middle of which I lay down on the frozen ground and remained until the sun had gone down and darkness was gathering. During the day the soldiers in search of me frequently passed within thirty steps, so close that I could hear their conjectures as to where I was most likely to be found. I remained so long in one position that I thawed into the frozen earth; but the cool of the evening coming on, the soil around me froze again, and I had some difficulty in releasing myself.

As it grew dark I descended the mountain, and cautiously approached a humble dwelling. Seeing no one but a woman and some children, I entered and asked for supper. While my supper was being prepared, no little to my disappointment, the husband, a strapping, manly-looking fellow, with his rifle on his shoulder, walked in. I had already assumed a character, and that was as agent to purchase horses for the Federal Government. I had come down that evening on the train from Knoxville, and was anxious to get a canoe and some one to paddle me down to Kingston, where I had an engagement for the next day to meet some gentlemen who were to have horses there, by agreement with me, for sale. Could the gentleman tell me where I could get a canoe and some one to go with me? He said the rebels were so annoying that all boats and canoes had been destroyed to keep them from crossing. He knew of but one canoe, owned by a good Union man some two miles down the river. Would he be kind enough to show me the way there, that I might get an early start and keep my engagement?

After supper my hospitable entertainer walked with me to the residence of the owner of the canoe. The family had retired, and when the owner of the premises came out, there came with him a Federal soldier who was staying overnight with him. This was not encouraging. After making my business known and offering large compensation, the owner of the canoe agreed to start with me by daylight. During my walk down there, my guide had mentioned that a certain person living opposite the place where the canoe was owned had several horses that he would

like to sell. I suggested that, in order to save time and get as early a start as possible for Kingston, the canoe-owner should take me over to see to the purchase of these horses that night. The river was high and dangerous to cross at night, but by promises of compensation I was taken over and landed some quarter of a mile from the house. With an injunction to await me, when the canoe landed I started toward the house; but when out of sight I changed my course and took to the mountains.

For eight days I traveled by night, taking my course by the stars, lying up in the mountains by day, and getting food early in the evening wherever I could find a place where there were no men. On the 27th of December I reached the Confederate lines near Dalton, Georgia.

COLONEL ROSE'S TUNNEL AT LIBBY PRISON

BY FRANK E. MORAN

Among all the thrilling incidents in the history of Libby Prison, none exceeds in interest the celebrated tunnel escape which occurred on the night of February 9, 1864. I was one of the 109 Union officers who passed through the tunnel, and one of the ill-fated 48 that were retaken. I and two companions—Lieutenant Charles H. Morgan of the 21st Wisconsin regiment, who has since served several terms in Congress from Missouri, and Lieutenant William L. Watson of the same company and regiment—when recaptured by the Confederate cavalry were in sight of the Union picket posts. Strange as it may appear, no accurate and complete account has ever been given to the public of this, the most ingenious and daring escape made on either side during the civil war. Twelve of the party of fifteen who dug the tunnel are still living, including their leader.

Thomas E. Rose, colonel of the 77th Pennsylvania Volunteers, the engineer and leader in the plot throughout,—now a captain in the 16th United States Infantry,—was taken prisoner at the battle of Chickamauga, September 20, 1863. On his way to Richmond he escaped from his guards at Weldon, N.C., but, after a day's wandering about the pine forests with a broken foot, was retaken by a detachment of Confederate cavalry and sent to Libby Prison, Richmond, where he arrived October 1, 1863.

COLONEL THOMAS E. ROSE.

Libby Prison fronts on Carey street, Richmond, and stands upon a hill which descends abruptly to the canal, from which its southern wall is divided only by a street, and having a vacant lot on the east. The building was wholly detached, making it a comparatively easy matter to guard the prison securely with a small force and keep every door and window in full view from without. As an additional measure of safety, prisoners were not allowed on the ground-floor, except that in the daytime they were permitted to use the first floor of the middle section for a cook-room. The interior embraced nine large warehouse-rooms 105 × 45, with eight feet from each floor to ceiling, except the upper floor, which gave more room, owing to the pitch of the gable roof. The abrupt slant of the hill gives the building an additional story on the south side. The whole building really embraces three sections, and these were originally separated by heavy blank walls. The Confederates cut doors through the walls of the two upper floors, which comprised the prisoners' quarters, and they were thus permitted to mingle freely with each other; but there was no communication whatever between the three large rooms on the first floor. Beneath these floors were three cellars of the same dimensions as the rooms above them, and, like them, divided from each other by massive blank walls. For ready comprehension, let these be designated the east, middle, and west cellars. Except in the lofts known as "Streight's room" and "Milroy's room," which were occupied by the earliest inmates of Libby in 1863, there was no furniture in the building, and only a few of the early comers

possessed such a luxury as an old army blanket or a knife, cup, and tin plate. As a rule, the prisoner, by the time he reached Libby, found himself devoid of earthly goods save the meager and dust-begrimed summer garb in which he had made his unlucky campaign.

At night the six large lofts presented strange war-pictures, over which a single tallow candle wept copious and greasy tears that ran down over the petrified loaf of corn-broad, Borden's condensed-milk can, or bottle in which it was set. The candle flickered on until "taps," when the guards, with unconscious irony shouted, "Lights out!"—at which signal it usually disappeared amid a shower of boots and such other missiles as were at hand. The sleepers covered the six floors, lying in ranks, head to head and foot to foot, like prostrate lines of battle. For the general good, and to preserve something like military precision, these ranks (especially when cold weather compelled them to lie close for better warmth) were subdivided into convenient squads under charge of a "captain," who was invested with authority to see that every man lay "spoon fashion."

A CORNER OF LIBBY PRISON

No consideration of personal convenience was permitted to interfere with the general comfort of the "squad." Thus, when the hard floor could no longer be endured on the right side,—especially by the thin men,—the captain gave the command, "Attention, Squad Number Four! Prepare to spoon! One—two—spoon!" And the whole squad flopped over on the left side.

The first floor on the west of the building was used by the Confederates as an office and for sleeping-quarters for the prison officials, and a stairway guarded by sentinels led from this to Milroy's room just above it. As before explained, the middle room was shut off from the office by a heavy blank wall. This room, known as the "kitchen," had two stoves in it, one of which stood about ten feet from the heavy door that opened on Carey street sidewalk, and behind the door was a fireplace. The room contained also several long pine tables with permanent seats attached, such as may be commonly seen at picnic grounds. The floor was constantly inundated here by several defective and overworked water-faucets and a leaky trough.

A stairway without banisters led up on the southwest end of the floor, above which was a room known as the "Chickamauga room," being chiefly occupied by Chickamauga prisoners. The sentinel who had formerly been placed at this stairway at night, to prevent the prisoners from entering the kitchen, had been withdrawn when, in the fall of 1863, the horrible condition of the floor made it untenable for sleeping purposes.

The uses to which the large ground-floor room east of the kitchen was put varied during the first two years of the war; but early in October of 1863, and thereafter, it was permanently used and known as the hospital, and it contained a large number of cots, which were never unoccupied. An apartment had been made at the north or front of the room, which served as a doctor's office and laboratory. Like those adjoining it on the west, this room had a large door opening on Carey street, which was heavily bolted and guarded on the outside.

LIBBY PRISON IN 1865

The arrival of the Chickamauga prisoners greatly crowded the upper floors, and compelled the Confederates to board up a small portion of the east cellar at its southeast corner as an additional cook-room, several large caldrons having been set in a rudely built furnace; so, for a short period, the prisoners were allowed down there in the daytime to cook. A stairway led from this cellar to the room above, which subsequently became the hospital.

Such, in brief, was the condition of things when Colonel Rose arrived at the prison. From the hour of his coming, a means of escape became his constant and eager study; and, with this purpose in view, he made a careful and minute survey of the entire premises.

From the windows of the upper east or "Gettysburg room" he could look across the vacant lot on the east and get a glimpse of the yard between, two adjacent buildings which faced the canal and Carey street respectively, and he estimated the intervening space at about seventy feet. From the south windows he looked out across a street upon the canal and James River, running parallel with each other, the two streams at this point being separated by a low and narrow strip of land. This strip periodically disappeared when protracted seasons of heavy rain came, or when spring floods so rapidly swelled the river that the latter invaded the cellars of Libby. At such times it was common to see enormous swarms of rats come out from the lower doors and windows of the prison and make head for dry land in swimming platoons amid the cheers of the prisoners in the upper windows. On one or two occasions Rose observed workmen descending from the middle of the south-side street into a sewer running through its center, and concluded that this sewer must have various openings to the canal both to the east and west of the prison.

The north portion of the cellar contained a large quantity of loose packing-straw, covering the floor to an average depth of two feet; and this straw afforded shelter, especially at night, for a large colony of rats, which gave the place the name of "Rat Hell."

MAJOR A.G. HAMILTON.

In one afternoon's inspection of this dark end, Rose suddenly encountered a fellow-prisoner, Major A.G. Hamilton, of the 12th Kentucky Cavalry. A confiding friendship followed, and the two men entered at once upon the plan of gaining their liberty. They agreed that the most feasible scheme was a tunnel, to begin in the rear of the little kitchen-apartment at the southeast corner of Rat Hell. Without more ado they secured a broken shovel and two case-knives and began operations.

Within a few days the Confederates decided upon certain changes in the prison for the greater security of their captives. A week afterward the cook-room was abandoned, the stairway nailed up, the prisoners sent to the upper floors, and all communication with the east cellar was cut off. This was a sore misfortune, for this apartment was the only possible base of successful tunnel operations. Colonel Rose now began to study other practicable means of escape, and spent night after night examining the posts and watching the movements of the sentinels on the four sides of Libby. One very dark night, during a howling storm, Rose again, unexpectedly met Hamilton in a place where no prisoner could reasonably be looked for at such an hour. For an instant the impenetrable darkness made it impossible for either to determine whether he had met a friend or foe: neither had a weapon, yet each involuntarily felt for one, and each made ready to spring at the other's throat, when a flash of lightning revealed their identity. The two men had availed themselves of the darkness of the night and the

roar of the storm to attempt an escape from a window of the upper west room to a platform that ran along the west outer wall of the prison, from which they hoped to reach the ground and elude the sentinels, whom they conjectured would be crouched in the shelter of some doorway or other partial refuge that might be available; but so vivid and frequent were the lightning flashes that the attempt was seen to be extremely hazardous.

Rose now spoke of the entrance from the south-side street to the middle cellar, having frequently noticed the entrance and exit of workmen at that point, and expressed his belief that if an entrance could be effected to this cellar it would afford them the only chance of slipping past the sentinels.

He hunted up a bit of pine-wood which he whittled into a sort of wedge, and the two men went down into the dark, vacant kitchen directly over this cellar. With the wedge Rose pried a floor-board out of its place, and made an opening large enough to let himself through. He had never been in this middle cellar, and was wholly ignorant of its contents or whether it was occupied by Confederates or workmen; but as he had made no noise, and the place was in profound darkness, he decided to go down and reconnoiter.

He wrenched off one of the long boards that formed a table-seat in the kitchen, and found that it was long enough to touch the cellar base and protrude a foot or so above the kitchen floor. By this means he easily descended, leaving Hamilton to keep watch above.

The storm still raged fiercely, and the faint beams of a street-lamp revealed the muffled form of the sentinel slowly pacing his beat and carrying his musket at "secure" arms. Creeping softly toward him along the cellar wall, he now saw that what he had supposed was a door was simply a naked opening to the street; and further inspection disclosed the fact that there was but one sentinel on the south side of the prison. Standing in the dark shadow, he could easily have touched this man with his hand as he repeatedly passed him. Groping about, he found various appurtenances indicating that the south end of this cellar was used for a carpenter's shop, and that the north end was partitioned off into a series of small cells with padlocked doors, and that through each door a square hole, a foot in diameter, was cut. Subsequently it was learned that these dismal cages were alternately used for the confinement of "troublesome prisoners"—*i. e.*, those who had distinguished themselves by ingenious attempts to escape—and also for runaway slaves, and Union spies under sentence of death.

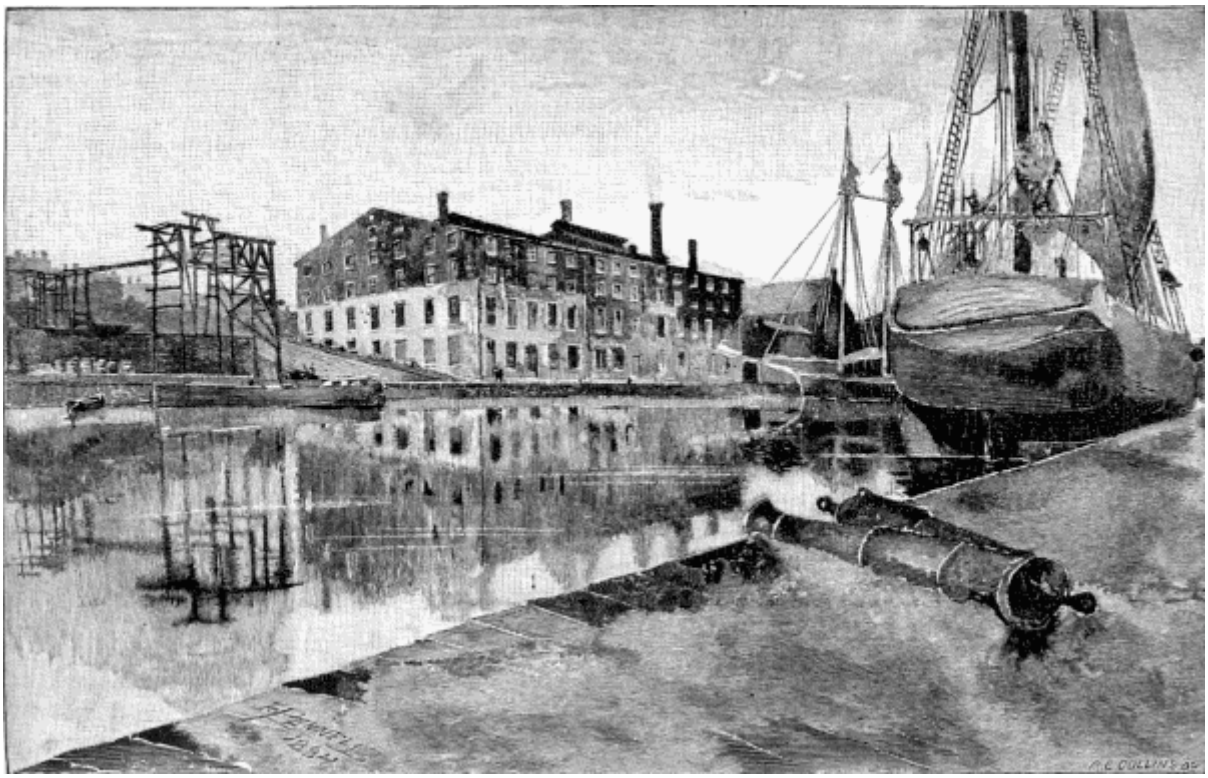
At the date of Rose's first reconnaissance to this cellar, these cells were vacant and unguarded. The night was far spent, and Rose proceeded to return to the kitchen, where Hamilton was patiently waiting for him.

The very next day a rare good fortune befell Rose. By an agreement between the commissioners of exchange, several bales of clothing and blankets had been sent by our government to the famishing Union prisoners on Belle Isle, a number of whom had already frozen to death. A committee of Union officers then confined in Libby, consisting of General Neal Dow, Colonel Alexander von Shrader, Lieut.-Colonel Joseph F. Boyd, and Colonel Harry White, having been selected by the Confederates to supervise the distribution of the donation, Colonel White had, by a shrewd bit of finesse, "confiscated" a fine rope by which one of the bales was tied, and this he now presented to Colonel Rose. It was nearly a hundred feet long, an inch thick, and almost new.

It was hardly dark the following night before Rose and Hamilton were again in the kitchen, and as soon as all was quiet Rose fastened his rope to one of the supporting posts, took up the floor-plank as before, and both men descended to the middle cellar. They were not a little disappointed to discover that where there had been but one sentinel on the south side there were now two. On this and for several nights they contented themselves with sly visits of observation to this cellar, during which Rose found and secreted various tools, among which were a broad-ax, a saw, two chisels, several files, and a carpenter's square. One dark night both men went down and determined to try their luck at passing the guards. Rose made the attempt and succeeded in passing the first man, but unluckily was seen by the second. The latter called lustily for the corporal of the guard, and the first excitedly cocked his gun and peered into the dark door through which Rose swiftly retreated. The guard called, "Who goes there?" but did not enter the dark cellar. Rose and Hamilton mounted the rope and had just succeeded in replacing the plank when the corporal and a file of men entered the cellar with a lantern. They looked into every barrel and under every bench, but no sign of Yankees appeared; and as on this night it happened that several workmen were sleeping in an apartment at the north end, the corporal concluded that the man seen by the sentinel was one of these, notwithstanding their denial when awakened and questioned. After a long parley the Confederates withdrew, and Hamilton and Rose, depressed in spirits, went to bed, Rose as usual concealing his rope.

Before the week was out they were at it again. On one of these nights Rose suddenly came upon one of the workmen, and, swift as thought, seized the hidden broad-ax with the intention of braining him if he attempted an alarm; but the poor fellow was too much paralyzed to cry out, and when finally he did recover his voice and his wits, it was to beg Rose, "for God's sake," not to come in there again at night. Evidently the man never mentioned the circumstance, for Rose's subsequent visits, which were soon resumed, disclosed no evidence of a discovery by the Confederates.

Hamilton agreed with Rose that there remained apparently but one means of escape, and that was by force. To overpower the two sentinels on the south side would have been an easy matter, but how to do it and not alarm the rest of the guard, and, in consequence, the whole city, was the problem. To secure these sentinels, without alarming their comrades on the east, west, and north sides of the prison, would require the swift action of several men of nerve acting in concert. Precious time was passing, and possibly further alterations might be decided upon that would shut them off from the middle cellar, as they had already been from their original base of operations. Moreover, a new cause of anxiety now appeared. It soon transpired that their nocturnal prowlings and close conferences together had already aroused the belief among many observant prisoners that a plan of escape was afoot, and both men were soon eagerly plied with guarded inquiries, and besought by their questioners to admit them to their confidence.



LIBBY PRISON IN 1884.

Hamilton and Rose now decided to organize an escaping party. A number of men were then sworn to secrecy and obedience by Colonel Rose, who was the only recognized leader in all operations that followed. This party soon numbered seventy men. The band was then taken down by Rose in convenient details to the middle cellar or carpenter's shop on many nights, to familiarize each man with the place and with his special part in the plot, and also to take advantage of any favoring circumstances that might arise.

When all had by frequent visits become familiar with the rendezvous, Rose and the whole party descended one night with the determination to escape at whatever hazard. The men were assigned to their several stations as usual, and a selected few were placed by the leader close to the entrance, in front of which the sentinel was regularly passing. Rose commanded strict silence, and placed himself near the exit preparatory to giving the signal. It was an exciting moment, and the bravest heart beat fast. A signal came, but not the one they looked for. At the very moment of action, the man whom Rose had left at the floor-opening in the kitchen gave the danger-signal! The alert leader had, with consummate care, told every man beforehand that he must never be surprised by this signal,—it was a thing to be counted upon,—and that noise and panic were of all things to be avoided as fatal folly in their operations. As a consequence, when this signal came, Rose quietly directed the men to fall in line and reascend to the kitchen rapidly, but without noise, which they did by the long rope which now formed the easy means of communication from the kitchen to the cellar.

Rose remained below to cover the retreat, and when the last man got up he followed him, replaced the board in the floor, and concealed the rope. He had barely done so when a detail of Confederate guards entered the kitchen from the Carey street door, and, headed by an officer, marched straight in his direction. Meantime the party had disappeared up the stairway and swiftly made their way over their prostrate comrades' forms to their proper sleeping-places. Rose, being the last up, and having the floor to fix, had now no time to disappear like his companions, at least without suspicious haste. He accordingly took a seat at one of the tables, and, putting an old pipe in his mouth, coolly awaited the approach of the Confederates. The officer of the guard came along, swinging his lantern almost in his face, stared at him for a second, and without a remark or a halt marched past him and ascended with his escort to the Chickamauga room. The entrance of a guard and their march around the prison, although afterward common enough after taps, was then an unusual thing, causing much talk among the prisoners, and to the mind of Rose and his fellow-plotters was indicative of aroused suspicion on the part of the Confederates.

The whispering groups of men next day, and the number of his eager questioners, gave the leader considerable concern; and Hamilton suggested, as a measure of safety rather than choice, that some of the mischievous talk of escape would be suppressed by increasing the party. This was acted upon; the men, like the rest, were put under oath by Rose, and the party was thus increased to four hundred and twenty. This force would have been enough to overpower the prison guard in a few minutes, but the swift alarm certain to ensue in the streets and spread like wild-fire over Richmond, the meager information possessed by the prisoners as to the strength and position of the nearest Federal troops, the strongly guarded

labyrinth of breastworks that encircled the city, and the easy facilities for instant pursuit at the command of the Confederates, put the success of such an undertaking clearly out of the range of probability, unless, indeed, some unusual favoring contingency should arise, such as the near approach of a coöperating column of Federal cavalry.

Nor was this an idle dream, as the country now knows, for even at this period General Kilpatrick was maturing his plans for that bold expedition for the rescue of the prisoners at Richmond and Belle Isle in which the lamented and heroic young cripple, Colonel Ulric Dahlgren, lost his life. Rose saw that a break out of Libby without such outside assistance promised nothing but a fruitless sacrifice of life and the savage punishment of the survivors. Hence the project, although eagerly and exhaustively discussed, was prudently abandoned.

All talk of escape by the general crowd now wholly ceased, and the captives resigned themselves to their fate and waited with depressed spirits for the remote contingency of an exchange. The quiet thus gained was Rose's opportunity. He sought Hamilton and told him that they must by some stratagem regain access to Rat Hell, and that the tunnel project must be at once revived. The latter assented to the proposition, and the two began earnestly to study the means of gaining an entrance without discovery into this coveted base of operations.

They could not even get into the room above the cellar they wanted to reach, for that was the hospital, and the kitchen's heavy wall shut them off therefrom. Neither could they break the heavy wall that divided this cellar from the carpenter's shop, which had been the nightly rendezvous of the party while the breakout was under consideration, for the breach certainly would be discovered by the workmen or Confederates, some of whom were in there constantly during daylight.

There was, in fact, but one plan by which Rat Hell could be reached without detection, and the conception of this device and its successful execution were due to the stout-hearted Hamilton. This was to cut a hole in the back of the kitchen fireplace; the incision must be just far enough to preserve the opposite or hospital side intact. It must then be cut downward to a point below the level of the hospital floor, then eastward into Rat Hell, the completed opening thus to describe the letter "S." It must be wide enough to let a man through, yet the wall must not be broken on the hospital side above the floor, nor marred on the carpenter's-shop side below it. Such a break would be fatal, for both of these points were conspicuously exposed to the view of the Confederates every hour in the day. Moreover, it was imperatively necessary that all trace of the beginning of the opening should be concealed, not only from the Confederate officials and guards, who were constantly passing the spot every day, but from the hundreds of

uninitiated prisoners who crowded around the stove just in front of it from dawn till dark.

Work could be possible only between the hours of ten at night, when the room was generally abandoned by the prisoners because of its inundated condition, and four o'clock in the morning, when the earliest risers were again astir. It was necessary to do the work with an old jack-knife and one of the chisels previously secured by Rose. It must be done in darkness and without noise, for a vigilant sentinel paced on the Carey street sidewalk just outside the door and within ten feet of the fireplace. A rubber blanket was procured, and the soot from the chimney carefully swept into it. Hamilton, with his old knife, cut the mortar between the bricks and pried a dozen of them out, being careful to preserve them whole.

The rest of the incision was made in accordance with the design described, but no conception could have been formed beforehand of the sickening tediousness of cutting an S-shaped hole through a heavy wall with a feeble old jack-knife, in stolen hours of darkness. Rose guarded his comrade against the constant danger of interruption by alert enemies on one side and by blundering friends on the other; and, as frequently happens in human affairs, their friends gave them more trouble than their foes. Night after night passed, and still the two men got up after taps from their hard beds, and descended to the dismal and reeking kitchen to bore for liberty. When the sentinel's call at Castle Thunder and at Libby announced four o'clock, the dislodged bricks were carefully replaced, and the soot previously gathered in the gum blanket was flung in handfuls against the restored wall, filling the seams between the bricks so thoroughly as to defy detection. At last, after many weary nights, Hamilton's heroic patience and skill were rewarded, and the way was open to the coveted base of operations, Rat Hell.

Now occurred a circumstance that almost revealed the plot and nearly ended in a tragedy. When the opening was finished, the long rope was made fast to one of the kitchen supporting posts, and Rose proceeded to descend and reconnoiter. He got partly through with ease, but lost his hold in such a manner that his body slipped through so as to pinion his arms and leave him wholly powerless either to drop lower or return—the bend of the hole being such as to cramp his back and neck terribly and prevent him from breathing. He strove desperately, but each effort only wedged him more firmly in the awful vise. Hamilton sprang to his aid and did his utmost to effect his release; but, powerful as he was, he could not budge him. Rose was gasping for breath and rapidly getting fainter, but even in this fearful strait he refrained from an outcry that would certainly alarm the guards just outside the door. Hamilton saw that without speedy relief his comrade must soon smother. He dashed through the long, dark room up the stairway, over

the forms of several hundred men, and disregarding consequences and savage curses in the dark and crowded room, he trampled upon arms, legs, faces, and stomachs, leaving riot and blasphemy in his track among the rudely awakened and now furious lodgers of the Chickamauga room. He sought the sleeping-place of Major George H. Fitzsimmons, but he was missing. He, however, found Lieutenant F.F. Bennett, of the 18th Regulars (since a major in the 9th United States Cavalry), to whom he told the trouble in a few hasty words. Both men fairly flew across the room, dashed down the stairs, and by their united efforts Rose, half dead and quite speechless, was drawn up from the fearful trap.

