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"THEN AND NOW"

Reminiscenses and Historic Romance, 1856 to 1865

BY JUDGE D. F. MORROW

Rutherfordton, N. C.

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CHAPTER FOUR Happenings At the Old Muster Ground, 1862.

In the life of every one there are certain incidents being written upon the mind each day, from childhood until the end of life. They never fade nor grow old.

Today as I think and try to live back in the sixties, the scenes and the faces of that day will not grow old. In July, 1862 as a boy of seven, I am again at the Muster Ground at Burnt Chimneys. And everybody for miles around are here too. Since the last gathering here, there has been great improvements, the old field pines have been trimmed up, the under brush cut out and a speaker's stand built out of pine poles under a big oak tree and seats for the crowd around the stand made out of poles; that is, there were a few poles lying on the ground and others thrown across and here the people were expected to sit while the speaker told all about the war. There was fighting going on now. The Battle of Big Bethel had been fought, and Wyatt killed; the first North Carolinian, or Rebel, to give his life in behalf of state rights and the Southings in Virginia along the Potomac and further on toward Washington. had it that the Yankees were running and Rebels winning!

These reports from the front were being broadcasted both over the the old muster ground. That grand Yank dog can whip any old Rebel North and the South, not by radios or telephones for we had none of Chimney Grays, with their old drum, Ground; and I can whip any rebel these things then, but the news spread from one to another and by special couriers on horseback, riding day and night, from the seat of war.

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So at every gathering, at every mus- I. ter ground, in all the states and in all the counties, both North and boy or man, in front of the crowd South, there were rumors of these down the road and walked up the things everywhere. And this day at road toward us after his old yellow Burnt Chimneys, we were to hear dog and called, "Yank, Yank", for them straight from the great speak- that was the name of this old yellow er, who would soon take the stand dog and the dog belonged to that and tell us all about it, and such fellow. His name was Sid Gitsome. things were happening everywhere. Now Sid Gitsome was about twenty-

All at once there were yells and one years old, had some white looka fife, a flute and a fiddle or two, Dixie Land, Look a-way, Look a-way, a-way, Look a-way, etc.

It died away and there was quiet, for the speaker of the hour was ascending the stand and as he made his bow, there were other Rebel yells

heard and the speaking was on. Now I did not care for the speaking, I wanted to look around. Boys do, you know, when they go to big gatherings and this was an exceptional one, for there were the most folks children were there. They had two one girl, Mattie. Mattie was the oldest of the two and was most grown up. She was wearing long dresses. In the sixties it was the custom for the girls to go into long dresses at from twelve to fifteen, but now they go into short ones from two to forty. Mattie was fourteen. And it was said that she had a beau. but Aunt Julie and Tom, said it was not so. We had called Thos. Jefferson, (Tom) for short. And Tom said. "No Mat, ain't go no beau. Bill Sniffles does come to our house Sunday evenings, but he talks to Pa about calves, cows and planting corn and things, but I did see him last Sunday looking at Mat, for she was all dressed up and come right out on the porch where Bill and Pa were sitting and looked at Bill and sorter laughed, she did. Bill smiled and looked at Mat and took off his hat. I could see he swallowed kinder hard and tried to spit out on the ground, but it went on the porch floor; and he said "och-O!" and got up and rubbed it off with his foot." Now I guess this is so for Tom told it to me while we were walking over the muster ground and Tom never did lie to me. Tom was about five or six years old and boys know lots about courting, dogs, and things at this age. I did and so did Tom. We had stopped right in the road just below where space, making a half moon figure. the speaking was going on. That is, in the old Shelby road about where the square in Forest City, now ends. Tom, after he had told me about Mat's beau, or rather that she didn't have a beau, looked down this road and saw Dixie, that was Tom's old dog, trotting off down that road. head up and looking at something. Tom said, "what's that down 'yander'?" I looked, I did and right about a hundred yards down that road was a crowd of men and some women, horses, wagons, dogs and a few children. They were all huddled up together. Most of them were looking toward the speaker's stand, like they were trying to hear the speech but they did not come up close. Tom said, "Less go down there" and we

did, Tom and I and Dixie. We had

and "kinder" barking. Tom said

"less go back," but we couldn't, for

that old dog was almost on us. Old |

and had his bristles up, wasn't barking but was growling like a mad hyena. Tom and I caught him by the collar, but Dixie was not trying to run at the other dog, but was standing by his guns, for he never meved, but the way he growled and looked at that old yellow dog, must have scared old yellow, for he stopped. All the crowd down on the east end was now watching the dogs and Tom and

