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"Be true to God, to your Country, and to your Duty."

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MRS. T. J. HOLTON,
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Poetry.

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BY JULIA A. BARBER.

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quite a good road to Rock River, and I turned my horse's head in that direction. I calculated my time and concluded that, by moderate traveling, I could reach the mill in two days.

During the first day my road lay through a country mostly cleared, and was well traveled; but on the second day I struck into a wilder region, and the way was little better than a bridle-path through a dense forest. I passed several clearings, where small huts were erected, and at one of these latter I stopped and got some dinner. I found a young man in charge of the premises, the father having gone to "the mill." I asked what mills they meant, and the old lady said they were "Foster's mills."

From these people I learned that Foster's place was forty miles distant, and that the only dwelling, since leaving two near by, between here and there was a sort of stopping place kept by a man named Daniel Grooms. They said he generally kept food for man and beast, and also had a good supply of liquor, principally whiskey. His house was twelve miles from the mill. This just suited me. I could reach Grooms by six o'clock, and there get some supper, and rest and bait my horse. Then I could easily reach Foster's by nine, as the moon was well on in its second quarter.

The good people refused to take anything for my dinner, but I bestowed half-a-dollar upon a fox-hunter's dog who was trotting around upon his bare feet, and then set forward again. There was another about a distance of half-a-mile, and a second about a mile off. I saw no more human habitations until I reached Grooms. I found the traveling full as good as I had expected, and arrived at the forest inn at just half-past five.

This inn was situated upon a romantic spot, and, to a lover of isolated nature, must have been a charming retreat. The house was built of logs, the outside surfaces of hewn, and the seams filled with cement, formed of some sort of fine, tough moss and pitch. There were three separate buildings to this house, the principal one being built with the gable to the road, and the other two upon either side, running out like two L's. Then there was a barn a short distance off, with a piggy connected. Take it altogether, and it was quite a place for such a locality. A small stream ran close by, so that water was plentiful.

As I rode up to the door Mr. Grooms himself came out. He was a tall, gaunt man, with a fiery red head, and a face as coarse and rough as it was ugly. But I was surprised when I heard his voice. I had expected a tone like the bellows of a bull; but instead of that his notes fell upon my ears like the speech of a woman. He smiled as he spoke, and I thought to myself how his appearance would deceive one, for in conversation he seemed a different man.

I informed him that I was on my way to Foster's Mill, and should only stop long enough to rest my horse and to get some supper. He gazed into my face for some moments without speaking, and finally said: "Ah—yes—hump!" Then he turned into the entry and called "Ike." Ike came—a tall, strapping youth of one- or two-and-twenty—with a red head, and features such as could belong to no one but a child of my host.

"Ike" took my horse, and Mr. Grooms led the way to the "sitting room," as he called it. It was rough but comfortable; and the furniture consisted of a pine table, a mahogany bureau, and four long pine benches which were set against the walls. There were no chairs, those benches being sufficient to accommodate quite an assemblage.

"Yes," I told him. "I wish to see my friend, and I shall gain considerable time by crossing his place to-night."
"Is he expectin' ye?" Grooms asked.
"No," I answered.
"Perhaps he don't know that you're in this section at all."
"No, he doesn't," I said. And I expected that my host would urge me stay with him until morning; so I had my answers all prepared.

But I was mistaken. He did not urge any such thing. On the contrary, he said he thought I was wise in my determination. He would like my company, but it would be better for me to push on. I was quite relieved.

I wanted a quarter of seven when my horse was brought to the door. I took out my wallet, and asked what was to pay—"Half a dollar," I said, and then asked which was the most direct route.

"You see that big tree, just over the barn there?"
"Yes," I said.
"Wal, that's right in the best road—when you strike that, you can't miss the way."
"But isn't there another road?"—one which follows the stream right down to the mill? I asked; for I had been informed by the young man who had taken charge of my horse at noon, that Grooms's inn was right by the very stream which gave Foster his mill power, and that the road followed the stream direct.