Hamilton managed slightly to increase the size of the hole and provide against a repetition of the accident just narrated, and all being now ready, the two men entered eagerly upon the work before them. They appropriated one of the wooden spittoons of the prison, and to each side attached a piece of clothes-line which they had been permitted to have to dry clothes on. Several bits of candle and the larger of the two chisels were also taken to the operating-cellar. They kept this secret well, and worked alone for many nights. In fact, they would have so continued, but they found that after digging about four feet their candle would go out in the vitiated air. Rose did the digging, and Hamilton fanned air into him with his hat: even then he had to emerge into the cellar every few minutes to breathe. Rose could dig, but needed the light and air; and Hamilton could not fan, and drag out and deposit the excavated earth, and meantime keep a lookout. In fact, it was demonstrated that there was slim chance of succeeding without more assistance, and it was decided to organize a party large enough for effective work by reliefs. As a preliminary step, and to afford the means of more rapid communication with the cellar from the fireplace opening, the long rope obtained from Colonel White was formed by Hamilton into a rope-ladder with convenient wooden rungs. This alteration considerably increased its bulk, and added to Rose's difficulty in concealing it from curious eyes.

He now made a careful selection of thirteen men besides himself and Hamilton, and bound them by a solemn oath to secrecy and strict obedience. To form this party as he wanted it required some diplomacy, as it was known that the Confederates had on more than one occasion sent cunning spies into Libby disguised as Union prisoners, for the detection of any contemplated plan of escape. Unfortunately, the complete list of the names of the party now formed has not been preserved; but among the party, besides Rose and Hamilton, were Captain John Sterling, 30th Indiana; Captain John Lucas, 5th Kentucky Cavalry; Captain Isaac N. Johnson, 6th Kentucky Cavalry; and Lieutenant F.F. Bennett, 18th Regulars.

The party, being now formed, were taken to Rat Hell and their several duties explained to them by Rose, who was invested with full authority over the work in

hand. Work was begun in rear of the little kitchen-room previously abandoned at the southeast corner of the cellar. To systematize the labor, the party was divided into squads of five each, which gave the men one night on duty and two off, Rose assigning each man to the branch of work in which experiments proved him the most proficient. He was himself, by long odds, the best digger of the party; while Hamilton had no equal for ingenious mechanical skill in contriving helpful, little devices to overcome or lessen the difficulties that beset almost every step of the party's progress.

The first plan was to dig down alongside the east wall and under it until it was passed, then turn southward and make for the large street sewer next the canal and into which Rose had before noticed workmen descending. This sewer was a large one, believed to be fully six feet high, and, if it could be gained, there could be little doubt that an adjacent opening to the canal would be found to the eastward. It was very soon revealed, however, that the lower side of Libby was built upon ponderous timbers, below which they could not hope to penetrate with their meager stock of tools—such, at least, was the opinion of nearly all the party. Rose nevertheless determined that the effort should be made, and they were soon at work with old penknives and case-knives hacked into saws. After infinite labor they at length cut through the great logs, only to be met by an unforeseen and still more formidable barrier. Their tunnel, in fact, had penetrated below the level of the canal. Water began to filter in—feebly at first, but at last it broke in with a rush that came near drowning Rose, who barely had time to make his escape. This opening was therefore plugged up; and to do this rapidly and leave no dangerous traces put the party to their wit's end.

An attempt was next made to dig into a small sewer that ran from the southeast corner of the prison into the main sewer. After a number of nights of hard labor, this opening was extended to a point below a brick furnace in which were incased several caldrons. The weight of this furnace caused a cave-in near the sentinel's path outside the prison wall. Next day, a group of officers were seen eying the break curiously. Rose, listening at a window above, heard the words "rats" repeated by them several times, and took comfort. The next day he entered the cellar alone, feeling that if the suspicions of the Confederates were really awakened a trap would be set for him in Rat Hell, and determined, if such were really the case, that he would be the only victim caught. He therefore entered the little partitioned corner room with some anxiety, but there was no visible evidence of a visit by the guards, and his spirits again rose.

The party now reassembled, and an effort was made to get into the small sewer that ran from the cook-room to the big sewer which Rose was so eager to reach; but soon it was discovered, to the utter dismay of the weary party, that this wood-lined sewer was too small to let a man through it. Still it was hoped by Rose that

by removing the plank with which it was lined the passage could be made. The spirits of the party were by this time considerably dashed by their repeated failures and sickening work; but the undaunted Rose, aided by Hamilton, persuaded the men to another effort, and soon the knives and toy saws were at work again with vigor. The work went on so swimmingly that it was confidently believed that an entrance to the main sewer would be gained on the night of January 26, 1864.

On the night of the 25th two men had been left down in Rat Hell to cover any remaining traces of a tunnel, and when night came again it was expected that all would be ready for the escape between eight and nine o'clock. In the mean time, the two men were to enter and make careful examination of the main sewer and its adjacent outlets. The party, which was now in readiness for its march to the Federal camps, waited tidings from these two men all next day in tormenting anxiety, and the weary hours went by on leaden wings. At last the sickening word came that the planks yet to be removed before they could enter the main sewer were of seasoned oak—hard as bone, and three inches thick. Their feeble tools were now worn out or broken; they could no longer get air to work, or keep a light in the horrible pit, which was reeking with cold mud; in short, any attempt at further progress with the utensils at hand was foolish.

Most of the party were now really ill from the foul stench in which they had lived so long. The visions of liberty that had first lured them to desperate efforts under the inspiration of Rose and Hamilton had at last faded, and one by one they lost heart and hope, and frankly told Colonel Rose that they could do no more. The party was therefore disbanded, and the yet sanguine leader, with Hamilton for his sole helper, continued the work alone. Up to this time thirty-nine nights had been spent in the work of excavation. The two men now made a careful examination of the northeast corner of the cellar, at which point the earth's surface outside the prison wall, being eight or nine feet higher than at the canal or south side, afforded a better place to dig than the latter, being free from water and with clay-top enough to support itself. The unfavorable feature of this point was that the only possible terminus of a tunnel was a yard between the buildings beyond the vacant lot on the east of Libby. Another objection was that, even when the tunnel should be made to that point, the exit of any escaping party must be made through an arched wagon-way under the building that faced the street on the canal side, and every man must emerge on the sidewalk in sight of the sentinel on the south side of the prison, the intervening space being in the full glare of the gas-lamp. It was carefully noted, however by Rose, long before this, that the west end of the beat of the nearest sentinel was between fifty and sixty feet from the point of egress, and it was concluded that by walking away at the moment the sentinel commenced his pace westward, one would be far enough into the

shadow to make it improbable that the color of his clothing could be made out by the sentinel when he faced about to return toward the eastern end of his beat, which terminated ten to fifteen feet east of the prison wall. It was further considered that as these sentinels had for their special duty the guarding of the prison, they would not be eager to burden themselves with the duty of molesting persons seen in the vicinity outside of their jurisdiction, provided, of course, that the retreating forms—many of which they must certainly see—were not recognized as Yankees. All others they might properly leave for the challenge and usual examination of the provost guard who patrolled the streets of Richmond.

The wall of that east cellar had to be broken in three places before a place was found where the earth was firm enough to support a tunnel. The two men worked on with stubborn patience, but their progress was painfully slow. Rose dug assiduously, and Hamilton alternately fanned air to his comrade and dragged out and hid the excavated dirt, but the old difficulty confronted him. The candle would not burn, the air could not be fanned fast enough with a hat, and the dirt hidden, without better contrivances or additional help.

Rose now reassembled the party, and selected from them a number who were willing to renew the attempt.[12] Against the east wall stood a series of stone fenders abutting inward, and these, being at uniform intervals of about twenty feet, cast deep shadows that fell toward the prison front. In one of these dark recesses the wall was pierced, well up toward the Carey street end. The earth here has very densely compressed sand, that offered a strong resistance to the broad-bladed chisel, which was their only effective implement, and it was clear that a long turn of hard work must be done to penetrate under the fifty-foot lot to the objective point. The lower part of the tunnel was about six inches above the level of the cellar floor, and its top about two and a half feet. Absolute accuracy was of course impossible, either in giving the hole a perfectly horizontal direction or in preserving uniform dimensions; but a fair level was preserved, and the average diameter of the tunnel was a little over two feet. Usually one man would dig, and fill the spittoon with earth; upon the signal of a gentle pull, an assistant would drag the load into the cellar by the clothes-lines fastened to each side of this box and then hide it under the straw; a third constantly fanned air into the tunnel with a rubber blanket stretched across a frame, the invention of the ingenious Hamilton; a fourth would give occasional relief to the last two; while a fifth would keep a lookout.

[12]The party now consisted of Colonel Thomas E. Rose, 77th Pennsylvania; Major A.G. Hamilton, 12th Kentucky; Captain Terrance Clark, 79th Illinois; Major George H. Fitzsimmons, 30th Indiana; Captain John F. Gallagher, 2d Ohio: Captain W.S.B. Randall, 2d Ohio; Captain John Lucas, 5th Kentucky; Captain I.N. Johnson, 6th Kentucky; Major B.B. McDonald, 101st Ohio; Lieutenant N.S. McKean, 21st Illinois; Lieutenant David Garbett, 77th Pennsylvania; Lieutenant J.C. Fislar, 7th

Indiana Artillery; Lieutenant John D. Simpson, 10th Indiana; Lieutenant John Mitchell, 79th Illinois; and Lieutenant Eli Foster, 30th Indiana. This party was divided into three reliefs, as before, and the work of breaking the cellar wall was successfully done the first night by McDonald and Clark.

The danger of discovery was continual, for the guards were under instructions from the prison commandant to make occasional visits to every accessible part of the building; so that it was not unusual for a sergeant and several men to enter the south door of Rat Hell in the daytime, while the diggers were at labor in the dark north end. During these visits the digger would watch the intruders with his head sticking out of the tunnel, while the others would crouch behind the low stone fenders, or crawl quickly under the straw. This was, however, so uninviting a place that the Confederates made this visit as brief as a nominal compliance with their orders permitted, and they did not often venture into the dark north end. The work was fearfully monotonous, and the more so because absolute silence was commanded, the men moving about mutely in the dark. The darkness caused them frequently to become bewildered and lost; and as Rose could not call out for them, he had often to hunt all over the big dungeon to gather them up and pilot them to their places.

The difficulty of forcing air to the digger, whose body nearly filled the tunnel, increased as the hole was extended, and compelled the operator to back often into the cellar for air, and for air that was itself foul enough to sicken a strong man.

But they were no longer harassed with the water and timbers that had impeded their progress at the south end. Moreover, experience was daily making each man more proficient in the work. Rose urged them on with cheery enthusiasm, and their hopes rose high, for already they had penetrated beyond the sentinel's beat and were nearing the goal.

The party off duty kept a cautious lookout from the upper east windows for any indications of suspicion on the part of the Confederates. In this extreme caution was necessary, both to avert the curiosity of prisoners in those east rooms, and to keep out of the range of bullets from the guards, who were under a standing order to fire at a head if seen at a window, or at a hand if placed on the bars that secured them. A sentinel's bullet one day cut a hole in the ear of Lieutenant Hammond; another officer was wounded in the face by a bullet, which fortunately first splintered against one of the window-bars; and a captain of an Ohio regiment was shot through the head and instantly killed while reading a newspaper. He was violating no rule whatever, and when shot was from eight to ten feet inside the window through which the bullet came. This was a wholly unprovoked and wanton murder; the cowardly miscreant had fired the shot while he was off duty, and from the north sidewalk of Carey street. The guards (home guards they were) used, in fact, to gun for prisoners' heads from their posts

below, pretty much after the fashion of boys after squirrels; and the whizz of a bullet through the windows became too common an occurrence to occasion remark unless some one was shot.

Under a standing rule, the twelve hundred prisoners were counted twice each day, the first count being made about nine in the morning, and the last about four in the afternoon. This duty was habitually done by the clerk of the prison, E.W. Ross, a civilian employed by the commandant. He was christened "Little Ross"[13] by the prisoners, because of his diminutive size. Ross was generally attended by either "Dick" Turner, Adjutant Latouche, or Sergeant George Stansil, of the 18th Georgia, with a small guard to keep the prisoners in four closed ranks during the count. The commandant of the prison, Major Thomas P. Turner (no relative of Dick's), seldom came up-stairs.

[13]"Little Ross" was burned to death, with other guests, at the Spotswood House, Richmond, in 1873.

To conceal the absence of the five men who were daily at work at the tunnel, their comrades of the party off digging duty resorted, under Rose's supervision, to a device of "repeating." This scheme, which was of vital importance to hoodwink the Confederates and avert mischievous curiosity among the uninformed prisoners, was a hazardous business that severely taxed the ingenuity and strained the nerve of the leader and his coadjutors. The manner of the fraud varied with circumstances, but in general it was worked by five of Rose's men, after being counted at or near the head of the line, stooping down and running toward the foot of the ranks, where a few moments later they were counted a second time, thus making Ross's book balance. The whole five, however, could not always do this undiscovered, and perhaps but three of the number could repeat. These occasional mishaps threatened to dethrone the reason of the puzzled clerk; but in the next count the "repeaters" would succeed in their game, and for the time all went well, until one day some of the prisoners took it into their heads, "just for the fun of the thing," to imitate the repeaters. Unconscious of the curses that the party were mentally hurling at them, the meddlers' sole purpose was to make "Little Ross" mad. In this they certainly met with signal success, for the reason of the mystified clerk seemed to totter as he repeated the count over and over in the hope of finding out how one careful count would show that three prisoners were missing and the next an excess of fifteen. Finally Ross, lashed into uncontrollable fury by the sarcastic remarks of his employers and the heartless merriment of the grinning Yanks before him, poured forth his goaded soul as follows:

"Now, gentlemen, look yere. I can count a hundred as good as any blank man in this yere town, but I'll be blank blanked if I can count a hundred of you blanked

Yankees. Now, gentlemen, there's one thing sho: there's eight or ten of you-uns yere that ain't yere!"

This extraordinary accusation "brought down the house," and the Confederate officers and guards, and finally Ross himself, were caught by the resistless contagion of laughter that shook the rafters of Libby.

The officials somehow found a balance that day on the books, and the danger was for this once over, to the infinite relief of Rose and his anxious comrades. But the Confederates appeared dissatisfied with something, and came up-stairs next morning with more officers and with double the usual number of guards; and some of these were now stationed about the room so as to make it next to impossible to work the repeating device successfully. On this day, for some reason, there were but two men in the cellar, and these were Major B.B. McDonald and Captain I.N. Johnson.

The count began as usual, and despite the guard in rear, two of the party attempted the repeating device by forcing their way through the center of the ranks toward the left; but the "fun of the thing" had now worn out with the unsuspecting meddlers, who resisted the passage of the two men. This drew the attention of the Confederate officers, and the repeaters were threatened with punishment. The result was inevitable: the count showed two missing. It was carefully repeated, with the same result. To the dismay of Rose and his little band, the prison register was now brought up-stairs and a long, tedious roll-call by name was endured, each man passing through a narrow door as his name was called, and between a line of guards.

No stratagem that Rose could now invent could avert the discovery by the Confederates that McDonald and Johnson had disappeared, and the mystery of their departure would be almost certain to cause an inquiry and investigation that would put their plot in peril and probably reveal it.

At last the "J's" were reached, and the name of I.N. Johnson was lustily shouted and repeated, with no response. The roll-call proceeded until the name of B.B. McDonald was reached. To the increasing amazement of everybody but the conspirators, he also had vanished. A careful note was taken of these two names by the Confederates, and a thousand tongues were now busy with the names of the missing men and their singular disappearance.

The conspirators were in a tight place, and must choose between two things. One was for the men in the cellar to return that night and face the Confederates with the most plausible explanation of their absence that they could invent, and the other alternative was the revolting one of remaining in their horrible abode until the completion of the tunnel.

When night came the fireplace was opened, and the unlucky pair were informed of the situation of affairs and asked to choose between the alternatives presented. McDonald decided to return and face the music; but Johnson, doubtful if the Confederates would be hoodwinked by any explanation, voted to remain where he was and wait for the finish of the tunnel.

As was anticipated, McDonald's return awakened almost as much curiosity among the inhabitants of Libby as his disappearance, and he was soon called to account by the Confederates. He told them he had fallen asleep in an out-of-the-way place in the upper west room, where the guards must have overlooked him during the roll-call of the day before. McDonald was not further molested. The garrulous busybodies, who were Rose's chief dread, told the Confederate officials that they had certainly slept near Johnson the night before the day he was missed. Lieutenant J.C. Fislar (of the working party), who also slept next to Johnson, boldly declared this a case of mistaken identity, and confidently expressed his belief to both Confederates and Federals who gathered around him that Johnson had escaped, and was by this time, no doubt, safe in the Union lines. To this he added the positive statement that Johnson had not been in his accustomed sleeping-place for a good many nights. The busybodies, who had indeed told the truth, looked at the speaker in speechless amazement, but reiterated their statements. Others of the conspirators, however, took Fislar's bold cue and stoutly corroborated him.

Johnson, was, of course, nightly fed by his companions, and gave them such assistance as he could at the work; but it soon became apparent that a man could not long exist in such a pestilential atmosphere. No tongue can tell how long were the days and nights the poor fellow passed among the squealing rats,—enduring the sickening air, the deathly chill, the horrible, interminable darkness. One day out of three was an ordeal for the workers, who at least had a rest of two days afterward. As a desperate measure of relief, it was arranged, with the utmost caution, that late each night Johnson should come up-stairs, when all was dark and the prison in slumber, and sleep among the prisoners until just before the time for closing the fireplace opening, about four o'clock each morning. As he spoke to no one and the room was dark, his presence was never known, even to those who lay next to him; and indeed he listened to many earnest conversations between his neighbors regarding his wonderful disappearance.[14]

[14]In a volume entitled "Four Months in Libby," Captain Johnson has related his experience at this time, and his subsequent escape.

As a matter of course, the incidents above narrated made day-work on the tunnel too hazardous to be indulged in, on account of the increased difficulty of

accounting for absentees; but the party continued the night-work with unabated industry.

When the opening had been extended nearly across the lot, some of the party believed they had entered under the yard which was the intended terminus; and one night, when McDonald was the digger, so confident was he that the desired distance had been made, that he turned his direction upward, and soon broke through to the surface. A glance showed him his nearly fatal blunder, against which, indeed, he had been earnestly warned by Rose, who from the first had carefully estimated the intervening distance between the east wall of Libby and the terminus. In fact, McDonald saw that he had broken through in the open lot which was all in full view of a sentinel who was dangerously close. Appalled by what he had done, he retreated to the cellar and reported the disaster to his companions. Believing that discovery was now certain, the party sent one of their number up the rope to report to Rose, who was asleep. The hour was about midnight when the leader learned of the mischief. He quickly got up, went down cellar, entered the tunnel, and examined the break. It was not so near the sentinel's path as McDonald's excited report indicated, and fortunately the breach was at a point whence the surface sloped downward toward the east. He took off his blouse and stuffed it into the opening, pulling the dirt over it noiselessly, and in a few minutes there was little surface evidence of the hole. He then backed into the cellar in the usual crab fashion, and gave directions for the required depression of the tunnel and vigorous resumption of the work. The hole made in the roof of the tunnel was not much larger than a rat-hole and could not be seen from the prison. But the next night Rose shoved an old shoe out of the hole, and the day afterward he looked down through the prison bars and saw the shoe lying where he had placed it, and judged from its position that he had better incline the direction of the tunnel slightly to the left.

Meantime Captain Johnson was dragging out a wretched existence in Rat Hell, and for safety was obliged to confine himself by day to the dark north end, for the Confederates often came into the place very suddenly through the south entrance. When they ventured too close, Johnson would get into a pit that he had dug under the straw as a hiding-hole both for himself and the tunnelers' tools, and quickly cover himself with a huge heap of short packing-straw. A score of times he came near being stepped upon by the Confederates, and more than once the dust of the straw compelled him to sneeze in their very presence.

On Saturday, February 6, a larger party than usual of the Confederates came into the cellar, walked by the very mouth, of the tunnel, and seemed to be making a critical survey of the entire place. They remained an unusually long time and conversed in low tones; several of them even kicked the loose straw about; and in fact everything seemed to indicate to Johnson—who was the only one of the

working party now in the cellar—that the long-averted discovery had been made. That night he reported matters fully to Rose at the fireplace opening.

The tunnel was now nearly completed, and when Rose conveyed Johnson's message to the party it caused dismay. Even the stout-hearted Hamilton was for once excited, and the leader whose unflinching fortitude had thus far inspired his little band had his brave spirits dashed. But his buoyant courage rose quickly to its high and natural level. He could not longer doubt that the suspicions of the Confederates were aroused, but he felt convinced that these suspicions had not as yet assumed such a definite shape as most of his companions thought; still, he had abundant reason to believe that the success of the tunnel absolutely demanded its speedy completion, and he now firmly resolved that a desperate effort should be made to that end. Remembering that the next day was Sunday, and that it was not customary for the Confederates to visit the operating-cellar on that day, he determined to make the most in his power of the now precious time. He therefore caused all the party to remain up-stairs, directing them to keep a close watch upon the Confederates from all available points of observation, to avoid being seen in whispering groups,—in short, to avoid all things calculated to excite the curiosity of friends or the suspicion of enemies,—and to await his return.

Taking McDonald with him, he went down through the fireplace before daylight on Sunday morning, and, bidding Johnson to keep a vigilant watch for intruders and McDonald to fan air into him, he entered the tunnel and began the forlorn hope. From this time forward he never once turned over the chisel to a relief.

All day long he worked with the tireless patience of a beaver. When night came, even his single helper, who performed the double duty of fanning air and hiding the excavated earth, was ill from his hard, long task and the deadly air of the cellar. Yet this was as nothing compared with the fatigue of the duty that Rose had performed; and when at last, far into the night, he backed into the cellar, he had scarcely strength enough to stagger across to the rope-ladder.

He had made more than double the distance that had been accomplished under the system of reliefs on any previous day, and the non-appearance of the Confederates encouraged the hope that another day, without interruption, would see the work completed. He therefore determined to refresh himself by a night's sleep for the finish. The drooping spirits of his party were revived by the report of his progress and his unalterable confidence.

Monday morning dawned, and the great prison with its twelve hundred captives was again astir. The general crowd did not suspect the suppressed excitement and

anxiety of the little party that waited through that interminable day, which they felt must determine the fate of their project.

Rose had repeated the instructions of the day before, and again descended to Rat Hell with McDonald for his only helper. Johnson reported all quiet, and McDonald taking up his former duties at the tunnel's mouth, Rose once more entered with his chisel. It was now the seventeenth day since the present tunnel was begun, and he resolved it should be the last. Hour after hour passed, and still the busy chisel was plied, and still the little wooden box with its freight of earth made its monotonous trips from the digger to his comrade and back again.

From the early morning of Monday, February 8, 1864, until an hour after midnight the next morning his work went on. As midnight approached, Rose was nearly a physical wreck: the perspiration dripped from every pore of his exhausted body; food he could not have eaten, if he had had it. His labors thus far had given him a somewhat exaggerated estimate of his physical powers. The sensation of fainting was strange to him, but his staggering senses warned him that to faint where he was meant at once his death and burial. He could scarcely inflate his lungs with the poisonous air of the pit; his muscles quivered with increasing weakness and the warning spasmodic tremor which their unnatural strain induced; his head swam like that of a drowning person.

By midnight he had struck and passed beyond a post which he felt must be in the yard. During the last few minutes he had directed his course upward, and to relieve his cramped limbs he turned upon his back. His strength was nearly gone; the feeble stream of air which his comrade was trying, with all his might, to send to him from a distance of fifty-three feet could no longer reach him through the deadly stench. His senses reeled; he had not breath or strength enough to move backward through his narrow grave. In the agony of suffocation he dropped the dull chisel and beat his two fists against the roof of his grave with the might of despair—when, blessed boon! the crust gave way and the loosened earth showered upon his dripping face purple with agony; his famished eye caught sight of a radiant star in the blue vault above him; a flood of light and a volume of cool, delicious air poured over him. At that very instant the sentinel's cry rang out like a prophecy—"Half-past one, and all's well!"

LIBERTY!

Recovering quickly under the inspiring air, he dragged his body out of the hole and made a careful survey of the yard in which he found himself. He was under a shed, with a board fence between him and the east-side sentinels, and the gable end of Libby loomed grimly against the blue sky. He found the wagon-way under the south-side building closed from the street by a gate fastened by a swinging

bar, which, after a good many efforts, he succeeded in opening. This was the only exit to the street. As soon as the nearest sentinel's back was turned he stepped out and walked quickly to the east. At the first corner he turned north, carefully avoiding the sentinels in front of the "Pemberton Buildings" (another military prison northeast of Libby), and at the corner above this he went westward, then south to the edge of the canal, and thus, by cautious moving, made a minute examination, of Libby from all sides.

