

CHAPTER XV

Misfortunes and Bereavements

We listened to this interesting narrative with the liveliest satisfaction. I told Sue that while there was nothing to condemn in all her conduct, she might well be proud of the *overt act* itself as while it proved her disloyalty to the Union her kindness to Guffin had also demonstrated her loyalty to humanity, to womanly feelings and to her Southern sympathies. She added one further item to her narrative of the siege and capitulation at Riverside. Before the passport to Lenoir's for her trunk could be signed by the *parvenu* at Knoxville it was required that some loyalist should guarantee her good conduct for the interim between her release and her expatriation. Who should be the guarantee? Mrs. Dickson, her sister,—a lone widow, with her two little boys, unprotected and dependent—had been told that if she did not take the necessary oath of allegiance, the fate of her house and property should be the same as that of her father's across the river and in ashes. Anticipating the same vandalism in her own case she had been induced to take the oath and thus become loyal. She volunteered and became the guarantee for Sue's good behavior. Mrs. Dickson had taken the oath under duress and doubtless with many mental reservations. Her sympathies remained unchanged, and were always what they ought to be. She was the only member of my family that was ever reduced to the humiliating necessity of renouncing allegiance to the South. Had she persisted in declining the oath her military tyrants exacted from her, the widow and the fatherless would soon have been made like ourselves houseless and homeless. Sue told us further that after the Yankees had made the discovery that a Confederate soldier had been concealed at Lenoir's, new precautions were adopted against the recurrence of similar acts of disloyalty. Additional guards were appointed, the sentinels were duplicated and a more rigid surveillance established over the rebel family at Lenoir's. This will account for the detective policy set on foot on her arrival at Knoxville and the rigid siege of Riverside. The vigilance and energy and skill of the provost pro tem at headquarters were

unannounced, and unrewarded. No promotion of the gallant principal in the affair took place. The ridiculous farce became a subject of merriment even to the invaders. No censure was ever insinuated against the Little Rebel. Her conduct was universally commended. And she herself was gratified in what she had most desired, her banishment to Dixie. This was the more gratifying also to myself as Mrs. Ramsey sent me word by her that as soon as their duties to Henrietta would permit her she and Mrs. Breck would seek a similar refuge in the Sunny South. Under the hope that this would soon take place we all at Liberty concluded that Sue should remain there with the kind exiled family of her uncle Colonel Crozier with the promise on my part of re-joining at an early day this hospitable home of Tennessee refugees.

Accordingly the next day I took the train for Atlanta and was soon absorbed by my financial and professional duties there. The enemy had made daily advances in the direction of this important metropolitan city of central interior Georgia. I wrote, therefore, to Mr. Memminger for further instructions to govern my movements in case of the siege or capture of that place. He replied that he had no instructions to give me on that subject but that he surrendered to me the entire control of my depository. I had an interview with General _____ and got from him the assurance that he would give me due notice if he would find it necessary to evacuate the city. In my correspondence with the secretary of the treasury I suggested two branches of policy, each necessary for the success of our cause. One of these was to enact a law making the Confederate issues everywhere a legal tender. The other to grant to France the entire monopoly of our cotton trade for _____ years upon conditions of the recognition by that power of the Southern Confederacy and of a full alliance with us for that purpose. Several large cotton planters from the South then at Atlanta assisted me in the elaboration and defense of this policy and joined in the application for its immediate adoption.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the Confederate States met in May, 1864, at Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. My venerated pastor Reverend W. A. Harrison was with me at Atlanta and suggested that though his Presbytery (Knoxville), *flagranti bello*,

could not convene and for that reason had given him no credentials as a commissioner to that ecclesiastical body he wished to attend its session at Charlotte. He asked me to accompany him. I did so. Tennessee had not a single representative duly authorized and commissioned. But I met several of my old clerical friends and associates in early life. The moderator, Reverend J. A. Lyon, D.D., was educated in my Alma Mater, and had often been my guest at home, and had married the daughter of my brother-in-law, Mr. Deadrick of Knoxville. My new pastor at Atlanta, Reverend _____ Wilson, D.D., was elected the successor of Dr. Lyon. I had often mentioned to my home pastor, Mr. Harrison, the extent of Presbyterianism in North Carolina and the size of their congregations, number of communicants, etc., etc., and he wished to see and preach to one of the seven old churches (not of Asia) but of Mecklenburg. We went up by rail on Saturday afternoon to my grandfather's old church, Hopewell.

One of the earliest ecclesiastical organizations in the southern colonies, Hopewell was more than one hundred years old. Hopewell and Sugar Creek constituted in the olden time one pastorate. Of the former my grandfather, John McKnitt Alexander, Esquire, was the founder and the oldest ruling elder and his elder brother, Hezekiah Alexander, Esquire, exercised the same functions in Sugar Creek. It was in the midst of these two then infant and frontier churches that the fire of liberty and of independence broke forth into a flame May 20, 1775. Besides the two Alexanders already mentioned four others—Abraham, Adam, Charles and Ezra—were all members of the Mecklenburg Convention. John McKnitt Alexander was the secretary. We passed the old oak tree under the boughs of which these early Whigs of the Revolution deliberated, keeping their proceedings as secret even from their wives. The charge of *disloyalty* is no new thing in our family. It began in 1775, was repeated in 1785 during the Franklin revolt, was persisted in 1860. May right, liberty, and conscience continue to be the title of nobility to all my posterity as they have been to our ancestry. Incendiarism is also no new thing in my family. Loyalists burned the house and destroyed the papers of J. McKnitt Alexander during the Revolution. Loyalists burned the house and destroyed the papers and other property of his grandson J. G. Mc. Ramsey in 1863,—a common calamity, a common patent of nobility and a common infamy to an ignoble loyalty. The next day at Hopewell I showed Mr. Harrison the graves of my ancestors and told him if I died out of Tennessee I wished my remains to be interred in the same sacred cemetery. Though not re-