"Oh," said my host, turning and looking off towards the stream, "that road ain't fit to travel on. 'Tother one's the best."
"But what's the matter with it?" I asked.
"Why—the bridges are all washed away; and then there's been wind falls across it. I tried it last week, and had to come back. The upper road is the matter of a mile or two longer, but that's nuthin'. Your beast is good for it, I guess."

I told him my horse would stand it well enough, and then asked where the other road struck the stream.
"About three mile this side of the mill," he replied.
"It's all clear, and direct?"
"Yes. You can't miss the way."

I bade my host good bye, and then started on. I didn't like this idea of a new road, at all. The youth, before mentioned, had told me what an excellent road it was from Grooms's to the mill, by the river-road. He said it followed the stream, which was very near straight, and that it was light and open the whole distance. However, of course, Grooms knew, so I must make the best of it. I looked back as I reached the edge of the wood. I was upon a gentle eminence, and could overlook the shrubbery I had passed. I looked and saw "Ike" going from the house to the barn. He had a saddle upon his arm. I was sure it was a saddle. Perhaps he had an errand to do.

Ke long, I entered the wood, and found it thick and gloomy. The path was plain enough, and had evidently been once a traveled road. Aye—I remembered, now, of having heard my informant of the notable speak of the "old road." He said there used to be a road leading to Rock River, but when Foster commenced his settlement, a new road was opened by the stream, and the old one discontinued. He had said nothing about my bridges.

slipped the cap off, and found the percussion composition removed. There was not a particle left within the cap. And this was not all. I found the tube spiked with a little pine stick!

Here was the secret, sure enough. I took my penknife, and succeeded in drawing out the stick; and then I examined the other pistol, which I found to be in the same plight. I stopped and went at the work in earnest. I had an excellent screw for removing bullets, and my pistol barrels were emptied in a very few moments. I had a serious objection to firing them off there in the woods, where the report might betray the knowledge I had gained. So I emptied them, and then snapped a cap upon each. I found them both clear, and then proceeded to load them, which I did carefully.

And now, how should I proceed? That this road would lead me to Foster's Mills I had no doubt; and it would be nearer for me now to keep on than to turn back. So upon that point my mind was made up.

And next—which way would my host come?—for that he meant to rob me I felt certain. Every circumstance—everything that had transpired between him and me—pointed to that simple result. Would he go down the river road a piece, and head me off; or would he follow me directly up? Most likely the former. I considered upon it awhile, and then resolved to push on, and keep upon my guard.

The sun was down, and it grew dark in the deep wood; but the moon was already up, and as her beams fell languidly upon the road, she gave me considerable light when my eyes had become to the transition. Half an hour had passed since I looked to my pistols, and just as I began to wonder if I had been mistaken, I heard the sound of a horse's tramp at no great distance. At first I was puzzled to tell the direction from which it came, but in a moment I knew it was in advance of me, and upon my right hand, which was towards the river. Presently it stopped. I drew my horse to the left side of the path and kept on at a gentle trot, having raised the lapet of my right holster.

In few moments I saw a dark form, amid the bushes, a little way ahead, on the right. As I came up a man rode out. It was Mr. Host!

"Good evening, sir," said he, with exceeding politeness.
"Ah—good evening," I returned. "I had not expected the pleasure of company."
"No—I suppose not," he resumed, in a sort of hesitating tone. And I shouldn't have come out only for a little business. I forgot when you were at the inn."
It was plain as day. My pistols had been rendered useless—I had been sent off into the unfrequented wood—and now the villain thought to take my life and my money without any risk to his own body, and then hide my poor carcass in the earth, where, very likely, others had been hidden before. My eyes were open, and my hand ready.

