

several batteries of from six to eight guns each that commanded the opening. We had only a single line of battle. We were ordered over the works, lined up in front of them and commanded to charge the enemy. We started at full run. Their batteries opened on us by the dozen, with grape and canister shot and shell. The face of the earth was literally torn to pieces, and how any of us escaped is yet a mystery. I saw a deep gully to my right and obliquing toward it, I did my best running. I leaped into it only to find six or eight of our boys who had preceded me. How they beat me to it I am unable to say. Others retreated to the works we had left, many were killed on the way, some captured in ditches and gullies, but we were overlooked. The flag was with us and tearing it from the staff we buried it in the sand, concealing the staff under the rank grass on the bank. When dark came on we resurrected the flag, the color-bearer winding it around his body.

We started, groping our way as noiselessly as possible along the meanderings of the gully, often on hands and knees, passed through the Federal pickets on the way and reached our command about nine o'clock. Maj. Maxon was with us. Stepping off the breastworks we joined the boys, waving the old flag which was thought to be lost, in the bright fire-light. Next morning we moved into the village of Jonesboro, awaiting orders to reinforce where most needed. This was often the case with the homeless Orphan Brigade. About one o'clock a courier dashed into our lines and handed Gen. Lewis a message. The long roll was ordered and in ten minutes we were in a double quick to our right wing. We were placed in line only one column deep with no support. The enemy could be plainly seen one mile away, forming many columns deep. We went into the ground like gophers, and in a short time had improvised breast works, which, though meager, were better than none. To our left the works were better, having been in construction several days. We heard the bugle call of the enemy sound, "Forward, march!" and the great cloud of blue coats were moving down upon us. Firing commenced right and left. The blaze of the cannon could be seen all along the line. The Yankees were coming slowly but surely, nor did they break their gait until within two

hundred yards of our works. Then the whole body, ten or twelve columns deep, moved down upon us like an avalanche. Ten pieces of our artillery were playing on them, plowing great roads through their ranks. The 12th New York Zouaves were leading and made fine targets (with their red sashes, caps and stockings.) They had requested this privilege, but we made such deadly havoc that, out of their twelve hundred, not two hundred were left at the end of the battle. Amidst this fearful fire from our brave men, on they came to our breastworks and here I witnessed the first hand to hand encounter of the Civil War. They fought like demons. Bayonets clashed bayonets and swords crossed swords, but over our works they came in spite of the most stubborn resistance I ever saw. Ten lines to our one was too many for us and great numbers of our boys died in this, their last ditch. I was captured, with about three hundred others. We were taken up the line and crossed over the breastworks where the fight had been fiercest. Many Federals were wounded and dying in the ditch with our men. The scene on top and at the foot of the works beggars description. In some places they were lying three or four deep, and some guns standing on end with bayonets plunged through the bodies of the victims, giving ample evidence of the awful conflict. In going to the rear, for three or four hundred yards, we had to pick our way through the bodies of the dead, dying and wounded, often stepping over them. At one point we passed where a caisson of a battery, which they had been drawing by hand, had been exploded by one of our shells. Only fragments of the pieces could be seen, but hundreds of the victims covered the ground for fifty yards around. We spent the night under heavy guard in the valley near by. A load of corn in the ear was thrown out to us which we parched and ate with a relish, having eaten nothing since morning. They issued rations to us next morning and also orders that we help bury their dead which we promptly refused to do. About nine o'clock we started on our march for Atlanta, Georgia, and were imprisoned that night in barracks in which we had formerly confined our captives. Thence we were carried by rail to Chattanooga, where we were kept in prison a week or thereabouts. This prison pen consisted of about one acre in-

closed by a high fence of plank on end, with watch boxes on top every twenty or thirty yards, accessible only from the outside. A walk had been made on the inner side of loose brick for the guards along the fence. The ground was simply mud from four to six inches deep, and reeking with filth to such a degree as to be almost a moving mass of maggots. Hence we procured bricks from buildings which had been burned previous to the enclosure, and laid them in the mud, layer on layer, until they were above the surface, on which we sat during the day and slept at night. But these creepers made their way up between the bricks and so infested our clothing during the night that our first waking thought was to shake them from our garments and brush them from our beds. We had no water except as it was hauled in barrels once a day. In the intervals our thirst would become so intense that we were almost frenzied and formed lines, canteens in hands, at times hours before the water came, and were only kept back at the point of the bayonet by the guards with the wagons for that purpose.

From Chattanooga we were started for Nashville. Our short, but trying experience of prison life had made us resolve to escape at all hazards, if possible. While in the pen I had found an old case knife in the debris of the burned buildings, for which I improvised a strong handle with the help of George Page's pocket knife, which he had concealed from the scrutiny of our captors. With it we made a serrated edge on the case knife, intending to make it serve in lieu of a better saw if opportunity should offer.

We were duly packed into a lot of box-cars very much as if we had been cattle. Page's pocket-knife and improvised saw were quickly put into use in the car I happened to be in. With the first a small hole was cut in the bottom, and with the second a section was sawed out, making a hole barely large enough to permit a man's body of average size to slip through. When the train was nearing La Vergne, a few miles out from Nashville, we determined to make a break for liberty. It was decided that I should first try the dangerous experiment.

The train stopped near La Vergne for wood. I promptly dropped into the hole we had cut, but a slight error of calculation rendered it necessary for me to part with a considera-

ble portion of my skin, fore and aft, as I slipped through. My successor was Jack Gavin, but being thicker in the chest than I, he stuck fast, and he was able to get neither up nor down. In a moment the train moved off, and the last I saw of poor Jack his legs were still dangling under the car.

