

(editor's note: This paper was transcribed from a handwritten cursive copy with various difficulties. For a perfect rendition, the reader might wish to consult the original, itself a copy, in the volume entitled *Literary Club Papers*, May 30, 1891 to February 6, 1892)

The South

It is not my object to picture the whole south, but rather, like a mustard plaster, to draw thoroughly the points touched. This is not written as a revenge on the South or the audience. It is not a war paper. I never write war papers. I was up in arms at the time of the war but I did not fight the South. I went south after the war was over and it was safe to do so, but I did not stay long. I was shot south in a "Cannon Ball" train.

How well I remember. It was Monday morning, just after the little Sunday stars had ceased to twinkle in the sky. I went spinning through the lovely blue-grass region of "Dixie" and as the beautiful fields of long wavy grass stretched peacefully out on either side as far as the eye could see, in delightful contrast to the rugged warlike mountains into which we suddenly passed I could not but think it was time blue-grass was made into hay.

But we went prancing on into the mountains through twenty-seven long beautiful tunnels that would have charmed the most fastidiously sentimental couple that ever breathed the stifling soot-laden smoke of a soft coal engine. It might have been simply delightful but I was not built that way. There is no sign of life in the mountains but the moon shiner shines here in an unpretentious way. There anonymous distillers do not advertise. It does not play. They lead a solitary life so to speak. They are nominally hospitable and press their callers, often urging them with a pistol or gun to prolong their visit- very effective persuasion. I did not call.

We passed rapidly through the mountains over high bridges, where the Kentucky River humbly moves along some three hundred feet below. The train stopped a few moments on the bridge just long enough for us to glance up and down the valley. Riverbanks of solid rock rise

straight up from the water on either side. Along one of these precipices a carriage road is cut in the rock, which winds along the banks of the river some fifty feet above the waters edge. Ivy clings in graceful festoons, covering the banks with a very pleasing effect. This is truly a wonderful spectacle.

The shades of night were falling fast when we arrived in Chattanooga, the metropolis as it were, of a galaxy of American cities rising from the ashes of the late war. Everyone who is not just about to leave Chattanooga flees to the mountains, the most interesting feature about the city. On the top of Mt. Lookout an old man selling Indian and war relics and a touching little love legend of early days of how an Indian Chief and his beautiful lover jumped over the precipice two thousand feet in one last fond embrace. The precipice is still there, but the lovers are gone and the place knows them no more.

From the veranda of the spacious hotel on this mountain, just before the evening folds itself in twilight, you can see Cameron Hill almost in the heart of the city (it is always there). The national Cemetery on its eastern outskirts, Chickamauga, Walden's and Missionary Ridges. All teeming with historic memories and as you gaze up and down the beautiful valley where the white Tennessee River winds its serpentine course and behold the sun sinking in splendor behind its leafy tapestry changing the foliage to a variety of hues you are held captive by the sublimity of the scene. This magnificent panorama knows no handiwork. Its incomparable charm is the despair of artists. We did not go on the mountain but the little man opposite me said that we would see all this if we were there. I looked out of the car window and the sun was merely going to bed and the modest heavens were blushing at the performance as usual. I did not see much of the country during the night but was told it was the best part of the South that we passed over and I believe it. After I had taken breakfast at my jumping off place I regretted as all Northerners do

that go South, that I had not brought my luncheon with me, but this was not so bad a breakfast as might be, as I afterwards found out.

A drive of twenty miles through an unbroken pine forest to a County seat lay before me. I must have a team. There were two stables. "Hitch you up best rig in town" was the declaration I accepted. Now in half an hour my chariot came rattling up to the "Palace" (that is where the section men on the railroad and I said). The wheels were formerly painted yellow, and the body a light red, but little of the original color remained. It was drawn, much to my surprise by a tall lank mule. Now I had never before driven a mule and the first five miles I did little but watch it trot. The mule trots like a cow with a fore and aft movement. And as he swayed along gracefully as a dancing bear I meditated. I had nothing else to do. I could not guide that animal any more than I could have guided an ocean steamer through the forest. He seemed to know the way, however, and much to my comfort had a way of swaying around among the stumps and trees that was perfectly marvelous. About a mile and we came to a ferry. It was a rope raft ferry. The aged attendant after gazing at me and my chariot for full five minutes said

"Well, stranger, don't remember your face."

