

CHAPTER XIII

Rebel Ladies

I will not attempt to describe [my] first interview with my family since the commencement of my exile in August.¹ I was now with them at the house of my son-in-law Dr. B. B. Lenoir. But how altered that house, how changed his interesting family. Lenoir's is a principal and important station and depot on the E. T. & G. R. R. twenty miles below Knoxville. In some respects it is the most valuable property in Tennessee or the West. It contains between two and three thousand acres of land, much of it island and river bottom. Upon it have been erected a cotton spinning factory, planing machines, mills and other large improvements of several kinds. When I last saw it before there were in its barns, cribs, meat-houses, any extent of these supplies necessary for the subsistence of an army. The cellars were filled with groceries of all kinds. The forests on the property were scarcely excelled anywhere for their extent or their value. These extended to and embraced the dwelling house and the out-buildings. The outstanding crop in August before promised a yield of _____.

About September 1, the enemy came and took whatever of supplies they chose to of all kinds. They exhausted the smokehouse and cellar of all the necessaries of life, cut down the forests as they pleased, and erected in their fertile fields villas of cabins for their soldiers. They took possession of Dr. Lenoir's office and established in it their headquarters for General James M. Shackleford first and then General Edward Ferrero and General William B. Hazen, General Robert B. Potter. Two brigades were generally camped on the place. The officers' tents were pitched in the yard and gardens around the house. Everything was appropriated by the invaders and used as they pleased. The family consisted of three brothers, all loyal to the South. Dr. Lenoir's wife was my beloved daughter, Henrietta Rutledge. I have already mentioned her heroism and loyalty

¹Dr. Ramsey inserted the account on the following pages immediately after he related his first meeting with his family late in 1863. See above, page 148.

at the Sanders raid. Their children were three. The eldest J. Ramsey Lenoir, named for me, the most interesting and manly little boy I ever saw and so pronounced to be by everyone who met him on the cars, on the streets, at the Springs or in the house. He was precocious, beautiful, intellectual, amiable, dutiful, gentle. His two brothers were younger, and of course less attractive and less interesting. They were idols in the family and amongst the whole connection.

Soon after the arrival of the Federal forces at Lenoir's, Dr. Lenoir himself was arrested and held in prison as a hostage for some frivolous cause not now recollected. He was sent to the jail in Knoxville. His children were taken sick shortly before his arrest. No cause was assigned for this cruel and arbitrary arrest and imprisonment.

At Lenoir's Mrs. Ramsey gave me a minute account of her own movements after I left home August 28. On that day, as I had advised, the family vacated the house taking with them the most portable and valuable of her effects. They went with these to our daughter across the Holston, Mrs. Dickson at Riverside. Late at night our carriage driver, Levy, returned home and bringing with him our youngest son, our "Benjamin," who had been absent at school in Jefferson County. A day or two after this our son, Arthur Crozier, not yet sixteen, went with his sister to town for the purpose of renting a house there. It stood near the intersection of Clinch and Water Streets and not far from Scott's Mills. There they settled. But the Federal cavalry were turned into that and Mrs. Kennedy's adjoining lot and as their tents were pitched in the latter they soon found that the annoyances were so great as to make it necessary to leave it at the end of their first month. One evening at tea a servant came to the door to say that Mrs. Pryor, an old neighbor, had just returned from a visit of mercy to the jail and that she had there seen Dr. Lenoir a prisoner, and that she had been requested by Dr. Lenoir to give this information to my family. Mrs. Breck, a widowed daughter and living in the family, went immediately to the jail taking with her the cook and a supply of refreshments. Dr. Lenoir told her he had been in jail several days and had not yet learned for what offense. Nor had he heard from his family, then sick. When leaving the jail, Mrs. Breck was requested to ask General Samuel P. Carter, the Federal post commandant, what was his offense and to give him the opportunity to communicate with his sick family. She called next morning at the General's headquarters. He treated her with the courtesy becoming a chivalrous soldier and in a

short time after Dr. Lenoir was released and never did know the cause of his arrest. Returning home his children had relapsed. Two of them died with pneumonia complicated with diphtheria. They died in one night. Two Yankee surgeons were called in and showed some attention and sympathy to the afflicted family and especially to the heartbroken mother who had lost an eldest and a favorite son. But during all this time no opportunity could be had for the grandmother and the other females of the family to visit or hear from poor disconsolate Henrietta. Her grief consumed her and she never afterwards smiled.

Mrs. Ramsey quit her rented house and moved to and occupied a part of the house of her brother, Dr. C. W. Crozier. He was in the army and his two daughters were with him in Georgia. Of his sons one was killed in the fight as already mentioned. Another was under Wheeler. His wife and two younger children were still at their home in Knoxville and with them in the same house were living my wife, our two daughters, and our youngest son Arthur. He became rather a favorite with the Federal officers and as he was approaching the military age they often tried to seduce him from his southern convictions and sympathies. "Little Secesh" for so they called him "join our flag. The rebellion will soon be put down and the rebels either killed or hung." These seductive and menacing remarks were all lost. The true little patriot heard but laughed at them and as will be seen hereafter he lived and died loyal to the Southern cause.

Soon after going into Dr. Crozier's house our daughter Sue was attacked with fever. Her convalescence was slow. Dr. Lenoir was called to see her and he advised that she should be removed to Lenoir's as a more healthy place. According to this advice and invitation my ladies were taken to Lenoir's. Sue soon recovered. It was a merciful Providence that sent this sickness and thus caused the removal of my family out of Knoxville. Had it have been otherwise they would have had to undergo the discomforts and dangers of the siege. The house they occupied was the most exposed of any points in town. During the siege the house was first robbed and then burned and to make a full wreck of our property everything that had been saved from the burning at Mecklenburg was stolen or burned at Dr. Crozier's.