I had crawled to some weeds that grew along the road and concealed myself. Some of the guards who had stepped off the train ran over me to get aboard as it started, but in their haste did not notice me. I quickly rose, took a direction opposite from Nashville, closely followed by a number of Federals who had congregated at the wood yard from a recruiting station near by, to learn the number of prisoners that had been taken. At the first curve of the road, I ran into a thick bramble, where I lay concealed until my pursuers had passed by. Then I started north as near as I could conjecture, in the direction of Lebanon, Tenn. I had gone perhaps one hundred yards, when, to my astonishment, I discovered that I was on the inside of a heavy picket line of colored troops. It was now night and the moon was shining brightly. A large oak tree stood in front of me and immediately on the picket line. I thought if I could reach the tree unobserved, its shadows, which luckily lay out beyond, would furnish concealment until I could go its length and thus enable me to escape. It was a hazardous plan, but I determined to put it into execution. Dropping on my hands and knees, I crawled cautiously through the weeds and grass until I was within about forty paces of the tree. Here I halted and waited until two pickets, starting in opposite directions from the tree, had reached the ends of their respective beats. I rose, darted towards the shadow and ere they were aware had gained its outer edge. Then "halt! halt! halt!" rang out on either hand, instantly followed by the click of arms, flash of musketry and whiz of bullets. This served only as a stimulus to accelerate my speed. Hat in hand, I simply struck the ground in high places. The pickets pursued, still firing, but in a minute or so I had reached a cedar glade which furnished ample protection from their guns. I continued my flight until I was sure I had eluded my pursuers.

After pausing a moment for breath, and locating the points of the compass as well as I could by the hour of the night and

the position of the moon, I resolved upon making the point called Black Cross Roads on the Murfreesboro and Lebanon turnpike, where I had a friend tried and true. Selecting my bearing I bent my steps in that course, without regard to roads. Presently I came into a large field covered with a rank growth of tall weeds, wet with dew. My clothing was soon saturated, but I pressed on. I had eaten my last meal thirty-six hours before, and the fatigue incident to my flight had brought with it a most aggravating sense of hunger. By and by I became bewildered. The moon had gone down, and the sky, too, had become cloudy, rendering the darkness extreme and oppressive. In my aimless wanderings about the field, for as yet I had found no limit to it, I chanced to find a peach tree full of delicious fruit. A sufficient quantity of this was devoured to temporarily quiet the pleadings of my appetite.

Again I went on, traveling it seemed to me for hours without finding a fence or other object to direct my course. Finally I concluded I must be going in a circle and stopped. I hallooed at the top of my voice, and the series of echoes that followed startled me. My shouts availed me the end I had in view, and aroused some dogs in the neighborhood which set up in a vigorous barking. Proceeding in their direction, and hallooing from time to time when necessary to keep them barking, I finally reached a fence.

By this time, however, I was so exhausted from hunger, travel and the excitement of the past twelve hours, that I sank down beside the fence, and with no other covering than the wet clothing I wore, soon fell asleep. I dreamed of comrades, of campfires and of putting my hand in a blaze, which forked between each finger, but gave no warmth. Half dreaming, half waking, I concluded I had rolled from beneath our usual scanty covering, and reached out my hands to draw it over me again, only to grasp the wet weeds and grass, which I had made my bed. Then becoming fully aroused to consciousness, and startled by the remembrance of where I was and the happenings of the night, I essayed to rise, but my limbs refused to move. It was the night of September 15th, and very cold for that season and I had become thoroughly benumbed while asleep. Gradually I

was able to assume a sitting posture, and then to pull myself on my feet by holding to the fence. Finally I could move my legs more freely, and climbing over the fence I started into the road which lay alongside of it. The first blush of morning was faintly to be seen, and by this was I enabled to take a northeast course in the direction, as I conjectured, of Black's Cross Roads. I saw several persons in the distance, on right and left, whose eyes followed me suspiciously. Pressing on until near noon I met an old man of small stature, the first person I had seen since my escape that I was not afraid of, and inquired where the friend of whom I was in quest, (Dick Malone,) lived. To my great astonishment and greater pleasure, I was told that I was on the outskirts of his farm.

Soon I was at my friend's house. After detailing to him an account of what had happened, I told him how long I had been without food, other than the peaches. I was promptly ushered into the dining room, where slices of ham that, to my famished eyes, seemed large as saddle skirts, and biscuits that swelled to the circumference of saucers, were furnished me in delightful abundance by the mother and sister. The meal despatched, I was admonished that it would be safe, neither for my friends nor for myself, to longer remain, as the negroes on the place were aware of my presence, and could not be trusted to keep the secret.

I was directed to go to an acquaintance of mine, (Isaac Pierce,) who lived three miles further on. As I bade my friends goodbye, Mrs. Malone told me to stop at a church on the roadside near by, where I would find a suit of citizen's clothes secreted beneath the pulpit. I went on, found the clothing and was soon dressed in a style with which I was utterly unacquainted—coat with sweeping skirts that flapped about my legs, broadbrimmed hat, and striped vest with brass buttons. The only thing to remind me of my former estate was an old pair of shoes badly run down and open at the toes, which contrasted most unhappily with the rest of my attire.

I reached Pierce's without further incident. I was passed at once to a room upstairs where I remained until morning, that my presence might not be known to the negroes. I was treated

as a stranger at breakfast by the family, and in the presence of the negroes was asked whither I was bound. I answered that I was on my way to Lebanon, whereupon my host remarked that he was going that way himself with a mule he intended selling, and that if I wished to do so I could ride the mule. I, of course, promptly accepted the proffer, and we were soon on the road.

