MYRTA LOCKETT AVARY

A VIRGINIA GIRL IN THE CIVIL WAR, 1861-1865

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Содержание

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INTRODUCTION

This history was told over the tea-cups. One winter, in the South, I had for my neighbor a gentle, little brown-haired lady, who spent many evenings at my fireside, as I at hers, where with bits of needlework in our hands we gossiped away as women will. I discovered in her an unconscious heroine, and her Civil War experiences made ever an interesting topic. Wishing to share with others the reminiscences she gave me, I seek to present them here in her own words. Just as they stand, they are, I believe, unique, possessing at once the charm of romance and the veracity of history. They supply a graphic, if artless, picture of the social life of one of the most interesting and dramatic

periods of our national existence. The stories were not related in strict chronological sequence, but I have endeavored to arrange them in that way. Otherwise, I have made as few changes as possible. Out of deference to the wishes of living persons, her own and her husband's real names have been suppressed and others substituted; in the case of a few of their close personal friends, and of some whose names would not be of special historical value, the same plan has been followed.

Those who read this book are admitted to the sacred councils of close friends, and I am sure they will turn with reverent fingers these pages of a sweet and pure woman's life – a life on which, since those fireside talks of ours, the Death-Angel has set his seal.

Memoirs and journals written not because of their historical or political significance, but because they are to the writer the natural expression of what life has meant to him in the moment of living, have a value entirely apart from literary quality. They bring us close to the human soul – the human soul in undress. We find ourselves without preface or apology in personal, intimate relation with whatever makes the yesterday, to-day, to-morrow of the writer. When this current of events and conditions is impelled and directed by a vital and formative period in the history of a nation, we have only to follow its course to see what history can never show us, and what fiction can unfold to us only in part – how the people thought, felt, and lived who were not making history, or did not know that they were.

This is the essential value of A Virginia Girl in the Civil War: it shows us simply, sincerely, and unconsciously what life meant to an American woman during the vital and formative period of American history. That this American woman was also a Virginian with all a Virginian's love for Virginia and loyalty to the South, gives to her record of those days that are still "the very fiber of us" a fidelity rarely found in studies of local color. Meanwhile, her grateful affection for the Union soldiers, officers and men, who served and shielded her, should lift this story to a place beyond the pale of sectional prejudice.

Myrta Lockett Avary.

New York, *November 1, 1902*.

CHAPTER I
HOME LIFE IN A SOUTHERN HARBOR

Many years ago I heard a prominent lawyer of Baltimore, who had just returned from a visit to Charleston, say that the Charlestonians were so in the habit of antedating everything with the Civil War that when he commented to one of them upon the beauty of the moonlight on the Battery, his answer was, "You should have seen it before the war." I laughed, as everybody else did; but since then I have more than once caught myself echoing the sentiment of that Charleston citizen to visitors who exclaimed over the social delights of Norfolk. For really they know nothing about it – that is, about the real Norfolk.

Nobody does who can not remember, as I do, when her harbor was covered with shipping which floated flags of all nations, and her society was the society of the world. Milicent and I – there were only the two of us – were as familiar with foreign colors as with our own Red, White, and Blue, and happily grew up unconscious that a title had any right of precedence superior to that of youth, good breeding, good looks, and agreeability. That all of these gave instant way to the claims of age was one of the unalterable tenets handed down from generation to generation, and punctiliously observed in our manner and address to the

older servants. The "uncle" and "aunty" and "mammy" that fall so oddly upon the ears of the present generation were with Southern children and young people the "straight and narrow" path that separated gentle birth and breeding from the vulgar and ignorant.

My girlhood was a happy one. My father was an officer of the Bank of Virginia, and, according to the custom that obtained, he lived over the bank. His young assistant, Walter H. Taylor (afterward adjutant to General R. E. Lee), was like a brother to Milicent and me. Father's position and means, and the personal charm that left him and my mother cherished memories in Norfolk till to-day, drew around us a cultivated and cosmopolitan society. Our lives were made up of dance and song and moonlit sails. There were the Atlantic Ocean, the Roads, the bay, the James and Elizabeth rivers, meeting at our very door. And there were admirals, commodores, and captains whose good ships rode these waters, and who served two sovereigns – the nation whose flag they floated and a slim Virginia maiden. In all the gatherings, formal and informal, under our roof, naval and military uniforms predominated. Many men who later distinguished themselves in the Federal and Confederate armies, sat around our board and danced in our parlors; others holding high places in Eastern and European courts were numbered among our friends and acquaintances.

Some years after Commodore Perry through a skilful mixture of gunpowder and diplomacy had opened the ports of Japan to the commerce of all nations, Ito and Inouye – not then counts

– had brought into existence an organized Japanese navy which sailed out of these same ports to the harbors of the world on tours of inspection. One of my most vivid memories is of the Japanese squadron which lay at anchor in our harbor, of the picturesque dress and manners of these Eastern strangers, and the polished courtesy of the two men whose names are now a part of history.

But the handsomest sailors I ever saw were the Prussians. When the Prussian navy was in its infancy two Prussian vessels, the frigate Gaefion and a corvette, dropped anchor in Norfolk harbor; they, too, were visiting the ports of different nations on tours of inspection. All the officers on these vessels, including the midshipmen, were noblemen, and all of them were magnificent-looking men. Then, too, their brilliant uniforms and the state and ceremony with which they invested every-day life made them altogether charming to a young, romantic girl. I shall never forget how they used to enter the room. They would appear in full regimentals, march in military form, the frigate's captain in command, and salute Milicent before they permitted themselves to talk, dance, and sing. Upon leaving, the same order was observed. They went out into the hall, donned their hats, sword-belts, and swords, returned, saluted, and withdrew in military form. At this time I was a little girl who played on the piano for grown-up people to dance. On formal occasions we had military bands, but for the every-evening dance my playing did well enough. When the Prussians were our guests, one of them always sat by me while I played. Baron von der Golz, since Admiral

of the German navy, was the gentleman who was oftenest kind enough to turn over my music. I play now, for my children to dance, a Prussian gallop he taught me, with some of the music I played for those officers, and some which they used to play when they took my place at the piano that I might have my share of the dancing. Another Prussian officer of whom I was very fond was Count von Monts, afterward Admiral of the German navy, Von der Golz succeeding at his death.

I shall never forget the day my Prussian friends sailed away. From the roof of our residence over the bank, there was a good view of the harbor and river: Milicent, Emily Conway, and a number of girls who wanted to see the last of the gallant, handsome Prussians went up on the roof, and I was permitted to go with them. We turned our spy-glasses on their ships as they sailed toward Hampton Roads, and there were our friends on deck, their glasses turned upon the housetop where we stood in the full glare of the midday sun. Even I was visible to them. Milicent placed me in front of our spy-glass, and I looked through and singled out Baron von Golz, to whom I waved my handkerchief vigorously. A little snow-storm fluttered on the deck, and the baron not only waved, but saluted. According to the fashion of the time, young ladies wore low-necked dresses in the middle of the day – never, however, at any hour, so low as ladies at the opera wear them now. Milicent and her friends who went to the housetop were bare-necked, and the sun blistered their throats and shoulders; and mother had to bathe Milicent

with buttermilk all the afternoon to make her presentable for the dance that night, which, by special permission, Count von Monts attended, coming up from Fortress Monroe to escort Milicent. They made a pretty picture when they danced their last dance together. The Count would not permit their friendship to cease with that last dance, and a correspondence was long kept up between them. At parting, she gave him her little Catholic prayer-book with her name on the fly-leaf, and years after, when revisiting Norfolk, he had that prayer-book and tried to find her; but times were changed, and Norfolk no more our home. Many a titled sailor sought my sister's favor, but in our day Virginia's daughters, undazzled by coronets, were content to wed Virginia's sons.

The almost limitless hospitality of those days made all the sharper the distinction between "open house" and open hand. In the forties, the reserve of the American girl was more like that of her English sister than it is at the present day. Society did not sanction the freedom which it countenances now. The gentlewoman of the old South was a past mistress in the art of tact, but had little knowledge or practise in it to further her own private ends. Its office, as she understood it, was to relieve painful situations not her own, to contribute to the comfort and pleasure of others. To rid herself of a disagreeable third person to secure a *tête-à-tête* with a lover was not within its province. Lovers had to make their own opportunities – indeed it was not her part even to conceive that they wanted to make opportunities. Taking all this

into consideration, the freedom with which Southern children entered into the social life must have often made them thorns in the flesh of their elders. I have often wondered since those happy days if my favorites among my sister's visitors did not find me a great nuisance in spite of the caresses they lavished upon me.

The New Year's reception of that period was not an afternoon and evening affair. It began in the morning and lasted all day; it meant pretty girls fluttering in laces and ribbons and feathers and sparkling with jewels and smiles; stately matrons who, however beautiful and young they were, never indulged even in the innocent coquetry that neither deceives a man nor wounds a woman – the married belle was unknown to Virginia; and gallant men, young and old, ready to die for them or live for them; it meant the good things to eat for which Virginia is famous, and, I am sorry to say, often more than enough of good things to drink. I remember one of these New Year's days when the ardor of my affections prevented a young officer who had come to bid us good-by from exchanging a word with anybody unhampered by my close attendance. I was brimful of nine-year-old love for him. I proposed to him and was promptly accepted; I made him drink punch with me dipped from the old punch-bowl that had been presented to father by the military companies of Norfolk, and I told him how Admiral Tucker had made the presentation with flags flying and bands playing and wine flowing, and how the admiral tried to ride his horse up the front steps into the house, and how the sober animal wisely and firmly refused to perform

the feat. Through a long day he did not once escape me. This young officer was Lieutenant John L. Worden. He was one of the gallant "boys in blue" who made my sister's girlhood happy. A most charming gentleman he was, and everybody in my father's house loved him.

