HEN BOYS

By JOHN HABBERTON,

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CHAPTER XIII.

WHICH I HAD NOT COUNTED UPON. NE day our company was sent out to rebuild a ruined bridge, sever-al miles beyond the picket lines, which would give us the use of a road by which we might increase our ca-pacity for threatening

the enemy. All the material, even to the flooring, was to be cut from the woods near the little river.

The first two days of this work would have been very happy ones to me but for a single circumstance. All day long there wandered among us the farmer who owned the young pine forest from which we were cutting our timber, and his face looked as if his family were dying one by one, with no doctor or edicine within reach. Had he lost have got rid of him and our uncomfort able feelings, but he was a gentle, slow spoken, tired looking man, like the American farmer of almost any other state, and he told us how he had been saving that bit of woods from the time he married, so that the timber upon it should pay for educating his sons when they grew up and also to give himself and his wife a little money with which to see something of the world after the boys married and the farm was divided between them. Now it all was being swept away and without a word of warning or a cent of pay.

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"Well, sir," said our captain kindly, "I'm awfully sorry for you, but it's one of the fortunes of war. A full half of my company are young men who ought to be in college or learning some business by-which to live and perhaps provide for their parents' later years; but, so far as their own future is concerned, their time is being wasted about as thoroughly as your property."
"I suppose that's true," said the

farmer, looking around at the men at You've got some likely looking young fellows. But that don't give me back my trees."
"Very well," said the captain, "the

government will pay you the full value of your trees if you will certify and prove that you are and always have been a true and loyal citizen of the United States and have never given aid or comfort to the enemy."

The farmer stopped looking gentle and tired as he replied:
"I've given the Confederacy my three

sons, and I'm proud of it."
"That's square, honest talk," said the captain, "but it brings us back to the "I didn't bring on the war;" said the

"I believe you," said the captain. "I only went with my state," contin-ned the farmer. "God knows I never wanted any war; neither did any of my

neighbors, except a loafer or two. 'Twas the same way with me and my neighbors," said the captain. "I suppose if we on our side and you on side had been more particular about the men we sent to congress and to the legislatures-if we had thought more of our country and less of our party, there wouldn't bave been any

"There's a right smart lot of sense in that," said the farmer after a moment's reflection. Then he looked sad eyed and continued, "But it doesn't give me back my trees."

As the farmer wandered away I offered the captain an argument or two lags clir of the rightfulness of his position, but

he smiled sadly and replied:
"It's of no use, my boy, to fuss over a man's head when his heart's turned

"But"- I began.

"Oh, go back to your ax," interrupt-I need for use upon myself. If you live through the war and have a farm and a family of your own some day and look back to this particular time, you'll probably believe that I'm about as unhappy over this work as the farmer is at his loss."

I was made so wretched for two days by this sad eyed farmer's manner that I tried to devise ways of escaping it. It wasn't long before I found one. Many of our logs had to be floated to the point where we were massing the timber preparatory for use, and it was not easy for men walking along the shore with long poles in their hands to prevent an occasional log from drifting out of reach and escaping us entirely. I suggested to the captain that a single rowboat or a skiff would help us greatly, and the captain agreed with me, but wanted to know if I had never heard that for military reasons all boats on streams in a fighting country

were destroyed.

"If southern boys are as smart as northern boys," said I, "I guess a boat or two escaped and lie hidden away in the bushes somewhere along the

I couldn't forget how many times I had stumbled over boats while roaming along the edge of creeks and ponds not far from our village up north.

"Very well," said the captain, withan

"Very well," said the captain, with an odd smile, "if that is true and northern boys are as smart as southern boys, you may go and find one of those boats.

Take two or three men with you. Don't go without carbines. And be in a hur-

"Gimme yer belt," said he. I obeyed.

ry about it. We do need a boat."