We had traveled probably ten miles when we entered into a long, crooked lane. Suddenly we came to a residence, where the lane spread to a width of perhaps fifty yards, and where, without warning, we found ourselves in plain view of some forty or fifty Federal cavalrmen, all well mounted. Our first impulse was to fly, but upon reflecting that my steed was only a mule of three years and of doubtful speed, we concluded to adopt other tactics. Pierce was terribly excited and his feet shook like aspen leaves, making his stirrups fairly jingle. As we checked our animals, and discussed the best policy to pursue, his teeth chattered and his eyes danced. I told him I was going to tell a tale and he must swear to it. He agreed, and we moved steadily down upon the enemy. As we struck their front lines, a man with epaulets and severe countenance commanded us in a peremptory tone to halt. We obeyed. Pierce had been in the Southern army, had been shot through his right arm and carried a stiff elbow. He had been honorably discharged from Lee's command only a few months before, and luckily had his parole with him, the only talisman which the people wore at that time. I had imprudently changed some letters from home from my old clothes to those I had donned the evening before. These, which under ordinary circumstances, would have been ample passports, would here be witnesses to condemn me. I was asked by the officer if I had taken the oath. I answered in the affirmative. He demanded my papers, whereupon I began feeling in my pockets to allow myself time to think. In the meanwhile he asked me where I was from, to which I gave a misleading response. He further queried me as to where I was going, when quick as a flash I hit on a device which doubtless saved my life, telling him I was going to Lebanon to attend the trial of a man accused of killing a negro, hoping in this way to arouse his sympathy in behalf of the dead negro of my imagination. I told the officer, moreover,

that the hour for the trial was close at hand. Seeing me somewhat slow to find my alleged papers, he asked Pierce for his. The latter thrust his hand in his breast-pocket, and laid the documents in the officer's hand.

Just here another horseman rode up. On the shoulders of his horse were the letters "U. S." The officer told him to dismount, but he saucily refused, at the same time setting up such a furious cursing of the officer and his men, and indeed of the whole Yankee army, as I have rarely heard. The officer commanded his men to come forward and take charge of the fellow. The man still resisting. I suggested to Pierce in the most natural manner I could assume that we had better hurry on, or we would be too late for the trial. We rode off leisurely seemingly unobserved, but at the first turn of the road we quickened our speed to a furious rate. I had a long cedar limb with which I encouraged my beast with persuasive and eloquent appeal. Pierce was riding a spirited, fleet young horse and the gravel flew thick and fast from his heels as he clattered over the pike. It was an unequal match, but I strove to make up for any delinquencies of species or breeding, by whipping right and left, fore and aft, laying prone upon the pommel of my saddle and thumping the mule's flanks with all the might that was in me. The beast, with the sagacity characteristic of her kind, seemed to appreciate the sublime demands which were being made upon her resources, and lumbered down the road, imbued with a desperate determination that Pierce's horse should not get out of view, a determination with which her rider was most heartily in sympathy. Presently we reached a point where the road forked, and Pierce shouted back to me, "I turn to the right, leave my mule at the first house on the left." I wrapped the bridle rein closely around my hand and summoning all the strength in my left arm I drew the mule's head about, using the indispensable cedar limb on the right to insure that she turned into the left, which she did. I soon came in sight of the house Pierce had mentioned, but just at this juncture a loud clatter of hoofs greeted my ears, as I thought, from behind. Applying my whip more desperately than ever, I dashed through an open gate up to the house at full speed. Bounding from her back while she was still under way,

I yelled to a man standing near: "This is Billy Pierce's mule," and, leaping a fence, made for a body of timber which I reached in safety. Looking back, I saw a squad of troops going in the direction from which I had come, some of whom were filing in through the open gate I had entered. I was at the head of a deep ravine, and the sight of the soldiers put me in fine trim for running. Plunging into the hollow, heedless of bushes and briars, I bounded along at a wonderful rate of speed until I had put nearly a mile between me and where I had last stopped. After resting a few minutes beneath a ledge of rock, I resumed my flight.

Suddenly I came to a dim country road leading to the right and rather toward the one I had left. I followed it one and a half miles, which brought me in view of Beard's Mills, where we had once encamped as rear guard for Morgan's men while on their way to the battle of Hartsville. I knew Beard to be a man I could trust. He was suspicious of me at first, but finally I won him over to my side by alluding to incidents which occurred during our encampment there. He told me I was in danger, as the forces that infested that part were irresponsible marauders, that any man who fell into their hands whom they suspected of having been in the Southern army was promptly executed, and that several had been recently killed, among them a Southern soldier who was shot to death and his tongue cut out because he refused to divulge the whereabouts of his comrades that were known to be in the community. This blood-curdling statement of the situation was most discouraging to one who had been so long and so industriously seeking liberty and safety, but there was no help for it, so I asked the miller what I had best do. He directed me to the home of Foster Doak, a few miles away, giving me leave to use his name in introducing myself. The house was found, but he, with his sons, was away in our army. I was invited into the parlor by the servants, who informed me that their mistress was absent, meanwhile inviting me to a plush rocker and ottoman, furnishing me with a copy of the Cincinnati Enquirer, the first I had seen for three years, and bringing in a yellow pitcher filled with cider to be quaffed ad libitum. All this was too much for a soldier habituated to the

hard privations of war life, and its rarity and richness tempted me to an indulgence, especially as to the cider, which a teetotaler would doubtless have characterized as shocking. The hostess soon arrived. I presented my verbal credentials, and was cordially received.

