

JOHN MCELROY

SIKLEGG,
BOOK 3

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John McElroy
Si Klegg, Book 3 / Si and Shorty
Meet Mr. Rosenbaum, the Spy,
Who Relates His Adventures

PREFACE

"Si Klegg, of the 200th Ind., and Shorty, his Partner," were born years ago in the brain of John McElroy, Editor of The National Tribune.

These sketches are the original ones published in The National Tribune, revised and enlarged somewhat by the author. How true they are to nature every veteran can abundantly testify from his own service. Really, only the name of the regiment was invented. There is no doubt that there were several men of the name of Josiah Klegg in the Union Army, and who did valiant service for the Government. They had experiences akin to, if not identical with, those narrated here, and substantially every man who faithfully and bravely carried a musket in defense of the best Government on earth had sometimes, if not often, experiences of which those of Si Klegg are a strong reminder.

The Publishers.

THIS BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED TO THE RANK AND FILE OF THE
GRANDEST ARMY EVER MUSTERED FOR WAR.

CHAPTER I. OUT ON PICKET

THE BOYS SHOW THE DEACON A NEW WRINKLE IN THE CULINARY ART

SOME days later, Si had charge of a picket-post on the Readyville Pike, near Cripple Deer Creek. The Deacon went with them, at their request, which accorded with his own inclinations, The weather was getting warmer every day, which made him fidgety to get back to his own fields, though Si insisted that they were still under a foot of snow in Indiana. But he had heard so much about picket duty that, next to battle, it was the thing he most wanted to see. Abraham Lincoln was left behind to care for the "house." He had been a disappointment so far, having developed no strong qualities, except for eating and sleeping, of which he could do unlimited quantities.

"No use o' takin' him out on picket," observed Shorty, "unless we kin git a wagon to go along and haul rations for him. I understand now why these rebels are so poor; the niggers eat up everything they kin raise. I'm afraid, Deacon, he'll make the Wabash Valley look sick when you turn him loose in it."

"I guess my farm kin stand him," said the Deacon proudly. "It stood Si when he was a growin' boy, though he used, to strain it sometimes."

They found a comfortable fence-corner facing south for their "tent," which they constructed by making a roof of cedar boughs resting on a rail running from one angle to another. They laid more boughs down in the corner, and on this placed their blankets, making a bed which the Deacon pronounced very inviting and comfortable. They built a fire in front, for warmth and for cooking, and so set up housekeeping in a very neat and soldier-like way.

The afternoon passed without special incident. Shorty came in with a couple of chickens, but the Deacon had learned enough to repress any questions as to where and how he got them. He soon became more interested in his preparations for cooking them. He had built a big fire in a hole in the ground, and piled a quantity of dry cedar on this. Then he cut off the heads and legs of the chickens, and, getting some mud from the side of the road, proceeded to cover each, feathers and all, with a coating nearly an inch thick.

"What in the world do you mean by that, Shorty?" asked the Deacon in surprise.

"He's all right. Pap," assured Si. "He'll show you a new wrinkle in chicken-fixin' that you kin teach mother when you go home. She knows more about cookin' than any other woman in the world, but I'll bet she's not up to this dodge."

The fire had by this time burned down to a heap of glowing embers. The boys scraped a hole in these, laid on it their two balls of mud, then carefully covered them with live coals and piled on a little more wood.

"I'll say right now," said the Deacon, "that I don't think much o' that way. Why didn't you take their feathers off and clean out their innards? Seems to me that's a nasty way."

"Wait and see," said Shorty sententiously.

Si had mixed some meal into a dough in the half-canteens he and Shorty carried in their haversacks. He spread this out on a piece of sheet-iron, and propped it up before the fire. In a little while it was nicely browned over, when Si removed it from the sheet-iron, turned it over, and browned the other side. He repeated this until he had a sufficiency of "hoe cakes" for their supper. A kettle of good, strong coffee had been boiling on the other side of the fire while this was going on. Then they carefully raked the embers off, and rolled out two balls of hard-baked clay. Waiting for these to cool a little, they broke them. The skin and feathers came off with the pieces and revealed deliciously

savory, sweet meat, roasted just to a turn. The intestines had shriveled up with the heat into little, hard balls, which were thrown away.

"Yum—yum—yum," said Shorty, tearing one of the chickens in two, and handing a piece to the Deacon, while Si gave him a sweet, crisp hoe cake and a cup of strong coffee. "Now, this's what you might call livin'. Never beat that cookin' in any house that had a roof. Only do that when you've stars in the roof of your kitchen."

"It certainly is splendid," admitted the Deacon. "I don't think Maria could've done better."

It was yet light when they finished their supper, filled their pipes, and adjusted themselves for a comfortable smoke. One of the men came back and said:

"Corporal, there's a rebel on horseback down the road a little ways who seems to be spying on us. We've noticed him for some little time. He don't come up in good range, and we haven't fired at him, hopin' he'd come closer. Better come and take a look at him."

"Don't do anything to scare him off," said Si. "Keep quiet. Me and Shorty'll sneak down through the field, out of sight, and git him."

They picked up their guns and slipped out under the cover of the undergrowth to where they could walk along the fence, screened by the heavy thicket of sumach. Catching the excitement of the occasion, the Deacon followed them at a little distance.

Without discovery Si and Shorty made their way to a covert within an easy 50 yards of where the horseman sat rather uneasily on a fine, mettled animal. They got a good look at him. He was a young, slender man, below medium hight, with curly, coalblack hair, short whiskers, a hooked nose, and large, full eyes. He wore a gray suit of rather better make and material than was customary in the rebel army. He had a revolver in his belt and a carbine slung to his saddle, but showed no immediate intention of using either. His right hand rested on his thigh, and his eyes were intently fixed on the distant picket-post.

"A rebel scout," whispered Si. "Shall we knock him over, and then order him to surrender, or halt him first, and then shoot?"

"He can't git away," said Shorty. "I have him kivered. You kivver his hoss's head. Then call him down."

Si drew his sights fine on the horse's head and yelled:

"Surrender, there, you dumbd rebel."

The man gave a quick start, a swift glance at the blue uniforms, and instantly both hands went up.

"That is all right, boys. Don't shoot. I'm a friend," he called in a strong German accent.

"Climb down off o' that boss, and come here, and do it mighty sudden," called out Si, with his finger still on the trigger.

The horse became restive at the sound of strange voices, but the man succeeded in dismounting, and taking his reins in his hand, led the horse up to the fence.

"Very glad to see you, boys," said he, surveying their blue garments with undisguised satisfaction, and putting out his other hand to shake.

"Take off that revolver, and hand it here," ordered the wary Shorty, following the man with the muzzle of his gun. The man slipped his arm through the reins, unbuckled his revolver, and handed it to Shorty. Si jumped over the fence and seized the carbine.

"Who are you, and where did you come from?" asked Si, starting the man up the road toward the post.

"What rechiment do you belong to?" asked the stranger, warily.

"We belong to Co. Q, 200th Injianny, the best regiment in Gen. Rosecrans's army," answered Si proudly, that the captive might understand where the honor of his taking belonged.

"That is all right," said the stranger, with an air of satisfaction. "The 200th Indianny is a very good regiment. I saw them whip John Morgan's cavalry at Green River. Clumsy farmer boys, but shoot like born devils."

"But who are you, and where did you come from?" repeated Si impatiently.

"I'm all right. I'm Levi Rosenbaum of Gen. Rosecrans's secret service. I got some news for him."

"You have?" said Si suspiciously. "Why didn't you ride right in and tell it to him? What've you bin hangin' around here all afternoon, watchin' our post for?"

"I wasn't sure you was there. I was told that the Yankee pickets was going to be pushed out to Cripple Deer Creek to-day, but I didn't know it for sure. I was afraid that the rebels was there yet. Jim Jones, of the secret service, had agreed to come out this afternoon and wave a flag if it was all right. I was waiting for his sign. But he is probably drunk. He always gets so when he reaches camp."

The Deacon joined them in the road, and gave a searching glance at the prisoner.

"Ain't you a Jew?" he inquired presently. "Ain't your name Rosenbaum? Didn't you go through Posey County, Ind., a year or two ago, with a wagon, sellin' packs o' cloth to the farmers?"

"I'm an American citizen," said the man proudly, "the same as the rest of you. My religion is Hebrew. I don't know and don't care what your religion is. Every man has the religion that suits him. My name is Rosenbaum. I did sell cloth in Posey County, unt all over Indianny. It was good cloth, too, unt I sold it at a bargain."

"It certainly was good cloth, and cheap," admitted the Deacon. "What in the world are you doin' down here in them clothes?"