Early in April 1864, I received a telegram from my son Crozier at Bristol. "My sister Sue has just arrived by Flag of Truce, sent out for disloyal

acts. What shall I do with her." I answered "Take her to Colonel Anderson's. I leave in the cars today and will soon join her." I got on the train and found her at Liberty, Virginia in the house of her uncle Honorable J. H. Crozier. My first inquiries were of course about my wife and daughters at Lenoir's from whom I had not heard since my last interview with them the preceding December at that place, when leaving them for the headquarters of Longstreet. She told me that they had received a single pencil note from me at Jonesboro, that my daughter Mrs. Lenoir was in bad health, and that for that reason Mrs. Ramsey and Mrs. Breck had the *indulgence* granted to them of watching by her bedside and waiting the result of her protracted sickness and her approaching confinement. But that her own banishment had been early determined on—perhaps to the North, perhaps to the South—she knew not which till a short time before she left Knoxville when as a matter of grace she was allowed the favor of being sent out by flag of truce to the mountains of Virginia. Not to Atlanta, Georgia where I was, but to the Confederate lines wherever that might be—with probably no acquaintance or friend within her reach. The departure of the flag of truce had been anticipated a day or two and she being twenty miles below Knoxville the truce train had started before she got there. All her co-exile lady friends had left the previous day and not one of her own sex was present to accompany her in her lonely exile from her native place and her banishment to a land of strangers. She therefore went out again to her sister's, Mrs. Dickson's, at Riverside. Late that afternoon some soldiers came out there for her. She refused to go with them at that late hour and requested that a suitable conveyance should be sent for her the next day. The soldiers replied that their orders were to bring her to town that night. She told them again she would not go. Mrs. Dickson also refused to let her go. They replied if she did not go they would place a guard around the house and hold her a prisoner.

Next morning Mrs. Dickson accompanied Sue to town, Captain Boyd kindly furnishing his carriage to them for that purpose. Sue's trunk had been packed at Lenoir's in the presence of Colonel James S. Jaquess, post commander at that place, and had been left at F. A. R. Scott's while she went out to her sister's. Major Gratz, pro-tem provost martial in the absence of General Carter, went to Mr. Scott's, asked for the trunk, and finding that Sue had the key, proceeded with other keys to open and search it for contraband goods or treasonable documents, Confederate conspiracies, etc., etc., that a noncombatant—a lady in her teens—could be

imagined to have concealed in her trunk. But his patriotic vigilance and his soldierly zeal in detecting treason, stratagem, and spoils were doomed to an inglorious failure. Miss Sue had not any plans of attack upon Loyal Knoxville; no projected campaigns by her gallant Confederate countrymen against the Federal hosts now in their undisputed possession. Not even the evidence of an apprehended raid on the part of her five brothers against the Federal bulwarks around town—no complicity between the modern Joan of Arc at the head of a dashing scout of bushwhackers could the chivalrous and faithful Detective Major Gratz make known or discover. His return from Mr. Scott's house to his headquarters elicited no congratulatory peans, no *éclat*, no promotion. The trunk escaped confiscation or robbery, and was allowed to go on the train. But Sue found not a single female upon it. Seeing this, Mrs. Dickson, as at present the natural and only guardian of her youngest sister, volunteered to go with her. At Bulls Gap the train stopped, the road being not yet repaired beyond that point. All the means of conveyance had been exhausted in transporting the passengers of the preceding day. Mr. Walker, a merchant of Knoxville, happened to be there and proposed to Mrs. Dickson that if she wished to return home he would take charge of her little sister and if he could find a conveyance would carry her on to where the two flags of truce would meet. Mr. Walker could find no conveyance. This came to the knowledge of General (perhaps only Major Cox) Jacob D. Cox of the Federal army and when he heard the artless tale of the Little Rebel now an exile he very politely directed that his own ambulance should be brought up and offered to Mr. Walker. When I heard this incident of Susan's trip to the Confederate lines I immediately inquired what state General Cox was from. That is still unknown to me. But the act was so kind, courteous, polite and gentlemanly that I risk little in claiming him as from the South. This allowed Mrs. Dickson to return the same day to her home and also enabled Mr. Walker to hand over his protegee to the officer having the charge of the Confederate flag of truce.

Sue here described her feelings of relief and joy when she met the Confederate troops—the men in grey. For several weeks she had seen only Yankee uniforms, Federal troops, Federal officers, the United States flag. Yankee Doodle had been in sight and hearing ever since I had bidden her farewell at Lenoir's. No Confederate had she since seen, only occasionally a Confederate prisoner or wounded soldier passing on the train to a hospital or a northern prison. When her name was announced, "Little

Rebel, Little Rebel," was vociferously shouted. She met several Confederate officers who knew her and her history. She inquired for me and for her brothers in the army. At last the truce arrived at Bristol. She had never before been out of Tennessee—never before been at Bristol. But when the train stopped there, what was her inexpressible joy and surprise to see on one side her brother J. G. McKnitt Ramsey and on the other her oldest brother J. Crozier Ramsey. The latter, as has been before stated, immediately telegraphed to me at Atlanta this joyous announcement. Mrs. Anderson, wife of Colonel Anderson, whose guest I had been while funding the Confederate States issues a short time before, hearing of her arrival at the depot, hastened there, took her to her hospitable and genteel house, and acted the part of a mother to her while she stayed there. A day or two afterward her uncle, Honorable J. H. Crozier, telegraphed for her to come to Liberty, Virginia where, as before stated, I soon after joined her.

She told me that her Ma and her sister, Mrs. Breck, were still at Lenoir's standing around the sickbed of her sister Mrs. Lenoir—and that it was hoped she would soon be better but that the place was almost in a state of siege from the armies of General Ferrero and General Hazen camped near and around it. And that from the hateful sight of these enemies and spoilers of the South constantly in her view and that from the heavy domestic bereavement occasioned by the death of her two interesting boys her heart had been pierced and broken by an irremedicable wound. I knew her sensitive nature too well to unite with her in the expression of the hope that poor Henrietta could recover. She told me further that so soon as they could leave her, Mrs. Ramsey and Mrs. Breck had obtained permission to follow her to Dixie.