Having satisfied his desires, he retraced his steps to the yard. He hunted up an old bit of heavy plank crept back into the tunnel feet first, drew the plank over the opening to conceal it from the notice of any possible visitors to the place, and crawled back to Rat Hell. McDonald was overjoyed, and poor Johnson almost wept with delight, as Rose handed one of them his victorious old chisel, and gave the other some trifle he had picked up in the outer world as a token that the Underground Railroad to God's Country was open.

Rose now climbed the rope-ladder, drew it up, rebuilt the fireplace wall as usual, and, finding Hamilton, took him over near one of the windows and broke the news to him. The brave fellow was almost speechless with delight, and quickly hunting up the rest of the party, told them that Colonel Rose wanted to see them down in the dining-room.

As they had been waiting news from their absent leader with feverish anxiety for what had seemed to them all the longest day in their lives, they instantly responded to the call, and flocked around Rose a few minutes later in the dark kitchen where he waited them. As yet they did not know what news he brought, and they could scarcely wait for him to speak out; and when he announced, "Boys, the tunnel is finished," they could hardly repress a cheer. They wrung his hand again and again, and danced about with childish joy.

It was now nearly three o'clock in the morning. Rose and Hamilton were ready to go out at once, and indeed were anxious to do so, since every day of late had brought some new peril to their plans. None of the rest however, were ready; and all urged the advantage of having a whole night in which to escape through and beyond the Richmond fortifications, instead of the few hours of darkness which now preceded the day. To this proposition Rose and Hamilton somewhat reluctantly assented. It was agreed that each man of the party should have the privilege of taking one friend into his confidence, and that the second party of fifteen thus formed should be obligated not to follow the working party out of the tunnel until an hour had elapsed. Colonel H.C. Hobart, of the 21st Wisconsin, was deputed to see that the program was observed. He was to draw up the rope-ladder, hide it, and rebuild the wall; and the next night was himself to lead out the second party, deputing some trustworthy leader to follow with still another party

on the third night; and thus it was to continue until as many as possible should escape.

On Tuesday evening, February 9, at seven o'clock, Colonel Rose assembled his party in the kitchen, and, posting himself at the fireplace, which he opened, waited until the last man went down. He bade Colonel Hobart good-by, went down the hole, and waited until he had heard his comrade pull up the ladder, and finally heard him replace the bricks in the fireplace and depart. He now crossed Rat Hell to the entrance into the tunnel, and placed the party in the order in which they were to go out. He gave each a parting caution, thanked his brave comrades for their faithful labors, and, feelingly shaking their hands, bade them God-speed and farewell.

He entered the tunnel first, with Hamilton next, and was promptly followed by the whole party through the tunnel and into the yard. He opened the gate leading toward the canal, and signaled the party that all was clear. Stepping out on the sidewalk as soon as the nearest sentinel's back was turned, he walked briskly down the street to the east, and a square below was joined by Hamilton. The others followed at intervals of a few minutes, and disappeared in various directions in groups usually of three.

The plan agreed upon between Colonels Rose and Hobart was frustrated by information of the party's departure leaking out; and before nine o'clock the knowledge of the existence of the tunnel and of the departure of the first party was flashed over the crowded prison, which was soon a convention of excited and whispering men. Colonel Hobart made a brave effort to restore order, but the frenzied crowd that now fiercely struggled for precedence at the fireplace was beyond human control.

Some of them had opened the fireplace and were jumping down like sheep into the cellar one after another. The colonel implored the maddened men at least to be quiet, and put the rope-ladder in position and escaped himself.

My companion, Sprague, was already asleep when I lay down that night; but my other companion, Duenkel, who had been hunting for me, was very much awake, and, seizing me by the collar, he whispered excitedly the fact that Colonel Rose had gone out at the head of a party through a tunnel. For a brief moment the appalling suspicion, that my friend's reason had been dethroned by illness and captivity swept over my mind; but a glance toward the window at the east end showed a quiet but apparently excited group of men from other rooms, and I now observed that several of them were bundled up for a march. The hope of regaining liberty thrilled me like a current of electricity. Looking through the window, I could see the escaping men appear one by one on the sidewalk below,

opposite the exit yard, and silently disappear, without hindrance or challenge by the prison sentinels. While I was eagerly surveying this scene, I lost track of Duenkel, who had gone in search of further information, but ran against Lieutenant Harry Wilcox, of the 1st New York, whom I knew, and who appeared to have the "tip" regarding the tunnel. Wilcox and I agreed to unite our fortunes in the escape. My shoes were nearly worn out, and my clothes were thin and ragged. I was ill prepared for a journey in midwinter through the enemy's country: happily I had my old overcoat, and this I put on. I had not a crumb of food saved up, as did those who were posted; but as I was ill at the time, my appetite was feeble.

Wilcox and I hurried to the kitchen, where we found several hundred men struggling to be first at the opening in the fireplace. We took our places behind them, and soon two hundred more closed us tightly in the mass. The room was pitch-dark, and the sentinel could be seen through the door-cracks, within a dozen feet of us. The fight for precedence was savage, though no one spoke; but now and then fainting men begged to be released. They begged in vain: certainly some of them must have been permanently injured. For my own part, when I neared the stove I was nearly suffocated; but I took heart when I saw but three more men between me and the hole. At this moment a sound as of tramping feet was heard, and some idiot on the outer edge of the mob startled us with the cry, "The guards the guards!" A fearful panic ensued, and the entire crowd bounded toward the stairway leading up to their sleeping-quarters. The stairway was unbanistered, and some of the men were forced off the edge and fell on those beneath. I was among the lightest in that crowd; and when it broke and expanded I was taken off my feet, dashed to the floor senseless, my head and one of my hands bruised and cut, and my shoulder painfully injured by the boots of the men who rushed over me. When I gathered my swimming wits I was lying in a pool of water. The room seemed darker than before; and, to my grateful surprise, I was alone. I was now convinced that it was a false alarm, and quickly resolved to avail myself of the advantage of having the whole place to myself. I entered the cavity feet first, but found it necessary to remove my overcoat and push it through the opening, and it fell in the darkness below.

I had now no comrade, having lost Wilcox in the stampede. Rose and his party, being the first out, were several hours on their journey; and I burned to be away, knowing well that my salvation depended on my passage beyond the city defenses before the pursuing guards were on our trail, when the inevitable discovery should come at roll-call. The fact that I was alone I regretted; but I had served with McClellan in the Peninsula campaign of 1862, I knew the country well from my frequent inspection of war maps, and the friendly north star gave me my bearings. The rope-ladder had either become broken or disarranged, but it

afforded me a short hold at the top; so I balanced myself, trusted to fortune, and fell into Rat Hell, which was a rayless pit of darkness, swarming with squealing rats, several of which I must have killed in my fall. I felt a troop of them, run over my face and hands before I could regain my feet. Several times I put my hand on them, and once I flung one from my shoulder. Groping around, I found a stout stick or stave, put my back to the wall, and beat about me blindly but with vigor.

In spite of the hurried instructions given me by Wilcox, I had a long and horrible hunt over the cold surface of the cellar walls in my efforts to find the entrance to the tunnel; and in two minutes after I began feeling my way with my hands I had no idea in what part of the place was the point where I had fallen: my bearings were completely lost, and I must have made the circuit of Rat Hell several times. At my entrance the rats seemed to receive me with cheers sufficiently hearty, I thought; but my vain efforts to find egress seemed to kindle anew their enthusiasm. They had received large reinforcements, and my march around was now received with deafening squeaks. Finally, my exploring hands fell upon a pair of heels which vanished at my touch. Here at last was the narrow road to freedom! The heels proved to be the property of Lieutenant Charles H. Morgan, 21st Wisconsin, a Chickamauga prisoner. Just ahead of him in the tunnel was Lieutenant William L. Watson of the same company and regiment. With my cut hand and bruised shoulder, the passage through the cold, narrow grave was indescribably horrible, and when I reached the terminus in the yard I was sick and faint. The passage seemed to me to be a mile long; but the crisp, pure air and the first glimpse of freedom, the sweet sense of being out of doors, and the realization that I had taken the first step toward liberty and home, had a magical effect in my restoration.


Gehen
87

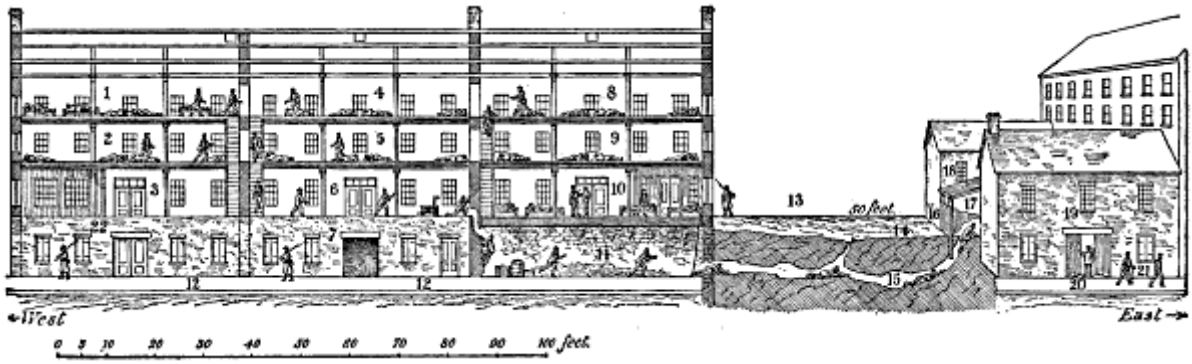
FIGHTING THE RATS.

I have related before, in a published reminiscence,[15] my experience and that of my two companions above named in the journey toward the Union lines, and our recapture; but the more important matter relating to the plot itself has never been published. This is the leading motive of this article, and therefore I will not intrude the details of my personal experience into the narrative. It is enough to say that it was a chapter of hairbreadth escapes, hunger, cold, suffering, and, alas! failure. We were run down and captured in a swamp several miles north of Charlottesville, and when we were taken our captors pointed out to us the smoke over a Federal outpost. We were brought back to Libby, and put in one of the dark, narrow dungeons. I was afterward confined in Macon, Georgia; Charleston and Columbia, South Carolina; and in Charlotte, North Carolina. After a captivity of just a year and eight months, during which I had made five escapes and was each time retaken, I was at last released on March 1, 1865, at Wilmington, North Carolina.

[15]"Philadelphia Times," October 28, 1882.

Great was the panic in Libby when the next morning's roll revealed to the astounded Confederates that 109 of their captives were missing; and as the fireplace had been rebuilt by some one and the opening of the hole in the yard had been covered by the last man who went out, no human trace guided the keepers toward a solution of the mystery. The Richmond papers having announced the "miraculous" escape of 109 Yankee officers from Libby, curious crowds flocked thither for several days, until some one, happening to remove the plank in the yard, revealed the tunnel. A terrified negro was driven into the hole at the point of the bayonet, and thus made a trip to Rat Hell that nearly turned him white.

Several circumstances at this time combined to make this escape peculiarly exasperating to the Confederates. In obedience to repeated appeals from the Richmond newspapers, iron bars had but recently been fixed in all the prison windows for better security, and the guard had been considerably reinforced. The columns of these same journals had just been aglow with accounts of the daring and successful escape of the Confederate General John Morgan and his companions from the Columbus (Ohio) jail. Morgan had arrived in Richmond on the 8th of January, exactly a month prior to the completion of the tunnel, and was still the lion of the Confederate capital.



SECTION OF THE INTERIOR OF LIBBY PRISON AND TUNNEL.

1. Streight's room; 2. Milroy's room; 3. Commandant's office; 4. Chickamauga room (upper); 5. Chickamauga room (lower); 6. Dining-room; 7. Carpenter's shop (middle cellar); 8. Gettysburg room (upper); 9. Gettysburg room (lower); 10. Hospital room; 11. East or "Rat Hell" cellar; 12. South side Canal street, ten feet lower than Carey street; 13. North side Carey street, ground sloping toward Canal; 14. Open lot; 15. Tunnel; 16. Fence; 17. Shed; 18. Kerr's warehouse; 19. Office James River Towing Co.; 20. Gate; 21. Prisoners escaping; 22. West cellar.

At daylight a plank was seen suspended on the outside of the east wall; this was fastened by a blanket-rope to one of the window-bars, and was, of course, a trick to mislead the Confederates. General John H. Winder, then in charge of all the prisoners in the Confederacy, with his headquarters in Richmond, was furious when the news reached him. After a careful external examination of the building, and a talk, not of the politest kind, with Major Turner, he reached the conclusion that such an escape had but one explanation—the guards had been bribed. Accordingly the sentinels on duty were marched off under arrest to Castle Thunder, where they were locked up and searched for "greenbacks." The thousand and more prisoners still in Libby were compensated, in a measure, for their failure to escape by the panic they saw among the "Rebs." Messengers and despatches were soon flying in all directions, and all the horse, foot, and dragoons of Richmond were in pursuit of the fugitives before noon. Only one man of the whole escaping party was retaken inside of the city limits.[16] Of the 109 who got out that night, 59 reached the Union lines, 48 were recaptured, and 2 were drowned.

[16]Captain Gates, of the 33d Ohio.

Colonel Streight and several other officers who had been chosen by the diggers of the tunnel to follow them out, in accordance with the agreement already referred to, lay concealed for a week in a vacant house, where they were fed by

loyal friends, and escaped to the Federal lines when the first excitement had abated.

After leaving Libby, Rose and Hamilton turned northward and cautiously walked on a few squares, when suddenly they encountered some Confederates who were guarding a military hospital. Hamilton retreated quickly and ran off to the east; but Rose, who was a little in advance, walked boldly by on the opposite walk, and was not challenged; and thus the two friends separated.

Hamilton, after several days of wandering and fearful exposure, came joyfully upon a Union picket squad, received the care he painfully needed, and was soon on his happy journey home.

GROUND-PLAN OF LIBBY PRISON AND SURROUNDINGS.

A. Break in fireplace on floor above; B. End of tunnel; CCC. Course of party escaping; D. Shed; E. Cook-room (abandoned Oct., '63); F. Lumber-room; G. Office of James River Towing Company; HH. Gates; III. Doors; J. Cells for condemned prisoners; K. First tunnel (abandoned); L. Fence.

Rose passed out of the city of Richmond to the York River Railroad, and followed its track to the Chickahominy bridge. Finding this guarded, he turned to the right, and as the day was breaking he came upon a camp of Confederate cavalry. His blue uniform made it exceedingly dangerous to travel in daylight in this region; and seeing a large sycamore log that was hollow, he crawled into it. The February air was keen and biting, but he kept his cramped position until late in the afternoon; and all day he could hear the loud talk in the camp and the neighing of the horses. Toward night he came cautiously forth, and finding the Chickahominy fordable within a few hundred yards, he succeeded in wading across. The uneven bed of the river, however, led him into several deep holes, and before he reached the shore his scanty raiment was thoroughly soaked. He trudged on through the woods as fast as his stiffened limbs would bear him, borne up by the hope of early deliverance, and made a brave effort to shake off the horrible ague. He had not gone far, however, when he found himself again close to some Confederate cavalry, and was compelled once more to seek a hiding-place. The day seemed of interminable length, and he tried vainly in sleep to escape from hunger and cold. His teeth chattered in his head, and when he rose at dark to continue his journey his tattered clothes were frozen stiff. In this plight he pushed on resolutely, and was obliged to wade to his waist for hundreds of yards through one of those deep and treacherous morasses that proved such deadly fever-pools for McClellan's army in the campaign of 1862. Finally he reached the high ground, and as the severe exertion had set his blood again in motion and loosened his limbs, he was making better progress, when suddenly he

found himself near a Confederate picket. This picket he easily avoided, and, keeping well in the shadow of the forest and shunning the roads, he pressed forward with increasing hopes of success. He had secured a box of matches before leaving Libby; and as the cold night came on and he felt that he was really in danger of freezing to death, he penetrated into the center of the cedar grove and built a fire in a small and secluded hollow. He felt that this was hazardous, but the necessity was desperate, since with his stiffened limbs he could no longer move along fast enough to keep the warmth of life in his body. To add to his trouble, his foot, which had been broken in Tennessee previous to his capture, was now giving him great pain, and threatened to cripple him wholly; indeed, it would stiffen and disable the best of limbs to compass the journey he had made in darkness over strange, uneven, and hard-frozen ground, and through rivers, creeks, and bogs, and this without food or warmth.

The fire was so welcome that he slept soundly—so soundly that waking in the early morning he found his boot-legs and half his uniform burned up, the ice on the rest of it probably having prevented its total destruction.

Resuming his journey much refreshed, he reached Crump's Cross-roads, where he successfully avoided another picket. He traveled all day, taking occasional short rests, and before dark had reached New Kent Court-house. Here again he saw some pickets, but by cautious flanking managed to pass them; but in crossing an open space a little farther on he was seen by a cavalryman, who at once put spurs to his horse and rode up to Rose, and, saluting him, inquired if he belonged to the New Kent Cavalry. Rose had on a gray cap, and seeing that he had a stupid sort of fellow to deal with, instantly answered, "Yes," whereupon the trooper turned his horse and rode back. A very few moments were enough to show Rose that the cavalryman's report had failed to satisfy his comrades, whom he could see making movements for his capture. He plunged through a laurel thicket, and had no sooner emerged than he saw the Confederates deploying around it in confidence that their game was bagged. He dashed on as fast as his injured foot would let him, and entered a tract of heavily timbered land that rose to the east of this thicket. At the border of the grove he found another picket post, and barely escaped the notice of several of the men. The only chance of escape lay through a wide, clear field before him, and even this was in full view from the grove that bordered it, and this he knew would soon swarm with his pursuers.

Across the center of this open field, which was fully half a mile wide, a ditch ran, which, although but a shallow gully, afforded a partial concealment. Rose, who could now hear the voices of the Confederates nearer and nearer, dove into the ditch as the only chance, and dropping on his hands and knees crept swiftly forward to the eastward. In this cramped position his progress was extremely painful, and his hands were torn by the briers and stones; but forward he dashed,

fully expecting a shower of bullets every minute. At last he reached the other end of the half-mile ditch, breathless and half dead, but without having once raised his head above the gully.

Emerging from this field, he found himself in the Williamsburg road, and bordering the opposite side was an extensive tract thickly covered with pines. As he crossed and entered this tract he looked back and could see his enemies, whose movements showed that they were greatly puzzled and off the scent. When at a safe distance he sought a hiding-place and took a needed rest of several hours.

He then resumed his journey, and followed the direction of the Williamsburg road, which he found picketed at various points, so that it was necessary to avoid open spaces. Several times during the day he saw squads of Confederate cavalry passing along the road so near that he could hear their talk. Near nightfall he reached Diasen Bridge, where he successfully passed another picket. He kept on until nearly midnight, when he lay down by a great tree and, cold as he was, slept soundly until daylight. He now made a careful reconnoissance, and found near the road the ruins of an old building which, he afterward learned, was called "Burnt Ordinary."

He now found himself almost unable to walk with his injured foot, but, nerved by the yet bright hope of liberty, he once more went his weary way in the direction of Williamsburg. Finally he came to a place where there were some smoking fagots and a number of tracks, indicating it to have been a picket post of the previous night. He was now nearing Williamsburg, which, he was inclined to believe from such meager information as had reached Libby before his departure, was in possession of the Union forces. Still, he knew that this was territory that was frequently changing hands, and was therefore likely to be under a close watch. From this on he avoided the roads wholly, and kept under cover as much as it was possible; and if compelled to cross an open field at all, he did so in a stooping position. He was now moving in a southeasterly direction, and coming again to the margin of a wide opening, he saw, to his unutterable joy, a body of Union troops advancing along the road toward him.

Thoroughly worn out, Rose, believing that his deliverers were at hand, sat down to await their approach. His pleasant reverie was disturbed by a sound behind and near him, and turning quickly he was startled to see three soldiers in the road along which the troops first seen were advancing. The fact that these men had not been noticed before gave Rose some uneasiness for a moment; but as they wore blue uniforms, and moreover seemed to take no note of the approaching Federal troops, all things seemed to indicate that they were simply an advanced detail of the same body. This seemed to be further confirmed by the fact that the trio were

now moving down the road, apparently with the intent of joining the larger body; and as the ground to the east rose to a crest, both of the bodies were a minute later shut off from Rose's view.

In the full confidence that all was right he rose to his feet and walked toward the crest to get a better view of everything and greet his comrades of the loyal blue. A walk of a hundred yards brought him again in sight of the three men, who now noticed and challenged him.

In spite of appearances a vague suspicion forced itself upon Rose, who, however, obeyed the summons and continued to approach the party, who now watched him with fixed attention. As he came closer to the group, the brave but unfortunate soldier saw that he was lost.

For the first time the three seemed to be made aware of the approach of the Federals, and to show consequent alarm and haste. The unhappy Rose saw before the men spoke that their blue uniform was a disguise, and the discovery brought a savage expression to his lips. He hoped and tried to convince his captors that he was a Confederate, but all in vain; they retained him as their prisoner, and now told him that they were Confederates. Rose, in the first bitter moment of his misfortune, thought seriously of breaking away to his friends so temptingly near; but his poor broken foot and the slender chance of escaping three bullets at a few yards made this suicide, and he decided to wait for a better chance, and this came sooner than he expected.

One of the men appeared to be an officer, who detailed one of his companions to conduct Rose to the rear in the direction of Richmond. The prisoner went quietly with his guard, the other two men tarried a little to watch the advancing Federals, and now Rose began to limp like a man who was unable to go farther. Presently the ridge shut them off from the view of the others. Rose, who had slyly been staggering closer and closer to the guard, suddenly sprang upon the man, and before he had time to wink had twisted his gun from his grasp, discharged it into the air, flung it down, and ran off as fast as his poor foot would let him toward the east and so as to avoid the rest of the Confederates. The disarmed Confederate made no attempt at pursuit, nor indeed did the other two, who were now seen retreating at a run across the adjacent fields.

Rose's heart bounded with new hope, for he felt that he would be with his advancing comrades in a few minutes at most. All at once a squad of Confederates, hitherto unseen, rose up in his very path, and beat him down with the butts of their muskets. All hands now rushed around and secured him, and one of the men called out excitedly, "Hurry up, boys; the Yankees are right here!" They rushed their prisoner into the wooded ravine, and here they were

joined by the man whom Rose had just disarmed. He was in a savage mood, and declared it to be his particular desire to fill Rose full of Confederate lead. The officer in charge rebuked the man, however, and compelled him to cool down, and he went along with an injured air that excited the merriment of his comrades.

The party continued its retreat to Barhamsville, thence to the White House on the Pamunkey River, and finally to Richmond, where Rose was again restored to Libby, and, like the writer, was confined for a number of days in a narrow and loathsome cell. On the 30th of April his exchange was effected for a Confederate colonel, and on the 6th of July, 1864, he rejoined his regiment, in which he served with conspicuous gallantry to the close of the war.

As already stated, Hamilton reached the Union lines safely after many vicissitudes, and did brave service in the closing scenes of the rebellion. He is now a resident of Reedyville, Kentucky. Johnson, whose enforced confinement in Rat Hell gave him a unique fame in Libby, also made good his escape, and now lives at North Pleasantville, Kentucky.

Of the fifteen men who dug the successful tunnel, four are dead, viz.: Fitzsimmons, Gallagher, Garbett, and McDonald. Captain W.S.B. Randall lives at Hillsboro, Highland County, Ohio; Colonel Terrance Clark at Paris, Edgar County, Illinois; Captain Eli Foster at Chicago; Colonel N.S. McKean at Collinsville, Madison County, Illinois; and Captain J.C. Fislar at Lewiston, I.T. The addresses of Captains Lucas, Simpson, and Mitchell are unknown at this writing.

Colonel Rose has served faithfully almost since the end of the war with the 16th United States Infantry, in which he holds a captain's commission. No one meeting him now would hear from his reticent lips, or read in his placid face, the thrilling story that links his name in so remarkable a manner with the history of the famous Bastile of the Confederacy.

A HARD ROAD TO TRAVEL OUT OF DIXIE

BY W.H. SHELTON

It was past noon of the first day of the bloody contest in the Wilderness. The guns of the Fifth Corps, led by Battery D of the 1st New York Artillery, were halted along the Orange turnpike, by which we had made the fruitless campaign to Mine Run. The continuous roar of musketry in front and to the left indicated

that the infantry was desperately engaged, while the great guns filling every wooded road leading up to the battle-field were silent. Our drivers were lounging about the horses, while the cannoneers lay on the green grass by the roadside or walked by the pieces. Down the line came an order for the center section, under my command, to advance and pass the right section, which lay in front of us. General Warren, surrounded by his staff, sat on a gray horse at the right of the road where the woods bordered an open field dipping between two wooded ridges. The position we were leaving was admirable, while the one to which we were ordered, on the opposite side of the narrow field, was wholly impracticable. The captain had received his orders in person from General Warren, and joined my command as we passed.

