CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA (1861)

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PERHAPS there are no two States which stand more as representatives of their two sections than Massachusetts and South Carolina. In the history of the country they have never been silent, and they have spoken with no uncertain sound. Though they have often been bitterly opposed, yet in their sturdy and uncompromising allegiance to what each has believed to be the right way of acting they have found a certain sympathy with each other, and a certain large measure of mutual respect. Each has felt that in the other she had a foeman worthy of her steel when in opposition, and when in conjunction a friend not to be misunderstood or distrusted. In the same way it might be said that their two largest cities are worthy antagonists, and now heartily respected friends. Boston is Massachusetts boiled down, and Charleston may be spoken of as a very strong decoction of South Carolina. Both think what they must, and say what they think. The people of both have a very strong attachment for and a hearty pride in their city, and an injury to it, an insult aimed at it, or even a humorous remark bearing on any of its peculiarities, is sure to call to their feet a host of indignant defenders. More than all others, these are the feminine cities of the Union, being all through and everywhere just what they are anywhere, and, like women, arousing a chivalric love. Both have a glorious past and a living present, such as in kind and intensity of personal life can scarce be easily found elsewhere—at any rate in the East, or in the original thirteen colonies. There is among their merchants a fine sense of honor, which holds itself high for the sake of the city as well as from personal motives, and in social life an aristocracy not based upon wealth. Both have a line of noble names, the very possession of which is a presumption of breeding and refinement. Both are the holders of the kind of firmness that begins with “O,” and are ready to maintain their opinion with any and all arms. Both have strongly marked peculiarities in their English, and hold to these as firmly as to any other characteristic. They are noble and consistent members of the great family of cities, standing proudly side by side in spite of their well-marked differences, and acting as constant foils to the beauty of each other. While seeming to be opposed, they understand each other, and hold alike to the old motto concerning the obligations resting on a real nobility.

In the old times it was especially Boston that hated slavery, and it was Charleston, above all other cities, that hated antislavery. It has always been the boast of Boston that her public schools were absolutely perfect, and one would hardly have expected that any resemblance could be found to them, or to the spirit which runs through them, in the public schools of Charleston, differing as did the two cities for so long in the very principles of their existence. But there is a story about the public schools of Charleston before the war which is worth telling, and worthy of the noble city, and which shall not go untold so long as I, who was a part of it, do not forget the duty of recognizing noble deeds.

It was easy in Boston to carry on the schools. They were a part of the tradition of the city, and it took no great amount of courage to support and defend them. They were filled by the children of rich and poor alike, and it was the boast of the city that the child of the mechanic sat side by side with the children of the richest and noblest families. To be a teacher had always been to be respected, if not honored, and there was no thought of accepting charity in the children who enjoyed their advantages. This was generally the case in the Northern States. But in the South it was different. The public schools were supposed to be only for those who could not afford to pay for education, and consequently they had many of the characteristics of charity schools. The teaching in them was poor and far behind the times, and none of the families of breeding ever thought of sending their children to them. These were educated in small private schools, or at home under tutors and governesses, or were sent North. But about the year 1857 some of the best men in Charleston became dissatisfied with this state of things, and determined to see if it could not be bettered. They studied the ways of other cities, and the outcome of the movement was the building of three large school-houses after the New York plans, having each one accommodations for primary and grammar departments, and of one noble house of different idea, to be called the Girls' High and Normal School. They meant to have good schools, and they were determined to have good teachers, and in time to have them educated in their own city. The men who initiated the movement and who gave it their personal attention, and not merely the weight of their names, were the men who should begin such enterprises. They were a power in the community, and commanded universal respect and confidence. They made up their minds that as to schools they must learn of the North, and they faced the necessity of the situation with a noble courage. Their ultimate purpose was to supply their city with good schools, taught by native teachers, and they hesitated at no sacrifice of their lifelong prejudices to attain their end. They must have large and convenient houses. They built them, sparing no expense and no trouble to make them as good as any. They needed teachers in line with the best theories, and familiar with the most tested practice of the profession. They took them from the principals of New York and Providence grammar-schools. They demanded the best, and they offered those men and women salaries sufficient to draw them from their positions in those two cities, and to make the question of their acceptance of the offers only a matter of time. They made these schools free to all the children of the city, and bought the books which were to be used. They furnished the rooms with everything that could make them attractive .and healthful. They sought in the city for the best teachers, men and women, that they could find, and made them assistants to the Northern principals, to learn of and to be trained in their ways; and when all this had been done they put their own children, not only boys, but girls, into these public free schools, side by side with any who might choose to come. Never was there a nobler instance of entire singleness of purpose and of the sacrifice of preconceived opinions to conviction. It seems worth while to give the names of the Commissioners for the year 1860 as a testimony. Some .of the names will be easily recognized as familiar: C. G. Memminger, chairman; William C. Bee; W. J. Bennett; G. P. Bryan; George Buist; W. G. De Saussure; C. M. Furman; William Jervey; Hon. A. G. Magrath; Hon. W. A. Pringle; F. Richards; John Russell; E. Montague Grimké, secretary.

