A REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER

[Chapters I through IX]

REVISED AND PREPARED
BY
JOHN M. ROBERTS, Esq.

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Entered, according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1859, by
JOHN M. ROBERTS, Esqr., in the Clerk’s Office of the United States
District Court of the State of Louisiana.
DEAR SIR — Your letter, requesting to examine the Records in my Office, for evidence of the payments made to JAMES COLLINS, a soldier of the Revolutionary war, was duly received.

On a full and thorough examination of the Records, I find sundry payments made to JAMES COLLINS, in the Halifax, Wilmington, Salisbury, and Morgan Districts.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
(Signed) C.H. BROGDEN, Comptroller
TO JOHN M. ROBERTS, ESQ, Clinton, La.

To the Children
OF
JAMES P. COLLINS, Deceased,
THE PRESENT WORK,
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY JOHN M. ROBERTS,
CLINTON, LA.
# I N D E X.

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The present work is written in an unpolished and plain style; but it is written in the words of truth. It is written by a soldier who stood in the front in many battles of the enemy—whose life was exposed to whatever danger that should be necessarily encountered, both by night and by day, undergoing fatigue of all kinds.

There are facts, in the present work, in regard to the battle of King’s Mountain—which former historians have not altogether taken so much notice—which goes to show the actual situation of the scattering and small troops of Col. Moffit, their difficulties and struggles with the home enemies at that time (i.e., the Tories) being compelled to rely almost entirely upon their own resources, or in fact, absolutely having no prospect of future reward from the public, the majority being very poor and unable to obtain the most necessary means suited to the field of battle. But these embarrassments did not baffle their designs, for they were determined to conquer or lose their lives in the contest. They were contending for freedom, for liberty and for the prosperity of a new republic, that American should be the home of social and national happiness, and it is presumed that no one will doubt but that their efforts have been crowned with triumphant success.

Yes, our venerable father of the revolution, died in his eighty-first year, in the State of Texas, .....
polar star and sheet-anchor to direct and maintain his course; for he was never known to fall behind, if possible, with his obligations to his fellow men. This was his tried character. His accumulations of wealth were comparatively small, but he always strove to have a sufficiency to meet the necessary wants of a respectable life, and enjoyed it to full fruition. His doors were thrown open to distress, and the hand of charity extended, wherever he thought it really necessary. He was remarkable for his frankness of expression, and candid in the transactions of business. He was a man who had not all the early opportunities of what is termed a liberal education, but he devoted in the latter part of his life, considerable of his time to reading, especially the Bible, and seemed to reflect a great deal on its holy pages. His opinions were received in all matters, when consulted; he had few enemies which caused his opinions to go farther than perhaps the most of men, as he was not meddlesome with other people’s affairs. He was not quarrelsome, but at times, we suppose, from the many early conflicts with the enemies of his country, became excited at the mention of the name of a Tory, for he had an undying hatred for them which sometimes caused him to betray the weakness of his feelings, and would soon become transported by that monster which he termed his greatest self-enemy. We consider it to be almost universally the case in those whose temperaments are naturally given to excitement, and who have had to go through sanguinary scenes, and have come off victorious, to give way at times to exuberance of passion; but they were soon over for him, provided the object of his indignation was removed immediately, otherwise, battle to the hilt. As observed, he devoted a great deal of his time in his old age to reading, and among other works, were those containing descriptions of the battles of the revolution, and among them were those in which he was engaged. He thought that their descriptions was not sufficiently elaborate, which brought him to the conclusion to write a narrative of his own life and adventures. The relative position he stood in as a spy, in the beginning of the war, and as a soldier at its conclusion, he thought it “might not be amiss” to add a few words in his way, to the world, and to the rising generation. We believe that it is a natural instinct in the bosom of men, who have passed through similar trials – as our venerable father did – to tell all about it as far as possible; and it is right that we should listen to their stories with care and attention. In this we show respect to them as well as gratitude on our part. This light which he has left, is fervently hoped to burn forever in the heart of every true lover of liberty: it is his tribute that he owes to his country – come and get it.
CHAPTER I.