This much of Sue's narrative I heard before we all retired to bed. Next morning I inquired the reason why she had been sent out before the rest of my family and what was meant by that part of my dispatch from her brother Crozier that said for *disloyal acts*? "What disloyal act can you, a girl of sixteen, have perpetrated—surrounded as you were by two army corps of the United States?" I knew that like all others of her age she was more than earnest, she was enthusiastic for the Southern cause. When Tennessee seceded her father and her brothers approved of and endorsed her secession and took an early and a bold stand to maintain and promote it. One of them had gone into Campbell County and had at Jacksboro bearded the lion in his den, appealing in a public harangue

at the courthouse to the patriotism and manhood of the young men of that mountain country to join the standard he had planted there for recruits for the Southern Confederacy. Half a dozen bullies had attempted to intimidate him by threats of personal violence. He finished his speech and brought home with him several volunteers, recruits to a Confederate company he was raising. So also of four of her brothers. At the earliest possible period of the rebellion each of them volunteered and went at once to the field.

Another sister of Susan, two years older, of similar patriotic impulses, no less susceptible, alike earnest and enthusiastic,—Charlotte Barton Ramsey, our fourth daughter—was the first to devote the beauty and fashion of Knoxville to the southern cause, the first to sing and play Dixie and to inspire her hearers with a passion for the sunny South. Well can I recollect that when the clansmen of her native East Tennessee began to pass Mecklenburg in small groups, then in organized companies and still later in regiments, how gracefully and modestly she stood in our front veranda waving to the proud soldiery as they passed the beautiful flag of her own making. And also the impressive scene at the Knoxville depot when at the head of the elite ladies of the city and country Colonel Duncan (?) on the arrival of his valiant regiment of Kentuckians in his *On to Richmond* was received with deafening plaudits amidst a shower of bouquets thrown upon the cars by the young ladies. The compliment was so cordially and gracefully bestowed that Colonel Duncan (?) in his reply to the speech of welcome from Honorable J. H. Crozier noticed it handsomely. He said: "These soldiers from the '*dark and bloody*' grounds of Kentucky, on their way to the rescue and protection of their mother state, Virginia, have passed through the beautiful capital of the Volunteer State—our sister, Tennessee—through the young city of Chattanooga and the intermediate towns and villages, and have everywhere been received with the greetings of your patriotic people. But here at the ancient capital of Tennessee, the style and tone of our reception exceed our expectation and merit." Then bowing to the long line of young ladies standing on the platform near him, he continued, "Animated by your smiles, cheered by your welcome—and especially by the graceful and tasteful manner of its bestowal—I return to you young ladies of Knoxville the grateful acknowledgments of my regiment, and pledge you in advance their devotion to the South and their fidelity to our young Confederacy."

But it was not alone in these friendly greetings and joyous manifesta-

tions of regard that Miss Charlotte exhibited her kindness for the soldiers of the South. On the return of her brother McKnitt from the sickly camps on the Chickamauga she heard from him a detail of the sufferings and wants of the sick and wounded in the hospitals. As far as she could she contributed to their comfort and relief: and when her own supplies were exhausted she determined to appeal for assistance to others. On an inclement day in March of 1863 she and her sister Susan went on horseback through her own neighborhood and above it into Sevier County on a mission of humanity and mercy. Their success was remarkable. They obtained supplies even from unexpected quarters: The families of Union citizens contributed their full proportion. One of them, Wesley Hufacre, Esquire, told me he was unable to resist the fascinating appeal and the bewitching earnestness of my daughter. But alas! That earnestness was fatal to my poor Charlotte. The fatigue and exposure of that long ride—twenty or thirty miles over rough roads and on a bleak and cheerless day of early spring brought on a typhus fever. The dutiful daughter, the affectionate sister, the patriotic and humane girl, the humble Christian bade adieu to Earth and went to Heaven. Her pastor, Doctor Curry, wrote a beautiful tribute to her memory. No one of her age was more highly esteemed, none more cordially loved. The chasm made in our family was irreparable.

This apparent digression from the thread on which I had entered of Sue's banishment, has been made for the purpose of presenting one of the *antecedents* that made that measure necessary in the belligerent operations of the Federal authorities in Tennessee. She had made Confederate flags. She had floated them in the grounds at Mecklenburg, and on the verandas of her father's domicile. It was even said that with a girlish fondness for having something of her own she kept a flag of diminutive size folded away in her trunk. Be this as it may, it was mentioned at headquarters as evidence of the most enormous disloyalty and rebellion against the best government the world ever saw. It was further said that after the beautiful home at Mecklenburg was first robbed and then burned and when everything owned by her family had been confiscated, stolen, and destroyed and they had become quiet unpretending occupants of a rented house in Knoxville, they preferred to visit and to be visited by such of the citizens as would sympathize in their misfortunes and adversity and if necessary relieve their wants. It was even hinted at, if not openly charged, that this Presbyterian family actually preferred the ministrations and the society of their old pastor, Reverend W. A. Harrison, until he was

silenced by the military authorities—then under command of Major General Burnside—and after that humble and pious divine had been banished from his home and his pastorate, that this rebel family transferred their membership to the Second Presbyterian Church in which an old acquaintance, a friend, Reverend J. H. Martin officiated: and that in these churches they actually sat near to, and recognized and exchanged friendly and Christian salutations with the mothers and daughters of Southern men. These treasonable acts I do not pretend to palliate or deny. I was not there to witness them and I am not unwilling to admit the entire truth of these several charges and specifications. Women in all ages have been true to their faith, their modes of worship and their God. And I cheerfully admit that the history of our Scotch Irish ancestors exhibited centuries since a similar constancy to their creed, a similar devotion to the rights of conscience and of liberty, and similar acts of disloyalty and rebellion against tyranny, oppression and wrong. But in doing thus they burned no houses over the heads of noncombatants, stole no one's books, no one's plate, no one's property. With these examples before them it is highly probable that the ladies of my desolated household did all these atrocious acts of treason alleged against them.

But it was further intimated that these rebel ladies declined the attentions of United States officials then at Knoxville and that this was proof of disloyalty. This is also very probable and I admit it. Southern ladies are proverbially aristocratic in their social relations and especially with strangers. They are aristocratic in the true meaning of the word Aristocracy—the few, the best. Of the aristocrats there is more than one kind. In their vocabulary, the first is the aristocracy of Birth, of family. They can never be brought to believe that because an individual has had a grandfather or an ancestry of elevated character, unquestioned integrity, high-souled honor, stainless reputation, etc., that he is thus placed on a level with the son of a thief, a defamer or a blackguard. A second kind of aristocracy, and which Southern ladies esteem highly, is the aristocracy of *Virtue*. A love of truth, probity, sincerity, candor, justice, humanity, honor, and public and private virtue—these confer on the individual possessing them a title of nobility which even the disciples of Black Republicanism would be unwilling avowedly to discard or openly to invalidate. And if to these attributes is added a becoming deference to age, to character, to position, to sex, and to private worth the possessor is deservedly

esteemed the superior of the ignoble, the supercilious, the vulgar, the rude, the selfish upstart and pretender.