Of the building for the Girls' High and Normal School something more should be said. Situated in St. Philip Street, a square, three-story building with a crowning dome, it attracted the eye of whoever passed that way. Below there were wardrobes, and a large room for the use of the girls at recesses in stormy weather. The second story was filled by a hall and classrooms leading there from, while above was a still larger hall, to which the increased size of the school drove the daily sessions in the second year of its life. The glory of the place, however, was the garden in the midst of which it was set, and which, surrounded by a high stone wall, gave perfect freedom and seclusion to the pupils. This garden was overflowing with all sorts of roses and flowering plants, was laid out with gravelled walks, and well cared for by the Irish janitor, who had a little house on the premises. Dan was very proud of the garden and his care of it, though he used often to assure us that, for real beauty, now, there was no place like Ireland, adding, “And sure if ye were there now, I could show yez a spot where this blessed minute ye could stand knee-deep in clover.” In the second story, and fronting this garden, was a piazza two stories in height, with lofty pillars reaching to the roof—a pleasanter spot than which, during the heats of the early summer, I have never found.

For this school, in which was the hope of the entire system, the teachers were all selected from the Northern States—the most convincing proof, if anything further were needed, of the noble courage and fearlessness of purpose which characterized every act of the Board of Commissioners. The principal was a teacher of long experience in the public schools of Boston, a native of New Hampshire; two of the assistants were Massachusetts born and bred, and one came from Pennsylvania. To show how conservative and wise were the board, it may be stated that of the seventy-seven teachers in all the public schools, only nine were of Northern birth and home. But in the Normal School, where the future teachers were to be trained, they were all Northern, that the very best and most modern work might be done there.

Of those three women, coming thus into a new home and a strange city, I was one, and am therefore telling what I know and saw.

It was a fresh experience, the voyage thither in one of the beautiful steamers which then ran between Charleston and the Northern cities—the *Massachusetts* and the *South Carolina.* But stranger to our Northern eyes was Charleston itself, with the cross on old St. Michael's rising high above it as the steamer came in view of the garden-loving city. The harbor is bad, like those of all the sand-line cities; and the steamers, though drawing at the utmost only sixteen feet, were often obliged to lie outside waiting for high water, and had always to time their departures by the almanac. But, once within the bars and on shore, there were no bars in the welcome of the people. Not only by our personal friends, but by all connected with the schools, were we made to feel at home. The exquisite breeding of the city asserted itself, and at once took us, though from an alien land and a different civilization, into its charmed circle. The commissioners who had invited us there spared no pains to make our stay pleasant, making us welcome to their homes as well as to those of all the best people in the city. Courtesies of all kinds were offered to us. How beautiful and strange it all was—the rides about the country, where, while our Northern homes were still shivering in frost and snow, the Cherokee rose spread its white petals along the dusty roads, and we picked the yellow jasmine where the gray moss hung from the live-oaks! Camellias blossomed unafraid in the open air, and our desks at school were beautiful with them and magnolia blooms, or weighted with daintily arranged baskets of the purple or the large lemon figs which our girls had picked as they came to school from before their doors. The memory even now lies in my mind, sweet and still, persistent as the odor of orange blossoms from the Charleston trees. The orange-tree is not safe in that latitude; a sudden frost might stifle its life; but they were sometimes planted, and were of course found in conservatories or raised in parlors.

