

RECOLLECTIONS

OF

Pioneer Days in Georgia

BY

JAMES S. LAMAR



CHAPTER I.

EARLY LIFE IN MUSCOGEE COUNTY GEORGIA.

My father, Philip Lamar, and my mother, Margaret Anthony, were born and reared in Edgefield District, South Carolina, and after their marriage lived on the hill immediately opposite Augusta, and within sight of that city.

My father lived on land that had been settled by his grandfather and other members of the family; when, about 1750, Robert, Thomas and John Lamar, and their sister Mrs. Davis, came with the tide of Marylanders to the Horse Creek Section. Although it was a new country everyone seemed to think it best to move still farther westward, and there is extant a joint letter, written in 1770 by Robert, Thomas and John to their maternal uncle, Joseph Wilson, who lived in Maryland, near the present City of Washington. In this letter the recent emigrants from Maryland told him of the Oakeechee lands in Georgia, with their forests of oak and hickory, and strongly intimated their purpose of moving from South Carolina to that section.

At that time the Indian title to the land had not been quieted and they did nothing to carry their plan into effect; but it was not forgotten by them nor by their descendants.

The old files of the *Augusta Chronicle* and the *Charleston Courier* for that year show that my grandfather, Philip Lamar, and his wife, Ruth Davis Lamar, both died on September 13, 1807, of one of the malignant fevers with which the region was then infected. This left my father an orphan when he was about fifteen years old. He assumed the man-



agement of the plantation, with the advice and assistance of his uncles, and made a remarkable success of it for one of his age and experience. In addition to being a successful planter, he had a great taste for mathematics, and was constantly called upon by friends and neighbors for assistance in surveying. His skill in this line of work was the occasion of his being asked to visit recently opened lands in Western Georgia. He was greatly impressed by the country. It was a time when to move was in the blood of everyone, and he too finally decided to carry out the old plan about which he had, no doubt, heard much discussion in the family. So, with my mother and older brothers, he started on the journey of three hundred miles. The trip from Augusta to what is now Columbus can be made in less than a day, but then it took months.

I was born in Gwinnett County, on May 18, 1829, about forty or fifty miles Northeast of the place where Atlanta was subsequently built. My father never intended to remain in Gwinnett, and stopped there only while prospecting for a place of permanent residence. At that time my maternal grandparents, Lewis and Elizabeth Anthony, who were also South Carolinians, had settled and were living in Muscogee County, and their children, except my mother, were with them. Doubtless it was owing to the representation and influence of these relatives that my father decided to settle in the same county. He moved accordingly in November, 1829, I being about six months old. The country was new, the population very sparse and scattered. The roads were winding pathways, often through dense woods, and frequently obstructed by fallen trees—sometimes leading through boggy swamps and deep

waters, or, in case of absolute necessity, over bridges constructed of rough logs rudely put together, and ever and anon washed away or turned helter-skelter by recurring freshets. One might have to go ten or twenty miles to reach a gristmill, and sawmills were equally scarce. Columbus was then but a small town, and being on the extreme western boundary of the county, was with difficulty reached even to obtain the most necessary supplies. There were no schools and no churches, the only religious privileges being to hear a discourse once in three or four weeks from a Methodist circuit-rider, either in some private house or, in summer, under a roughly constructed bush-arbor. Such in bare outline was the country to which in infancy I was carried and where I passed all the early years of my life.

The family's first stopping place on reaching this Eldorado, after what must have been a long, tedious journey from Gwinnett, was on the eastern border of the county near the Upatoie Creek. At that time, before the forests through which it ran had been felled, it was a large stream, one that in some sections of the country would be called a river, and sometimes, after heavy rains it would spread out far and wide over its swamp or bottom endangering and often drowning the cattle that had lingered there to feed upon its luxuriant and abundant cane tops.

On a little stream flowing from the west into the Upatoie, the tired family *camped* until a temporary house could be built on the hill rising up above it, and from this circumstance the stream was named by them Camp Branch.

My father settled about two miles further west, which brought him within eight miles of Columbus. This being the county site, and on the Chattahoochee

River at the head of navigation, was already growing into some importance. The river swamp lands below the town were inexhaustibly fertile, and were being brought into cultivation by planters from South Carolina and elsewhere. The uplands north of the town, extending through several counties, were also very productive. The falls of the river, extending from Columbus indefinitely upwards, furnished an immense water power, which would certainly be utilized sooner or later. All these indications gave assurance of a coming city of prosperous enterprises and much wealth.

My father did not seek for the River Bottoms nor yet the heavily-timbered clay lands north of the town, but purchased instead a large body of land, well-watered and covered with lofty yellow pine trees. The public road extending from Columbus to Macon by way of Tazewell ran through it. The woods furnished abundant pasturage both summer and winter for his fine herd of cattle, and as the region was perfectly healthy the conclusion to settle there seemed wise and prudent. He first built a small house about a quarter of a mile from the public road, to be occupied until land could be cleared and a crop or two cultivated, when, at a heavy expense, he built his residence immediately on the road. There were few saw mills and they at a distance so that dressed lumber was very hard to obtain. The body of the house was therefore built of hewn lumber of a size and strength which would now be considered wastefully extravagant, but the doors, window-frames, floors and outside were much like those of the present day. It was for that time and place a magnificent house, and would have been an excellent and most comfortable residence at any place. It was

just about finished, and the family were getting ready to move in, when one night about 2 o'clock some malicious person set fire to a pile of dry shavings that had been left in it, and burnt the whole structure to the ground. It was known almost to a certainty who did it, and yet the proofs were not such as would have justified his prosecution. This fire not only carried a sore disappointment to the family, but it was a crippling loss financially.

Another house was immediately begun on the same site, and pushed as soon as possible to completion. It was, however, not nearly so fine nor so good, but large and comfortable. The immense large pines of which it was built, were hewn to a straight wall on the outer and inner sides and ceiled over, or covered with boards. There was a large kitchen in the yard. There was a horse lot with stable and cow pens and an inexhaustible well of good clear water. It was sunk on the line of the front fence, and the fixtures were so arranged that wagoners and other travelers passing along the road, which was only a few steps from the front gate, could draw water for themselves and their stock. There were fields adjoining the grounds which were soon brought to high state of productiveness. There was a good large garden, and my mother always kept the yard ornamented with bright flowers and trailing vines. Across the road lay an immense pine forest, with scarcely any undergrowth; but the sighing of the gentle winds through the leaves of the lofty pines was an everlasting psalm of sweetly solemn and varied music, composed and executed by heaven itself.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIFE THAT I LED AS A SMALL BOY.

There was, of course, on a farm in a new country, much work to be done. As for my small self there were many things within my capacity and which I took a pride in doing. I would occasionally even get up before sunrise, go out with the milk women to the cowpen, put a rope around a calf's neck, and hold it off from sucking while the women milked. As there were about twenty cows to be milked, this gave me a *little* something to do before breakfast. Then I could drive out the cows and start them off into the woods to feed on what they could find till late in the afternoon. When they were gone out of sight, I could drive the calves in a different direction that *they* might browse a while. As evening approached, I could get both parties in again, and attend to my calf-holding once more; and there were numerous little "chores" that just suited my capacity. This kind of jobbing work I did not mind for it had so many betweenities and resting places and varieties, it did not seem like work. I could manufacture a sled or a cart to haul chips in, and so convert it into play. I even ventured upon a contrivance of rope and pulley and treadle which was *intended* to facilitate the churning. At any rate it was a development of nascent mechanics out of nascent science.

Sometimes grandfather, who lived a mile further on, would come by on his way to town, and through the influence of my ever-ready eloquence, seconded always by the persuasive powers of the old people I would "get to go". The ride was long and slow and

hot, but no matter. It was going to town with all its strange sights and sounds. On one of these occasions I saw something that made a deep and lasting impression on me. My grandfather while resting by the unused fire-place in a store, asked the merchant if he could not get him some fire to light his pipe. He said he would try, and took out of his vest pocket a piece of rough paper about an inch square, folded together like the back of a little book, and then he drew from another pocket what seemed to be a very small, flat piece of wood, which he inserted between the folded paper, and pressed upon it with his thumb and finger. Then taking hold of the projecting end of the stick with his other thumb and finger, he drew it out with a quick, sudden jerk, and upon my word, one end of it was in a light blaze! I have seen a good many matches since that day, made and operated in different ways, but that was the very first that I had ever seen. It was a good while after this before they came into common use, especially in the country. People had to save their fire in those days, or else they would have to go a half mile or a mile, as I sometimes did, to get *said fire*. Of course, if properly prepared for it, they *could* get it by means of flint and steel and lint and punk, but it was not always certain, and at best was a good deal of trouble.

CREEK INDIANS.

I was also greatly interested in gazing at the Creek Indians who had not yet been removed from their territory just across the river in Alabama. They would come over to Columbus in large companies, men, women, boys, babies and all. I would

commonly first see them as they turned into Broad Street, after ascending from the river, and they would march in single file without any regard to age or size or sex, right up the center of the street. It might be shoe-deep in mud, but no matter—on they went one right after another. Often a woman had a blanket bound loosely around her neck and shoulders, leaving room between the blanket and her back to receive and retain her papoose or baby. Whether this infantile *Creek* was sitting on some fold of the blanket, or *standing* on it, or was sustained without *fundamental* support by the mere compression of the blanket, I know not. But there it stood; or, at any rate, there it was, with its ridiculous little face poked up above the blanket looking as sober as a judge, and totally unconcerned and uninterested. It might have been carrying somewhere in its insides a great spasm of colic, but you could never know it; as it viewed the many strange and funny things along its way, it might have felt in its interior department a powerful convulsion of laughter, but if so, it gave no sign of it. If the face had been that of an Egyptian mummy it could not have been more quiet and expressionless—save in the coal black eyes which gleamed like a serpent's. As for the company, their faces like their steps turned neither to the right nor to the left. They did not move very fast nor yet very slow, but they marched steadily and without deviation right on, as if their whole mission and purpose in life were concentrated, for the nonce, in the one great, all-absorbing object of marching, one after another, straight up the center of Broad Street. For this they had left the State of Alabama; for this they had crossed the roaring Chattahoochee; for this

they had entered the confines of the Empire State of the South; for this they were subjecting themselves to the finger of scorn and the laugh of derision, only for this and nothing more. They bought nothing—they had nothing to sell. They spoke to nobody—nobody spoke to them. But they accomplished their sublime object—they walked straight up the center of Broad Street!

