

VARIOUS

SOUTHERN
STORIES

Various Southern Stories

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Southern Stories / Retold from St. Nicholas:*

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SOUTH

Beautiful is the land, with its prairies and forests of fruit-trees;
Under the feet a garden of flowers, and the bluest of heavens
Bending above, and resting its dome on the walls of the forest.

Longfellow.

HIS HERO

BY MARGARET MINOR

It was an October afternoon, and through Indian summer's tulle-like haze a low-swinging sun sent shafts of scarlet light at the highest peaks of the Blue Ridge. The sweet-gum leaves looked like blood-colored stars as they floated slowly to the ground, and brown chestnuts gleamed satin-like through their gaping burs; while over all there rested a dense stillness, cut now and then by the sharp yelp of a dog as he scurried through the bushes after a rabbit.

Surrounded by this splendid autumn beauty stood Mountain Top Inn, near the crest of the Blue Ridge in Rockfish Gap, its historical value dating from the time when Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe, after a long and spirited discussion in one of its low-ceiled rooms, decided upon the location of the University of Virginia.

On the porch of this old inn there now sat a little boy, idly swinging a pair of sun-tanned legs. Occasionally he tickled an old liver-colored hound that lay dozing in a limp heap; but being rewarded only by toothless snaps at very long intervals, he finally grew tired of this amusement, and stretching himself out on his

back, he began to dream with wide-open eyes. At these dream-times, when he let his thoughts loose, they always bore him to the very same field, and here his fancy painted pictures with the vivid colors of a boy's imagination: pictures so strong that they left him flushed and tingling with pride; again, pictures that brought a cool, choking feeling to his throat; and at times pictures that made his childish mouth quiver and droop. Among all of these thought-born scenes, at intervals there would stand out the real ones, scenes that were etched on the clean walls of his memory in everlasting strokes.

He never tired thinking of that first morning—that morning when all the world seemed gilded with sunshine and throbbing with martial music. His grandfather had lifted him up on one of the "big gate" posts to see the soldiers march by. With mingled feelings of admiration and childish envy he had watched them drill for many weeks, but they had never seemed such real, grand soldiers until now, as they came marching by with quick, firm steps, keeping time to the clear, staccato notes, marching off to real battle-fields. It was all so beautiful, splendid, and gay—the music, the soldiers, the people, the hurraing! It stirred his sentient little body through and through with a kind of joy, and he thought it so strange that his mother's eyes were full of tears.

Just a few days later he had listened eagerly to the sharp, crackling sound of guns and the rumbling thunder of cannon, so near that the air seemed to vibrate. He and another little boy had stood and talked in high, quick tones, bragging and predicting

breathlessly the result of the battle as they used the term "our men."

Finally they climbed the tallest oak on the lawn, and strained their young eyes to see which was "gettin' whipped."

A little while after this he remembered following his father through the long hospital ward. Over the first bed he saw him stoop and loosen the white cotton bandages of a wounded man. On the next narrow cot there was a slender boy of fifteen, who lay with clenched hands watching the work of the surgeon. Then they passed a woman, who was gently bathing the forehead of a man whose soldier days seemed likely to come to an early end.

Some weeks had gone by, when one day he followed a party of men to Marye's Heights. It was a short time after the battle of Fredericksburg. A light snow had fallen the night before, which the wind whirled and sifted about the dead, in a way that made them appear to be shuddering. Once a sharp gust blew the snow off a body lying on its face, and the boy's eyes filled. He scarcely heeded the talk of the men with whom he had gone. His thoughts were held fast by the awful scene which lay spread before his young eyes.

How often since then had the boy pictured himself a grown man, seated on just such a fine horse and following Lee! It was always Lee; in his dreamland through the heart of the battle he always followed General Robert E. Lee, his hero, whom he had never seen, but whom he had carried halo-crowned in his heart ever since he could remember.

And then the very saddest day in his life had come—the day when the first news of Lee's surrender lay heavy on the hearts of the household. For a while he had followed his mother as she went silently, with closed white lips, from one duty to another. Finally he went out to seek comfort from Uncle Jake, whom he found sitting with his back propped against the side of the corn-crib, drawing little quick puffs of smoke from his pipe.