"I'm doing just what these men are doing here in their cloze," answered Rosenbaum. "I'm trying to serve the country. I'm doing it different from them, because I'm built different from them. I hope I'm doing it well. But I'm awfully hungry. Got anything to eat? Just a cup of coffee and a cracker? Don't care for any pork."

"Yes, we'll give you something to eat," said Shorty. "I think there's some of our chicken left. You'll find that good."

"How did you cook that?" said Rosenbaum, looking at the tempting morsel suspiciously.

Shorty explained.

"Thanks; I can't eat it," said Rosenbaum with a sigh. "It ain't kosher."

"What the devil's that?" asked Shorty.

"It's my religion. I can't explain. Send for the Officer of the Guard to take me to Headquarters," answered Rosenbaum, sipping his coffee.

CHAPTER II. ROSENBAUM, THE SPY

THE JEW TELLS THE THRILLING STORY OF HIS ADVENTURE

THE Officer of the Guard was a long time in coming, and Mr. Rosenbaum grew quite chatty and communicative, as they sat around the bright fire of cedar logs and smoked.

"Yes," he said, "I have been in the secret service ever since the beginning of the war—in fact, before the war, for I began getting news for Frank Blair in the Winter before the war. They say Jews have no patriotism. That's a lie. Why should they have no patriotism for countries where they were treated like dogs? In Germany, where I was born, they treated us worse than dogs. They made us live in a little, nasty, pig-pen of an alley; we had to go in at sundown, unt stay there; we had to wear a different cloze from other folks, unt we didn't dare to say our souls were our own to any dirty loafer that insulted us.

"Here we are treated like men, unt why shouldn't we help to keep the country from breaking up? Jews ought to do more than anybody else, unt I made up my mind from the very first that I was going to do all that I could. The Generals have told me that I could do much better for the country in the secret service than as a soldier; they could get plenty of soldiers unt but few spies."

"Now you're shoutin'," said Shorty. "They kin git me to soldier as long as the war lasts, for the askin', but I wouldn't be a spy 10 minutes for a corn-basket full o' greenbacks. I have too much regard for my neck. I need it in my business."

"You a spy," said Si derisively. "You couldn't spy for sour apples. Them big feet o' your'n 'd give you dead away to anybody that'd ever seen you before."

"Spyin' isn't the business that any straightfor'd man,"—the Deacon began to say in tones of cold disapproval, and then he bethought him of courtesy to the stranger, and changed hastily—"that I'd like to do. It's entirely too resky."

"O, it's jest as honorable as anything else. Pap," said Si, divining his father's thought. "All's fair in love and war. We couldn't git along without spies. They're as necessary as muskets and cannon."

"Indeed they are," said Mr. Rosenbaum earnestly; "you wouldn't know what to do with your muskets and cannon if the spies didn't tell you where the rebels were, unt how many there was of them. I go out unt get information that it would cost hundreds of lives to get, unt may save thousands of lives, unt all that it costs is one poor little Jew's neck, when they drop on to him some day, unt leave him swinging from a tree. But when that time comes, I shall make no more complaint than these other poor boys do, who get their heads knockt off in battle. I'm no better than they are. My life belongs to the country the same as theirs, unt this free Government is worth all our lives, unt more, too."

His simple, sincere patriotism touched the Deacon deeply. "I'd no idee that there was so much o' the man in a Jew," he said to himself. Then he asked the stranger:

"How did you come to go into the spy business, Mr. Rosenbaum?"

"Well, I was in St. Louis in the Clothing pizniss, unt you know it was purty hot there. All the Germans were for the Union, unt most of the Americans unt Irish seemed to be Secessionists. I sided with the Germans, but as nobody seemed to think that a Jew had any principles or cared for anything but the almighty dollar, everybody talked right out before me, unt by keepin' my ears wide open I got hold of lots of news, which I took straight to General Lyon. I got well acquainted with him, and he used to send me here and there to find out things for him. I'd sell gray uniforms and other things to the Secessionists; they'd talk to one another right before me as to what was being done, and I'd keep my ears wide open all the time, though seemed to be only thinking about the fit and the buttons and the gold lace.

"Then General Lyon wanted to find out just exactly how many men there was in Camp Jackson—no guesswork—no suppose. I took 2,000 of my business cards, printed on white, and 1,000 printed on gray paper. I went through the whole camp. To every man in uniform I give a white card; to every man without a uniform, who seemed to be there for earnest, I give a gray card. When I got back I counted my cards in General Lyon's office, unt found I'd give out 500 white cards unt 200 gray ones. Then General Lyon took out about 3,000 men, unt brought the whole crowd back with him."

"Then General Lyon," continued Rosenbaum, "sent me out from Springfield, Mizzouri, to see how many men old Pap Price unt Ben McCullough had gathered up against him from Mizzouri, Arkansaw, Texas unt the plains. Holy Moses, I was scared when I saw the pile of them. The whole world seemed to be out there, yipping unt yelling for Jeff Davis, drinking raw sod-corn whisky, making secession speeches, unt shooting at marks.

"I rode right into them, unt pretended that I was looking for Mexican silver dollars to take to Mexico to buy powder unt lead for the rebel army. I had a lot of new Confedrit notes that I'd got from my cousin, who was in the tobacco business in Memphis. They was great curiosities, unt every man who had a Mexican dollar wanted to trade it for a Confedrit dollar.

"There was no use tryin' to count the men—might as well have tried to count the leaves on the trees, so I begun to count the regiments. I stuck a pin in my right lapel for every Mizzouri regiment, one in my left lapel for every Arkansaw regiment, one in my vest for every one from Texas. I had black pins for the cannons. I was getting along very well, when I run across Bob Smiles, a dirty loafer, who had been a customer in St. Louis. He wouldn't pay me, unt I had to get out a writ unt levy on his clothes just as he was dressing to go to a quadroon ball.

"I left him with only a necktie, which was worth nothing to me, as it had been worn and soiled. He was very sore against me, unt I was not surprised.

"It made me sick at my stomach when I saw him come up.

"'Hello, you damn Dutch Jew,' he said. 'What are you doing here?'

"I tried to be very pleasant, unt I put out my hand unt said, with my best smile:

"'Good gracious. Bob, how glad I am to see you. When did you get here? Are you well? How are the other boys? Who's here? Where are you stopping?'

"'But I might as well have tried to make friends with a bull dog in front of a farm house where all the people had gone away.

"'Go to blazes,' he said. 'None of your bizniss how I am, how I got here, or how the other boys are. Better not let them find out you're here. They'll take it out of your Jew hide for the way you used to skin them in St. Louis. I want to know what the devil you are doing here?'

"'Now, Mister Smiles,' I said, pleasant as a May morning, 'that's not the way to talk to me. You know I got up the stylistest clothes unt the best fits in St. Louis. We had a little trouble, it is true. It was nothing, though. Just a little business dispute. You know I always thought you one of the very nicest men in St. Louis, unt I said so, even to the Squire unt to the Constable.'

"'Go to the devil, you Savior-killing Jew,' said he. 'Shut up your mouth, or I'll stuff a piece of pork in it. I want to know at once what you are doing here? Where did you come from?'

"'I come from Memphis,' said I. 'I'm in the service of the Southern Confedrisy. General Pillow sent me to gather up all the Mexican dollars I could find, to send to Mexico to buy ammunition.'

"'It's a lie, of course,' said he. 'A Jew'd rather lie than eat, any day. Then you're one of them St. Louis Dutch—they imported Hessians. They're all dead against us. They all ought to be killed. I ought to kill you myself for being so cussed mean to me.'

"He put his hand on his revolver in a way that made my breakfast sour in my stomach, but then I knew that Bob Smiles was a great blowhard, unt his bark was much worse than his bite. In St. Louis he was always going to fight somebody unt kill somebody, but he never done neither. Quite a crowd gathered around, unt Bob blew off to them, unt they yelled, 'Hang the Jew spy. Kill the damn rascal,' and other things that made me unhappy. But what made my flesh crawl was to see a man who wasn't

saying much, go to a wagon, pull out a rope, unt begin making a noose on the end. Bob Smiles caught hold of my collar unt started to drag me toward a tree. Just as I was giving up everything for lost, up comes Jim Jones—the same man I'm going to meet here—he come runnin' up. He was dressed in full uniform as a rebel officer—gray coat unt pants, silver stars on his collar, high boots, gray slouched hat with gold cord, unt so on.

"Here, what is the matter? What's all this fuss in camp?' he said.

"We've ketched one of them Dutch Jews from St. Louis spying our camp, Major,' said Bob Smiles, letting loose of my collar to salute the Major's silver stars. 'And we are going to hang him.'