EARLY DAYS AND ANCESTRY

In reflecting on past events, and comparing them with the present, and having arrived at that period of life which unfit me for the more active employments and busy pursuits that have hitherto occupied my time, I thought it might not be amiss to amuse myself by writing a few incidents of my life, although they may not be interesting to any one (who may chance to read these pages), yet might be, in some instances, amusing as well as important to some of my progeny when I am no more. In writing the incidents of my past life, I am forced to depend entirely upon memory; by moving from one place to another, and meeting with sundry accidents, I lost all the important papers and notes which I could apply to as references, and can therefore give but an incomplete and unfinished idea of many things.

Before I proceed farther, it will perhaps be necessary to say something of my parentage, of which I can detail but little, being only in possession of some statements given to me by my father, after I became of age to listen, and hear him recite, the most interesting stories about our ancestors and family. I learned from him, that my grand-father, Charles Collins, resided in the city of Waterford, in Ireland, a man of considerable wealth; my grand-mother Susannah was of a noted family of the Radcliffes. Their family consisted of seven sons and one daughter; the sons were, John, James, Edward, Charles, Josiah, Alexander, and Daniel. My grandfather, after giving his sons a liberal education, settled them in some professional business; but what particular occupations or business I am unable to say, except that the two eldest sons, John and James, were put in command of two ships engaged in the African slave-trade. My father, Daniel, the youngest son, was continued at school until he completed his education, as far as was intended. He being of a restless disposition, became dissatisfied with his mother’s plans respecting his future course of life; every proposition he made to his mother was discountenanced and absolutely rejected, and she on the other hand, being of a resolute and determined mind, forced him to obedience contrary to his will. His mother, however, furnished him with a sufficient amount of money necessary for his expenses on all occasions, requiring at the same time, a strict account of the manner in which it was expended. While matters were in this state between them, he determined to leave his country and sail for America. This design he had to keep a profound secret, for if his plans were discovered by his mother, immediate steps would be taken to prevent his
leaving. He found an opportunity of conferring

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with the captain of a vessel, then bound for America – perhaps for the sake of getting some
money. The captain agreed to favor his plans, and also assisted him in devising schemes to
obtain the requisite amount of funds from his mother. Success favored his plans, and all
things were arranged satisfactorily, for my father. When the ship was ready to sail, he was
conveyed on board, without the knowledge, or even the suspicion, of any of his friends, and
accordingly sailed for America. The exact age of my father at that time, I am unable,
positively to give, because I am without dates, and can only guess from subsequent events:
at all events it was while he was under control of his mother, and not authorized to manage
his own affairs. He landed at Philadelphia, and there got into some temporary business,
being a good penman and calculator, for I believe I can say, without being in error, he was
one of the first class of penman I have ever met with; he was so considered, at least, by
those who professed to be good judges, besides which he stood in the first class in
arithmetic. He next undertook to teach an English school in the country, near Philadelphia,
and continued in that business until the commencement of what was called the French and
Indian war. He then quit his school and joined the army – I think according to his
statement to me, this was in 1754. He continued in the army until some time in the winter
after Braddock was defeated, and his time of service expiring, he quit the army and
returned to Philadelphia, when some short time after he married my mother; this was early
in the winter of 1756. He again resumed his former occupation of school-teaching, out in
the country, where he continued about five years. People were at that time emigrating to the
South; but before I proceed further, I must here mention a circumstance which occurred
one day while my father was at his school. The house caught fire, and my mother with
difficulty, saved her children, while the house and every article in it were consumed.

My father, in order to secure land on which to support a

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family that appeared to be increasing, determined to look in the South for the object, and
immediately set out in the spring of 1763, in order to view the country. In the fall of the
same year, perhaps in the month of October, he started with his family for his place of
destination, and had arrived at the house of a Mr. Jourdan. In the morning, my mother was
unable to proceed, and the good man furnished my father with a house, or rather a cabin, in
which to shelter the family from the weather, at which place my mother brought me forth on
22d November. Thus was I born by the way and have been a wayfaring man ever since. My
father proceeded to buile some kind of shelter, and improve the land on which he had
determined to settle, and move his family, so soon as my mother's situation admitted. The
place was then supposed to be within the limits of North Carolina and then called Tryon
County, and my father was appointed Clerk of the first court that was ever held in the
county, called Tryon Court; but afterwards, when the boundary of the State was ascertained,
it fell about four miles in the State of South Carolina, in what was called York County, or
District. Of my mother I have but a very imperfect recollection; however, as well as I can
remember the statement given me, her parents came over from Ireland previous to the time
that my father came over and settled in Philadelphia. Her name was Elizabeth Heland; she
was a small woman and of a delicate constitution, and old women, who were her neighbors;
have since spoken of her to me in highly flattering terms. She lived to have seven children, of which I was the fourth; three sons and four daughters. She died a few days after the birth of her seventh child, and it died a few days after her. My father was then left with six children, all young. I was about three years old. Some of the neighboring women took three of my sisters, and my father retained his sons at home, I being one of that number. Occasionally, a neighboring woman, who had no children, would take me with her and keep me sometime. My father continued to stay at home and keep house, after some manner, I know now how, for perhaps about fourteen months, when he married a young widow, with one child; who, after marriage with my father, had thirteen children. I recollect to have eaten at my father's table, when fifteen of his children, all grown, and mostly all heads of families, sat at the same table. It was my father's practice to be engaged in teaching every winter season and working on his farm during the summer; so soon as the marriage with his second wife took place I was put at school. During the summer season, the schoolhouse was always occupied by some other teacher, but was invariably reserved for my father during the winter. In summer, I was only sent to school at intervals, as I could not be spared out of the farm, for I was put to ploughing before I could turn the plough at the end of the land.