Hurrah! Here was to be an outing

that would bring back a taste of old

times. I wasn't long in selecting my party. Brainard almost danced with

joy when I asked him to come along, and two other fellows about as old as

we begged to go with us. Just before we started the captain handed me a canteen of whisky, telling me not to

use any unless some one fell into the water, in which case I was to dose him

frequently, a few swallows at a time. We were on the search within a quar-

ter of an hour, and I felt a year youn-

ger in each successive five minutes. Blessed be nature! There isn't much

difference 'twixt north and south as to

the underbrush and dry leaves along

the banks of small streams during

winter. It was almost as jolly a trip

as if we were out chestnutting in the woods about Summerton. Once in

awhile we would startle a squirrel and long to fire at him. It was so hard to

be bound by the rule to fire at nothing

but the enemy when outside our own picket lines! What enemy could hear

us, anyway? There was no road with-

in three miles except that which was

broken by the bridge. The temptation to shoot became still stronger when we

saw the head of a deer on the other

side of the stream, but Brainard re-

minded us that the deer would do us

no good unless we could cross the

So on we tramped. It was as good as an excursion. We continued to be reminded of old times at home. In one

place were the remains of a toy boat

such as each of us had whittled from

made in tramping to the river to drink.

A little farther along was a little dock,

such as northern farmers with water

fronts generally have. All of these dis-

coveries had no suggestion of war

about them, and we all agreed with

"I feel as if I weren't down south at all."

and I shouted "Hurrah!" for through a

screen of bushes I saw the side of a boat. It was only a skiff, made of

a boat often been as good as I wanted

at home? We surrounded it in an in

northerner, and it seemed in as good

"The captain ought to make you a

ergeant for this, Frost," said one of

Flat bottomed skiffs make up in

weight what they lack in grace, so we

laid our carbines in a heap and began

to lift and drag. The boat was fully 50 feet from the water's edge, so we

had a great lot of tugging and shout-ing of "Now!" "All together!" "Again!"

etc., before we reached the water. At last, however, we got it where a single

shove would place it afloat; then we

straightened our backs and took another admiring look, while one of the boys

became ecstatic enough to spring in, seat himself, snatch the oars and go

'Don't fergit to take yer guns with

cord, however, we began to look for-

ward to Libby prison.
"Don't ye know it's a sin to steal

skifts?" asked one of the Johnnies, still

keeping his piece at the aim. I never saw so unpleasant looking a weapon

in my life—two great, yawning, dismal holes that ended in utter darkness and

behind them two hammers within an inch or two of which glittered bright

red percussion caps. I never again wanted to contemplate any kind of a

gun from that point of view. And how

everlastingly—it seemed at least a thou-sand hours—that fellow held his gun in

Brainard after the silence had become almost maddening; "we were merely appropriating it, according to the cus-

toms of war as recognized in all countries."

tries."
"'Properatin', eh?" replied the man.
relaxing his aim, though his comrades
neglected to follow his praiseworthy
example. "Well, 'cordin' to the customs of nations we'll 'properate you.
Come up here—one at a time."
"Nobody moved.

OAP EXPENSE

"We were not stealing the skiff," said

that one position!

through the motions of rowing.

order as if recently used.

Suddenly my heart bounded with joy,

stream to get him.

Brainard when he said:



"D'you hyah me?" shouted the John-

"Yes, sir," said I politely as I step-

We looked around quickly.

with it, saying as he did so, "You uns bein' four to we uns three, we uns has

got to be more'n ord'nary keerful."

I didn't look at the other boys while they were being bound. I was afraid they might be looking at ma. Besides, I had too much else to occupy my mind. Capture meant prison, poor food, perhaps sickness and death. It certainly meant no more communica-tion with home for months. Probably my parents would think me dead, and they would daily wonder where and how I met my fate. Oh, what an awful load of punishment belonged to whoever was to blame for the war!

When all of us had been bound, the men who had kept us covered with their guns arose, came in front of us and stared at us. Suddenly one of them exclaimed:

"It's a fact! I was doggoned sure of it from the fust. "What you talkin' about?" asked ansticks in other days. Then we came upon a path which cattle and pigs had

"This here," was the reply as I felt a big hand on my shoulder and looked up; "this here is the little cuss that got us coffee the night the Yanks grabbed us three months ago. Mebbe you didn't git some of it. I did, though, an' I shayn't never fergit it. I'm right glad to see you again, my friend, though I wish 'twas somebody else we'd ketched."