"A spy? How do you know he's a spy?'" asked Jim Jones.

"Well, he's Dutch; he's a Jew, unt he's from St. Louis. What more do you want?'" asked Bob Smiles.

The crowd yelled, unt de man with the rope went to the tree unt flung one end over a limb.

"His being a St. Louis Dutchman is against him,' said Jim Jones, 'but his being a Jew is in his favor. A Jew don't care a blame for politics. He hain't got no principles. He'd rather make a picayune off you in a trade than have a wagon-load of principles. But you fellers have got nothing to do with spies, anyway. That's headquarters' bizniss. I'm an officer at General Price's headquarters. I'll take him up there unt examine him. Bring him along.'

"Go along, Jew,' said two of three of them, giving me kicks, as Bob Smiles started with me. The man with the rope stood by the tree looking very disappointed.

"When we got near General Price's tent, Jim Jones says to the rest:

"You stop there. Come along with me, Jew.'

"He took me by the collar, unt we walked toward General Price's tent. He whispered to me as we went along: 'You're all right, Rosenbaum. I know you, unt I know what you're here for. Just keep a stiff upper lip, tell your story straight, unt I'll see you through.'

"That scared me worse than ever, but all that I could do was to keep up my nerve, unt play my cards coolly. We went into the General's tent, but he was busy, unt motioned us with his hand to the Adjutant-General.

"What's the matter?" asked the Adjutant-General, motioning me to sit down, while he went on making tally marks on a sheet of paper, as a man called off the regiments that had reported. Then he footed them all up, unt, turning to another officer, read from it so many Arkansaw regiments, so many Louisianny, so many Mizzouri, so many Texas, so many batteries of artillery, unt he said to another officer as he laid the paper face down among the other papers on his table: 'Just as I told you, Colonel. We have fully 22,000 men ready for battle.' Then to us: 'Well, what can I do for you?'

"The boys had picked up this Jew for a spy, Colonel,' said Jim Jones, pointing to me, 'unt they were about to hang him, just to pass away the afternoon more than for anything else. I took him away from them, telling them that it was your privilege to hang spies, unt you could do it according to the science of war. I brung him up here to get him away from them. After they're gone away or got interested in something else I'll take him unt put him outside of camp.'

"All right," said de Adjutant-General, without taking much interest in the matter. 'Do with him as you please. A Jew more or less isn't of any consequence. Probably he deserves hanging, though, but it isn't well to encourage the boys to hang men on sight. They're quite too ready to do that, anyway.'

"He talked to the other man a little, unt then when he went away he turned to me, unt said, sort of lazy like, as if he didn't care anything about it:

"Where are you from?'

"From Memphis,' said I.

"Great place, Memphis,' said he; 'one of the thriving suburbs of Satan's Kingdom. Had lots of fun there. I know every faro bank in it, which speaks well for my memory, if not for my morals. What bizniss was you in?'

"Clothing,' said I.

"'What a fool question to ask a Jew,' said he, yawning. 'Of course, you was in the clothing trade. You was born in it. All Jews have been since they gambled for the Savior's garments.'

"'They wasn't Jews what gambled for Christ's clothes,' said I, picking up a little courage. 'They vass Romans—Italians—Dagoes.'

"'Was they?' said he. 'Well, mebbe they was. I haven't read my Bible for so long that I've clean forgot. Say, what are you doing with all them pins?'

"The question come so unexpected that it come nearly knocking me off my base. I had calculated on almost every other possible thing, unt was ready for it, except that fool question. I thought for a minit that disappointed man by the tree with the rope was going to get his job, after all. But I gathered myself together with a jerk, unt calmly said with a smile:

"'O, that's some of my foolishness. I can't get over being a tailor, and sticking all the pins what I find in my lapel. I must pick up every one I see.'

"'Queer where you found them all,' said he. 'Must've brung them from Memphis with you. I can't find one in the whole camp. Our men use nails unt thorns instead of pins. I've been wanting a lot of pins for my papers. Let me have all you got. I wish you had a paper of them.'

"I did have two or three papers in my pockets, unt first had a fool idea of offering them to him. Then I remembered that disappointed man with the rope by the tree, unt pulled the pins out of my lapels one by one unt give them to him, trying to keep count in my head as I did so.

"'What are you doing here, anyway?' he asked as he gathered up the pins unt put them in a pasteboard box.

"'I come here at General Pillow's orders, to pick up some Mexican silfer dollars, to buy ammunition in Mexico.

"'Another of old blowhard Pillow's fool schemes,' said he. 'I know old Pillow. I served with him in Mexico, when he dug his ditch on the wrong side of his fortification. He's probably going to do some-thing else with the dollars than buy ammunition. Old Gid Pillow's a mighty slick one, I tell you, when it comes to filling his own pockets. He's no fool there, whatever he may be in other ways. He's working some scheme to skin our men, unt making you his partner, then he'll turn around unt skin you. I'll stop it going any further by turning you out of camp, unt I ought to take away from you all the money you've gathered up, but I won't do it on one condition.'

"'What is your condition?' said I, trying not to speak too quick.

"'You say you are in the clothing pizniss. I want awfully a nice uniform, just like the Major's there. What's such a uniform worth?'

"'About \$75,' said I.

"'I paid \$65 for this in St. Louis,' said Jim Jones.

"'Well, \$10 is not much of a skin for a Memphis Jew,' laughed the Adjutant-General. 'I tell you what I'll do, if you'll swear by the book of Deuteronomy, unt Moses, Abraham unt Isaac, to have me inside of two weeks just such a uniform as the Major's there, I'll let you off with all the money you have made already, unt when you come back with it I'll give you written permission to trade for every silver dollar in camp.'

"'It is a bargain,' said I.

"'Unt it'll be a perfect fit,' said he.

"'Just like the paper on the wall,' said I. 'Let me take your measure.'

"I had my eye all the time on the paper he had laid carelessly down unt forgotten. I pulled my tapemeasure out. The old idee of the tailor come up. I forgot about the disappointed man with the rope by the tree, unt was my old self taking the measure of a customer. I put all the figures down on his piece of paper, without his noticing what I was using. I asked him about the lining, the trimming, unt the pockets, unt wrote them down. Then I folded up the paper unt stuck it in my breast pocket, unt my heart gave a big thump, though I kept my face straight, unt went on talking about buttons unt silk braid unt gold lace for the sleeves. I promised him he should have the uniform in the army in two

weeks' time. Just then some officers come in, unt Jim Jones hurried me out. I could not understand Jim Jones. He hurried me across to a place behind the woods, where we found some horses.

"Untie that one unt get on quick," he said. "My God, you've got the thing dead to rights; you've got everything on that piece of paper. My God, what luck! Smartest thing I ever saw done. Get that paper in General Lyon's hands before midnight if you kill yourself unt horse in doing it. I'll take you out past part of the guards, unt show you how to avoid the rest. Then ride as if the devil was after you, until you reach General Lyon's tent."

"I was dumfounded. I looked at Jim Jones. His eyes was like fire. Then it suddenly occurred to me that Jim Jones was a spy, too.

"As I mounted I looked back across the camp. I saw the rope still hanging from a limb of the tree, and the disappointed man sitting down beside it patiently waiting.

"That night the paper was in General Lyon's hands, unt the next night the army moved out to fight the battle of Wilson's Creek.

"The Adjutant-General is still waiting for that uniform."

"Halt, who comes there?" called out Shorty, whose quick ears caught the sound of approaching footsteps.

"The Officer of the Guard," responded from the bank of darkness in the rear.

"Advance, Officer of the Guard, and give the countersign," commanded Shorty, lowering his musket to a charge bayonets.

The officer advanced, leaned over the bayonet's point, and whispered the countersign.

"Countersign's correct," announced Shorty, bringing his gun to a present. "Good evening. Lieutenant. We have got a man here who claims to belong to the Secret Service."

"Yes," answered the officer. "We've been expecting him all afternoon, but thought he was coming in on the other road. I'd have been around here long ago only for that. This is he, is it? Well, let's hurry in. They want you at Headquarters as soon as possible."

"Good night, boys," called out Mr. Rosenbaum as he disappeared; "see you again soon."

CHAPTER III. THE DEACON GOES HOME

SHORTY FALLS A VICTIM TO HIS GAMBLING PROPENSITIES

THE BOYS did not finish their tour of picket duty till the forenoon of the next day, and it was getting toward evening when they reached their own camp.

"What in the world's going on at the house?" Si asked anxiously, as they were standing on the regimental parade ground waiting to be dismissed. Strange sounds came floating from that direction. The scraping of a fiddle was mingled with yells, the rush of feet, and laughter.

