

CEASE FIRING

"It's a great day, soldier! They must all remember it, must n't they?"

"Yes, yes!" said Edward. He paused beside her, gazing about him. "I am of the Virginia troops. We passed through Vicksburg a fortnight ago, but it was at night. — Well! the place wears its garland bravely, but I hope the siege will not come."

"If it does," said the young woman, "we shall stand it. We stood the bombardment last summer."

The boy nearest her put in a voice. "Ho! that was n't anything! That was just fun! There was n't more 'n a dozen killed and one lady."

"An' the house next ours burned up!" piped a little girl. "An' a shell made a hole in the street before my grandma's door as big as — big as — big as — big as the moon!"

All the children began to talk. "It was awful —"

"Ho! it was n't awful. I liked it."

"We got up in the middle of the night an' it was as light as day! An' the ground shook so it made your ears ring, an' everybody had to shout so's they 'd be heard —"

"An' it was n't just one night! It was a whole lot of nights an' days. Old Porter an' old Farragut —"

"An' Miss Lily used to give us holiday —"

"Huh! She would n't give it less'n the noise got so loud she had to scream to make us hear! When we could honest-Injun say, 'Miss Lily, we can't hear you!' then she'd give it —"

"We had a whole lot of holiday. An' then old Porter an' old Farragut went away —"

The boy who held the banner had not spoken. Now he waved it once, looking with his brilliant eyes up and out, beyond the river.

"The damn-Yankees went away, and if the damn-Yankees come any more, they can go away over again —"

"Gordon! don't use injurious epithets!" said Miss Lily, very gently.

Edward laughed and said good day. Farther on, keeping step for a moment with a venerable old gentleman, he asked, "What, sir, are all those small excavations in the hillsides, there, beyond the houses —"

"They are refuges, sir, for the women and children and sick and