Another young sailor – the handsomest of them all, whom everybody in my father's house loved – was Captain Warren. How well I remember that evening when the order came bidding him report at once to his ship, which was to set forth on a long cruise in Eastern waters! Shall I ever forget the look in his eyes as he turned them upon Milicent! How beautiful she was that night! How gracious and sweet, how greatly to be desired! And how many desired her!

Milicent had been married several years and I was in the raptures of my first winter in society when my father died, and mother decided that we should leave Norfolk – Norfolk where river and bay and ocean had sung our cradle-songs – and go to Petersburg to live. In this day of independent women it sounds absurd to say that it was scarcely considered wise or delicate for women to live without the protection of a male relative in the house, and to add that as far as possible they were shielded from the burden of business responsibilities. Uncle Henry considered it imperative that we should be under his care; he could not come to Norfolk, so we went to him. We could scarcely have been strangers anywhere in Virginia, and in Petersburg we had many friends. The Lees and the Randolphs, the Pegrams and

the Pages, the Stringfellows, the Hamiltons, the Witherspoons, the Bannisters, the Donnans, the Dunlops, and a score of others made it easy to exercise the genius for friendship which in Virginia hands down that relation from generation to generation.

It was in Petersburg that my trousseau was made. Much of it was the work and embroidery of loving, light-hearted girls whose feet were set to music and dancing, and most of it was worn by women who trod instead fields red with the blood of their friends and kinsmen. During the long, dreary years in which the Northern ports were closed, and the South clothed itself as best it could, or went in rags, that trousseau constituted my sole outfit, and it reinforced the wardrobes of some comrades in war and want.

CHAPTER II
HOW I MET DAN GREY

"Have you met Dan Grey?"

Charlie Murray and I were galloping along a country road.

"I haven't, Charlie. I met his brother Dick in Norfolk, and didn't like him at all."

"Well, Nell, you'd like Dan – everybody does. I wonder you haven't met him. Dan never fails to meet every pretty girl that comes here."

I had heard that before. Indeed, I had heard a great deal about Dan Grey that made me long to get even with him. Everybody had a way of speaking as if Petersburg wasn't Petersburg with Dan Grey left out.

"You ought to meet Dan Grey," Charlie repeated.

"I don't think so," I rapped out. "I think I can get along very nicely without meeting Dan Grey" – Dan Grey seemed to be getting along very nicely without meeting me – "I know as many nice men now as I have time to see."

So I dismissed Dan, whipped up my horse, and raced Charlie along the old Jerusalem Plank Road – that historic thoroughfare by which the Union troops first threatened Petersburg, and near which Fort Hell and Fort Damnation are still visible. We ran our horses past the old brick church, built of bricks brought from

England to erect a place of worship for the aristocratic colonists, past the quiet graves in Blandford; and turning our horses into Washington Street, slackened their pace and, chatting merrily the while, rode slowly into the city toward the golden sunset. A few years later I was to run along this street in abject terror from bursting shells.

"You ought to meet Dan Grey."

It came from George Van B – this time. George was the poet laureate of our set. Afterward he was Colonel Van B – , and as gallant a soldier as ever faced shot and shell. I had been playing an accompaniment for him; he was singing a popular ditty of the day, "Sweet Nellie is by my Side"; I wheeled around on the piano-stool and faced him.

"What is the matter with that man? He must be a curiosity?"

"He is just the nicest fellow in town," George asserted with mingled resentment and amusement.

"He must be something extraordinary. One would think there was just one man in town and that his name was Dan Grey."

Before the week was out I heard it again. This time it was Willie. He spoke oracularly, and as if he were broaching an original idea. Page, the best dancer in our set, repeated the recommendation, looking as if I were quite out of the swim in not knowing Dan Grey. (If Governor – reads this chapter, will he please overlook the familiar use of his name? Boys and girls who have played mumble-peg together and snowballed each other, do not attach handles to each other's names until they are more

thoroughly grown up than we were then.)

"I am sure it must be my duty to meet Dan Grey," I said gravely. "I am continually being told that I 'ought to meet Dan Grey' just as I might be told that I ought to go to church."

"Dan isn't a bit like a church, Nell," laughed Willie. "But he is a splendid fellow, generous to a fault – and then, you know, Dan is the handsomest man in town."

"Oh, no!" I retorted, "I left the handsomest man in town in Norfolk."

I can't begin to tell how terribly tired I got of "You ought to meet Dan Grey," "Haven't you met Dan Grey?" Evidently Dan Grey was in no hurry to meet me. I knew that he was the toast of our set and that he ignored me as completely as if I were not in it – and I had never been ignored before. I also knew, without being continually told, that he was a broad-shouldered, magnificent-looking fellow, fair-haired, blue-eyed, and "the handsomest man in town." My girl friends talked about him almost as much as the men did. And I did not even know the lion! I took great pains not to want to know him. I impressed it upon Willie and Charlie and George and the rest that they were not to bring Dan Grey to see me.

"Why, what will we say if he asks us to bring him? You are unreasonable, Nell. How did you ever pick up such a prejudice against Dan? Nobody can object to Dan Grey. If he asks any of us to bring him, I don't know what we can do."

"Oh, of course you can't be rude. If you are asked to bring

him, you will have to do as you are asked, but I don't think you will be asked. I'm sure I hope you won't, for I have heard of Dan Grey until I am sick of the very name."

Meanwhile I resolved privately if I ever did lay my hands on Dan Grey I would wreak a full vengeance. He says that I have done it.

A Catholic fair was to be held in Petersburg, but as dearly as we loved Father Mulvey (all Petersburg loved him), and as much as we longed to do everything possible for our poor little Church of St. Joseph, we could not go to the fair rooms and sell things and make merry. We were in deep mourning; mother said that our going was out of the question. Then her old friend, Mrs. Winton, came out to persuade and convince.

"I really can not let the girls go," mother protested. "They can make fancy articles and send them to the fair, or do any home work that you can put them to; we are willing to help just as much as we can. I will send pickled oysters and shrimp salad after my Norfolk recipes, and cake and cream and anything you like that I can make."

"We want the oysters and the salad and the cake and everything else you choose to send, but above all things we want the girls. I didn't come here for your pickled oysters and shrimp salad, if they are the best I ever tasted. I want Milicent and Nell – I want Nell for my booth and Milicent for Mrs. Lynn's. Mrs. Lynn has set her heart on Milicent – but, there! Mrs. Lynn may do her own begging. Do let me have Nell."

"My dear, I don't see how I can."

"Oh, you must! We really need them. You know how few girls there are in our little congregation."

Mother was too good a Catholic not to yield – Milicent and I were given over to the cause of St. Joseph's.

"But they are to work, not to amuse themselves," she stipulated. "They are not to promenade – just to stand behind tables and sell things."

"Just send them," pleaded Mrs. Winton. "I'll promise not to let them enjoy themselves. I'll keep Nell busy, and Mrs. Lynn will do her duty by Milicent."

But work is fun when you are young enough, and there was plenty of both in getting the booths ready. The old Library Hall on Bollingbrook Street was a gay and busy scene for several days before it was formally opened to the public who came to spend money and make merry.

On one never-forgotten morning the hall was filled with matrons and maidens weaving festoons of pine-beard, running cedar, and ivy. I had purposely donned my worst dress, and was sitting on the floor Turkish fashion, with evergreens heaped around me, when I saw a party of gentlemen entering the hall.

I tried to sink out of sight, but they saw me, demolished my barricade, and began to tease me. The quartet were Charlie Murray, George Van B – , Willie, and Page. Behind them came a fifth gentleman, and before this fifth gentleman and I knew what was happening we were being presented to each other. And that

is how I met Dan Grey – sitting on the floor in my shabbiest dress and half hidden by evergreens. I soon had the whole party hard at work festooning the hall, and what a good, if late, laborer, Dan Grey made in my vineyard!

"You see how useful I am," he said – he was standing on a box and I was handing up wreaths of cedar which he was arranging on the wall. "Now, why didn't you let me come to see you?"

"Me?" I asked in utter bewilderment.

"Yes, 'me'!"

"Why, I never had a thing to do with your not coming to see me."

He gave George, Charlie, and Willie a withering look.

"I reckon somebody else didn't want me to."

The boys looked dumfounded.

"I heard," said Dan from his box, "that you didn't want me to come to see you, that you had an unaccountable prejudice against me because you didn't like Dick, that you asked all your friends by no means to bring me to see you."

I was as mad as I could be with George, Willie, and Charlie.

"Why," I said, "you are not your brother Dick. And then, I don't dislike Dick at all."

Again the trio looked at me as if they doubted the evidence of their senses.

"Nell, what did you tell such a story for?" George asked me privately later.

"Why, I didn't tell any story at all," I declared. "He isn't his

brother Dick, is he? And I don't dislike Dick now."

The night of the fair I wore a black bombazine, cut low in the neck and with long angel sleeves falling away from my arms above the elbow to the hem of my dress, and around my neck a band of black velvet with a black onyx cross. I sat or stood behind Mrs. Winton's booth, and Mr. Grey haunted the booth all the evening, and bought quantities of things he had no use for.