It was with a curious interest that we studied the buildings and customs of the town, so different in every way from those of our Northern homes. The long, airy houses with their three stories of piazzas, the negro quarters in the yards, often much larger and more imposing than the dwelling of the master and mistress, swarming with happy and careless life, as the many servants passed to and fro between house and quarters; and the little darkies of all ages were free to play and tumble to their hearts' content, unless, indeed, a sweet-voiced call came from the rear of the piazza, “George Washington and Columbus, come notice Miss Elvira!” followed by the rush of perhaps half a dozen small darkies of varying ages, all eager to play with and care for the heiress of the house and of them. And the loving and reverent care which they did take of the little Elvira was beautiful to see! Then the long stretch of the yard, with its pump in the middle, where a buxom serving-maid was filling her pails of water, which came into the house afterwards, one poised on her stately head, while she carried two in her hands; the queer wooden shutters, and the bewildering arrangement of the numbers of the houses on the street, where it was said that every citizen, if he moved, carried his number with him as a part of his personal property; the inevitable negro everywhere, waiting on and serving us at every turn; the beautiful gardens, whose high gates opened mysteriously and swiftly by invisible hands at the appeal of the loud-echoing bell. While one negro led us up the path, another opened the front door, a third escorted us to the drawing-room, while a fourth announced our arrival to the gracious mistress, and a fifth chubby little girl or boy appeared before we were fairly seated with a tray of cooling drink! And the procession of servants from the kitchen when dinner was in course of serving, one servant for each dish, so that everything was smoking hot, though it had come some distance in the open air! The queer and fascinating dialect of the negroes, and the altogether fascinating accent of the Charlestonians, the flare and live sighlike breath of the pitch-pine knots in the fireplace in the evening or the early morning, when the servant who came to make our fire entertained us all the time of her stay by her remarks, and never quitted the room—which she did half a dozen times during the process—leaving us in doubt as to what her errand might be, but announcing encouragingly each time, as she opened the door and disappeared, “Now I'm going for the matches,” “Now I'm going for to fetch the dust-pan,” etc. All was new, and full of interest and suggestion.

The regulations under which it was considered necessary to keep the colored population were to us new and interesting. The law at that time forbade their being taught to read. A colored woman could not wear a veil in the street, nor were two negroes allowed to walk arm in arm except at funerals. A curious and suggestive thing happened, therefore. Every negro funeral was largely attended, and the corpse was sure to be followed to the grave by an imposing line of mourners, all walking arm in arm. One very marked figure in the city was the old man at the ladies' entrance of the Charleston Hotel. I think I have never seen a man who had more the appearance of being somebody's grandfather than this kindly old Marcus. One day he had disappeared, and there was no one at the door. After long and futile search for him, a messenger brought word that he wanted the loan of money in order to return, and the mystery was finally solved by the discovery that he could not come, not because he had bought either oxen or land or married a wife, but for the simple reason that, having become more than specially interested in his one only pastime of gambling the night before, he had, in a fit of noble rage at his persistent ill luck, rashly hazarded his clothes—and lost the game. A contribution from his friends at the hotel soon restored him, clothed and in his right mind, which was a very positive one. There was a tradition current that one evening, as a party of lately arrived Northerners were having a pleasant conversation in the parlor somewhat late, they were surprised by the appearance of Marcus, who gravely informed them that he had come to sweep the parlors, and that “our folks in dis house always goes to bed by half past ten, soh!” The intimation was humbly heeded. Of course no one could resist the law of the hotel when the decisions were handed down from such a height.

Old St. Michael's Church was well worth a visit, with its tiled aisles and square pews. In its steeple, 193 feet in height, were the chimes which marked the quarters of the hour, and here too were rung, morning and evening, the hells which regulated the negroes in their perambulations. In winter the evening bells ring from quarter of six to six, and for a quarter of an hour before nine. This last was called the "last bell-ringing," and after it had ceased to sound any unfortunate negro found in the streets, unless he could show a pass from his master, was summarily deposited in the guard-house for the remainder of the night. During the ringing of the last bell two men regularly performed on the fife and drum on the corner opposite where the guard-house was situated, and the negroes who came out to listen to the music dispersed in quick time as the last tap was given the drum, and the last stroke of the bell lingered in the air. The watchman in the tower called the hour, and all relapsed into silence again. I give a literal copy of one of these passes:

> " CHARLESTON, March 12, 1855.
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> "Paris has permission to pass from my residence in Beaufain St., near Rutledge, to the corner of Vanderhorst's wharf and East Berry, and from thence back again to my residence, before drum-beat in the morning, for one month.
>
> "JAS. B. CAMPBELL.
>
> " J. L. HUTCHINSON, Mayor."