"Uncle Jake," he said, "Lee's just *had* to s'render."

"Yes, honey." And as he looked into Uncle Jake's little red, watery eyes, he saw no comfort there, and turned away.

Seven months had gone by since the war had ended; still, on this October afternoon, as the boy lay stretched out on the porch of the old inn, he dreamed his boyish dreams of romance and heroism.

Suddenly his attention was attracted by the sound of hoofs, and turning his head he saw a man riding slowly down the road. A new arrival at the inn was always most interesting. An eager light came into the boy's eyes as he watched the rider, who was now near enough for him to see how firmly he sat in his saddle. The man seemed a very part of the strongly built horse, which carried him with an ease that indicated long habit.

A wiry little negro had also seen the approaching horseman, and was now hurrying across the lawn to meet him.

"May I spend the night here, my man?" asked the stranger.

"Yessuh—yessuh!" answered Uncle Jake, quickly, and opening the gate he stepped out and caught the bridle near the bit,

as the horseman swung out of the creaking saddle to the ground.

"Uncle Jake, take the horse around to the stable!" called out the boy, who felt that the honors of hospitality rested on him, there being no one else in sight. Then he ran briskly down the walk to meet the stranger, who extended his fine, strong hand with a little smile, and said very kindly:

"How do you do, sir?"

"I'm well," replied the boy.

"And what is your name?"

"Jimmy."

"Jimmy? Well, Jimmy is a nice name," he said. Then he turned, and still held the boy's hand as he watched the little old negro, who stood with his head under the saddle-skirt, tiptoeing and straining in his effort to unfasten the girth. Finally, when he succeeded, he flung the saddle on the ground, and the horse, feeling relieved of his burden, first shook himself violently, and then expressed his comfort again and again in deep chest-tones.

During all this time Jimmy's eyes had been fastened on the stranger's spurs, and a peculiar feeling of incredulity gradually filled his mind.

Silver, indeed! He could not fool him! No one was rich enough to have real silver spurs! So sternly did he resent what he thought to be an attempt at deception that he drew his small brown hand slowly out of the stranger's gentle clasp.

After slipping off the bridle from the horse's head and dropping it by the saddle, Uncle Jake led him away by his

forelock to the stable, and Jimmy walked toward the inn with his guest, who said as they reached the steps:

"Jimmy, we will sit here for a while, and then I will go over to the stable and see about my horse."

As they sat down the old hound came cautiously down the steps, wheezing out a husky greeting.

"She is too old to hurt any one," said Jimmy.

"Is she yours?"

"No, sir. Tip's mine. Listen!" he exclaimed, as the sharp yelp of a dog again broke the stillness. "That's Tip! He goes off and runs rabbits all by himself."

"Perhaps he is after a fox."

"No, sir; Tip won't run a fox."

"Jimmy, can you tell from a dog's cry whether he is running a fox or a rabbit?"

"No, sir."

"Well, if he is trailing a rabbit he does not bark continually, but if he is after a fox he does; so you can always tell if you listen carefully."

"Never heard about that before," replied Jimmy, with a smile.

After this there followed a long pause, during which the stranger looked about inquiringly, then said:

"Jimmy, how long have you been living here?"

"Not very long. We refueged over in North Carolina the first part of the war. Then we came back to Spottsylvania County while father was in prison. Why, we just came here after the

s'trender. You remember when Lee just had to s'trender?" he asked, looking up into the stranger's face.

The boy's mouth, as usual, quivered as he uttered the word "s'trender," but the man did not appear to see this. He seemed to be looking at a far-off mountain peak. After a pause he replied, "Yes, I remember," as he arose and started toward the stable.

"I'll show you the way," said Jimmy.

"Thank you, sir," he answered gravely.

When they entered the stable the big gray horse greeted his master with some soft little nickerings. "Oh, he knows you without even looking!" exclaimed Jimmy, in tones expressing delight and surprise.

"Yes, he knows me pretty well," the man replied, as he looked with anxious sympathy at a saddle-galled place on the horse's back.

Jimmy had climbed up on the side of the stall, and was also looking with much interest. Suddenly he exclaimed: "I know what's good for that! Some stuff down in the bottom of the chalybeate spring."