We dashed down the road at a trot, the cannoneers running beside their pieces. At the center of the field we crossed by a wooden bridge over a deep, dry ditch, and came rapidly into position at the side of the turnpike and facing the thicket. As the cannoneers were not all up, the captain and I dismounted and lent a hand in swinging round the heavy trails. The air was full of Minié balls, some whistling by like mad hornets, and others, partly spent, humming like big nails. One of the latter struck my knee with force enough to wound the bone without penetrating the grained-leather boot-leg. In front of us the ground rose into the timber where our infantry was engaged. It was madness to continue firing here, for my shot must first plow through our own lines before reaching the enemy. So after one discharge the captain ordered the limbers to the rear, and the section started back at a gallop. My horse was cut on the flanks, and his plunging, with my disabled knee, delayed me in mounting, and prevented my seeing why the carriages kept to the grass instead of getting upon the roadway. When I overtook the guns they had come to a forced halt at the dry ditch, now full of skulkers, an angle of which cut the way to the bridge. Brief as the interval had been, not a man of my command was in sight. The lead horse of the gun team at my side had been shot and was reeling in the harness. Slipping to the ground, I untoggled one trace at the collar to release him, and had placed my hand on the other when I heard the demand "Surrender!" and turning found in my face two big pistols in the hands of an Alabama colonel. "Give me that sword," said he. I pressed the clasp and let it fall to the ground, where it remained. The colonel had taken me by the right arm, and as we turned toward the road I took in the whole situation at a glance. My chestnut horse and the captain's bald-faced brown were dashing frantically against the long, swaying gun teams. By the bridge stood a company of the 61st Alabama Infantry in butternut suits and slouch-hats, shooting straggling and wounded Zouaves from a Pennsylvania brigade as they appeared in groups of two or three on the road in front. The colonel as he handed me over to his men ordered his troops to take what prisoners they could and to cease firing. The guns which we were forced to abandon were a bone of contention until they were

secured by the enemy on the third day, at which time but one of the twenty-four team horses was living.

With a few other prisoners I was led by a short detour through the woods. In ten minutes we had turned the flank of both armies and reached the same turnpike in the rear of our enemy. A line of ambulances was moving back on the road, all filled with wounded, and when we saw a vacant seat beside a driver I was hoisted up to the place. The boy driver was in a high state of excitement. He said that two shells had come flying down this same road, and showed where the trace of the near mule had been cut by a piece of shell, for which I was directly responsible.

The field hospital of General Jubal Early's corps was near Locust Grove Tavern, where the wounded Yankees were in charge of Surgeon Donnelly of the Pennsylvania Reserves. No guard was established, as no one was supposed to be in condition to run away. At the end of a week, however, my leg had greatly improved, although I was still unable to use it. In our party was another lieutenant, an aide on the staff of General James C. Rice, whose horse had been shot under him while riding at full speed with despatches. Lieutenant Hadley had returned to consciousness to find himself a prisoner in hospital, somewhat bruised, and robbed of his valuables, but not otherwise disabled. We two concluded to start for Washington by way of Kelly's Ford. I traded my penknife for a haversack of corn-bread with one of the Confederate nurses, and a wounded officer, Colonel Miller of a New York regiment, gave us a pocket compass. I provided myself with a stout pole, which I used with both hands in lieu of my left foot. At 9 P.M. we set out, passing during the night the narrow field and the dry ditch where I had left my guns. Only a pile of dead horses marked the spot.

On a grassy bank we captured a firefly and shut him in between the glass and the face of our pocket compass. With such a guide we shaped our course for the Rapidan. After traveling nearly all night we lay down exhausted upon a bluff within sound of the river, and slept until sunrise. Hastening to our feet again, we hurried down to the ford. Just before reaching the river we heard shouts behind us, and saw a man beckoning and running after us. Believing the man an enemy, we dashed into the shallow water, and after crossing safely hobbled away up the other side as fast as a man with one leg and a pole could travel. I afterward met this man, himself a prisoner, at Macon, Georgia. He was the officer of our pickets, and would have conducted us into our lines if we had permitted him to come up with us. As it was, we found a snug hiding-place in a thicket of swamp growth, where we lay in concealment all day. After struggling on a few miles in a chilling rain, my leg became so painful that it was impossible to go farther. A house was near by and we threw ourselves on the mercy of the family. Good Mrs. Brandon had harbored the pickets of both armies again and again, and had luxuriated in real coffee and tea and priceless salt at the hands of our officers.

She bore the Yankees only good-will, and after dressing my wound we sat down to breakfast with herself and daughters.

After breakfast we were conducted to the second half-story, which was one unfinished room. There was a bed in one corner, where we were to sleep. Beyond the stairs was a pile of yellow ears of corn, and from the rafters and sills hung a variety of dried herbs and medicinal roots. Here our meals were served, and the girls brought us books and read aloud to pass away the long days. I was confined to the bed, and my companion never ventured below stairs except on one dark night, when at my earnest entreaty he set out for Kelly's Ford, but soon returned unable to make his way in the darkness. One day we heard the door open at the foot of the stairs, a tread of heavy boots on the steps, and a clank, clank that sounded very much like a saber. Out of the floor rose a gray slouch-hat with the yellow cord and tassel of a cavalryman, and in another moment there stood on the landing one of the most astonished troopers that ever was seen. "Coot" Brandon was one of "Jeb" Stuart's rangers, and came every day for corn for his horse. Heretofore the corn had been brought down for him, and he was as ignorant of our presence as we were of his existence. On this day no pretext could keep him from coming up to help himself. His mother worked on his sympathies, and he departed promising her that he would leave us undisturbed. But the very next morning he turned up again, this time accompanied by another ranger of sterner mold. A parole was exacted from my able-bodied companion, and we were left for another twenty-four hours, when I was considered in condition to be moved. Mrs. Brandon gave us each a new blue overcoat from a plentiful store of Uncle Sam's clothing she had on hand, and I opened my heart and gave her my last twenty-dollar greenback—and wished I had it back again every day for the next ten months.

I was mounted on a horse, and with Lieutenant Hadley on foot we were marched under guard all day until we arrived at a field hospital established in the rear of Longstreet's corps, my companion being sent on to some prison for officers. Thence I was forwarded with a train-load of wounded to Lynchburg, on which General Hunter was then marching, and we had good reason to hope for a speedy deliverance. On more than one day we heard his guns to the north, where there was no force but a few citizens with bird-guns to oppose the entrance of his command. The slaves were employed on a line of breastworks which there was no adequate force to hold. It was our opinion that one well-disciplined regiment could have captured and held the town. It was several days before a portion of General Breckinridge's command arrived for the defense of Lynchburg.

I had clung to my clean bed in the hospital just as long as my rapidly healing wound would permit, but was soon transferred to a prison where at night the sleepers—Yankees, Confederate deserters, and negroes—were so crowded upon

the floor that some lay under the feet of the guards in the doorways. The atmosphere was dreadful. I fell ill, and for three days lay with my head in the fireplace, more dead than alive.

A few days thereafter about three hundred prisoners were crowded into cattle-cars bound for Andersonville. We must have been a week on this railroad journey when an Irish lieutenant of a Rochester regiment and I, who had been allowed to ride in the baggage-car, were taken from the train at Macon, Georgia, where about sixteen hundred Union officers were confined at the fair-grounds. General Alexander Shaler, of Sedgwick's corps, also captured at the Wilderness, was the ranking officer, and to him was accorded a sort of interior command of the camp. Before passing through the gate we expected to see a crowd bearing some outward semblance of respectability. Instead, we were instantly surrounded by several hundred ragged, barefooted, frowzy-headed men shouting "Fresh fish!" at the top of their voices and eagerly asking for news. With rare exceptions all were shabbily dressed. There was, however, a little knot of naval officers who had been captured in the windings of the narrow Rappahannock by a force of cavalry, and who were the aristocrats of the camp. They were housed in a substantial fair-building in the center of the grounds, and by some special terms of surrender must have brought their complete wardrobes along. On hot days they appeared in spotless white duck, which they were permitted to send outside to be laundered. Their mess was abundantly supplied with the fruits and vegetables of the season. The ripe red tomatoes they were daily seen to peel were the envy of the camp. I well remember that to me, at this time, a favorite occupation was to lie on my back with closed eyes and imagine the dinner I would order if I were in a first-class hotel. It was no unusual thing to see a dignified colonel washing his lower clothes in a pail, clad only in his uniform dresscoat. Ladies sometimes appeared on the guard-walk outside the top of the stockade, on which occasions the cleanest and best-dressed men turned out to see and be seen. I was quite proud to appear in a clean gray shirt, spotless white drawers, and moccasins made of blue overcoat cloth.

On the Fourth of July, after the regular morning count, we repaired to the big central building and held an informal celebration. One officer had brought into captivity, concealed on his person, a little silk national flag, which was carried up into the cross-beams of the building, and the sight of it created the wildest enthusiasm. We cheered the flag and applauded the patriotic speeches until a detachment of the guard succeeded in putting a stop to our proceedings. They tried to capture the flag, but in this they were not successful. We were informed that cannon were planted commanding the camp, and would be opened on us if we renewed our demonstrations.

Soon after this episode the fall of Atlanta and the subsequent movements of General Sherman led to the breaking up of the camp at Macon, and to the transfer of half of us to a camp at Charleston, and half to Savannah. Late in September, by another transfer, we found ourselves together again at Columbia. We had no form of shelter, and there was no stockade around the camp, only a guard and a dead-line. During two hours of each morning an extra line of guards was stationed around an adjoining piece of pine woods, into which we were allowed to go and cut wood and timber to construct for ourselves huts for the approaching winter. Our ration at this time consisted of raw corn-meal and sorghum molasses, without salt or any provision of utensils for cooking. The camp took its name from our principal article of diet, and was by common consent known as "Camp Sorghum." A stream of clear water was accessible during the day by an extension of the guards, but at night the lines were so contracted as to leave the path leading to the water outside the guard. Lieutenant S.H.M. Byers, who had already written the well-known lyric "Sherman's March to the Sea," was sharing my tent, which consisted of a ragged blanket. We had been in the new camp but little more than a week when we determined to make an attempt at escape. Preparatory to starting we concealed two tin cups and two blankets in the pine woods to which we had access during the chopping hours, and here was to be our rendezvous in case we were separated in getting out. Covering my shoulders with an old gray blanket and providing myself with a stick, about the size of a gun, from the woodpile, I tried to smuggle myself into the relief guard when the line was contracted at six o'clock. Unfortunately an unexpected halt was called, and the soldier in front turned and discovered me. I was now more than ever determined on getting away. After a hurried conference with Lieutenant Byers, at which I promised to wait at our rendezvous in the woods until I heard the posting of the ten-o'clock relief, I proceeded alone up the side of the camp to a point where a group of low cedars grew close to the dead-line. Concealing myself in their dark shadow, I could observe at my leisure the movements of the sentinels. A full moon was just rising above the horizon to my left, and in the soft, misty light the guards were plainly visible for a long distance either way. An open field from which the small growth had been recently cut away lay beyond, and between the camp and the guard-line ran a broad road of soft sand—noiseless to cross, but so white in the moonlight that a leaf blown across it by the wind could scarcely escape a vigilant eye. The guards were bundled in their overcoats, and I soon observed that the two who met opposite to my place of concealment turned and walked their short beats without looking back. Waiting until they separated again, and regardless of the fact that I might with equal likelihood be seen by a dozen sentinels in either direction, I ran quickly across the soft sand road several yards into the open field, and threw myself down upon the uneven ground. First I dragged my body on my elbows for a few yards, then I crept on my knees, and so

gradually gained in distance until I could rise to a standing position and get safely to the shelter of the trees. With some difficulty I found the cups and blankets we had concealed, and lay down to await the arrival of my companion. Soon I heard several shots which I understood too well; and, as I afterward learned, two officers were shot dead for attempting the feat I had accomplished, and perhaps in emulation of my success. A third young officer, whom I knew, was also killed in camp by one of the shots fired at the others.

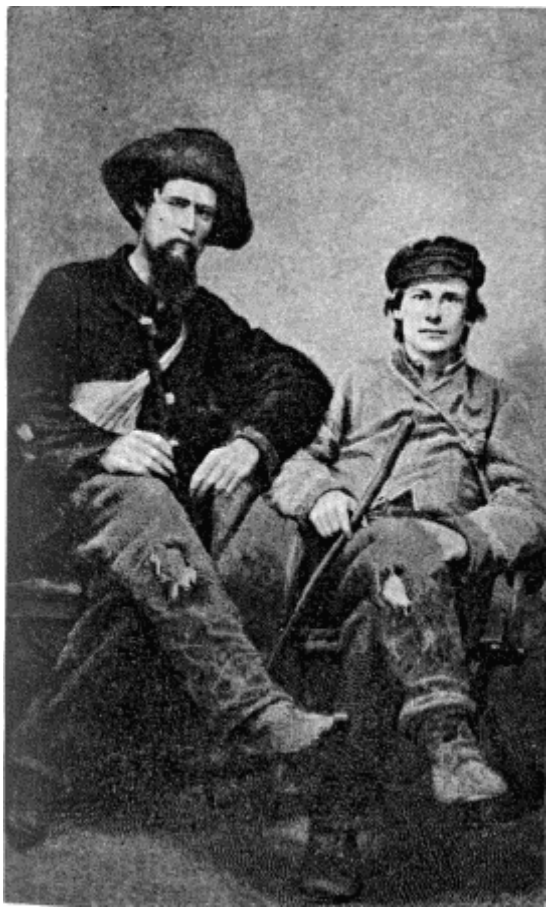
At ten o'clock I set out alone and made my way across the fields to the bank of the Saluda, where a covered bridge crossed to Columbia. Hiding when it was light, wandering through fields and swamps by night, and venturing at last to seek food of negroes, I proceeded for thirteen days toward the sea.

In general I had followed the Columbia turnpike; at a quaint little chapel on the shore of Goose Creek, but a few miles out of Charleston, I turned to the north and bent my course for the coast above the city. About this time I learned that I should find no boats along the shore between Charleston and the mouth of the Santee, everything able to float having been destroyed to prevent the escape of the negroes and the desertion of the soldiers. I was ferried over the Broad River by a crusty old darky who came paddling across in response to my cries of "O-v-e-r," and who seemed so put out because I had no fare for him that I gave him my case-knife. The next evening I had the only taste of meat of this thirteen days' journey, which I got from an old negro whom I found alone in his cabin eating possum and rice.

I had never seen the open sea-coast beaten by the surf, and after being satisfied that I had no hope of escape in that direction it was in part my curiosity that led me on, and partly a vague idea that I would get Confederate transportation back to Columbia and take a fresh start westward bound. The tide was out, and in a little cove I found an abundance of oysters bedded in the mud, some of which I cracked with stones and ate. After satisfying my hunger, and finding the sea rather unexpectedly tame inside the line of islands which marked the eastern horizon, I bent my steps toward a fire, where I found a detachment of Confederate coastguards, to whom I offered myself as a guest as coolly as if my whole toilsome journey had been prosecuted to that end.

In the morning I was marched a few miles to Mount Pleasant, near Fort Moultrie, and taken thence in a sail-boat across the harbor to Charleston. At night I found myself again in the city jail, where with a large party of officers I had spent most of the month of August. My cell-mate was Lieutenant H.G. Dorr of the 4th Massachusetts Cavalry, with whom I journeyed by rail back to Columbia, arriving at "Camp Sorghum" about the 1st of November.

I rejoined the mess of Lieutenant Byers, and introduced to the others Lieutenant Dorr, whose cool assurance was a prize that procured us all the blessings possible. He could borrow frying-pans from the guards, money from his brother Masons at headquarters, and I believe if we had asked him to secure us a gun he would have charmed it out of the hand of a sentinel on duty.



LIEUTENANTS E.E. SILL AND A.T. LAMSON.

Lieutenant Edward E. Sill, of General Daniel Butterfield's staff, whom I had met at Macon, during my absence had come to "Sorghum" from a fruitless trip to Macon for exchange, and I had promised to join him in an attempt to escape when he could secure a pair of shoes. On November 29 our mess had felled a big pine-tree and had rolled into camp a short section of the trunk, which a Tennessee officer was to split into shingles to complete our hut, a pretty good cabin with an earthen fireplace. While we were resting from our exertion, Sill appeared with his friend Lieutenant A.T. Lamson of the 104th New York Infantry, and reminded me of my promise. The prisoners always respected their parole on wood-chopping expeditions, and went out and came in at the main entrance. The guards were a particularly verdant body of back-country militia, and the confusion of the parole system enabled us to practise ruses. In our present

difficulty we resorted to a new expedient and forged a parole. The next day all three of us were quietly walking down the guard-line on the outside. At the creek, where all the camp came for water, we found Dorr and Byers and West, and calling to one of them in the presence of the guard, asked for blankets to bring in spruce boughs for beds. When the blankets came they contained certain haversacks, cups, and little indispensable articles for the road. Falling back into the woods, we secured a safe hiding-place until after dark. Just beyond the village of Lexington we successfully evaded the first picket, being warned of its presence by the smoldering embers in the road. A few nights after this, having exposed ourselves and anticipating pursuit, we pushed on until we came to a stream crossing the road. Up this we waded for some distance, and secured a hiding-place on a neighboring hill. In the morning we looked out upon mounted men and dogs, at the very point where we had entered the stream, searching for our lost trail. We spent two days during a severe storm of rain and sleet in a farm-barn where the slaves were so drunk on applejack that they had forgotten us and left us with nothing to eat but raw turnips. One night, in our search for provisions, we met a party of negroes burning charcoal, who took us to their camp and sent out for a supply of food. While waiting a venerable "uncle" proposed to hold a prayer-meeting. So under the tall trees and by the light of the smoldering coal-pits the old man prayed long and fervently to the "bressed Lord and Massa Lincoln," and hearty amens echoed through the woods. Besides a few small potatoes, one dried goat ham was all our zealous friends could procure. The next day, having made our camp in the secure depths of a dry swamp, we lighted the only fire we allowed ourselves between Columbia and the mountains. The ham, which was almost as light as cork, was riddled with worm-holes, and as hard as a petrified sponge.

We avoided the towns, and after an endless variety of adventures approached the mountains, cold, hungry, ragged, and foot-sore. On the night of December 13 we were grouped about a guide-post, at a fork in the road, earnestly contending as to which way we should proceed. Lieutenant Sill was for the right, I was for the left, and no amount of persuasion could induce Lieutenant Lamson to decide the controversy. I yielded, and we turned to the right. After walking a mile in a state of general uncertainty, we came to a low white farm-house standing very near the road. It was now close upon midnight, and the windows were all dark; but from a house of logs, partly behind the other, gleamed a bright light. Judging this to be servants' quarters, two of us remained back while Lieutenant Sill made a cautious approach. In due time a negro appeared, advancing stealthily, and, beckoning to my companion and me, conducted us in the shadow of a hedge to a side window, through which we clambered into the cabin. We were made very comfortable in the glow of a bright woodfire. Sweet potatoes were already roasting in the ashes, and a tin pot of barley coffee was steaming on the coals. Rain and sleet had

begun to fall, and it was decided that after having been warmed and refreshed we should be concealed in the barn until the following night. Accordingly we were conducted thither and put to bed upon a pile of corn-shucks high up under the roof. Secure as this retreat seemed, it was deemed advisable in the morning to burrow several feet down in the mow, so that the children, if by any chance they should climb so high, might romp unsuspecting over our heads. We could still look out through the cracks in the siding and get sufficient light whereby to study a map of the Southern States, which had been brought us with our breakfast. A luxurious repast was in preparation, to be eaten at the quarters before starting; but a frolic being in progress, and a certain negro present of questionable fidelity, the banquet was transferred to the barn. The great barn doors were set open, and the cloth was spread on the floor by the light of the moon. Certainly we had partaken of no such substantial fare within the Confederacy. The central dish was a pork-pie, flanked by savory little patties of sausage. There were sweet potatoes, fleecy biscuits, a jug of sorghum, and a pitcher of sweet milk. Most delicious of all was a variety of corn-bread having tiny bits of fresh pork baked in it, like plums in a pudding.[17]

[17]Major Sill contributes the following evidence of the impression our trio made upon one, at least, of the piccaninnies who looked on in the moonlight. The picture of Lieutenants Sill and Lamson which appears on page 255 was enlarged from a small photograph taken on their arrival at Chattanooga, before divesting themselves of the rags worn throughout the long journey. Years afterward Major Sill gave one of these pictures to Wallace Bruce of Florida, at one time United States consul at Glasgow. In the winter of 1888-89 Mr. Bruce, at his Florida home, was showing the photograph to his family when it caught the eye of a colored servant, who exclaimed: "O Massa Bruce, I know those gen'men. My father and mother hid 'em in Massa's barn at Pickensville and fed 'em; there was three of 'em; I saw 'em." This servant was a child barely ten years old in 1864, and could have seen us only through the barn door while we were eating our supper in the uncertain moonlight. Yet more than twenty years thereafter he greeted the photograph of the ragged Yankee officers with a flash of recognition.

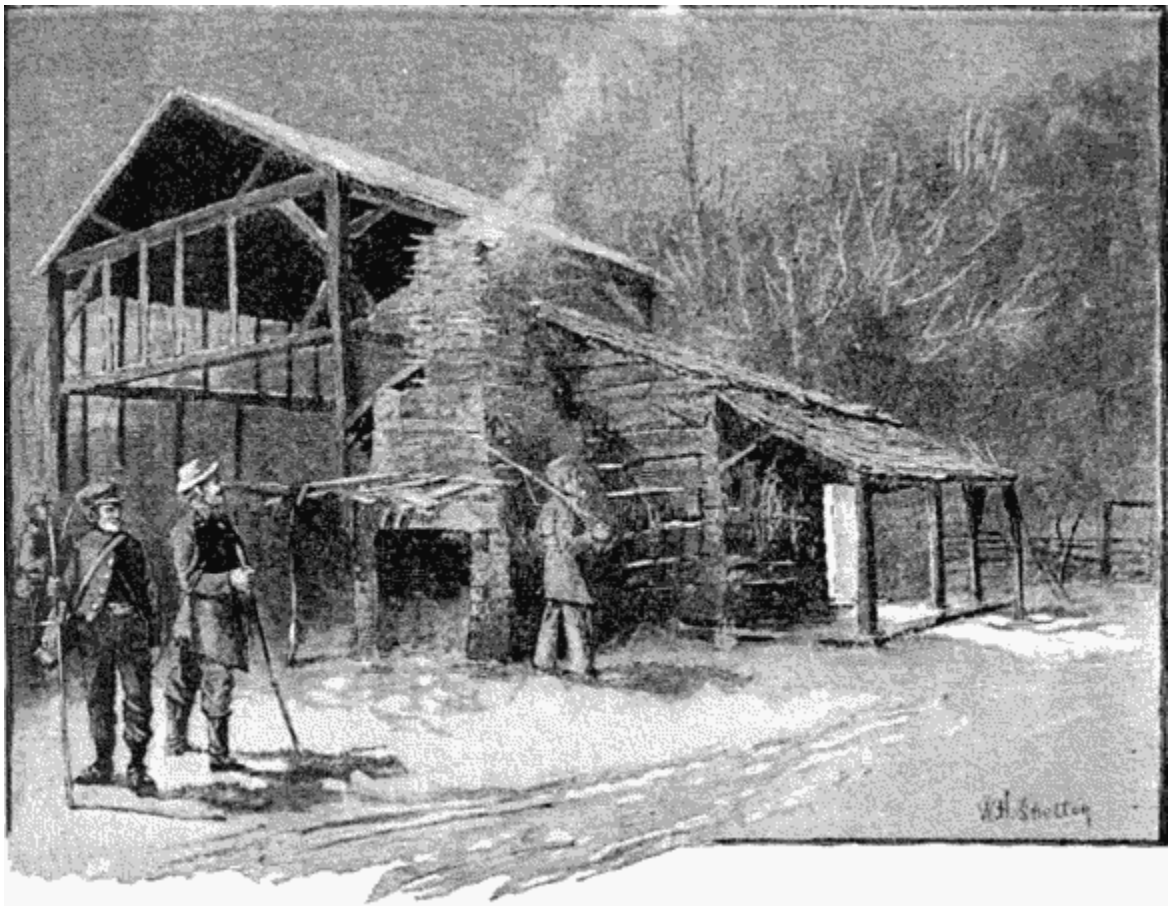
Filling our haversacks with the fragments, we took grateful leave of our sable benefactors and resumed our journey, retracing our steps to the point of disagreement of the evening before. Long experience in night marching had taught us extreme caution. We had advanced along the new road but a short way when we were startled by the barking of a house-dog. Apprehending that something was moving in front of us, we instantly withdrew into the woods. We had scarcely concealed ourselves when two cavalrymen passed along, driving before them a prisoner. Aware that it was high time to betake ourselves to the cross-roads and describe a wide circle around the military station at Pickensville, we first sought information. A ray of light was visible from a hut in the woods, and believing from its humble appearance that it sheltered friends, my companions lay down in concealment while I advanced to reconnoiter. I gained the side of the house, and, looking through a crack in the boards, saw, to my

surprise, a soldier lying on his back before the fire playing with a dog. I stole back with redoubled care. Thoroughly alarmed by the dangers we had already encountered, we decided to abandon the roads. Near midnight of December 16 we passed through a wooden gate on a level road leading into the forest. Believing that the lateness of the hour would secure us from further dangers, we resolved to press on with all speed, when two figures with lighted torches came suddenly into view. Knowing that we were yet unseen, we turned into the woods and concealed ourselves behind separate trees at no great distance from the path. Soon the advancing lights revealed two hunters, mere lads, but having at their heels a pack of mongrel dogs, with which they had probably been pursuing the coon or the possum. The boys would have passed unaware of our presence, but the dogs, scurrying along with their noses in the leaves, soon struck our trail, and were instantly yelping about us. We had possessed ourselves of the name of the commanding officer of the neighboring post at Pendleton, and advanced boldly, representing ourselves to be his soldiers. "Then where did you get them blue pantaloons?" they demanded, exchanging glances, which showed they were not ignorant of our true character. We coolly faced them down and resumed our march leisurely, while the boys still lingered undecided. When out of sight we abandoned the road and fled at the top of our speed. We had covered a long distance through forest and field before we heard in our wake the faint yelping of the pack. Plunging into the first stream, we dashed for some distance along its bed. Emerging on the opposite bank, we sped on through marshy fields, skirting high hills and bounding down through dry watercourses, over shelving stones and accumulated barriers of driftwood; now panting up a steep ascent, and now resting for a moment to rub our shoes with the resinous needles of the pine; always within hearing of the dogs, whose fitful cries varied in volume in accordance with the broken conformation of the intervening country. Knowing that in speed and endurance we were no match for our four-footed pursuers, we trusted to our precautions for throwing them off the scent, mindful that they were but an ill-bred kennel and the more easily to be disposed of. Physically we were capable of prolonged exertion. Fainter and less frequent came the cry of the dogs, until, ceasing altogether, we were assured of our escape.