After the fair he saw me or reminded me of his existence in some way every day. Mother took me, about this time, on a visit to some cousins in Birdville, and every day Mr. Grey rode out on Dare Devil, the horse that he was to ride into his first fight. There was another fair. I went in from Birdville to help, and had the same coterie of assistants. "Ben Bolt" was a great favorite then. It was a new song and divided honors with "Sweet Nellie is by my Side." My assistants used to sit on a goods box that was later to be converted into an ornamental stand, and sing, "O don't you Remember Sweet Alice, Ben Bolt?"

Well, to make a long story short – as Dan and I did – we were married in exactly four months and a half from the day on which he was introduced to me as I sat cross-legged among the evergreens; and when Willie and George and Charlie came up to congratulate us, every wretch of them said, "Didn't I tell you you ought to meet Dan Grey?"

CHAPTER III
THE FIRST DAYS OF THE CONFEDERACY

Soon after my marriage my brother-in-law moved to Baltimore, and my mother decided to go with Milicent and her little boy. I had never really been separated from them before; I was only seventeen, a spoiled child, but though I loved them dearly, after the first I scarcely missed them. I had my husband, and ah! how happy we were – how glad we both were that I had met Dan Grey!

We did not go to housekeeping at once. In the first place, I did not know anything about housekeeping and I didn't want Dan to find it out; in the second place, we wanted to look around before we settled upon a house; and in the third, and what was to me the smallest place, the country was in a very unsettled condition.

The question of State's rights and secession was being pressed home to Virginia. The correspondence between the commission at Washington and Mr. Seward was despatched to Richmond, and Richmond is but twenty miles from Petersburg. There were mutterings that each day grew louder, signs and portents that we refused to believe. Local militia were organizing and drilling – getting ready to answer the call should it come. Not that the people seriously thought that it would come. They believed, as

they hoped, that something would be done to prevent war; that statesmen, North and South, would combine to save the Union; that, at any rate, we should be saved from bloodshed. As for those others who prophesied and prayed for it, who wanted the vials of God's wrath uncorked, they got what they wanted. Their prayers were answered; the land was drenched in blood. But for the most of us – the Virginians whom I knew – we did not, we would not believe that brothers could war with brothers.

Then something happened that drove the truth home to our hearts. The guns of Sumter spoke – war was upon us. But not for long; the differences would be adjusted. Sumter fell, Virginia seceded. Still we befooled ourselves. There would be a brief campaign, victory, and peace. North and South, we looked for anything but what came – those four long years of bloody agony; North and South were each sure of victory. In Virginia, where the courage and endurance of starving men were to stand the test of weary months and years, we scoffed at the idea that there would be any real fighting. If there should be, for Virginia who had never known the shadow of defeat, defeat was impossible.

One day my brother-in-law, Dick, walked in.

"I've come to tell you good-by, Nell – I'm off to-morrow."

"Where?"

"Norfolk."

"What for?"

"Infantry ordered there. The Rifles go down to-night, the Grays to-morrow."

I looked serious, and Dick laughed.

"Don't bother, Nell, we'll be back in a few days. There won't be any fighting."

Dick was a good-looking fellow, and I liked him much better than I had once said I did. He was the dandy of the family, and on the present occasion was glorious in a new uniform.

"Dick," I said, "please don't get in a fight and get shot."

"Not if I can help it, Nell! There won't be any fighting. We're going to protect Norfolk, you know. Just going there to be on the spot if we're needed, I suppose."

He went away laughing, but I wasn't convinced. When Dan came, I was almost too weak with fear to ask the question that was on my tongue.

"Is Norfolk to be bombarded?"

"No, I think not," he spoke cheerily. "The boys will be back in a few days."

Oh, I hoped they would! Many of my friends were among "the boys."

"Do – do you think your company will have to go?"

I was only seventeen; mother and Milicent were away; my young husband was my life.

"The cavalry have not been ordered out," he said. "I don't think we will be sent for. Cheer up, Nell! The boys will be back in a few days, and won't we have a high old time welcoming them home!"

The Rifles went down one day. The Grays went down the next.

The day after my husband came in, looking very pale and quiet.

"Dan," I said, "I know what it is."

"The cavalry are ordered to Norfolk," he said in a low voice. "It's only a few days' parting, little wife. I don't think there will be any fighting. Be brave, my darling."

I had thrown myself into his arms with a great cry.

"I can't, Dan! I can't let you go!"

He did not speak. He only held me close to his breast.

"Mother and Milicent are gone," I cried, "and I can't let you leave me to go and be killed! I couldn't let you go if they were here."

There was silence for a little while, then he said:

"I belong to you, little wife – I leave it to you what I shall do. Shall I stay behind, a traitor and a coward? Or shall I go with my company and do my duty?"

I couldn't speak for tears. I felt how hard his heart beat against mine.

"Poor wife!" he said, "poor little child!"

When I spoke, I felt as if I were tearing my heart out by the roots.

"I – I – must – let – you – go!"

"That is my own brave girl. Never mind, Nell, I will make you proud of your soldier!"

"Oh, Dan! Dan!" I sobbed, "I don't want to be proud of you! I just don't want you to get hurt! I don't want you to go if I could help it – but I can't! I don't want fame or glory! I want you!"

He smoothed my hair with slow touches, and was silent. Then he spoke again, trying to comfort me with those false hopes all fed on.

"I still doubt if there will be any fighting. But if there is, I must be in it. I can't be a coward. There! there! Nellie, don't cry! I hope for peace. The North and the South both want peace. You will laugh at all of this, Nell, when we come back from Norfolk without striking a blow!"

"Dan, let me go with you."

"Dear, I can't. How could you travel around, with only a knapsack, like a soldier?"

"Try me. I am to be a soldier's wife."

I was swallowing my sobs, sniffling, blowing my nose, and trying to look brave all at once. Instead of looking brave, I must have looked very comical, for Dan burst out laughing. The next moment we were silent again. The chimes of St. Paul's rang out upon the air. It was neither Sabbath nor saint's day. We knew what the bells were ringing for. Not only St. Paul's chimes, but the bells of all the churches had become familiar signals calling us to labor as sacred as worship. Sewing machines had been carried into the churches, and the sacred buildings had become depots for bolts of cloth, linen, and flannel. Nothing could be heard in them for days but the click of machines, the tearing of cloth, the ceaseless murmur of voices questioning, and voices directing the work. Old and young were busy. Some were tearing flannel into lengths for shirts and cutting out havelocks and knapsacks. And

some were tearing linen into strips and rolling it for bandages ready to the surgeon's hand. Others were picking linen into balls of lint.

"I must go make you some clothes," I said, getting up from Dan's knee.

"But I have plenty," he said.

"It doesn't matter. I must make you some more – like the others."

Before the war was over I had learned to make clothes out of next to nothing, but that morning, except for fancy work, I had never sewed a stitch in my life. I could embroider anything from an altar cloth to an initial in the corner of a handkerchief, but to make a flannel shirt was beyond my comprehension. Make it, however, I could and would. I never hinted to Dan that I didn't know how, for I was determined that nobody but me should make his army shirts – I must sew them with my own fingers. I went down town and bought the finest, softest flannel I could find. Then I was at my wits' ends. I looked at the flannel and I looked at the scissors. Time was flying. I picked up my flannel and ran to consult my neighbor, Mrs. Cuthbert. She showed me how to cut and fashion my shirts, and I made them beautifully, feather-stitching all the seams.

Next day came and Dan made me buckle on his sword.

"If you stay long in Norfolk may I come?" I sobbed.

Poor Dan didn't know what to say.

"I'm a soldier's wife," I said with a mighty effort to look it.

"I can travel with a knapsack – and," with a sob, "I can – keep – from crying."

"I'm going to have you with me if possible. There! little wife, don't cry, or you'll make a fool of me. Be brave, Nell. That's it! I'm proud of you."

But there was a tremor in his voice all the same. He put me gently away from him and went out, and I lay down on the sofa and cried as if my heart would break. But not for long. Captain Jeter's wife came for me; her eyes were red with weeping, but she was trying to smile. We were to go to the public leave-taking – there would be time enough for tears afterward. Everybody was on the streets to see the troops go off, and I took my stand with the others and watched as the cavalry rode past us. We kept our handkerchiefs waving all the time our friends were riding by, and when we saw our husbands and brothers we tried to cheer, but our voices were husky. The last thing I saw of my husband he was wringing the hand of an old friend who was not going, tears were streaming down his cheeks and he was saying, "For God's sake, take care of my wife."

They were gone, all gone, infantry and cavalry, the flower of the city. But they would be back in a few days, of that we were sure – and some of them never came back again.

I was in a city of mourning and dread, but my own suspense measured by days was not long, though it seemed an age to me then. A week had not passed when I got a telegram from Dan:

"Come to Norfolk. We are camped near there."

It was near train time when I got it. I snatched up my satchel, put in a comb and brush and tooth-brush – not even an extra handkerchief – and almost ran to the depot. I could not have carried all my clothes, I know, for part of them were with the laundress, and packing a trunk would have taken time; but why on earth I did not put a few more articles into my satchel I can not tell. It is a matter of history, however, that I only took those I have named. The first thing Dan did was to get me some handkerchiefs.

"Why, Nell," he said, "you are taking this thing of being a soldier's wife too seriously."