He pronounced each syllable of the word "chalybeate" very clearly, for it was a newly learned word, and he was proud of his ability to use it.

"Why, yes; the iron in it ought to be healing. How far is the spring?"

"Oh, just a little way; I'll show you," Jimmy replied, jumping to the ground and quickly opening the stable door. "Let me lead

him," he added.

"Hadn't you rather ride him, Jimmy?"

"Yes, sir," he replied, in rather shy but pleased tones.

"All right," said the man, as he swung the little fellow up on the horse. "There! Sit farther back, so you will not hurt that galled place. Now I'll lead him, and you tell me in which direction to go."

"Down the road there, just on the other side of the ice-pond," said Jimmy, pointing in that direction as they moved off.

The boy was happy as he cupped his bare legs close around the body of the horse, and watched the square shoulders of the man who walked slowly ahead. He thought him exceedingly nice and kind, and his feelings in regard to the spurs were not nearly so intense. The desire to ask if they were real silver, though, was strong, but he felt that perhaps it would not be polite, so he said nothing.

After they had gone some distance Jimmy exclaimed, "There's the spring!" Then he slid quickly to the ground, and without other words knelt down and, baring one arm, dipped out of the bottom of the spring a handful of rust-colored flakes.

"This is what you put on his back," he said. "Just lay it right on. It doesn't hurt; it just feels cool."

The directions were quietly obeyed, and the horse made no movement, save a slight quiver of the skin, as if to shake off a fly.

"Uncle Jake says that doctors can't make any finer medicine than this," he said, as he scooped up another handful.

"Well, Jimmy, I am very much obliged to you, and I'm sure that my horse is also," said the stranger, as they started on back to the stable.

In the meantime the saddle left by Uncle Jake near the horse-rack had attracted the attention of a young man as he came through the front gate. After looking at it for a few minutes, idle curiosity prompted him to turn it over with his foot, and as he did so three bright brass letters—"R. E. L."—greeted him. He looked sharply at them at first, then his eyes dilated, and a little prickly thrill ran through him. "I wonder if it can be!" he said. Suddenly some convincing feeling seemed to fill his mind, and then he almost ran to the house. On reaching the steps, he sprang up them two at a time, and entered the hall, where he met Mrs. Claverly.

"Mrs. Claverly—" he began, and stopped.

"Well?" she asked, smiling at his hesitation. "What is it, Charley?"

"Ah, do you know, Mrs. Claverly, I think that General Lee is here." His voice was husky with excitement.

"General Lee! Where?" But without waiting for a reply, she stepped quickly to the door of the old-fashioned parlor, and exclaimed in soft, suppressed tones to a group of women sitting there:

"They think that General Lee is here!"

"What makes them think so?" asked a thin, gray-haired woman, as she hastily arose.

"Why," replied the young man, his tones now quite positive, "his saddle with 'R. E. L.' on it is out there by the gate."

"There he comes now," said one of the group, eagerly; "at least, I suppose that it is he."

"Let me see," said Mrs. Claverly, going rapidly to the window. "I saw him once at the Greenbrier White, and I am sure that I would know him. Yes, it is he!" she exclaimed, as she looked at the man coming slowly across the lawn, talking earnestly to the barefoot boy at his side. His thoughts were so completely occupied by what he was saying that not until he was quite near the inn did he see the group on the porch, and his face flushed slightly as he realized that they were there to greet him. Lifting his hat, he ascended the steps with bared head. Mrs. Claverly walked quickly forward, and extended her slim white hand.

"General Lee, I believe."

"Yes, madam," he replied gravely, as he bowed low over her hand.

At the sound of Lee's name Jimmy's eyes grew round, and filled with astonishment. For one brief moment he stood gazing up at the stately old soldier, whom every one was greeting, then he backed slowly away until he reached the door. There he stood another moment, seeing nothing but his hero.

Suddenly he turned and darted down the long hall, up the stairway, and into his mother's room.

"Mother!" he exclaimed in breathless wonderment, "mother! General Lee is downstairs, and he is just splendid, and—er—"

mother, he's just exactly like anybody else!"¹

¹ This story is based upon the personal experience of one who related it to the author.