HOW THEY COUNTED MONEY WHEN THEY HAD IT.

Towards sundown, the purchases made, and the sights seen, we started home. My luncheon was supplemented by the addition of a small, thin, oblong, hard, pale-faced *ginger cake*. The cake cost a *thrip*, a word contracted from *three pence*, and the coin so named was *six and a quarter cents*. It was after dark when we reached home. I had slept over the last few miles. The old folks would not get out; but they would linger at the gate till grandmother could give to mother a detailed history of the day's purchases and incidents—explaining that butter was worth one-and-nine-pence ($37\frac{1}{2}$ cents), and eggs *ten pence h-a-penny* (pronounced *a long*) that is, ten pence, half penny, equal to $18\frac{3}{4}$ cents, which is the half of *one-and-nine-pence*, i. e., one *shilling*, nine pence. The small money of the day was about as hard to name and count as it was to get—though grandmother had it down to a fine point. But for us moderns, when a *thrip*, or *three-pence* was six-and-a-quarter cents, while *seven pence* was only twelve and a half cents, we could but feel that our education required us to make known that the word *thrip* stood, not for three pence simply, but for three pence, half penny, which made the sum work right,

“and got the answer in the book.” Those who have never heard these money terms carelessly uttered by those who daily used them would hardly imagine their pronunciation, especially where the ha-penny or half penny was involved. The *h* was never sounded, and the *s* sound of the *c* in pence coalesced with the long *a* in ha-penny. The *e* in pence and penny was hardly sounded at all, or was merely an obscure, barely detected, short *u*. What was heard, therefore, was, for example, “thripun-say-penny,” or tenpun-say-punny.”

Fortunately, I did not have any money to *speak* of in those days, and by the time I became the owner of as much as three-quarters of a dollar, it was seventy-five cents, and not “*three-and-six-pence*.”

CHAPTER III.

LOG-ROLLING AND OTHER PASTIMES.

In reading these Recollections it must not be forgotten that they relate, especially at this early period, to the very borders of the time of which, as Blackstone expresses it, "the memory of man runneth not to the contrary." They are also connected with a new country. The people were poor. The polishing hand of Society had not yet rubbed off their spontaneous and rough manners. They were nature's children, but as ignorant of the arts of finesse and pretension as they were of the customs and amenities of the gay world. Growing up among them as I did, mingling in their daily life, participating in their pleasures and amusements, I found in them the only gratification of my social instincts, and so naturally, inevitably, I became identified with them both in their work and their play, and I trust, also, in the genuineness of their simple honesty and unflinching integrity.

It may seem surprising that I have classed Log-Rolling at the head of this chapter, with other Pastimes. But the classification is correct. I might include in it house-raising, harvesting and even fodder-pulling—any work extraordinary in its recurrence and of special hardship in its performance. In such cases it was customary for the neighbors to come together by special invitation with hearty good-will and untroubled cheerfulness, and by combination in the work, convert a laborious task into an instrument of fun and frolic. I need not detail any single occurrence of this sort but merge them all in one typical picture.

Those who wished to take in a "new ground" and add it to their cultivated lands, had been engaged for weeks in having the tall pines chopped down, many of them very large, cutting the logs into convenient lengths, trimming off the large limbs, and leaving the ground covered with a tangled mass of logs and brush. The space thus occupied may be anywhere from ten to twenty acres. On the day appointed for the "pastime" the men from all the contiguous region, married men, single men, and often boys, are there by sunrise, each bringing a stout hickory handspike shaped *secundum artem*. They have all been out of bed since an hour or two before daybreak, have eaten their breakfast and have walked from their houses—from a half a mile to two miles away, or even more. And woe to him who is tardy in arriving. He is guyed unmercifully. Joke begets joke. He is joked about his wife's powerful attractions holding him back. One thinks he must have had an enormous breakfast,—it took so long to cook it. Another gives his opinion that it was such a little breakfast, it gave the man no strength to make the trip in time. Another asks him if he didn't forget the day of the log-rolling and think it was to be to-morrow. And one says to him, "If I had been you I wouldn't have *come* for this little piece of a day." Another says, "I'll tell you what was the matter, he waited to eat his *dinner* before he started." Each sally is greeted with loud laughter—the jokee laughing as loud as any, and sometimes skillfully turning the tables upon the *jokers*. At length, all have assembled and, having had enough guying and taunting, the boss says, for there is always a recognized boss of such work in every neighborhood, "Come boys, name o' common

sense and goodness, ye goin' to stand here till twelve o'clock? D'ye see them logs—we're goin' to have a powerful big dinner after a while—le's git ready for it. Come now every man, soople up yer jint, and get to work!" This ringing call meets with a prompt and cheerful response, and the work begins. If the hands are numerous they are divided into companies, commonly of eight, who scatter to different parts of the clearing. They pair off so as to have two men of about the same height lift at the same handspike. The spikes are laid down one near each end of the log and two between. The log is rolled upon them, the men stoop down and get a firm hold of the spikes; the boss says "All together," and, with a deep breath and swelling muscles, they lift it from the ground and bear it slowly to the place decided on for a "log-heap." Others are brought and piled to it until the number is deemed sufficient, and so the heap is finished. The work is very hard, and the strain sometimes intense; for many of the logs are quite large, and they are all green, full of sap, and very heavy. But there is no shrinking nor shirking nor complaining. The work goes steadily on, nor does the guying cease. It is surprising, where all are free hearted and friendly, how the jokes bubble up continuously—one company ever and anon hollering to another in taunting, and all is life, merriment and pleasurable feeling, notwithstanding the ever-recurring physical strain and severe tax upon the strength and endurance. As for us boys, we are proud to be here. There is not much that we can do, except to draw the brush out of the way of the men, but we wouldn't miss being there for anything. The only times during the day that our happiness is lashed is when we are sent to the house for a bucket

of water. That *is* a hard case, for the best thing of the day is sure to be said in our absence, and we can hear the loud ha ha's and screams of delight in the distance, but the exciting cause of the extraordinary outburst is lost for good and all; and we wonder, for our part, why men who have nothing better to do than laugh and shout at that rate, mightn't do without water a *little* while! The mischief of it is, the thing is alluded to again and again during the day, always producing ripples of fun and pleasing but faint echoes of the original big laugh, but for the life of us we never can understand head nor tail of it. Somehow we feel outside of the charmed circle, and our spirits are shadowed. Why *will* men drink so much water?

By noon the work is well along—if the clearing is not very large, it is nearly finished. Then the horn is blown at the house for dinner, a summons which is always heard with delight, and all *of us* march promptly to the house, we boys in the center of the crowd, with empty water-bucket in hand to be carried back full, as we are resolved not to lose another blessed thing that day if forethought and care can guard against it. No pen nor tongue can ever describe the exalted feeling of manly importance with which we march up into the presence of the ladies with all those great men, experiencing in ourselves—*quorum magna pars fuimus*—or some such Latin feeling as that—to be seated with them at the table—at the *first* table—with log-rollers, mind you! Bless me, it is nearly seventy years ago, and I have hardly gotten over it yet!

The dinner was bountiful and most excellent. Several of the neighboring women were on hand to assist in dispensing it; and they waited on us all--

all us log-rollers—as kindly and considerately and sweetly as could be; and the way we did eat!—for we had been rolling logs all the day long, and log-rolling is hard, hard work.

We finished the job during the afternoon. It was a red letter day in my early history, but it was hard to get over that most unlucky bucket of water.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST CORN-SHUCKINGS.

Another of the enjoyable occurrences during my early boyhood was the annual *corn shucking*. Northern people and others who know no better call this corn *husking*! But the external integuments of ears of corn are known among *civilized* folks as *shucks*, hence our "corn shuckings." We had one of these every fall, and so did each of our neighbors. They were always at night. The corn was hauled in from the fields and piled up in the lot near the corn house. When the seasons had been favorable the heap was very large, and was made in the form of a crescent, thus making room for a large number of shuckers to stand or sit around the outer curve and throw the corn as shucked, into a pile between the horns of the crescent. When all was ready, invitations were sent out, sometimes a day or two in advance, asking the neighbors to come to a corn-shucking on such a night. These frolics were always particularly enjoyed by the boys, and they always came in full force, together with the young men and many of the married men of the neighborhood. At the house a bountiful feast was prepared, and several young ladies and some matrons were on hand to assist in that "function".