A third kind of aristocracy is that of Intellect. This forms the grand distinction between the rational and irrational creation. A well cultivated intellect, a well disciplined mind, well balanced thinking powers, the ability to investigate, to discriminate, to analyze, to sublimate, to elucidate, to philosophize, to generalize—this ability gives to the individual possessing it a genuine claim to true nobility. His superiority *quoad hoc* is admitted and unquestioned and *pro tanto* he is one of the *Oi Aristoi*. When to this are added the first and second kinds of aristocracy—that of family and of Virtue we have the truest noblesse of any land.

But there is yet a fourth kind of aristocracy—that of Wealth. In America this is too often considered the primary class of nobility. In Europe it is otherwise. Inherited wealth in most instances is the result of ancestral worth, station and endowment. In America, and especially in the late United States, it is often the result of accident or good fortune, as we call it. Now wealth acquired by honest industry and diligent and skillful application to business in the honorable and lawful pursuits of life is not illaudable. It is rather praiseworthy in the possessor of it—especially if he be generous in his public and private benefactions, unselfish and liberal in his charities, a patron of learning and science and the material improvement of the country and a philanthropist and benefactor of his race. But wealth acquired by fraud, extortion or usury, by ignoble and dishonorable trickery and intrigue, or shrewdness in driving a bargain, or a low flung meanness or duplicity—these debase the possessor and stamp him as ignoble and really belittle him. Such wealth makes the owner purse-proud, arrogant, supercilious and pretentious, intolerant and overbearing to the poorer classes, sycophantic or envious to those superior to them in rank or public esteem. Their aspirations, if such men can aspire, are low and vulgar. They belong to the pseudoaristocracy, the class known as the shabby-genteel and the upstart. If in times of political turmoil and revolution they attain to preferment or official station they become bogus-aristocrats. Their honors sit awkwardly upon them and their assumed consequence not only belittles but degrades them.

But it was further stated that the Southern ladies at Knoxville declined persistently the attentions of Federal officers. This allegation did not assume the dignity of a *charge* of disloyalty. Coming as it did to the ears

of the United States army officers through the chambermaids around the hotels and boarding houses, it was considered by the genteel and refined as puerile and ridiculous and in the army phrase specifications were in no case brought forward or urged. Still there was abundant and satisfactory proof offered every day that the statement was founded in truth. The conduct of the Southern ladies needs no justification or apology. In the days of chivalry to be a soldier was to be a gentleman. In more modern times a British officer is necessarily and of course a gentleman. In the army of Washington from that great chieftain down to his lieutenants all were gentlemen. In the Mexican War, Scott and Taylor and Pierce and Pillow would have felt unworthy of their epaulettes and of an association with gentlemen if they had connived at or tolerated even in a subordinate officer a discourtesy to a lady or the infliction of a private wrong upon a noncombatant. The rules that regulate and govern the conduct of men of honor always exclude such an offender from good society. True chivalry would pronounce him infamous and the army code denounces such conduct unofficer-like if not unsoldierly.

It will not be denied that in the late war against the South, the Federal army too often discarded these high-souled and manly virtues. No disavowal has been made, no disavowal can in truth be made of intentional and palpable insult and discourtesy to ladies and of acknowledged injustice, violence, outrage and cruelty to the aged, the infirm, the helpless noncombatants. Instances are not wanting, where *loyal* families became victims of the heartless rapacity and oppression that too often left an indelible stain upon the military reputation of Federal officers while invading the South. It is said that Napoleon, when the French army invaded Russia, cashiered any subaltern of his who should supply his commissariat from the resources of the Russian peasantry without ample compensation for it in French ducats. It was with the same honorable and humane spirit likewise that he bore himself to the nobility of Russia. If they remained unarmed on their estates, their rights of person and of property were always respected. There was no incendiarism, no robbery, no perpetration of a private wrong. The serfs even were as secure in their huts as were the grandees and noblemen in their palaces. There was no intrusion upon the privacy of the domicile, no burning of libraries, no wanton destruction of works of art, science or taste, no profanation of churches,—no pilfering of trunks, bureaus,—and family escritaires, no searchings for concealed treasures, no stealing of jewelry or personal ornaments of women. Such

was the Emperor Napoleon. The Kossacks said he should be called the French Czar.

In the invasion of Mexico, Scott and Taylor were alike observant of the usages of honorable and civilized warfare. From Reseca, Monterey and Vera Cruz to the halls of the Montezumas in the city of Mexico the rights of all private and unarmed Mexicans were respected. Along the track of our armies the padre (priest) was unmolested. His sacerdotal garments gave him the amplest protection from insult or aggression by the civilized and chivalrous invaders. He was allowed to carry the host or present the crucifix to the wounded Mexican and to perform the rites of absolution or of sepulture to a deceased Catholic without restraint or intimidation on the part of the victors. The shepherdess on the heights of Cerro Gordo with her crozier and her voice guarded her sheep and never lost a lamb of her flock by the rapacity of a hungry American soldier. The peon brought the fruits from his vintage to the bivouac of the soldiery of the United States, was liberally compensated for his welcome refreshments and left the camp with the impression that although "inter arma silent leges" was an axiom of war yet even in the midst of belligerent operations inseparable from an invasion of his country the laws of honor and humanity are never silent, but that the American soldier or commander is still a gentleman and not a stranger to the laws of chivalry and civilized warfare.