JERICO BOB

BY ANNA EICHBERG KING

Jericho Bob, when he was four years old, hoped that one day he might be allowed to eat just as much turkey as he possibly could. He was eight now, but that hope had not been realized.

Mrs. Jericho Bob, his mother, kept hens for a living, and she expected that they would lay enough eggs in the course of time to help her son to an independent career as a bootblack.

They lived in a tumble-down house in a waste of land near the steam cars, and besides her hens Mrs. Bob owned a goat.

Our story has, however, nothing to do with the goat except to say he was there, and that he was on nibbling terms, not only with Jericho Bob, but with Bob's bosom friend, Julius Cæsar Fish, and it was surprising how many old hat-brims and other tidbits of clothing he could swallow during a day.

As Mrs. Bob truly said, it was no earthly use to get something new for Jericho, even if she could afford it; for the goat browsed all over him, and had been known to carry away even a leg of his trousers.

Jericho Bob was eight years old, and the friend of his bosom, Julius Cæsar Fish, was nine. They were both of a lovely black; a

tallow-dip couldn't take the kink out of their hair, and the hardest whipping did not disturb the even cheerfulness of their spirits. They were so much alike that if it hadn't been for Jericho's bow-legs and his turn-up nose, you really could not have told them apart.

A kindred taste for turkey also united them.

In honor of Thanksgiving day Mrs. Bob always sacrificed a hen which would, but for such blessed release, have died of old age. One drumstick was given to Jericho, whose interior remained an unsatisfied void.

Jericho Bob had heard of turkey as a fowl larger, sweeter, and more tender than hen; and about Thanksgiving time he would linger around the provision stores and gaze with open mouth at the noble array of turkeys hanging, head downward, over bushels of cranberries, as if even at that uncooked stage, they were destined for one another. And turkey was his dream.

It was spring-time, and the hens were being a credit to themselves. The goat in the yard, tied to a stake, was varying a meal of old shoe and tomato-can by a nibble of fresh green grass. Mrs. Bob was laid up with rheumatism.

"Jericho Bob!" she said to her son, shaking her red and yellow turban at him, "Jericho Bob, you go down an' fetch de eggs to-day. Ef I find yer don't bring me twenty-three, I'll—well, never mind what I'll do, but yer won't like it."

Now, Jericho Bob meant to be honest, but the fact was he found twenty-four, and the twenty-fourth was so big, so

remarkably big.

Twenty-three eggs he brought to Mrs. Bob, but the twenty-fourth he sinfully left in charge of the discreet hen.

On his return he met Julius Cæsar Fish, with his hands in his pockets and his head extinguished by his grandfather's fur cap.

Together they went toward the hen-coop and Julius Cæsar Fish spoke, or rather lisped (he had lost some of his front teeth):

"Jericho Bobth, that 'th a turkey'th egg."

"Yer don't say so?"

"I think i'th a-goin' ter hatch." No sooner said than they heard a pick and a peck in the shell.

"Pick!" a tiny beak broke through the shell. "Peck!" more beak. "Crack!" a funny little head, a long, bare neck, and then "Pick! Peck! Crack!" before them stood the funniest, fluffiest brown ball resting on two weak little legs.

"Hooray!" shouted the woolly heads.

"Peep!" said turkeykin.

"It's mine!" Jericho shouted excitedly.

"I'th Marm Pitkin'th turkey'th; she laid it there."

"It's mine, and I'm going to keep it, and next Thanksgiving I'm going ter eat him."

"Think your ma'll let you feed him up for thath?" Julius Cæsar asked, triumphantly.

Jericho Bob's next Thanksgiving dinner seemed destined to be a dream. His face fell.

"I'll tell yer whath I'll do," his friend said, benevolently; "I'll

keep 'm for you, and Thanksgivin' we'll go halvth."

Jericho resigned himself to the inevitable, and the infant turkey was borne home by his friend.

Fish, Jr., lived next door, and the only difference in the premises was a freight-car permanently switched off before the broken-down fence of the Fish yard; and in this car turkeykin took up his abode.