During the *early* years of this country's history the "shuckers" were all white people and the corn-shuckings were comparatively tame. The parties would gather about dark, take their places at the corn pile, and, while the work went steadily on, would chat and joke, and chew tobacco, and tell anecdotes. There was one man named Lewis Skin-

ner, who seemed to have an inexhaustible stock of anecdotes. He had a quiet manner. He was dry and deliberate. He never seemed to crack a smile himself, but he kept all who were in hearing of him in a state of pleased expectancy, knowing that he would be sure to get there; and when he did, there was always a roar of laughter. This would "remind" somebody, and by the time he got through, Skinner would be ready again. And so it went on for an hour or two. Some one would wake up to the fact that, owing to the attention given to the anecdotes, the work of the evening was lagging. Then there would be a spurt. The boys and young men would try their powers on some song which they had heard, and for a while the shucked corn would rain down upon the pile, and by this time the shucks had vastly accumulated behind the men, a state of things not to be resisted by any small boy. We turned "summersets" in them. We buried each other beneath them. We ran races through them, pushing each other down, rejoicing in the hurtless falls, and shouting and screaming with delighted glee and merriment.—Talk about your town boys' birthday and other parties. If you would know the meaning of a sure-enough and not a make-believe good time, imagine a parcel of country boys at an old-time corn-shucking, turned loose in a big pile of shucks. The fun is spontaneous, rollicking, boisterous—but it is *fun*.

At length the man placed about the center of the crescent, put there because he is known to be a fast shucker, shucks through the pile at that point, and so cuts it in two. And now comes the race of the two ends which party can finish first—and there is hurraing and stimulation and bragging and jeer-

ing and guying and all the excitement of intense rivalry. The shucks pile up behind faster than the boys can move them out of the way. The cleaned corn in front has grown into a great heap. The end of the work is in sight. The home stretch has come. Some of the shuckers can no longer find room to work at the diminished corn heap. These stand back and hurrah. Presently they raise the stirring corn song "Look for the last Ear," with its refrain of "Jolly, jolly." The leader of the song pats and stamps and throws up his hands, and shouts out all manner of extemporized "poetry," such as "Last ear red ear." "Last ear blue ear." "Where is the last ear?" "Who'll find the last ear?" while every voice roars the refrain, Jolly, jolly! And so this final spurt winds it all up, first at one end followed by crowing and shouting and taunting, and presently at the other, and the work is done. Then they all set to and take up the shucks, putting them into pens, made commonly of rails, expressly prepared for them. Before this is ended the owner of the corn has been slipping and dodging about a good deal, trying to get out of sight. But sharp eyes keep him in view, and when the last armful of shucks has been put in place, he is *caught*, and, in spite of a mighty struggle and show of resistance, he is hoisted upon the shoulders of some powerful man, the rest falling into line, and is borne to the house while the welkin rings again with an appropriate corn song. They carry him once or twice round the house, and finally indoors to the feast, where he is seated at the head of the table, looking and feeling very much ashamed—the more so because the women are present and laughing at him. Having placed him in his seat, amid laughter and all sorts of free and

easy remarks and comments, they step back, and in an instant all is changed. The frolic with its unrestrained hilarity is over, the gentleman of the house rises from the chair and takes the role of host as if nothing extraordinary had gone before, invites them to be seated at table, and disperses the generous and thoughtful hospitality characteristic of the times. The feast is abundant and the very best that can be prepared. It is disposed of by going straight through from end to end without much formality or many pauses. Fresh meats, chicken-pie, ham, cold turkey, fried chicken, hot coffee, and several kinds of plate pies, were leading items of the usual menus. All would be over and the guests safe at home by midnight. They could retire with the reflection that they had rendered an important neighborly service, had eaten an excellent supper, and had enjoyed friendly and pleasant social intercourse.

OLD-TIME NEGRO CORN-SHUCKINGS.

When I was about eight or nine years old there was introduced into our neighborhood the negro corn-shuckings. These were common elsewhere in the South, but were practically unknown in the new country where we lived. I wish I felt able to give an adequate idea of them, as they have entirely passed away never to return. But this is not easy—the main feature being the *singing* of the negroes, which cannot be represented either in prose or poetry, and which they themselves cannot now reproduce. The emancipation of the race, while it has brought them prospective benefits of the highest value, which I sincerely hope they may ultimately reach, has also entailed upon them a weight of re-

sponsibility and care too great for their present strength. It has largely pressed out of them, especially those in the country, the light-hearted joviality and child-like frolicsomeness, which were once regarded as social characteristics. I would not if I could reproduce what is in my mind because of any value that I attach to it, for it has none; but only to perpetuate in some degree the memory of one of the joyous outflowings of their life of servitude which is destined, at no distant day, to be entirely forgotten. I might also in this way express my sense of kindness to a humble people who in my boyhood contributed much to my pleasure.

It was, I think, about the year 1837 or '38. Father had made and gathered a very large corn crop, and as usual there was a corn-shucking. The neighbors were on hand and the shucking was steadily but leisurely going on. About half past eight or a little later, we heard, coming from the top of a long high hill two miles to the east, the sound of the negroes singing, and it soon developed that some one in going to mill had casually mentioned to some darkey over on the creek several miles away, that there was to be a corn-shucking at our house, telling him at what time. The chance was too good to be lost. He hustles around and sends word to one and another, and so gets up a company of twenty or thirty who of their own volition came to the corn-shucking. The sound drew nearer and nearer, and swelled out louder and louder. The corn-shuckers stopped, listened and waited. In due time the negroes arrived singing at the very top of their voices, marched right into the lot, surrounded the corn pile, signaled the white men away and took their places.

They have in the Northeast little patent contrivances called corn huskers, an arrangement of small grappling hook fitted to leather gloves, by means of which it is said, the very disagreeable work of husking is facilitated; but for a really perfect contrivance give me a cornfield darkey's pair of hands, plated as they are with horn almost from wrist to finger-tips. Of course he can sit in a corn house of a rainy day and mumble and fumble over the job turning out the ears at the rate of almost one ear every two minutes. But see him at a corn-shucking, aroused, alert, determined, stimulated by song, and with the prospect of a dram immediately before him, and the grateful memory of a dram immediately behind him, and my opinion is he can beat any patent contrivance ever yet invented. The shucks seems to fall off the ears as if by some magic touch. He hardly gets the ear in his hands before the shuck is behind him and the corn cast before him. And when about thirty stout, active fellows are working at that rate, a large pile of corn begins very soon to grow beautifully less.

All the time the singing goes on. They have a leader or foreman who is responsible for the "composition." This he sings one or two lines at a time, in some cases as loud as he can bawl, in others in a subdued crooning sort of way. Some of his tunes are rapid and snappy, some slower and half serious, some seem to be mournful echoes of a life far away, and many are a sort of love ditties of current time and present surroundings; but the very spirit of the song, whatever it may be, seems to enter into the shuckers and regulate their movements. The main thing attained, and apparently the main object sought, is the bring-

ing out of the choral refrain which in itself is absolutely without sense and without any significant connection with the words of the leader's song. But it is noise—it is noise in measured time and infallible unity of movement. It is pleasing to the ear, and wonderful in its effect upon the feelings. I do not pretend to any accuracy in my recollection of the following songs. It is the *tunes* that come back to me as I return in thought to that far-off time—the tunes not the words; and of course the tunes I am unable to give, either on paper or with the voice. The words I record, are at least in the spirit of the original, and in some cases nearly an exact reproduction of it.

The first song on this occasion I cannot give at all. The chorus I remember was "Jolly, jolly ho," sung on a high key and the "ho" brought out with tremendous power. It could have been heard for miles. The leader was on top of the cornpile, marching slowly to right and left in front of his chorus, and giving out, with many gesticulations and powerful voice, the lines of his song, each one so contrived and sung as to leave a vacuum to be filled by "Jolly, jolly, ho," supplied and sung only by the chorus.

The leader, so it seemed to me, had had some trouble with Dinah. She had changed from smiles to frowns. She had gone back upon her word. She had trampled upon his affections. He was sick at heart, and was going away to leave her. But he seemed to be undecided, so I judged, whether he would go to Alabama or Ole Virginy. Meanwhile the chorus stood bravely by him. At every deepening stroke of woe, he was still encouraged to be *Jolly—jolly ho!*—It was a sort of Africanized

Greek tragedy, in which the chorus is always on hand to support the hero, and get him safely through an emergency. I do not pretend that familiarity with an old-time Georgia corn-shucking will perfectly illuminate Euripides or Æschylus—but it will help a little.

“Possum up a Gum Tree” was less classical in conception, and not as roaring in execution, but it was sung with great heartiness, notwithstanding. It was about as follows:

LEADER: Possum up a gum tree,
 CHORUS: *I yi, my pretty boy.*
 Raccoon in de holler,
 I yi, my pretty boy.
 Towser on de possum track,
 I yi, my pretty boy.
 Towser tree de possum,
 I yi, my pretty boy.
 Nigger come to gum tree,
 I yi, my pretty boy.
 Nigger shake the gum tree,
 I yi, my pretty boy.
 Possum drap from gum tree,
 I yi, my pretty boy.
 Sh wa-wa, shwa, shwa, shwa,
 I yi, my pretty boy.

Of course in the rendition every line with its chorus was repeated, so as to hold the mind in suspense, and postpone the *denouement*. The last line, which I have indicated rather than expressed, was a wonderful representation, in perfect time and tune, of the sounds made by the dog and possum when the capture was effected.

After a while they began to think it was time to have a dram. I may say that on occasions of this sort it was then the universal custom to furnish whiskey. Church people and all did it. The moral question as to the right or wrong of the practice, had not yet come to the surface. The jug was at intervals passed around with an empty glass, which was handed to each man in turn. He held it out for the liquor to be poured into it until he said it was enough. They took very little—many of them none at all. And I must say that I never saw a drunken man on any of these occasions. But now to the song. It began with a sort of crooning recitative:

LEADER: How's ye *feelin'* brudders? Seem to me de wedder's gittin to be powerful *dry* ober here in dis neighborhood!