"May I ask to what business you allude?" I said.
"Yes!" he snapped out, in a tone somewhat in agreement with his features, "I want wooley money sir!"
As he spoke he raised a heavy pistol.
"Take care!" I cried, raising my own pistol, and pointing it full in his face.
"Ha, ha, ha," he laughed, in coarse triumph, "your Yankee pistols weren't made to harm such as me! I'll soon put you where I've put others afore—"

ging there we found two human bodies—Subsequently one more was found only a few rods distant.

The body of Grooms was taken up to his house, and we there found that "Ike" had fled. He had probably been out and found his dead father, and, fearing that he might be implicated, he departed.

Mrs. Grooms, who was a mild, broken-down woman, acknowledged that she had long been a swarper of her husband's crimes, but that the fear of death had kept her silent. She said she had sworn to expose him if he ever did a murder where she could see, or hear it.

"Ike," I believe, has not yet been found; but his mother is still living in Illinois, with a married daughter, and is well off—She has grown healthier, and stronger, and more happy since the night on which I had the highway adventure with My Host.

HINT FOR HORSE DEALERS—Tompkins brought a fine horse—paid three hundred dollars for him; the horse, after a few months, proved to be lame in the right shoulder—Tompkins was distressed about it. He tried all sorts of remedies—embrocations, liniments, Mustang included—under the advice of the very best veterinarians; still the lameness was obstinate and grew rather worse. He became desperate, and hit upon this device to sell the horse: He drove an ugly ten penny nail plump in to the right forefoot, and left it in there for ten days, when he led the reticent animal, limping to a neighboring blacksmith to be shod. The blacksmith was a dealer in horses and quite a jockey in his way. At a while, Tompkins called at the shop for his horse.

"That's a splendid gelding of yours, Mr. Tompkins; pry his so lame," says the blacksmith.
"He is, indeed," replied Tompkins; "but he is very lame, and I am afraid he can't be cured."
"Perhaps not, and may be he can," says Vulcan. "How much would you be willing to take for him just as he stands, Mr. Tompkins, money down?"
"Ah, well, I don't know what to say about that. If he is cured he is worth all I paid for him, and even much more, as horses go now; but if his lameness should continue, you see, he is worth nothing—not a dollar."
The blacksmith began to chaffer. First he offered fifty dollars, then seventy-five, and at last two hundred for the animal. Tompkins was persuaded, and accepted the last offer. The money was paid, and the horse was delivered on the spot.

"Now," says the blacksmith, "as the bargain is finished, I will be frank with you, Mr. Tompkins. I suppose I can tell you just exactly what was the matter with that horse."
"Can you?" says Tompkins; "well, I shall be glad to hear it. I thought you must know all about it, or you would not have paid me so much money for him."
The blacksmith produced the nail, and assured Tompkins, with great apparent satisfaction, that while paring down the horse's hoofs, he had found the infernal piece of iron, and that he had drawn it out of the frog of the rear forefoot.

"Is that all you know about it?" Tompkins asked, very quietly.
"All?" replied the blacksmith, "all; isn't that enough, for conscience's sake?"
"Well," replied Tompkins, "don't know as it is. I will be equally frank with you, as the bargain is finished. I drove that nail into the spot; but the lameness is in the shoulder, I think you will find."

The northern people exult over what they are pleased to call the re-opening of the Mississippi. That they virtually possess the river, and can use it for purposes of war, is unquestionable; but that the river is open to their commerce, or of other service to them than as a road for iron-clad vessels, is untrue. Until the Southern Confederacy is destroyed the Mississippi cannot become again a channel for commerce.

While a single point upon its vast extent on either bank is accessible to hostile parties it cannot be termed a vessel only; and although they have New Orleans and the principal strategic positions above it, they have not driven the Confederates from many hundred miles of shores, whence they can stop trade and passage as completely as by the guns of Fort Mifflin or Columbus.

The fall of New Orleans, and the consequent of the Mississippi, was a heavy blow to the Confederacy, and diminished its resources for supplies. But it is far from being irremediable. The recovery of that river will be as easy as its loss. Victories in the North will compel the United States to recall its troops even if the yellow fever does not do its work in the next sixty days so effectively as to leave none to recall.

