



Upon the morning of an ever ^{memorable} day, in November 1860, I stood upon an eminence, overlooking one of the fairest portions of that fair land Western Virginia. The pen of a Scott only, could do justice to the country, which lay spread out before me. Hills, covered with the richest verdure, and crisscrossed with forests, upon which the bright tints of Autumn were just appearing, melted as they retreated into wild looking knolls, which were lost in the distance in shadowy mountains, among which towered the tall peak of "White Top". And all was bathed in the purple sunlight of an American Autumn. Nature gave no sign of the mighty struggle that day going on which was to shake a mighty Republic to its centre and pour upon these very hills the blood of contending sects. The people themselves seemed asleep of ^{their} danger. As the emigrants, from the country, trotted slowly in to deposit their votes, the rival claims of Breckinridge, Douglas, and Bell, were good-humoredly discussed — and with a confidence which agreed but little with the general belief that Abraham Lincoln would in all probability be the next President of these United States.

Having been brought "according to the strictest sect" an old line Whig, I advocated the cause of Bell; but having only the boy's privilege, of "hollering" for my candidate, and being denied even that, except in very secluded situations, I determined to leave the country in the hands of the men, and take a ramble over the hills. So, persuading several young ladies to be my companions, I started off — to go nowhere and for nothing. After wandering about for some time in this delicious uncertainty, we stopped on the top of a small hill to consider the matter, and lay out some map for our travels, which, we had already determined, should be very extensive. Noticing, in the distance, a knob of peculiar shape, we chose that, as our goal, and with woman's philosophy took a straight line as our course. The immediate result of which was, having to wade through a meadow, which seemed like the half dried bed of a creek. Then we climbed a fence and ascended a hill by a newly cut dirt road, which made our feet monstrous to carry, and inclined me to ask with the German philosopher "What is this down here, walking along with me?" Nothing daunted however, we pushed on, now crossing a creek on the water gate and then half wading another — meeting all along the "Lords of Location", and amusing ourselves with guesses as to whom they would vote for. At length we struck an open road and our exertions, having made us indisposed for conversation, we wandered on "chewing the end of sweet and bitter reflections."

None turned upon the country, and I wondered if there would really be an end of this glorious Union, as one might wonder if the days of the great Solomon and the wonderful Prince, of Blue Beard and Aladdin would ever again be known.

However for convenience sake I supposed it would not begin immediately to build the most magnificent "pyramids" in the war which was to follow. After crossing another creek we began the ascent of an almost perpendicular knob and I tried to fancy



how I would feel, belonging to a body of soldiers, ordered to charge up such a hill, under a heavy fire from the summit. I turned the question over in my mind, and concluded, as I swung myself up by the young evergreens, that if I ever succeeded, in reaching the top, I would do the Yankees much damage on the way.

Reaching the summit, I imagined myself, in the much more pleasant position, of firing down on the enemy, as they attempted to pass the road below. Then I tried charging down the knob but noticing my accelerated speed, as I neared the bottom, I inwardly hoped I might not be received, on fixed bayonets.

After these extensive military operations, our lagging steps were turned upon the homeward march, and I had at length the happiness to reach my own room, with the head-ache, caused by a slip from a water gate, weary, wet, and muddy. The United States and myself, after considerable exertions on the part of both, being in much the same condition.

II.

Two weeks passed and the alarming but by no means astonishing, news that Abraham Lincoln had been elected President, reached us. At first, men turned and looked at each other, not knowing what to do. A few — but a very few — were in favor of immediate secession. The great majority seemed to think, no important movement would follow the mere election, of a Black Republican President. They were then startled to hear that South Carolina had actually withdrawn from the Union.

For myself, I felt as though I had been suddenly struck in the face and must wait to recover my senses. I had been born and reared in Kentucky, a true believer in her state motto, "United we stand, divided we fall." Her seal, with its two gentlemen of the old school, one in white knee-breeches, the other in black, holding on to each other's hands, with a most deadly grip, was wont to awaken in me, the most patriotic emotions. The words "Star-spangled Banner", "American Eagle", "Glorious Union" were the "open beam" of my heart. And I honestly believed, when "C. Plumbeus Unum" breathed his last, the world would close doors and suspend payment.

And yet, strange as it may seem, my love for the Union arose only from an idea that it was beneficial to the South. I never doubted the will but the power of the South to injure us. Yankees politically and personally (and I called all men Yankees who were born north of Mason's and Dixon's line) were an abomination in my sight. Even in my early childhood I had shocked my more believing companions by calling the Pilgrim Fathers a