One of the most interesting places was the church of Rev. J. L. Girardeau, a very large building, capable of seating perhaps fourteen hundred persons. In the morning the lower floor was occupied by the white congregation, and the negroes, as in the other churches, sat in the galleries, but in the afternoon the negroes filled the body of the house, the whites being seated only at the sides and in the galleries. To one not accustomed to the sight, the church then presented a striking appearance, and we had an opportunity of seeing all shades and varieties of color, in both complexion and dress. The old and staid negro women generally wore bright handkerchiefs twisted around the head, sometimes with the addition, though not the amendment, of a bonnet perched upon the top thereof, crown uppermost; but the younger and gayer portion of the community wore bonnets of all styles, from the most fashionable to the most obsolete. The only music was by the negroes, and it was really worth hearing. As of course they could not read, the hymn was retailed, two lines at a time, by the minister, who usually began the singing, and it welled out refreshingly strong and true. Before the services commenced the audience sometimes struck up a voluntary, greeting the ear as we entered in the form of some grand old tune sung by the assembled throng. The courtesy which surrendered the main part of the church to the negroes for half the time was only one out of many customs in the city which testified to the general kind feeling existing between master and slave, where true nobility asserted itself in relation to inferiors as well as to equals. In the homes of Charleston the negroes were treated like a sort of children of the household, and this because of a real affection.

The strength of family feeling on the part of the negroes was often queerly put, as thus: "Law sakes! Balaam Preston Hamilton Smith," a venerable old negro was heard to exclaim to a young man who was understood to be thinking of marrying, "don't say you'd go fur to 'liberate fur to take up wid any middlin' set. If you want a wife, you'd better marry into de Middleton family. De Middletons is a mighty good family. Hm! De Roses is 'spectable too; but jes look at me! I married into de Middleton family!"

The closeness of the relation was amusingly illustrated by an incident which occurred in school when we insisted that certain words should be pronounced according to authority, and not in the way in which the girls had been accustomed to sound them. "But," they said, "you know we grow up with the negroes, they take care of us, and we hear them talk all the time. Of course we can't help catching some of their ways of talking. It sounds all right to us." They were told that if they could find in any dictionary the least authority for the pronunciation dear to them, there would be no objection to it; that we were only trying to give them the best, and that it was not for any notion of ours that we insisted. "But," they said, quickly and sadly, "the dictionaries are all Northern dictionaries!" and so the matter came to an end. For it was by no means nothing but flowers and fruit from their gardens that these Southern maidens were in the habit of bringing to us, their Northern teachers; they brought to our aid every morning the sweetest docility, the greatest eagerness to learn, and the most perfect breeding. Even in the days after the *Star of the West* had been fired on, and the whole city was full of devotion to the Palmetto State and of denunciations of the North and of the people there; when for a Northern woman it was sometimes difficult to be calm; when we could neither listen to the prayers offered from the pulpits nor read the newspapers; when threatening anonymous letters came to our hand, and we grew tired with the constant strain and uncertainty—even then, and perhaps even more than before, to cross the threshold of that school-room was to pass at once into an atmosphere of peace and unfailing courtesy. Those girls came from homes that were full of bitter feeling and opposition to the North, but there was never an ungentle look or word from them to their Northern teachers. The school-room was an asylum, a safe and sure place for us; and what this meant of good-breeding and loyalty is comprehensi-ble perhaps only to those who have spent their lives in contact with young and warm-hearted girls. There is nothing but sweet and dear memories of those girls, light-hearted and happy then, but with heavy clouds of war and trouble hanging over them—war and trouble which in more than one instance broke up happy homes, and struck down at their sides the brothers and the friends whom they so loved. I have before me now a card on which the girls of the first class wrote their names together for me, and to look it over is to recall much of sadness, though much of devotion, faithfulness, and high courage. The planning of this work is exquisitely neat, as was all the work that they did. Here are the names of two sisters, who afterwards became teachers in our places when we came away. Underneath, a name that recalls all gentleness and grace; next it, that of a girl whose parents had been born in New England, and who showed it in every fibre. Then comes Sallie, tall and slender, full of dash and fire, and the indescribable charm of the Southern girl, with her haughty, “Who'd stoop to quarrel?” so often said when some difference arose in the class; then Lizzie, with her beautiful dark eyes and her no less beautiful disposition, whose after-life was so full of sadness and sorrow; then the carefully written signature of the girl who took up the teacher's life, drawing her inspiration from what we brought her in those long-past days, and who has become a tower of strength to a new generation in her chosen profession; and then Celia, who, leaving her gracious and luxurious home, gave up her life to caring for the poor and suffering, and died at her post, mourned by the whole city. Sweet and strong they pass before me in memory, the girls of that first class, with the happy days in which we lived together in the close relation of teacher and taught. They had never before been in a large school, and its life and regulations were new and striking to them. They grew mentally like plants given a new sun and soil, and the work to the educator was beyond measure delightful, yielding a rich harvest.