By Mrs. Doak I was directed to a Mrs. Buchanan, and by her to a Mr. Turner's, where I had expected to spend the night. Mrs. Buchanan sent a trusted negro servant with me to Turner's that I might not miss the way. When I had arrived, to my great astonishment, I was received by Turner with suspicion, who not only refused to allow me the privilege of stopping, but declined giving the name of any person to whom I might apply for shelter and aid. Chagrined and enraged, I denounced Turner to his face in unequivocal terms and abruptly left. I learned afterwards, however, that I owed my life to Turner's refusal to receive me. The negro servant who had conducted me to him went to Lebanon that night and notified the Federals of my whereabouts. A party of them, fully armed, surrounded the Turner mansion, late in the night, and demanded my delivery. Turner, of course, denied my being in the house, whereupon every nook and corner of the home was thoroughly searched and the bedding ripped open, but all in vain. Thus cheated of their victim, they followed the road Turner said I had gone but luckily for me, taking the left one instead of the right, they missed me altogether.

Meantime I had made my way to the home of Orrin Hearn, where I was granted lodging. He directed me to Mr. Bob Allen's, who, after some hesitation, put me across Cumberland river, and a short walk brought me to the hospitable home of my friend, Mrs. Puryear, near Dixon Springs. Thence I was conducted by Geo. Clark to Mrs. Gifford's, near Hartsville, and from there without further important event made my way by circuitous route to my father's home on the L. & N. pike, six miles South of Franklin, where I arrived at six o'clock on the evening of September 21st.

Although I had been a wanderer for three long years, and the sight of the familiar environments of the old home stirred my soul to its depths, I curbed the impetuosity which would have impelled me to rush into the house, and allowed a wiser

discretion to prevail, and it was well that I did. Stopping in a skirt of woods near the premises, I devoted myself to a careful reconnoitre of the situation. I was unable, however, to determine anything definite, and after waiting about two hours, when it had become well dark, I ventured cautiously up to the front gate. My attention had been attracted by the lowing of many cattle, and I suspected they were accompanied by the "boys in blue," hence my approach was not made without grave misgivings. There were a number of large cedars in the front yard and I could hear several persons talking at one side of the house. I gave a gentle "hello," to which my father responded by coming to the front gate. He never suspected that his soldier boy stood before him, and when I requested lodging for the night he replied: "With the exception of the family room, the house is full of Federal officers, not only the beds but the floors as well, and several hundred of their cattle are in the field. Probably you can get accommodations at 'Squire Henry Durcan's, a few hundred yards down the road.'" Unable longer to conceal my identity, I told him who I was. For the first time in my recollection, he broke down completely and cried like a child. The cedars concealed this meeting of "Jacob and Joseph" from the officers, though they were not more than fifty yards away. I knew it would be quite impossible for me to rest under the parental roof that night, despite my longings to do so, and the next question claiming consideration was food, as I had eaten nothing since breakfast. My father told me to secrete myself in a cane patch just across the road, and that he would see me again in a little while. I did so, and presently heard a gentle rap on the fence, to which I responded by the shaking of a cane stalk. He came to tell me it would be impossible to get anything to eat without divulging my presence to the other members of the family. Consoling him in his distress over the situation by assuring him that I had frequently passed two days without food, I told him to return to the house before his absence would awaken suspicion. He directed me to a fodder stack nearby where I could spend the night. Thither I repaired, after munching a few stalks of cane to appease my hunger, and burrowing my way to the center of the stack, I was soon fast asleep.

About daybreak I was visited by my father, who, after ascertaining that I was safe, returned to the house. At sunrise, a mingled crackling of corn stalks, rumble of hoofs and clatter of horns aroused and startled me. The herd of cattle had broken into the field. In a moment more they had reached the stack, and my hiding place was being literally devoured by a hundred head of hungry cows. Here was a situation that defied strategy. No fleetness of foot, adroitness of statement, or cunning of manipulation would avail me now. I was as helpless as was the infant Moses in his basket of bulrushes, and an ague of fright seized upon me. I knew that in a few minutes the last bundle would be pulled off and my concealment exposed. Just as I was giving up in despair, however, the "whoop-woa" of more than a score of soldiers greeted my ears. They were driving the cows from the field, and another narrow escape was added to the series that had made up my experience for the past two weeks.

Perfect quiet soon reigned, save for the shouts of the soldiers as they proceeded down the pike with the cattle. As soon as the premises were cleared my father for the first time told my mother who the stranger was that had called at the gate the night before, notwithstanding she had earnestly besought him to do so, and had, in fact, spent a sleepless night on account of the incident, though she had never suspected the truth. The revelation had no sooner been made than she exclaimed in a mother's own way: "Where is he? Where is he?" She was reminded that the negroes about the house must first be gotten away and the coast cleared generally before I could come in. This was done in short order by sending the whole of them, large and small, away to the fields. Then I heard approaching steps followed by the voice of my mother: "My son, my son, where are you?" A moment later she was in my arms. How I rained tears and kisses on that dear, sweet face and pressed her to my bosom in ecstasy of joy and tenderness such as my heart had never known before! He who has not spent three long years amid the dangers of war, and returned through many perils to the maternal arms that in earlier years were his sure fortress and refuge from childhood's fiercest alarms, is not prepared to appreciate the supreme bliss of this moment.

My mother told me to go to the house where I would find my father and sister Nannie, while she joined the negroes in the field to keep down suspicion. As I neared the yard, I was met by my sister, and the scene at the fodder stack, with a few variations, was re-enacted.