It was delightful to be in my old home once more. Friends and kindred crowded around me, the river and bay and ocean sang my old cradle-songs to me again, and, above all, Dan was near and came in from camp as often as he could. Then he was ordered away to Suffolk, which is twenty miles from Norfolk, and there, of course, he could not ride in to see me. But that was not so bad as it might have been. I could hear from him regularly, he had not yet been in any actual engagement, my fears were subsiding, or I was getting accustomed to them. I had, of course, telegraphed to Petersburg for my baggage and had made myself as comfortable as possible. An old uncle had taken it into his head to become quite fond of me, and altogether I was very far from unhappy. This uncle was eccentric and had eccentric ways of comforting me when I had the blues.

"Why, Nellie, my dear," he used to say, "you ought to be

playing dolls, and here you are a wife, and if Dan gets killed you will be a widow."

On the heels of which cheerful observation this despatch came from Suffolk:

"Come by next train. Dan slightly hurt.

"Jack."

When I got to Suffolk four of the company met me.

"Don't be alarmed, Miss Nell," said the great fellows, sympathy and desire to cheer me blending in their eyes. "Dan will pull through all right."

Then Jack Carrington took me aside and explained as gently and tenderly as if he had been my brother:

"It happened yesterday, Miss Nell, but we wouldn't let you know because there was no way for you to get here then. We thought it wouldn't be so hard on you if we waited and sent the telegram just before train time. Your uncle got one before you did, but we told him not to tell you till just before train time, and he wired us back to tell you ourselves, that he couldn't tell you. Dan is getting all right now – he'll soon get well, Miss Nell, indeed he will. But the doctor said I must warn you – Miss Nell, you must be brave, you see – or I can't tell you at all. The doctor said I mustn't let you go in there unless you were perfectly calm. The wound is nothing at all, Miss Nell."

Poor Jack was almost as unnerved as I was. He mopped my face with a wet handkerchief, and made somebody bring me some brandy.

But the words ringing in my head, "A soldier's wife," pulled me together more than the brandy, and I made Jack go on.

"It's nothing but his arm. We were out on vidette duty yesterday and we got shot into. You see, Miss Nell, you *must* be brave or I can't tell you!"

I pulled myself together again and insisted that I *was* brave.

"You don't look like it, Miss Nell. I declare you don't."

"But I am. See now."

Jack didn't seem to see, but he went on, looking scared himself all the time.

"The real trouble was Dare Devil. You see, after Dan's arm got hurt – I wish it had been me or George who had caught that shot, but, hang the luck! it was Dan. You know Dare Devil's old trick – catching the bit in his teeth. Well, he did that and ran away. Dan held on with his good arm until that d – d horse (excuse me, Miss Nell!) wheeled suddenly and dashed into the woods. The limbs of the trees dragged Dan out of his saddle, and his foot caught in the stirrup and Dare Devil dragged him (take some brandy, Miss Nell) until the strap broke. We picked Dan up insensible; he was delirious all night, and we thought for a time that he was done for, but, thank God! he's all right now. I hate to tell you, Miss Nell, but – you'll see how his head is – and the doctor said we mustn't let you go in if you couldn't be calm."

"I understand," I said, "I will be very careful – "

And to prove how careful I could be, I broke down crying.

They didn't know what to do with me, poor fellows. They

begged me not to cry, and then they said crying would do me good, and I had four pairs of broad shoulders to cry on. They were all as gentle and pitiful with me as a mother is with a baby. One of them got out his nice fresh handkerchief and wiped my eyes with it. I had come off the second time without a change of handkerchiefs, and this time without even a tooth-brush. When I had cried my trouble out and was quite calm, I told them I was ready to go to my husband. They took me to the door and I went in quietly, and seeing that he was awake, bent over him.

"I am here, Dan," I said smiling.

He tried to smile back.

"Take my head in your hands, Nell," he whispered, "and turn it so I can kiss you."

I laid my hands softly and firmly on each side of his head and turned it on the pillow. As I did so, a quantity of sand fell away.

I don't know whether his head had been properly dressed or not, but I know that for a number of days the sand fell away from it whenever I took it into my hands to turn it.

"After I fell," he told me, when he was allowed to talk, "my head was in the dirt, of course, and it was beat first against one tree and then against another. When I felt my senses leaving me, I clasped my arms tight around my head. I don't know how I managed it, but I got hold of my crippled arm with my good one, and when I was picked up my arms were locked in some way about my head. That is all that saved me."

I took the law into my own hands. Before Dan got well Dare

Devil had been shot.

CHAPTER IV
THE REALITIES OF WAR

When Dan recovered I returned to Norfolk, and there I stayed for some time, getting letters from him, taking care of uncle and developing a genius for housekeeping. One day I was out shopping when I saw everybody running toward the quay. I turned and went with the crowd. We saw the Merrimac swing out of the harbor – or did she crawl? A curious looking craft she was, that first of our ironclads, ugly and ominous.

She had not been gone many hours when the sound of guns came over the water followed by silence, terrible silence, that lasted until after the lamps were lit. Suddenly there was tumultuous cheering from the quay. The Merrimac had come home after destroying the Cumberland and the Congress.

"Well for the Congress!" we said. Her commander had eaten and drunk of Norfolk's hospitality, and then had turned his guns upon her – upon a city full of his friends. Bravely done, O Merrimac! But that night I cried myself to sleep. Under the sullen waters of Hampton Roads slept brave men and true, to whom Stars and Stripes and Southern Cross alike meant nothing now. The commander of the Congress was among the dead, and he had been my friend – I had danced with him in my father's house. Next day, the Monitor met the Merrimac and turned the tide of

victory against us. Her commander was John L. Worden, who had been our guest beloved.

During all this time I had been separated from my husband. He had been detailed to make a survey of Pig Point and the surrounding country, and it was not until he reached Smithfield that he sent for me. We were beginning now to realize that war was upon us in earnest. There was the retreat from Yorktown; Norfolk was evacuated. Troops were moving. Everything was bustle and confusion. My husband went off with his command, the order for departure so sudden that he had not time to plan for me.

As Northern troops began to occupy the country, fearing that I would be left in the enemy's lines and so cut off from getting to him, I took the matter into my own hands and went in a covered wagon to Zuni, twenty miles distant, where I had heard that his command was encamped for a few days. After a rough ride I got there only to find that my husband had started off to Smithfield for me. We had passed each other on the road, each in a covered wagon. There was nothing to do except to wait his return that night.

As my husband's command had been ordered to join the troops at Seven Pines, I took the train for Richmond the next day, stopped a few hours, and then went to Petersburg. When I got there the Battle of Seven Pines was on. For two days it raged – for two days the booming of the cannon sounded in our ears and thundered at our hearts. Friends gathered at each other's houses

and looked into each other's faces and held each other's hands, and listened for news from the field. And the sullen boom of the cannon broke in upon us, and we would start and shiver as if it had shot *us*, and sometimes the tears would come. But the bravest of us got so we could not weep. We only sat in silence or spoke in low voices to each other and rolled bandages and picked linen into lint. And in those two days it seemed as if we forgot how to smile.

Telegrams began to come; a woman would drop limp and white into the arms of a friend – her husband was shot. Another would sit with her hand on her heart in pallid silence until her friends, crowding around her, spoke to her, tried to arouse her, and then she would break into a cry:

"O my son! my son!"

There were some who could never be roused any more; grief had stunned and stupefied them forever, and a few there were who died of grief. One young wife, who had just lost her baby and whose husband perished in the fight, never lifted her head from her pillow. When the funeral train brought him home we laid her in old Blandford beside him, the little baby between.

Now and then when mothers and sisters were bewailing their loss and we were pressing comfort upon them, there would be a whisper, and one of us would turn to where some poor girl sat, dumb and stricken, the secret of her love for the slain wrenched from her by the hand of war. Sometimes a bereaved one would laugh!

The third day, the day after the battle, I heard that Dan was safe. Every day I had searched the columns of "Killed and Wounded" in the Richmond Despatch for his name, and had thanked God when I didn't find it. But direct news I had none until that third day. The strain had been too great; I fell ill. Owing to the general's illness at this time his staff was ordered to Petersburg, and Dan, who was engineer upon the staff, got leave to come on for a day or two in advance of the other members of it; but while I was still at death's door he was ordered off. When I at last got up, I had to be taught to walk as a child is taught, step by step; and before I was able to join my husband many battles had been fought in which he took part. I was at the breakfast-table, when, after months of weary waiting, he telegraphed me to come to Culpeper Court-house.

This time I packed a small trunk with necessary articles, putting in heavy dresses and winter flannels. The winter does not come early in Petersburg; the weather was warm when I started, and I decided to travel in a rather light dress for the season. I did not trouble myself with hand-baggage – not even a shawl. The afternoon train would put me in Richmond before night; I would stop over until morning, and that day's train would leave me in Culpeper. Just before I started, Mr. Sampson, at whose house I was staying, came in and said that an old friend of his was going to Richmond on my train and would be glad to look after me. I assented with alacrity. Before the war it was not the custom for ladies to travel alone, and, besides this, in the days of which

I write traveling was attended with much confusion and many delays. I reached the depot a few minutes before train time, my escort was presented and immediately took charge of me. He was a nice-looking elderly gentleman, quite agreeable, and with just a slight odor of brandy about him. He saw me comfortably seated, and went to see after our baggage, he said. He did not return at once, but I took it for granted that he was in the smoking-car. Traveling was slower then than now. Half-way to Richmond I began to wonder what had become of my escort. But my head was too full of other things to bother very much about it. The outlook from the car window along that route is always beautiful; and then, the next day I was to see Dan. Darkness, and across the river the lights of Richmond flashed upon the view. Where *was* my escort? I had noticed on the train that morning a gentleman who wore the uniform of a Confederate captain and whom I knew by sight. He came up to me now.