"I'll go over there and see," said the Deacon, who had sat down behind the line on a pile of the things they had brought back with them. He picked up the coffee-pot, the frying-pan, and one of the haversacks, and walked in the direction of the house. As he turned into the company street and came in sight of the cabin he looked for an instant, and then broke out:

"I'm blamed if they don't seem to be havin' a nigger political rally there, with the house as campaign headquarters. Where in time could they have all come from? Looks like a crow-roost, with some o' the crows drunk."

Apparently, all the negro cooks, teamsters, officers' servants, and roustabouts from the adjoining camps had been gathered there, with Groundhog, Pilgarlic, and similar specimens of the white teamsters among them and leading them.

Seated on a log were three negroes, one sawing on an old fiddle, one picking a banjo, and one playing the bones. Two negroes were in the center of a ring, dancing, while the others patted "Juba." All were more or less intoxicated. Groundhog and Pilgarlic were endeavoring to get up a fight between Abraham Lincoln and another stalwart, stupid negro, and were plying them with whisky from a canteen and egging them on with words.

The Deacon strode up to Groundhog and, catching him by the arm, demanded sternly:

"What are you doing, you miserable scoundrel? Stop it at once."

Groundhog, who had drunk considerable himself, and was pot-valiant, shook him off roughly, saying:

"G'way from here, you dumbest citizen. This hain't none o' your bizniss. Go back to your haymow and leave soldiers alone."

The Deacon began divesting himself of his burden to prepare for action, but before he could do so, Shorty rushed in, gave Groundhog a vigorous kick, and he and Si dispersed the rest of the crowd in a hurry with sharp cuffs for all they could reach. The meeting broke up without a motion to adjourn.

The Deacon caught Abraham Lincoln by the collar and shook him vigorously.

"You black rascal," he said, "what've you bin up to?"

"Didn't 'spect you back so soon. Boss," gasped the negro. "Said you wouldn't be back till termorrer."

"No matter when you expected us back," said the Deacon, shaking him still harder, while Si winked meaningly at Shorty. "What d'ye mean by sich capers as this? You've bin a-drinkin' likker, you brute."

"Cel'bratun my freedom," gasped the negro. "Groundhog done tole me to."

"I'd like to celebrate his razzled head offen him," exploded the Deacon. "I'll welt him into dog's meat hash if I kin lay my hands on him. He's too mean and wuthless to even associate with mules. If I'd a dog on my place as onery as he is I'd give him a button before night. He's not content with bein' a skunk himself; he wants to drag everybody else down to his level. Learnin' you to drink whisky

and fight as soon as you're out o' bondage. Next thing he'll be learnin' you to steal sheep and vote for Vallandigham. I'd like to put a stone around his neck and feed him to the catfish."

There was something so strange and earnest about the Deacon's wrath that it impressed the negro more than any of the most terrible exhibitions of wrath that he had seen his master make. He cowered down, and began crying in a maudlin way and begging:

"Pray God, Boss, don't be so hard on a poor nigger."

Si, who had learned something more of the slave nature than his father, ended the unpleasant scene by giving Abraham Lincoln a sharp slap across the hips with a piece of clapboard and ordering:

"Pick up that camp-kettle, go to the spring and fill it, and git back here in short meter."

The blow came to the negro as a welcome relief. It was something that he could understand. He sprang to his feet, grinned, snatched up the campkettle, and ran to the spring.

"I must get that man away from here without delay," said the Deacon. "The influences here are awful. They'll ruin him. He'll lose his soul if he stays here. I'll start home with him to-morrow."

"He'll do worse'n lose his soul," grumbled Shorty, who had been looking over the provisions. "He'll lose the top of his woolly head if he brings another gang o' coons around here to eat us out o' house and home. I'll be gosh durned if I don't believe they've eat up even all the salt and soap. There ain't a crumb left of anything. Talk about losin' his soul. I'd give six bits for something to make him lose his appetite."

"I'll take him home to-morrow," reiterated the Deacon. "I raised over 'leven hundred bushels o' corn last year, 'bout 500 o' wheat, and just an even ton o' pork. I kin feed him awhile, anyway, but I don't know as I'd chance two of him."

"What'll you do if you have him and the grasshoppers the same year, Pap?" inquired Si.

That night the Deacon began his preparations for returning home. He had gathered up many relics from the battlefield to distribute among his friends at home and decorate the family mantelpiece. There were fragments of exploded shells, some canister, a broken bayonet, a smashed musket, a solid 12-pound shot, and a quart or more of battered bullets picked up in his walks over the scenes of the heavy fighting.

"Looks as if you were going into the junk business. Pap," commented Si, as the store was gathered on the floor.

The faithful old striped carpetsack was brought out, and its handles repaired with stout straps. The thrifty Deacon insisted on taking home some of Si's and Shorty's clothes to be mended. The boys protested.

"We don't mend clothes in the army, Pap," said Si. "They ain't wuth it. We just wear 'em out throw 'em away, and draw new ones."

The Deacon held out that his mother and sisters would take great pleasure in working on such things, from the feeling that they were helping the war along. Finally the matter was compromised by putting in some socks to be darned and shirts to be mended. Then the bullets, canister, round-shot, fragments of shell, etc., were filled in.

"I declare," said the Deacon dubiously, as he hefted the carpetsack. "It's goin' to be a job to lug that thing back home. Better hire a mule-team. But I'll try it. Mebbe it'll help work some o' the stupidity out o' Abraham Lincoln."

The whole of Co. Q and most of the regiment had grown very fond of the Deacon, and when it was noised around that he was going, they crowded in to say good-by, and give him letters and money to take home. The remaining space in the carpetsack and all that in the Deacon's many pockets were filled with these.

The next morning the company turned out to a man and escorted him to the train, with Si and his father marching arm-in-arm at the head, the company fifers playing,

"Ain't I glad to get out of the Wilderness,

Way down in Tennessee,"

and Abraham Lincoln, laden with the striped carpetsack, the smashed musket and other relics, bringing up the rear, under the supervision of Shorty. Tears stood in the old man's eyes as he stood on the platform of the car, and grasped Si's and Shorty's hands in adieu. His brief farewell was characteristic of the strong, self-contained Western man:

"Good-by, boys. God bless you. Take care of yourselves. Be good boys. Come home safe after the war."

The boys stood and watched the train with sorrowful eyes until it had passed out of sight in the woods beyond Overall's Creek, and then turned to go to their camp with a great load of homesickness weighing down their hearts.

"Just think of it; he's going straight back to God's country," said someone near.

A sympathetic sigh went up from all.

"Shet up," said Shorty savagely. "I don't want to hear a word o' that kind. He pulled his hat down over his eyes, rammed his hands deep in his pockets, and strode off, trying to whistle

"When this cruel war is over,"

but the attempt was a dismal failure. Si separated from the crowd and joined him. They took an unfrequented and roundabout way back to camp.

"I feel all broke up. Si," said Shorty. "I wish that we were goin' into a fight, or something to stir us up."

Si understood his partner's mood, and that it was likely to result in an outbreak of some kind. He tried to get him over to the house, so that he could get him interested in work there.

They came to a little hidden ravine, and found it filled with men playing that most fascinating of all gambling games to the average soldier—chuck-a-luck. There were a score of groups, each gathered around as many "sweat-boards." Some of the men "running" the games were citizens, and some were in uniform. Each had before him a small board on which was sometimes painted, sometimes rudely marked with charcoal, numbers from 1 to 6.

On some of the boards the numbers were indicated by playing-cards, from ace to six-spot, tacked down. The man who "ran" the game had a dice-box, with three dice. He would shake the box, turn it upside down on the board, and call upon the group in front of him to make their bets.

The players would deposit their money on the numbers that they fancied, and then, after the inquiry, "All down?" the "banker" would raise the box and reveal the dice. Those who had put their money on any of the three numbers which had turned up, would be paid, while those who bet on the other three would lose.

Chuck-a-luck was strictly prohibited in camp, but it was next to impossible to keep the men from playing it. Citizen gamblers would gain admittance to camp under various pretexts and immediately set up boards in secluded places, and play till they were discovered and run out, by which time they would have made enough to make it an inducement to try again whenever they could find an opportunity. They followed the army incessantly for this purpose, and in the aggregate carried off immense sums of the soldiers' pay. Chuck-a-luck is one of the fairest of gambling games, when fairly played, which it rarely or never is by a professional gambler. A tolerably quick, expert man finds little difficulty in palming the dice before a crowd of careless soldiers so as to transfer the majority of their bets to his pocket. The regular citizen gamblers were reinforced by numbers of insatiable chuck-a-luckers in the ranks, who would set up a "board" at the least chance, even under the enemy's fire, while waiting the order to move.