"No" I said, "I never was this way before"

"Going to 'gusta?"

"No."

A pause for a few minutes

"Live over the railroad?"

"No but I would like to get across the river" I said.

"Why, sartin, but your face looks familiar an I was trying to recall your name."

"But, I said you never saw me before"

I soon perceived that in order to get across the river I must give him my name, age, condition in life, business and a quarter of a dollar, which I proceeded to do and was then rafted over the waters. A little further on I met the U.S. mail coach. This consists in very long legged darkey on a short-legged jackass, who has the mail pouch strapped over his back. (I refer to the darky). The advantages of this arrangement are three fold. If the coach sways as though it would overturn the darkey steadies it with his foot. If it starts to run away he straightens out his legs and lets the animal run out from under him and the mail is safe.

If he is attacked by a robber he faces the coach in an opposite direction and then rides on his way to notify a neighboring coroner that the remains of the robber were dangling from the boughs of a long leafed yellow pine tree. The United States mail service in the South is very efficient. The jackasses used are one of two kinds, male and female.

We, the mule and I, were on the road three or four hours, when we came to our destination, a hamlet of several houses, and fifty-two inhabitants beside the Sheriff. He is a great man of the metropolis. Beside being sheriff he is the Postmaster, Jail keeper, Druggist, Farmer, Hotel keeper, Merchant, Saloon Keeper, owns a cotton gin, a steam sawmill and other offices, both Federal and local. I stayed here several days and we had one menu for all the meals at the hotel while I stayed there, fried chicken, rice and coffee without cream or milk. My sheriff land lord apologized for this last deficiency by saying that he owned thirteen cows but had not seen them for two weeks but as he was specially fond of fresh milk to drink he had for sometime been thinking of trying to find them. But I may say right here that the cow has not, as yet, her proper position in Southern Society. She passes immediately from her girlhood into the mature cow. She puts in her time hauling wood, making butter and other domestic labors so that really she has very little time for society, a friend of mine says.

I think I have never seen a sadder sight than that of a new milch cow, torn away from home and friends and kindred dear, descending a steep mountain in the road at a rapid rate and striving in her poor weak manner to keep out of the way of a small Jackson democratic wagon loaded with a big hogshead full of tobacco. It seems to me so totally foreign to the nature of the cow to enter in to the tobacco traffic a line of business for which she can have no sympathy and in which she certainly can feel very little interest.

I have seen a proud and noble cow become the co-worker with a jackass. Yoked in the same harness and I have seen with my own eyes tears and perspiration run down her anxious face in small washouts and sweatlets and fall on the dry land ground with a solemn mellow plunk. It was very affecting. They work the cow in the South instead of their butler. This is unfair as the cow is the weaker of the two.

Speaking of works reminds that it is not foreign to the South. They all do it. Along the gulf it is a popular pastime, especially in the region of Augusta. During my visit however it was a holiday and all of the 52 inhabitants but three were spending it in the woods with a colored gentleman, who was accused of raping a young white girl. They were in two parties, the colored man comprised one party and the rest were by themselves in another party. The two parties did not picnic in the same part of the grove but out of sight of each other.

The relations between them were strained and likely to be more so if they met. The circumstances surrounding this case of rape were remarkable in that the girl was not present at the time the criminal and brutal act was committed by the black scoundrel. She was visiting her grandmother six miles away when the night before the black villain entered the narrow window of her bed chamber and alone committed the terrible deed for which he must be hanged without trail if caught. In fact I was told that the girl did not even then know that she had been outraged,

but that the footprints under the window pointed out conclusively what his intentions were, and that he must suffer the penalty for it. This seems like taking crime by the [] in a kind of ounce- of-prevention-pound-of-cure-style. But the fathers of families who were also married men said that the purity of the family must be preserved if it took the last piece of rope in town to do it.

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