"Excuse me, madam, but can I be of any assistance to you? I know your husband quite well."

"Do you know where my escort is?" I asked.

He looked embarrassed and tried not to smile.

"We left him at Chester, Mrs. Grey."

"At Chester? He was going to Richmond."

"Well – you see, Mrs. Grey, it was – an accident. The old gentleman got off to get a drink and the train left him."

I could not help laughing.

"If you will allow me, madam," said my new friend, "I will

see you to your hotel. How about your baggage?"

"Oh!" I cried in dismay, "Mr. C – has my trunk-check in his pocket."

My new friend considered. "If he comes on the next train, perhaps that will be in time to get your trunk off with you to Culpeper. If not, your trunk will follow you immediately. I'll see the conductor and do what I can. I'm going out of town to-morrow, but Captain Jeter is here and I'll tell him about your trunk-check. He'll be sure to see Mr. C – ."

I was to see Dan the next day, and nothing else mattered. I made my mind easy about that trunk, and my new friend took me to the American, where I spent the evening very pleasantly in receiving old acquaintances and making new ones.

But with bedtime another difficulty arose: I had never slept in a room at a hotel by myself in my life. Fortunately, Mrs. Hopson, of Norfolk, happened to be spending the night there. I sent up a note asking if I might sleep with her, and went up to her room half an hour later prepared for a delightful talk about Norfolk. When we were ready for bed, she took up one of her numerous satchels and put it down on the side where I afterward lay down to sleep.

"I put that close by the bed because it contains valuables," she said with an impressive solemnity I afterward understood.

Of course I asked no questions, though she referred to the valuables several times. We were in bed and the lights had been out some time when I had occasion to ask her where she had

come from there.

"Oh, Nell!" she said, "didn't you know? I've been to Charlottesville and I've come from there to-day. Didn't you know about it? John" (her son) "was wounded. Didn't you know about it? Of course I had to go to him. They had to perform an operation on him. I was right there when they did it." Here followed a graphic account of the operation. "It was dreadful. You see that satchel over there?" pointing to the one just beneath my head on the floor.

"Yes, I see it."

"Well, John's bones are right in there!"

"Good gracious!" I cried, and jumped over her to the other side of the bed.

"Why, what's the matter?" she asked. "You look like you were scared, Nell. Why, Nell, the whole of John wouldn't hurt you, much less those few bones. I'm carrying them home to put them in the family burying-ground. That's the reason I think so much of that satchel and keep it so close to me. I don't want John to be buried all about in different places, you see. But I don't see anything for you to be afraid of in a few bones. John's as well as ever – it isn't like he was dead, now."

I lay down quietly, ashamed of my sudden fright, but there were cold chills running down my spine.

After a little more talk she turned over, and I presently heard a comfortable snore, but I lay awake a long time, my eyes riveted on the satchel containing fragments of John. Then I began to

think of seeing Dan in the morning, and fell asleep feeling how good it was that he was safe and sound, all his bones together and not scattered around like poor John's.

I reached Culpeper Court-house the next afternoon about four o'clock. Dan met me looking tired and shabby, and as soon as he had me settled went back to camp.

"I'll come to see you as often as I can get leave," he said when he told me good-by. "We may be quartered here for some time – long enough for us to get ourselves and our horses rested up, I hope; but I'm afraid I can't see much of you. Hardly worth the trouble of your coming, is it, little woman?"

"Oh, Dan, yes," I said cheerfully; "just so you are not shot up! It would be worth the coming if I only got to see you through a car window as the train went by."

A few days after my arrival a heavy snow-storm set in. As my trunk had not yet come, I was still in the same dress in which I had left Petersburg, and, though we were all willing enough to lend, clothes were so scarce that borrowing from your neighbor was a last resort. I suffered in silence for a week before my trunk arrived, and then it was exchanging one discomfort for another, for my flannels were so tight from shrinkage and so worn that I felt as if something would break every time I moved.

During this snow-storm the roads were lined with Confederate troops marching home footsore and weary from Maryland. Long, hard marches and bloody battles had been their portion. In August they had come, after their work at Seven Pines, Cold

Harbor, and Malvern Hill, to drive Pope out of Culpeper, where he was plundering. They had driven him out and pressed after, fighting incessantly. Near Culpeper there had been the battle of Cedar Mountain, where Jackson had defeated Pope and chased him to Culpeper Court-house. Somewhat farther from Culpeper had been fought the second battle of Manassas, and, crowding upon these, the battles of Germantown, Centreville, Antietam – more than I can remember to name. Lee's army was back in Culpeper now with Federal troops at their heels, and McClellan, not Pope, in command. Civilians, women, children, and slaves feared Pope; soldiers feared McClellan – that is, as much as Lee's soldiers could fear anybody.

I found our tired army in Culpeper trying to rest and fatten a little before meeting McClellan's legions. Then – I am not historian enough to know just how it happened – McClellan's head fell and Burnside reigned in his stead. Better and worse for our army, and no worse for our women and children, for Burnside was a gentleman even as McClellan was and as Pope was not, and made no war upon women and children until the shelling of Fredericksburg.

CHAPTER V
I MEET BELLE BOYD AND SEE DICK IN A NEW LIGHT

The tallow candles were lighted on each side of my bureau – the time came when I remembered those *two* tallow candles as a piece of reckless and foolish extravagance – when there was a rap at my door and Mrs. Rixey entered to ask if I would share my room with a lady who had come unexpectedly. A heavy snow was falling, and the wind was blowing it into drifts. The idea of sending anybody out in such weather was not to be thought of for a moment, so saying yes I hurried through with my dressing and went down to the parlor. Mrs. Rixey's house was filled with Confederates who were there either because it was near the army or because they were awaiting an opportunity to run the blockade. Our evenings were always gay, and when I entered the parlor this evening there was as usual a merry party, and, also as usual, there were several officers of rank in the room. I was so busy-sending messages to mother and Milicent by a little lady who meant to run the blockade to Baltimore as soon as possible, that I did not catch my roommate's name when Mrs. Rixey introduced her.

She seemed to be nineteen, or, perhaps, twenty – rather young, I thought, to be traveling alone. True, I was not older, but then I

was married, which made all the difference in the world. What made her an object of special interest to every woman present, was that she was exceedingly well dressed. It had been a long, long time since we had seen a new dress! She was a brilliant talker, and soon everybody in the room was attracted to her, especially the men. She talked chiefly to the men – indeed, I am afraid she did not care particularly for the women – and at first we were a little piqued; but when we found that she was devoted to The Cause we were ready to forgive her anything. She soon let us know that she had come directly from Washington, where she had been a prisoner of the United States. She showed us her watch and told us how the prisoners in Washington had made the money up among themselves and presented it to her just before she left. I wish I had listened better to her account of her prison life and her adventures; but I was on the outer rim of the charmed circles, my head was full of Milicent and mother, Dan was at camp, and I couldn't see him. I got sleepy, slipped quietly out of the room, and went upstairs and to bed. My roommate undressed and got to bed so quickly that night that I did not wake. The next morning when the maid came in to make the fire, we woke up face to face in the same bed, and then she told me that her name was Belle Boyd, and I knew for the first time that my bedfellow was the South's famous female spy. When we got up she took a large bottle of cologne and poured it into the basin in which she was going to bathe. It was the first cologne I had seen for more than a year, and it was the last I saw until I ran the blockade.

That day, while we were at dinner, a servant, behind my chair, whispered:

"Somebody out dar wan' ter see you right erway, mistis – er solger."

When I went out into the hallway, there stood the most abject, pitiable-looking creature – a soldier, ragged and footsore! He was at the end of the hall farthest from the dining-room, and looked as if he didn't wish to attract attention.

He wore gray trousers patched with blue – or were they blue patched with gray? – and a jacket which had as much Federal blue as Confederate gray in it. From the color of his uniform, he belonged equally to both armies. His trousers were much too short for him, and altogether too small. His shoes were heavy brogans twice too large for him, and tied on with strings. He was without socks and his ankles showed naked and sore between trousers and shoes. He had on a bedticking shirt, a tobacco-bag of bedticking hung by a string from a button of his shirt – a button which, by the way, was doing more than double duty – and an old slouch hat was pulled over his face.

"You wanted to see me, sir?" I asked, stopping at a short distance from him.

He looked up quickly.

"How do you do, Nell?" he said. "I got leave to come from camp to see you to-day. My company got in from Maryland yesterday."

"Dick!" I cried in amazement; and then I burst into tears.

Dick, our dandy, to look like this! Laughter mingled with weeping.

"Good gracious, Nell! what is the matter?" he said.

"Dick, Dick, how you look!"

"Hush, Nell! Good gracious! You'll have everybody in the dining-room out here to look at me."

Then I began to beg incoherently that he would go in and dine with me. I think Dick was hungry, but he was not *that* hungry. In his present garb starvation would not have driven him into a dining-room where ladies were. He looked toward the door with abject terror, and tried to hide himself behind the hat-rack. I was puzzled to know what I should do with him. As a young lady was my roommate it was out of the question to take him to my room, and he positively refused to go into the parlor. While we debated, the dining-room door opened and the ladies filed out into the hall. Unkempt, unshorn, patched, ragged, and dirty, a very travesty of his former foppish self, Dick went through the introductions with what grace he might.