I will not tell you how he grew and more than realized the hopes of his foster-fathers, nor with what impatience and anticipation they saw spring, summer, and autumn pass, while they watched their Thanksgiving dinner stalk proudly up the bare yard, and even hop across the railroad tracks.

But, alas! the possession of the turkey brought with it strife and discord.

Quarrels arose between the friends as to the prospective disposal of his remains. We grieve to say that the question of who was to cook him led to blows.

It was the day before Thanksgiving. There was a coldness between the friends which was not dispelled by the bringing of a pint of cranberries to the common store by Jericho, and the contributing thereto of a couple of cold boiled sweet potatoes by Julius Cæsar Fish.

The friends sat on an ancient wash-tub in the back yard, and there was a momentary truce between them. Before them stood the freight-car, and along the track beyond an occasional train tore down the road, which so far excited their mutual sympathy

that they rose and shouted as one man.

At the open door of the freight-car stood the unsuspecting turkey, and looked meditatively out on the landscape and at the two figures on the wash-tub.

One had bow-legs, a turn-up nose, and a huge straw hat. The other wore a fur cap and a gentleman's swallow-tail coat, with the tails caught up because they were too long.

The turkey hopped out of the car and gazed confidently at his protectors. In point of size he was altogether their superior.

"I think," said Jericho Bob, "we'd better ketch 'im; to-morrow's Thanksgiving. Yum!"

And he looked with great joy at the innocent, the unsuspecting fowl.

"Butcher Tham 'th goin' ter kill 'im for uth," Julius Cæsar hastened to say, "an' I kin cook 'im."

"No, you ain't. I'm goin' to cook 'im," Jericho Bob cried, resentfully. "He's mine."

"He ain'th; he'th mine."

"He was my egg," and Jericho Bob danced defiance at his friend.

The turkey looked on with some surprise, and he became alarmed when he saw his foster-fathers clasped in an embrace more of anger than of love.

"I'll eat 'im all alone!" Jericho Bob cried.

"No, yer sha'n't!" the other shouted.

The turkey fled in a circle about the yard.

"Now, look yere," said Julius Cæsar, who had conquered. "We're goin' to be squar'. He wath your egg, but who brought 'im up? Me! Who'th got a friend to kill 'im? Me! Who'th got a fire to cook 'im? Me! Now you git up and we'll kitch 'im. Ef you thay another word about your egg I'll jeth eat 'im up all mythelf."

Jericho Bob was conquered. With mutual understanding they approached the turkey.

"Come yere; come yere," Julius Cæsar said, coaxingly.

For a moment the bird gazed at both, uncertain what to do.

"Come yere," Julius Cæsar repeated, and made a dive for him. The turkey spread his tail. Oh, didn't he run!

"Now I've got yer!" the wicked Jericho Bob cried, and thought he had captured the fowl; when with a shriek from Jericho Bob, as the turkey knocked him over, the Thanksgiving dinner spread his wings, rose in the air, and alighted on the roof of the freight-car.

The turkey looked down over the edge of the car at his enemies, and they gazed up at him. Both parties surveyed the situation.

"We've got him," Julius Cæsar cried at last, exultantly. "You git on the roof, and ef you don't kitch 'im up thar, I'll kitch 'im down yere."

With the help of the wash-tub, an old chair, Julius Cæsar's back, and much scrambling, Jericho Bob was hoisted on top of the car. The turkey was stalking solemnly up and down the roof with tail and wings half spread.

"I've got yer now," Jericho Bob said, creeping softly after him. "I've got yer now, sure," he was just repeating, when with a deafening roar the express-train came tearing down the road.

For what possible reason it slowed up on approaching the freight-car nobody ever knew; but the fact remains that it did, just as Jericho Bob laid his wicked black paw on the turkey's tail.

The turkey shrieked, spread his wings, shook the small black boy's grasp from his tail, and with a mighty swoop alighted on the roof of the very last car as it passed; and in a moment more Jericho Bob's Thanksgiving dinner had vanished, like a beautiful dream, down the road!

What became of that Thanksgiving dinner no one ever knew. If you happen to meet a traveling turkey without any luggage, but with a smile on his countenance, please send word to Jericho Bob.

Every evening he and Julius Cæsar Fish stand by the broken-down fence and look up and down the road, as if they expected some one.