lated to me he was sensibly impressed with our solemn surroundings. New-made graves of the Confederate soldiers brought home for interment, the occupants of nearly every pew in mourning, the sad aspect of our public affairs all tended to desecularize the mind, and prepare the audience for public worship. The pastor in charge, Reverend S. C. Pharr, invited the Tennessee divine and the exiles' refugee-in-attendance, Reverend W. A. Harrison, my excellent pastor, to occupy the pulpit for the entire day. He is always eloquent and impressive. But on that occasion he exceeded himself. I lived afterwards two or three years in the same neighborhood and had frequent opportunities of hearing high commendation bestowed upon this pulpit effort of Mr. Harrison.

That night we spent in the house of a kinsman in the neighborhood. His son, Captain Francis Ramsey Alexander of the Confederate army, had come home from Petersburg on a short furlough and charged with the sad duty of bringing home for interment the remains of an officer in his command. That duty performed, the next morning had been appointed as the time of his departure to the tented field. Of course, his return to the army threw a deep gloom over the socialities of the evening. I observed with pleasure the dutiful and filial demeanor of Captain Alexander to those he left behind and especially to his aged mother and his affectionate sisters. He was very tall and graceful and bore a very martial appearance. He spoke little and in a subdued tone. Seated between his mother and a sister and on the same sofa he manifested to them all the soothing attentions and affection of the son and brother, and not withstanding the presence of the two strangers who witnessed the sorrowful scene he reclined his head alternately on the shoulder of each. At family worship his deep toned bass was tremulous and sometimes scarcely audible from the tenderness and emotion which he vainly endeavored to conceal. He politely lighted Mr. Harrison and myself to our room and as the captain retired from it I remarked that the scene we had witnessed below was ominous and that our gallant young friend had a presentiment that next morning's interview would be the last he would have on earth with his family. We witnessed the sorrowful parting at the depot as we took the train next morning for the army of Virginia. The railroad between Greensboro North Carolina and Danville, Virginia was not yet completed and we had to walk thirteen miles—the length of this incompleting hiatus. At our bivouac at night Captain Alexander politely and kindly spread his India-rubber blanket for my comfort and protection from the damp earth on the

roadside, assisted in carrying my baggage and gave me such other attentions as I could have only expected from a considerate son. At Danville we separated.

He had told me that he had the presentiment that he would fall in his next battle. This turned out to be, alas, too true. Arriving at his camp just at the moment to make the night assault on the entrenchments of the enemy, he gallantly took the head of his company and led the assault. Cheering his Mecklenburg men forward he received a fatal wound in the breast and died soon after. His remains were carried back to Hopewell and there interred. I saw his sword afterwards. It was the sword worn by his patriotic ancestor General William Davidson who fell February first, 1781 at Cowans Ford, and has since been formally presented by the relatives and friends of Captain Alexander to the faculty and trustees of Davidson College, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Of this institution of learning Captain Alexander was an alumnus and had he survived he would have reflected high honor upon his Alma Mater. The sword of the ancestor who fell fighting in the Revolutionary war in defense of American independence in 1781 was worn by the youthful descendant who fell in defense of Southern independence in 1864. It has been the property of two southern officers alike gallant and patriotic. Amongst the archives of Davidson College, this relic, well representing the enlarged patriotism and the heroic virtue of old Mecklenburg, cannot be too carefully preserved or more fondly revered and appreciated. It is sacred to freedom and independence. The remains of these two patriots lie within the walls of Hopewell cemetery. Requiescat in peace! I wrote a suitable obituary of my young kinsman and friend, Francis Ramsey Alexander, and a copy of it will be appended if it can be procured.

In the meantime, with the concurrence of Colonel Torbett and other officers of the Bank of Tennessee, my Knoxville branch of that institution, had been removed to Augusta and placed in the vaults of Mr. Metcalf's bank in the care of my faithful cashier, Dr. B. Rush Strong. I remained with the Confederate States depository at Atlanta. The enemy was making steady advances in the direction of that city. Seated at the breakfast table at my boarding house, Mr. McCrosky's, I was beckoned to from the door by a messenger from the telegraph office to come to the door. He handed to me the telegram. It was from my old countryman and friend

and at the time the commander of three of my sons in the Confederate service, General J. C. Vaughn, and was dated "Blue Ridge, Virginia."

June 1864.

Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey, Atlanta, Georgia.

Robert safe. Alexander a prisoner. Arthur badly wounded—leg amputated.

