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[WHOLE NO. 242.]

For the North Carolina Argus.

A Y E A R

IN THE

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY.

BY HILDEGARDE.

Mr. James was astonished, but, as he could not help himself had to surrender. He told the officer that he had never been in the Confederate service, and was simply a plain farmer. His Captainship replied that he must have proof of the statement. So they jogged on; Mr. James in moody silence, the Captain humming "E Pluribus Unum." At length they met an acquaintance of Mr. J's., from the Point; the Federal, also, knew the man, and asked him some questions concerning his prisoner. This man confirmed the latter's own statement. In the same manner several men were met and interrogated. On reaching the Public Square at Friar's Point, the Captain halted, drew forth a pistol and pointing it at his prisoner said: "Stand here till I return."

After an absence of five minutes he returned followed by an old negro man; pointing to the prisoner, he said, to the negro, "there's the man, do you know him?"

"O, yes, massa, dat's Mr. Jeem's—berry cleber man, too, berry cleber; no, no, Massa, I is'n't neber hearn no 'plaints o' him by nobody."

This magnificent trial now being at an end the prisoner was released and went on his way rejoicing.

I am a woman, and trust that I do duly comprehend my sphere as one of the "weaker vessels"—I know that I do admire gentleness, amiability, and all the soft and lovely qualities which do, or should, characterize the female race—I know, too, that unless a woman possess these beautiful traits of character, she is not fitted to fill the station in life—for which God designed her. But I think he ought to have killed that man; and then gloried in dying at the report of a thousand Federal guns. Mr. J., said that he did try to shoot him, but his pistol snapped. A few days subsequent to the above incident, a lady, residing several miles from my uncle's, sent her carriage and a note requesting me to spend some time with her. She thought a change would be beneficial to my health. I went. One morning the lady's husband told her he was going up on the "Pass," and would not be back till late in the evening. Mrs. F., and I had a nice time although I was sick and not able to be up. She nursed me so good, and said as soon as I regained strength sufficient to bear the fatigues of travelling, she would take me to the Hills. I was so delighted at the idea of going where the air was fresh and pure, I could think of nothing else after she mentioned it.

But ere the sun set that day, I had other and more weighty things to think of. Mr. F., returned in great excitement. He said there were five hundred Federals in the neighborhood who were taking the negroes, horses and cotton, and destroying everything that they could not carry off. By twelve o'clock that night Mr. and Mrs. F., had packed some of their most valuable things and tumbled them topsy turvy into wagons. Whilst the packing was going on I lay on the bed, with a burning fever, looking at them, and wondering what would become of me in all the confusion.

I was fearful they would mistake me for something else and put me in a box, or tie me up in a sheet. The servants were sullen and kept muttering half aloud, "I'd like to know where they's guine to drag us off to now; for my part I jest as live be wid de Yankees as what I is, ever bit an' grain." Some of them refused to obey orders, and Mr. F. doubted whether they would go with him. When all was ready to start I was carried and put in the carriage with Mrs. F. Out on the road, we were joined by several families who were going the same way. They held a consultation a few minutes and then, putting the wagons in front, the negroes next and the family carriages in the rear, we started to go, I knew not where; in fact, I was too sick to know anything.

The next morning I awoke to find myself in a

strange house, and a strange woman standing by the bed with a bowl of chicken soup in hand urging me to take some, saying I needed refreshment after being so fatigued the past night. She told me that Mr. F. had left me there the night before, requesting her to take care of me until my uncle could send for me. And where's Mr. F. and all of them? I asked her.

"They are going to Marshall county, and," she continued, "I am afraid they will not better their condition by doing so, for the Yankees are expected if they are not already there."