Jericho Bob has a turn-up nose and bow-legs. Julius Cæsar still wears his dress-coat, and both are watching for a Thanksgiving dinner that ran away.

HOW WE BOUGHT LOUISIANA

BY HELEN LOCKWOOD COFFIN

It is a hard matter to tell just how much power a little thing has, because little things have the habit of growing. That was the trouble that France and England and Spain and all the other big nations had with America at first. The thirteen colonies occupied so small and unimportant a strip of land that few people thought they would ever amount to much. How could such insignificance ever bother old England, for instance, big and powerful as she was? To England's great loss she soon learned her error in underestimating the importance or strength of her colonies.

France watched the giant and the pygmy fighting together, and learned several lessons while she was watching. For one thing, she found out that the little American colonies were going to grow, and so she said to herself: "I will be a sort of back-stop to them. These Americans are going to be foolish over this bit of success, and think that just because they have won the Revolution they can do anything they wish to do. They'll think they can spread out all over this country and grow to be as big as England herself; and of course anybody can see that that is impossible. I'll just put up a net along the Mississippi River, and prevent them

crossing over it. That will be the only way to keep them within bounds."

And so France held the Mississippi, and from there back to the Rocky Mountains, and whenever the United States citizen desired to go west of the Mississippi, France said: "No, dear child. Stay within your own yard and play, like a good little boy," or something to that effect.

Now the United States citizen didn't like this at all; he had pushed his way with much trouble and expense and hard work through bands of Indians and through forests and over rivers and mountains, into Wisconsin and Illinois, and he wished to go farther. And, besides, he wanted to have the right to sail up and down the Mississippi, and so save himself the trouble of walking over the land and cutting out his own roads as he went. So when France said, "No, dear," and told him to "be a good little boy and not tease," the United States citizen very naturally rebelled.

Mr. Jefferson was President of the United States at that time, and he was a man who hated war of any description. He certainly did not wish to fight with his own countrymen, and he as certainly did not wish to fight with any other nation, so he searched around for some sort of a compromise. He thought that if America could own even one port on this useful river and had the right of Mississippi navigation, the matter would be settled with satisfaction to all parties. So he sent James Monroe over to Paris to join our minister, Mr. Livingston, and see if the two of them together could not persuade France to sell them the island

of New Orleans, on which was the city of the same name.

Now Napoleon was the ruler of France, and he was dreaming dreams and seeing visions in which France was the most important power in America, because she owned this wonderful Mississippi River and all this "Louisiana" which stretched back from the river to the Rockies. He already held forts along the river, and he was planning to strengthen these and build some new ones. But you know what happens to the plans of mice and men sometimes. Napoleon was depending upon his army to help him out on these plans, but his armies in San Domingo were swept away by war and sickness, so that on the day he had set for them to move up into Louisiana not a man was able to go. At the same time Napoleon had on hand another scheme against England, which was even more important than his plans for America, and which demanded men and money. Besides this, he was shrewd enough to know that he could not hold this far-away territory for any long time against England, which had so many more ships than France. He suddenly changed his mind about his American possessions, and nearly sent Mr. Monroe and Mr. Livingston into a state of collapse by offering to sell them not only New Orleans but also the whole Province of Louisiana.



MAP OF THE UNITED STATES SHOWING THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE AND OTHER ACCESSIONS OF TERRITORY.

There was no time to write to President Jefferson and ask his advice, and this was before the days of the cable; so Monroe and Livingston took the matter into their own hands, and signed the contract which transferred the Louisiana territory to the United States for a consideration of \$15,000,000. They were severely criticized by many of their own countrymen, and they had some doubts of their own about the wisdom of their action. You see, nobody knew then that corn and wheat would grow so abundantly in this territory, or that beyond the Mississippi there were such stretches of glorious pasture-lands, or that underneath

its mountainous regions were such mines of gold, silver, and copper. Americans saw only the commercial possibilities of the river, and all they wanted was the right of navigating it and the permission to explore the unknown country to the westward.