New armies will be formed in the States which border that river, which will retake New Orleans. No treaty of peace is possible which would leave the river in the hands of the North. An effort will be made to render the great city at its mouth a free town, like Hamburg and Bremen; but it will be an indecisive war, and a drawn battle only, which will render the project possible. The people of the Mississippi country and town, are entirely Southern, lately hostile to the United States, and without an exception, recovered forever to be consistent parts of the Confederacy. If the Confederacy lives, it will be impossible to give that river and its valley any political connection other than nature ordains for it. Beyond the separation from Texas and Arkansas, and the loss of the cattle supply we might obtain from that source, its present possession by the enemy is of no real importance in the actual war or in the future condition of the country.—Richmond Examiner.

A "SKETCH" OF THE SOUTH, FROM HARPER'S WEEKLY.—That punny snobby representative of "enlightened" Yankee journalism, Harper's Weekly, in its issue of the 17th ultimo, which we have before us, contains one of the most libelous and scurrilous articles upon the South and the women of the South, which we have ever seen. After commencing with its usual disregard of truth upon the virtues and ignorance of the Southern masses and the moral and intellectual superiority of the Yankee ruffian over them, it unblushingly says: "Impatient of natural decay, they boil the dead flesh of our soldiers to get the bones more speedily. The bones are cut and carved into trinkets, into esskets, into drinking cups, and the women of the region, equally ignorant and craft, wear them and gloat over them with glee. In the Shenandoah valley the people suppose us to have horses; believe that we wore the wounded and cannot taste blood though. The extravagance, the idocy of ignorance, in every quarter that our troops have entered, is appalling. But it is not strange. Slavery cannot exist without it. It must have ignorance at any price. Knowledge is light, and in the light it withers."

Such is the true type of the unconscionable falsehood which fill the columns of Yankee journals in wrong of the South—manufactured out of whole cloth, with the fullest consciousness of their mendacity, and distributed throughout Europe with the hope of prejudicing the advocates of monetary and the haters of African slavery in that country against our cause. This gross aspersion upon unparagoned morality and the bright Christian virtues of our lovely women, is intended as a base and unparagoned caricature of our civilization, and is only excused in infamy by the recumbent, low-sitting and cowardly reflection upon their chastity by that bestial Yankee miscreant Benjamin F. Butler—a more odious name in future history to the gentle sex than that of the ruffian Haymaw himself.—Scotchman's Appeal.

Col. Stearns, of Tennessee, is doing some efficient service as a bold and active partisan leader against the enemy, in Tennessee. His legion of mounted men, between five and six hundred in number, is occasionally on the tramp, beating up the enemy's quarters and cutting off his marauding parties in the section of country between Nashville and Chattanooga. Hearing recently that a Yankee detachment had occupied Realville about forty miles from Nashville, Col. Stearns, at the head of a company of his troops, with a daily at the place, and, after a brief skirmish, in which six of the Yankees were killed, found himself in possession of between fifty and sixty prisoners. Learning that three of the prisoners were officers and just previously given to a private residence in the outskirts of the village, a squad of our men was detached to fetch them, and found that they had just forced their way into the neighborhood of a young lady. A squad was sent for the team, revolvers in hand, and the ruffians had barely time to realize their doom when their bodies, pierced by a dozen bullets, were stretched lifeless on the floor.—Richmond Examiner.

Miscellaneous.

MY HOST.

A HIGHWAY ADVENTURE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

My business called me through the northern part of the State of Illinois. I crossed the Illinois River at Ottawa, intending to strike Rock River at Foster's Mill. Foster was an old friend, who had gone out some years before, and erected a mill upon one of the tributaries of the last mentioned river, he having bought a whole township in that section. It was some out of my way, as my most direct route was very near due west from Ottawa, whereas this took me over sixty miles farther north— However, I had learned that there was