It having been decided that I should occupy an upper room, the problem of preparing and serving my meals without the knowledge of Maria, the cook, was one that baffled even the wits of my mother. Maria's devotion to the family during the trying ordeals of the past three years and the fidelity with which she had regarded and conserved their every interest, had won for her their entire confidence. Accordingly when my mother asked me whether I would be willing for Maria to know of my presence I said yes, unhesitatingly. I knew her so well that I was not afraid to risk my life in her hands, and it is needless to add that my trust was not betrayed.

For the three or four nights that I remained at home, after the lights had been extinguished, the family, including Maria, would gather together in the darkness of the upper chamber, where the events of the three years, at home and in the war, were recounted in detail. For more than a year after the close of the rebellion, no one save the family and the faithful negress, Maria, ever knew that I had been at home, notwithstanding that during my stay the Federal forces were passing along the pike, and infesting every part of the premises in search of supplies.

Despite its hardships and dangers, there is a strong fascination about war life, and when a heart, especially a young heart, has once been fired by the peal of the cannon, roar of musketry and shouts of contending forces, it soon chafes under the monotonous quiet of home. Hence, on the morning of the fourth day, when my breakfast was carried up to my room, the family discovered that I was gone. I had determined to rejoin my command at all hazards, and rising early, I hastily despatched a remnant of supper which I had saved for the purpose, and was well on the road before I was missed.

About nine o'clock in the morning, ere I was aware, I walked into a squad of Federals commanded by Capt. Mitch Billingsly, of the 52nd Kentucky, and was once more a prisoner of war.

I was in a creek bottom and the soldiers on the bank above me, when the mutual discovery was made. I was commanded to halt, which I instantly obeyed to the letter. The next order was "Come up out of that ditch," which was also met with a ready and prompt acquiescence.

"Where are you from?" queried the officer. Just here I did some rapid thinking.

Pretending to wilt, I told him that I was a Confederate soldier, giving my real name, and that I had gone home from the army to find that my parents had taken the oath. Not wishing to render them liable to the penalty of law for concealing a rebel soldier, I had concluded to go to Gallatin and take the oath myself and was now on my way there.

The officer sarcastically remarked he was afraid that I might get lost, and that I had better go with him, adding also that I was a disgrace to my family whom he personally knew and that he would not trust me as far as he could throw a cow by the tail. He then ordered me to put my feet in the narrow path that formed the central section of the road, authorizing his men to shoot me down without further notice if I deviated an inch to the right or left. Fearing to trespass on the sod that lined the path on either hand, and seeing my duty as I thought very plainly, I walked "pigeon-toed" for three miles. Then we came to a broader road where I could walk with more ease. A mile and a half more brought us in front of a widow's premises, where a gray mare stood hitched. She was saddled, ready for mounting, and I was commanded to get into the saddle, despite the woman's protest. The mare was very aged, but very frisky nevertheless, and manifested a decided penchant for trotting when a walk would have served a better purpose, and saved me a great deal of unnecessary jolting.

We stayed that night at the home of a Mrs. Bracken, whose husband was in the Southern army. Capt. Billingsly, who was a minister of the gospel, before and afterwards, submitted this lady to indignities, whose mention would fire the blood of any true lover of honor and virtue. The next day we stopped at a farm house on the Gallatin and Scottville road for dinner, having by this time accumulated two or three other prisoners beside

myself. Capt. Ellis Harper, the noted guerrilla, having learned of my capture by Billingsly and his men, had set out with a band of valiant comrades to rescue me. I had determined to escape, if possible, and just as we were remounting, a fearful volley was discharged from the guns of Harper and his men who had concealed themselves on the top of a steep hill, at whose base we had left our horses. This unexpected attack threw our party into confusion. I had prepared a long stout hickory limb, which I intended using as I did the cedar brush on the mule, if opportunity should offer, and now the time for action had come. Turning the old mare's head up the pike, I threw myself over the pommel of my saddle and applied limb and spur to her aged ribs in a mad endeavor to develop the highest possible rate of speed in the smallest space of time. We made fine time, "Gray" and I, and as I fairly lifted her from the ground with each application of the limb, she seemed to fly through the air, and I felt that my escape was an assured fact. Just as I was beginning to congratulate the mare on her splendid speed, to my unutterable dismay I heard the command: "Halt, halt, you—rascal halt," ring out close at hand. Looking back under my arm, for I was afraid to raise my head, I beheld the muzzle of a carbine aimed at me, not more than fifty feet away. At the sight of this I commenced to yell, "Whoa, Gray! Whoa, Gray! Whoa!" at the top of my voice, gradually rising to a sitting posture as the mare's speed slackened. As soon as I could get enough breath I said to my pursuer: "Old gray is about to run away with me," to which he replied with a grim humor: "Yes, and you are helping her." My switch had been worn into a "frazzle," and the mare was blowing like a bellows. On my way back with my captor, I saw locks of white hair floating in the air like thistle down, sad reminders of my luckless race for liberty. Rejoining our party, who had succeeded in beating off Harper's squad, we went to Scottville without further incident, and I was there committed to jail for the night by order of Capt. Billingsly. My cell floor was rendered unavailable as a couch on account of the twenty-penny nails that protruded above it, and backing up in a corner I dropped down to what was known as a "hospital bend," and passed the night as best I could.

Next morning a call at the cell door brought me promptly forward, though I was by no means certain I was not to be shot. I was conducted to headquarters, and as I came into the Captain's presence the odor of savory viands greeted my olfactorys. The odor was soon traced to a big tea tray, which held a sumptuous breakfast, I supposed was for his honor, Capt. Billingsly, but to my delight he gruffly remarked that there was a breakfast sent to me by one of my rebel friends, Mrs. Dr. Sidney Walker, of that town. I was kept in prison for ten days, during which time my meals were sent to me by turns, by three lady friends, Mrs. Walker, Mrs. James Reed and Mrs. Fount Brown, and through their instrumentality I was paroled to the limits of the town for one week.