But Jefferson and Monroe and Livingston builded better than they knew. All this happened a hundred years ago; and to-day that old Louisiana territory is, in natural resources, the wealthiest part of the whole United States. Without that territory in our possession we should have no Colorado and no Wyoming, no Dakotas, or Nebraska, or Minnesota, or Montana, or Missouri, or Iowa, or Kansas, or Arkansas, or Louisiana, or Oklahoma, or Indian Territory.

For all these reasons we owe our most sincere and hearty thanks to the patriotic and far-sighted men who were concerned in buying this territory for the United States.

THE CITY THAT LIVES OUTDOORS

BY W. S. HARWOOD

When the wind is howling through the days of the mad March far up in the lands where snow and ice thick cover the earth, here in this city that lives outdoors the roses are clambering over the "galleries" and the wistaria is drooping in purplish splendor from the low branches of the trees and from the red heights of brick walls.

The yellow jonquils, too, are swelling, and the geraniums are throwing out their scarlet flame across wide stretches of greensward, while the violets are nodding at the feet of the gigantic magnolias, whose huge yellowish-gray buds will soon burst into white beauty, crowning this noblest of flower-bearing trees.

It is a strange old city, this city that lives outdoors—a city rich in romantic history, throbbing with tragedy and fascinating events, a beautiful old city, with a child by its side as beautiful as the mother. The child is the newer, more modern city, and the child, like the parent, lives out of doors.

The people seem to come into closer touch with nature than

the people of most other portions of the land. The climate, the constant invitation of the earth and sky, seem to demand a life lived in the open. This city that lives outdoors is a real city, with all a city's varied life; but it is a country place as well—a city set in the country, or the country moved into town.

For at least nine months in the twelve, the people of this rare old town live out of doors nearly all the waking hours of the twenty-four. For the remaining three months of the year, December, January, and February, they delude themselves into the notion that they are having a winter, when they gather around a winter-time hearth and listen to imaginary wind-roarings in the chimney, and see through the panes fictitious and spectral snow-storms, and dream that they are housed so snug and warm. But when the day comes the sun is shining and there is no trace of white on the ground, and the grass is green and there are industrious buds breaking out of cover, and the earth is sleeping very lightly. Open-eyed, the youngsters sit by these December firesides and listen to their elders tell of the snow-storms in the long ago that came so very, very deep—ah, yes, so deep that the darkies were full of fear and would not stir from their cabins to do the work of the white people; when snowballs were flying in the streets, and the earth was white, and the "banquettes," or sidewalks, were ankle-deep in slush.

All the long years of the two centuries since this old city was born, a mighty river has been flowing by its doors, never so far forgetting its purpose to live outdoors as to freeze its yellow crest,

stealing softly past by night and by day, bearing along the city's front a vast commerce on down to the blue waters of the Gulf, and enriching the city by its cargoes from the outer world and from the plantations of the upper river. Strangely enough, the great yellow river flows above the city, its surface being nearly thirty feet above the streets in time of flood. It is held in its course by vast banks of earth.

It is a cold, drear March where the north star shines high overhead; but here, where it seems suddenly to have lost its balance and to have dropped low in the brilliant night, March is like June. It is June indeed, June with its wealth of grasses, its noble avenue of magnolias, its great green spread of live-oaks—most magnificent of Southern trees; June with its soft balm, and its sweet sunshine, and its perfume-laden air. And if you have never seen the pole star in the sky of the north, where the star is almost directly over your head, you cannot realize how strange a sight it is to see it so low in the sky as it is here.

There is a large garden in this city—it is, in fact, a part of the city proper. It was once a beautiful faubourg, now known as the Garden District, where the people live outdoors in a fine old aristocratic way, and where all the beauty in nature seen in the other sections of the city seems to be outdone. Very many rare old homes are in this garden region, with its deep hedges and ample grounds, inclosed in high stone walls, and a wealth of flowers and noble courts and an abounding hospitality. But what, after all, are houses to a people that lives outdoors? Conveniences

only; for such a people, better than houses are the air of the open, the scent of the roses, the blue of the Southern sky, the vast, strong sweep of the brilliant stars!