Nor are we without illustrious instances in the history of the short-lived Confederate States of the prevalence of these lofty sentiments and this enlightened and liberal policy both in the cabinet and in the field. I give but a single instance in each of these departments. On the arrest of Honorable T. A. R. Nelson by the Confederate authorities, he was taken to Richmond—not as a prisoner or with any of the appliances of a humiliating captivity upon him but in a public passenger car—with no armed guard around him, either on the train or in the hotels. He was allowed to select his own lodgings and his own companions and to go in and out at his own pleasure. He had been one of the most able, most constant, and influential advocates of the union in the whole South; one of the most devout worshippers of the old flag in Tennessee. When before President Davis no concessions were required, no penitential confessions, no degrading pledges of allegiance were extorted or even called for. He was known to be a gentleman of personal honor and political virtue. Under these circumstances what did President Davis do? He was magnanimous

as well as brave and patriotic. To this writer he telegraphed—"Your letter received. I have released Mr. Nelson on his personal parole of honor. Jeff. Davis, President, etc."

Again. In his celebrated invasion of Pennsylvania by General Lee that officer acted the part of a model of chivalry and of knightly bearing. He invaded like a prince and where he conquered, he conquered like a benign angel of mercy. His orders were not to disturb a noncombatant, inflict no avoidable injury upon the inoffensive. "Private property must be respected. Rations, subsistence and forage must be paid for." A Confederate brigadier told me this was the substance of his orders. If on the field of battle he was a desolating tornado or the consuming fire on a prairie yet when the bloody conflict was over or when he was on the march he appeared calm as a summer evening, gentle as a woman and sympathizing as a friend. Ulcerated by the wrongs to his noble wife at Arlington or by the outrageous atrocities committed against his own Virginia or by the vandalism perpetrated against the South everywhere, it might have been supposed that his proud spirit would prompt him to retaliate—the low revenge, the malignant hate, the mean pilferings of the enemy—and thus imitate the example of Burnside, of Sherman and of Butler. But Lee could not let himself down to a level so degraded. His standard of heroism was higher. He preserved to the last his self-respect by carrying out his regard for the principles and laws of honorable warfare.

It is not deemed necessary or proper here to carry further the contrast between the North and the South. Or to institute a comparison further between the armies of the two sections. It is enough here to state that the type, the style, of Southern civilization is essentially and radically different from the Northern,—not only different but antagonistic both in form and in substance. Which of the two has the most valid claim to superiority in my estimation, the reader of these pages will be at no loss to decide. Truth and candor impel me to this opinion, and the judgment of posterity and future history as well as the past will sustain its correctness.

But to recur again to the narrative of Sue as given to me at Liberty, Virginia. On one occasion, while my family were still keeping house in Knoxville, a subaltern of General Burnside came to the door and rudely commanded one of our slaves, Mrs. Ramsey's cook, a favorite servant, to go

with him—her services being required elsewhere. The Negress refused to go. The subaltern rebuked her folly for preferring to live as the slave of rebels when she was really free. She replied that she liked to stay where she was with her old mistress and said again she would not leave her. He went away declaring that he would take her with him by force tomorrow. Mrs. Ramsey, accompanied by Sue, called immediately at the office of General Carter, the commandant of the post, and requested his interference in her behalf in this matter. General Carter received the ladies very courteously and at once gave Mrs. Ramsey a note to General George L. Hartsuff in whose department such matters were placed. General Hartsuff very readily gave orders for Mrs. Ramsey to retain her cook and a further order and a guard of soldiers to reclaim a horse stolen from the plantation. The horse was a gift to Sue by her now absent father and on that account the more highly prized by her. The cook was retained but the horse was never found.

The courtesy and politeness of these officers were duly appreciated by my family and whenever either of them asked for permission to go to the country, it was in no case withheld by these gentlemen. They as far as possible mitigated the severity and misfortune of war as suffered by this lonely and desolated family.

Soon after this the torch of the incendiary was applied to the beautiful old family mansion at Mecklenburg and everything the proprietor owned there was destroyed or stolen. Next morning the strongest union men of town and country came forward offering their sympathy and assistance. Such indignation was publicly expressed upon the streets and in more private circles that even General Burnside felt constrained to notice and punish the outrage. The ostensible perpetrator of the arson was actually drummed out of camp and run back to Michigan and thus escaped further military service in the grand army of Burnside then engaged in the patriotic duty of coercing one of the sovereign states of the Union which had chosen to secede from it. Everyone who witnessed the infliction of this idle military ceremonial laughed at the inadequacy of the punishment to the enormity of the crime. Even union men of Knoxville mentioned to the commanding general that his lenity would be considered as a premium for desertion and that the penalty for incendiarism was the coveted privilege of retiring from the United States army and of thus ingloriously deserting the old flag. The burning of a Southern patriot's house and making a gentleman's family homeless and houseless was rewarded by allow-

ing the convict quietly to retire to private life with all his laurels fresh upon his brow. The truth was Burnside inflicted no punishment at all upon the criminal. He tolerated the crime and offered thus a premium for the repetition of it. Such were the indignant remarks of Doctor Ramsey's union friends all over the state. He was everywhere known as a public benefactor. He had spent nearly the whole of his long life in the service and in the material improvement of his native Tennessee. No one had been more active, no one more successful in promoting the physical improvement of the country. In private morals, in public virtue, and in patriotic spirit no one, as all admit, was his superior. His private benefactions were upon the same scale with his public services. It became thus necessary to appease the general indignation against the commanding general for his misplaced lenity and indulgence to the miserable Michigander who had committed this outrage against the code and usages of honorable warfare: and a Knoxville journal the day after the culprit was subjected to the *condign* punishment of being drummed out of the United States army said with a flourish how promptly sentence had been pronounced and executed upon the offender, and then, as if apologizing for its severity, added that Dr. Ramsey was a very *bad* man. In the vocabulary of the times a very bad man meant a citizen very loyal to the Southern Confederacy and very consistent and persistent in his support of the Southern cause. That was all true and he here pleads guilty to the charge. And it is his present boast and glory in 1870 to say that he, his whole family—sons, wife and daughters and his whole connection—were and always have been loyal to Tennessee, loyal to the South, loyal to their section, loyal to their country, and loyal to liberty and to the right of self-government; and if Mr. Burnside or any of his incendiaries suppose that by the infliction of a private injury, in a way so pusillanimous and little, they could curb or repress that *loyalty*, they have very much underrated the weight and dignity of Southern character and underestimated the genuine impulses of Southern patriotism. I said this publicly a year ago on the streets of Knoxville near the Lamar House on the arrival there of ex-president Johnson and I record it here—

“I never bowed the knee

“To any Power but that which made me free.”