At the expiration of this time I was sent in charge of a detail of five men to Bowling Green, where I was again placed in jail with a lot of other prisoners of war. I had a top bunk, and immediately beneath me was a fellow-prisoner much smaller than I. On the third or fourth night after my arrival, he succeeded, with the single remaining prong of an old table fork, in digging out the mortar and removing a sufficient number of brick to make a hole large enough through which to escape. His blanket was torn into strips and knotted together, and securing one end of the improvised rope thus made he dropped outside the prison in safety. I discovered afterward, not only that he was gone but my only pair of pants had departed with him, leaving me to adjust myself to circumstances as best I could. The pants he had left behind were about three inches too short at either end, and when I donned them contrasted strangely with my striped vest, besides being unsightly in the extreme.

From Bowling Green we were taken to Louisville and placed in a prison at the corner of Tenth and Main streets which was reserved for the more desperate men that might be captured from time to time. On entering, I was surprised to find among my new fellow-prisoners, three old acquaintances, Messrs. W. P. Hendricks, John Hendricks and James (Pone) Cherry, the two former belonging to the Union army, the latter a civil prisoner. We were placed on half rations for twenty days, after which time began the most trying experience of my life.

Gen. Burbridge, the military despot, whose name and character are familiar to all Kentuckians, had issued an order for the execution of four men in prison, retaliation for the killing of a Union citizen in Meade county by supposed guerrillas. The draft was made without our knowledge and the first intimation of Burbridge's bloody purpose was received when the names of the four unfortunate prisoners on whom the lot had fallen were called out. The announcement fell like a pall upon the prison. There were only nineteen of us, and four were doomed to certain death. As each man's name was called, he marched bravely forward to receive his handcuffs. Manacled and surrounded by a heavy guard, they were marched down three flights of stairs and sent by rail to the place of execution.

The night passed, a sad one for us, and the morning dawned. Our apprehensions that the worst was not yet over proved to be well founded. Another roll was called at the door and eight of us went forward, each receiving his handcuffs in turn. We supposed the fate that had befallen our companions was soon to be ours. One who has never faced death, in full possession of every faculty, can not imagine the sense of awful dread and despair which took hold on each heart. Down the dismal steps we went, and, accompanied by a heavy guard, we were marched hurriedly through the streets to the depot, while it was yet barely day and before the city had awakened to resume its activities.

We were placed on the Lexington train, securely handcuffed in pairs. Nothing of the program was divulged to us, and we knew not where we were to be stopped for execution. One of my handcuffs had been pressed too tightly, and by degrees buried itself in the flesh. I was comparatively unconscious of the pain, however, so heavily did the burden of my expected doom weigh upon me.

We arrived at Lexington, however, at noon, and were conducted to a prison in the center of the town, near the Kentucky Central railroad. The second floor was reached by a flight of stairs, and we there found about three hundred prisoners, soldiers and citizens, from boys of fifteen to gray headed men of seventy. Several, like ourselves, were wearing chains. Soon after entering, our handcuffs were removed and we were allowed the free-

doom of the room. Guards heavily armed, stood along either wall, at the head of the stairway and at the front door.

Thirty days of wearisome prison life wore uneventfully away. To us they were days of dread, for we were in constant apprehension that the fate of our companions in Louisville was sooner or later to be our own. Added to this, we were in a half starved condition, as any soldier can well understand who has passed a month on quarter rations. The monotony of prison life was rudely broken, however, on the night of November 1st, and its hardships altogether forgotten amid scenes and circumstances which combined to make the most memorable night of my life.

It had been rumored about the prison during the day that another draft was to be made. The announcement struck terror into every breast, and in an agony of fear we watched and waited. The ordeal through which I had passed in the Louisville prison did not prepare me for a second, but on the contrary served to intensify my dread. Sure enough about 9 o'clock that night an officer appeared with paper in hand and commenced calling out a list of names. Fifteen names were called, and as each was pronounced its owner was ordered to descend the stairway. My name was the second on the roll. When I reached the foot of the stairs I found thirty or forty armed soldiers, standing so as to form a circle near the door. A soldier stepped aside to admit us, and one by one the fifteen men walked into the fatal circle.

We knew not what was to happen, and not a word had yet been spoken, but heavy dread bore upon each heart. Two officers stood at a desk near by, with their backs turned to us, and a third stood in our midst, holding a hat in his hand. Raising it above his head he announced that he was ready. One of the officers at the desk came forward, and placing his hand in the hat drew therefrom a single slip of paper. This was carried to the officer remaining at the desk, and the name written thereon silently recorded in an open book. Another and another slip was drawn until ten names were registered.

The terrible meaning of this dumb procedure was all too plain. Ten men were to be executed, but which of our names had been inscribed on the death roll was not as yet revealed. We were commanded to go back up stairs, which we did, followed by the

soldiers who had been present at the drawing. The soldiers on duty in the prison were then directed to close up to their right and the space thus cleared was filled by those who came from below. The walls of the prison were literally lined with loaded guns and bristling bayonets. An officer stepped forward and demanded the attention of the troops. Every prisoner was ordered to lie flat on the floor and any man who should raise his head unless his name was called was to be shot without further notice.

Another file of soldiers came up from the fateful room below, the first two bearing an anvil and the others bringing balls, chains and handcuffs. During these preparations a stillness of death reigned in the room, broken only by the clanking of chains and the solemn tread of those who bore them. Motionless and almost breathless, we lay on the floor and watched the development of the awful program. How our minds flew back to home and loved ones as we contemplated an approaching fate, in which each of the fifteen expected to share!