My father was rigid in his discipline, both at school and at home, and every rule that he laid down, must be strictly complied with, or on failure, punishment was the inevitable consequence, and I often thought he used more severity towards me than necessary, in order to make me an example for others. So it was, I was continued at school, sometimes under his tuition and sometimes under that of other teachers, until I was about twelve years old; but, by the way, I always got more indulgence when under the control of any other teacher, than of my father.

My father was also a man of strict morals and never admitted any immoral conversation or conduct in his presence, or otherwise; if the same was reported to him, he would punish the offender. He was also a strict observer of the Sabbath day, consequently he enjoined it on all his family to attend to religious duties, and on that day the Bible must be read, and every Sunday evening a certain portion must be committed to memory and rehearsed under his inspection, together with the Lord's Prayer, and what is called the Larger and Shorter Catechism. There was no fishing, shooting, hunting, or visiting permitted on that day, or trading or dealing of any kind whatever, nor was it fashionable in the neighborhood. I omitted to mention in the proper place, that agreeable to the rules of the Church to which my father belonged, all children were presented to the Church when young, for baptism. Accordingly, I was presented and was baptized by a clergyman, to whom my father was somewhat partial, named James Potter, after whom I was called; hence the name, J.P.

But to return to my subject – when I was about twelve years of age, I had learned to read English pretty well and write a fair hand, and gained a tolerable knowledge of arithmetic and my father proposed sending me to college, in order to prepare me for studying divinity, but I, not feeling a willingness, objected and my father being somewhat straitened in
circumstances on account of an increasing family, determined I should engage in some mechanical occupation, and proposed binding me to a tailor. I objected to that also, and suggested that I would rather work in wood, but he took his own way in the matter and bound me to a tailor by the name of McMavey, for the term of five years. It was stipulated in the contract that my father was to furnish all my necessary clothing, and that I should not, during my apprenticeship, be removed out of the State or county. The man to whom I was bound, was a man of very agreeable disposition, and remarkably good-humored, a good workman, very attentive to business, and of sober, industrious habits, so that I found myself placed in quite an agreeable situation. When I was placed under him, his family was small, having only a wife and one child, and another apprentice something older than myself, and who had been at work sometime. We worked regularly in the shop; for my own part, I was put to some trifling business as sewing up lining, &c. I had been at work about two months when Christmas came on—and here I must relate a little anecdote. The principal and his lad were invited to a party among their friends, and the older boy was permitted to go to his father’s to spend the holidays, while it devolved on me to stay at home and keep house. There was nothing left me in charge to do, only to take care of the house. There was a large cat that generally lay about the fire. In order to try out my mechanical powers, I concluded to make a suit of clothing for puss, and for my purpose gathered some scraps of cloth that lay about the shop-board, and went to work as hard as I could. Late in the evening I got my suit of clothes finished; I caught the cat, put on the whole suit—coat, vest, and small-clothes—buttoned all on tight, and set down my cat to inspect the fit; unfortunately for me there was a hole through the floor close to the fireplace, just large enough for the cat to pass down; after making some efforts to get rid of the clothes, and failing, pussy descended through the hole and disappeared; the floor was tight and the house underpinned with brick, so there was no chance of pursuit. I consoled myself with a hope that the cat would extricate itself from its incumbrance, but not so; night came and I had made on a good fire and seated myself for some two or three hours after dark, when who should make their appearance but my master and mistress and two young men, all in good humor, with two or three bottles of rum. After all were seated around the fire, who should appear amongst us but the cat in his uniform. I was struck speechless, the secret was out and no chance of concealing; the cat was caught, the whole work was inspected and the question asked, is this your day’s work? I was obliged to answer in the affirmative; I would then have been willing to have taken a good whipping, and let it stop there, but no, to complete my mortification the clothes were carefully taken off the cat and hung up in the shop for the inspection of all customers that came in. I lived and went on very agreeably for two years and two months, when the revolutionary war began to make some interruption in the South, and