At Oconee, on Sunday, December 18, we met a negro well acquainted with the roads and passes into North Carolina, who furnished us information by which we traveled for two nights, recognizing on the second objects which by his direction we avoided (like the house of Black Bill McKinney), and going directly to that of friendly old Tom Handcock. The first of these two nights we struggled up the foot-hills and outlying spurs of the mountains, through an uninhabited waste of rolling barrens, along an old stage road, long deserted, and in places impassable to a saddle-mule. Lying down before morning, high up on the side of the mountain, we fell asleep, to be awakened by thunder and lightning, and to find

torrents of hail and sleet beating upon our blankets. Chilled to the bone, we ventured to build a small fire in a secluded place. After dark and before abandoning our camp, we gathered quantities of wood, stacking it upon the fire, which when we left it was a wild tower of flame lighting up the whole mountain-side in the direction we had come, and seeming, in some sort, to atone for a long succession of shivering days in tireless bivouac. We followed the same stage road through the scattering settlement of Casher's Valley in Jackson County, North Carolina. A little farther on, two houses, of hewn logs, with verandas and green blinds, just fitted the description we had received of the home of old Tom Handcock. Knocking boldly at the door of the farther one, we were soon in the presence of the loyal mountaineer. He and his wife had been sleeping on a bed spread upon the floor before the fire. Drawing this to one side, they heaped the chimney with green wood, and were soon listening with genuine delight to the story of our adventures.

After breakfast next day, Tom, with his rifle, led us by a back road to the house of "'Squire Larkin C. Hooper," a leading loyalist, whom we met on the way, and together we proceeded to his house. Ragged and forlorn, we were eagerly welcomed at his home by Hooper's invalid wife and daughters. For several days we enjoyed a hospitality given as freely to utter strangers as if we had been relatives of the family.



WE ARRIVE AT HEADEN'S.

Here we learned of a party about to start through the mountains for East Tennessee, guided by Emanuel Headen, who lived on the crest of the Blue Ridge. Our friend Tom was to be one of the party, and other refugees were coming over the Georgia border, where Headen, better known in the settlement as "Man Heady," was mustering his party. It now being near Christmas, and the squire's family in daily expectation of a relative, who was a captain in the Confederate army, it was deemed prudent for us to go on to Headen's under the guidance of Tom. Setting out at sunset on the 23d of December, it was late in the evening when we arrived at our destination, having walked nine miles up the mountain trails over a light carpeting of snow. Pausing in front of a diminutive cabin, through the chinks of whose stone fireplace and stick chimney the whole interior seemed to be red hot like a furnace, our guide demanded, "Is Man Heady to hum?" Receiving a sharp negative in reply, he continued, "Well, can Tom get to stay all night?" At this the door flew open and a skinny woman appeared, her homespun frock pendent with tow-headed urchins.

"In course you can," she cried, leading the way into the cabin. Never have I seen so unique a character as this voluble, hatched-faced, tireless woman. Her skin

was like yellow parchment, and I doubt if she knew by experience what it was to be sick or weary. She had built the stake-and-cap fences that divided the fields, and she boasted of the acres she had plowed. The cabin was very small. Two bedsteads, with a narrow alleyway between, occupied half the interior. One was heaped with rubbish, and in the other slept the whole family, consisting of father, mother, a daughter of sixteen, and two little boys. When I add that the room contained a massive timber loom, a table, a spinning-wheel, and a variety of rude seats, it will be understood that we were crowded uncomfortably close to the fire. Shrinking back as far as possible from the blaze, we listened in amused wonder to the tongue of this seemingly untamed virago, who, nevertheless, proved to be the kindest-hearted of women. She cursed, in her high, pitched tones, for a pack of fools, the men who had brought on the war. Roderic Norton, who lived down the mountain, she expressed a profane desire to "stomp through the turnpike" because at some time he had stolen one of her hogs, marked, as to the ear, with "two smooth craps an' a slit in the left." Once only she had journeyed into the low country, where she had seen those twin marvels, steam cars and brick chimneys. On this occasion she had driven a heifer to market, making a journey of forty miles, walking beside her horse and wagon, which she took along to bring back the corn-meal received in payment for the animal. Charged by her husband to bring back the heifer bell, and being denied that musical instrument by the purchaser, it immediately assumed more importance to her mind than horse, wagon, and corn-meal. Baffled at first, she proceeded to the pasture in the gray of the morning, cornered the cow, and cut off the bell, and, in her own picturesque language, "walked through the streets of Walhalla cussin'." Rising at midnight she would fall to spinning with all her energy. To us, waked from sleep on the floor by the humming of the wheel, she seemed by the light of the low fire like a witch in a sunbonnet, darting forward and back.

We remained there several days, sometimes at the cabin and sometimes at a cavern in the rocks such as abound throughout the mountains, and which are called by the natives "rock houses." Many of the men at that time were "outliers"—that is, they camped in the mountain fastnesses, receiving their food from some member of the family. Some of these men, as now, had their copper stills in the rock houses, while others, more wary of the recruiting sergeant, wandered from point to point, their only furniture a rifle and a bed-quilt. On December 29, we were joined at the cavern by Lieutenant Knapp and Captain Smith, Federal officers, who had also made their way from Columbia, and by three refugees from Georgia, whom I remember as Old Man Tigue and the two Vincent boys. During the night our party was to start across the mountains for Tennessee. Tom Handcock was momentarily expected to join us. Our guide was busy with preparations for the journey. The night coming on icy cold, and a cutting wind driving the smoke of the fire into our granite house, we abandoned

it at nine o'clock and descended to the cabin. Headen and his wife had gone to the mill for a supply of corn-meal. Although it was time for their return, we were in nowise alarmed by their absence, and formed a jovial circle about the roaring chimney. About midnight came a rap on the door. Thinking it was Tom Handcock and some of his companions, I threw it open with an eager "Come in, boys!" The boys began to come in, stamping the snow from their boots and rattling their muskets on the floor, until the house was full, and yet others were on guard without and crowding the porch. "Man Heady" and his wife were already prisoners at the mill, and the house had been picketed for some hours awaiting the arrival of the other refugees, who had discovered the plot just in time to keep out of the toils. Marshaled in some semblance of military array, we were marched down the mountain, over the frozen ground, to the house of old Roderic Norton. The Yankee officers were sent to an upper room, while the refugees were guarded below, under the immediate eyes of the soldiery. Making the best of our misfortune, our original trio bounced promptly into a warm bed, which had been recently deserted by some members of the family, and secured a good night's rest.

Lieutenant Knapp, who had imprudently indulged in frozen chestnuts on the mountain-side, was attacked with violent cramps, and kept the household below stairs in commotion all night humanely endeavoring to assuage his agony. In the morning, although quite recovered, he cunningly feigned a continuance of his pains, and was left behind in the keeping of two guards, who, having no suspicion of his deep designs, left their guns in the house and went out to the spring to wash. Knapp, instantly on the alert, possessed himself of the muskets, and breaking the lock of one, by a powerful effort he bent the barrel of the other, and dashed out through the garden. His keepers, returning from the spring, shouted and rushed indoors only to find their disabled pieces. They joined our party later in the day, rendering a chapfallen account of their detached service.

We had but a moderate march to make to the headquarters of the battalion, where we were to spend the night. Our guards we found kindly disposed toward us, but bitterly upbraiding the refugees, whom they saluted by the ancient name of Tories. Lieutenant Cogdill, in command of the expedition, privately informed us that his sympathies were entirely ours, but as a matter of duty he should guard us jealously while under his military charge. If we could effect our escape thereafter we had only to come to his mountain home and he would conceal us until such time as he could despatch us with safety over the borders. These mountain soldiers were mostly of two classes, both opposed to the war, but doing home-guard duty in lieu of sterner service in the field. Numbers were of the outlier class, who, wearied of continual hiding in the laurel brakes, had embraced this service as a compromise. Many were deserters, some of whom had coolly set at

defiance the terms of their furloughs, while others had abandoned the camps in Virginia, and, versed in mountain craft, had made their way along the Blue Ridge and put in a heroic appearance in their native valleys.

That night we arrived at a farm-house near the river, where we found Major Parker, commanding the battalion, with a small detachment billeted upon the family. The farmer was a gray-haired old loyalist, whom I shall always remember, leaning on his staff in the middle of the kitchen, barred out from his place in the chimney-corner by the noisy circle of his unbidden guests. Major Parker was a brisk little man, clad in brindle jeans of ancient cut, resplendent with brass buttons. Two small piercing eyes, deep-set beside a hawk's-beak nose, twinkled from under the rim of his brown straw hat, whose crown was defiantly surmounted by a cock's feather. But he was exceedingly jolly withal, and welcomed the Yankees with pompous good-humor, despatching a sergeant for a jug of applejack, which was doubtless as inexpensive to the major as his other hospitality. Having been a prisoner at Chicago, he prided himself on his knowledge of dungeon etiquette and the military courtesies due to our rank.

We were awakened in the morning by high-pitched voices in the room below. Lieutenant Sill and I had passed the night in neighboring caverns of the same miraculous feather-bed. We recognized the voice of the major, informing some culprit that he had just ten minutes to live, and that if he wished to send any dying message to his wife or children then and there was his last opportunity; and then followed the tramping of the guards as they retired from his presence with their victim. Hastily dressing, we hurried down to find what was the matter. We were welcomed with a cheery good-morning from the major, who seemed to be in the sunniest of spirits. No sign of commotion was visible. "Step out to the branch, gentlemen; your parole of honor is sufficient; you'll find towels—been a prisoner myself." And he restrained by a sign the sentinel who would have accompanied us. At the branch, in the yard, we found the other refugees trembling for their fate, and learned that Headen had gone to the orchard in the charge of a file of soldiers with a rope. While we were discussing the situation and endeavoring to calm the apprehensions of the Georgians, the executioners returned from the orchard, our guide marching in advance and looking none the worse for the rough handling he had undergone. The brave fellow had confided his last message and been thrice drawn up toward the branch of an apple-tree, and as many times lowered for the information it was supposed he would give. Nothing was learned, and it is probable he had no secrets to disclose or conceal.

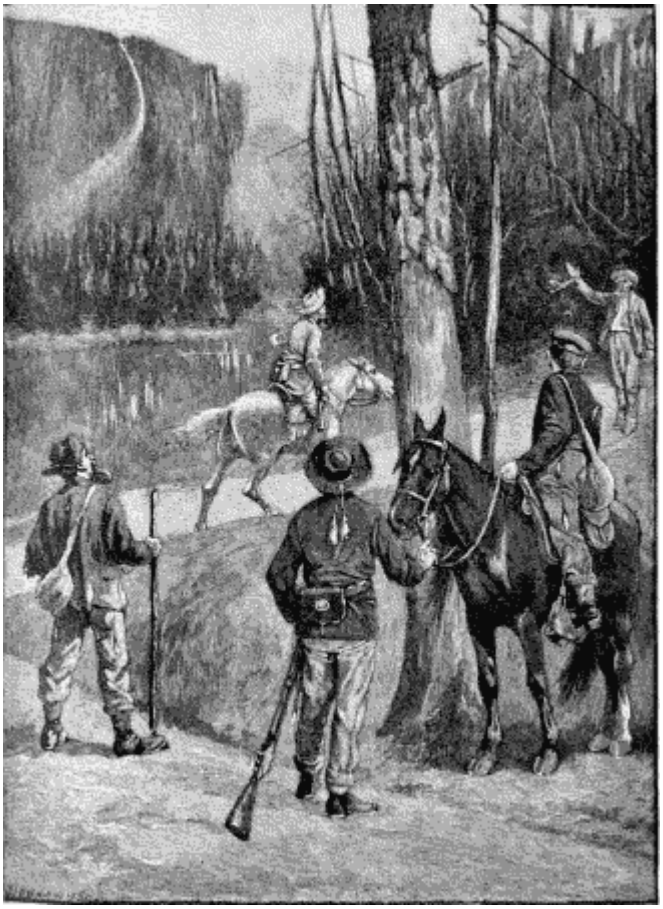
Lieutenant Cogdill, with two soldiers, was detailed to conduct us to Quallatown, a Cherokee station at the foot of the Great Smoky Mountains. Two horses were allotted to the guard, and we set out in military order, the refugees two and two in advance, Headen and Old Man Tigue lashed together by the wrists, and the rear

brought up by the troopers on horseback. It was the last day of the year, and although a winter morning, the rare mountain air was as soft as spring. We struck the banks of the Tuckasegee directly opposite to a feathery waterfall, which, leaping over a crag of the opposite cliff, was dissipated in a glittering sheet of spray before reaching the tops of the trees below. As the morning advanced we fell into a more negligent order of marching. The beautiful river, a wide, swift current, flowing smoothly between thickly wooded banks, swept by on our left, and on the right wild, uninhabited mountains closed in the road. The two Vincents were strolling along far in advance. Some distance behind them were Headen and Tigue; the remainder of us following in a general group, Sill mounted beside one of the guards. Advancing in this order, a cry from the front broke on the stillness of the woods, and we beheld Old Man Tigue gesticulating wildly in the center of the road and screaming, "He's gone! He's gone! Catch him!" Sure enough the old man was alone, the fragment of the parted strap dangling from his outstretched wrist. The guard, who was mounted, dashed off in pursuit, followed by the lieutenant on foot, but both soon returned, giving over the hopeless chase. Thoroughly frightened by the events of the morning, Headen[18] had watched his opportunity to make good his escape, and, as we afterward learned, joined by Knapp and Tom Handcock, he conducted a party safely to Tennessee.

[18]A short time ago the writer received the following letter: "Casher's Valley, May 28, 1890. Old Manuel Headen and wife are living, but separated. Julia Ann is living with her mother. The old lady is blind. Old man Norton (Roderic), to whose house you were taken as prisoner, has been dead for years. Old Tom Handcock is dead.—W.R. HOOPER."

At Webster, the court town of Jackson County, we were quartered for the night in the jail, but accompanied Lieutenant Cogdill to a venison breakfast at the parsonage with Mrs. Harris and her daughter, who had called on us the evening before. Snow had fallen during the night, and when we continued our march it was with the half-frozen slush crushing in and out, at every step, through our broken shoes. Before the close of this dreary New-Year's day we came upon the scene of one of those wild tragedies which are still of too frequent occurrence in those remote regions, isolated from the strong arm of the law. Our road led down and around the mountain-side, which on our right was a barren, rocky waste, sloping gradually up from the inner curve of the arc we were describing. From this direction arose a low wailing sound, and a little farther on we came in view of a dismal group of men, women, and mules. In the center of the gathering lay the lifeless remains of a father and his two sons; seated upon the ground, swaying and weeping over their dead, were the mother and wives of the young men. A burial party, armed with spades and picks, waited by their mules, while at a respectful distance from the mourners stood a circle of neighbors and passers-by, some gazing in silent sympathy, and others not hesitating to express a quiet

approval of the shocking tragedy. Between two families, the Hoopers and the Watsons, a bitter feud had long existed, and from time to time men of each clan had fallen by the rifles of the other. The Hoopers were loyal Union men, and if the Watsons yielded any loyalty it was to the State of North Carolina. On one occasion shortly before the final tragedy, when one of the young Hoopers was sitting quietly in his door, a light puff of smoke rose from the bushes and a rifle-ball plowed through his leg. The Hoopers resolved to begin the new year by wiping out their enemies, root and branch. Before light they had surrounded the log cabin of the Watsons and secured all the male inmates, except one who, wounded, escaped through a window. The latter afterward executed a singular revenge by killing and skinning the dog of his enemies and elevating the carcass on a pole in front of their house.



THE ESCAPE OF HEADEN.

After a brief stay at Quallatown we set out for Asheville, leaving behind our old and friendly guard. Besides the soldiers who now had us in charge, a Cherokee Indian was allotted to each prisoner, with instructions to keep his man constantly in view. To travel with an armed Indian, sullen and silent, trotting at your heels like a dog, with very explicit instructions to blow out your brains at the first attempt to escape, is neither cheerful nor ornamental, and we were a sorry-

looking party plodding silently along the road. Detachments of prisoners were frequently passed over this route, and regular stopping-places were established for the nights. It was growing dusk when we arrived at the first cantonment, which was the wing of a great barren farm-house owned by Colonel Bryson. The place was already occupied by a party of refugees, and we were directed to a barn in the field beyond. We had brought with us uncooked rations, and while two of the soldiers went into the house for cooking utensils, the rest of the party, including the Indians, were leaning in a line upon the door-yard fence; Sill and Lamson were at the end of the line, where the fence cornered with a hedge. Presently the two soldiers reappeared, one of them with an iron pot in which to cook our meat, and the other swinging in his hand a burning brand. In the wake of these guides we followed down to the barn, and had already started a fire when word came from the house that for fear of rain we had best return to the corn-barn. It was not until we were again in the road that I noticed the absence of Sill and Lamson. I hastened to Smith and confided the good news. The fugitives were missed almost simultaneously by the guards, who first beat up the vicinity of the barn, and then, after securing the remainder of us in a corn-crib, sent out the Indians in pursuit. Faithful dogs, as these Cherokees had shown themselves during the day, they proved but poor hunters when the game was in the bush, and soon returned, giving over the chase. Half an hour later they were all back in camp, baking their hoe-cake in genuine aboriginal fashion, flattened on the surface of a board and inclined to the heat of the fire.[19]

[19]Sill and Lamson reached Loudon, Tennessee, in February. A few days after their escape from the Indian guard they arrived at the house of "Shooting John Brown," who confided them to the care of the young Hoopers and a party of their outlying companions. From a rocky cliff overlooking the valley of the Tuckasegee they could look down on the river roads dotted with the sheriff's posse in pursuit of the Hoopers. So near were they that they could distinguish a relative of the Watsons leading the sheriff's party. One of the Hooper boys, with characteristic recklessness and to the consternation of the others, stood boldly out on a great rock in plain sight of his pursuers (if they had chanced to look up), half resolved to try his rifle at the last of the Watsons.

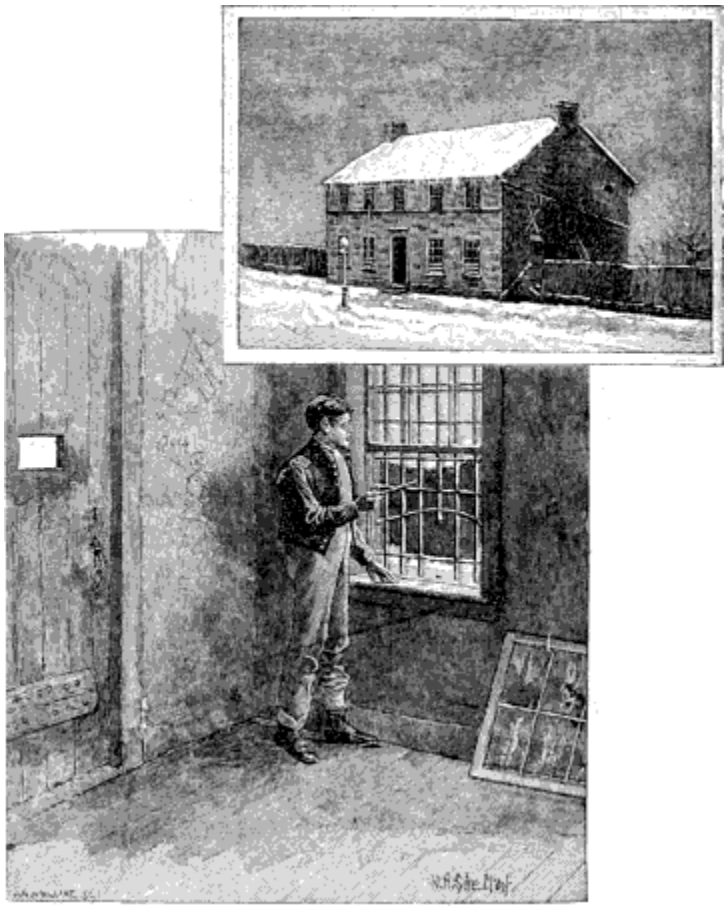
That I was eager to follow goes without saying, but our keepers had learned our slippery character. All the way to Asheville, day and night, we were watched with sleepless vigilance. There we gave our parole, Smith and I, and secured thereby comfortable quarters in the court-house with freedom to stroll about the town. Old Man Tigue and the Vincents were committed to the county jail. We were there a week, part of my spare time being employed in helping a Confederate company officer make out a correct pay-roll.

When our diminished ranks had been recruited by four more officers from Columbia, who had been captured near the frozen summit of the Great Smoky Mountains, we were started on a journey of sixty miles to Greenville in South Carolina. The night before our arrival we were quartered at a large farm-house.

The prisoners, together with the privates of the guard, were allotted a comfortable room, which contained, however, but a single bed. The officer in charge had retired to enjoy the hospitality of the family. A flock of enormous white pullets were roosting in the yard. Procuring an iron kettle from the servants, who looked with grinning approval upon all forms of chicken stealing, we sallied forth to the capture. Twisting the precious necks of half a dozen, we left them to die in the grass while we pierced the side of a sweet-potato mound. Loaded with our booty we retreated to the house undiscovered, and spent the night in cooking in one pot instead of sleeping in one bed. The fowls were skinned instead of plucked, and, vandals that we were, dressed on the backs of the picture-frames taken down from the walls.

At Greenville we were lodged in the county jail to await the reconstruction of railway-bridges, when we were to be transported to Columbia. The jail was a stone structure, two stories in height, with halls through the center on both floors and square rooms on each side. The lock was turned on our little party of six in one of these upper rooms, having two grated windows looking down on the walk. Through the door which opened on the hall a square hole was cut as high as one's face and large enough to admit the passage of a plate. Aside from the rigor of our confinement we were treated with marked kindness. We had scarcely walked about our dungeon before the jailer's daughters were at the door with their autograph albums. In a few days we were playing draughts and reading Bulwer, while the girls, without, were preparing our food and knitting for us warm new stockings. Notwithstanding all these attentions, we were ungratefully discontented. At the end of the first week we were joined by seven enlisted men, Ohio boys, who like ourselves had been found at large in the mountains. From one of these new arrivals we procured a case-knife and a gun screw-driver. Down on the hearth before the fire the screw-driver was placed on the thick edge of the knife and belabored with a beef bone until a few inches of its back were converted into a rude saw. The grate in the window was formed of cast-iron bars, passing perpendicularly through wrought-iron plates, bedded in the stone jambs. If one of these perpendicular bars, an inch and a half square, could be cut through, the plates might be easily bent so as to permit the egress of a man. With this end in view we cautiously began operations. Outside of the bars a piece of carpet had been stretched to keep out the raw wind, and behind this we worked with safety. An hour's toil produced but a few feathery filings on the horizontal plate, but many hands make light work, and steadily the cut grew deeper. We recalled the adventures of Claude Duval, Dick Turpin, and Sixteen-string Jack, and sawed away. During the available hours of three days and throughout one entire night the blade of steel was worrying, rasping, eating the iron bar. At last the grosser yielded to the temper and persistence of the finer metal. It was Saturday night when the toilsome cut was completed, and preparations were

already under way for a speedy departure. The jail had always been regarded as too secure to require a military guard, although soldiers were quartered in the town; besides, the night was so cold that a crust had formed on the snow, and both citizens and soldiers, unused to such extreme weather would be likely to remain indoors. For greater secrecy of movement, we divided into small parties, aiming to traverse different roads. I was to go with my former companion, Captain Smith. Lots were cast to determine the order of our going. First exit was allotted to four of the Ohio soldiers. Made fast to the grating outside were a bit of rope and strip of blanket, along which to descend. Our room was immediately over that of the jailer and his sleeping family, and beneath our opening was a window, which each man must pass in his descent. At eleven o'clock the exodus began. The first man was passed through the bars amid a suppressed buzz of whispered cautions. His boots were handed after him in a haversack. The rest of us, pressing our faces to the frosty grating, listened breathlessly for the success of the movement we could no longer see. Suddenly there was a crash, and in the midst of mutterings of anger we snatched in the rag ladder and restored the piece of carpeting to its place outside the bars. Our pioneer had hurt his hand against the rough stones, and, floundering in mid-air, had dashed his leg through sash and glass of the window below. We could see nothing of his further movements, but soon discovered the jailer standing in the door, looking up and down the street, seemingly in the dark as to where the crash came from. At last, wearied and worried and disappointed, we lay down in our blankets upon the hard floor.