Chuck-a-luck was Shorty's greatest weakness. He found it as difficult to pass a chuck-a-luck board as an incurable drunkard does to pass a dram-shop.

Si knew this, and shuddered a little as he saw the "layouts," and tried to get his partner past them. But it was of no use. Shorty was in an intractable mood. He must have a strong distraction. If he could not fight he would gamble.

"I'm goin' to bust this feller's bank before I go another step," said he, stopping before one. "I know him. He's the same feller that, you remember, I busted down before Nashville. I kin do it agin. He's a bum citizen gambler. He thinks he's the smartest chuck-a-lucker in the Army o' the Cumberland, but I'll learn him different."

"Don't risk more'n a dollar," begged Si as a final appeal.

"All down?" called the "banker."

"Allow doublin'?" inquired Shorty.

"Double as much as you blamed please, so long's you put your money down," answered the "banker" defiantly.

"Well, then, here goes a dollar on that five-spot," said Shorty, "skinning" a bill from a considerable roll.

"Don't allow more'n 25 cents bet on single cards, first bet," said the "banker," dismayed by the size of the roll.

"Thought you had some sand," remarked Shorty contemptuously. "Well, then, here's 25 cents on the five-spot, and 25 cents on the deuce," and he placed shin-plasters on the numbers. "Now, throw them dice straight, and no fingerin'. I'm watchin' you."

"Watch and be durned," said the "banker" surlily. "Watch your own business, and I'll watch mine. I'm as honest as you are any day."

The "banker" lifted the box, and showed two sixes and a tray up. He raked in the bets on the ace, deuce, four and five-spots, and paid the others.

"Fifty cents on the deuce; 50 cents on the five," said Shorty, laying down the fractional currency. Again they lost.

"A dollar on the deuce; a dollar on the five," said Shorty.

The same ill luck.

"Two dollars on the deuce; two dollars on the five," said Shorty, though Si in vain plucked his sleeve to get him away.

The spots remained obstinately down.

"Four dollars on the deuce; four dollars on the five," said Shorty.

No better luck.

"Eight dollars on the deuce; eight dollars on the five," said Shorty.

"Whew, there goes more'n a month's pay," said the other players, stopping to watch the dice as they rolled out, with the deuce and five-spot down somewhere else than on top. "And his roll's beginning to look as if an elephant had stepped on it. Now we'll see his sand."

"Come, Shorty, you've lost enough. You've lost too much already. Luck's agin you," urged Si. "Come away."

"I ain't goin'," said Shorty, obstinately. "Now's my chance to bust him. Every time them spots don't come up increases the chances that they'll come up next time. They've got to. They're not loaded; I kin tell that by the way they roll. He ain't fingerin' 'em; I stopped that when I made him give 'em a rollin' throw, instead o' keep in' 'em kivered with the box."

"Sixteen dollars on the deuce; sixteen dollars on the five-spot. And I ain't takin' no chances o' your jumpin' the game on me, Mr. Banker. I want you to plank down \$32 alongside o' mine."

Shorty laid down his money and put his fists on it. "Now put yours right there."

"O, I've got money enough to pay you. Don't be skeered," sneered the "banker," "and you'll git it if you win it."

"You bet I will," answered Shorty. "And I'm goin' to make sure by havin' it right on the board alongside o' mine. Come down, now."

The proposition met the favor of the other players, and the "banker" was constrained to comply.

"Now," said Shorty, as the money was counted down, "I've jest \$20 more that says that I'll win. Put her up alongside."

The "banker" was game. He pulled out a roll and said as he thumbed it over:

"I'll see you \$20, and go you \$50 better that I win."

Shorty's heart beat a little faster. All his money was up, but there was the \$50 which the Deacon had intrusted to him for charitable purposes. He slipped his hand into his bosom, felt it, and looked at Si. Si was not looking at him, but had his eyes fixed on a part of the board where the dice had been swept after the last throw. Shorty resisted the temptation for a moment, and withdrew his hand.

"Come down, now," taunted the "banker." "You've blowed so much about sand. Don't weaken over a little thing like \$50. I'm a thoroughbred, myself, I am. The man don't live that kin bluff me."

The taunt was too much for Shorty. He ran his hand into his bosom in desperation, pulled out the roll of the Deacon's money, and laid it on the board.

Si had not lifted his eyes. He was wondering why the flies showed such a liking for the part of the board where the dice were lying. Numbers of them had gathered there, apparently eagerly feeding. He was trying to understand it.

He had been thinking of trying a little shy at the four-spot himself, as he had noticed that it had never won, and two or three times he had looked for it before the dice were put in the box, and had seen the "banker" turn it down on the board before picking the dice up. A thought flashed into his mind.

The "banker" picked up the dice with seeming carelessness, dropped them into the box, gave them a little shake, and rolled them out. Two threes and a six came up. The "banker's" face lighted up with triumph, and Shorty's deadened into acute despair.

"I guess that little change is mine," said the "banker" reaching for the pile.

"Hold on a minnit. Mister," said Si, covering the pile with his massive hands. "Shorty, look at them dice. He's got molasses on one side. You kin see there where the flies are eatin' it."

Shorty snatched up the dice, felt them and touched his tongue to one side. "That's so, sure's you're a foot high," said he sententiously.

Just then someone yelled:

"Scatter! Here come the guards!"

All looked up. A company coming at the doublequick was almost upon them. The "banker" made a final desperate claw for the money, but was met by the heavy fist of Shorty and knocked on his back. Shorty grabbed what money there was on the board, and he and Si made a burst of speed which took them out of reach of the "provos" in a few seconds. Looking back from a safe distance they could see the "bankers" and a lot of the more luckless ones being gathered together to march to the guard-house. "Another detachment of horny-handed laborers for the fortifications," said Shorty grimly, as he recovered his breath, watched them, and sent up a yell of triumph and derision. "Another contribution to the charity fund," he continued, looking down at the bunch of bills and fractional currency in his hands.

"Shorty," said Si earnestly, "promise me solemnly that you'll never bet at chuck-a-luck agin as long as you live."

"Si, don't ask me impossibilities. But I want you to take every cent o' this money and keep it. Don't you ever give me more'n \$5 at a time, under any consideration. Don't you do it, if I git down on my knees and ask for it. Lord, how nigh I come to losin' that \$50 o' your father's."

CHAPTER IV. A SPY'S EXPERIENCES

MR. ROSENBAUM TELLS THE BOYS MORE OF HIS ADVENTURES

MR. ROSENBAUM became a frequent visitor to the Hoosier's Rest, and generally greatly interested Si and Shorty with his stories of adventure.

"How did you happen to come into the Army of the Cumberland?" asked Si. "I'd a-thought you'd staid where you knowed the country and the people."

"That was just the trouble," replied Rosenbaum. "I got to know them very well, but they got to know me a confounded sight better. When I was in the clothing pizniss in St. Louis I tried to have everybody know me. I advertised. I wanted to be a great big sunflower that everybody noticed. But when I got to be a spy I wanted to be a modest little violet that hid under the leaves, unt nobody saw. Then every man what knew me become a danger, unt it got so that I shuddered every time that I see a limb running out from a tree, for I didn't know how soon I might be hung from it. I had some awful narrow escapes, I tell you.

"But what decided me to leave the country unt skip over de Mississippi River was something that happened down in the Boston Mountains just before the battle of Pea Ridge. I was down there watching Van Dorn unt Ben McCullough for General Curtis, unt was getting along all right. I was still playing the old racket about buying up Mexican silver dollars to buy ammunition. One night I was sitting at a campfire with two or three others, when a crowd of Texans come up. They was just drunk enough to be devilish, unt had a rope with a noose on the end, which I noticed first thing. I had begun to keep a sharp lookout for such things. My flesh creeped when I saw them. I tried to think what had stirred them up all at once, but couldn't for my life recollect, for everything had been going on all right for several days. The man with the rope—a big, ugly brute, with red hair unt one eye—says:

"'You're a Jew, ain't you?'"

"'Yes,' says I; 'I was born that way.'"

"'Well,' says he, 'we're going to hang you right off.' Unt he put the noose around my neck unt began trying to throw the other end over a limb."

"'What for?' I yelled, trying to pull the rope off my neck. 'I ain't done nothing.'"

"'Hain't eh?' said the man with one eye. 'You hook-nosed Jews crucified our Savior.'"

"'Why, you red-headed fool,' said I, catching hold of the rope with both hands, 'that happened more as 1,800 years ago. Let me go.'"

"'I don't care if it did,' said the one-eyed man, getting the end of the rope over the limb, 'we didn't hear about it till the Chaplain told us this morning, unt then the boys said we'd kill every Jew we come across. Catch hold of the end here, Bowers.'"