If this is *Treason*, the oppressor and the tyrant of 1865-1870 can make the most of it.

The true history of this arson is this. The miserable private from Michigan is not, was not, responsible for the enormity of the outrage. It was traced at the time to a higher source. Why was Doctor Ramsey selected over a thousand other secession and disloyal citizens as a fitter victim of Federal revenge and malevolent hate? If he were a *bad* man, if he were a *worse* man than any other of the Southern gentlemen in East Tennessee or at Knoxville, why was *Mecklenburg* the *first*, the *only* object of destruction under the military administration of the illustrious invader? The proprietor was unknown to the commanding general, still less known to the poor private—the instrument of his unmanly revenge and the miserable tool of his lawless ferocity and his acknowledged violation of the well-known rules and regulations of honorable warfare. Trace out the secret history of the whole infernal infamy of the low revenge and private and personal hate. Look especially at the *special time* at which the incendiary arrived at Knoxville from Cincinnati. Learn that the very day after his arrival he was known to inquire for the road to Dr. Ramsey's house—how to find it, how it was known from other houses across the river, and consider the intensity of his purpose to burn *it* and *it only*—and that, too, against the earnest remonstrances of Union men around him and the extreme villainy of the whole matter, including the inadequacy of his punishment can be explained and easily understood. The poor wretch had been bribed at Cincinnati to execute a certain purpose of a malignant prompter.² Defamation and abuse, scurrility and falsehood had signally failed to affect the well-earned reputation of Dr. Ramsey wherever he was known and among gentlemen everywhere: and where the tongue of slander had failed to injure his good name, the torch of the bribed incendiary had been effectual in destroying his property. A viper had been

² The reference, of course, is to "Parson" William Ganaway Brownlow, editor of the Knoxville *Whig*, who was in exile in Cincinnati before Burnside entered Knoxville. Brownlow seemed to have an especial animosity to J. Crozier Ramsey, who was, in his opinion "but a few degrees removed from an idiot. He is the nephew of the Croziers and the son of one of the directors of this villainous bank, against whom I instituted and recovered an important suit, exposing the *father*, the *uncle*, and the entire Democratic swindle." W. G. Brownlow, *Sketches of the Rise, Progress, and Decline of Secession* ("Parson Brownlow's Book"), 290. Young Ramsey was, said Brownlow further, a "*corrupt scoundrel* and most unprincipled knave (p. 295) who attempted to "get up a company of volunteers, but was never able to muster more than *thirty* men; and, being detected in drawing rations and clothing for sixty-five, he was, under General Zollicoffer's reign at Knoxville, drummed out of the service (p. 302). The irate "Parson" dismissed Dr. Ramsey as "the vain old historian of Tennessee, against whom I brought and sustained a suit for a nefarious *bank-swindle*, and to avoid the damages of which, the old rebel has put his property out of his hands, making this corrupt son the trustee!" (p. 301.) In December 1861, Dr. Ramsey protested to Jefferson Davis against the release of Brownlow from prison. *Official Records*, series 1, vol. 7, pp. 743-744.

twenty years gnawing at a file, with no other effect than to smear its surface with a harmless venom. An adder blinded by its own virus, had attempted to bite a diamond. Its fetid saliva and its poisonous breath, failed signally to lessen its value or bedim its brilliancy. A signal judgment of Heaven made the slanderer voiceless.—

An instrumentality scarcely less base or ignoble, though less wicked and nefarious than defamation, was now necessary to punish the disloyalty of Dr. Ramsey and his patriotic family. A bribe offered to a venal private in the army of the enemy, was the miserable resort of the profession of arms once considered honorable, or of an individual presumed to be pious. That instrumentality was successful. Private property was destroyed and Burnside is entitled to the glory of this great martial achievement. And while he boasts of these laurels thus ingloriously won, thus infamously claimed and thus indecently worn, it will be the pride and glory and boast of the proprietor of Mecklenburg that he was the earliest victim in East Tennessee of Federal aggression and outrage and when asked for his jewels he will be able defiantly and proudly to point to the *ashes* of his old home. To be thus designated as the *earliest victim* will be to him glory enough for one lifetime—glory as perennial and eternal as the infamy of him who inflicted the wrong.

Few were found even in Knoxville, the headquarters of the Federal army and the central point of Unionism in East Tennessee, who justified the destruction of private property and the disregard of private and of individual rights, inaugurated by Burnside after the retirement of the Southern army. As the evacuation had been made without a conflict or the firing of a gun, a generous enemy would have taken possession of the town quietly and without the air of an indecent triumph on the part of the victors. The invaders had met with no resistance. Their conduct afterwards should have been signalized by a magnanimous spirit of courtesy, toleration and forbearance, and especially to ladies and noncombatants. A Southern general under similar circumstances would have made no humiliating exactions, permitted no discourtesy, nor especially would he have given his official sanction to an infraction of the rules and observances of good society nor the amenities or pleasant charities of life. Chivalry forbids such infraction as unbecoming a gentleman and unworthy of an officer. But at Knoxville Might made Right. An order was issued making it a criminal offense for any of the inhabitants to go at large who had not taken their oath of allegiance—forbidding any such

the privilege of purchasing or selling anything, even subsistence and clothing, prohibiting the ministers of our holy religion from the exercise of their sacred calling, even the duty of visiting a sick parishioner or the performance of the funeral service at his grave or of offering consolation to his bereaved family. Mrs. E. the patriotic wife of a Confederate absentee, was arrested, charged with the grave offense of purchasing something she needed under the *permit* of a loyal lady who was so kind as to offer it to her for that purpose. There were men on the streets brave and loyal enough to watch Southern ladies, dog them to the stores, notice and report their purchases to the military authorities who in the omnipotence of their inquisitorial power threatened them with transportation North if the dignity of their law-martial was again trampled on or thus ruthlessly violated by these unprotected and defenseless females. Nor was this watching and dogging confined to the mercantile operations of the rebel ladies. Many a treasonable conspiracy was drummed up and conjecturely established by some of these self-constituted detectives. "I saw old Mr. G. actually whispering something in the ear of Miss S. as they came out of church Sunday," said one of these vigilant patriots and loyal lickspittles Monday morning early to the provost marshal. "You ought to double your sentinels and increase your guards. Something wrong is hatching. They are both disloyal and especially that little girl. She is poison and ought to be sent out. Her brothers were in the Fork last Friday and may be here tonight." "Never mind that Little Rebel. I will attend to her case," replied the official as the detective left the office. These remarks were overheard by two female friends of Mrs. E. as they retired after a fruitless intercession for her release.