CHORUS: *O dear, I'm so dry!*
 I'm a chokin',
O dear, I'm so dry!
 Stop dat coughin',
O dear, I'm so dry!
 Who dat sneezin',
O dear, I'm so dry!
 O my brudders, wake up an' tell me if any of yer 'member what de jug *used* to say, long *time* ago.
Ho google, my google guggle—ho google, my google google.
 O dat's de talk! but now she's sick and lying out da in the fence corner, and it 'pears like she neve *will say*—
Ho google my google guggle.
 Wonder what's de matter.
Ho google my google guggle.

She's down wid consum'tion.
Ho google my google guggle.
Ho! I look out da and see her comin'
dis way,
Google guggle.
 Walkin' fast,
Google guggle.
 Mos' here,
Google guggle.
 Now all togedder,
Google guggle.
 Make yer bow,
Google guggle.
 Den one by one,

CHORUS: *Google guggle.*
Mind what yer 'bout da,
Google guggle.
Touch her light boys,
Google.

ALL: Hoh-h-goo-google-gug-gug-gug-guggle,
 my time come at last!

Certainly, all this is less than nothing, to *read* it. But let thirty good voices, with their various shades of difference, mingle harmoniously in *singing* it, and the effect will be altogether different. The words were nothing—it was the music. And we may still compare our darkies with classical men, for even Mendelssohn has composed *Songs without words!* I shall not further attempt, however, to represent *songs*, when I can give neither words nor music. There was a very effective one, considered as a stimulus to rapid shucking, which began with the chorus—

Pull de co'n.

and which rapidly moved through such phrases as—

Pull down,
Pull de co'n.
 Every body,
Pull de co'n.
 Pull fas' an,
Pull de co'n.
 Wake up, Sambo,
Pull de co'n.
 Roosters crowin',
Pull de co'n.
 Day's a-breakin',
Pull de co'n.

And so on and on, indefinitely.

There was also a stirring domestic song beginning:

What you 'bout da, Nancy Jane?
Ho, Nancy Jane, ho, Nancy Jane.

And it went on to picture Nancy Jane as sitting up for her lord and master at home in the little cabin nodding over the fire—the picaninny in the cradle—“de Spider on de coals an' de hoccake in the Spider”—and at length she is called upon to wake up and—

Rock de cradle, Nancy Jane,
Ho, Nancy Jane, ho, Nancy Jane.

There were also love songs, referring mostly to “Dinah”. But it was noteworthy that in all the more powerful choruses, the word *jolly* evidently predominated. It came in as “Jolly, jolly”, or as “Ho, jolly, jolly”, or as “Jolly jolly ho.”

When the shucking was over, and the shucks put away, the negroes insisted upon giving my father the usual ride to the table; and then they respectfully retired, and after the whites had finished, they got as good a supper as anybody.

CHAPTER V.

THE EXPRESS MAIL
AND OTHER RECOLLECTIONS.

Ordinarily in these days the through mails were carried in stage coaches. The stage coach from Macon to Columbus was not the one that passed our door, but one several miles north of it, but when an Express mail line, running from New York and beyond to New Orleans, was established, the company adopted the road on which we lived. Our house was not quite far enough from Columbus for the first stable, but as my father was the only man for miles along who was able to supply it with corn and hay, the company established its stables not far from his house.

Literature has made every one familiar with the old-time Stage Coaches. After the romance is taken out of them there is not much left to be said in their favor. They were heavy and clumsy. Usually they were loaded down with passengers and their baggage. Inside, a man was cramped and crowded, and on a long journey one became most uncomfortable. Then they were very low. Of course, on a smooth hard road and when there was a down grade, the horses were kept in a sweeping trot, but in deep sand or mud, on rough rocky stretches, and on all up grades which were at all steep, they were obliged to go in a slow walk. Then there were long delays for changing horses, and three times a day for meals, and other inevitable stoppages and hindrances, so that the average speed was anything but great. Now the Express Mail was intended to overcome this objection in part, so far as the mail was

concerned, not by carrying *the mail*, but only a small portion of it—not even all the letters. It, however, carried all those whose *rapid* transmission was deemed of sufficient importance to justify the considerable extra charge that was made for them.

For that day and time the Express Mail was carried very rapidly. It was in a stout leather bag so arranged that the weight was divided between the two ends, as in an old-fashioned pair of saddlebags. This was thrown across the saddle to which it was secured by means of leather straps made fast to the stirrup leathers. Upon this the rider sat—having at night a little lantern fixed to the front part of his hat, a tin trumpet swung over his shoulders, and a stout cowhide suspended from his wrist. He set out in a fast gallop which was maintained without a moment's intermission, up hill and down, through mud and sand, across bridges and even through any but deep water until he came within half a mile of the first stable. There, without slacking speed he would begin to blow his trumpet to notify the ostler of his approach, and continue to blow for two or three hundred yards. By the time he reached the stable, the relay horse, ready saddled and bridled, had been led outside the door and stood ready to be mounted. It took but a small fraction of a minute to transfer the bag from one horse to the other, and a moment after the rider was mounted and off in a rapid gallop once more. After going about thirty miles, his mail was taken by another rider. Later in the night the Westbound rider would arrive and depart in the same way. All this was as familiar to me in my boyhood as the coming and going of an ordinary train. It was as much a matter of course, and while always a source of interest, was one of no surprise.

I little dreamed that it was an *institution of a transition* period, and that in a few short decades there would be few beside myself that had ever known or ever heard of its existence.

The introduction of the railroads into all parts of the land, has wrought changes that the present generation can with difficulty realize. If one were to spend a winter now at the place of my boyhood's home, he would occasionally see a wagon pass—most likely a light one-horse wagon—having in it a few chickens, three or four dozen eggs, and perhaps a little country butter—and it would soon be recognized as a wagon of the neighborhood. But he would hardly believe that in my early youth there was scarcely a day from October to March or April, when a perfect stream of wagons of all sorts and sizes, was not continually in sight—six-horse wagons, four-horse and two-horse wagons, ox wagons, some with one and many with two yokes of oxen—some going to town loaded heavily with cotton, cotton, cotton, and some returning with salt and sugar and iron and all manner of domestic and farm supplies. The explanation of all this is simple. Columbus, being on a navigable river, was a good market town, both for the purchase of cotton and the supply of groceries. Boats carried the cotton to Appalachicola where it was put upon ocean vessels for its ultimate destination, and they returned laden with *everything*. To the east and southeast of Muscogee lay the fertile counties of Marion, (then including Schley), Sumter and others, nearly the whole of whose immense products found their way to Columbus over the road on which we lived. Across the road, not far from our house, was a favorite camping ground, and I could not venture to say how many

wagons would sometimes be gathered there of a night. Before the whole there was a continual scene of moving life and busy animation, to the accompaniment of whip-cracking, hurraing, loud laughter, and frequently the music of banjos and negro melodies.

It should be added that the constant wear and crushing of the heavy wagons greatly impaired the road. The hard surface which was its characteristic in the beginning was broken through and crumbled. Rains washed it into gullies; the sand accumulated between the hills; immense ditches or gullies obstructed the sides; until, from a smooth hard delightful road, it came to be one of the sandiest, heaviest and most disagreeable. Still, it continued to be the favorite thoroughfare till the railroads finally superseded the necessity for it.

FIRE ARMS FOR HUNTING AND CHRISTMAS.

We boys used to catch partridges in ordinary traps and bird-pens. The birds were exceedingly numerous. It might possibly have been known by some people that a partridge *could* be shot on the wing, but if so I never heard of it. No hunters came out from Columbus with guns and bags and pointer dogs to scour the fields. In summer the cornfields and woods were musical with the whistling of male and female partridges, and in winter they swarmed in vast flocks that could easily be toled by proper baits into our traps. I *had* a gun—what boy had not?—with which I sometimes killed a dove or a lark, and in summer a woodpecker, or a yellow hammer, maybe a sap-sucker, but never a partridge. My gun, a flint and steel lock, was none

of the best and I spent much of my valuable time in keeping it together. The pan would spill my powder, the flint would often drop out, the cock would not always *stand* cocked when I wanted it to, and worst of all, the whole lock had a provoking habit of coming off the stock. After trying in vain to get screws that would hold it on, I finally resorted to twine, with which I bound it hard and fast—and then I had it. The twine, however, was somewhat in the way of the cock pan and the trigger, so that it was not a distinguished success after all. No human being will ever know the amount of pleasure I got out of that gun. It gave me something to think about, and something to do—endless occupation for both mind and hand. I did not thin out the game to any great extent with it, but then it came in mighty handy for Christmas.

The way we boys spent Christmas, and especially Christmas Eve, was anything but creditable. In passing judgment upon us, however, it should not be forgotten that we were country boys; that life in general was dull and monotonous; that in these amusements we were left to ourselves; and that although what we did was absurdly foolish, we enjoyed it.

Some eight or ten of us would get together, with anything that would shoot, from my celebrated gun to an old army musket that had come down from some remote past. Each of us had previously laid in a good supply of powder. We would stay wherever we had met till long past the latest bedtime, and then loading our blunderbusses with full charges of powder, we little rascals would set out and travel for miles and miles visiting every house far and near in the whole neighborhood. There were marshes to wade; there were slippery footlogs to walk; there

were hills to climb; often it was very cold; sometimes rainy and wet; but no matter—it was Christmas Eve, and it was not likely to come again for twelve whole months. As we approached a house we became as still as death. We crept up close to it, got as near to where the beds were placed as we could, drew up close together with faces turned from the house, lowered our guns, which had been cocked as we approached the house, and stood still and waited till the Captain gave the whispered command *Fire!* I tell you, when that old musket and all the other guns, great and small, *went off*, there was a commotion in that house! To the startled and suddenly aroused inmates, it seemed as if heaven and earth had come together. And by the time the man had fallen over a few chairs, and the women screamed and the babies squalled a little, they found out that it was Christmas Eve—which was the information we had come there to impart! In some instances we would be allowed to depart without more ado, in others we would be invited in and treated to Christmas pies and things, including, perhaps, a little extemporized egg-nogg.