the man with whom I lived took a notion to move high up in North Carolina, and as he was bound not to remove me, gave me up again to my father.

After returning home, the affairs of the country became more unsettled, and the people began to divide up into parties. It was again proposed I should go to college. Accordingly arrangements were made and I was sent to Charlotte, in North Carolina. I had not
remained there long until times became more troublesome, and I was again recalled home.

It was then customary for intinerant shoemakers to pass through the country and stop at the house of any farmer and make shoes for the family, and pass on to the next house where they were wanted. It was also a custom for every farmer to tan his own leather. It had been the practice of my father to have one of these shoemakers every winter, and his family increasing rapidly, and he being somewhat straitened in circumstances, concluded to have me taught how to make shoes. Accordingly he agreed with an old man who set me to work, gave me some instructions, and I worked about three weeks, when I came home with some shoes as a sample of my performance. My father was a little hard to please and disliked the work, and truly it would not recommend itself. I gave as fair a statement as I could of the inattention to business, on the part of the old man, and it was determined that I should go to another who it was thought, would be more attentive. The latter was a man who kept a shop, also, and was very industrious. There were two who worked at the business, and both took every pains they could to instruct me, and I soon made pretty smart improvement which pleased my father very much. I disliked the business and made great complaint to my father, and as he was inclined to industry and economy, he concluded he would put me to weaving. It was then the fashion for every family to manufacture every article of clothing that was worn, and the loom was occupied by the men while the females performed the spinning. Cotton was little used then – only as fillings, as it was called, for shirts, and clothing for females – while flax and wool composed the main materials for domestic clothing; as to broad cloth, it was but little used among the common people, and it was not uncommon for the son when grown up to become heir to his father's wedding coat, if his father had been able to procure broad cloth for that purpose.

It was concluded that I should learn to weave to save some expense in that way, and in the spring season I was put under the care of an Irish weaver to learn that business, where I continued during the summer. I was not averse to the weaving business and made considerable proficiency in the trade. I could then weave ten yards daily of what was then called seven hundred linen. I had worked all this time for nothing, save information. Another weaver proposed to my father to give me wages. My father agreed and hired me to him; this man kept three looms and sometimes four in constant employ. I must here relate a little anecdote: I have mentioned before, that my father was rigid respecting Sunday, though not more so than some of his neighbors. I had no time to lose from the loom during the week, so I concluded I must go home, some six or seven miles to get some clothing. My employer objected as it would be a breach of the Sabbath; I urged the necessity on the ground of losing no time in the week. He still stood opposed to the motion, threatening me with the vengeance of my father and utterly refusing his consent. While we were discussing the subject, a flock of sheep in a pasture fronting the door began to run and there appeared to be some confusion among them which drew the attention of the old man. A wolf had gotten among them, and before all hands could arrest his progress he had killed four, right in full view. The weaver then pleaded the right of necessity to skin the sheep and save his mutton, so I left him to save his meat.
and I went home to abide the consequences of my father's wrath on the subject. This, if I mistake not, was in the fall of 1779.