Fortunately my friends who surrounded him were in sympathy with the threadbare Confederate soldier, and ready to help him to the extent of their power. One friend, whose husband had a shirt to spare, gave that to him; another lady found him a pair of socks; some one else contributed a pair of homespun drawers. I was drawn aside and consulted as to the best and most graceful way of conveying these presents to him. They feared that he might be wounded and insulted if the matter were not delicately

managed. But Dick was past all that. He accepted the goods the gods provided in the spirit in which they were bestowed, and was radiant with his good luck, and with gratitude to the fair donors. While we held council he had been in Mrs. Rixey's and Miss Boyd's hands, and had had a good dinner.

As he stood in the hall ready to go back to camp, Belle Boyd came down the staircase, carrying a large new blanket shawl.

"You must let me wrap you up, lieutenant," she said, putting the shawl around Dick's shoulders and pinning it together.

Dick blushed and demurred. A shawl like that was too much – it was a princely gift, a fortune.

"I can't let you go back to camp in this thin jacket," she said, "while I have this shawl. It is serving our country, lieutenant, while it protects her soldier from the cold. I may need it? No, no, I can get others where this one came from."

There was nothing for him to do but to accept it. He looked at me with something of his old humor in his eyes as he started off.

"I'll be sure to come to see you again, Nell," he said.

After he left the house we saw him stoop, take off his shoes, and walk off with them in his hands. His feet left marks of blood in the snow. Shoes had been dealt out to the army only that morning, and his feet were so sore that his heavy, ill-fitting brogans were unendurable.

I have heard of many generous deeds like this done by Belle Boyd. Once, when riding out to review some troops near Winchester, she met a soldier, a mere boy, trudging along

painfully on his bare feet. She took off her own shoes and made him put them on; they were fine cloth gaiters laced at the side, and trimmed with patent leather. Some one remonstrated; the shoes would not last the boy long enough to pay for her sacrifice.

"Oh," she said, "if it rests his poor young feet only a little while, I am repaid. He is not old enough to be away from his mother."

She did not spend another night with us. She seemed to feel that she had the weight of the Confederacy on her shoulders, and took the afternoon train for Richmond.

CHAPTER VI
A FAITHFUL SLAVE AND A HOSPITAL WARD

Not long after this I had to give up my room to Governor Bailey of Florida and his family. They had come on in search of their son, whom they had for months believed to be dead, and who, they had only recently learned, was alive and in the mountains near Culpeper Court-house.

It seems that young Bailey had been shot at the battle of Cedar Mountain and left on the field for dead. An old negro, his body-servant, had carried him off by stealth to a hut in the woods, and there, with such simple resources as he had, had dressed and bandaged the wound. The hut was a mere shell of a house, a habitation for bats and owls; it had been unused so long that no paths led to it, and Uncle Reuben's chief object in carrying his master there was to hide him from the Yankees. He had no medicine, no doctor, no help, the master was ill for a long time from his wounds and with a slow fever, and through it all Uncle Reuben never left him except at night to forage for both. Food in the Confederacy was far from plentiful, and under the circumstances almost impossible to get. The hardships they endured seem inconceivable to-day. Afraid to show himself lest in doing so he should turn his master over into the hands of

the dreaded Yankees, the faithful old servant saw no way of communicating with the family. He was in a strange country; he could not leave his charge, alone and desperately ill, long enough to seek advice and assistance, and, besides, how was he to know the friend who would help him from the man who might betray him? He knew but one token – the Confederate uniform, and that was not always to be trusted, for spies wore it.

Confederate troops must have passed near his hiding-place several times, but in his anxiety to save his master from the Federals, the negro hid him from the Confederates as well.

It happened at last that a party of skirmishers who had frequently deployed along the obscure roads intersecting the country, noticed, rising from the depths of the forest, a thin streak of smoke suggesting deserters or spies, and began to investigate. So, it happened that they came upon the hut, and a poor, old, half-starved negro watching what seemed to be little more than a human skeleton. When convinced that his discoverers were really Confederates, his joy and eagerness knew no bounds.

"Ef any uv you gentlemen will jes send a 'spatch to Ole Marster," he said tremulously, "Ole Marster'll be hyer toreckly. He'll be hyer jes ez quick ez de kyars kin git him hyer. We ain't got no money. But Ole Marster'll pay fur de 'spatch jes ez soon ez he comes. Ole Marster's rich. He'll pay fur anything anybody do fur Mars Hugh, an' be thankful ter do it. Ole Marster'll come arter Mars Hugh jes ez quick ez I kin git him word. He'll pay

anybody fur evvything."

The soldiers hardly knew what to do; perhaps they never considered that they could do anything but what they did: ride away and leave behind them the pair in the hut. Perhaps, poor fellows, there was nothing else they could do. Comfortable hospitals for Southern soldiers were scarce, and the Confederate soldier had little to give to any one, even to his sick comrade.

The negro, the guardian in this instance, was not anxious to have his charge moved. His whole concern was "to git word to Ole Marster."

"I kin take kyeer uv him," he insisted, "jes lak I bin doin' 'twell Ole Marster come. Den he'll know what to do. Mars Hugh ain't fitten to move now. Ef twarn't done jes right, he couldn't stan' it, case he's too weakly. 'Twon't do fur no strange folks to tech him nor 'sturb him, lessen dey knows how. Mars Hugh jes same ez er baby."

They gave the negro the rations they had with them, and the whisky in their canteens – it was all they had to give except their scant clothes – and rode on to Culpeper Court-house, where one of them sent the despatch to "Ole Marster," according to the directions Uncle Reuben had given. And our Florida party was "Ole Marster" and his wife, and poor Hugh Bailey's young wife and her uncle.

It was well into the night after their arrival when four soldiers carried up to my room a stretcher holding a skeleton of a man. A gaunt, ragged old negro followed.

The next day the party started for home, but they never got poor Hugh as far as Florida. They stopped in Richmond at the Exchange, and there Hugh Bailey died the next day.

And now began for me the nursing in hospital wards that made up so large a part of our lives during the war.

"Jeter shot, perhaps fatally. Go to the hospital and see what you can do for him. I have telegraphed to his wife and mother.

"Dan."

The orderly who brought me this message from my husband said that Captain Jeter's command had been in a skirmish that day, and that the captain had fallen, mortally wounded, it was thought.

I went to him at once. He was lying unconscious across the bed as if he had fallen or been dropped there, dressed in full uniform with his coat buttoned up to his throat, breathing stertorously, and moaning. There was a small black hole in his temple. I thought he must be uncomfortable with his clothes on, and proposed to the nurse that we should try to undress him, but she said he was dying and it would only disturb him. All that day and until late that night I stayed with him, changing the towels on his head, wiping the ooze from his lips, listening to that agonizing moaning, and thinking of the wife and mother who could not reach him. About ten o'clock he seemed to be strangling.

"It's phlegm in his throat," the nurse said. She ran her finger down his throat, pulling out a quid of tobacco that had been in his mouth when he was shot and that had lain there ever since.

He died at midnight, and his mother came the next day at noon. I don't know which was the hardest to stand, her first burst of agony or her endless questions when she could talk.

"Did he suffer much, Nell?"

"Not much, I think. He was unconscious from the time he was shot."

"Nell, did he send me any message? Did he call for me?"

"He was unconscious," I repeated gently, "and we must be thankful that he was. If he had been conscious he would have suffered more."

"Yes, yes; I reckon I am thankful. I don't know how I am now. But I'm trying to submit myself to the will of the Lord. Nellie, you don't know what a sweet baby he was! the prettiest little fellow! as soon as he could walk, he was always toddling after me and pulling at my skirts."

I turned my head away.

"Last night I dozed for a minute and I dreamed about him. He was my baby again, and I had him safe in my arms, and there never had been any war. But I didn't sleep much. I couldn't come as soon as I got the telegram. I had to wait for a train. And I was up nearly all night cooking things to bring him."

She opened her basket and satchel and showed me. They were full of little cakes and crackers, wine jellies and blanc-mange, and other delicacies for the sick.

"Do you think if I had gotten here in time he could have eaten them?" she asked wistfully.

"He could not eat anything," I said, choking back my tears.

"You don't think he was hungry at all, Nell? The soldiers have so little to eat sometimes – and I have heard it said that people are sometimes hungry when they are dying."

"Dear Mrs. Jeter, he looked well and strong except for the wound. You know the troops had just returned from the valley, where they had plenty to eat."

"I am glad of that. I was just getting a box ready to send him full of everything I thought he would like. And I had some clothes for him. I began making the clothes as soon as I heard the troops had come back to Culpeper. You say he was wounded in the head?"

Neither of us closed our eyes that night. She walked the floor asking the same questions over and over again, and I got so I answered yes or no just as I saw she wanted yes or no and without regard to the truth.

Several months after this I saw Captain Jeter's widow. She was surrounded by his little children – none of them old enough to realize their loss.

"Nell," she said, "you remember the day in Petersburg when we stood together and watched the troops start off for Norfolk – and everybody was cheering?"

"Yes."

"Well, war does not look to me now as it did then. God grant it may spare your husband to you, Nell!"

I shivered.