We had visitors, men and women, to all of whom our work was of the greatest interest, and to whom it was a comparative novelty to be allowed to visit a school, and to see the work going on. I was greatly puzzled at first by the saying, which I heard often, that they had come to “see the system,” as if we had some patent method of conveying information and of training, which had to be applied in some well-defined manner. I have since learned that this idea is not peculiar to the South.

Not different from the cordiality with which we were welcomed to the city homes was the thoughtful kindness which provided for our Christmas holidays. To see the rice plantation, with its long avenue of live-oaks, and the noble mansion standing on the wide lawn; to go over the store-house, where were kept goods of all kinds ready to he distributed to the field hands, the piles of dress goods and provisions, and all presided over by the gracious mistress of the house; to watch the men laborers, tall and brawny, splendid animals, with their fully developed muscles, and their rows of perfect white teeth, and the not-so-fortunate negro women, who also toiled in the rice-fields, bent and knotted with the labor; to see the great supper provided for them on Christmas eve, and to listen to their rejoicing and songs—all this was a great pleasure and a great lesson.

But it all was to pass away. The Democratic Convention in April, 1860 to which we devoted all our spare time, was a highly interesting and significant event. Political meetings grew more common and more enthusiastic. Then followed the election of President Lincoln, and the immediate resignation of the Federal judge, one of our commissioners, the Hon. A. G. Magrath, and of the district attorney. The streets bloomed with palmetto flags, and with a great variety of mottoes and the air grew more and more charged with electrical feeling. The banks all suspended November 30. 1860. The convention met December 16th, and the act of secession was passed on the 20th, between one and two o'clock. The firing of guns and the ringing of bells announced the fact to the eager populace, and we began to live in a scene of the wildest excitement—a double-distilled Fourth of July. Business was at once suspended, and stores were closed. The chimes of old St. Michael's rang merrily at intervals all the afternoon. Fire companies of both colors paraded the streets, noisily jingling their bells, and one continually met members of the Vigilant Rifles, the Zouaves, the Washington Light-Infantry, or some other of the many companies, hurrying in a state of great excitement to their headquarters. Boys in the street shouted, “Hurrah! Out of the Union!” with all the strength of their lungs; and the negroes, who, on hearing any unusual noise, always made their appearance at all the gates, stood in groups at every passageway. The young men devoted themselves to drinking the health of the State, and exhibited indubitable evidence of having done so as they walked or drove furiously along. On Meeting and King streets in several places the sidewalks were covered with the remains of Indian crackers, and the whole air was redolent of gun-powder.

The excitement by no means came to an end as the day wore to its close, with a rosy sunset over the rippling waters of the Ashley, and when the twilight had died away an illumination of the principal business streets by means of blazing tar-barrels produced a strong and bodeful light. Meeting Street, from above the Charleston Hotel to below Institute or Secession Hall, was ablaze with burning tar, which overflowed so that some-times the whole width of the street was aflame.

Ladies as well as gentlemen crowded Secession Hall at an early hour. About half the floor was reserved for members of the convention and the Legislature, the remainder being filled with an excited crowd of men. The meeting was opened with a prayer, short but comprehensive, acknowledging the possibility of suffering and privation, but asking, after that was passed, that their sails might whiten every sea, and their agriculture and commerce be greatly prospered. The ordinance of secession was then handed to the president, and by him read from a large parchment with the seal of the State hanging there-from. At its close tumultuous applause shook the building, and the delegates, called in the order of their districts, were summoned to affix their names. The table upon which the signing was done was that upon which the ratification of the Federal Constitution had been signed. The whole evening there was a constant discharge of fireworks, crackers, and fire-arms in the street below, so that during the prayer it was at times impossible to hear what was being said. Bands of music passed at intervals, and the crowd outside shouted and cheered without intermission.