"The other fellers around me laughed at the Texans so that they finally agreed to let me go if I'd promise not to do it again, holler for Jeff Davis, unt treat all around. It was a fool thing, but it scared me worse'n anything else, unt I resolved to get out of there unt go where the people read their Bibles unt the newspapers."

"How did you manage to keep Gen. Curtis posted as to the number of rebels in front of him?" asked Si. "You couldn't always be running back and forth from one army to the other."

"O, that was easy enough. You see. General Curtis was advancing, unt the rebels falling back most of the time. There was cabins every little ways along the road. All these have great big fireplaces, built of smooth rocks, which they pick up out of the creek unt wherever they can find them.

"I'd go into these houses unt talk with the people unt play with the children. I'd sit by the fire unt pick up a dead coal unt mark on these smooth rocks. Sometimes I'd draw horses unt wagons unt

men to amuse the children. Sometimes I'd talk to the old folks about how long they'd been in the country, how many bears unt deers the man had killed, how far it was to the next place, how the roads run, unt so on, unt I'd make marks on the jam of the fireplace to help me understand.

"The next day our scouts would come in unt see the marks unt understand them just as well as if I'd wrote them a letter. I fixed it all up with them before I left camp. I kin draw very well with a piece of charcoal. I'd make pictures of men what would make the children unt old folks open their eyes. Our scouts would understand which one meant Ben McCullough, which one Van Dorn, which one Pap Price, unt so on. Other marks would show which way each one was going unt how many men he hat with him. The rebels never dropt on to it, but they came so close to it once or twice that my hair stood on end."

"That curly mop of yours'd have a time standing on end," ventured Shorty. "I should think it'd twist your neck off tryin' to."

"Well, something gave me a queer feeling about the throat one day when I saw a rebel Colonel stop unt look very hard at a long letter which I'd wrote this way on a rock.

"Who done that?" he asked.

"This man here," says the old woman, 'He done it while he was gassing with the old man unt fooling with the children. Lot o' pesky nonsense, marking up de walls dat a-way.'

"Looks like very systematic nonsense," said the Colonel very stern unt sour. 'There may be something in it. Did you do this?' said he, turning to me.

"Yes, sir," said I, 'I have a bad habit of marking when I'm talking. I always done it, even when I was a child. My mother used to often slap me for spoiling the walls, but she could never break me of it.'

"Humph," said he, not at all satisfied with my story, unt looking at the scratches harder than ever. 'Who are you, unt what are you doing here?'

"I told him my story about buying Mexican silver dollars, unt showed him a lot of the dollars I'd bought.

"Your story ain't reasonable," said he. 'You haven't done bizniss enough to pay you for all the time you've spent around the army. I'll put you under guard till I can look into your case.'

"He called to the Sergeant of the Guard, unt ordered him to take charge of me. The Sergeant was that same dirty loafer. Bob Smiles, that I had the trouble with by Wilson's Creek. He kicked me unt pounded me, unt put me on my horse, with my hands tied behind me, unt my feet tied under the horse's belly. I was almost dead by night, when we reached Headquarters. They gave me something to eat, unt I laid down on the floor of the cabin, wishing I was Pontius Pilate, so that I could crucify every man in the Southern Confedrisy, especially Bob Smiles. An hour or two later I heard Bob Smiles swearing again."

"Make out the names of all the prisoners I have," he was saying, 'with where they belong unt the charges against them. I can't. Do they take me for a counter-jumping clerk? I didn't come into the army to be a white-faced bookkeeper, I sprained my thumb the other day, unt I can't write even a Httle bit. What am I to do?'

"That was all moonshine about his spraining his thumb. He vas ignorant as a jackass. If he had 40 thumbs he couldn't write even his own name so's anybody could read it.

"I don't believe these's a man in a mile of here that can make out such a list," he went on. 'They're all a set of hominy-eating blockheads. Perhaps that hook-nosed Jew might. He's the man. I'll make him do it, or break his swindling head.'

"He come in, kicked me, unt made me get up, unt then took me out unt set me down at a table, where he had paper, pen unt ink, unt ordered me to take down the names of the prisoners as he brought them up. He'd look over my shoulder as I wrote, as if he was reading what I set down, but I knowed that he couldn't make out a letter. I was tempted to write all sorts of things about him, but I didn't, for I was in enough trouble already. When I come to my own name, he said:

"Make de charge a spy, a thief, unt a Dutch traitor to the Southern Confedrisy.'

"I just wrote: 'Levi Rosenbaum, Memphis, Tenn. Merchant. No charge.'

"He scowled very wisely at it, unt pretended to read it, unt said:

"'It's lucky for you that you wrote it just as I told you. I'd 'a' broke every bone in your body if you hadn't.'

"I'd just got done when an officer come down from Headquarters for it. He looked it over unt said:

"'Who made this out?'

"'Why, I made it out,' said Bob Smiles, bold as brass.

"'But who wrote it?'" said de officer.

"'O, I sprained my thumb, so I couldn't write very well, unt I made a Jew prisoner copy it,' said Bob Smiles.

"'It's the best writing I have seen,' said the officer. 'I want the man what wrote it to go with me to Headquarters at once. I have some copying there to be done at once, unt not one of them corn-crackers that I have up there can write anything fit to read. Bring that man out here unt I will take him with me.'

"Bob Smiles hated to let me go, but he couldn't help himself, unt I went with the officer. I was so tired I could hardly move a step, unt I felt I could not write a word. But I seemed to see a chance at Headquarters, unt I determined to make every effort to do something. They gave me a stiff horn of whisky unt set me to work. They wanted me to make out unt copy a consolidated report of the army.

"I almost forgot I was tired when I found out what they wanted, for I saw a chance to get something of great value. They'd been trying to make up a report from all sorts of scraps unt sheets of paper sent in from the different Headquarters, unt they had spoiled a half-dozen big sheets of paper after they'd got them partly done. If I do say it myself, I can write better and faster and figure quicker than most any man you ever saw. Those rebels thought they had got hold of a wonder—a lightning calculator unt lightning penman together.

"As fast as I could copy one paper, unt it would prove to be all right, I would fold it up unt stick it into a big yaller envelope. I also folded up the spoiled reports, unt stuck them in the envelope, saying that I wanted to get rid of them—put them where seeing them wouldn't bother me. I carefully slipped the envelope under the edge of a pile of papers near the edge of the table. I had another big yaller envelope that looked just like it lying in the middle of the table, into which I stuck papers that didn't amount to nothing. I was very slick about it, unt didn't let them see that I had two envelopes.

"It was past midnight when I got the consolidated report made out, unt the rebels was tickled to death with it. They'd never seen anything so well done before. They wanted a copy made to keep, unt I said I'd make one, though I was nearly dead for sleep. I really wasn't, for the excitement made me forget all about being tired.

"I was determined, before I slept, to have that yellow envelope, with all those papers, in General Curtis's hands, though he was 40 miles away. How in the world I was going to do it I could not think, but I was going to do it, if I died a trying. The first thing was to get that envelope off the table into my clothes; the next, to get out of that cabin, away from Bob Smiles unt his guards, through the rebel lines, unt over the mountains to General Curtis's camp. It was a dark, windy night, unt things were in confusion about the camp—just the kind of a time when anybody might kill a Jew pedler, unt no questions would be asked.

"I had got the last copy finished, unt the officers was going over it. They had their heads together, not 18 inches from me, across the table. I had my fingers on the envelope, but I didn't dare slip it out, though my fingers itched. I was in hopes that they'd turn around, or do something that'd give me a chance.

"Suddenly Bob Smiles opened the door wide, unt walked in, with a dispatch in his hand. The wind swept in, blew the candles out, unt sent de papers flying about the room. Some went into the fire. The officers yelled unt swore at him, unt he shut the door, but I had the envelope in my breast-pocket.

"Then to get away. How in the name of Moses unt the ten commandments was I to do that?"

"One of the officers said to Bob Smiles: 'Take this man away unt take good care of him until to-morrow. We'll want him again. Give him a good bed, unt plenty to eat, unt treat him well. We'll need him to-morrow.'

"'Come on, you pork-hating Jew,' said Bob Smiles crabbedly. 'I'll give you a mess of spare-ribs unt corn-dodgers for supper.'

"'You'll do nothing of the kind,' said the officer. 'I told you to treat him well, unt if you don't treat him well, I'll see about it. Give him a bed in that house where de orderlies stay.'

"Bob Smiles grumbled unt swore at me, unt we vent out, but there was nothing to do but to obey orders. He give me a good place, unt some coffee unt bread, unt I lay down pretending to go to sleep.

