

helpless. We made them when Farragut came up the river and Porter came down it and poured shot and shell in upon us every few days for a month or two! If signs may be trusted, it is apparent, sir, that we shall find use for them again."

"I am afraid it is. I am not sure that it is correct to try to hold the place."

The old gentleman struck his cane against the ground. "I am no strategist, sir, and I do not know a great deal about abstract correctness! But I am not a giver-up, and I would eat mule and live in a rat-hole for the balance of my existence before I would give up Vicksburg! Yes, sir! If I were a two-year-old, and expected to live as long as Methuselah, those would be my sentiments! Damn the outrageousness of their presence on the Mississippi River, sir! Our women are heroic, sir. They, too, will eat mule and live in rat-holes for as long a time as may be necessary! — No, sir; the President may be trusted to see that the town must be held!"

"Will General Johnston see it so?"

The old gentleman wiped his forehead with a snowy handkerchief. "Why should n't he see it so? He's a good general. General Pemberton sees it so. Why should n't General Johnston see it so?"

Edward smiled. "Evidently you see it so, sir. — Yes; I know that except for Port Hudson, it's the only defensible place between Memphis and New Orleans! We won't cross swords. Only our forces are n't exactly as large as were Xerxes'!"

"Xerxes! Xerxes, sir, was an effete Oriental! — I gather from your accent, sir, that you are from Virginia. I don't know how it may be with Virginia, — though we have heard good reports, — but *our* people, sir, — *our* people are determined!"

"Oh," said the other, with a happy laugh. "I like your people mighty well, sir! Do you happen to know where the —th Virginia is camped?"

The old gentleman waved his hand toward another and still broader street. Cary, passing into it, found more banners, more garlands, more people, and in addition carriages and civic dignitaries. In front of him, before a dignified, pillared residence, was an open place with soldiers drawn up. He gathered that this was the vacant lot for which he was searching, but nearer approach failed to reveal the —th Virginia. A lieutenant stood beneath a tree,