At last the signing was over, and the president, taking up the parchment amid profound silence, said, “The ordinance of secession has been signed and ratified, and I proclaim the State of South Carolina to be an independent commonwealth.” This was the signal for an outburst of enthusiasm such as is not often witnessed. Every one rose to his feet, and all broke forth into tumultuous and ever-renewed cheering. Handkerchiefs waved, hats were swung round and wildly tossed into the air, or they were elevated on canes, swords, or muskets, and spun round and round. The act of secession was then read to the crowd on the outside of the building, who greeted it with their shouts. The two palmetto-trees which stood on either side of the platform were despoiled of their leaves by the audience as mementos of the occasion, and the meeting slowly dispersed.

It was in the assembly-room of the old school-house, early on the morning of January 9, 1861, as I sat at the desk bending over my books preparing for the day's work, that I heard the report of the first gun which was fired at the *Star of the West,* and lifted my head to listen, with a great fear at my heart, and an effort to persuade myself that the sounds were only the effect of my excited imagination as they came again and again. On the morning of April 12th I was twenty miles away, in one of the beautiful homes where we had been so often welcome guests, and on coming down to breakfast found anxious faces and much excitement among the servants, who reported that they had heard firing all the night in the direction of Charleston. We ate breakfast almost in silence, our only thought being whether we could get to the city that day; and after the meal was over stood on the broad piazza waiting till the big strong farm wagon could be arranged to take us to the railroad station. At last it appeared.

The driver went to the kitchen for a last word, and detailed one of the house-servants who stood looking on to stand in front of the horses till he should return. The latter, attracted by the play of two children, turned away to watch them; some sudden noise startled the horses, and away they went, big wagon and all, in a mad run round and round over the great field, in and out among out-houses, sheds, and trees, while we stood helplessly looking on, and heard the sound of the guns. It seemed a long time before they made for the opposite sides of a tree, which they saw stood directly in their way, and smashing the pole of the wagon on its trunk, were brought to a standstill. There was the wagon hopelessly ruined, so far as any journey in it for that day was concerned, dripping as to its back end with broken eggs; there was the terrified negro, tears streaming down his face, and crying out, “Oh, I only looked away from dose horses one minute, and now I have done more harm dan I can pay for all my life long!” And again and again we heard the sound of the far-off guns. The brother of one of our company was on duty at one of the forts; the families of all of them were there whence came the ominous sound. But there was absolutely nothing to do on that isolated plantation but to sit still or pace up and down while the servants hunted for some other vehicle in sufficient order to be trusted to carry all of us over the roads, floating with the spring rains. They worked at an old carry-all, which they found stored away in a shed, till they thought it safe to trust, and it was some time after dinner before we finally set off for the railroad station miles away. When we reached there in safety, in spite of the ominous groans and creaks of the crazy old carriage in which we sat crowded, the air was full of rumors, but we could hear nothing definite. At last came the train, delayed, and with troops on board, whose number was augmented at several stations where we stopped, to be still farther delayed, and when we were finally landed in a shed on the side of the river opposite Charleston, we found it swarming with citizen soldiery. We crossed the river, and said hasty good-byes. I rushed to my boarding-place, flung down my packages, and hastening through the streets, filled with an excited crowd, reported myself to the principal of the school as being in the city, to be greeted as soon as seen by the exclamation, "By Jove! I knew you'd get here somehow."

The night came and passed, and the sun rose cloudless and bright on one of the April days which are like the June days of New England, but the wind had shifted, and we heard no reports. It was believed that the firing had ceased—why, no one could tell—but at the Battery the smoke still showed that it had not, even though there it was almost impossible to hear the sound.

Let us go thither. Many of the stores have their doors open, but no shutters are unclosed, and only necessary business is transacted. We go down Meeting Street, past Institute or Secession Hall, and remember the scene of the 20th of last December there. Saddled horses stand waiting at the door, and remind us that General Beauregard's office is within. As we turn down Water Street towards the East Battery the crowd becomes visible, lining the sidewalk. Making our way between the carriages which fill the street, we mount the steps leading to the walk, and taking up our position at the least crowded part, turn our attention to the harbor. The reports come deadened to the ear, though one can easily tell whence the shot come by the smoke.

The crowd increases, and is composed of all materials. Women of all ages and ranks of life look eagerly out with spy-glasses and opera-glasses. Children talk and laugh and walk back and forth in the small moving-space as if they were at a public show. Now and then a man in military dress goes hastily past. Grave men talk in groups. Young men smoke and calculate probabilities and compare conflicting reports, and still the guns send forth their deadly missiles, and the light clouds suddenly appearing and hanging over the fort till dispersed by the wind tell of the shells which explode before they reach their destination.

" There goes Stevens again! He gives it to 'em strong!" and a puff of white smoke rises from the iron-clad battery.