J. C. Vaughn

I turned to Mr. Cleage and exclaiming, "Shocking. Terrible—terrible" and asked him, "Has the train left?" He ran down to the depot and ascertained that the morning train was gone. In his absence I had my trunk packed and already on the porch. Several of my Tennessee friends, and amongst the rest Governor Harris, came in. I inquired where Blue Ridge was? Could I reach it by railroad? Where had the battle taken place? Was it probably within the enemy's lines? Had other telegrams been received? With them I went down into town to the newspaper offices and to the headquarters of General _____, then commander of the post. I could ascertain nothing definite and had to await impatiently for further intelligence. The train could not go till next morning so as to make the proper eastern connection at Augusta. This interim I improved in so arranging my depository now in the Fulton Bank as to enable Mr. T. A. Cleage, now acting as my assistant, to have it carefully transported to Augusta, should unknown army contingencies in my absence render that measure necessary. In the afternoon Governor Harris and others called to see me again and to give me such further information as they could procure from every accessible source. Little of it was definite. The substance of it was that the enemy had made a sudden incursion from West Virginia, had met the Confederate forces in Augusta County and with a vastly superior force—capturing many prisoners, leaving many dead and wounded on the field of battle—were compelling the remainder of our armies to fall back into the interior for the protection and defense of Salem, Liberty and Lynchburg, and that some of these places were probably within the Federal lines and all railroad communication probably cut off. I was perplexed beyond measure what to do under these uncertainties. My poor wounded son might be suffering somewhere for such attentions and services as I could render him if I could but reach him. Governor Harris advised me that a further telegram might be expected and remonstrated against my ventur-

ing so far within the enemy's line as the hospital might be in which the wounded would be placed. But I determined to go by next morning's train, hoping to receive on my route such information as might make my way and my duty plainer. I did so. At Columbia I saw a dispatch in the morning paper that the enemy was at Staunton River and had been gallantly repulsed by Captain _____. This discouraged my further progress, as that point was over one hundred miles this side of where Arthur was wounded. On the train I learned that though our troops had prevented the crossing of the enemy at Staunton River, they remained still there and held the country beyond it. At Rock Hill I hired a private conveyance and deflecting a little to the left went by Mr. Pressley's, whose daughter was the wife of my son Alexander and who was, with her family, now at her father's. I arrived there and gave her the first information that Colonel Ramsey had been captured and his brother Arthur wounded. During the short time I was with her my granddaughter Nina was born. At early dawn Mr. Pressley sent me to Charlotte where I arrived in time to take the train. At Danville I heard where Piedmont battleground was, and tried to hire a private conveyance across the intermediate country so as to hasten my arrival for his relief. Neither horse nor buggy could I procure for love or money. I kept on in the train. Arrived at Burkesville Junction I found I was too late to get on the train for Lynchburg. It had passed three-quarters of an hour before. As I left the car a friend getting on recognized me and, unwilling to communicate what he knew, handed me a letter and hastily left me. Seeing it was from my beloved wife I stood in the hot sun and read it.

Bristol July 11 —64

My dear Doctor,

I scarcely know how to write my heart is so sore I am crushed, my health is good. I have had a fatiguing trip but bore up through it all and hurried on to try and get to see my poor son. Now that hope is gone, and I don't care where I go it is so hard it is difficult to keep from murmuring. I have prayed so earnestly and suffered such anxiety for poor Arthur ever since he left me, the most I wished to come through the lines for was to see him. I received a letter from Alex—from camp Morton Indiana he wrote the day after he got there said he was a prisoner and dear Arthur wounded in the foot we were then at M. J. D. The flag of truce was to be sent out

in two days and I was anxious to come. I was shocked when I heard that, but I dont know how I survived when I heard he was gone and we should never see him more. I often exclaim what have I done that I am made to suffer so much. I was often sick last winter and was sick after I came to M. J.s but felt better for two weeks before I started than for some time—it must be that I was being prepared for a greater affliction than I had yet endured—

O that God would comfort us under these severe bereavements—I had a distressing time before. Dear Ettie's health was bad all winter she never got over the shock she received when the little children died talked often about dicing said it would not make her die any sooner to think and be prepared. Mr. Park was sent for after the birth of her babe she had become worse he received her into the church and baptised the children the little boy was about 8 days old, after that she was all vain; she went to Heaven the 25th day May. Then the question often arose in my mind who will be the next? now it is answered my youngest and beautiful and good boy. Poor Ettie often during her sickness talked about you her brothers and sisters particularly Arthur prayed for all and talked to all of her many friends who came and nursed her. It has been a task to write this much. Our friends advise us to stay here Crozier is going to get us a house some friends say they will lend us furniture etc Crozier and Mck. are here and can get supplies. Wesley is here to assist us in the work. i have written to Sue. it will take but little to do us and we shall not want it long. My eyes are so weak I can scarcely see to write. May God have mercy on us all your affectionate M. B. Ramsey.

M. J. and the little boys were well—

I will not attempt a description of my feelings at the moment of reading this excellent letter from my excellent wife. No pen can describe them. It was nearly eleven o'clock. The intensity of the beaming July sun reflected from the arid space around me had not driven me to seek a cooling shade before I perused it. I had not heard before of the death of my favorite daughter Henrietta, much less of that of our Benjamin, my favorite son, poor Arthur, whom I was in vain trying to find and hoping to rescue and relieve. My heart was ready to break with agony indescribable and unparalleled. I was inconsolable and disconsolate. Oh, could I have seen these children die! Could I have taken leave of them with a father's fondness!