In the absence of General Carter from his post as provost marshal, another assumed his responsible duties. His mantle fell upon a Foreigner, Major _____. He wore United States epaulettes, held a commission in the United States army, and of course was presumed to be a gentleman. Another detective soon reported to him that he had seen the rebellious Miss Sue actually leave the pavement and step into the mud near the curb stone rather than walk under the Union flag hanging over it. This intensely wicked and superlatively disloyal act—very pardonable as a piece of girlish prudery, and would have been so considered by General Carter himself—was by the detectives magnified into the very quintessence of disloyalty and rebellion and thus reported by them to the acting provost marshal who in the exuberance of his superior love of country, and his

greater vigilance over the *liberty* he was here to protect and defend against the machinations and intrigues of the *natives*—men women and children “to the manor born”—he pronounced it a punishable offense and worthy of banishment or even of transportation North. The crime was so heinous, the guilt so well established, that the patriotic wrath of the pro tem provost could be appeased only by the infliction of the aforementioned punishment. A crisis was at hand, a renewal of the rebellion in Tennessee was apprehended. One rebel girl, if not in arms, was yet unsubdued and defiant. *Fiat justitia—ruat celum*. Thus thought the autocratic provost pro tem at Knoxville—the successor of the polite and chivalrous Carter.

Some time after the defiant refusal of Sue to walk under the flag of a country hostile to her own, as was her wont, in passing from Lenoir’s to Riverside the residence of her sister, Mrs. Dickson, she went into General Carter’s office to procure from that officer the necessary passport. She inquired for General Carter and was told that he was still absent. She then mentioned the object of her call. Major Gratz³ inquired for her name. Learning this he signed the passport and pointed her attention to the printed oath of allegiance upon it. He rather rudely added, “You must sign that oath,” handing her the pen. She refused to sign the oath and threw the pen upon the counter remarking at the same time that General Carter had never in granting her a passport exacted from her an oath to renounce her allegiance to the Southern Confederacy in whose service her father and her five brothers were then engaged. The major then said something about the duty of loyalty. She replied, “I am loyal but my loyalty is only to the South. I will not sign that oath.” “Then you shall not leave town.” He was evidently excited and more irascible and passionate than gentlemen usually allow themselves to be, even in the exercise of an unpleasant official duty to a lady. His voice was tremulous with an unmanly anger as he charged her as she retired from the office, “You must stay in town. You sha’n’t go to the country.”

On the street Sue found her sister’s carriage waiting for her and she was soon on the road to Riverside. The driver had filled the same position for my family his whole life that he was now occupying for my two daughters. Though faithful to us, he was now loyal to our enemies and was thus entitled to the passport he always carried in his pocket. It was late and very cold. As the carriage approached the *lines* the sentinel on

³ Dr. Ramsey crossed out the Major’s name here and in the next paragraphs. No Major Gratz can be identified among the Union forces in East Tennessee at this time.

duty left his fire which he had kindled under a tree some distance from the road and started towards the carriage. The driver, not knowing that he was conniving at disloyalty, drew his own passport from his pocket and displaying it with a flourish exclaimed, "*All Right,*" and was permitted to pass by without further examination. They soon after arrived at Mrs. Dickson's but in a few minutes some Federal soldiers rode up to the gate and inquired for Sue and told her they had orders to take her a prisoner to Knoxville. She replied that she would not go, it was too late, the roads were too muddy, and the weather too inclement and that if Major Gratz wanted to see her he must send a carriage for her tomorrow. The soldiers persisted in demanding her immediate return. Sue still refused to go that night. Mrs. Dickson then declared that her little sister should not go with them. Then said they, "We will place a guard around the house and hold her a prisoner 'till a courier should be dispatched to town and receive the provost marshal's further orders."

It appears that this energetic and superlatively vigilant officer, baffled in his patriotic and magnanimous purpose of keeping a little rebel girl a prisoner of war within his strong fortifications, had achieved the great military feat of not only discovering the escape of a noncombatant prisoner but had also achieved the further glory and renown of promptly sending a sufficient armed force to make pursuit, to find, and to capture and hold as a prisoner one rebellious lady who was bold enough to say to him in his office "I owe allegiance only to Tennessee and the Southern Confederacy." What might have been the result of this daring pursuit and successful capture of Miss Sue, had the gallant originator of the enterprise—the commander in chief Major Gratz—been personally present, military strategists have not yet agreed. It has been suggested by some of the wisest and most experienced of them that if the soldiery besieging the house, instead of occupying the kitchen near it and receiving from Mrs. Dickson's a more liberal supply of provisions than they were accustomed to in the Federal camps, had built their campfires on or near the path to the spring they might have deprived the two ladies and the children and servants belonging to the house, of all practicable access to water and thus compelled a surrender, or at least dictate to the besieged honorable terms of capitulation. But that dignitary, having delegated to some subaltern the command of the pursuing troops, wisely remained in town. The escape of his prisoner from his entrenchments gave immediate rise to fabulous reports that Miss Sue intended to excite afresh the rebellious

spirit of her countrymen, rally around her standard the clansmen of Old Mecklenburg, build pontoons across the Holston, march at their head a second Joan of Arc, besiege Knoxville and capture Gratz. These fabulous reports received confirmation, from the information sent regularly to his headquarters every morning by some of his detectives. The substance of their reports was that they had actually heard with their own ears the night after the escape of Miss Sue, several of her classmates, associates and co-rebels singing Dixie—out-aloud too, with the candles burning and the window curtains up at that. "I tell you Major, these Dixie girls have got some good news and I believe Longstreet will be here tomorrow. All these disloyal secesh women must be sent out of our lines and the sooner this is done the better." Such rumors and alarms compelled the Major to acquiesce in what had now become the general public sentiment—the expulsion of Miss Sue from the Federal Lines.