The details of preparation perfected, an officer said in tones that were touched with the solemnity befitting the moment: "Thomas Hunt, come forward."

He was a young man of twenty years, from Maysville, Ky., a magnificent specimen of physical manhood and as brave as a lion. He arose promptly and walked to the officer, holding up both hands as he said calmly and distinctly: "If it is for my country I die, it is all right." To this the officer replied: "You will possibly not be so patriotic before you get through with this."

Handcuffs were placed upon him, and the click of each cuff as it was pressed together was plainly audible all over the prison. He was then told to sit upon the floor, and shackles, one of which was attached to a long chain and a ball of forty pounds, were put about his ankles. Each foot was placed upon the anvil, and a man, wielding blow after blow with a hammer, riveted the shackles firmly together. This was all. Thomas Hunt's doom was sealed, and he was ready for execution.

Ten minutes had passed since Hunt's name was called until the echo of the hammer's last blow had died away. Who was

to come next? The agony of soul which each of the remaining fourteen men suffered baffles the puny insufficiency of language to describe. We were ready if need be to die for the cause we had espoused, but to be executed to avenge a crime which we had not committed, and of which we had no knowledge, made the situation tenfold harder to contemplate.

In another moment the suspense of one of us was forever relieved. His name was called, he arose and went forward, and the same process through which the first victim had been carried was repeated. One by one the names were called, and one by one the dooms were sealed as shackles, chains and cuffs of steel were fastened upon those on whom the lot had fallen.

As the number remaining grew less the suspense waxed more awful. I lay prostrate, with fists clenched, teeth set together and every muscle drawn to its utmost tension. So powerfully was I wrought upon that my finger nails almost pierced the flesh of each palm. Dim oil lamps, few in number, shed a strange, uncertain light upon the solemn scene. Not a word had been spoken, save by him who called the death-roll, until the last name was called, when the same fateful sentence that had been uttered an hour before, greeted my ears: "That's ten."

This being done, the doomed men, with thier balls and chains, were removed to a space allotted them near the stove, and in this they sat, grouping together, gazing vacantly into each other's faces. With them the die was cast, and in that despair, which sees no gleam of hope, they waited for their fate. Some of them procured Bibles and read for hours. The lips of others could be seen moving in prayer. The officers had all gone below, and the lynx-eyed guards that stood along the shadowy walls, seemed as spectres. The stillness that reigned in the room was oppressive, broken only by an occasional sigh breathed by some of the three hundred prostrate prisoners. The soldiers themselves were deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion. I lay in one position on the hard floor the whole of that terrible night, not daring even to move for fear that my life, grown more precious to me than ever, might pay the penalty. Sleep was of course out of the question, but as I lay and gazed upon the scene about me, the feeling would now and then steal

in upon my consciousness that the whole thing was a horrible nightmare. Oh! how I longed for the morning, though it was a longing unmixed with dread, for I had no assurance that I would not be called upon to meet the doom which had already been assigned to my companions.

Finally the shadows of night gave way to the indistinct light of dawn. A sigh of relief went up from the floor of the prison, saving that space where the ten men sat, quietly awaiting the approach of the end. What storms of agony raged in their bosoms, what keen knife thrusts of despair pierced their hearts, as they thought of the homes where mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, wives or children were eagerly anticipating his coming back again who should never return, what shrinking from the awful fate that was near at hand, and what thoughts of the great future upon which they were soon to enter, passed in hurried march through their minds, will never be known until the last great day, though a pitiable index of their feelings was seen upon every face, which wore a cast of inexpressible sadness.

By and by it was fully day. The heavens seemed to be in sympathy with the occasion, as a dismal mist of rain was falling and the clouds were dark and lowering. Breakfast was announced at six o'clock, and although our appetites had been sharpened by thirty days on quarter rations, I dare say not a morsel was touched by any man in the prison. Soon the scream of a locomotive was heard in the distance, and a moment later it drew up with two or three cars in front of the prison door and stopped. An officer, with some soldiers, ascended the stairs and commanded the condemned men to get ready. Each man rose unfalteringly as his name was called, and with manacled hand clutched the chain fastened to his leg and threw the iron burden over his shoulder. For some reason the names of only eight were called, and it was afterward reported that an indentity had been offered to secure the release of the other two.

The death procession filed down the stairway, young Hunt leading the way. It was followed by the soldiers who had stood on guard during the night, a fresh detail taking their places. Hunt and his seven comrades were carried to Frankfort, where, in the outskirts of the city, eight new-made graves were waiting

to receive their occupants. The doomed men were assembled in close proximity to the graves, and a minister who chanced to be present asked the privilege to hold a brief religious service, which was granted.

One of the prisoners was an old man of seventy years. His hair was silvery white, and he had tottered along with the rest, scarcely able to bear the heavy iron ball. From long confinement he was much emaciated and very weak. The iron band about his ankle had worn its way into the flesh and he had torn off a piece of his clothing and slipped it between the shackle and the bleeding surface. While prayer was being offered, he managed with the aid of the cloth to slip the shackle from his leg. When the "Amen" was pronounced he rose with the others and quickly whirling about, made a desperate effort to escape. Gun after gun was discharged, but he ran on until he reached a fence. Just as he was mounting it, the sure aim of a soldier pierced him in a vital part and he fell over the fence dead.

This was witnessed by the other seven, but they seemed unmoved, and were evidently determined to die like brave men. They were ranged in a row and a detachment of fifty soldiers stood in front of them fifteen paces away. One of the prisoners asked for a drink of water before being executed, and it is said to have been dipped from one of the graves and handed him. The words "ready," "aim," "fire," were then spoken in quick succession, a volley of bullets was discharged and seven souls were sent into eternity.