It was the custom in these times, for every farmer to make all the provisions he wanted for his use, viz.: corn, wheat, rye, barley, oats, pork, beef, and vegetables; also potatoes, and whatever else was necessary; or, on failure, to pay his neighbor for whatever he might want, besides the risk of being called lazy, unless sickness or some misfortune occurred, in which case the neighbors were all very liberal with each other. Besides, if so disposed, he could keep liquor about his house, which was very general. He had his own malt, rye, corn, etc. prepared and ground at the mill, and taken to the still-house, where he received one gallon for every bushel of meal he delivered, or one half the quantity that the whole produced, took it home, stored it away in the cellar, and used it at pleasure. Here I must remark, that my father was very economical in his distribution, and reserved his whiskey for certain occasions. My step-mother's son and myself, being nearly the same age, were always together, when I was about home and would never divulge anything on each other; my step-mother, by the way, was fully as great an economist as my father. We were both named James, and for distinction, I was often called Potter. We seldom got a dram more than once in the week and thought our rations rather small; we accordingly prepared us two small gourds, cleaned them out and converted them into bottles; they contained not more than half a pint each. In my father's absence we would keep strict watch over the house, and when the old lady would disappear for the purpose of washing, or on some other business, which often happened, we would immediately repair to the house, open the hatch-way of the cellar, when one of us would descend and fill the two gourds, while the other would keep a good lookout for fear of being caught; we always came off clear without being suspected; our two gourds lasted us about three weeks or longer, for we used it very sparingly. At harvest time, or in gathering corn, it was a practice for every man to invite all the neighbors, male and female, to assist in reaping, or husking his corn, for women thought it no hardship or disgrace, to labor in the fields; and some females, who stood high in society, were hard to beat, in the field, or at a corn heap. In the evening, or at night, when the labor was over, it generally wound up with a dance, and it was not rare to see women, more than forty years of age, cheerfully join in the same dance with the young. The old men who did not choose to dance, would sit by the fire, look on, and take their social glass of "over lively", and in the meantime, be sure to sing a few songs. The boys selected a place a convenient distance from the house, kindled up a fire, and commenced running, jumping, and wrestling. They were always paired or matched by some of the larger class, chosen as judges. When the exercises were gone through, there came a boxing match: any one that declined was declared a coward yet some would stand it. For my own part, I disliked it, but was unwilling to own it, and determined to stand the test. The rule was thus: A mark was made on the ground, the parties placed opposite, each with his toe to the mark, then a stick, handkerchief or rope was drawn between them and held by two of the judges. No man was to scratch, bite, gouge or strike in the eye; neither was he allowed to kick, but did the best he could, and hit to the best advantage so as to hurt his opponent. So soon as one gave back, the victory was proclaimed in favor of the other; this was all done in good humor, without
any quarreling and if a fellow felt dispose to continue or was dissatisfied, he had to wait for
the next time and get his remedy in the same way. Many of us went home pretty sore but
never complained for fear of being punished by our parents. Some old men sanctioned the
business, others were strongly opposed; among that number my father was one, and if ever
he found out that I was in the boxing party, I was sure to get a dressing which hurt worse
than all the boxing I ever was in.
CHAPTER II.

TROUBLE AMONG THE TORIES

Let me pass on. I began to grow up – times began to be troublesome, and people began to divide into parties. Those that had been good friends in times past, became enemies; they began to watch each other with jealous eye, and were designated by names of Whig and Tory. Recruiting officers were out in all directions, to enlist soldiers. My brother, older than myself, enlisted, and went off to the army. My father remonstrated against it but in vain. There was a Mr. Moffitt in the neighborhood who was then captain of the militia, was pretty shrewd and an active partizan. I had often been sent on business, by my father, in various directions through the country, and was frequently employed by others to hunt stray horses, &c., consequently I became acquainted with all the by-paths for twenty or thirty miles around. Moffit consulted my father and it was agreed that I should be made use of merely as a collector or news. In order to prepare me for business, I had to receive several lectures. I was furnished with documents – sometimes a list of several stray horses with marks and brand, sometimes with papers and other business. I was to attend all public places, make no inquiry only about the business I was sent on, and pay strict attention to all that was passing in conversation and otherwise. I succeeded for some time without incurring the least suspicion, by which means the

Tories were several times disappointed in their plans without being able to account for the cause.

There existed at the time, at least three classes of Whigs, and three of Tories. The first class of Whigs were those who determined to fight it out to the last let the consequence be what it might; the second class were those who would fight a little when the wind was favorable, but as soon as it shifted to an unfavorable point would draw back and give up all for lost; the third class were those who were favorable to the cause, provided it prospered and they could enjoy the benefit but would not rish one hair on their heads to attain it.

There was a class of Tories who I believe were Tories from principle; another class believed it impossible for the cause of liberty to succeed, and thought in the end, whatever they got, they would be enabled to hold, and so become rich – they resorted to murdering and plunder, and every means to get hold of property; another class were Tories entirely through fear; and fit for nothing only to be made tools of by others, and all cowards too.