Out stepped a big burly looking

shouts from the crowds around the ing fine beard all over his face about speaker's stand. Everybody rose to two or three inches long. It was not their feet, and was looking and many even for some places was longer than of them running west up the big road others and thin in spots and thick in toward Rutherfordton, or as it was spots and around his mouth it was then called Rutherford Town. There reddish or yellow. Sid chewed towas a might "huzzing" in that di- bacco and this fine "fuzz" or hair rection, for the speaker of the day, was tinged with the juice from the escorted by all the Rutherford Town- tobacco, making it about the same ites and a host of others from all up- color as his dog's hair. As he and per Rutherford were coming. The that old yellow dog of his looked at procession met the runners from our Dixie, Tom and I, he looked hideous place, Burnt Chimneys; the hurrahs to me and his picture would be the increased and the "Rebel yells" were same to me. Now Tom and I could deafening. The dogs were barking not move a peg as we had hold of for all the settlement dogs, hounds Dixie's collar. Dixie would not move, and curs, were there. The incoming only looked at them and continued to procession was, for the most part on growl so hideously that I though old horse back, a few old time carriages "Yank" was scared, and do now, for and in one of these was the speaker he raised his head a little higher but of the day. In front of this carriage didn't bark or growl much, but just as it moved toward us was a man yawned out some kind of lonesome ern cause. There were other fight- riding a large gray horse carrying a sound like a yawn of a tired man beflag; not the stars and stripes, but hind the plow handles on a hot sumthe bars and stripes. The procession mer day in the late afternoon. I Excitement was running high. Rumor stopped in front of the speaker's thought he was scared and Tom did stand. And into the air went one for he said so. And then it was that Rebel yell after another which float- Sid Gitsome flashed his eyes at Tom ed out over the hills and dales around and said: "You little 'Rebel, my old band, composed of the Burnt dog on Burnt Chimney's Muster up yonder in that crowd, all by mytouched the notes of that now famous self." I replied, "you can't, you old old war song, "I'll take my stand in Union Scalawag, for me and Tom were up there just now and we saw I'll live and Die in Dixie Land, Look | William Buster and his dog up there and you can't whip him." Tom said, "No you can't." Tom said "My dog, Dixie, can whip your Yellow Yank, that's what he can do." I said "You can't whip nothing, for you are afraid, just ike your old yellow Yank dog, he's ser ad now, don't you see him trembling?" He wasn't, but I wanted to make Sid think so. But that old yellow was not scared, but he just did not care to jump on old there, I had ever seen. Uncle Johnny Dixie. There is something even in Watkins and Aunt Julie and their dogology that each understand. Old Yellow could tell from the steady children, one boy, Thos. Jefferson and look of old Dixie that if he jumped on him he would have a hard fight. Dixie was not a high dog, but was as the old folks used to say, "built from the ground up," short legs, heavy body, big head and the most powerful jaw I ever saw on any dog, and very square mouth but rather broad. If he ever got a good hold on any thing he would never turn loose. Old Yank was of a different type. He was high, had long legs, slim body, active and very lithe. We liked to call him "Old Yellow" because it made Sid madder every time we called his dog yellow. Sid was a Union Scalawag and liked Yankees and had named his dog Yank for that very reason. Some one of the boys about the speaker's stand must have seen me and Tom down on the east road and saw that there was going to be a dog fight for all boys in those days loved to see dogs fight. It was but a short time till this news spread all round over Burnt Chimneys Muster ground, for there came a drove of Rebel boys from up toward the speaking and from the south end

> the Shelby road, where they left a (Continued next Week)

where there was an old pear tree,

and the pears were ripe and good;

another and bigger bunch than that

crowd from the west of the speaker's

stand came. They all circled around

Tom and I and Dixie; except toward

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cane seed, orange and amber cane seed, home-grown and recleaned; cow peas, yellow dent, Iowa silver mine, Tennessee red cob and Hastings prolific seed corn; sudan grass, not reached them, when out came a cat-tail millett, teosentie, etc. Will big old yellow cur dog with his bris- have potato plants for delivery about

tles up and tail curled and growling April 26th. C. C. KIRBY'S Seed and Grocery Store Gaffney, S. C. Dixie was standing right between us 28-4t

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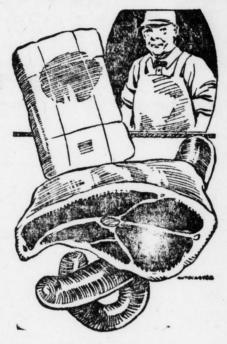
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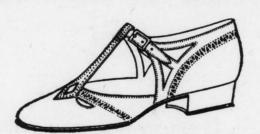
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