GREENVILLE JAIL.

At daylight we were awakened by the voice of Miss Emma at the hole in the door. "Who got out last night?" "Welty." "Well, you was fools you didn't all go; pap wouldn't 'a' stopped you. If you'll keep the break concealed until night we'll let you all out." The secret of the extreme kindness of our keepers was explained. The jailer, a loyalist, retained his position as a civil detail, thus protecting himself and sons from conscription. Welty had been taken in the night before, his bruises had been anointed, and he had been provisioned for the journey.

We spent the day repairing our clothing and preparing for the road. My long-heeled cowhides, "wife's shoes," for which I had exchanged a uniform waistcoat with a cotton-wooled old darky on the banks of the Saluda, were about parting soles from uppers, and I kept the twain together by winding my feet with stout cords. At supper an extra ration was given us. As soon as it was dark the old jailer appeared among us and gave us a minute description of the different roads leading west into the mountains, warning us of certain dangers. At eleven o'clock Miss Emma came with the great keys, and we followed her, in single file, down the stairs and out into the back yard of the jail. From the broken gratings in front, the bit of rope and strip of blanket were left dangling in the wind.

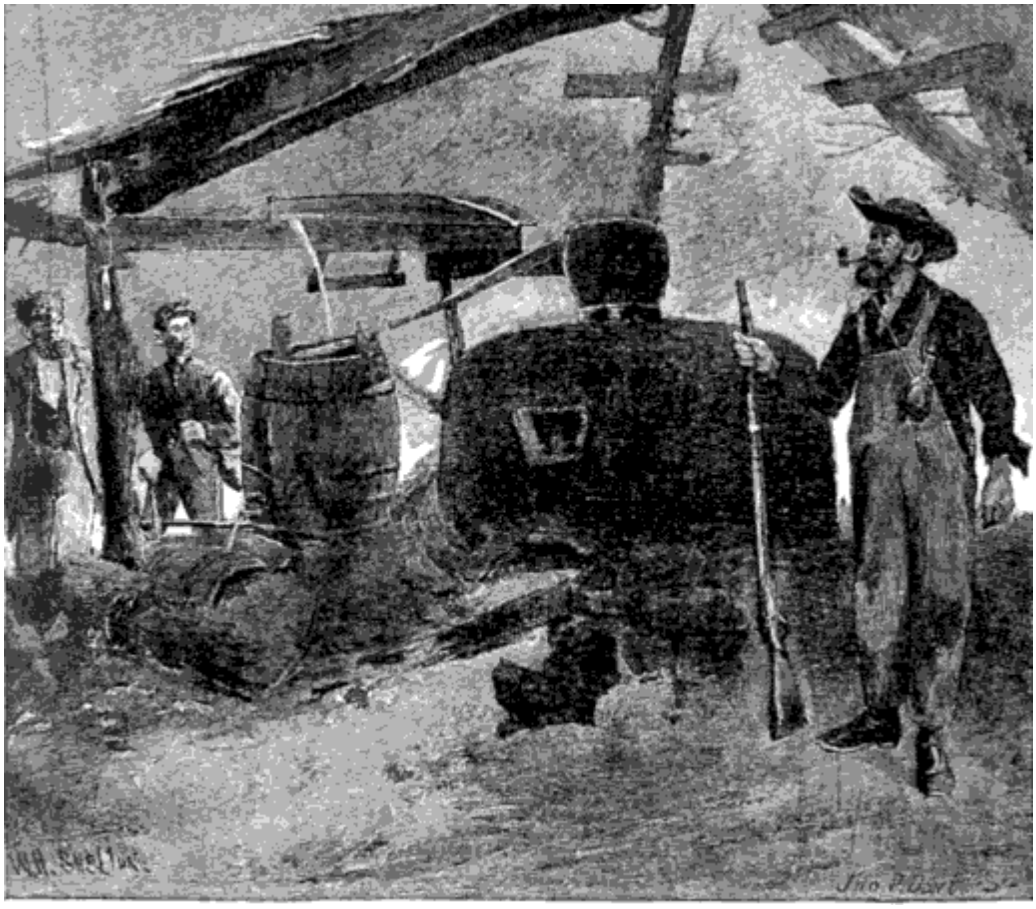
We made short work of leave-taking, Captain Smith and I separating immediately from the rest, and pushing hurriedly out of the sleeping town, by back streets, into the bitter cold of the country roads. We stopped once to warm at the pits of some negro charcoal-burners, and before day dawned had traveled sixteen miles. We found a sheltered nook on the side of the mountain open to the sun, where we made a bed of dry leaves and remained for the day. At night we set out again, due west by the stars, but before we had gone far my companion, who claimed to know something of the country, insisted upon going to the left, and within a mile turned into another left-hand road. I protested, claiming that this course was leading us back. While we were yet contending, we came to a bridgeless creek whose dark waters barred our progress, and at the same moment, as if induced by the thought of the fording, the captain was seized with rheumatic pains in his knees, so that he walked with difficulty. We had just passed a house where lights were still showing, and to this we decided to return, hoping at least to find shelter for Smith. Leaving him at the gate, I went to a side porch and knocked at the door, which was opened by a woman who proved to be friendly to our cause, her husband being in the rebel army much against his will. We were soon seated to the right and left of her fireplace. Blazing pine-knots brilliantly lighted the room, and a number of beds lined the walls. A trundle-bed before the fire was occupied by a very old woman, who was feebly moaning with rheumatism. Our hostess shouted into the old lady's ear, "Granny, them's Yankees." "Be they!" said she, peering at us with her poor old eyes. "Be ye sellin' tablecloths?" When it was explained that we were just from the war, she demanded, in an absent way, to know if we were Britishers. We slept in one of the comfortable beds, and, as a measure of prudence, passed the day in the woods, leaving at nightfall with well-filled haversacks. Captain Smith was again the victim of his rheumatism, and directing me to his friends at Cæsar's Head, where I was to wait for him until Monday (it then being Tuesday), he returned to the house, little thinking that we were separating forever.

I traveled very rapidly all night, hoping to make the whole distance, but day was breaking when I reached the head waters of the Saluda. Following up the stream, I found a dam on which I crossed, and although the sun was rising and the voices of children mingled with the lowing of cattle in the frosty air, I ran across the fields and gained a secure hiding-place on the side of the mountain. It was a long, solitary day, and glad was I when it grew sufficiently dark to turn the little settlement and get into the main road up the mountain. It was six zigzag miles to the top, the road turning on log abutments, well anchored with stones, and not a habitation on the way until I should reach Bishop's house, on the crest of the divide. Half-way up I paused before a big summer hotel, looming up in the woods like the ghost of a deserted factory, its broken windows and rotting gateways redoubling the solitude of the bleak mountain-side. Shortly before

reaching Bishop's, "wife's shoes" became quite unmanageable. One had climbed up my leg half-way to the knee, and I knocked at the door with the wreck of the other in my hand. My visit had been preceded but a day by a squad of partizan raiders, who had carried away the bedding and driven off the cattle of my new friends, and for this reason the most generous hospitality could offer no better couch than the hard floor. Stretched thereon in close proximity to the dying fire, the cold air coming up through the wide cracks between the hewn planks seemed to be cutting me in sections as with icy saws, so that I was forced to establish myself lengthwise on a broad puncheon at the side of the room and under the table.

In this family "the gray mare was the better horse," and poor Bishop, an inoffensive man, and a cripple withal, was wedded to a regular Xantippe. It was evident that unpleasant thoughts were dominant in the woman's mind as she proceeded sullenly and vigorously with preparations for breakfast. The bitter bread of charity was being prepared with a vengeance for the unwelcome guest. Premonitions of the coming storm flashed now and then in lightning cuffs on the ears of the children, or crashed venomously among the pottery in the fireplace. At last the repast was spread, the table still standing against the wall, as is the custom among mountain housewives. The good-natured husband now advanced cheerfully to lend a hand in removing it into the middle of the room. It was when one of the table-legs overturned the swill-pail that the long pent-up storm burst in a torrent of invective. The prospect of spending several days here was a very gloomy outlook, and the relief was great when it was proposed to pay a visit to Neighbor Case, whose house was in the nearest valley, and with whose sons Captain Smith had lain in concealment for some weeks on a former visit to the mountains. I was curious to see his sons, who were famous outliers. From safe cover they delighted to pick off a recruiting officer or a tax-in-kind collector, or tumble out of their saddles the last drivers of a wagon-train. These lively young men had been in unusual demand of late, and their hiding-place was not known even to the faithful, so I was condemned to the society of an outlier of a less picturesque variety. Pink Bishop was a blacksmith, and just the man to forge me a set of shoes from the leather Neighbor Case had already provided. The little still-shed, concealed from the road only by a low hill, was considered an unsafe harbor, on account of a fresh fall of snow with its sensibility to tell-tale impressions. So, we set up our shoe-factory in a deserted cabin, well back on the mountain and just astride of that imaginary line which divides the Carolinas. From the fireplace we dug away the corn-stalks, heaping the displaced bundles against broken windows and windy cracks, and otherwise secured our retreat against frost and enemies. Then ensued three days of primitive shoemaking. As may be inferred, the shoes made no pretension to style. I sewed the short seams at the sides, and split the pegs from a section of seasoned maple. Rudely

constructed as these shoes were, they bore their wearer triumphantly into the promised land.



PINK BISHOP AT THE STILL.

I restrained my eagerness to be going until Monday night, the time agreed upon, when, my disabled companion not putting in an appearance, I set out for my old friend's in Casher's Valley. I got safety over a long wooden bridge within half a mile of a garrisoned town. I left the road, and turned, as I believed, away from the town; but I was absolutely lost in the darkness of a snow-storm, and forced to seek counsel as well as shelter. In this plight I pressed on toward a light glimmering faintly through the blinding snow. It led me into the shelter of the porch to a small brown house, cut deeply beneath the low eaves, and protected at the sides by flanking bedrooms. My knock was answered by a girlish voice, and from the ensuing parley, through the closed door, I learned that she was the daughter of a Baptist exhorter, and that she was alone in the house, her brother being away at the village, and her father, who preached the day before at some distance, not being expected home until the next morning. Reassured by my civil-toned inquiries about the road, she unfastened the door and came out to the porch, where she proceeded to instruct me how to go on, which was just the thing

I least desired to do. By this time I had discovered the political complexion of the family, and, making myself known, was instantly invited in, with the assurance that her father would be gravely displeased if she permitted me to go on before he returned. I had interrupted my little benefactress in the act of writing a letter, on a sheet of foolscap which lay on an old-fashioned stand in one corner of the room, beside the ink-bottle and the candlestick. In the diagonal corner stood a tall bookcase, the crowded volumes nestling lovingly behind the glass doors—the only collection of the sort that I saw at any time in the mountains. A feather-bed was spread upon the floor, the head raised by means of a turned-down chair, and here I was reposing comfortably when the brother arrived. It was late in the forenoon when the minister reached home, his rickety wagon creaking through the snow, and drawn at a snail's pace by a long-furred, knock-kneed horse. The tall but not very clerical figure was wrapped in a shawl and swathed round the throat with many turns of a woolen tippet. The daughter ran out with eagerness to greet her father and tell of the wonderful arrival. I was received with genuine delight. It was the enthusiasm of a patriot eager to find a sympathetic ear for his long-repressed views.[20]

[20]The Rev. James H. Duckworth, now postmaster of Brevard, Transylvania County, North Carolina, and in 1868 member of the State Constitutional Convention, in his letter of June 24, 1890, says: "I have not forgotten those things of which you speak. I can almost see you (even in imagination) standing at the fire when I drove up to the gate and went into the house and asked you, 'Have I ever seen you before?' Just then I observed your uniform. 'Oh, yes,' said I; 'I know who it is now.' ... This daughter of whom you speak married about a year after, and is living in Morgantown, North Carolina, about one hundred miles from here. Hattie (for that is her name) is a pious, religious woman."

ARRIVAL HOME OF THE BAPTIST MINISTER.

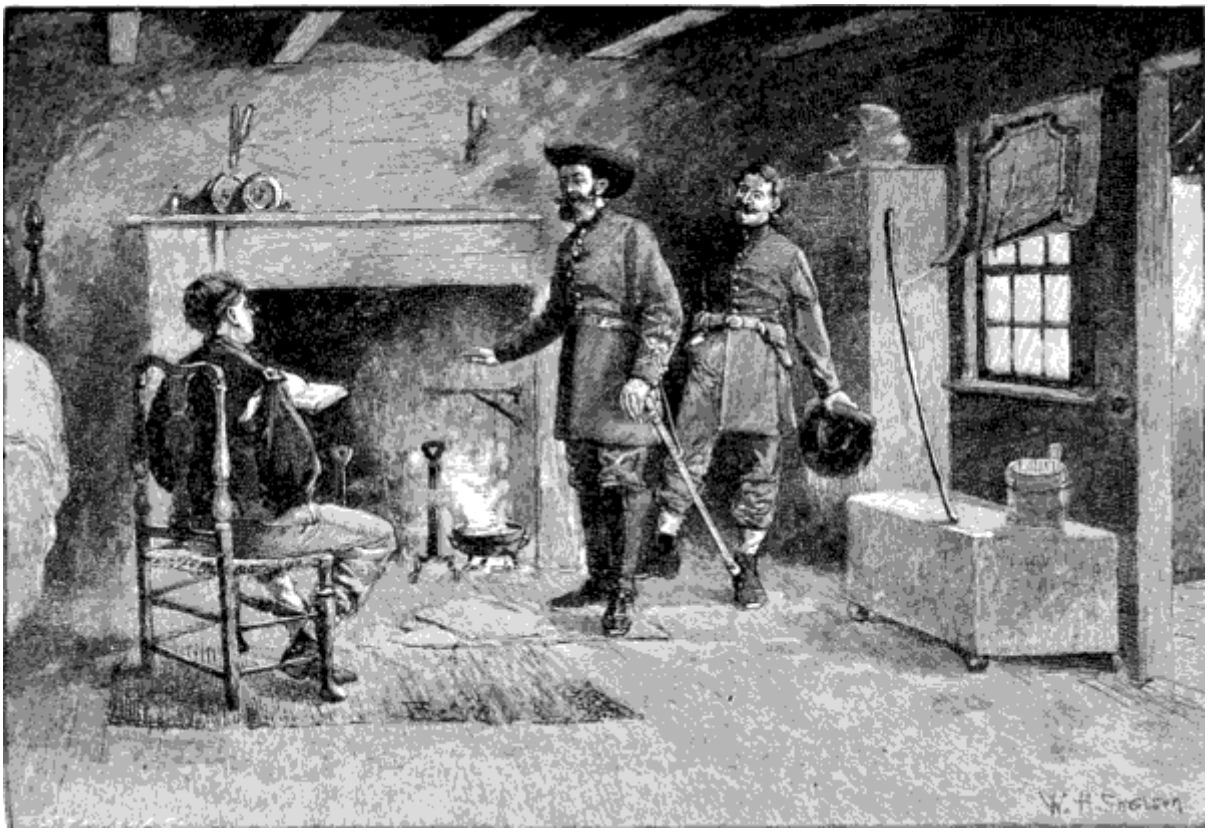
When night came and no entreaties could prevail to detain me over another day, the minister conducted me some distance in person, passing me on with ample directions to another exhorter, who was located for that night at the house of a miller who kept a ferocious dog. I came first to the pond and then to the mill, and got into the house without encountering the dog. Aware of the necessity of arriving before bedtime, I had made such speed as to find the miller's family still lingering about the fireplace with preacher number two seated in the lay circle. That night I slept with the parson, who sat up in bed in the morning, and after disencumbering himself of a striped extinguisher nightcap, electrified the other sleepers by announcing that this was the first time he had ever slept with a Yankee. After breakfast the parson, armed with staff and scrip, signified his purpose to walk with me during the day, as it was no longer dangerous to move by daylight. We must have been traveling the regular Baptist road, for we lodged that night at the house of another lay brother. The minister continued with me a few miles in the morning, intending to put me in the company of a man who was going toward Casher's Valley on a hunting expedition. When we reached his house, however, the hunter had gone; so, after parting with my guide, I set forward through the woods, following the tracks of the hunter's horse. The shoe-prints were sometimes plainly impressed in the snow, and again for long distances over dry leaves and bare ground but an occasional trace could be found.

It was past noon when I arrived at the house where the hunters were assembled. Quite a number of men were gathered in and about the porch, just returned from the chase. Blinded by the snow over which I had been walking in the glare of the sun, I blundered up the steps, inquiring without much tact for the rider who had preceded me, and was no little alarmed at receiving a rude and gruff reception. I continued in suspense for some time, until my man found an opportunity to inform me that there were suspicious persons present, thus accounting for his unexpected manner. The explanation was made at a combination meal, serving for both dinner and supper, and consisting exclusively of beans. I set out at twilight to make a walk of thirteen miles to the house of our old friend Esquire Hooper. Eager for the cordial welcome which I knew awaited me, and nerved by the frosty air, I sped over the level wood road, much of the way running instead of walking. Three times I came upon bends of the same broad rivulet. Taking off my shoes and stockings and rolling up my trousers above my knees, I tried the first passage. Flakes of broken ice were eddying against the banks, and before gaining the middle of the stream my feet and ankles ached with the cold, the sharp pain increasing at every step until I threw my blanket on the opposite bank and springing upon it wrapped my feet in its dry folds. Rising a little knoll soon after making the third ford, I came suddenly upon the familiar stopping-place of my former journey. It was scarcely more than nine o'clock, and the little hardships of the journey from Cæsar's Head seemed but a cheap outlay for the joy of the meeting with friends so interested in the varied fortunes of myself and my late companions. Together we rejoiced at the escape of Sill and Lamson, and made merry over the vicissitudes of my checkered career. Here I first learned of the safe arrival in Tennessee of Knapp, Man Heady, and old Tom Handcock.

After a day's rest I climbed the mountains to the Headen cabin, now presided over by the heroine of the heifer-bell, in the absence of her fugitive husband. Saddling her horse, she took me the next evening to join a lad who was about starting for Shooting Creek. Young Green was awaiting my arrival, and after a brief delay we were off on a journey of something like sixty miles; the journey, however, was pushed to a successful termination by the help of information gleaned by the way. It was at the close of the last night's march, which had been long and uneventful, except that we had surmounted no fewer than three snow-capped ridges, that my blacksmith's shoes, soaked to a pulp by the wet snow, gave out altogether. On the top of the last ridge I found myself panting in the yellow light of the rising sun, the sad wrecks of my two shoes dangling from my hands, a wilderness of beauty spread out before me, and a sparkling field of frosty forms beneath my tingling feet. Stretching far into the west toward the open country of East Tennessee was the limitless wilderness of mountains, drawn like mighty furrows across the toilsome way, the pale blue of the uttermost ridges fading into an imperceptible union with the sky. A log house was in sight down

in the valley, a perpendicular column of smoke rising from its single chimney. Toward this we picked our way, I in my stocking feet, and my boy guide confidently predicting that we should find the required cobbler. Of course we found him in a country where every family makes its own shoes as much as its own bread, and he was ready to serve the traveler without pay. Notwithstanding our night's work, we tarried only for the necessary repairs, and just before sunset we looked down upon the scattering settlement of Shooting Creek. Standing on the bleak brow of "Chunky Gall" Mountain, my guide recognized the first familiar object on the trip, which was the roof of his uncle's house. At Shooting Creek I was the guest of the Widow Kitchen, whose house was the chief one in the settlement, and whose estate boasted two slaves. The husband had fallen by an anonymous bullet while salting his cattle on the mountain in an early year of the war.

On the day following my arrival I was conducted over a ridge to another creek, where I met two professional guides, Quince Edmonston and Mack Hooper. As I came upon the pair parting a thicket of laurel, with their long rifles at a shoulder, I instantly recognized the coat of the latter as the snuff-colored sack in which I had last seen Lieutenant Lamson. It had been given to the man at Chattanooga, where these same guides had conducted my former companions in safety a month before. Quince Edmonston, the elder, had led numerous parties of Yankee officers over the Wacheesa trail for a consideration of a hundred dollars, pledged to be paid by each officer at Chattanooga or Nashville.



SURPRISED AT MRS. KITCHEN'S.

Two other officers were concealed near by, and a number of refugees, awaiting a convoy, and an arrangement was rapidly made with the guides. The swollen condition of the Valley River made it necessary to remain for several days at Shooting Creek before setting out. Mack and I were staying at the house of Mrs. Kitchen. It was on the afternoon of a memorable Friday, the rain still falling in torrents without, that I sat before the fire poring over a small Sunday-school book,—the only printed book in the house, if not in the settlement. Mack Hooper was sitting by the door. Attracted by a rustling sound in his direction, I looked up just in time to see his heels disappearing under the nearest bed. Leaping to my feet with an instinctive impulse to do likewise, I was confronted in the doorway by a stalwart Confederate officer fully uniformed and armed. Behind him was his quartermaster-sergeant. This was a government party collecting the tax in kind, which at that time throughout the Confederacy was the tenth part of all crops and other farm productions. It was an ugly surprise. Seeing no escape, I ventured a remark on the weather: only a stare in reply. A plan of escape flashed through my mind like an inspiration. I seated myself quietly, and for an instant bent my eyes upon the printed pages. The two soldiers had advanced to the corner of the chimney nearest the door, inquiring for the head of the family, and keeping their eyes riveted on my hostile uniform. At this juncture I was seized with a severe fit of coughing. With one hand upon my chest, I walked slowly past the men, and

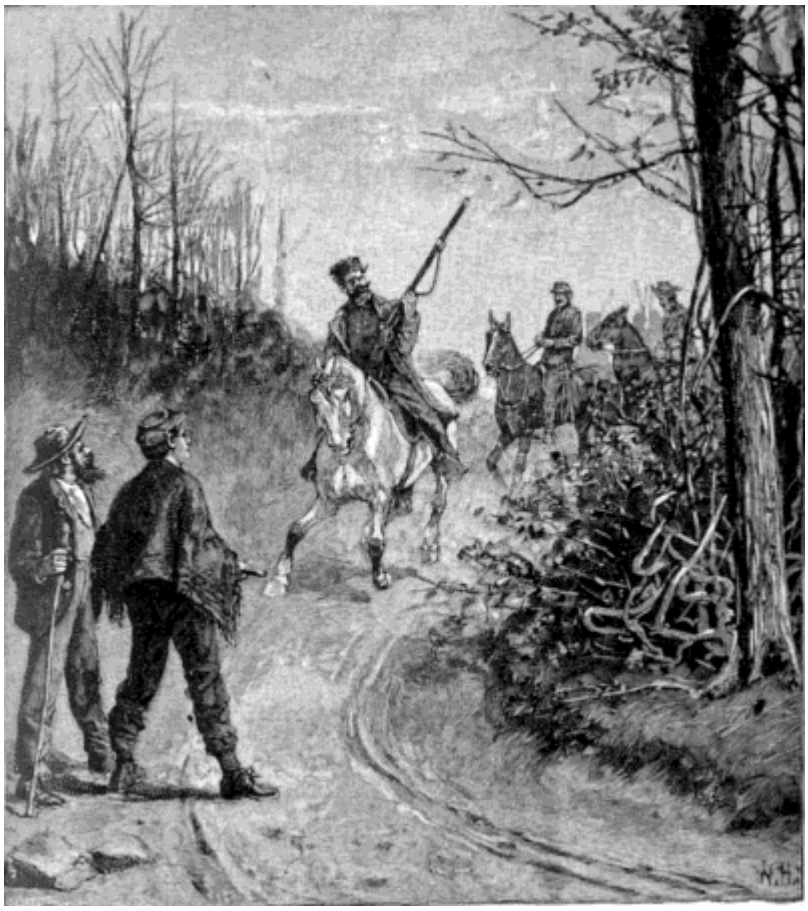
laid my carefully opened book face down upon a chest. With another step or two I was in the porch, and bounding into the kitchen I sprang out through a window already opened by the women for my exit. Away I sped bareheaded through the pelting rain, now crashing through thick underbrush, now up to my waist in swollen streams, plunging on and on, only mindful to select a course that would baffle horsemen in pursuit. After some miles of running I took cover behind a stack, within view of the road which Mack must take in retreating to the other settlement; and sure enough here he was, coming down the road with my cap and haversack, which was already loaded for the western journey. Mack had remained undiscovered under the bed, an interested listener to the conversation that ensued. The officer had been assured that I was a friendly scout; but, convinced of the contrary by my flight, he had departed swearing he would capture that Yankee before morning if he had to search the whole settlement. So alarmed were we for our safety that we crossed that night into a third valley and slept in the loft of a horse-barn.