Soon we were off again, and making for the next house, the same program was carried out, and by the time we made the grand round and got back home the night was far spent. We were tired half to death. We hadn't taken much of the noggs, but being boys, the little of the stuff that we had tried to swallow, because we thought it was manly to do so, had made our heads ache; and now that the excitement was all over, we felt cold and sleepy and stupid and irritable to the last degree. Verily, boys are great geese—I mean the boys of my days were—and I was the stupidest goose of the lot,—for I wouldn't have missed that lark for anything.

Christmas day was spent in partaking of extra good cheer, and in making all the noise we possibly could, especially all that could be made by the explosion of gunpowder. It is hardly worth while to spend much breath in preaching against such nonsensical customs and practices. Repression is not the proper remedy for them. They must be supplanted by the substitution of things higher and better, along with the cultivation of worthier aims and more refined tastes.

My personality at this early period is hardly worth mentioning. I seemed to have grown by drawing in laterally and extending vertically. I weighed nothing to speak of. My single redeeming feature was my eyes, which were of the right size, dark brown in color and very bright. But my face was as white as a ghost; most of the time I was half sick, and the rest of it I was swallowing medicine—heroic medicine given in heroic doses. The Calomel and Castor Oil and Salts and Rhubarb and Aloes, with their various accompaniments, that I was brought up on, would be sufficient now to start a respectable Apothecary's Shop. But in spite of it all I continued to grow upwards, and contract horizontally. Still I was a sprightly chap, fond of fun and frolic, a perfect "dab at law," and the fleetest runner of my size in all that region. I was a dreamer and a builder of castles in the air. My architectural achievements never materialized, but then they cost nothing and they were beautiful to contemplate. To be a dreamer of dreams is not an unmitigated evil. *Quite* Mayhap, the vision may sometimes beckon him to wider fields, and rouse him to high endeavor.

CHAPTER VI.

MY PARENTS.

The condition and circumstances of my early years which I have thus far recorded, are such as were in the main friendly to my future success—though I did not then so consider them—and it is time to recall some of the more directly helpful influences that were brought to bear upon my young life. And here my parents must be given the chief place, not as an act of filial duty merely, but because in the mature and deliberate conviction of my mind they are clearly entitled to it.

My mother was gentle, sweet-spirited, and tenderly affectionate. In her young womanhood she had been very beautiful, and, many traces of it lingered with her to the last. Her feelings were refined and delicate, and her manners easy and charming. She was deft and tasty in handiwork, and the oracle of all the neighboring women on the various questions pertaining to their domestic and personal comfort and well being. They never failed to find in her, not only a competent, but a kind, sympathetic and helpful friend. If I have, in any noticeable degree, a regard for the feelings, and a genuine concern for the welfare and happiness of others, it is to her that I am largely indebted for it. Her parents, who were quite aged when I knew them, were people of the period of the Revolution. Her oldest brother, Samuel Anthony, was a Methodist preacher. One of my earliest recollections is my going to a meeting held in a rough log house, and hearing him preach. The quiet, sober, solemn faces of the little audience are distinctly before me as I

write, and I remember that the preacher felt it necessary to explain the meaning of the word *dine* as being one not in their vocabulary. He was rehearsing the story of Zaccheus, and he quoted, not quite accurately, as follows: "Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must *dine*, or *eat dinner*, in thy house."

Samuel Anthony was a genuinely good man, and though I was not then able to judge of his mental ability, he must have been a man of great natural powers, for he was appointed by his Conference, at one time or another, to nearly all the best places in the State, and in these he not only sustained himself and his church, but secured the respect and love of his people and the outside public. It goes without saying that my mother was an ardent Methodist, as were her mother and father before her, and of course my own prepossessions and inclinations tended in the same direction.

My father was a Baptist. Religiously speaking, therefore, I may be said to have in me "all the blood of all the Howards." Arminianism was *instilled* into me at church, and Calvinism was *distilled* into me at home, for my father was none of your half-and-half sort. *Election* was a Bible word, so was *predestination* and *particular* election and predestination, long long before the foundation of the world. And so it came to pass that before I was a grown man I could split hairs as to fixed fate, free will and fore knowledge, with the best of them. These high themes, constantly, earnestly and intelligently discussed were the grindstone on which I sharpened my discriminative faculties.

My father, was a genuine and throughgoing Calvinist, full of its spirit and familiar with the litera-

ture of the subject. But it would be a great mistake to suppose that his influence upon my character and destiny was connected with his out-spoken Calvinism. It was something separate from these, and altogether of a different nature. He was an educated man. Having been born within sight of Augusta and having lived just across the river from that city, he had attended Richmond Academy which at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth Century was, as now, an excellent school. In his day it had a reputation for its classical course; of all this he got the benefit and considering the period, he was well educated—not in the higher classics, for few indeed could attend college in South Carolina and Georgia at the beginning of the nineteenth century—but still his advantages had been far in advance of the society in which he came to live. He was a fine mathematician; an accomplished and skillful surveyor; an insatiable reader; with an immense fund of information on all sorts of subjects. Accustomed, in South Carolina, to associate with people of the highest grade and tone, his neighbors in Muscogee looked up to him as a trusted friend and counsellor. He took a kindly interest in them, advising them upon points of law and upon the right and wrong of the various questions and differences arising between neighbors. It was his constant endeavor to prepare his children for something higher and better, and to stimulate them to attain it. To his teaching and training, to his inspiring advice and helpful counsel, I am debtor beyond words to express.

When we first went to live in Muscogee County there was no school within miles of our house. My older brothers were taught the elements of learning by my father. I myself learned from him

and from my brothers the earliest lessons in the Spelling Book; but before long a school was opened in the neighborhood in which I became a pupil, and my academic career regularly began. But this merits a separate chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

STUDYING OUT LOUD IN AN OLD FIELD SCHOOL.

Very few people in this decade of the nineteenth century know anything of an Old Field School in the Georgia of the long ago. I will try here to give a faint conception of the one which I attended, and which was a fair specimen of its class. It was kept by a man who had come into the neighborhood from somewhere, to hunt for a school. Nobody I suppose examined him, or knew anything about his qualifications, character or antecedents. He was about forty years old, clean shaved, rather good looking and a little better dressed than the ordinary farmers. He went through the neighborhood with "Articles of Agreement" to be signed by the patrons; and, without difficulty, got up a large school, which was soon opened, and running in the usual way. Geography and English Grammar were not in the curriculum. Smiley's Arithmetic was taught with considerable success so far as "The Rule of Three." Beyond that it became a weariness to the flesh of both teacher and pupil, and when the Cube Root was attacked, it was found to be invincibly intrenched, and, as they "didn't see no use in it no how," it was deemed expedient to go back to the beginning of the book, and *review!*

In the building of the school house, which was of long pine poles with the bark left on, two of the poles had been half cut away from end to end, and by bringing the cuts opposite each other, the long opening served as a happy provision for illuminating purposes. In front of this was a broad shelf reaching all the way and resting on stout pegs inserted

with a slant into the log beneath. It was there that *I began my career as a writer*, by laboriously making pot-hooks and other chirographical elements. At the opposite end of the house was a chimney, built also of logs wholly on the outside. It was very broad and deep. The opening into the house was about eight feet wide. The hearth was made of clay mortar, resting on common dirt or sand firmly packed. The back and jambs were secured against burning by a very thick lining of the same mortar. This chimney was doubly useful. In winter it held a large fire; and in summer it subserved important *mathematical* purposes. The cipherers were permitted to take their slates out of the school room, and sit around the outside and in the angles of that vast projecting chimney! In the afternoons it was shady and very pleasant out there. And when I reached the point of being sent out for the first time, I felt that I had attained a higher grade in *life* as well as in school. Like the other boys I would work a sum or two, maybe in addition or subtraction, and then carry my slate inside to show it to the teacher. Ah, it was a grand thing—marching in there before all those boys and girls as a *cipherer!*

But I have not yet shown how the young idea was taught to shoot. To do this it will be necessary to go in and observe the processes of the school. The scholars leave home before sunrise and get to the schoolhouse a little after. They engage in plays of various sorts while waiting for the teacher, who, by the way, is cordially hated. Before a great while he is seen approaching, when immediately the girls who have been carrying on at a high rate indoors, subside, and become as quiet as mice. The teacher, with a fresh and stout switch or two in his hand,

which he has had the forethought to cut from the wayside as he came, marches with a firm and steady step to the door, and calls out, "*Books! Books! Come to books!*"

All that are outside hurry to get in, and presently the entire school is seated some on the bench against the wall where they can lean against the logs, the rest on long benches reaching from side to side across the room. Books are opened, places found, and in a moment comes the command, "Get your lessons." Now be it known that in the brave boys of old, reading meant reading *out*, nor was spelling to be done in a whisper. Consequently, in order to *get* the lesson, whether it was spelling or reading, the process must go on *aloud*. This early morning study, however, was not in full voice, nor was it much subdued. It was the ordinary conversational tone. Imagine thirty scholars, and often there were many more, having perhaps, five or six different lessons and even those having the same lesson would never all be conning the same parts of it at once—all spelling different words or reading all manner of different sentences at one and the same time! Listen: Here is a girl that goes racing through a familiar lesson.—b-a ba k-e-r ker baker, s-h-a sha d-y dy shady; A young reader over there is slowly and with difficulty making known that *She—fed—the—old—hen*; Back yonder we hear, i-m im m-a ma imma t-e te immate r-i ri immateri a-l al immaterial i immateriali t-y ty immateriality. This boy reads "I—like—to—play—in—the—shady gro—g-r-o-v-e *groove*—I like to play in the shady *groove*," much as he likes it, he will probably get a thrashing for it this time. Representing the conning thus, as if the parts came in succession one after another,

laughable as it is, can of course give no adequate conception of their concurrence and commingling—every man for himself but all together.