There was another class of men amongst us, who pretended neutrality entirely on both sides; they pretended friendship to all, and prayed, “Good God!” “Good Devil!” not knowing into whose hands they might fall. Of these last there were several in the neighborhood, and by some means, some one or more became acquainted with the part I acted; it became known to the Tories by the same means. They swore revenge. By some of the same people this was communicated to me, and I was cautioned of the danger that awaited me. It was
also communicated to my father, and he advised me not to act in that part any longer, else I would suffer the penalty if caught. I took some alarm, and proposed enlisting in order to avoid danger. My father counseled me otherwise; he said the time was at hand when volunteers would be called for, and by joining them I would be equally safe; if I went to battle I stood

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as fair a chance; besides, I would be less exposed, less fatigued, and if there should be a time of resting, I could come home and enjoy it; he said he had had some experience and learned a lesson from that.

The British and Tories had overrun Georgia, and even driven out the celebrated Clarke, with all his veterans, as far as the very confines of North Carolina. All the south and south-western parts of South Carolina were nearly subjugated, and but a small part stood out with firmness, and that part itself was divided. The British were pressing on Charleston, and had eventually got possession of it, and now began to come “squally times.” So soon as Charleston fell, there was a proclamation for all to come forward, submit, and take protection; peace and pardon should be granted. In order to expedite the business, there were officers sent out in various directions, with guards or companies of men, to receive the submission of the people. Vast numbers flocked in and submitted; some through fear, some through willingness, and others, perhaps, through a hope that all things would settle down and war cease. But not so; there was some conditions annexed, that some of the patriots of the day could not submit to and therefore determined to hold out a little longer. Among the officers sent out on this occasion, there was one Lord Hook [Christian Huck, British Legion captain, Philadelphia loyalist], who came up and stationed himself at or near Fishing Creek at some distance below where we live. His proclamation came out and a day was appointed to deliver his speeches. Almost all the men of families attended. He got up, harangued the people in a very rough and insulting manner and submitted his propositions for their acceptance. Some bowed to his sceptre, but far the greater part returned home without submitting.

I omitted to mention in the proper place, that in conversation with my father on the subject of enlistment, he observed to me that should volunteers be called which he confidently anticipated, that he would join the ranks, he said, “though over

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age for the laws of my country to demand it, yet I think the nature of the case requires the best energies of every man who is a friend to liberty.” Not many miles distant from where this Lord Hook, whom I have mentioned, had made his stand, there was a set of ironworks called Billy Hill’s Ironworks, which were very profitable, both to the proprietor and all the country around. Lord Hook, provoked at the non-compliance of the people, charged on the ironworks, killed several men, set the works on fire, and reduced them to ashes. I must here relate the expression of my father, when he returned home from Lord Hook’s exhibition. My step-mother asked him thus: “Well Daniel, what news?” My father replied, “Nothing very pleasant. I have come home determined to take my gun and when I lay it down, I lay down my life with it;” then turning to me said, “my son you may prepare for the worst; the thing is fairly at issue. We submit and become slaves, or fight. For my part I am
determined – tomorrow I will go and join Moffitt. Moffitt, while these things were transpiring, had been engaged in raising volunteers, to be all mounted and ready at a minute’s warning, to be called “Minute Men.” He had already raised about seventy men. A nomination of officers had taken place, and he was unanimously chosen colonel of the troops. Accordingly, next day we shouldered our guns and went to Moffitt. The gun that I had to take was what was called a blue barrel shot gun. When we presented ourselves, “Well,” said the colonel to my father, “Daniel, I suppose you intend to fight.” My father said he had come to that conclusion. “Well, James,” he said to me, “we shall have plenty for you to do, and two or three more such, if they could all have as good luck as you. We will try to take care of you and not let the Tories catch you.” In a few days there was a meeting of several officers, and it was determined to attack Lord Hook, and take vengeance