Could I have received a look of confidence and love and filial recognition from them! I stood there like a statue, inanimate from affliction, hardened by misfortune and lifeless from adversity. I stood surrounded by physical ruin. Burkesville was in ashes. The depot had been burnt. Standing chimneys and broken walls attested that the incendiary and vandal had been there to burn, to ruin and to lay waste. Not a vestige of Burkesville station was left. The charred trunks of branchless trees and leafless limbs stood there as spectres to intimidate and as ghosts to frighten the unfortunate beholder. The trains had left. Not a living being was in view. A death-like silence prevailed and all my surroundings were as quiet and noiseless as the grave. I stood some minutes amid these desolations motionless as if in a reverie. There was a stupid weight upon my senses—a strange apathy possessed me. I could not—I did not weep. If I could have shed tears, they would have given some relief to a heart oppressed by a burthen too heavy to be borne. A flood of grief had overwhelmed it and sorrow had well nigh stopped its pulsations. This stupor produced a feeling of syncope. If I had stood a minute longer in the hot sunshine I would have fainted. I looked for a shade. No one was in my reach. I carried my valise to the foot of a dead tree not far off and availed myself of the narrow shade its sapless trunk afforded me from the burning sun. Seated upon the valise my sight began to return and the tendency to syncope went off. I read and reread my wife's good letter and its pious tone and submissive spirit reanimated me. I began to look for my next step. I had not seen a single human being since the cars left. It was Sunday and the place bore the stillness and quiet of a graveyard. At length a Negro man came in view. I inquired the way and the distance to the nearest house. He told me all the houses were burned for two miles around but the hospital and pointed out the direction of it in the nearest forest. I walked up to the hospital, told the chief surgeon who I was and gave him a brief history of the past. I mentioned the sad contents of my wife's letter. I wish I could recollect so as to give his name. He was from a place which he spoke of as Black and Whites some place below. He had like myself been despoiled of everything and entered at once and with an earnest sympathy into all my misfortunes and bereavements. I found him to be a Christian gentleman, very hospitable to the extent of his scanty supplies—for the enemy's rapacity had been exercised even upon his hospital stores. I asked him to make me useful to the sick and wounded under his charge. He took me to see his most difficult cases. One of these awakened my deepest sympathy and secured my greatest vig-

ilance and care. It was a knee joint wound received in the recent raid of _____ in the valley. Like my son Arthur he was yet a boy, little over eighteen. Like him, too, he was modest and retiring, evidently well raised and intelligent and anxious to recover so as to avenge the wrongs of his country. His countenance, his hair, his eyes, his stature all reminded me of Arthur. I went to see him the more frequently the day I stayed there so as to remind me of another youthful patriot and soldier who had fallen at Piedmont and to inspire this suffering patient with hope and encouragement. His mother had been sent for. I cheered him all I could. He was better when I left him and I hoped his convalescence would continue.

Sunday P.M. I telegraphed to Mrs. Ramsey at Bristol that I would arrive on the next train and to Sue, now at Liberty, that I would call for her there and take her on to meet her disconsolate mother and sister. Time can never obliterate from my recollection these occurrences at Burkesville Junction. They transpired nearly six years ago and yet the impressions they made on my mind and heart are as fresh and vivid as if they had taken place yesterday. The kindness of Dr. _____, the surgeon, and the interest I felt in one of his patients—the facsimile of my son Arthur—I can never forget.

I took the train. Marks of the recent raid met me everywhere. At Lynchburg I learned that, as Governor Harris and other friends at Atlanta had told me, the falling back of the Confederate forces from Piedmont and the consequent pursuit of them by the raiders would have baffled any efforts of my own to reach and assist my wounded boy, had I even known exactly at what point he would be found. I ascertained that for more than two weeks the country between Piedmont and the Staunton River had been in the occupancy of the enemy's cavalry. It was the fortune of war and uncontrollable destiny that I should never again see my son Arthur.

The train passed a station called Blue Ridge, probably the office from which General Vaughn had telegraphed to me the disaster of June fifth at Piedmont. The high bridges near the Peaks of Otter were not yet repaired. The passengers walked around them. Coming in sight of Liberty I saw Sue standing ready with her trunks to go on with me towards Bristol. I did not get off the train though urged thereto by hosts of old friends who crowded around my car and manifested a generous sympathy in all that concerned me and mine. Some of Arthur's comrades spoke highly of his manly virtues and his gallant conduct in battle. Some of them had been

slightly wounded at his side but had escaped capture and were now convalescent.

At length I neared Bristol. My telegram to General Ramsey had been received and he was at the depot awaiting my arrival. Without saying a word he pointed to the Lancaster House to me and leaving Sue and her baggage in his charge I hastened to the hotel. There I met my bereaved wife and disconsolate daughter, Mrs. Breck, dressed in mourning and drowned in tears. In a few minutes after, Sue came in accompanied by her brother Crozier. Such a meeting very rarely takes place even in this world of trouble, sorrow, affliction and bereavement. I felt, we all felt,—though I could not say it in words—“Surely I am the man that hath seen affliction.” The first word I uttered was “Where is McKnitt?” I dreaded to hear the reply. Crozier answered, “At the head of a scout in Johnson County.” I knew that was a position of imminent danger for a Tennessee secessionist to occupy in times and places of civil war: but still the answer gave me a sensible relief as he might be still alive. I next inquired, “Where is Robert?” “The last we heard from him, he was at the head of his scouting party, with General Early’s command in the Valley of Virginia and surrounded by the Federal legions, with little probability of escape or of avoiding a desperate fight or capture.” But I felt that the same kind Providence that in many a past conflict, had shielded and protected him unharmed, might still vouchsafe to him his further deliverance from danger and from death. “When did you hear from Colonel Ramsey?” “Not since his letter from Camp Chase announcing to us his own capture and the desperate wound of his poor brother Arthur.” “How are you, Crozier?” “Still an unexchanged prisoner—paroled at Vicksburg and in the hospital here under treatment of my uncle Frank A. Ramsey, surgeon in chief of the Confederate States army of Tennessee. He and his family are now here in Bristol.” “What have you heard from poor Ardie (Mrs. Dickson) and her two little boys?” “Still at Riverside—her fields of wheat and oats still pastured by the Yankee cavalry. No corn or other grain except a few bushels of the former secreted upstairs in her house—all her stock and provisions taken or destroyed but her family unmolested otherwise by the enemy encamped around the spring and the barn.” General Carter had been so kind and polite as to give her a guard. “How are they at Lenoir’s?” “Almost under a state of siege. Federal encampments all over their large plantation and the headquarters of the commanding general in the yard. An immense destruc-