"I snored away like a good feller, unt presently I heard some one come in. I looked a little out the corner of my eye, unt see by the light of the fire that Bob Smiles was sneaking back. He watched me for a minute, unt then put his hand on me.

"I was scared as I never was, for I thought he vas after my precious yaller envelope. But I thought of my bowie knife, which I always carried out of sight in my bosom, unt resolved dat I would stick it in his heart, if he tried to take away my papers. But I never moved. He felt over me until he come to de pocket where I had the silver dollars, unt then slipped his fingers in, unt pulled them out one by one, just as gently as if he vas smoothing the hair of a cat. I let him take them all, without moving a muscle. I was glad to haf him take them. I knowed that he was playing poker somewhere, unt had run out of cash, unt would take my money unt go back to his game.

"As soon as I heard his footsteps disappear in the distance, I got up unt sneaked down to where the Headquarters horses were tied. I must get a fresh one, because my own vas played nearly out. He would never do to carry me over the rough roads I must ride before morning. But when I got there I saw a guard pacing up unt down in front of them. I had not counted on this, unt for a minit my heart stood still. There were no other horses anywheres around.

"I hesitated, looked up at Headquarters, unt saw de lights still burning, unt made up my mind at once to risk everything on one desperate chance. I remembered that I had put in my envelope some blank sheets of paper, with Headquarters, Army of the Frontier,' unt a rebel flag on dem. There was a big fire burning ofer to the right mit no one near. I went up in de shadow of a tree, where I could see by the firelight, took out one of the sheets of paper unt wrote on it an order to have a horse saddled for me at once. Then I slipped back so that it would look as if I was coming straight from Headquarters, unt walked up to the guard unt handed him the order. He couldn't read a word, but he recognized the heading on the paper, unt I told him the rest. He thought there was nothing for him to do but obey.

"While he was getting the horse I wrote out, by the fire, a pass for myself through the guards. I was in a hurry, you bet, unt it was all done mighty quick, unt I was on the horse's back unt started. I had lost all direction, but I knowed that I had to go generally to the northeast to get to General Curtis. But I got confused again, unt found I was riding around unt around the camp without getting out at all. I even come up again near the big fire, just where I wrote out the pass.

"Just then what should I hear but Bob Smiles's voice. He had lost all his money—all my money—at poker, unt was damning the fellers he had been playing with as cheats. He was not in a temper to meet, unt I knowed he would see me if I went by the big fire; but I was desperate, unt I stuck the spurs into my horse unt he shot ahead. I heard Bob Smiles yell:

"'There is that Jew. Where is he going? Halt, there! Stop him!'

"I knowed that if I stopped now I would be hung sure. The only safety was to go as fast as I could. I dashed away, where, I didn't know. Directly a guard halted me, but I showed him my pass, unt he let me go on. While he was looking at it I strained my ears, unt could hear horses galloping my way. I knowed it was Bob Smiles after me. My horse was a good one, unt I determined to get on the main road unt go as fast as I could. I could see by the campfires that I was now getting away from the army, unt I began to hope that I was going north. I kept my horse running.

"Pretty soon the pickets halted me, but I didn't stop to answer them. I just bolted ahead. The chances of their shooting me wasn't as dreadful as of Bob Smiles catching me. They fired at me, but I galloped right through them, unt through a rain of bullets that they sent after me. I felt better then, for I was confident I was out in the open country, but I kept my horse on the run. It seemed to me that I went a hundred miles.

"Just as the day was breaking in the east, I heard a voice, with a strong German accent call out the brush:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

"I was so glad that I almost fainted, for I knowed that I'd reached General Sigel's pickets. I couldn't get my lips to answer.

"There came a lot of shots, unt one of them struck my horse in the head, unt he fell in the road, throwing me over his head. The pickets run out unt picked me up. The German language sounded the sweetest I ever heard it.

"As soon as I could make myself talk, I answered them in German, unt told them who I was. Then they couldn't do enough for me. They helped me back to where they could get an ambulance, in which they sent me to Headquarters, for I was top weak to ride or walk a step. I handed my yellow envelope to General Curtis, got a dram of whisky to keep me up while I answered his questions, unt then went to sleep, unt slept through the whole battle of Pea Ridge.

"After the battle, General Curtis wanted to know how much he ought to pay me, but I told him that all I wanted was to serve the country, unt I was already paid many times over, by helping him win a victory.

"But I concluded that there was too much Bob Smiles in that country for me, unt I had better leave for some parts where I was not likely to meet him. So I crossed the Mississippi River, unt joined General Rosecrans's Headquarters."

CHAPTER V. THE BOYS GO SPYING

ON AN EXPEDITION WITH ROSENBAUM THEY MAKE A CAPTURE

MR. ROSENBAUM'S stories of adventure were not such as to captivate the boys with the career of a spy. But the long stay in camp was getting very tedious, and they longed for something to break the monotony of camp guard and work on the interminable fortifications. Therefore, when Mr. Rosenbaum came over one morning with a proposition to take them out on an expedition, he found them ready to go. He went to Regimental Headquarters, secured a detail for them, and, returning to the Hoosier's Rest, found the boys lugubriously pulling over a pile of homespun garments they had picked up among the teamsters and campfollowers.

"I suppose we've got to wear 'em, Shorty," said Si, looking very disdainfully at a butternut-colored coat and vest. "But I'd heap rather wear a mustard plaster. I'd be a heap comfortabler."

"I ain't myself finicky about clothes," answered Shorty. "I ain't no swell—never was. But somehow I've got a prejudice in favor of blue as a color, and agin gray and brown. I only like gray and brown on a corpse. They make purty grave clothes. I always like to bury a man what has butternut clothes on."

"What are you doing with them dirty rags, boys?" asked Rosenbaum, in astonishment, as he surveyed the scene.

"Why, we've got to wear 'em, haven't we, if we go out with you?" asked Si.

"You wear them when you go out with me—you disguise yourselves," said Rosenbaum, with fine scorn. "You'd play the devil in disguise. You can't disguise your tongues. That's the worst. Anybody'd catch on to that Indianny lingo first thing. You've got to speak like an educated man—speak like I do—to keep people from finding out where you're from. I speak correct English always. Nobody can tell where I'm from."

The boys had hard work controlling their risibles over Mr. Rosenbaum's self-complacency.

"What clothes are we to wear, then?" asked Si, much puzzled.

"Wear what you please; wear the clothes you have on, or anything else. This is not to be a full-dress affair. Gentlemen can attend in their working clothes if they want to."

"I don't understand," mumbled Si.

"Of course, you don't," said Rosenbaum gaily. "If you did, you would know as much as I do, unt I wouldn't have no advantage."

"All right," said Shorty. "We've decided to go it blind. Go ahead. Fix it up to suit yourself. We are your huckleberries for anything that you kin turn up. It all goes in our \$13 a month."

"O. K.," answered Rosenbaum. "That's the right way. Trust me, unt I will bring you out all straight. Now, let me tell you something. When you captured me, after a hard struggle, as you remember (and he gave as much of a wink as his prominent Jewish nose would admit), I was an officer on General Roddey's staff. It was, unt still is, my business to keep up express lines by which the rebels are supplied with quinine, medicines, gun-caps, letters, giving information, unt other things. Unt I do it."

The boys opened their eyes wide, and could not restrain an exclamation of surprise.

"Now, hold your horses; don't get excited," said Rosenbaum calmly. "You don't know as much about war as I do—not by a hundred per cent. These things are always done in every war, unt General Rosecrans understands the tricks of war better as any man in the army. He beats them all when it comes to getting information about the enemy. He knows that a dog that fetches must carry, unt that the best way is to let a spy take a little to the enemy, unt bring a good deal back."

"The trouble at the battle of Stone River was that the spies took more to General Bragg than they brought to General Rosecrans. But General Rosecrans was new to the work then. It won't be so in future. He knows a great deal more about the rebels now than they know about him, thanks to such men as me."

"I don't know as we ought to have anything to do with this, Shorty," said Si dubiously. "At least, we ought to inquire of the Colonel first."

"That's all right—that's all right," said Rosenbaum quickly. "I've got the order from the Colonel which will satisfy you. Read it yourself."

He handed the order to Si, who looked carefully at the printed heading, "Headquarters, 200th Ind., near Murfreesboro', Tenn.," and then read the order aloud to Shorty: "Corporal Josiah Klegg and one private, whom he may select, will report to Mr. Levi Rosenbaum for special duty, and will obey such orders and instructions as he may give, and on return report to these Headquarters. By order of the Colonel. Philip Blake, Adjutant."