"Look! Did you see the bricks fly then from the end of the fort? She struck that time!"

"What is that smoke over Sumter? Isn't it smoke?" and all glasses and eyes are turned in that direction and watch eagerly. It increases in volume and rolls off seaward. What can it be? Is he going to blow up the fort? Is he heating shot? What is it? Still the batteries keep up their continual fire, and Anderson's guns, amidst a cloud of smoke, return with two or three discharges. Suddenly a white cloud rises from Sumter, and a loud report tells of the explosion of some magazine—"Probably a magazine on the roof for some of his barbette guns"—and the firing goes on.

"Look out! Moultrie speaks again!" and another puff of smoke points out the position of that fort, followed by one from the floating battery of the others. We listen and watch.

" I don't believe Anderson is in the fort. He must have gone off in the night and left only a few men. It was a very dark night."

"See the vessels off there? No, not there; farther along to the right of Sumter. That small one is the *Harriet Lane."*

"Yes, I can see them plain with the naked eye. Ain't they going to do anything? The large one has hauled off."

"No; they are still."

" Look! Can you see those little boats? Three little boats a hundred yards apart. They are certainly coming."

"Yes," said a woman, an opera-glass at her eyes, "the papers this morning said they were to reenforce with small boats, which were to keep at a great distance from each other." Another, incredulous, says they are nothing but waves, and you can see plenty anywhere like them. "Doubleday is killed," remarks another. "They saw him from Moultrie, lying on top of the ramparts."

This is set at naught by a small boy. who says, "Look, do you see that mosquito just on the corner of that flag in Sumter?" and a dignified silence follows.

Now the smoke rises over Sumter again, black smoke, and curls away, but no other signs of life. We watch, and as we watch it grows blacker and thicker. The fort must be on fire!

"Yes ! Can't you see the flame? There at the south angle! You can see it through this glass. Look now!"

The smoke hides all one side of the fort, and the leaping flames leave no room for doubt. They spread till it seems as if the whole fort must be a sheet of flame within, and the firing goes on as if nothing had happened, but no signs of life at Fort Sumter. Why doesn't the fleet do something? How can men with blood in their veins idly watch the scene and not lend a helping hand when they have the power? They must be armed vessels! Is Anderson still in the fort? No signal comes from there, and the firing continues, and the shells explode around and within, and the dense black smoke rolls away, and the flames leap round the flag-staff.

"Now you'll see that old flag go down!" cries a boy with a spy-glass.

"That old flag!"

I listen and watch in mournful silence, and hear the beating of my heart as the flames rise higher and higher. What does it mean? Anderson can't be in the fort! He must be on board the fleet, or they could not stand idly by.

"He has probably left slow matches to some of his guns. He means to burn up the fort—to blow it up!"

"Captain Foster intimated that it was undermined," says another.

Still the flag-staff stands, though the flames are red around it.

"It would be a bad omen if the flag should stand all this fire," says a gentleman at my side as he hands me his glass. I level it and look.

A vessel has dropped anchor just between, and the flag of the Confederate States, fluttering from the fore, completely conceals the staff at Sumter. I move impatiently to the right to get rid of it, and see with throbbing heart the flag still safe, and watch with sickening anxiety.

Another explosion, which scatters the smoke for a while.

"He is blowing up the barracks to prevent the fire from spreading," says one. Can it be that he is still there?

Still the flag waves as of old. The flames die down, and the smoke somewhat clears away, and the shells explode as before, and Major Stevens fires continually.

"It is West Point against West Point today," says one.

"Stevens was not at West Point." "No, but Beauregard was a pupil of Anderson's there."

The tide has turned and is going out, and now the vessels cannot come in. What does it mean? Still the people pass and repass; the crowd thins a little; they jest idly and remark on the passers, and conversation goes on. Friends meet and greet each other with playful words. Judge Magrath stands in a careless attitude, a red camellia in his button-hole, at the window of one of the houses overlooking the scene. Beauregard passes, observant. Carriages drive by. People begin to leave.

"The flag is down!" A shot has struck the staff and carried it away. "Look! the flag is down!" and an excited crowd rush again through the streets leading to the Battery, and a shout fills the air.

The flag of the United States has been shot down in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina.

"It is up again on a lower staff!" "Yes!" "No!" "It is a white flag!"

A white flag waves from the walls of Fort Sumter, and the colors which have been repeatedly lowered today as a signal of distress in vain have fallen at last.