tion of private property—many of their magnificent forests had been cut down and appropriated—fences burned, everything in the cribs, granaries, barns, smoke house and cellars had been seized and used or wasted by the invaders.” These interrogatories and their answers occupied us the first few hours after this to us interesting meeting.

Afterwards I learned from Mrs. Ramsey and Mrs. Breck other details especially about our daughter Henrietta Lenoir and our youngest son Arthur, now both, as we trusted, gone to rest in Heaven. As mentioned in Mrs. Ramsey’s letter, Mrs. Lenoir had never recovered from the shock she endured from the death of her two sons in the fall of the preceding year. That wound proved to be immedicable. Her depression was, as my wife now told me, much increased and aggravated when I and Arthur, her little brother, left her house for Longstreet’s headquarters. No father was ever loved with a more filial fondness or a more dutiful affection, or a more partial admiration than she bore for me. For obvious reason she was devoted to her youngest brother. He was the pet of our household. He was amicable, intelligent beyond his years, manly, modest, courteous, obliging, obedient and passionately devoted and affectionate to his mother and sisters. His defect of vision only made him the object of higher interest and deeper solicitude for his safety. After our departure from Lenoir’s in December Henrietta became very anxious for us both, often inquired for us and felt dissatisfied that she could hear nothing from us. She never mentioned and did not at all regard the loss of property, whether already inflicted or apprehended, but her anxiety for the absent members of our family was intense and persistent. No maternal kindness, no sympathy from sisters around her could assuage her grief or mitigate her sorrow. She had no melancholy, no discontent, no murmuring spirit. The heart was wounded. It was crushed. She laid hold of the covenant, joined the church of her fathers, offered her children to God in baptism, left her blessing and her farewell for absent friends and quietly fell asleep and woke in Heaven. . . .

Soon after her interment Mrs. Ramsey determined to carry into effect the purpose she had early made to join her exiled family in the South. At the solemn and earnest request of her dying daughter she had promised for herself and for me that we would take and raise her two children as we had raised and trained our own. The youngest was only seven weeks old and would require therefore the attention and care of its own nurse. My wife left the grandchildren, therefore, temporarily at least where they were

and with Mrs. Breck came up to Riverside, intending to rest there with Mrs. Dickson a few days before setting out for the South. Before these ladies had recovered from the fatigues, anxieties and watchings necessarily undergone at Lenoir's a letter was received dated at Camp Morton, June 1864, from our son Francis Alexander Ramsey stating that he had been captured and was then in prison at a Federal camp, that his brother Arthur was dangerously wounded and left on the battlefield at Piedmont and asking his mother to send him some greenbacks, and to get other Tennessee friends to help him. Alexander also stated that Robert was in the fight but he had not seen him after it was over. This distressing intelligence hastened the preparations that were making at Riverside for the departure to Dixie. Mrs. Ramsey replied the same day she received this letter and inclosed to Alexander some money. General Carter had previously given my ladies permission to go out of his lines under flag of truce and take with them a bed and bedding and their wearing apparel. Their trunks were brought to town and subjected to the scrutiny of army officials at headquarters. Nothing wrong was detected and the United States seal was placed upon the trunks.

The flag of truce car was a very common box one without seats, no conveniences for carrying water, indeed with no appendages of comfort or convenience more than are found on every lumber or coal train. And yet there were Mrs. Ramsey, Mrs. Breck, Mrs. Vandyke the wife of Captain Vandyke of the Confederate army, Miss Anna Law, the poetess-laureate of Tennessee, Miss Mag. Williams and others. A decent respect to the commonest proprieties of life and the usages of honorable war would have required from the United States officers commanding at Knoxville to furnish to ladies entitled to consideration and respect from their age and position if not from regard to their sex a more decent and cleanly car. If the passengers were, as some of them were, exiled because of their disloyalty would that justify an officer wearing United States epaulettes to expose them to the further mortification of taking seats upon their trunks or upon the floor of a rough car exposed to the gaze of surrounding loyalists? It may have been all right on the part of the victorious invaders, to use this mode and this style of banishing from their native homes citizens of such character and worth. Who were they? One of the ladies, the oldest of the number—a sexagenarian and two—the daughter of one of the pioneers of Tennessee and of the founders of Knoxville—one of its first merchants, Captain John Crozier: He was one of its *patres conscripti*—who