I called on another widowed friend. Her husband – a captain, too – had been sent home, his face mutilated past recognition by the shell that killed him. Her little ones were around her, and the captain's sword was hanging on the wall. When I spoke to her of it as a proud possession, her eyes filled. His little boy said with flashing eyes:

"It's my papa's s'ode. I wants to be a man. An' I'll take it down and kill all the Yankees!"

"H-sh!" his mother put her hand over his mouth. "God grant there may be no war when you are a man!" she said fervently.

"Amen!" I responded.

"Oh, Nell," she said, "when it's all over, what good will it do? It will just show that one side could fight better than the other, or had more money and men than the other. It won't show that anybody's right. You can't know how it is until it hits you, Nell. I'm proud of him, and proud of his sword; I wouldn't have had him out of it all. I wouldn't have had him a coward. But oh, Nell, I feel that war is wrong! I'm sorry for every Northern woman who has a circle like this around her, and a sword like that hanging on her wall."

The little boy put his arm around her neck. "Mamma," he said, "are *you* sorry for the *Yankees*?"

"My dear," she said, "I am sorry for all little boys who haven't got a papa, and I'm sorry for their mammas. And I don't want you ever to kill anybody."

CHAPTER VII
TRAVELING THROUGH DIXIE IN WAR TIMES

Our troops had to get out of winter quarters before they were well settled in them. I am not historian enough to explain how it was, but the old familiar trip "On to Richmond" had been started again, Burnside directing it. Every new Federal commander-in-chief started for Richmond as soon as he was in command. There was a popular song called "Richmond is a Hard Road to Travel." They always found it so, though they got there eventually.

The cavalry, as usual, were on the wing first. General Rooney (W. H. F.) Lee's division was sent to Fredericksburg in November, I think. My husband, of course, went with it. I was to go to Richmond and wait until I heard whether it would be safe for me to join him.

From Richmond I ran over to Petersburg, saw many old friends and ran back to Richmond again, fearful lest a message should come from Dan and I should miss it. I looked for a telegram every day, and kept my trunk packed. It was well that I did.

One morning my door was burst open unceremoniously and Dan rushed in.

"Ready to go, Nell?"

"Yes."

"Come. Now."

I put on my bonnet, caught up my satchel, stuffed brush, toothbrush, and comb into it and was ready. Dan had stepped into the hall to call a porter to take the trunk down. We followed it, jumped into the omnibus, and it rolled off – all this in about five minutes from the time he burst my door open. On the omnibus, among other passengers, was a gentleman who had a brother in Dan's command. This gentleman had so many questions to ask about the army, and so many messages to send his brother that Dan and I hardly exchanged a dozen sentences before we were at the depot. He established me in my seat, got my baggage checked, sat down, and then exclaiming:

"Good gracious! I forgot that bundle for General Lee. It's on top of the omnibus, Nell. I'll be back in a minute," and darted off.

At the next station, when the conductor came for my ticket, I said:

"See my husband, please. He must be in the smoking-car."

A gentleman across the aisle remarked:

"Excuse me, madam, but I think the gentleman who came in with you got left. I saw him get off the omnibus with a bundle in his hand and run after the car, but he missed it."

"Then I don't know what to do," I said in despair to the conductor. "I haven't a ticket, and I haven't any money."

"Where are you going?" he asked kindly.

"I don't know!" I gasped.

The conductor looked blank. I explained the manner of my starting to him.

"Do you know where your husband's command is stationed?"

"No, I don't know that either. You see," I explained, "as he belongs to the cavalry it is much harder to keep up with his whereabouts than if he were in the infantry."

"What division is he in?"

"General Rooney Lee's."

"Do you know what brigade?"

"Chambliss's."

"All right. I know what to do with you, then. You stop at Milford. Your husband will come on the freight this afternoon – at least, that's what I expect him to do. Your best plan is to wait at Milford for him."

When we reached Milford the conductor took me out and introduced me to the landlord of the tavern, and I was shown into what I suppose might be called by grace the reception-room. It was literally on the ground floor, being built on native brown earth. The ceiling was low, the room was full of smoke, and rough-looking men sat about with pipes in their mouths. I asked for a private room, and was shown into one upstairs, but this was so cold that I went out into the porch which overhung the street and walked up and down in the sun to keep myself warm. Very soon the gong sounded for dinner. I went down, sat with a rough crowd around a long table, swallowed what I could, and went back to my promenade on the porch. After a time an ambulance

drove up and stopped under the porch, and an orderly sang out:

"Adjutant of the Thirteenth here?"

I leaned over the railing.

"I am his wife," I said.

He saluted. "Can you tell me where the adjutant is, ma'am?"

"He will be here on the next train."

"That might be midnight, ma'am, or it might be to-morrow. My orders were to meet the adjutant here about this time."

"The adjutant got left by the regular passenger. But a freight was to leave Richmond soon after the passenger, and the adjutant will come on that."

"The freight?" the orderly looked doubtful. "Maybe so."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Well, ma'am, all trains are uncertain, and freight trains more so. And sometimes freight trains are mighty pertickular about what kind of freight they carry."

I laughed, but the orderly did not see the point. Dan's body-servant was to drive the ambulance back, so the orderly, turning it over to a man whom he picked up in the tavern, went back to camp according to instructions. As soon as he was out of sight I began to repent. If Dan *shouldn't* come on that freight, what would I do with myself and that strange man and the ambulance and the mules? It was getting late when the welcome sound of a whistle broke upon my ear and the freight came creeping in. On the engine beside the engineer stood my husband, with that abominable little bundle of General Lee's in his hand.

"Josh got left somewhere," Dan said of his servant, "the man will have to drive."

At last we were off, Dan and I sitting comfortably back in the ambulance. I was very cold when I first got in, but he wrapped me up well in the blanket and I snuggled up against him, and began to tell him how nice and warm he was, and how thankful I was that there was no possibility of his getting left from me between here and camp.

"I had a time of it to come on that freight," he said.

"The orderly said you would." I repeated the orderly's remark, and Dan laughed.

"He told the truth. I had to do more swearing to the square inch than I have been called upon to do for some time. I knew you didn't even know where you were going, and that I *must* get here to-night. As soon as I heard about the freight, I went to the conductor. He said passengers couldn't be taken on the freight, it was against orders. 'I belong to the army as you see,' I urged, 'I am an officer and it is important for me to rejoin my command.' He insisted still that I couldn't go, that it was against orders. I told him that it was a bundle for General Lee that had got me left, and I pictured your predicament in moving colors. He was obdurate. 'If the freights begin to take passengers,' he said, 'there would soon be no room for any other sort of freight on them.' I felt like kicking him. It was then that I told him that orders were not made for fools to carry out, and the swearing began. I threatened to report him. He looked uneasy and was ready to

make concessions which politeness had not been able to win, but I walked off. Evidently, like a mule, he respected me more for cursing him. I had my plan laid. Just as the train moved out of the station I swung on to the engine, and politely introduced myself to the engineer. He had overheard my conversation with the conductor – the first part of it, not the part where the swearing came in – and he invited me to get off the engine. While we were debating the engine was traveling. I saw that he was about to stop it.

"Quick as a flash I had my pistol at his head.

"'Now,' I said, 'drive on with this engine, or I'll kill you and run it myself!' I am not telling you *all* the words I used, Nell, you'll forgive me this time, I had to get to you, and honest English is wasted on fools and mules. 'Hold off!' he said, 'and don't put that d – d thing so close to my head, and you can ride up here and be d – d to you.' The invitation was not very polite, but I accepted it. I gave him some good tobacco, and we got to be friends before I got off."

The short day was done. I was tired and warm and sleepy and went to sleep while Dan was talking. I don't know how long I had dozed when the driver doubled up suddenly and turned head over heels backward into my lap. I struggled from under him, and Dan gave him a push that helped to free me and at the same time jumped on to the driver's seat and caught up the lines.

"Lord-a-mussy on me!" I heard the man groaning, "dat ar d – n mu-el! she have kicked me in de pit er my stummick!"

He gathered himself together in a corner of the ambulance, and continued to express forcible opinions of the mule.

"Dan," I said, "please get away from there! That mule might kick you."

"Don't be silly, Nell! Somebody's got to drive."

"But, Dan, if you get kicked, you *can't* drive."

"I won't get kicked. I know how to talk to a mule. Just shut your ears, Nell, if you don't want to hear me. I've got to convince this mule. She's just like that engineer and conductor. As soon as I get through giving her my opinion in language she can understand, she'll travel all right."

Presently Dan called out: "You can unstop your ears now, Nell – I think she understands."

"Dan," I said, "are you cold out there?"

"Not a bit of it! This isn't anything to a soldier. But a soldier's wife, eh, Nell? Getting to be rather hard lines, isn't it?"

"Dan," I said, my teeth chattering, "don't it seem that I have had more adventures in one day than I am entitled to?"

"Rather! By the way, Josh got on that same freight. How he managed it, the Lord only knows! Worked himself in with the brakeman, I suppose. But he got off – to look around, I reckon – just like him! – at some station before Milford and got left. He'll come straggling into camp to-morrow. You see there's another accident you can credit your account with. Josh could have driven these mules instead of that fool white man over there who don't know what to do with a mule. Then I would have been back there

entertaining you, and you would have been complimenting me by going to sleep." He drove on singing:

"Sweet Nellie is by my side!"