for the burning of the ironworks. The time and place was appointed for a rendezvous, several parties united in the plan, we met, mounted on horseback, and advanced towards his lordship, early in the morning. Not long after sunrise, we came in sight of their headquarters, which were in a log building [Williamson’s plantation]. In the rear of the building was a large peach orchard; at some distance behind the peach orchard we all dismounted and tied our horses; we then proceeded on foot through the orchard, thinking the peach trees would be a good safeguard, against the charge of the horseman. We had not proceeded far until the sentinels discovered us – fired on us and fled. The troops were soon mounted and paraded. This, I confess, was a very imposing sight, at least to me, for I had never seen a troop of British horse before, and thought they differed vastly in appearance from us – poor hunting-shirt fellows. The leader drew his sword, mounted his horse, and began to storm and rave, and advanced on us; but we kept close to the peach orchard. When they had got pretty near the peach trees, their leader called out, “disperse you d__d rebels, or I will put every man of you to the sword.” Our rifle balls began to whistle among them, and in a few minutes my Lord Hook was shot off his horse and fell at full length; his sword flew out of his hand as he fell and lay at some distance, and both lay till some of his men gathered about and around him two or three times. At length one halted and pointed his sword downward, seemed to pause a moment, then raising his sword, wheeled off and all started at full gallop. We then moved on to the house without opposition, but all had disappeared. In the yard sat two good looking fellows bleeding pretty freely, their horses standing at no great distance: one of whom was shot through the thigh.

Before the body of Hook was examined, two claimed the honor of killing him; both showed their guns and named the part of his body they had taken aim at, and both claimed the sword. One presented a large rifle, the other a very small

one. The person having the small gun, cried, “I shot him! I shot him! I shot two balls which entered close under the ear.” When Hook was examined, the two small balls were found to have passed through the place as described. We then bound up the wounds of the two men, took three swords, three brace of pistols, some powder and lead, perhaps my Lord Hook’s watch, and but little else, and departed, every man for his own place. For my own part, I fired my old shot gun only twice in the action. I suppose I did no more harm than burning so much powder.
CHAPTER III.

MINUTE MEN.

The only man, in that section of country, who had raised or commanded Minute Men, was Moffitt. His ranks increased, in a short time, to number one hundred and twenty-six, exclusive of our officers. The Tories became enraged at this deed of cruelty committed on their worthy friends, and swore revenge. In a short time we got the news that they were preparing to give us a blow, but of their plans, we were ignorant. It was resolved that I should go on another mission towards what was called “upper Tories,” to find out something, if practicable. I was mounted on a pretty fleet nag, with orders to proceed with great caution. I started on Saturday morning, took a circuitous route, and went on until I had proceeded to the house of a man by the name of Oats, on whom I could rely. He had a young man living with him whom he had raised from a child, being an orphan, named Crago. This man lived near a strong Tory settlement, and was obliged to act with the greatest caution. Crago was quite a pleasant fellow, well acquainted among them, and appeared to be a great favorite with the old women and boys. He had often been among them, cock fighting, which was a favorite sport in those days, and he was thought to be a great hand at the business. It was agreed that Crago should ride with me next day, being Sunday. I was to

pass as a companion of Crago’s, and be altogether careless, while Crago, in his own way, should elicit all the news he could. It was understood, at the same time, that most of the men were away from home, except the old ones, a sure sign that there was a movement on foot; but not having fully ascertained it, we started on our journey, halted at three or four houses, and found no one at home, but some women and boys. They all saluted Crago with some degree of kindness, yet we could get no satisfactory news. They would all inquire if there was any news from Moffitt and make remarks intimating that he would meet a check before long. At length we came to another house, got off our horses and went in; here Crago, as usual, began to chat with the old woman. It was my wish, and Crago knew it, that I did not want to be known by name. I had taken up an old book that lay close at hand, and was perusing the same, when an old man entered the house, who had been out somewhere. He saluted Crago, glanced his eye at me, and spoke to me, “what young man is this you have with you?” “Oh, it’s a young man that lives away down yonder by my uncle’s.” “Well,” said the old man, “what does the young man bring any news from Moffitt and his gang and what they are doing?” “Oh, no, he is a young man that has been working at the tailor business down by uncle’s and knows nothing about Moffitt, for they never go in that quarter; they are always about Broad River, or Ticketty, [Thicketty] or lower down.” “Well,” said the old man, “be they where they may, I think they will get something to do before long. There is a great meeting of our friends to take place upon Buffalo, next Thursday night, at Elliot’s, and they are going to send down to the Brushy Fork and Sandy River boys to be ready to join them, and I think if they all get together they will soon settle the business with Moffitt
and all his gang. There will be another meeting on the South Fork about
Ramsour’s before long; so I think we will have the country clear before long.” “Well,” said
Crago, “I wish they may have good luck for the times are troublesome; I wish they may settle it at once.” “Settle it,” exclaimed the old man, “if they would all give up as they ought
to do, and they will be compelled to do at last, they might easily settle it and save a great
many lives and save the property besides; but it will be settled to their cost and that before
long – you will see it then. The King has men enough to conquer them without help and
more than half the people are on his side.”