Meanwhile the teacher sits at his desk near the fireplace, possibly mending pens or working over a hard sum in vulgar Fractions that became troublesome the evening before. But he does not fail to cast a watchful eye now and again upon the tricky crowd in front of him. And alertness is soon justified, for presently he hears: “Mr. Thompson—boo-hoo—I wish you’d make Jim Braynor—boo-hoo—stop stickin’ p-p-pins in me!”

“I haint done no such a thing—he was scrouging me off’n the bench and I jes—”

“Come up here both of you.”

And then he flogs them. But while this is going on it is deemed all the more important to keep on getting the lesson; C-o-m com p-r-e double s press compress i-compressi b-i-l bil compressibil i compressibili t-y ty compressibility.

L-a-d lad d-e-r der ladder,

f-o-d fod d-e-r der fodder,

I love-to-read—The—Holy—Bible.

The-hen-was-fed-by-her.

S-l-i sli m-y my slimy.

I-n in c-o-m com incom p-r-e pre incompre h-e-n hen incomprehen s-i si incompreheni b-i-l bil incomprehensibil i incomprehensibili t-y ty incomprehensibility.

The—cow—was—in—the—lot.

And now the lessons are called and recitations, with whippings for failures, are in order for an hour or two. The boys in Arithmetic have tables to recite, the Pot-hook and other chirographers have a showing with their quill pens,—for steel pens were

not yet—and cedar pencils were unknown; and soon thereafter comes “recess”, always pronounced with the accent on *re*.

During this respite from labor, the girls would perhaps play “Many, many stars”, or “William my-Trimble-toe,” and the boys would run races, or play “catch-the-ball”, or sometimes “Antony-Over”. This last was played by separating into two parties, but without choosing men or having an equal and regular division. They would take their position on each side of the house—one party having the ball. The other party would call out Antony, Over! And the ball side would call back “Here she comes!” and would throw it over. The strife was who would catch it. But as it could never be known over what part of the house the ball would come, nor yet whether it would be thrown far, or so as to fall near the house, the players would scatter out and watch for it, and when it came in sight there was rushing and pushing down and crowding for place so as to catch it. Then of course the action would be reversed and the other side would catch. This was not a game but simply a pastime, and was only resorted to, to fill in brief intervals of leisure, such as *recess*.

Presently the school is called in, and the studies, recitations and whippings go on about as before till half an hour or so before dinner, when all class lessons cease, the cipherers are summoned in, and the entire school excepting the little tots, is told to “Get the spelling lesson.” This feature of The Old Field Schools must have been devised as a sort of lung gymnastic. If so, it was a success—an amazing success. Every boy and girl, large and small, young men and young women, the bass voices,

and the treble voices and the squealing voices and all the voices, at full strength and without the least restraint, simply made that spelling lesson roar, and jingle and jangle and clatter and sputter and bellow like ten thousand bullfrogs in a South Georgia swamp! Edgar Poe's Bells were not a circumstance to it.

When the lesson happened to be in columns of easy and familiar words of two syllables, like Baker, or Ladder or Compel the sound was more of a clatter, for the movement was then very rapid. But when the column began with Immateriality or Compressibility, and every word was hastily gone over in the way that was then required,—pronouncing every syllable and every successive combination of syllables till the word was finally completed, as I have already indicated,—and when thirty or forty pupils were rattling them off, some faster some slower, but each on his own word, and all doing their very best both in speed and loudness, the total effect was ridiculous beyond expression and beyond conception.

I remember that the only whipping I ever got in school was on one of those spelling lesson occasions. I was intensely amused and I thought I would make an experiment, more I fear, from curiosity than in the interest of science. But the noise and clatter were so great that I naturally *wanted* to ascertain whether a little keen whistle would be heard above it! It was not much of a whistle, merely about what one might make on suddenly pricking his finger. The experiment, however, was successful. I found out that it *was* heard, and forthwith I took my punishment. Then the teacher, book in hand, gave out the lesson to the school standing in

a long crooked line, like a company of Georgia militia, and we were dismissed for dinner, and *playtime* which lasted two hours. The dinner, taken from little tin buckets, was soon over, when all hastened to engage in the main business of the day, which was commonly Townball, but why so named I never knew.

OLD FIELD SCHOOL GAMES IN 1840.

If some future antiquarian, puzzling his brains over the evolution of Baseball, should happen to find in some heap of musty old papers, even a brief account of its progenitor, the author of said account would probably secure an immortality of renown that might else never fall to his lot. It is only in view of this remote possibility that I bring myself to tell how Townball was played. It will be dry reading, but perhaps for the end contemplated the dryer the better.

The Townball *ground* was not a diamond, but a large circle. Its diameter varied with the size of unobstructed ground available for it, and also according to the number of players. I suppose an average circle would have been about fifty yards in diameter. On this there were several equidistant marked spots called bases, each indicated by a circle about three feet in diameter. These might be more or fewer in number according as the main circle was larger or smaller. Nothing depended upon the number, as they were simply for rest and refuge while a runner was making the grand round.

The players were not limited to *nine*, or any definite number on a side. If there were forty or more boys in the school they all would be chosen in, one by one, by the two Captains, choosing turn about, in

making up the sides. The first choice was settled by lot—"Heads or Tails"—or if lacking a suitable coin, by "Wet or Dry". The first *inning* was decided in the same way. The *ins* would go by turns to the bat, and one of *their* number would deliver the ball to them from a station located at a fixed distance from the little circle in which the batter must stand. It will be seen that the pitcher's object was not to make the batter *miss* the ball but to enable him to *hit* it. Hence there were no "scientific curves" nor similar devices needed, as in Baseball. The pitcher simply delivered the ball as the batter called for it, fast or slow, high or low. The outs had a catcher behind the striker, to catch him out if possible when he missed, but three misses put him out anyhow—that is, out of the *game* for that *inning*.

There were no right and left fielders nor center stops, such as I have read of in the modern games. The Captain of the Outs distributed his men over the field sending them where he thought best, some near and some far.

The ball was usually made of strips of elastic rubber, stretched tightly while winding it on a solid central substance frequently a leaden bullet. It was wound with great care to keep it perfectly round, and when it had reached a size of some two inches in diameter, it was neatly and securely covered with buckskin. Such a ball was exceedingly elastic; it would bounce very high, and could be knocked by a good striker to a great distance. There were three or four kinds of bats, some round and some flat, that is simply a paddle, some heavier and some lighter, and every one might select the bat that he preferred—thus players of all sizes and degrees of

strength could be suited. When the batter hit the ball, he might have another stroke or even two more, if he was not satisfied with the force of the blow delivered. But if he missed the ball at both these subsequent strokes he was out. He had discarded one, which was therefore equal to a miss, and had missed two more, which made his three. But usually when he got in a fairly good blow, he would drop his paddle and run for the first base and on to as many more as he could make. If, however, any of the fielders caught the ball, either before it struck the ground or on its first bounce, the striker was out. Otherwise it would be thrown as quickly as possible either at the runner or to some of the fielders in front of him so as to shut him off from making the round. The only way to put him out was to *hit him* with the ball. A runner on a base must *stay at it* till the next striker hits the ball. There was *no stealing of bases*, and if he started before the ball was struck, it was a violation of the rules and put him out. Often a good batter could knock the ball so far that all on the bases could get home, and he himself make a complete round or what is now called a "home run." Such times always marked the high tides of excitement, with all the noisy, screaming, shouting and hurraing accompaniments, naturally engendered by such brilliant achievements.

In due course of time, what with being caught out by the catcher, with failing three times to hit the ball, with being caught out by the fielders, or put out on the run, the whole side would be out, and then the others would have their innings.

If young people want to *play* ball, Townball is the game; if they simply want to see *somebody else* play ball, then Baseball may be better.

There was another game often played by us, which, though not equal to Townball, was frequently preferred as a change. This, which was called Bullpen, has gone, I believe, entirely out, not even leaving a substitute. Properly it was played with a lighter ball, made up mainly of yarn, as the game involved a great deal of hitting, which, with the rubber ball, would have been too painful. The "pen" was about thirty or forty feet square, made by the deep scratches of a stick drawn along the ground, and having each of the four corners marked with a circle like an ordinary "base." The players were divided by choosings in the usual way, and the two sides were alternately "bulls" and "bull-killers." The bull side all went into the pen, and each of the four corners was occupied by a killer, the rest of that side being out of the play until brought in. The ball was in the hand of one of the four killers, and was passed from one to another of them, while the bulls were kept running to get as far away from it as possible. But while they were scampering away from it towards another corner, the ball could be thrown to the killer in that corner, and if he caught it, he could almost certainly hit a bull with it—and that bull was "dead." If the thrower missed, he was "out." As soon as he had thrown, he ran away as fast as he could, and as quickly as possible the ball would be thrown *at* him by a bull; and if he was hit, *he* was out, and his place was taken by another of his side who had not yet been playing. The "dead bulls" left the pen. As their numbers diminished it became more and more difficult to hit those that were left and so the killers were rapidly thinned out till their number was reduced to two. These two would take the ball and go off a few

steps and there, standing close up together with their backs to the pen, they would juggle—that is, they would decide which of them should take the ball. When they turned around, each had his right hand concealed in the bosom of his shirt, and as these two were no longer confined to the corners, but might throw from any part of enclosing lines, they would march up and down on opposite sides of the pen; as nobody knew which of them had the ball, it was a right ticklish time for the bulls. They were afraid to go too near to either, and could not get far from both at once, nor was it easy to watch both at once. At length after much jeering and daring from the bulls, the ball would be thrown, and, if without hitting, both killers were put out, and the innings changed.