If we pause here along this street where run such every-day things as electric street-cars, we shall see on one side of the splendid avenue a smooth-paved roadway for the carriages, on the other a course for the horsemen, and in the center a noble inner avenue of trees set in a velvet-like carpet of grass; and here and there along the way, almost in touch of your hand from the open car window, appears the Spanish dagger, with its green, sharp blades and its snowy, showy plume. Not far away stands a lowly negro cabin, where the sun beats down hot and fierce upon a great straggling rose-bush, reaching up to the eaves, beating back the rays of the sun defiantly and gaining fresh strength in the struggle. On such a bush one day I counted two hundred and ninety roses.

This city which lives outdoors must play most in the open, and in its noble park, with its vast stretches of bright green, here empurpled by masses of the dainty grass-flower, there yellowing with the sheen of the buttercup, one finds the tireless golf-players leisurely strolling over the links; from yonder come the cries of the boys at ball; and in the farther distance you may see through the frame-like branches of a giant live-oak the students of a great university hard set at a game of tennis. And yet—is it the air, or the race, or the traditions?—something it is which makes the sportsmen, like the spring, seem slow to move.

And here even the palms grow outdoors in the city yards. And should you go past the city's limits, and yet within seeing distance of its blue-tiled housetops, you will find the palms growing rank in the great swamps, which you must search if you care to hunt for the languid alligators—palms growing so thick and rank that it is quite like looking into some vast conservatory, with the blue dome of the sky for glass. And here grow the magnolias in their wild, barbaric splendor of bloom, and the live-oaks, mighty of girth and spread, draped in somber gray moss as if for the funeral of some god of the deep green wood. At the fringe of the swamp, tempting you until near to jumping into the morass after them, are the huge fleurs-de-lis, each gorgeous blossom fully seven inches across its purple top.

To the north, somewhat apart from the reach of the treacherous river, lie the health-giving piny woods, and along the big, sullen stream the sugar plantations, some of them still the home of a lavish hospitality, some of them transformed into mere places of trade, where thrift and push have elbowed out all that fine gallantry and ease and ample hospitality of an earlier day—that hospitality which will ever remain a leading characteristic of the people. To be a Southern man or a Southern woman and to be inhospitable—that is not possible in the nature of things.

It is, when all is said and done, on the gallery that this city lives most of its life—on the gallery even more than on the evening-thronged banquette, which is the sidewalk of the North, or the boulevards, or even the fragrant parks, where life flows in a fair,

placid stream. Some there must be who toil by day in shop, or at counter, or in dim accounting-rooms, or on the floors of the marts where fortunes are made and lost in sugar or cotton or rice. For such the gallery is a haven of rest. If they must pass the earlier day indoors, for them the gallery during the long, late afternoon, and the ghost of a twilight, and the long evenings far into the starry night. The ghost of a twilight indeed—the South knows no other. Sometimes I have watched the long, splendid twilight come down over the wild Canadian forest—slowly delaying; creeping up the low mountains; halting from hour to hour in the glades below; shade after shade in the glorious sky of the west gradually merging into the dimness of the oncoming dusk; the moments passing so slowly, the day fading so elusively, until, at last, when even the low moon has hung out its silver sign in the west and the stars are pricking through, it is still twilight along the lower earth. And still farther to the north, around the globe in the far upper Europe, with the polar circle below you, it is like living on a planet of eternal day to sit through the northern light and feel about you the all-pervasive twilight of the land of the midnight sun. But the night is so hasty here, and the day is swift; and between them runs but a slender, dim thread.

The gallery is a feature of every house in this city that lives outdoors, be it big or little, humble or grand, or lowly or mean. It is on the first floor or the second, or even the third, though the third it seldom reaches, for few people care for houses of great height. Indeed, there are hundreds of homes of but one

story, full of the costliest tokens of the taste of an artistic people. And the soil below is so like a morass that ample space must be left between floor and earth; while as for cellars, I have heard of but two in all the great city. The gallery may run around the entire house, flanked and set off by splendid pillars with capitals rich and ornate; it may run across one end of the residence and be a marvel of rich ironwork, as fine as art and handicraft can make it, with, mayhap, the figures of its field outlined in some bit of color, as gold or green; it may be but a single cheap wooden affair, paintless, dingy, dilapidated, weather-worn, and stained with neglect; but a gallery it is still, an important social feature of this outdoor life.

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