had *ab urbe condita* resided there, whose money and enterprise had liberally contributed to the growth, progress and enlargement of the young community then germinating into life, whose elegant and refined hospitality always welcomed the stranger and contributed to the comfort and encouragement of the immigrant and the friendless, whose munificence endowed and whose patronage supported all our early institutions of learning and religion, whose benefactions are even yet felt and acknowledged in the embellishment and material improvement of society and of the country, whose noble heart ever beat responsive to the spirit of an enlarged patriotism and the dictates of an unselfish public spirit, whose martial bearing designated him as the fit representative of ancient chivalry, to conduct the funeral ceremonials observed at the close of the last century upon the demise of the great Washington. "Conspicuous at the head of the funeral Cortège was the company of Dragoons under the lead of Captain Crozier—the hilts of their broadswords draped in black crape." He was the intimate companion and associate of the two governors, Blount and Sevier, and on the occasion of more than one affair of honor acted as the *friend* of the chivalrous Jackson. Such was the prestige of one of the ladies *boxed* out of the Federal lines by General _____ of the United States army at Knoxville. Who was another of them? A granddaughter of the patriot and soldier Isaac Shelby,—the Hero of King's Mountain and of the River Raisen—"Whose youthful patriotism first glowed under the genial influence of a Carolina sky, but retained its ardor undiminished by the cold and chilling temperature of a Canadian winter." (Ramsey's *Tennessee*, page 10 of Introduction.) Of the others it is sufficient here to remark they were all ladies of the highest respectability.

The flag of truce train was ready to depart. My ladies took a sorrowful leave of remaining friends. Many of them accompanied them to the depot. There was assembled a large crowd both of the loyal and the disloyal. No letters were allowed to be sent out, but oral messages and good wishes were whispered in the ears of the banished passengers. Very sincere tears were shed by many on the platform who wished for the privilege of exile too. The train was put in motion. It was the first day of July 1864, intensely hot. But the discomforts of a dark and crowded boxcar were not felt in the fond wish of soon getting beyond the enemy's lines and breathing again the free air of Dixie. Mrs. Ramsey and Mrs. Breck said they felt a relief they had not experienced for months from the cherished anticipation of finding our wounded son Arthur and of contributing their soothing

care and attention in some tent or hospital wherever he might be found.

What was their disappointment and sorrow when, arrived at Strawberry Plains only fifteen miles from Knoxville, Major Smith entered their boxcar and announced that a telegram from headquarters required that the train should stop and the baggage and persons of each passenger aboard should be searched for contraband or treasonable papers. My wife apprehending that some delay might follow and thus postpone the principal object of her mission to Dixie, pointing to her trunk said to the major that it had been already searched and that it now bore the United States seal upon it. He replied that he had to obey his orders. An ambulance was improvised and the ladies were sent in it across the plantation and to the house of G. C. McBee, an old friend and patron of my own and a good Confederate. Arrived at his house the ladies were showed into a room full of strange men. The house had been stripped of all its furniture and everything movable. Mrs. Ramsey could not recognize our old acquaintance McBee—his attire and surroundings were so changed. She asked him for some water. As he handed it to her, he recognized my wife and told her who he was. She inquired for his family. They were all sick. He took her to Mrs. McBee's sickroom, where were also her grandchildren around her very sick. She alluded at once to my long professional services to herself and her family and inquired for me. Mr. McBee mentioned in an undertone their changed condition from profusion to want. An officer summoned Mrs. Ramsey into a private room. She was ushered into it and there met by two women picked up from the camp who said they were required to search her person. One of them seemed to know who Mrs. Ramsey was and not yet divested of all womanly instincts rather apologized and said in conclusion that, "You, Mrs. Ramsey, would do the same for your side." With her usual gravity and dignity she said, "I would do almost anything honorable for the South, but this I could never do: proceed though and execute your orders." This done, Mrs. Ramsey was allowed to retire again to Mrs. McBee's sick chamber. The searching process was carried into effect with each of the suspected ladies. When this was done the major again summoned my wife to submit to a closer search. There had been found on one of her co-passengers some articles—Confederate uniform—concealed under her clothing, and this had prompted the re-examination of my wife's person. But the ordeal was again submitted to with as a becoming spirit of self denial and gracefulness as was compatible with the exigencies of the occasion. She re-entered the private room as before and said to one of the au-

gust females in waiting, "You seemed to be satisfied with your first search—what do you consider contraband?" "Gold, pistols and medicine and *sich* like. Have you anything of the sort concealed under your dresses?" and pointing to the Confederate uniform still lying on the floor, exclaiming with an air of vulgar triumph, "See there what we got from Mrs. Vandyke." Mrs. Ramsey carried around her person and wore two pockets which she produced. There were laid upon a table and the search further prosecuted with unfaltering loyalty and with a patriotic fidelity of research that should be rewarded by promotion or a pension.

I have had no opportunity to examine the official report of this daring achievement or the order book of some official, subaltern or principal at Knoxville, who telegraphed to Major Smith the search warrant, but in all conscience let the distinguished dictator of that famous telegram wear the laurels he has so gallantly won. But the search was still further prosecuted. My wife was an admitted rebel. She had refused the oath. Her five sons were or had been in the rebel service. There must be something further of treason, stratagem, and spoils concealed about her disloyal person. She must be searched *in extremis* and her criminality and guilt fully established and exposed. The virtuoso at the head of these inquisitorial transactions stooped to the servile duties of unlacing Mrs. Ramsey's shoes, scrutinizing them closely and replacing them on the pedal extremities of the suspected Southern lady, at her bidding relaced the shoes, and nothing discouraged by finding nothing contraband of war proceeded to rip open with a knife the hem of her outer garment. The seamstress that had made it, had taken very short stitches and after ripping the first yard of its circumference she found the task of ripping rather tedious and fruitless and she abandoned it in despair and was contented with the mere hasty manipulation and digital indentations of the remainder of the hem and retired from this scene of her glory carrying with her the two unopened side pockets as the legitimate spoils of war and trophies of victory. Mrs. Ramsey retired again to the sickroom of Mrs. McBee and awaited the decision of Major Smith.