This determination brings our narrative back to the besieged house at Riverside. Things remained out there in *statu quo ante-bellum*. A kind of armistice had obtained there for some time. The besieging party had made no approaches on the old castle, no entrenchments had been made, no batteries had been erected. Both camps were quiet; Mrs. Dickson furnishing the best of rations to the besiegers and allowing them to stay in her kitchen. The assailants in the meantime cutting her wood and laying it quietly on her porch ready for use and bringing water from the spring. Nothing indicated a renewal of hostilities. If war existed around Riverside it was a civilized warfare. One of the privates was heard to say he was tired of this war against women. They could do no harm anyhow, and they should be allowed to go and come when and where they pleased. Indeed, if all that was said and done by the besieging party, had been reported to the provost headquarters some of the loyal soldiers of the United States army would have been arrested for disloyalty to the Union and certainly to Major Gratz. The thing had become ridiculous and some of the officers clamored for a cessation of existing hostilities. But who should propose the terms of capitulation? Miss Sue could concede nothing. She was a rebel. She was a true Confederate. She loved and bowed down before the Southern flag and a compulsory oath of allegiance could not modify or change that allègiance. She persisted therefore in her refusal to take it. But the question was settled by the arrival of another functionary at Riverside who proposed that the prisoner should go out of the Federal lines tomorrow under flag of truce and thereafter remain in Dixie, and

that if Mrs. Ramsey, her mother, and Mrs. Breck, her widowed sister, chose to accompany her the privilege should be granted them to do so. Miss Sue replied that she could not go tomorrow. Her trunks and her wardrobe were then at Lenoir's and, using the imperative instead of the subjunctive mood, "I must have time to prepare for my long-wished-for exile to Dixie and my expatriation from Tennessee, my native home. As to my mother and sister, they are now watching around the sickbed of my dying sister at Lenoir's. You must consult them. They will decide for themselves. But as for me, if I can tear myself from my poor sister Henrietta and our dear mother and sister, I go cheerfully to Dixie. Banishment, expatriation, exile have no terrors for me. I suffer them cheerfully and can bear them patiently." Thus spake this brave girl, calm, defiant and graceful. The terms were accepted. A passport and transportation to Lenoir's were politely furnished and at her earliest convenience she hastened thither. Soon after arriving there a telegram from Knoxville was sent to her that the flag of truce train would leave there the next day and that she was required to come up on that morning's train. Her mother replied that Sue was not yet ready with her wardrobe. Her trunk was not yet packed. This explains to the reader the delay, as heretofore mentioned, which caused her to be a few days too late for the flag of truce. In the whole conduct of the military in these preparatory movements there was an appearance of indecent haste, but my ladies went at once to work in executing their part of the program.

Encamped around and near to Lenoir's was a large Federal force. Of this Colonel James F. Jaquess acted as provost marshal. Before packing her trunk Sue requested that officer to come over to inspect the packing and to see that no contraband of war went into her trunk. He was very polite and gentlemanly and said he would cheerfully obey her request but that he supposed the trunk would be again examined by Major Gratz, provost at Knoxville. This name when first mentioned elicited from Sue some reminiscences and remarks neither pleasant nor excessively charitable to the Knoxville subaltern, although not one unlady-like word escaped her lips. It might have been conjectured, though, from the words and motions of the speaker that she entertained no very exalted appreciation of the refinement, courtesy, culture or high breeding of the epauletted provost. To her remarks upon the character of a real gentleman Colonel Jaquess replied "Miss Sue when your wrath gets up to the boiling point just pour it out all on me. I can bear it. I know how to speak to ladies.

But let me advise you never to speak to these Dutch. They have no conception what a genuine lady is. Pour out your wrath on my head. I have been always accustomed to ladies. I understand them, and know how to speak to them. But, never talk to these Dutch." True to the instincts of a gentleman of refined feelings and of delicate sentiment, Colonel Jaquess during this conversation and the packing of the trunks never once turned his face in that direction nor once averted it from the fire around which they were seated. Though requested to see if anything there was contraband of war, he simply replied, "Miss Sue, a lady is never to be watched." As he retired from the hall, Colonel Jaquess took the young rebel kindly by the hand and bade her a polite and affectionate farewell. My ladies all appreciated his kindly manner, his sympathizing demeanor to them. As already said, at Knoxville another provost marshal—true too, to his own instincts—violated the lock of Sue's trunk, scrutinized its contents closely, and roughly replacing them put the United States seal upon it and left surlily. I never saw Colonel Jaquess but I infer his mother was a lady and he has conferred honor upon that lady by this exhibition of her method of training her son.

The narrative of Sue's varied experiences in Tennessee as thus given to me in detail, the morning after we met at Liberty, Virginia, had failed to convince me that she had perpetrated so disloyal an act as to justify her expatriation. After dinner, therefore, I said, "Sue was there nothing more disloyal in your conduct in Tennessee than that you played and sang Dixie, declined the attentions offered you by Federal officers, refused to walk under the Federal flag, or sign the oath of allegiance to a government hostile to your own? I concede this was all *disloyal* to the United States if your state had not previously absolved all allegiance on the part of every one of her citizens, even girls and boys, due to the old union. Was there not something more atrocious that you had done thus to provoke the resentment of the military authorities by which you were surrounded at Knoxville, Lenoir's and Riverside?" She replied, "Pa, I have no disposition to conceal from you anything which I have done. I confess I always did dislike the Yankees. They are so different from our Southern people. The New England gentlemen that used to visit you at Mecklenburg, such as Dr. Coffin, Dr. Strong, Mr. Sherman, Mr. Cornelius, and others of that kind, were erudite, eloquent, polite and even refined—gentlemen of taste, culture and weight of character, unselfish, generous, liberal, patriotic and public spirited—but I never considered them as Yan-

kees but as countrymen of our own and entitled to regard and esteem. Even for my tutoresses from the North I never cherished any respect. Many of them were not ladies. After the war began, what had been prejudice once became intensified into hatred and hostility. A blue coat and a [Illeg.] I detested as enemies of enlightened liberty and as the tools of tyrants and usurpers. Under the influence of these feelings I participated in an affair of which I make this recital," handing to me a paper headed the *Lost Rifle*. It is appended on the next page.