To-day there stands in the cemetery at Frankfort a monument erected in memory of these eight men, and every year flowers are brought and strewn over their graves.

The next day Dick Vance, commander of the post, came into prison. I recognized him, and still fearing that I might be the unlucky victim in another draft, I approached him, told him who I was and that I desired, if possible, to be released. He had already received a letter from Dr. G. W. Duncan, of Frankfort, written in my behalf and had doubtless come in search of me. I was promised a hearing on the morrow which was had, and which resulted in my being permitted to parole north of the Ohio river.

On the following day myself and four others, who had secured hearings when I did, one of them a nephew of John J. Crittenden, were placed in charge of an escort of soldiers. They were part of those who had participated in the slaughter of our comrades at Frankfort, and from them we learned the details of the execution. We were carried across the river to Cincinnati, and were free men once more.

I remained there a month or so, after which, through the instrumentality of Mrs. Francis Ford, of Covington, then Miss Augusta Webb, the legislature passed an act in my favor, making the corporate line of that city the limit of my parole.

Cincinnati continued to be my home under the conditions of my parole until the general amnesty was issued, by which I was released.

One thing more and I am done. My experience under the tyrannical and inhuman reign of Gen. Burbridge had learned me to loathe his name, and I had sworn in my heart of hearts to slay the assassin if he should ever cross my path. This was a thing I intended to do at all hazards, even if it cost me my life.

About a year after the occurrence of the events narrated in this chapter, while standing one day in the office of the Metropolitan Hotel, at Cincinnati, a friend to whom I had previously expressed my intention, came to me and told me that Gen. Burbridge was in the office, at the same time pointing him out. I was armed for the emergency, and immediately walked over to Burbridge, who was engaged in conversation with Senator Garrard Davis, then one of Kentucky's representatives in the United States Senate. Taking my position in front of Burbridge and to the left of Senator Davis, I drew my pistol and began to remind my intended victim of the slaughter of my comrades at Frankfort, whose death I had sworn to avenge. At this juncture Senator Davis threw himself between us, and raising both hands excitedly exclaimed: "Don't shoot! for God's sake, young man, don't shoot!" Burbridge had backed against the wall while I sought to get a clear passage to him, telling the Senator I didn't want to hurt him but he must keep out of the way. This all occurred in a trice. There were perhaps forty or fifty bystanders, who, seeing that a tragedy was about to be enacted,

rushed upon us and separated us. My friend hurried me away, while Burbridge made his way up the steps of the hotel. I have never seen him since, but I am informed that he died while in connection with the United States mint at Philadelphia.

THE DYING SOLDIER.

IN RESACA'S bloody battle,
In the thickest of the fight,
Stood our comrades, true and gallant,
Battling for the cause of right.
While the fight was fiercely raging,
Contested hardly by the foe,
Fell a comrade, true and noble,
With his face toward the foe.
"Tell me, Doctor, am I dying?
My shattered limbs are racked with pain;
Shall I ever join my comrades?
Shall I meet the foe again?
"Is it death that's coming on me?
Is it death that dims my sight?
Tell me, Doctor, shall I ever
Speed the cause of God and right?"
As the doctor knelt beside him,
With an effort to console,
Told him that he might recover;
Not give up—but to be bold.
When he spoke, his words betrayed him.
The soldier's close discerning eye
Caught the truth like inspiration,
That his time had come to die.
"Doctor, seek not to deceive me;
My future fate-I gladly own.
These ghastly wounds I would not change
To be a king upon his throne.
Or were it ever in my power
To protract my days of pain,
I would not—but to see the hour
When my country's free again.

To see the true Confederate banner
Float from every Southern hill,
And beneath her white and crimson
Freedom's thoughts engendered still.

But adieu, my noble comrades,
I trust you to the future fight;
Ever strive—ever labor
To speed the cause of God and right.

Take this ring my sister gave me
When first I joined my brave comrades.
Tell her that I dearly love her—
That we'll meet in Heaven again.

Tell father that this last injunction,
When he pressed my hand good bye—
That if I like a Christian lived,
I could like a soldier die.

These few words have been my guidance,
And with a purpose fixed on high,
I have tried like Christ to live,
And now can like a soldier die."

As they from the battle bore him,
To which he ne'er returned again,
Angels' wings were hovered o'er him
To calm his soul and soothe his pain.

Then with voice loud and sweeter
Than e'er before was sung by him—
While yet amid the groans of dying—
He sang his last, his favorite hymn.

The one his mother dear had taught him,
Who years ago had passed away,
Yet had ever been consoling
And lit his soul with heavenly day.

"Jesus, lover of my soul,
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll,
While the tempest still is high."

We laid him with his comrades brave
Who had in battle fell;
No words escaped his pallid lips,
Save "Jesus does all things well."

The chaplain close beside him knelt,
A tear was started from his eye;

He asked, but not without emotion,
"Alfred, do you fear to die?"

A smile of joy then lit his features,
That seemed to shine from heaven.
"Oh, no, dear chaplain, all is well,
My sins are all forgiven."

"See the sun is sinking low
Beneath the Western sky—
Comes streaming through the forest trees
To cheer me as I die.

"Before its rich resplendent rays,
To earth again are given
I will be at rest with God,
My soul will be in heaven."

And ere its golden tinted rays
Had faded in the west,
A heavenly smile illumined his face—
The soldier was at rest.

He yet fills a Southern grave,
The Southern land of flowers
Alone bedecks his resting place
Beneath her woodland bowers.