I felt much better at once and then felt ashamed that the sound of a friendly voice had made me forgetful of the awful future before me.

about four boards, but hadn't just such "Don't look so down in the mouth," continued my old acquaintance. "We ain't goin' to kill an' eat you. After we git you across the river we'll treat you stant and murmured a chorus of delight. The oars were in it instead of as well as we know how. Won't we, being hidden a little way off, as they would have been had the owner been a

"Of course," growled the leader of

the party.
This was kind, but would their good will be of any service to us in Libby prison or Castle Thunder? Still, I thanked him as heartily as I could and told him truthfully that if we had to be captured I was glad we had fallen into the hands of some one who seemed to remember us pleasantly. Then my old acquaintance became chatty and told me they had hung about the edge of our camp all the day before, trying to find out what we were doing, word having been sent to their camp, 15 miles away, that a "lot of Yanks was cuttin' pine by the river." They had followed us, keeping on one flank as my little squad went up the river, for they wanted to learn what we were up to. They were glad they had seen us leave camp; otherwise they would have missed their boat, on which they night

ye," said a voice which none of us recognized. We looked around quickly crossed the river to the house in ly, and there, kneeling right by our which they slept. carbines, were three Johnnies, each All this was interesting, but it made cold chills play hide and seek all over with his own gun at the position of aim. And two of those three awful guns were double barreled! me. Suppose, instead of following us through mere curiosity, they had sho This was something that none of us had looked forward to. With one ac-

us as soon as we were out of hearing of our camp. Ugh! "Guess we'd better git across the river now," said the man who seemed leader of the party. "The Yanks 'll be sendin' out for these boys pooty soon, like as not, an' we don't want to git into no muss."

CHAPTER XIV.



WO Johnnies got into the boat, putting two of us, still bound, in the stern, and crossed the river; then one brought the boat back and took over the remainder of the party, first stowing our car-

bines in the bow under the legs of a man who held a double barreled gun ready for use. When all had crossed, the boat was hauled up into the bushes just as we had found it on the other side. Then we were marched about half a mile from the river to a big log

"Now, boys," said my old acquaintance, "we'll make you feel as much at home as we can without bein' unsafe. We'll onloose one of you at a time, so you can stretch your arms an' eat, an' we'll send word to our camp soon ez we can for somebody to come an' take you 'long to Richmond."

"We're in no hurry to get there, I'm sure," said I.

He looked at me sharply a moment

and replied: and replied:
"Mobbe they ain't as well fixed thar
as you uns at Fort Monroe, where they
tuck us when we got ketched, but
they'll do the best they can for you.
Besides, you'll be exchanged 'fore long,
just as we was."

It was real kind of him to say this and I told him so, but my heart grew heavier and heavier. What would fa-ther and mother think? Who would write them about my disappearance? there be any possible way of getting word home from Richmond? I asked my old acquaintance this question and told him I was afraid my disappearance would kill my parents unless they

knew what had happened. "That's so, my friend," said he. "Just you write a scrap to some friend of yours in your camp, an' I'll see it reaches him in a week. Nuthin' else though, mind, except that you're cap

"How will you get it there?" I asked with natural curiosity.

"Ask me no questions, an' I'll tell you no lies," said he. "You give me coffee one time, don't you remember? Well that's enough."

As it happened that just then was my turn to be unbound. I got some letters out of my breast pocket and found a blank half sheet of paper, on which i penciled:

Dear Hamilton-We were captured by the enemy. Tell my father not to worry. Our captorsasy we'll be exchanged pretty soon.

Jack Frost.

My old acquaintance looked over my shoulder while I wrote. When I had finished, he said:

"Put in a little more. Say 'The man that I gave coffee to when he was ketched is the man that's got me, an he says I'll be well treated or his name ain't Clay Hillyard.' That ought to make em feel easier to home, oughtn't it?"
"I'm sure it would if they knew
you," said I. "I wrote them a long
letter after that scout in which you were captured, about how you fixed fried bacon and hoecake for us that night and how you showed me how to awfully hungry I was on that trip, too and my mother wrote back that she'd pray for you every night of her life

"Sho! You get out! Is that so, though?" said my particular Johnny. with a sheepish look. "Well, mothers is all alike, I s'pose." Then he and one of his party began to prepare a meal of bacon and boecake, for it was now

The aroma of the cooling diverted my thoughts from the situation, for we had started near noon and in such haste that we had forgotten to bring our haversacks. The Johnnies evidently intended to feed us, for they were preparing an immense quantity of

"Say, sarge," remarked my friend to the large, quiet man who seemed to be the leader of the party, "these boys cayn't eat with their arms tied. S'pose we tie their legs instead. They'll be safe ag'in runnin' away, an' they'll be more comfortable."