That officer soon came to her and handed back to her her gold and other monies from one of the pockets and the entire contents of the other—her husband's *will* and some, to him, very valuable private and official papers. I had left them with her at Lenoir's when I bade her adieu there in December—uncertain whether I could escape death or capture. The major had not looked into these official papers very closely. One of them was the official receipt of the secretary of the Confederate States treasury for be-

tween one and two millions of dollars canceled and forwarded to his department by me from Atlanta. My wife was aware of its value to me in the settlement of my account to that extent and had taken the precaution to burn the envelope containing it. This bore the official stamp of the Confederate States treasury and a hasty glance would have at once disclosed the purport of the remittance. Major Smith must therefore have given a very rapid inspection. But when he handed to Mrs. Ramsey her money and especially her gold she was not only surprised but delighted. She thanked him very politely for returning it as she told him without that she could not travel or go on to find her wounded son. He was evidently ashamed of the participation in this ridiculous farce imposed upon him by his orders and had executed his part of the search with the delicacy and refinement of a true gentleman.

What became of the Confederate uniform never transpired. The Major was more confused at its discovery than the lady on whom the grey had been found and he was polite enough never to allude to it. It was apprehended at first that the great offense of carrying out to Dixie a few yards of the grey would be considered as so capital as to demand for its punishment on the part of the United States transportation North. The telegraph soon quieted this apprehension and the passengers returned to the train to go again through the ordeal of examining their trunks, carpet bags, etc. These had been left in the car surrounded by a guard. As she left the car before going to the house, Mrs. Breck had slipped her silver and other valuables from her pockets into a large provision basket. It required some ingenuity to contrive a replacement of her effects so as to conceal them. She took the opportunity, as soon as the carpetbag of one of the ladies was examined, to change her seat to her side carrying the provision basket with her. While the search of the trunks was going on she found the opportunity to slip her silver into the carpetbag already examined and it was not found.

The ceremony of the search was now over and the flag of truce train was again in motion. Every minute appeared an hour to my two ladies who were of course most anxious to get on. At Mossy Creek the railroad was not yet so far repaired as to allow the car to go further. This was most depressing news. Mrs. Ramsey remonstrated with Major Smith and reminded him that the transportation was to Greeneville. He desired my wife to write to General Carter and assured her that if he got permission to do so he would return immediately to Mossy Creek provided with am-

bulances to carry them forward to Greeneville. He obtained the permission and with little loss of time returned and with one ambulance and one baggage wagon took the passengers forward. He was indeed kind and obliging to my ladies, inquired for and procured the best places for their comfortable lodging and entertainment. On one occasion Mrs. Ramsey mentioned rather reproachfully the scenes and search at McBee's. He disavowed all agency in it. She added that the next time she was subjected to such an ordeal she could wish the officer would select ladies for her inquisitors. He felt the rebuke keenly and again exculpated himself from all participation in the selection of the women who executed the search warrant—said someone else had improvised them beforehand.

At Greeneville he rode forward before the arrival of the ambulance and procured lodging of the most comfortable character at the hospitable mansion of Mrs. Williams. There many of the best citizens called and paid their respects. General T. D. Arnold, whom we had known in earlier life, and a strong Unionist invited them to come to his house a short distance from town. But the Confederate flag of truce was hourly expected and the invitation was declined. General Lowry, another polite and patriotic gentleman of Greeneville, called in the evening at Mrs. Williams' and invited them to spend the next day and night with his family. It is pleasant to remember, to notice these acts of civility and kindness on his part to the Tennessee people. The night before this arrival of the pilgrims at Greeneville had been spent at Mrs. Shannon's, a widowed lady who had been broken up by the war. Mrs. Shannon refused to receive any compensation for the excellent accommodations furnished to my wife and daughter and was so interested in the narrative of their sufferings that she wrapped up a new cheese and made my wife take it as a present to her wounded son. It is pleasant to recount and remember these instances of sympathy and assistance so common throughout Tennessee. The early settlers of that country were the best people in the world.

At length the long-wished-for Confederate flag of truce arrived. Mrs. Ramsey had expected to receive through it some definite intelligence from her son Arthur. There was a vague rumor that after the amputation of his leg, the symptoms were favorable and that he would do well. Before leaving for Knoxville Major Smith called to see our ladies. He took an affectionate leave of my wife and was chivalrous enough to add, "I do hope after you quit our lines you will find friends who will tell you the young soldier is better." There was courage, patriotism, and chivalry, all

three, in this parting farewell. It was soldierlike, officerlike, manly and humane as well as polite and considerate. His conduct contrasted well with that of some of the same command.