"That seems all straight. Shorty," said Si, folding up the order, and putting it in his pocket.

"Straight as a string," assented Shorty. "I'm ready, anyway. Go ahead, Mr. Cheap Clothing. I don't care much what it is, so long's it ain't shovelin' and diggin' on the fortifications. I'll go down to Tullahoma and pull old Bragg out of his tent rather than handle a pick and shovel any longer."

"Well, as I was going to tell you, I have been back to Tullahoma several times since you captured me, unt I have got the express lines between here unt there running pretty well. I have to tell them all sorts of stories how I got away from the Yankees. Luckily, I have a pretty good imagination, unt can furnish them with first-class narratives.

"But there is one feller on the staff that I'm afraid of. His name is Poke Bolivar, unt he is a terrible feller, I tell you. Always full of fight, unt desperate when he gets into a fight. I've seen him bluff all those other fellers. He is a red-hot Secessionist, unt wants to kill every Yankee in the country. Of late he has seemed very suspicious of me, unt has said lots of things that scared me. I want to settle him, either kill him or take him prisoner, unt keep him away, so's I can feel greater ease when I'm in General Bragg's camp. I can't do that so long as I know he's around, for I feel that his eyes are on me, unt that he's hunting some way to trip me up.

"I'm going out now to meet him, at a house about five miles from the lines. I have my pockets unt the pockets on my saddles full of letters unt things. Just outside the lines I will get some more. He will meet me unt we will go back to Tullahoma together—that is, if he don't kill me before we get there. I have brought a couple of revolvers, in addition to your guns, for Poke Bolivar's a terrible feller to fight, unt I want you to make sure of him. I'd take more'n two men out, but I'm afraid he'd get on to so many.

"I guess we two kin handle him," said Shorty, slipping his belt into the holster of the revolver and buckling it on. "Give us a fair show at him, and we don't want no help. I wouldn't mind having it out with Mr. Bolivar all by myself."

"Well, my plan is for you to go out by yourselves to that place where you were on picket. Then take the right-hand road through the creek bottom, as if you were going foraging. About two miles from the creek you will see a big hewed-log house standing on the left of the road. You will know it by its having brick outside chimneys, unt de doors painted blue unt yaller. There's no other house in that country like it.

"You're to keep out of sight as much as you can. Directly you will see me come riding out, follered by a nigger riding another horse. I will go up to the house, jump off, tie my horse, go inside, unt presently come out unt tie a white cloth to a post on the porch. That will be a signal to Poke Bolivar, who will be watching from the hill a mile ahead. You will see him come in, get off his horse, unt go into the house.

"By this time it will be dark, or nearly so. You slip up as quietly as you can, right by the house, hiding yourselves behind the lilacs. If the dogs run at you bayonet them. You can look through the

windows, unt see me unt Bolivar sitting by the fire talking, unt getting ready to start for Tullahoma as soon as the nigger who is cooking our supper in the kitchen outside gets it ready unt we eat it. You can wait till you see us sit down to eat supper, unt then jump us. Better wait until we are pretty near through supper, for I'll be very hungry, unt want all I can get to keep me up for my long ride.

"You run in unt order us to surrender. I'll jump up unt blaze away with my revolver, but you needn't pay much attention to me—only be careful not to shoot me. While you are 'tending to Bolivar I'll get on my horse unt skip out. You can kill Bolivar, or take him back to camp with you, or do anything that you please, so long's you keep him away from Tullahoma. You understand, now?"

"Perfectly," said Shorty. "I think we can manage it, and it looks like a pretty good arrangement. You are to git away, and we're to git Mr. Bolivar. Those two things are settled. Any change in the evening's program will depend on Mr. Bolivar. If he wants a fight he kin git whole gobs of it."

Going over the plan again, to make sure that the boys understood it, and cautioning them once more as to the sanguinary character of Polk Bolivar, Mr. Rosenbaum started for his horse. He had gone but a little ways when he came back with his face full of concern.

"I like you boys better than I can tell you," he said, taking their hands affectionately, "unt I never would forgive myself if you got hurt. Do you think that two of you'll be able to manage Poke Bolivar? If you're not sure I'll get another man to help you. I think that I had better, anyway."

"O, go along with you," said Shorty scornfully. "Don't worry about us and Mr. Bolivar. I'd stack Si Klegg up against any man that ever wore gray, in any sort of a scrimmage he could put up, and I'm a better man than Si. You just favor us with a meeting with Mr. Bolivar, and then git out o' the way. If it wasn't for dividing up fair with my partner here I'd go out by myself and tackle Mr. Bolivar. You carry out your share of the plan, and don't worry about us."

Rosenbaum's countenance brightened, and he hastened to mount and away. The boys shouldered their guns and started out for the long walk. They followed Rosenbaum's directions carefully, and arrived in sight of the house, which they recognized at once, and got into a position from which they could watch its front. Presently they saw Rosenbaum come riding along the road and stop in front of the house. He tied his horse to a scraggy locust tree, went in, and then reappeared and fastened the signal to a post supporting the roof of the porch.

They had not long to wait for the answer. Soon a horseman was seen descending from the distant hill. As he came near he was anxiously scanned, and appeared a cavalier so redoubtable as to fully justify Rosenbaum's apprehensions. He was a tall, strongly-built young man, who sat on his spirited horse with easy and complete mastery of him. Even at that distance it could be seen that he was heavily armed.

"Looks like a genuine fighter, and no mistake," said Si, examining the caps on his revolver. "He'll be a stiff one to tackle."

"We must be very careful not to let him get the drop on us," said Shorty. "He looks quicker'n lightnin', and I've no doubt that he kin shoot like Dan'l Boone. We might drop him from here with our guns," he added suggestively.

"No," said Si, "that wouldn't be fair. And it wouldn't be the way Rosenbaum wants it done. He's got his reasons for the other way. Besides, I'd be a great deal better satisfied in my mind, if I could have it out with him, hand-to-hand. It'd sound so much better in the regiment."

"Guess that's so," assented Shorty. "Well, let's sneak up to the house."

When they got close to the house they saw that it had been deserted; there were no dogs or other domestic animals about, and this allowed them to get under the shade of the lilacs without discovery. The only inmates were Rosenbaum and Bolivar, who were seated before a fire, which Rosenbaum had built in the big fireplace in the main room. The negro was busy cooking supper in the outbuilding which served as a kitchen. The glass was broken out the window, and they could hear the conversation between Rosenbaum and Bolivar.

It appeared that Rosenbaum had been making a report of his recent doings, to which Bolivar listened with a touch of disdain mingled with suspicion.

The negro brought in the supper, and the men ate it sitting by the fire.

"I declare," said Bolivar, stopping with a piece of bread and meat in one hand and a tin-cup of coffee in the other, "that for a man who is devoted to the South you can mix up with these Yankees with less danger to yourself and to them than any man I ever knew. You never get hurt, and you never hurt any of them. That's a queer thing for a soldier. War means hurting people, and getting hurt yourself. It means taking every chance to hurt some of the enemy. I never miss any opportunity of killing a Yankee, no matter what I may be doing, or what the risk is to me. I can't help myself. Whenever I see a Yankee in range I let him have it. I never go near their lines without killing at least one."

Shorty's thumb played a little with his gunlock, but Si restrained him with a look.

"Well," said Rosenbaum, "I hates the enemy as badly as any one can, but I always have business more important at the time than killing men. I want to get through with what I have to do, unt let other men do the killing. There's enough gentlemen like you for that work."

"No, there's not enough," said Bolivar savagely. "It's treasonable for you to say so. Our enemies outnumber us everywhere. It is the duty of every true Southern man to kill them off at every chance, like he would rattlesnakes and wolves. You are either not true to the South, or you hain't the right kind of grit. Why, you have told me yourself that you let two Yankees capture you, without firing a shot. Think of it; a Confederate officer captured by two Yankee privates, without firing a shot."

"They had the dead drop on me," murmured Rosenbaum. "If I had moved they'd killed me sure."

"Dead drop on you!" repeated Bolivar scornfully. "Two men with muskets have the dead drop on you! And you had a carbine and a revolver. Why, I have ridden into a nest of 10 or 15 Yankees, who had me covered with their guns. I killed three of them, wounded three others, and run the rest away with my empty revolver. If I'd had another revolver, not one would've got away alive. I always carry two revolvers now."

"I think our guns'll be in the way in that room," said Shorty, sotting his down. His face bore a look of stern determination. "They're too long. I'm itching to have it out with that feller hand-to-hand. We'll rush in. You pretend to be goin' for Rosenbaum and leave me to have it out with Mr. Bolivar. Don't you mix in at all. If I don't settle him he ought to be allowed to go."

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