I felt very desolate, but could not help laughing, the idea of running from the Yankees in the dead hours of the night, seemed so ridiculous. It is impossible to describe, so as to give a correct idea, the excitement and confusion which pervaded the whole country. People running to and fro, not knowing where to go for the best; some went to the cane-brakes and camped out, some left the county, and some stood their ground at home. To complete the picture Capt. Pinder's guerilla's, as if gifted with omnipresence, were everywhere at the same time. They galloped up one by-path and down another apparently looking for the Federals, but in reality dodging them. They had however several unavoidable skirmishes, the most important of which was called the "battle of Waller's Point." I never saw an official report of the engagement on our side; but the enemy stated that their loss, in "killed, wounded and missing," was two or three spokes knocked out of a wagon-wheel and an old mule that had been turned out to die. After making a successful raid through the country they would retire with their booty to their gun-boats on the river, where they remained several days "shelling the woods" up and down the river, then go to Helena, Memphis or Cairo, spend several weeks "flying round," I suppose, then back again to make another raid. I don't know what was their object in shelling the woods so much unless they feared Capt. Pinder's guerillas might be stationed there to fire on their boats, and certainly they dreaded the Captain ever after the renowned battle of Waller's Point. There were a great many negroes decoyed off by the enemy at first, but some, who had tried the "land of milk and honey," which was promised them, and made their escape back to their masters, brought such doleful accounts of the way they were treated that the rest of them were afraid to try it. I learned from good authority that there were hundreds of them at Helena and other places sick and dying out on the open streets without any attention; and their dead bodies thrown into the Mississippi. I noticed in an article, written by a Cairo correspondent of the Baltimore Sun, a statement which ought to convince the most rabid abolitionists of the error of their ways. He says:

"As I sit, by my window to write, I look out at the negro quarter beyond. Such a scene my eyes never witnessed before, and the groans of the sick and dying, their bodies exposed to the scorching rays of the sun, with not even a drop of water to cool their parched tongues—fill my ears with horror. All manner of foul disease is there, and starvation reigns supreme. Still every boat arrival adds new victims to this abode of misery. I am not an abolitionist, never was. If I were one of the rankest, this would convince me of my error."

"Mid scenes of confusion and creature complaints," the Summer passed away and I hailed with joy the first white frost of Autumn, for then the dreadful sickness ceased to rage. In September, my health being restored, I commenced a private school in a pleasant family where I remained all the Winter. Though my situation was very agreeable I could not be happy any longer away from home, for I knew that all communication with my friends was cut off so long as I stayed there, but I resolved in my mind to bear it patiently until Spring, and then, if barely possible, try to get home.

Smuggling on the Mississippi is the feature that marks the pages of that Winter's history, I mean the history of that portion of the country. Federal trading-boats laden with dry goods and gro-

ceries of every description landed at different points all along on the river where the planters would meet them, in the night, with cotton which was given in exchange for their goods. At first, this unlawful trade was carried on with great secrecy at night; but, as time wore on and there was no notice taken of it, (the Government authorities seemed to be sleeping, or, which is the same thing, were trading as much as any body else,) they grew bolder and went to and from with their cotton and goods in the broad open daylight. In saying the authorities encouraged this trade, I allude to Capt. Pinder, as he was the only person, in that section of country, at the time, who had a right to interfere. If the people had bought only necessary supplies for family use it would have been right, for they could not procure salt, medicines and other articles really essential to subsistence anywhere else; but many of them made large purchases in view of speculation and others sold their cotton for northern money. Yet these very men have the impudence to call themselves patriots—to even boast of their patriotism. I declare, such men ought not to live; but they're not fit to die, either, for in that case they would have no place in which to stay as they could not go to Heaven and His Satanic Majesty would not like to trust them in his kingdom. The smuggling had been going on two months, when a report of it reached Headquarters and troops were sent in to check it. Then, how the "patriots" did charge. They thought, "things had come to a nice pass, when they could not be allowed to exercise their just rights." Our soldiers, divided into squads, stationed themselves on all the roads leading to the river, burned the cotton and confiscated all the goods that passed. Among other things they frequently found oysters and sardines which they appropriated to themselves, and, from this, the Swampers called them, in contempt, "Oyster Rangers" and "Sardine Cavalry."

There are some citizens in Coahoma who were not concerned in the smuggling and who are well known to the proper authorities.

After a long, long Winter, Spring came and I mentioned to the gentleman and lady for whom I was teaching my plans about going home. They opposed it bitterly, said, "it was such a great undertaking, they knew I never would accomplish it." I told them that my mind was fixed and all they could say would not change it, that I knew, as well as they did, that I should have many difficulties to surmount, yet I was willing to make any sacrifices to get home. Mr. and Mrs. N., were clever people and very kind to me during my stay there; but I felt that it was selfish in them to try to prevent my going, by throwing every obstacle they could possibly think of in the way, knowing, as they did, too, how long I had been absent from home and for the last eight months could not even hear from my friends. Mr. N. tried to frighten me by telling me that he heard the railroad was torn up fifty or sixty miles beyond Jackson. I knew, so well, his motive was to secure my services as teacher, that it disgusted me and I replied that I was going if I had to walk every step of the way to North Carolina. One evening I inadvertently overheard Mrs. N. say to him:

"Mr. N., don't try to persuade Hildegarde any more, for you see, she is determined to go, and it will wound her feelings."