For a rollicking, scampering, noisy game, it was not bad. Indeed, when played with life and spirit, it was very good.

We also played a rough and tumble game which we called "Steal-Goods." The captains of the two sides would toe a mark facing each other, would clasp each other's hand, and attempt to pull each other across the mark, while their men would cling to them and to each other behind, and try to prevent it. There was a pile of "goods"—hats, coats, shoes, and what not—in the rear of each party, and while some were pulling and hauling and scuffling and falling down and shouting and hurraing, others were trying to sneak around and "steal" the enemies' goods. Here fleetness was sometimes of great advantage, for if the stealer was caught, i. e., *touched* by an "enemy," he had to stay in prison till one of his own side could deliver him, which was done by touching him.

This game was not as rough as the present football—but for us boys it was rough enough, resulting in many a bruise and strain, and scratch, and tear—for we meant business, and defeat is never pleasant.

TURNING OUT THE OLD FIELD TEACHER.

Our teacher, who by the way, was never called teacher, but always "the schoolmaster," took part in most of these pastimes, and I think the big boys took a special delight in hitting him hard with the heavy ball and otherwise bringing him to grief. Of course they "turned him out" whenever they wanted a holiday. He would want it too, but if he *gave* it, the loss in tuition would be his; whereas if it was forced from him he would be paid for the day as usual. He would, therefore, positively decline, with a great show of determination and bluster. But next morning he would find the doors securely barred and watchfully guarded. He would command and splutter, and threaten dire consequences, and we little boys would be sorely frightened; but as he remained obstinate, he would be seized by both legs, thrown over and securely held, and, not yet yielding, strong arms would lift him from the ground, and, holding his hands and feet as in a vice, would bear him vainly struggling down to the spring, and if he still held out, would duck him head and ears in the water. Commonly, however, the sight of the water would suffice, and with much apparent reluctance he would yield, but was not released until he had promised to inflict no punishment for this high-handed act.

I suppose I went to this teacher the better part of two sessions, when happily the neighborhood got rid of him. He probably had some good traits, but I

remember him only as a poor teacher and a cold-blooded, cruel tyrant. Me, he whipped only once, but he seemed to have an unappeasable spite against my older brother Philip, whom he flogged unmercifully, as he did many others. Philip would neither cry nor beg, but look him steadily in the eye, and take the fearful punishment like a Stoic. My next older brother William, was too large for an attempted whipping to be safe. I was in such dread that I took care to give no occasion, and so poor Philip was whipped for the whole family, being still a merit of supererogation for the rest of the school. I think Philip must have hated him with perfect hatred; and, as I recall it all, I almost hope he did.

CHARLES H. LA HATT—A REAL TEACHER

I do not remember how long it was after the close of the Old Field School, before I went to another. I picked up whatever came along in the way of knowledge. Then came the turning point with me,—all owing to one man to whom I am indebted more largely than I can here express. I must, however, give some idea of the man and of what he did for me.

Charles H. La Hatt was a college graduate, and a professional teacher. He was a fine mathematician, an accomplished Latin scholar, a geographer, botanist and grammarian. He had successfully taught a large school in a rich neighborhood about eight miles north of us, and he had also taught in Columbus. He became acquainted with a young lady living in our neighborhood, one of the most beautiful and queenly women that I ever beheld. He married her, and as a result of that marriage he

opened a school where the Old Field School had been. I went, of course, as did my older brothers, for to my father the coming of such a teacher was a perfect Godsend.

When I entered the school the first day, I saw a little man much below the average height, as straight as an arrow and as neat as a pin. His wife was much taller than he, and was there with him. He had considerable difficulty that first morning in prevailing upon some of the parents who had brought their children, to allow him to put them in English Grammar, which in their opinion was of no manner of use. I remember how he got around them, by showing them that the parts of Grammar were Orthography, Etymology, Syntax and Prosody. Now said he, Orthography is nothing in the world but *spelling*, and if your children have been in the spelling-book, they have been studying Grammar all this time. I shall expect to carry them a little farther, but if they are not to study Grammar, they might as well pick up their spelling-books and go back home. I can't teach school without teaching Grammar. They concluded finally that he perhaps knew a little more about it than they did, and so he carried the point. And right then and there the days of the Old Field School in that community were ended. To be sure, Mr. La Hatt had many difficulties yet to overcome, in bringing not only boys and girls but grown young men and women under discipline, and leading them and their parents to appreciate the great superiority of his methods. But he went right on. He understood his business, he determined to run the school his way, and if anybody did not like it, he could leave. There was no more studying aloud in school, hence no more slate drawing and ciphering

out of doors. The school was quiet and orderly. A new spirit was gradually infused into the scholars and they became interested in their studies, and ambitious to rise.

For myself, I must have made fairly good progress. I was warmly attached to the teacher, and he became very much attached to me. When after two or three years he gave up the school to take charge of the Academy at Jamestown, fifteen miles south,—in that part of the county which was subsequently cut off, and is now known as Chatahoochee County,—I followed him, boarded in the same house with him, took up higher studies under him, such as Latin and Algebra, and thus little by little the door was opened to me into a larger life.

My father had not recovered from the heavy loss due to the burning of his house and with a large family his means were cramped. My great trouble was scarcity of money to meet the necessary expenses. But by going to school one year, and teaching a school of my own the next, I managed to get money enough to go on again, and so by worrying along I contrived in some way to get a pretty fair academic education. It took me much longer than if I could have gone straight on, but possibly as the intervals were passed in teaching, this was no disadvantage—particularly as Mr. La Hatt, in addition to my school studies, had opened to me the world of books. He was an insatiable reader himself, and both by example and counsel, encouraged me to become—what I have always been—at home and happy among books.

ADMITTED TO THE BAR.

The Academy was patronized by wealthy people—rich planters mainly. Some of them were fine examples of the gentlemen of the Old South. They were highly cultivated. They were easy, elegant and unassuming in manners. Their houses were princely; their hospitalities unstinted; their wives and daughters gentle, refined and modest. Mr. La Hatt had somehow become possessed with the idea that I had something in me—at least “the promise and potency” of a better future. I presume he must have spoken of it; and I was treated with marked respect and came to enjoy a reputation for ability that I had never given myself credit for.

I think it likely that my head was somewhat turned by all this; for when I finally left the Academy and returned home, nothing would do but I must become a lawyer. I knew nothing about it, but perhaps for that very reason I felt equal to it. So I bought the two volumes of Blackstone, fitted me up a retired place for study, and went at it. The study of Blackstone was to me most interesting and instructive, and as a mental drill it was invaluable. I pored over it and over it, and after a while got a young lawyer to question me on it. He lent me the Statutes and something on Pleading and Equity, and before very long he seemed to think I could pass, made application for me, and I appeared before the Court for examination by a committee appointed for the purpose.

I am disposed to think now, as I look back at it, that my application and appearance before the Court for admission to the Bar, was the cheekiest thing in all history. For a stripling about the size of a

telegraph pole, and nearly half as high, to go to town and assume to arrest the business of the "Honorable Court and Jury" in order to be examined for admission, has not often been surpassed in downright assumption and presumption.

The committee were eminent lawyers. Nearly all of them subsequently rose to distinction—though it is hardly to be supposed that their elevation in life was traceable to any flashes of light which I poured upon their minds on that auspicious occasion. One of them was Alfred Iverson, subsequently a United States Senator; another was James Johnson, who reached the Governor's chair; others became Legislators and Judges—and there was, too, Walter T. Colquitt, who became everything, and was sometimes everything at once. Well, it would hardly be believed—it is all I can do to believe it myself—but I came out of that fiery ordeal without the smell of fire on my garments; was duly congratulated, took the oath, paid the Clerk five dollars for my Certificate, which was signed by the Judge, and I came out a full-fledged lawyer.

It is within the range of possibility that if some lawyer in full practice had had the goodness to take me into his office, and had made me familiar with the routine of professional work, leading me gradually into practice at the Bar, I might have made a pretty good lawyer. But my candid opinion is that I was not meant for it. Law as a science—law in its great principles, its fine distinctions, its wonderful scope and its infinitely various application, was a joy and delight to me then, as it has ever since been; but I seriously doubt if even under the most favorable circumstances I should ever have become a successful pleader at the bar. I am constitutionally un-

fitted for it as I am for the best colloquial achievements, and for the same reason,—a sort of ingrained aversion to collision and strife. I can shoot with tolerable effect, with my pen as a sort of long range gun, for then I can take deliberate aim and can calculate the result. I can also say what I have to say from the pulpit, where there is no one to interrupt me and divert me from my line of thought before I get to the end of it—but the management of a case in court is something altogether different, demanding powers of another sort. There is an accurate balance, however, in the two professions; for just as the qualities best adapted to the pulpit are unsuitable to the bar, so those of the latter when carried into the pulpit, can never exemplify its highest ideals, nor accomplish its best work. Too many preachers, in my judgment, copy the spirit and manner of the Bar.

DECIDES TO ENTER THE MINISTRY.