We caught up with another ambulance. In it were an army friend of Dan's with his wife, and she proved the straw that broke the back of my endurance. She played the martyr. She had rugs, and shawls, and blankets. I cross-examined her and made her show that she hadn't been left on a car by herself without a ticket or a cent of money, and with no knowledge of where she was going, that the driver of her ambulance hadn't been kicked in the stomach and tumbled himself backward into her lap and nearly broken her bones, and that my case was far worse than hers. But in spite of it, she complained of everything, and had Dan and her husband sympathizing so with her that they had no time to sympathize with me. I sat, almost frozen, huddled up in the one shawl that answered for shawl, blanket, and rug, and tried to keep my teeth from chattering and myself from hating that whining Mrs. Gummidge of a woman.

At last our ambulance drew up in front of the Rev. Mr. McGuire's, where we were to stop. There was a hot supper ready, in parlor and dining-room cheerful flames leaped up from hickory logs on bright brass fire-dogs, and our welcome was as cheery as the glow of the fire. As our ambulance had driven into the gate a few minutes in advance of the other, and as Dan had

also engaged board for me several days before, I had a right to the first choice of rooms. One of these was large with a bright fire burning in the fireplace, and a great downy feather-bed on the four-poster; the other was small, and had neither fireplace nor feather-bed. Of course "Mrs. Gummidge" got the best room. Dan had to go back to camp. I slept on my hard bed in my cold room and cried for Milicent and mother; and the next morning I broke the ice in my bowl when I went to take my bath. I was very, very miserable that morning. I was not out of my twenties, I had been a spoiled child, I had not seen Milicent or mother since my marriage, I had nearly lost my husband, and I had been ill unto death. Following my husband around as I did, I yet saw very little of him, and I endured hardships of every sort. I was in the land of war, and in spite of all his efforts to protect me life was full of fears and horrors. I do not mean that it was all woe. There were smiles, and music, and laughter, too; my hosts were kind, Dan came over from camp whenever he could, and life was too full of excitement ever to be dull. During the day I managed fairly well – it was at night that the horrors overwhelmed me. My room was cheerless, my bed was hard and cold – I wanted Milicent, I wanted mother. I felt that the time had come when I *must* see them and I couldn't: there was no way! The longing grew upon me the more I struggled against it, until there was no risk I would not have run to see them. I was sitting in the parlor one night thinking with indescribable longing of the happy, care-free days in Norfolk, and seeing dissolving pictures of home in the hickory

fire. Tears were rolling down my cheeks, for while I was living over those dear old days I was living in the present, too. Suddenly I heard a voice in the hall – Dan's and another's!

I sprang up. And there was Dan, and behind him in the doorway stood a graceful figure in a long wrap. And a face – Milicent's face – pale and weary, but indescribably lovely and loving, was looking toward me with shining eyes.

"Millie!"

"Nell!"

That was one time I forgot Dan, but he didn't mind. He stayed with us as long as he could, and after he left Milicent and I talked and talked. Milicent – she was a widow now – had come all the way from Baltimore to see me – she had left mother and Bobby to come to see me! My little bed wasn't hard any more, my room wasn't cheerless any more; I didn't mind having to break the ice for my bath. Ah, me, what a night that was and how happy we were until Dan's command was moved!

Millie and I – Catholics – wish to pay tribute to the sweet piety of that Protestant home which sheltered us. Every evening the big Bible was brought out and prayers were held, the negro servants coming in to share in the family devotions.

CHAPTER VIII
BY FLAG OF TRUCE
Milicent tells how she got from Baltimore to Dixie

The War Department of the United States issued a notice that on such a date a flag-of-truce boat would go from Washington to Richmond, and that all persons wishing to go must obtain passes and come to that city by a certain date.

I had not heard from my sister, Mrs. Grey, for some time. We were very anxious about her, and I determined to seize this opportunity to get to her.

I was fortunate in making one of a party of three ladies, one of whom was Mrs. Montmorency, the widow of an English officer, and the other Mrs. Dangerfield, of Alexandria, Virginia. On our arrival at Washington late at night, we found all the hotels crowded and were told that it would be impossible to get a room anywhere. Fortunately for us, Mrs. Dangerfield was acquainted with the proprietor of one of the hotels where we inquired, and here, after much difficulty, we secured two small rooms. As he left us the old lady said triumphantly:

"Now, see what's in a name! If my name hadn't been Dangerfield none of us could have gotten a place to sleep in to-

night."

The next morning we started for the flag-of-truce boat. Immediately upon our arrival our baggage was weighed and all over two hundred pounds refused transportation. The confusion was indescribable. As soon as the steamer cleared the wharf every stateroom was locked, and the five hundred passengers on board, with the exception of the children, were subjected to a rigid examination – their persons, their clothing, their trunks were all thoroughly searched. We were marched down two by two between guards, and passed into the lower cabin, where four women removed and searched our clothing; our shoes, stockings, and even our hair were subjected to rigid inspection.

Mrs. Dangerfield being the oldest lady on board was by courtesy exempted. As for myself, I fell into the hands of a pleasant woman, who looked ashamed of the office she had to perform. She passed her hand lightly over and within my dress, and over my hair; touched my pockets and satchels, which I willingly showed her, and dismissed me with a smile and the kind remark, "Oh, I know you have nothing contraband," while around me stood ladies shivering in one garment.

I had tea and sugar, both contraband articles, in a large satchel upstairs in the care of the provost marshal. I out-Yankeed the Yankees this trip. As soon as I had heard that we were to be searched and have our things taken from us, I had walked up to the provost marshal, told him I had tea and coffee – a small quantity of each – and asked to be allowed to use them. In the

gruffest manner he bade me bring them immediately to him. My dejected looks must have inspired him with some pity, for when I went off and brought back my satchel and handed it to him, he turned and said in the kindest manner:

"Now I have saved them for you. After the search is over come to me and I will return them to you."

I thanked him and hurried off to impart the good news to my friend Mrs. Dangerfield. I found her in a most animated discussion with an officer who had just pronounced her camphor-bottle contraband. The old lady was asserting loudly her inability to stand the trip or to live without her camphor-bottle. After much argument and persuasion she was allowed to retain it.

The scenes on deck at this time were too painful to dwell upon. Mothers who had periled everything and spent their last dollar in buying shoes for their children had to see them rudely taken away. Materials for clothing, and pins, needles, buttons, thread, and all the little articles so needful at home and so difficult to obtain in the Confederacy at that time were pronounced contraband. Men went about with their arms filled with plunder taken from defenseless women who stood wringing their hands and pleading, crying, arguing, quarreling.

By this time we were far down the Potomac. Weak, hungry, and seasick, we were glad when dinner-time drew near. The official notice had stated that food would be provided, which we, of course, had construed into three meals a day of good

steamboat fare. The bell rang out loudly at last, and we all rushed to the cabin, where to our utter consternation we saw nothing whatever to eat, no set table, and nothing that looked like eating. Coming up the steps was a dirty boathand with a still dirtier bucket and a string of tin cups. He deposited these on a table and then called upon the ladies to help themselves to atrocious coffee, without milk, sugar, or spoons. Down he went again, and came up laden with tin plates piled one on the other, and containing what he called a sandwich. This sandwich was a chunk – not a slice – of bread, spread with dreadful mustard, a piece of coarse ham and another chunk of bread. Each person was generously allowed one of the tin plates and one sandwich. The very thought of swallowing such food was revolting, and more particularly so because we were tantalized with odors of beefsteak and chicken and other appetizing delicacies prepared for the officers' table.

How thankful I was to the provost for confiscating my tea and coffee and sugar and crackers and ginger-cakes! Each of our party had something to add. Down upon the lower deck we had seen an immense pile of loaves of bread, and near them a large stove. We coaxed the sailor in charge to get us a clean loaf from the center of the pile and to put our tea on his stove to draw. In a few moments we disappeared to enjoy in our stateroom the luxury of a cup of tea! How others fared I do not know. We were the only people, I think, who had saved any tea. Almost every one had brought a few crackers, or cakes of some kind which they had managed to keep, and these they must have lived on

with the abominable coffee.

When we reached the boat that morning only one stateroom was vacant, and this we contrived to secure. It was crowded comfort for three persons, but we were thankful. When night came our less fortunate fellow travelers were scattered in every direction on the floor, their only accommodations filthy camp mattresses without sheets, pillows, or covering of any kind except their own cloaks and shawls.

We traveled slowly and cautiously, fearing that in the night our flag might not be distinctly seen and we might be fired upon. The provost and his officers were in most things polite and kind. The men got up a little play between decks for the amusement of the ladies; but our party was too ultra-Southern even to look on.

We remained off Fortress Monroe all night, only starting at daylight for the James River. The trip up the James was accomplished in safety and without incident of special interest, if we except a very sudden and desperate love affair between a Southern girl and a Federal officer and the amusement which it afforded us.

As our boat neared the wharf at City Point, on all sides were heard cries of:

"Here we are in Dixie!"

As soon as we were landed a rush was made for the cars, and after everybody was seated the provost marshal came through bidding us good-by, shaking hands with many and kissing the pretty young girls. He had been very kind, and, as far as lay in

his power, had done so much for the comfort of all and for the pleasure of the young people that most of us felt as if we were parting from a friend. Indeed, some were so enthusiastic that before we reached City Point they went among the passengers begging subscriptions to a fund for purchasing the provost a handsome diamond ring as a testimonial. Many, however, refused indignantly, declaring that they did not feel called upon to reward the provost for confiscating every article possible, and for giving us for seven consecutive meals spoiled bacon, mustard, and undrinkable coffee.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.