"Why, Charlotte," he said, "I am bound to keep her if possible. I tell you, it'll never do to give her up. In the present state of affairs we can't send Koon (a nick name) off, and besides, if we can just keep Miss Hildegarde three or four years longer, she can be educated without having to pay out board."

Well, I thought, that is truly a grand scene, and I must sacrifice my feelings, everything, and risk my life another Summer in this miserable Swamp, all to save him, a wealthy planter and, to me, a comparative stranger, the petty expense of paying board. The next morning I addressed a note to a gentleman, in the neighborhood, who was going to Virginia, requesting him to see me home. He called, on reception of the note and said he would accompany me with pleasure; that

he apprehended no difficulty in getting along after we left Mississippi.

"How will you get out of the Swamp?" Mr. N., interposed.

"Well, that will be the worst part of the whole trip," said Mr. Clement, we'll have to go in dug-outs about sixty miles and run the blockade in several places, which I am told, is almost impassable; still, it can be accomplished if Miss Hildegarde is a pretty good soldier."

"I am a daring soldier, at least, for I am determined to make the attempt," I said, looking at Mr. N.

"You have made your plans," he said, "now you must paddle your own canoe. I would not undertake to send you to Charleston for five hundred dollars."

"O, Mr. N., you think you have touched the right chord, at last, knowing I have not that much money; but pay me one fifth of five hundred and I can go all the way home on it."

Charleston is a small town in Tallahatchie county, on the verge of the hills, and the point to which I was going by water. My next step was to ascertain whether the Federals had left Tallahatchie river. I learned by inquiry that they were gone to Helena but would return soon. Trusting in the guidance and protection of an All Wise Being I parted, not without regret, with my friends and started.

Mr. N's last words were, "I'll bet the best horse on my place you cry before you go ten miles."

I was not shocked at the bet, having become accustomed to all such in that land where the gentlemen wear koonskin caps and vests made of rattlesnake skins.

We went up Hopson's bayou, and down Cassada into Tallahatchie river, not meeting with any thing to impede our progress till we reached Tillatoba, a small but deep stream running into the last mentioned river, which was completely blockaded in several places, by large trees which had been thrown across it from bank to bank; this was made more impenetrable by drift wood, logs, brush and chunks collecting and filling up every opening. At such places I had to climb upon the brush and sit there until a passage was cleared for the dugout; and it required no small amount of time and labor to do this. While sitting on the brush, I saw on one occasion, not far from me, two very large cottonmouth snakes, stretched out full length sunning themselves; their attitude seemed to express, "if you'll let me alone I'll let you alone." I did let them alone, and glad of the chance. The "cottonmouth" is equally as venomous as the rattle-snake and very much like the latter except it has no rattles. We heard on arriving at Charleston that the enemy was in possession of Jackson, and remained there till that place was retaken.

TO BE CONTINUED.

STATE EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NORTH CAROLINA. The next Annual Meeting of the State Educational Association, of North Carolina, will be held in Lexington; the session to commence at eight o'clock on the evening of Tuesday the 18th day of August next.

This Annual Meeting is called at an earlier day in the year than usual, in order that it may precede the meeting of the National Educational Association to be held in Atlanta, Georgia, in the month of September; and it is to be hoped that the members of the body will consider it a duty to attend, if possible.

The Association has by the blessings of Providence; been kept alive during this trying crisis, and has been made a means of great good to the State; and through its agency friends of education can do much for the independence and prosperity of the country.

This class of persons should set an example of unflinching efforts in behalf of moral progress; and the accumulation of trials and difficulties should only stir them up to strivings.

The delegates to the Association will be carried by the Railroads at half the usual fare, and will be entertained by the people of Lexington free of charge.

C. H. WILEY,
Sup't Common Schools of N. C.
J. D. CAMPBELL,
Recording Secretary Association.
W. J. PALMER,
Corresponding Secretary.

July 21, 1863.

Rags.

FIVE CENTS PER POUND WILL BE PAID FOR clean Cotton or Linen Rags, delivered at the Registers' Office, Rockingham, Richmond, N. C.