The firing ceases, and Anderson surrenders unconditionally, with the fort a blazing furnace.

The school went on, and everything there was as usual, except perhaps a shade of added gravity, and a sense of sorrow for the parting which flung its shadow over teachers and taught; if it had been possible, an increased docility and loving gentleness on the one hand, a greater tender watchfulness and earnestness on the other. The shadow grew heavier and the parting nearer as the months went on, full of stir, till the day in early June when I left my class to meet the chairman of the special commissioners for our school in the dome-room, not to stand there again. Mr. Bennett had brought me my salary, then due; he paid me as usual in gold, and he said: "We are very sorry that you feel you must go. We want you to say that when this trouble is over you will come back to us," and he reached out his hand for a leave-taking with the old-time courtesy of which we had so much since we had made our home in Charleston. I said: "Mr. Bennett, I am so sorry to go! But I cannot promise to come back. I am afraid that neither you nor I nor any one knows how long this trouble is going to last, and I cannot say anything about coming back."

And so I had to turn away from my girls, and travel to Massachusetts by way of Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. I have the notes of that journey still, kept in pencil as we went, full of excitement and wonder. As the war went on, the schools had to stop; all the beautiful fabric so wisely and so nobly planned was destroyed, and the labor seemed to have been in vain. The shells went ploughing their way through the roof into the old class-rooms, so full of sweet and gracious memories, and fell in the flower-planted garden where we had walked with the eager girls. Trouble and anguish fell upon the dear old city.

And when her people fled to Columbia, fire and destruction met them there, such realities as we at the North never knew, even with all that came to us. That was the time when a young woman remarked to my friend one evening, “Well, whatever happens, I am sure that we shall not be utterly ruined, for my father has put our goods in seven different places in the city, so that we shall be sure to have something,” and said “Good-night.” In the lurid glare of the next morning, before daybreak, the same girl knocked at the same door with the piteous appeal : “Have you got a dress you can lend me to wear? I have not one thing left.” That was what war meant to those people. We thought it was hard!

I turn over the relics in my possession with gratitude and affection never wavering and with profound respect—the pass for gray-headed “Paris,” in its faded ink, with the strong, manly signature of his master at the foot; letters, records, and, given to me long after, postage-stamps bearing the name of the Confederate States; sheets of note-paper with the palmetto flag and the Confederate flag in colors at the head; a newspaper printed on wall-paper, bearing date, “Vicksburg, July 4, 1863”; and bank-bills of all denominations, from five hundred dollars to five cents. These are coarse in execution and on a poor quality of paper; but they used the very best they had. I know that no New York bank will take them on deposit, for I tried them once at the desk of the receiving-teller of the Sixth National, with as inexpressive a face as I can command from a long experience in teaching—which is saying a great deal and much to the astonishment of that functionary. But they are not valueless, for all that. There are many things which the banks will not take, and yet which are worth more than all the silver in the Treasury vaults at Washington, and realer than real estate in New York. These bills stand today for such assets as those, for “he who can prevail upon himself to devote his life for a cause, however we may condemn his opinions or abhor his actions, vouches at least for the honesty of his principles and the disinterestedness of his motives.... He is no longer a slave, but free. The contempt of death is the beginning of virtue.” And surely the old South needed no lessons in virtue from us.

But the work on those schools was not lost, for one by one they who had been our girls took up the task with the spirit we had helped to inspire in them, and one of them has made not only on her city, but on the wide Southern country from which her girls come to her wise guidance, an abiding mark. After the war was over, and the time of mismanagement and misuse, the seed that had been sown in earnest faith, unswerving purpose, and singleness of spirit brought forth a hundredfold.

And the two cities, so alike in so many ways, so different from all the other cities of the land, even through the bitter war learned to know each other better, and to recognize more fully their common character. As is the case often with two human sisters, they repelled each other simply because they were at heart and in all that constitutes true nobility so much alike. But as two sisters, taught better to understand each other by the experience of life, find their former repulsion changed into attraction, and finally into a complete unity that no outside influence can in the least affect, so is it with Boston and Charleston. When fire and earthquake fought for the possession of their beauty and their old and sacred places, they reached out tender hands to each other; for in the new dispensation the Lord was in both fire and earthquake. The great and strong wind bears now only peace and good-will for message on its Northern and Southern way, and if ever henceforth there be need of defending “that old flag,” no two States will stand closer shoulder to shoulder than Massachusetts and South Carolina.

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