Our flag of truce as it came down to Greeneville had all along its route given circulation to the intelligence that some rebel ladies had been sent out from Knoxville and would soon pass up the road. As it returned, therefore, an intense interest had been excited and at every cabin, house and village the spectators were eager to catch a view of the exiled rebel ladies. The people were profuse in their offers of sympathy and kindness and as cordial and sincere as they were profuse. Lodging, breakfast, dinner, supper, everything, anything, the ladies needed. But all had to be declined. I was myself known to many along the route, Mrs. Ramsey to many who had never seen her. The colleges where I and two of my sons had been educated were not far from the road. We were all well known and not known only but highly esteemed and appreciated. The buggy in which Mrs. Ramsey rode was easily designated from the others. The attention of all was directed to it. The wound of one of her sons, the captivity of another, and the gallantry of all of them was well known in both armies and had been all the war the talk of the camps. Everybody wished to see the mother. At Leesburg an old and highly respectable lady, the widow of the late Matthew Stevenson and the sister of Judge Trimble, late of Nashville, came to her carriage as it passed her house, asked if that was not Mrs. Ramsey and being answered affirmatively insisted that she should alight, rest and take dinner. She said she had learned to be too good a soldier not to obey her superior officers, that the flag of truce was before her and she must follow it. After she had passed on Mrs. Stevenson inquired where our son Robert was. She had heard of his scouts all the last winter and she was afraid to hear from him and his brothers. At Jonesboro several of the most respectable citizens called upon the ladies under the flag of truce and kindly invited them to remain in the *neutral* (not occupied by either army) district a few days, but Mrs. Ramsey's anxiety to hear the fate of Arthur was hourly increasing and she insisted on the flag of truce proceeding on at once. The ladies although expressed what a change of feeling had come over them since they had left behind them the soldiers in blue and were everywhere cheered and saluted by those in the Confederate grey. All whom they now met were members of the Confederate States army. They recognized several from Knoxville, but if they knew anything of Arthur's fate they were unwilling to tell it. My

wife described the crossing of the beautiful Watauga at night as the most interesting scene she had ever witnessed. It was the more so as she was told that Arthur's first feat of arms was achieved upon its romantic banks.

He belonged to a company of cavalry made up of the youngest sons of the best families of East Tennessee. His captain was A. L. Gammon of Jonesboro. His command was scarcely organized and but few in it had ever been in an engagement; a courier brought into camp information that a command of Federal cavalry _____ strong was at _____ on the west side of the river intending to cross it. Captain Gammon put his dragoons at once in motion and came in full view of the enemy across the river. Without reconnoitering or learning the number of the Federal force his command dashed into the impetuous stream, crossed it in good order, ascended the heights beyond it, engaged the enemy in a fierce onset, broke their ranks and drove them from the field. I saw Captain Gammon afterwards at Bristol and he told me that Arthur bore himself most gallantly from the time the courier arrived, that in crossing the river he kept his eye steadily upon his movements as he was nearsighted and the rapidity of the stream was so great as to require the utmost vigilance so as not to miss the opposite landing, that Arthur was cool and determined during the conflict while it lasted and in the pursuit he was one of the foremost and the very last to come from it. It was here Arthur flashed his maiden sword. Not strange, therefore, was it that in crossing its rapid waters, in the night his mother should be impressed with the romantic scenery along its banks.

The exiled ladies found lodging and excellent entertainment at the house of Mr. Devault. In the morning when the flag of truce was preparing to go onward, some Confederate horsemen rode up. Inquiry was at once made for the wounded soldier. At first a vague answer was given by one of the officers who knew that the inquiry came from his mother. He was reluctant to tell the sad news. At length one of his men who was from Knoxville—James White—disclosed the mournful intelligence that poor Arthur was no more. I leave the reader to imagine the heart-breaking effect this news had upon my wife and daughter. They had for many days deluded themselves with the vain hope of still finding him alive and of contributing to his comfort and soothing the agony of the wounded soldier that at the worst they would have the melancholy satisfaction of breathing Christian sympathy and peace into his ear and of shedding tears of sorrow upon his lonely grave. For this purpose they

had sought expatriation and exile. They had endured fatigue, exposure, danger, discomfort, annoyance, which few before them have ever encountered. All was submitted to and borne with heroic fortitude and the calm spirit of resignation and hope. This hope had proven to be illusory and the dread reality had met them. Arthur, the obedient and dutiful and affectionate son, the fond and tender brother, the beloved Benjamin of his family was dead. Doubtful as had been the issue in this tragic scene, it was still difficult, almost impossible to believe its painful realization that poor Arthur was no more!

The scene around Devault's porches and gates was most impressive and affecting. The soldiers stood around in silent sadness. They had witnessed without being intimidated or disheartened the havoc and desolations of war and the horrid carnage of the battlefield. The missiles of Hunter and Sheridan excited only their courage and stimulated the spirit of revenge and retaliation. But here they were subdued by the grief of a mother and a sister's sorrow. The brave men expressed their sympathy and condolence by their tearful eyes. Some of them that had known Arthur in the camps or on the field wept and left the scene of mourning.

The two griefstricken ladies entered the ambulance followed by their sorrowing companions. Scarce a word was spoken. It seemed almost like a funeral cortege. The chief mourners were inconsolable. They arrived at Bristol. There a surviving son and brother met them. The sad interview renewed the scene of the morning at Devault's. There are some griefs so poignant and intolerable, some wounds so deep as to be curable only by the alleviation which *time* and *time alone* can bring to the sufferers. This was the case now. Six years have passed since these sad events transpired. The wound of the heart then inflicted is still bleeding, is not yet, can never, be staunched—it is immedicable. Time indeed may have assuaged the poignancy of a mother's sorrow, but time will never, can never, efface the memory of the young patriot, the gallant soldier, or the dutiful and affectionate son!