On Sunday our expedition assembled on a hillside overlooking Shooting Creek, where our friends in the secret of the movement came up to bid us adieu. With guides we were a party of thirteen or fourteen, but only three of us officers who were to pay for our safe conduct. Each man carried his supply of bread and meat and bedding. Some were wrapped in faded bed-quilts and some in tattered army blankets; nearly all wore ragged clothes, broken shoes, and had unkempt beards. We arrived upon a mountain-side overlooking the settlement of Peach Tree, and were awaiting the friendly shades of night under which to descend to the house of the man who was to put us across Valley River. Premature darkness was accompanied with torrents of rain, through which we followed our now uncertain guides. At last the light of the cabin we were seeking gleamed humidly through the trees. Most of the family fled into the outhouses at our approach, some of them not reappearing until we were disposed for sleep in a half-circle before the fire. The last arrivals were two tall women in homespun dresses and calico sunbonnets. They slid timidly in at the door, with averted faces, and then with a rush and a bounce covered themselves out of sight in a bed, where they had probably been sleeping in the same clothing when we approached the house. Here we learned that a cavalcade of four hundred Texan Rangers had advanced into Tennessee by the roads on the day before. Our guides, familiar with the movements of these dreaded troopers, calculated that with the day's delay enforced by the state of the river a blow would have been struck and the marauders would be in full retreat before we should arrive on the ground. We passed that day concealed in a stable, and as soon as it was sufficiently dark we proceeded in a body to the bank of the river, attended by a man and a horse. The stream was narrow, but the current was full and swift. The horse breasted the

flood with difficulty, but he bore us all across one at a time, seated behind the farmer.

We had now left behind us the last settlement, and before us lay only wild and uninhabited mountains. The trail we traveled was an Indian path extending for nearly seventy miles through an uninhabited wilderness. Instead of crossing the ridges it follows the trend of the range, winding for the most part along the crests of the divides. The occasional traveler, having once mounted to its level, pursues his solitary way with little climbing.

Early in the morning of the fourth day our little party was assembled upon the last mountain overlooking the open country of East Tennessee. Some of us had been wandering in the mountains for the whole winter. We were returning to a half-forgotten world of farms and fences, roads and railways. Below us stretched the Tellico River away toward the line of towns marking the course of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad. One of the guides who had ventured down to the nearest house returned with information that the four hundred Texan Rangers had burned the depot at Philadelphia Station the day before, but were now thought to be out of the country. We could see the distant smoke arising from the ruins. Where the river flowed out of the mountains were extensive iron-works, the property of a loyal citizen, and in front of his house we halted for consultation. He regretted that we had shown ourselves so soon, as the rear-guard of the marauders had passed the night within sight of where we now stood. Our nearest pickets were at Loudon, thirty miles distant on the railway, and for this station we were advised to make all speed.



THE MEETING WITH THE SECOND OHIO HEAVY ARTILLERY.

For half a mile the road ran along the bank of the river, and then turned around a wooded bluff to the right. Opposite this bluff and accessible by a shallow ford was another hill, where it was feared that some of the Rangers were still lingering about their camp. As we came to the turn in the road our company was walking rapidly in Indian file, guide Edmonston and I at the front. Coming around the bluff from the opposite direction was a countryman mounted on a powerful gray mare. His overcoat was army blue, but he wore a bristling fur cap, and his rifle was slung on his back. At sight of us he turned in his saddle to shout to some one behind, and bringing his gun to bear came tearing and swearing down the road, spattering the gravel under the big hoofs of the gray. Close at his heels rode two officers in Confederate gray uniforms, and a motley crowd of riders closed up the road behind. In an instant the guide and I were surrounded, the whole cavalcade leveling their guns at the thicket and calling on our companions, who could be plainly heard crashing through the bushes, to halt. The dress of but few of our captors could be seen, nearly all being covered with rubber talmas; but their mounts, including mules as well as horses, were equipped with every variety of bridle and saddle to be imagined. I knew at a glance that this was no body of our cavalry. If we were in the hands of the Rangers, the fate of the guides and

refugees would be the hardest. I thought they might spare the lives of the officers. "Who are you? What are you doing here?" demanded the commander, riding up to us and scrutinizing our rags. I hesitated a moment, and then, throwing off the blanket I wore over my shoulders, simply said, "You can see what I am." My rags were the rags of a uniform, and spoke for themselves.

Our captors proved to be a company of the 2d Ohio Heavy Artillery, in pursuit of the marauders into whose clutches we thought we had fallen. The farmer on the gray mare was the guide of the expedition, and the two men uniformed as rebel officers were Union scouts. The irregular equipment of the animals, which had excited my suspicion most, as well as the animals themselves, had been hastily impressed from the country about the village of Loudon, where the 2d Ohio was stationed. On the following evening, which was the 4th of March, the day of the second inauguration of President Lincoln, we walked into Loudon and gladly surrendered ourselves to the outposts of the Ohio Heavy Artillery.

ESCAPE OF GENERAL BRECKINRIDGE

BY JOHN TAYLOR WOOD

As one of the aides of President Jefferson Davis, I left Richmond with him and his cabinet on April 2, 1865, the night of evacuation, and accompanied him through Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, until his capture. Except Lieutenant Barnwell, I was the only one of the party who escaped. After our surprise, I was guarded by a trooper, a German, who had appropriated my horse and most of my belongings. I determined, if possible, to escape; but after witnessing Mr. Davis's unsuccessful attempt, I was doubtful of success. However, I consulted him, and he advised me to try. Taking my guard aside, I asked him, by signs (for he could speak little or no English), to accompany me outside the picket-line to the swamp, showing him at the same time a twenty-dollar gold piece. He took it, tried the weight of it in his hands, and put it between his teeth. Fully satisfied that it was not spurious, he escorted me with his carbine to the stream, the banks of which were lined with a few straggling alder-bushes and thick saw-grass. I motioned him to return to camp, only a few rods distant. He shook his head, saying, "*Nein, nein*." I gave him another twenty-dollar gold piece; he chinked them together, and held up two fingers. I turned my pockets inside out, and then, satisfied that I had no more, he left me.

Creeping a little farther into the swamp, I lay concealed for about three hours in the most painful position, sometimes moving a few yards almost *ventre à terre* to escape notice; for I was within hearing of the camps on each side of the stream, and often when the soldiers came down for water, or to water their horses, I was within a few yards of them. Some two hours or more passed thus before the party moved. The wagons left first, then the bugles sounded, and the president started on one of his carriage-horses, followed by his staff and a squadron of the enemy. Shortly after their departure I saw some one leading two abandoned horses into the swamp, and recognized Lieutenant Barnwell of our escort. Secreting the horses, we picked up from the debris of the camp parts of two saddles and bridles, and with some patching and tying fitted out our horses, as sad and war-worn animals as ever man bestrode. Though hungry and tired, we gave the remains of the camp provisions to a Mr. Fenn for dinner. He recommended us to Widow Paulk's, ten miles distant, an old lady rich in cattle alone.

The day after my escape, I met Judah P. Benjamin as M. Bonfals, a French gentleman traveling for information, in a light wagon, with Colonel Leovie, who acted as interpreter. With goggles on, his beard grown, a hat well over his face, and a large cloak hiding his figure, no one would have recognized him as the late secretary of state of the Confederacy. I told him of the capture of Mr. Davis and his party, and made an engagement to meet him near Madison, Florida, and there decide upon our future movements. He was anxious to push on, and left us to follow more leisurely, passing as paroled soldiers returning home. For the next three days we traveled as fast as our poor horses would permit, leading or driving them; for even if they had been strong enough, their backs were in such a condition that we could not ride. We held on to them simply in the hope that we might be able to dispose of them or exchange them to advantage; but we finally were forced to abandon one.

On the 13th we passed through Valdosta, the first place since leaving Washington, in upper Georgia, in which we were able to purchase anything. Here I secured two hickory shirts and a pair of socks, a most welcome addition to my outfit; for, except what I stood in, I had left all my baggage behind. Near Valdosta we found Mr. Osborne Barnwell, an uncle of my young friend, a refugee from the coast of South Carolina, where he had lost a beautiful estate, surrounded with all the comforts and elegances which wealth and a refined taste could offer. Here in the pine forests, as far as possible from the paths of war, and almost outside of civilization, he had brought his family of ladies and children, and with the aid of his servants, most of whom had followed him, had built with a few tools a rough log cabin with six or eight rooms, but without nails, screws, bolts, or glass—almost as primitive a building as Robinson Crusoe's. But, in spite of all drawbacks, the ingenuity and deft hands of the ladies had given to the

premises an air of comfort and refinement that was most refreshing. Here I rested two days, enjoying the company of this charming family, with whom Lieutenant Barnwell remained. On the 15th I crossed into Florida, and rode to General Finnegan's, near Madison. Here I met General Breckinridge, the late secretary of war of the Confederacy, alias Colonel Cabell, and his aide, Colonel Wilson,—a pleasant encounter for both parties. Mr. Benjamin had been in the neighborhood, but, hearing that the enemy were in Madison, had gone off at a tangent. We were fully posted as to the different routes to the seaboard by General Finnegan, and discussed with him the most feasible way of leaving the country. I inclined to the eastern coast, and this was decided on. I exchanged my remaining horse with General Finnegan for a better, giving him fifty dollars to boot. Leaving Madison, we crossed the Suwanee River at Moody's Ferry, and took the old St. Augustine road, but seldom traveled in late years, as it leads through a pine wilderness, and there is one stretch of twenty miles with only water of bad quality, at the Diable Sinks. I rode out of my way some fifteen miles to Mr. Yulee's, formerly senator of the United States, and afterward Confederate senator, hoping to meet Mr. Benjamin; but he was too wily to be found at the house of a friend. Mr. Yulee was absent on my arrival, but Mrs. Yulee, a charming lady, and one of a noted family of beautiful women, welcomed me heartily. Mr. Yulee returned during the night from Jacksonville, and gave me the first news of what was going on in the world that I had had for nearly a month, including the information that Mr. Davis and party had reached Hilton Head on their way north.

Another day's ride brought us to the house of the brothers William and Samuel Owens, two wealthy and hospitable gentlemen, near Orange Lake. Here I rejoined General Breckinridge, and we were advised to secure the services and experience of Captain Dickinson. We sent to Waldo for him, and a most valuable friend he proved. During the war he had rendered notable services; among others he had surprised and captured the United States gunboat *Columbine* on the St. John's River, one of whose small boats he had retained, and kept concealed near the banks of the river. This boat with two of his best men he now put at our disposal, with orders to meet us on the upper St. John.

We now passed through a much more interesting country than the two or three hundred miles of pines we had just traversed. It was better watered, the forests were more diversified with varied species, occasionally thickets or hummocks were met with, and later these gave place to swamps and everglades with a tropical vegetation. The road led by Silver Spring, the clear and crystal waters of which show at the depth of hundreds of feet almost as distinctly as though seen through air.

We traveled incognito, known only to good friends, who sent us stage by stage from one to another, and by all we were welcomed most kindly. Besides those

mentioned, I recall with gratitude the names of Judge Dawkins, Mr. Mann, Colonel Summers, Major Stork, all of whom overwhelmed us with kindness, offering us of everything they had. Of money they were as bare as ourselves, for Confederate currency had disappeared as suddenly as snow before a warm sun, and greenbacks were as yet unknown. Before leaving our friends, we laid in a three weeks' supply of stores; for we could not depend upon obtaining any further south.

On May 25 we struck the St. John's River at Fort Butler, opposite Volusia, where we met Russell and O'Toole, two of Dickinson's command, in charge of the boat; and two most valuable and trustworthy comrades they proved to be, either in camp or in the boat, as hunters or fishermen. The boat was a man-of-war's small four-oared gig; her outfit was scanty, but what was necessary we rapidly improvised. Here General Breckinridge and I gave our horses to our companions, and thus ended my long ride of a thousand miles from Virginia.

Stowing our supplies away, we bade good-by to our friends, and started up the river with a fair wind. Our party consisted of General Breckinridge; his aide, Colonel Wilson of Kentucky; the general's servant, Tom, who had been with him all through the war; besides Russell, O'Toole, and I,—six in all. With our stores, arms, etc., it was a tight fit to get into the boat; there was no room to lie down or to stretch. At night we landed, and, like old campaigners, were soon comfortable. But at midnight the rain came down in bucketfuls, and continued till nearly morning; and, notwithstanding every effort, a large portion of our supplies were soaked and rendered worthless, and, what was worse, some of our powder shared the same fate.

Morning broke on a thoroughly drenched and unhappy company; but a little rum and water, with a corn-dodger and the rising sun, soon stirred us, and with a fair wind we made a good day's run,—some thirty-five miles. Except the ruins of two huts, there was no sign that a human being had ever visited these waters; for the war and the occasional visit of a gunboat had driven off the few settlers. The river gradually became narrower and more tortuous as we approached its head waters. The banks are generally low, with a few sandy elevations, thickly wooded or swampy. Occasionally we passed a small opening, or savanna, on which were sometimes feeding a herd of wild cattle and deer; at the latter we had several potshots, all wide. Alligators, as immovable as the logs on which they rested, could be counted by hundreds, and of all sizes up to twelve or fifteen feet. Occasionally, as we passed uncomfortably near, we could not resist, even with our scant supply of ammunition, giving them a little cold lead between the head and shoulders, the only vulnerable place. With a fair wind we sailed the twelve miles across Lake Monroe, a pretty sheet of water, the deserted huts of Enterprise and Mellonville on each side. Above the lake the river became still narrower and

more tortuous, dividing sometimes into numerous branches, most of which proved to be mere *culs-de-sac*. The long moss, reaching from the overhanging branches to the water, gave to the surroundings a most weird and funereal aspect.

On May 29 we reached Lake Harney, whence we determined to make the portage to Indian River. O'Toole was sent to look for some means of moving our boat. He returned next day with two small black bulls yoked to a pair of wheels such as are used by lumbermen. Their owner was a compound of Caucasian, African, and Indian, with the shrewdness of the white, the good temper of the negro, and the indolence of the red man. He was at first exorbitant in his demands; but a little money, some tobacco, and a spare fowling-piece made him happy, and he was ready to let us drive his beasts to the end of the peninsula. It required some skill to mount the boat securely on the wheels and to guard against any upsets or collisions, for our escape depended upon carrying it safely across.

The next morning we made an early start. Our course was an easterly one, through a roadless, flat, sandy pine-barren, with an occasional thicket and swamp. From the word "go" trouble with the bulls began. Their owner seemed to think that in furnishing them he had fulfilled his part of the contract. They would neither "gee" nor "haw"; if one started ahead, the other would go astern. If by accident they started ahead together, they would certainly bring up with their heads on each side of a tree. Occasionally they would lie down in a pool to get rid of the flies, and only by the most vigorous prodding could they be induced to move.

Paul, the owner, would loiter in the rear, but was always on hand when we halted for meals. Finally we told him, "No work, no grub; no drive bulls, no tobacco." This roused him to help us. Two days were thus occupied in covering eighteen miles. It would have been less labor to have tied the beasts, put them into the boat, and hauled it across the portage. The weather was intensely hot, and our time was made miserable by day with sand-flies, and by night with mosquitos.

The waters of Indian River were a most welcome sight, and we hoped that most of our troubles were over. Paul and his bulls of Bashan were gladly dismissed to the wilderness. Our first care was to make good any defects in our boat: some leaks were stopped by a little calking and pitching. Already our supply of provisions began to give us anxiety: only bacon and sweet potatoes remained. The meal was wet and worthless, and, what was worse, all our salt had dissolved. However, with the waters alive with fish, and some game on shore, we hoped to pull through.

We reached Indian River, or lagoon, opposite Cape Carnaveral. It extends along nearly the entire eastern coast of Florida, varying in width from three to six

miles, and is separated from the Atlantic by a narrow sand ridge, which is pierced at different points by shifting inlets. It is very shoal, so much so that we were obliged to haul our boat out nearly half a mile before she would float, and the water is teeming with stingarees, sword-fish, crabs, etc. But once afloat, we headed to the southward with a fair wind.

For four days we continued to make good progress, taking advantage of every fair wind by night as well as by day. Here, as on the St. John's River, the same scene of desolation as far as human beings were concerned was presented. We passed a few deserted cabins, around which we were able to obtain a few cocoanuts and watermelons, a most welcome addition to our slim commissariat. Unfortunately, oranges were not in season. Whenever the breeze left us the heat was almost suffocating; there was no escape for it. If we landed, and sought any shade, the mosquitos would drive us at once to the glare of the sun. When sleeping on shore, the best protection was to bury ourselves in the sand, with cap drawn down over the head (my buckskin gauntlets proved invaluable); if in the boat, to wrap the sail or tarpaulin around us. Besides this plague, sand-flies, gnats, swamp-flies, ants, and other insects abounded. The little black ant is especially bold and warlike. If, in making our beds in the sand, we disturbed one of their hives, they would rally in thousands to the attack, and the only safety was in a hasty shake and change of residence. Passing Indian River inlet, the river broadens, and there is a thirty-mile straight-away course to Gilbert's Bar, or Old Inlet, now closed; then begin the Jupiter Narrows, where the channel is crooked, narrow, and often almost closed by the dense growth of mangroves, juniper, saw-grass, etc., making a jungle that only a water-snake could penetrate. Several times we lost our reckoning, and had to retreat and take a fresh start; an entire day was lost in these everglades, which extend across the entire peninsula. Finally, by good luck, we stumbled on a short "haulover" to the sea, and determined at once to take advantage of it, and to run our boat across and launch her in the Atlantic. A short half-mile over the sand-dunes, and we were clear of the swamps and marshes of Indian River, and were reveling in the Atlantic, free, at least for a time, from mosquitos, which had punctured and bled us for the last three weeks.

SAND AS A DEFENSE AGAINST MOSQUITOS.

On Sunday, June 4, we passed Jupiter Inlet, with nothing in sight. The lighthouse had been destroyed the first year of the war. From this point we had determined to cross Florida Channel to the Bahamas, about eighty miles; but the wind was ahead, and we could do nothing but work slowly to the southward, waiting for a slant. It was of course a desperate venture to cross this distance in a small open boat, which even a moderate sea would swamp. Our provisions now became a very serious question. As I have said, we had lost all the meal, and the sweet

potatoes, our next main-stay, were sufficient only for two days more. We had but little more ammunition than was necessary for our revolvers, and these we might be called upon to use at any time. Very fortunately for us, it was the time of the year when the green turtle deposits its eggs. Russell and O'Toole were old beach-combers, and had hunted eggs before. Sharpening a stick, they pressed it into the sand as they walked along, and wherever it entered easily they would dig. After some hours' search we were successful in finding a nest which had not been destroyed, and I do not think prospectors were ever more gladdened by the sight of "the yellow" than we were at our find. The green turtle's egg is about the size of a walnut, with a white skin like parchment that you can tear, but not break. The yolk will cook hard, but the longer you boil the egg the softer the white becomes. The flavor is not unpleasant, and for the first two days we enjoyed them; but then we were glad to vary the fare with a few shell-fish and even with snails.

SEARCHING FOR TURLES EGGS.

From Cape Carnaveral to Cape Florida the coast trends nearly north and south in a straight line, so that we could see at a long distance anything going up or down the shore. Some distance to the southward of Jupiter Inlet we saw a steamer coming down, running close to the beach to avoid the three-and four-knot current of the stream. From her yards and general appearance I soon made her out to be a cruiser, so we hauled our boat well up on the sands, turned it over on its side, and went back among the palmettos. When abreast of us and not more than half a mile off, with colors flying, we could see the officer of the deck and others closely scanning the shore. We were in hopes they would look upon our boat as flotsam and jetsam, of which there was more or less strewn upon the beach. To our great relief, the cruiser passed us, and when she was two miles or more to the southward we ventured out and approached the boat, but the sharp lookout saw us, and, to our astonishment, the steamer came swinging about, and headed up the coast. The question at once arose, What was the best course to pursue? The general thought we had better take to the bush again, and leave the boat, hoping they would not disturb it. Colonel Wilson agreed with his chief. I told him that since we had been seen, the enemy would certainly destroy or carry off the boat, and the loss meant, if not starvation, at least privation, and no hope of escaping from the country. Besides, the mosquitos would suck us as dry as Egyptian mummies. I proposed that we should meet them half-way, in company with Russell and O'Toole, who were paroled men, and fortunately had their papers with them, and I offered to row off and see what was wanted. He agreed, and, launching our boat and throwing in two buckets of eggs, we pulled out. By this time the steamer was abreast of us, and had lowered a boat which met us half-way. I had one oar, and O'Toole the other. To the usual hail I paid no attention

except to stop rowing. A ten-oared cutter with a smart-looking crew dashed alongside. The sheen was not yet off the lace and buttons of the youngster in charge. With revolver in hand he asked us who we were, where we came from, and where we were going. "Cap'n," said I, "please put away that-ar pistol,—I don't like the looks of it,—and I'll tell you all about us. We've been rebs and there ain't no use saying we weren't; but it's all up now, and we got home too late to put in a crop, so we just made up our minds to come down shore and see if we couldn't find something. It's all right, Cap'n; we've got our papers. Want to see 'em? Got 'em fixed up at Jacksonville." O'Toole and Russell handed him their paroles, which he said were all right. He asked for mine. I turned my pockets out, looked in my hat, and said: "I must er dropped mine in camp, but 'tis just the same as theirn." He asked who was ashore. I told him, "There's more of we-uns b'iling some turtle-eggs for dinner. Cap'n, I'd like to swap some eggs for tobacco or bread." His crew soon produced from the slack of their frocks pieces of plug, which they passed on board in exchange for our eggs. I told the youngster if he'd come to camp we'd give him as many as he could eat. Our hospitality was declined. Among other questions he asked if there were any batteries on shore—a battery on a beach where there was not a white man within a hundred miles! "Up oars—let go forward—let fall—give 'way!" were all familiar orders; but never before had they sounded so welcome. As they shoved off, the coxswain said to the youngster, "That looks like a man-of-war's gig, sir"; but he paid no attention to him. We pulled leisurely ashore, watching the cruiser. The boat went up to the davits at a run, and she started to the southward again. The general was very much relieved, for it was a narrow escape.

THROUGH A SHALLOW LAGOON.

The wind still holding to the southward and eastward, we could work only slowly to the southward, against wind and current. At times we suffered greatly for want of water; our usual resource was to dig for it, but often it was so brackish and warm that when extreme thirst forced its use the consequences were violent pains and retchings. One morning we saw a few wigwams ashore, and pulled in at once and landed. It was a party of Seminoles who had come out of the everglades like the bears to gather eggs. They received us kindly, and we devoured ravenously the remnants of their breakfast of fish and *kountee*. Only the old chief spoke a little English. Not more than two or three hundred of this once powerful and warlike tribe remain in Florida; they occupy some islands in this endless swamp to the southward of Lake Okeechobee. They have but little intercourse with the whites, and come out on the coast only at certain seasons to fish. We were very anxious to obtain some provisions from them, but excepting kountee they had nothing to spare. This is an esculent resembling arrowroot, which they dig, pulverize, and use as flour. Cooked in the ashes, it makes a palatable but tough

cake, which we enjoyed after our long abstinence from bread. The old chief took advantage of our eagerness for supplies, and determined to replenish his powder-horn. Nothing else would do; not even an old coat, or fish-hooks, or a cavalry saber would tempt him. Powder only he would have for their long, heavy small-bore rifles with flintlocks, such as Davy Crockett used. We reluctantly divided with him our very scant supply in exchange for some of their flour. We parted good friends, after smoking the pipe of peace.

EXCHANGING THE BOAT FOR THE SLOOP.

On the 7th, off New River Inlet, we discovered a small sail standing to the northward. The breeze was very light, so we downed our sail, got out our oars, and gave chase. The stranger stood out to seaward, and endeavored to escape; but slowly we overhauled her, and finally a shot caused her mainsail to drop. As we pulled alongside I saw from the dress of the crew of three that they were man-of-war's men, and divined that they were deserters. They were thoroughly frightened at first, for our appearance was not calculated to impress them favorably. To our questions they returned evasive answers or were silent, and finally asked by what authority we had overhauled them. We told them that the war was not over so far as we were concerned; that they were our prisoners, and their boat our prize; that they were both deserters and pirates, the punishment of which was death; but that under the circumstances we would not surrender them to the first cruiser we met, but would take their paroles and exchange boats. To this they strenuously objected. They were well armed, and although we outnumbered them five to three (not counting Tom), still, if they could get the first bead on us the chances were about equal. They were desperate, and not disposed to surrender their boat without a tussle. The general and I stepped into their boat, and ordered the spokesman and leader to go forward. He hesitated a moment, and two revolvers looked him in the face. Sullenly he obeyed our orders. The general said, "Wilson, disarm that man." The colonel, with pistol in hand, told him to hold up his hands. He did so while the colonel drew from his belt a navy revolver and a sheath-knife. The other two made no further show of resistance, but handed us their arms. The crew disposed of, I made an examination of our capture. Unfortunately, her supply of provisions was very small—only some "salt-horse" and hardtack, with a breaker of fresh water, and we exchanged part of them for some of our konatee and turtles' eggs. But it was in our new boat that we were particularly fortunate: sloop-rigged, not much longer than our gig, but with more beam and plenty of freeboard, decked over to the mast, and well found in sails and rigging. After our experience in a boat the gunwale of which was not more than eighteen inches out of water, we felt that we had a craft able to cross the Atlantic. Our prisoners, submitting to the inevitable, soon made themselves at home in their new boat, became more communicative, and wanted some

information as to the best course by which to reach Jacksonville or Savannah. We were glad to give them the benefit of our experience, and on parting handed them their knives and two revolvers, for which they were very thankful.