The sergeant muttered assent. The change was made, and then, as we sat on a long, low bench against one wall, we were bountifully fed. We chatted freely, our captors being quite willing to converse, and the conversation ran as entirely to farming methods as if



"All I want, you said?"

there was no war or other special subject of interest. Two or three hours after dark the sergeant said to us:

"Now, gentlemen, any of you that tries to get away 'll be shot like a dog, but if you behave yourselves you can sleep as comfortable as if you was at home. Just lie down on the floor where you are whenever you like, or sit up, but keep to that side of the room. We'll keep to this side. If you even put your hands to your feet you'll be shot, so

don't do it."

I said something to the effect that we weren't fools. Meanwhile my friend and the third man dropped upon the floor, with their guns and our car-bines, while the sergeant sat down upon a box in front of the fire, cocked a double barreled shotgun and kept his eyes upon us. Conversation languish-ed after that. It is hard to talk to a man whom you know is ready to take your life on sufficient provocation. We exchanged remarks occasionally with one another, but they weren't at all filarious. I was just dropping asleep, still sitting in the bench, when Brainard whispered:

"Any water in your canteen, Jack?"

I hadn't thought before of the care

I hadn't thought before of the cap-tain's canteen of whisky. Would it be safe to tell Charley in the hearing of ship to tell Chartey in the manage of the guard that the canteen across my shoulder was full of whisky? Suppose the Johnnies should learn of it, drink it and get fighting mad and kill us? I answered Brainard, "No."

Then, remembering some jar inscriptions that he and I had spelled out together in our village drug store and persuaded the druggist to translate, I continued, trusting the sergeant did not understand Latin, "Spiritus fru-menti."

The surprise that gleamed through Brainard's eyes would have startled

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THE GOAL rns sergeant had he seen it. Before I aropped asieep again the guard was To climb a little toward the height: changed by the sergeant rousing the man of the three who seemed to amount to least. He was a thin, rathers; To sow the seed and spread the light; er feeble looking fellow, with a stupid face, the lower half of which had been To teach love to our struggling bro-

To follow in the ways of truth;
To meet the trials of each to-morrow;
To keep the hope and heart of youth, Though age steals on with hurt and sorrow.

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To learn our burdens to endure; To loyal be, though others fail us; To keep our spirits sweet and pure.
In spite of all who may assail us.

To add to the world's joy and mirth; To render fair the path of duty; To sprinkle sunshine o'er the earth; To see in all things hidden beauty.

To persevere and learn to wait; To manly be, yet loving, tender; o rise above an adverse fate; To meet defeat and not surrender.

To put aside all needless strife; To struggle onward in endeavor; To gather in the heart of life The inner wealth that lasts forever.

These are the things of real worth-The highest goal and aim of living—
That if attained, would fill the earth
With one perpetual thanksgiving.

-J. 'A. Edgerton.

This paper is printed with the Queen City Printing Ink-Cos Ink, Cincinnati, Ohio. A. Wunnfred, Representative.



sat down with the gun and yawned so fearfully that I feared he might fall

asleep with his hand on the trigger and

rouse the house, perhaps to our serious

injury. Finally, however, he got entirely awake, and then he seemed to

feel dismal amid so much silence, so he

tried to chat with us. He was a poor talker, but Brainard helped him along

to the best of his ability. They drawled along for an hour, and under the

noothing influence of their monotones

wheezing of the other Johnny I began

to drop asleep again just as the guard was explaining a lot of bad feelings he

"I could cure you, I think, if you

wouldn't get me into trouble," said

"Ef you've got any medicine of any

kind, stranger," said the guard, "fo' the Lawd's sake, gimme some. I don't

keer what it is. I know it'll do me good some way."

"Wouldn't whisky be the very best medicine you could have?" Brainard

The man's face looked like a beatified

saint in a fourteenth century picture as he placed a hand on his waist and

To Be Continued.

had from time to time.

asked.

murmured "Oh!".

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