It is needless to speculate, however, upon what I might have become under different circumstances. "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we may," and those circumstances were not permitted to me. Occasionally, a preacher from Columbus would come out into the country, and the matter of religion was presented in such a light that it began to press upon my conscience. It seemed to me that if the teaching of the Bible was true, of which I had no doubt, worldly success and fame, even if I should acquire them, would be of very little worth while they lasted, and would soon pass away. The law began to lose its fascination for me. There was but one thing worthy to com-

mand my time and my talents, and that seemed utterly beyond my reach—the pulpit.

At this period one of my school boy friends who had gone to Franklin College, Tennessee, returned. His name was John Tillery. He had identified himself with a people of whom I had previously heard nothing, and he was zealous and hearty in advocating and urging the truth as the Disciples held and taught it. At first it seemed to me to be utterly defective. But * * * I was finally convinced by this good man and took the step which changed the whole current of my life.

[The sketch then tells of the author's meeting with Dr. Daniel B. Hook of Augusta, then in Atlanta, who told of the wish of Mrs. Tubman to have him go to Bethany College and her willingness to assist him in securing a collegiate education.] * * * In January, 1853, I set out on what was then regarded as a long and arduous journey.

GOING TO COLLEGE VIA. AUGUSTA.
SLEEPING CARS IN GEORGIA IN 1850.

Forty-five years ago the Atlanta & West Point Railroad was already operated, as it is now, from Atlanta to Montgomery. Thence the passage to Mobile and New Orleans was by boats. The above road passed within twenty miles of Columbus, on the Alabama side of the river, at a little town called Loachipoka. I had travelled a few miles in the cars some time before, going from Loachipoka to Notasulga on business; and now I boarded them the second time, at the same place, to go in the opposite direction. In due time I reached Atlanta where I stopped over till night in order to confer

with Dr. Hook. Probably about eight o'clock I took the train on the Georgia Railroad for Augusta.

The car was well filled, and pretty soon the passengers began to make arrangements for retiring. This was perhaps the first "Pullman" ever invented, and there was no "patent" on it. The sleeping accommodations consisted of a long shelf on each side of the car reaching from end to end. It was placed next the wall of the car, and up between the backs of the seats and the ceiling overhead. There were no mattresses, though I believe there were blankets accessible when wanted. As luck would have it, gentleman's shawls were then in fashion, and these with overcoats served for covering. Handbags were transformed into pillows. When a passenger got ready to retire, he could by standing on the seats prepare his "humble couch", and then by mounting on the back of a seat and holding fast to the shelf he could clamber up and "go to bed." Such a convenient nuisance as a Porter had not yet been invented. Of course with a crowded car there was not sleeping room enough for all, but then all did not want it. A man, however, who had travelled from New Orleans or Mobile was very glad of a chance to stretch out. The local travelers would soon get off, and the ladies all preferred to sit up—so there was as much room as was actually wanted. The weather was cold, but the car was kept warm, and if snoring was any sign, the sleepers must have been comfortable. For myself, after trying the "berth" for a while, I decided that it was preferable to curl up on a seat. A little while before day we reached Augusta—to become in time my home and scene of my life work,—and stepped out into the car shed which was dismal, cold and poorly lighted. My eyes

were full of sleep, my joints aching with the cold; the bustle and calling out, and rushing to find baggage was confusing. There was a fellow up towards the front who kept crying "Claim your baggage." Another was taking trunks one by one from the car, and then looking up the check he would call out the number; and the passenger then and there in all that jam and confusion and half darkness, had to find out the number of his check, call out "Here!" and give it up, at the same time directing what to do with his baggage, and it would be consigned to a porter accordingly. I was an utter stranger, and so tried to do what others did. I noticed that some said "Central Hotel," and maybe the next man would say simply "Central," and the next "Augusta" and very many would say "Railroad." I supposed that they were all hotels, and as the majority seemed to prefer the "Railroad" hotel, I decided to go there too. So, in company with the rest I got into a large four-horse omnibus, and presently we set out. We went pretty fast, and before long we struck the bridge, and I knew that something was wrong. Upon inquiry I found that that 'bus was going to the South Carolina R. R. *Depot*, which was then on the other side of the river. I was obliged to spend the day in Augusta, but the driver upon learning of my mistake, told me to remain in the 'bus, and he would take me back, which he did; and about sunrise I got out at the Augusta Hotel, now the Commercial. During the forenoon I looked up Mr. Pinkerton who kindly gave me detailed information respecting the rest of the journey, introduced me to Mrs. Tubman—a noble and queenly woman, who was to be my life-long friend. I found her then, as ever afterwards, a woman of grace and dignity, of wisdom and charm.

After I had seen the sights of the town—which seemed to me a great city—I took the train at night for Charleston.

TRIP TO CHARLESTON.

In a little while the city was left behind and I had crossed Horse Creek and was in old Edgefield District, where my father was born and had lived for many years; and now the old fireside talks about men and places and incidents connected with his life in the very region through which I was passing, came back to me; and perhaps the fixing of my thoughts on the distant *time* made the distance in *space* seem greater. I had been seriously ill the summer before, and was still far from vigorous, and that slow, tedious all-night journey from Augusta to Charleston was exceedingly disagreeable. But at length the day came, and before we reached the city I had become interested in observing the strange growth of the country. The boat for Wilmington would not leave till late in the afternoon. I passed the day as I could, being much interested in the shipping and all the movements on the water, as I had never before been on the coast.

TO BALTIMORE AND WHEELING OVER THE MOUNTAINS.

The Wilmington boat on which I got aboard, was merely a river boat, and I suppose, of course, that it took an inland passage without going out to sea. But I was so jaded and worn and feeble that I went to bed, and was soon fast asleep. Early next morning when I came out, we were in Cape Fear River, and before a great while landed in Wilmington. There was another long delay, for it was not the age

of close connections and rapid transits. However, we got off finally and went whizzing toward Weldon. Compared with the present railroad service, trains on all roads went about half as fast, when they did go, stopped at ten times as many stations, and remained at each five times as long. From Wilmington to Weldon is a long run through a monotonous and uninteresting country, but we got there at last, were not unduly detained, and went on through Petersburg, Richmond and Fredericksburg to Acquia Creek, thence by boat on the Potomac to Washington, which we reached *sometime*, I do not know when. I made my way across the city to the B. & O. Depot, and early that night was in Baltimore. I left at about ten o'clock for Wheeling and next day crossed the Alleghenies, passing through many tunnels; but what is now the longest tunnel of them all, was not then completed, and so I did what, perhaps few now living have ever done, crossed *over the top* of the highest mountain ridge in a train. It went up the long steep side by means of a succession of zig-zags—going forward a little distance and then backing the same distance, but all the time getting higher and higher up—the arrangement being such that both the backward and forward runs were up grade. It was slow business, and all who desired to do so got out and walked directly up the mountain to the top, where they waited for the train, which stopped and took them on board. In due process of time we arrived at Wheeling, where I took the boat for Wellsburg, and there I hired a conveyance that took me to Bethany. I do not know how long I was in making the whole trip, but after leaving Augusta I lost not a moment that could be utilized in traveling, and I am sure I could now make the

journey between the two points in one-third of the time, and do it with unspeakably more comfort. None but the old can fully appreciate the blessings that have come to us in the latter half of the century—and not the least of these is the perfection of the railroad service.

[The Chapter dealing with the author's experiences in Bethany is omitted as being more appropriate for a publication intended for readers outside of Georgia.]

GRADUATES AND IS CALLED TO THE CHURCH IN AUGUSTA.

But at length the final examinations were all over. Whether by grace or merit I had safely passed the trying ordeal—but if I *was* saved by grace, it had certainly not been without work. During the interval between the examinations and the Commencement I prepared my Valedictory which, when delivered, was warmly received, and complimented doubtless beyond its merits. It was published in the next issue of the *Harbinger*. But before the day came, and while the graduates were luxuriating in their freedom from daily tasks, we had many a sober talk together as to our future course. Some had places in view, others had none. Some had plans for the immediate future, others were unable to plan. For myself I had nothing definite in view beyond returning home and doing with my might whatever my hands might find to do.

There are few situations more trying to a young man who is soberly conscious of possessing some latent power for useful work, while yet no opportunity opens its door before him. I cannot recall my own feelings at the time. I hope I had some re-



ligious faith; I fear that in the flush of recent triumphant achievements over formidable difficulties, I had too much faith in myself. If so, it was speedily nipped in the bud by an overwhelming surprise—a letter from Captain Edward Campfield conveying an urgent call to become the pastor of the church in Augusta. In my wildest day dreams I had never thought of such a thing. Instead of filling me with pride, it had just the opposite effect. I was not fitted for such a work—not equal to the demands upon a pulpit in such a place. While the call was of course most gratifying as the manifestation of confidence in my character and my abilities, I could not divest myself of the feeling that it would be wrong to accept. I was without experience, and wholly untrained as a preacher. I had absorbed a good deal—I had digested nothing. The tools were in hand, but I had never used them. I concluded finally to submit the question to Mr. Campbell, and again to my surprise he advised me by all means to accept; gave me such counsel and encouragement as he thought good; and as a result I wrote an affirmative answer.

Leaving Bethany I visited old Muscogee, and after preaching a few times started to Augusta, stopping over in Griffin to visit my brother Philip who was then preaching there. While there the yellow fever of 1854 was raging in Augusta. When I arrived I put up at the Augusta Hotel. After some delay I arranged for the resumption of services which had been long suspended, and on Sunday, November 15th, 1854, met the congregation and preached my first sermon to them. The situation and circumstances were quite peculiar, but the recollections of my Augusta career would be modern history, and hardly need be recalled.