Later we were abreast of Green Turtle Key, with wind light and ahead; still, with all these drawbacks, we were able to make some progress. Our new craft worked and sailed well, after a little addition of ballast. Before leaving the coast, we found it would be necessary to call at Fort Dallas or some other point for supplies. It was running a great risk, for we did not know whom we should find there, whether friend or foe. But without at least four or five days' rations of some kind, it would not be safe to attempt the passage across the Gulf Stream. However, before venturing to do so, we determined to try to replenish our larder with eggs. Landing on the beach, we hunted industriously for some hours, literally scratching for a living; but the ground had evidently been most effectually gone over before, as the tracks of bears proved. A few onions, washed from some passing vessel, were eagerly devoured. We scanned the washings along the strand in vain for anything that would satisfy hunger. Nothing remained but to make the venture of stopping at the fort. This fort, like many others, was established during the Seminole war, and at its close was abandoned. It is near the mouth of the Miami River, a small stream which serves as an outlet to the overflow of the everglades. Its banks are crowded to the water's edge with tropical verdure, with many flowering plants and creepers, all the colors of which are reflected in its clear waters. The old barracks were in sight as we slowly worked our way against the current. Located in a small clearing, with cocoanut-trees in the foreground, the white buildings made, with a backing of deep green, a very pretty picture. We approached cautiously, not knowing with what reception we should meet. As we neared the small wharf, we found waiting some twenty or thirty men, of all colors, from the pale Yankee to the ebony Congo, all armed: a more motley and villainous-looking crew never trod the deck of one of Captain Kidd's ships. We saw at once with whom we had to deal—deserters from the army and navy of both sides, with a mixture of Spaniards and Cubans, outlaws and renegades. A burly villain, towering head and shoulders above his companions, and whose shaggy black head scorned any covering, hailed us in broken English, and asked who we were. Wreckers, I replied; that we left our vessel outside, and had come in for water and provisions. He asked where we had left our vessel, and her name, evidently suspicious, which was not surprising, for our appearance was certainly against us. Our head-gear was unique: the general wore a straw hat that napped over his head like the ears of an elephant; Colonel Wilson, an old cavalry cap that had lost its visor; another, a turban made of some number 4 duck canvas; and all were in our shirt-sleeves, the colors of which were as varied as Joseph's coat. I told him we had left her to the northward a few miles, that a gunboat had spoken us a few hours before, and had overhauled our

papers, and had found them all right. After a noisy powwow we were told to land, that our papers might be examined. I said no, but if a canoe were sent off, I would let one of our men go on shore and buy what we wanted. I was determined not to trust our boat within a hundred yards of the shore. Finally a canoe paddled by two negroes came off, and said no one but the captain would be permitted to land. O'Toole volunteered to go, but the boatmen would not take him, evidently having had their orders. I told them to tell their chief that we had intended to spend a few pieces of gold with them, but since he would not permit it, we would go elsewhere for supplies. We got out our sweeps, and moved slowly down the river, a light breeze helping us. The canoe returned to the shore, and soon some fifteen or twenty men crowded into four or five canoes and dugouts, and started for us. We prepared for action, determined to give them a warm reception. Even Tom looked after his carbine, putting on a fresh cap.

Though outnumbered three to one, still we were well under cover in our boat, and could rake each canoe as it came up. We determined to take all the chances, and to open fire as soon as they came within range. I told Russell to try a shot at one some distance ahead of the others. He broke two paddles on one side and hit one man, not a bad beginning. This canoe dropped to the rear at once; the occupants of the others opened fire, but their shooting was wild from the motions of their small craft. The general tried and missed; Tom thought he could do better than his master, and made a good line shot, but short. The general advised husbanding our ammunition until they came within easy range. Waiting a little while, Russell and the colonel fired together, and the bowman in the nearest canoe rolled over, nearly upsetting her. They were now evidently convinced that we were in earnest, and, after giving us an ineffectual volley, paddled together to hold a council of war. Soon a single canoe with three men started for us with a white flag. We hove to, and waited for them to approach. When within hail, I asked what was wanted. A white man, standing in the stern, with two negroes paddling, replied:

"What did you fire on us for? We are friends."

"Friends do not give chase to friends."

"We wanted to find out who you are."

"I told you who we are; and if you are friends, sell us some provisions."

"Come on shore, and you can get what you want."

Our wants were urgent, and it was necessary, if possible, to make some terms with them; but it would not be safe to venture near their lair again. We told them that if they would bring us some supplies we would wait, and pay them well in gold. The promise of gold served as a bait to secure some concession. After some

parleying it was agreed that O'Toole should go on shore in their canoe, be allowed to purchase some provisions, and return in two hours. The bucaneer thought the time too short, but I insisted that if O'Toole were not brought back in two hours, I would speak the first gunboat I met, and return with her and have their nest of freebooters broken up. Time was important, for we had noticed soon after we had started down the river a black column of smoke ascending from near the fort, undoubtedly a signal to some of their craft in the vicinity to return, for I felt convinced that they had other craft besides canoes at their disposal; hence their anxiety to detain us. O'Toole was told to be as dumb as an oyster as to ourselves, but wide awake as to the designs of our dubious friends. The general gave him five eagles for his purchase, tribute-money. He jumped into the canoe, and all returned to the fort. We dropped anchor underfoot to await his return, keeping a sharp lookout for any strange sail. The two hours passed in pleasant surmises as to what he would bring off; another half-hour passed, and no sign of his return; and we began to despair of our anticipated feast, and of O'Toole, a bright young Irishman, whose good qualities had endeared him to us all. The anchor was up, and slowly with a light breeze we drew away from the river, debating what should be our next move. The fort was shut in by a projecting point, and three or four miles had passed when the welcome sight of a canoe astern made us heave to. It was O'Toole with two negroes, a bag of hard bread, two hams, some rusty salt pork, sweet potatoes, fruit, and, most important of all, two breakers of water and a keg of New England rum. While O'Toole gave us his experience, a ham was cut, and a slice between two of hardtack, washed down with a jorum of rum and water, with a dessert of oranges and bananas, was a feast to us more enjoyable than any ever eaten at Delmonico's or the Café Riche. On his arrival on shore, our ambassador had been taken to the quarters of Major Valdez, who claimed to be an officer of the Federals, and by him he was thoroughly cross-examined. He had heard of the breaking up of the Confederacy, but not of the capture of Mr. Davis, and was evidently skeptical of our story as to being wreckers, and connected us in some way with the losing party, either as persons of note or a party escaping with treasure. However, O'Toole baffled all his queries, and was proof against both blandishments and threats. He learned what he had expected, that they were looking for the return of a schooner; hence the smoke signal, and the anxiety to detain us as long as possible. It was only when he saw us leaving, after waiting over two hours, that the major permitted him to make a few purchases and rejoin us.

Night, coming on, found us inside of Key Biscayne, the beginning of the system of innumerable keys, or small islands, extending from this point to the Tortugas, nearly two hundred miles east and west, at the extremity of the peninsula. Of coral formation, as soon as it is built up to the surface of the water it crumbles under the action of the sea and sun. Sea-fowl rest upon it, dropping the seed of

some marine plants, or the hard mangrove is washed ashore on it, and its all-embracing roots soon spread in every direction; so are formed these keys. Darkness and shoal water warned us to anchor. We passed an unhappy night fighting mosquitos. As the sun rose, we saw to the eastward a schooner of thirty or forty tons standing down toward us with a light wind; no doubt it was one from the fort sent in pursuit. Up anchor, up sail, out sweeps, and we headed down Biscayne Bay, a shoal sheet of water between the reefs and mainland. The wind rose with the sun, and, being to windward, the schooner had the benefit of it first, and was fast overhauling us. The water was shoaling, which I was not sorry to see, for our draft must have been from two to three feet less than that of our pursuer, and we recognized that our best chance of escape was by drawing him into shoal water, while keeping afloat ourselves. By the color and break of the water I saw that we were approaching a part of the bay where the shoals appeared to extend nearly across, with narrow channels between them like the furrows in a plowed field, with occasional openings from one channel into another. Some of the shoals were just awash, others bare. Ahead was a reef on which there appeared but very little water. I could see no opening into the channel beyond. To attempt to haul by the wind on either tack would bring us in a few minutes under fire of the schooner now coming up hand over hand. I ordered the ballast to be thrown overboard, and determined, as our only chance, to attempt to force her over the reef. She was headed for what looked like a little breakwater on our port bow. As the ballast went overboard we watched the bottom anxiously; the water shoaled rapidly, and the grating of the keel over the coral, with that peculiar tremor most unpleasant to a seaman under any circumstances, told us our danger. As the last of the ballast went overboard she forged ahead, and then brought up. Together we went overboard, and sank to our waists in the black, pasty mud, through which at intervals branches of rotten coral projected, which only served to make the bottom more treacherous and difficult to work on. Relieved of a half-ton of our weight, our sloop forged ahead three or four lengths, and then brought up again. We pushed her forward some distance, but as the water lessened, notwithstanding our efforts, she stopped.

Looking astern, we saw the schooner coming up wing and wing, not more than a mile distant. Certainly the prospect was blue; but one chance was left, to sacrifice everything in the boat. Without hesitation, overboard went the provisions except a few biscuits; the oars were made fast to the main-sheet alongside, and a breaker of water, the anchor and chain, all spare rope, indeed everything that weighed a pound, was dropped alongside, and then, three on each side, our shoulders under the boat's bilges, at the word we lifted together, and foot by foot moved her forward. Sometimes the water would deepen a little and relieve us; again it would shoal. Between the coral-branches we would sink at times to our necks in the slime and water, our limbs lacerated with the sharp projecting points.

Fortunately, the wind helped us; keeping all sail on, thus for more than a hundred yards we toiled, until the water deepened and the reef was passed. Wet, foul, bleeding, with hardly strength enough to climb into the boat, we were safe at last for a time. As we cleared the shoal, the schooner hauled by the wind, and opened fire from a nine-or twelve-pounder; but we were at long range, and the firing was wild. With a fair wind we soon opened the distance between us.

General Breckinridge, thoroughly used up, threw himself down in the bottom of the boat; at which Tom, always on the lookout for his master's comfort, said, "Marse John, s'pose you take a little rum and water." This proposal stirred us all. The general rose, saying, "Yes, indeed, Tom, I will; but where is the rum?" supposing it had been sacrificed with everything else.

OVER A CORAL-REEF.

"I sees you pitchin' eberyt'ing away; I jes put this jug in hyar, 'ca'se I 'lowed you'd want some."

Opening a looker in the transom, he took out the jug. Never was a potion more grateful; we were faint and thirsty, and it acted like a charm, and, bringing up on another reef, we were ready for another tussle. Fortunately, this proved only a short lift. In the mean time the schooner had passed through the first reef by an opening, as her skipper was undoubtedly familiar with these waters. Still another shoal was ahead; instead of again lifting our sloop over it, I hauled by the wind, and stood for what looked like an opening to the eastward. Our pursuers were on the opposite tack and fast approaching; a reef intervened, and when abeam, distant about half a mile, they opened fire both with their small arms and boat-gun. The second shot from the latter was well directed; it grazed our mast and carried away the luff of the mainsail. Several Minié balls struck on our sides without penetrating; we did not reply, and kept under cover. When abreast of a break in the reef, we up helm, and again went off before the wind. The schooner was now satisfied that she could not overhaul us, and stood off to the northward.

Free from our enemy, we were now able to take stock of our supplies and determine what to do. Our provisions consisted of about ten pounds of hard bread, a twenty-gallon breaker of water, two thirds full, and three gallons of rum. Really a fatality appeared to follow us as regards our commissariat. Beginning with our first drenching on the St. John's, every successive supply had been lost, and now what we had bought with so much trouble yesterday, the sellers compelled us to sacrifice to-day. But our first care was to ballast the sloop, for without it she was so crank as to be unseaworthy. This was not an easy task; the shore of all the keys, as well as that of the mainland in sight, was low and

swampy, and covered to the water's edge with a dense growth of mangroves. What made matters worse, we were without any ground-tackle.

At night we were up to Elliott's Key, and anchored by making fast to a sweep shoved into the muddy bottom like a shad-pole. When the wind went down, the mosquitos came off in clouds. We wrapped ourselves in the sails from head to feet, with only our nostrils exposed. At daylight we started again to the westward, looking for a dry spot where we might land, get ballast, and possibly some supplies. A few palm-trees rising from the mangroves indicated a spot where we might find a little *terra firma*. Going in as near as was prudent, we waded ashore, and found a small patch of sand and coral elevated a few feet above the everlasting swamp. Some six or eight cocoa-palms rose to the height of forty or fifty feet, and under their umbrella-like tops we could see the bunches of green fruit. It was a question how to get at it. Without saying a word, Tom went on board the boat, brought off a piece of canvas, cut a strip a yard long, tied the ends together, and made two holes for his big toes. The canvas, stretched between his feet, embraced the rough bark so that he rapidly ascended. He threw down the green nuts, and cutting through the thick shell, we found about half a pint of milk. The general suggested a little milk-punch. All the trees were stripped, and what we did not use we saved for sea-stores.

To ballast our sloop was our next care. The jib was unbent, the sheet and head were brought together and made into a sack. This was filled with sand, and, slung on an oar, was shouldered by two and carried on board.

Leaving us so engaged, the general started to try to knock over some of the numerous water-fowl in sight. He returned in an hour thoroughly used up from his struggles in the swamp, but with two pelicans and a white crane. In the stomach of one of the first were a dozen or more mullet, from six to nine inches in length which had evidently just been swallowed. We cleaned them, and wrapping them in palmetto-leaves, roasted them in the ashes, and they proved delicious. Tom took the birds in hand, and as he was an old campaigner, who had cooked everything from a stalled ox to a crow, we had faith in his ability to make them palatable. He tried to pick them, but soon abandoned it, and skinned them. We looked on anxiously, ready after our first course of fish for something more substantial. He broiled them, and with a flourish laid one before the general on a clean leaf, saying, "I's 'feared, Marse John, it's tough as an old muscovy drake."

"Let me try it, Tom."

After some exertion he cut off a mouthful, while we anxiously awaited the verdict. Without a word he rose and disappeared into the bushes. Returning in a few minutes, he told Tom to remove the game. His tone and expression satisfied

us that pelican would not keep us from starving. The colonel thought the crane might be better, but a taste satisfied us that it was no improvement.

Hungry and tired, it was nearly night before we were ready to move; and, warned by our sanguinary experience of the previous night, we determined to haul off from the shore as far as possible, and get outside the range of the mosquitos. It was now necessary to determine upon our future course. We had abandoned all hope of reaching the Bahamas, and the nearest foreign shore was that of Cuba, distant across the Gulf Stream from our present position about two hundred miles, or three or four days' sail, with the winds we might expect at this season. With the strictest economy our provisions would not last so long. However, nearly a month in the swamps and among the keys of Florida, in the month of June, had prepared us to face almost any risk to escape from those shores, and it was determined to start in the morning for Cuba. Well out in the bay we hove to, and passed a fairly comfortable night; next day early we started for Cæsar's Canal, a passage between Elliott's Key and Key Largo. The channel was crooked and puzzling, leading through a labyrinth of mangrove islets, around which the current of the Gulf Stream was running like a sluice; we repeatedly got aground, when we would jump overboard and push off. So we worked all day before we were clear of the keys and outside among the reefs, which extend three or four miles beyond. Waiting again for daylight, we threaded our way through them, and with a light breeze from the eastward steered south, thankful to feel again the pulsating motion of the ocean.

Several sail and one steamer were in sight during the day, but all at a distance. Constant exposure had tanned us the color of mahogany, and our legs and feet were swollen and blistered from being so much in the salt water, and the action of the hot sun on them made them excessively painful. Fortunately, but little exertion was now necessary, and our only relief was in lying still, with an impromptu awning over us. General Breckinridge took charge of the water and rum, doling it out at regular intervals, a tot at a time, determined to make it last as long as possible.

Toward evening the wind was hardly strong enough to enable us to hold our own against the stream. At ten, Carysfort Light was abeam, and soon after a dark bank of clouds rising in the eastern sky betokened a change of wind and weather. Everything was made snug and lashed securely, with two reefs in the mainsail, and the bonnet taken off the jib. I knew from experience what we might expect from summer squalls in the straits of Florida. I took the helm, the general the sheet, Colonel Wilson was stationed by the halyards, Russell and O'Toole were prepared to bail. Tom, thoroughly demoralized, was already sitting in the bottom of the boat, between the general's knees. The sky was soon completely overcast with dark lowering clouds; the darkness, which could almost be felt, was broken

every few minutes by lurid streaks of lightning chasing one another through black abysses. Fitful gusts of wind were the heralds of the coming blast. Great drops of rain fell like the scattering fire of a skirmish-line, and with a roar like a thousand trumpets we heard the blast coming, giving us time only to lower everything and get the stern of the boat to it, for our only chance was to run with the storm until the rough edge was taken off, and then heave to. I cried, "All hands down!" as the gale struck us with the force of a thunderbolt, carrying a wall of white water with it which burst over us like a cataract. I thought we were swamped as I clung desperately to the tiller, though thrown violently against the boom. But after the shock, our brave little boat, though half filled, rose and shook herself like a spaniel. The mast bent like a whip-stick, and I expected to see it blown out of her, but, gathering way, we flew with the wind. The surface was lashed into foam as white as the driven snow. The lightning and artillery of the heavens were incessant, blinding, and deafening; involuntarily we bowed our heads, utterly helpless. Soon the heavens were opened, and the floods came down like a waterspout. I knew then that the worst of it had passed, and though one fierce squall succeeded another, each one was tamer. The deluge, too, helped to beat down the sea. To give an order was impossible, for I could not be heard; I could only, during the flashes, make signs to Russell and O'Toole to bail. Tying themselves and their buckets to the thwarts, they went to work and soon relieved her of a heavy load.

A ROUGH NIGHT IN THE GULF STREAM.

From the general direction of the wind I knew without compass or any other guide that we were running to the westward, and, I feared, were gradually approaching the dreaded reefs, where in such a sea our boat would have been reduced to match-wood in a little while. Therefore, without waiting for the wind or sea to moderate, I determined to heave to, hazardous as it was to attempt anything of the kind. Giving the colonel the helm, I lashed the end of the gaff to the boom, and then loosed enough of the mainsail to goose-wing it, or make a leg-of-mutton sail of it. Then watching for a lull or a smooth time, I told him to put the helm a-starboard and let her come to on the port tack, head to the southward, and at the same time I hoisted the sail. She came by the wind quickly without shipping a drop of water, but as I was securing the halyards the colonel gave her too much helm, bringing the wind on the other bow, the boom flew round and knocked my feet from under me, and overboard I went. Fortunately, her way was deadened, and as I came up I seized the sheet, and with the general's assistance scrambled on board. For twelve hours or more I did not trust the helm to any one. The storm passed over to the westward with many a departing growl and threat. But the wind still blew hoarsely from the eastward with frequent gusts against the stream, making a heavy, sharp sea. In the trough of it the boat was becalmed, but as she rose on the crest of the waves even the little sail set was as much as she could stand up under, and she had to be nursed carefully; for if she

had fallen off, one breaker would have swamped us, or any accident to sail or spar would have been fatal: but like a gull on the waters, our brave little craft rose and breasted every billow.

By noon the next day the weather had moderated sufficiently to make more sail, and the sea went down at the same time. Then, hungry and thirsty, Tom was thought of. During the gale he had remained in the bottom of the boat as motionless as a log. As he was roused up, he asked:

"Marse John, whar is you, and whar is you goin'? 'Fore de Lord, I never want to see a boat again."

"Come, Tom, get us something to drink, and see if there is anything left to eat," said the general. But Tom was helpless.

The general served out a small ration of water and rum, every drop of which was precious. Our small store of bread was found soaked, but, laid in the sun, it partly dried, and was, if not palatable, at least a relief to hungry men.

During the next few days the weather was moderate, and we stood to the southward; several sail were in sight, but at a distance. We were anxious to speak one even at some risk, for our supplies were down to a pint of rum in water each day under a tropical sun, with two water-soaked biscuits. On the afternoon of the second day a brig drifted slowly down toward us; we made signals that we wished to speak her, and, getting out our sweeps, pulled for her. As we neared her, the captain hailed and ordered us to keep off. I replied that we were shipwrecked men, and only wanted some provisions. As we rounded to under his stern, we could see that he had all his crew of seven or eight men at quarters. He stood on the taff-rail with a revolver in hand, his two mates with muskets, the cook with a huge tormentor, and the crew with handspikes.

"I tell you again, keep off, or I'll let fly."

"Captain, we won't go on board if you will give us some provisions; we are starving."

"Keep off, I tell you. Boys, make ready."

One of the mates drew a bead on me; our eyes met in a line over the sights on the barrel. I held up my right hand.

"Will you fire on an unarmed man? Captain, you are no sailor, or you would not refuse to help shipwrecked men."

"How do I know who you are? And I've got no grub to spare."

"Here is a passenger who is able to pay you," said I, pointing to the general.

"Yes; I will pay for anything you let us have."

The captain now held a consultation with his officers, and then said: "I'll give you some water and bread. I've got nothing else. But you must not come alongside."

A small keg, or breaker, was thrown overboard and picked up, with a bag of fifteen or twenty pounds of hardtack. This was the reception given us by the brig *Neptune* of Bangor. But when the time and place are considered, we cannot wonder at the captain's precautions, for a more piratical-looking party than we never sailed the Spanish main. General Breckinridge, bronzed the color of mahogany, unshaven, with long mustache, wearing a blue flannel shirt open at the neck, exposing his broad chest, with an old slouch hat, was a typical bucaneer. Thankful for what we had received, we parted company. Doubtless the captain reported on his arrival home a blood-curdling story of his encounter with pirates off the coast of Cuba.

"Marse John, I thought the war was done. Why didn't you tell dem folks who you was?" queried Tom. The general told Tom they were Yankees, and would not believe us. "Is dar any Yankees whar you goin'?—'ca'se if dar is, we best go back to old Kentucky." He was made easy on this point, and, with an increase in our larder, became quite perky. A change in the color of the water showed us that we were on soundings, and had crossed the Stream, and soon after we came in sight of some rocky islets, which I recognized as Double-Headed Shot Keys, thus fixing our position; for our chart, with the rest of our belongings, had disappeared, or had been destroyed by water, and as the heavens, by day and night, were our only guide, our navigation was necessarily very uncertain. For the next thirty miles our course to the southward took us over Salt Key Bank, where the soundings varied from three to five fathoms, but so clear was the water that it was hard to believe that the coral, the shells, and the marine flowers were not within arm's reach. Fishes of all sizes and colors darted by us in every direction. The bottom of the bank was a constantly varying kaleidoscope of beauty. But to starving men, with not a mouthful in our grasp, this display of food was tantalizing. Russell, who was an expert swimmer, volunteered to dive for some conchs and shell-fish; oysters there were none. Asking us to keep a sharp lookout on the surface of the water for sharks, which generally swim with the dorsal fin exposed, he went down and brought up a couple of live conchs about the size of a man's fist. Breaking the shell, we drew the quivering body out. Without its coat it looked like a huge grub, and not more inviting. The general asked Tom to try it.

"Glory, Marse John, I'm mighty hungry, nebber so hungry sense we been in de almy, and I'm just ready for ole mule, pole-cat, or anyt'ing 'cept dis worm."

After repeated efforts to dissect it we agreed with Tom, and found it not more edible than a pickled football. However, Russell, diving again, brought up bivalves with a very thin shell and beautiful colors, in shape like a large pea-pod. These we found tolerable; they served to satisfy in some small degree our craving for food. The only drawback was that eating them produced great thirst, which is much more difficult to bear than hunger. We found partial relief in keeping our heads and bodies wet with salt water.

On the sixth day from the Florida coast we crossed Nicholas Channel with fair wind. Soon after we made the Cuban coast, and stood to the westward, hoping to sight something which would determine our position. After a run of some hours just outside of the coral-reefs, we sighted in the distance some vessels at anchor. As we approached, a large town was visible at the head of the bay, which proved to be Cardenas. We offered prayful thanks for our wonderful escape, and anchored just off the custom-house, and waited some time for the health officer to give us pratique. But as no one came off in answer to our signals, I went on shore to report at the custom-house. It was some time before I could make them comprehend that we were from Florida, and anxious to land. Their astonishment was great at the size of our boat, and they could hardly believe we had crossed in it. Our arrival produced as much sensation as would that of a liner. We might have been filibusters in disguise. The governor-general had to be telegraphed to; numerous papers were made out and signed; a register was made out for the sloop *No Name*; then we had to make a visit to the governor before we were allowed to go to a hotel to get something to eat. After a cup of coffee and a light meal I had a warm bath, and donned some clean linen which our friends provided.

We were overwhelmed with attentions, and when the governor-general telegraphed that General Breckinridge was to be treated as one holding his position and rank, the officials became as obsequious as they had been overbearing and suspicious. The next day one of the governor-general's aides-de-camp arrived from Havana, with an invitation for the general and the party to visit him, which we accepted, and after two days' rest took the train for the capital. A special car was placed at our disposal, and on our arrival the general was received with all the honors. We were driven to the palace, had a long interview, and dined with Governor-General Concha. The transition from a small open boat at sea, naked and starving, to the luxuries and comforts of civilized life was as sudden as it was welcome and thoroughly appreciated.

At Havana our party separated. General Breckinridge and Colonel Wilson have since crossed the great river; Russell and O'Toole returned to Florida. I should be glad to know what has become of faithful Tom.