All this time I had confined myself closely to my book, not saying a word on either side,
hoping my silence would keep me from being questioned – and it did. It will here be
remembered, that I and Crago had often been together before, and were no strangers to
each other. We took dinner with the old man and left him with the spirit of prophecy still
hanging upon him. Crago and I returned to my friend Oats, in the evening, and
communicated the outlines of our adventure, staying all night. In the morning early, I
started on my way back, taking a different route from that which I had gone. After riding
some ten or twelve miles, I had to fall into a main road that passes through the gap of
King’s mountain. At this place lived a man by the name of Dixon, a little advanced in years,
having a family – daughters, five in number, and two small boys. He was in good
circumstances for the times, and lived in a very public place, situated on the northern road,
where all, passing from above or below, had to cross the mountain, and there was no other
house on the road for about twenty miles. He kept a good farm and consequently was in a
way of making something. Here I halted, my appetite being up, to get something to eat. I
was well acquainted with this man and his family, and was under no apprehension of
danger, seated at the table, with some bread, butter and milk before me, which I was always
fond of. While I was thus enjoying my meal, an old woman and a boy

rode up to the gate, mounted on a couple of small nags, with some baggage on each. They
alighted without ceremony, came in the house, and appeared quite familiar with the place.
“Good morning, Mr. Dixon,” said the woman. “Good morning, Mrs. Hedgepith,” he
replied, shaking hands very cordially. The old lady drew a pipe out of her pocket, went to
the fire, after saluting all the females, filled her pipt, and lighting the same, commenced
smoking. “La me! Mr. Dixon,” said she, “I want something to eat for myself and little son;
we have been riding all morning – have not had a mouthful to eat and feel hungry.” “How
far have you come?” said Mr. Dixon. “Why, clear from Mr. Hopes, away down yonder. I
would have stopped at your brother’s, but I was afraid; for they are a bad set down about
your brother’s there, you know. It was late too, but I was afraid, and I kept on all the way to
Mr. Hope’s. and it was some time in the night before I got there. Mr. Hope asked us to stay
and get breakfast, but I was in a hurry and could not stay: I thought I would stop at Henry’s,
but there was five or six men there, and I did not-like to stop, for that is another bad place
you know. I was afraid they would serve me like they did the last time I was up there; I
came up the other road, for it is the nighest; I met with some of Moffit’s set and they took
away my little son’s beast, and left us one between us. I had papers then, and do you think
they didn’t search all my pockets and took all my papers, and my little boy’s beast in the
bargain. But I brought no papers this time; so I think they will hardly find out my business this time.” I happened to be present at the time of the search, and discovery of the papers, and immediately recognized the old woman and her son, and kept silent all the while she was talking. The lady of the house observed she had nothing cooked or ready, and told her she had better have her horses stripped and wait for dinner, which would not be long, saying at the same time, “Come girls, it is time you were getting dinner.” “Oh, la! I cannot wait,” said the old woman, “I am in a great hurry; I am obliged to be back day-after-to-morrow. A little bread and milk will do if you have it – I cannot wait for dinner.” “Well,” said the woman, “I have plenty of bread and milk, but I would rather you would stay and get something better.” “Oh, la, no! no, I think I cannot stay.” So the bread and milk being prepared, the woman and son commenced on it with a good grace. The man of the house winked at me, and began some inquiries. “Well,” said he, “what is all the news below?” Oh, la, dear me! there is none very good about us; there is that old turkey-cock of a Sumpter just below us and he has a troublesome set about him – we can get no rest for them; and there’s Moffitt and his set has been down close by us, not long since – I wonder where abouts he is now? – haven’t heard lately.” The old man said, “they were down about Turkey Creek; where they are now I know not.” “Oh,” said the old woman, “I believe it is hard to tell where they are, for they never stay long in one place; but they will all get plenty to do before long – they will find warmer times than when they killed Lord Hook. There’s Neel, and Watson, and Moffitt, and even old Billy Hill must have had a hand in the business. I wish Billy Hill had another set of iron-works to burn down; I’ll be bound he would soon have it done for him – and there is old Brattin [Bratton] and Frank Ross are no better than the rest; they will get plenty to do before long to keep them from searching old women’s pockets. The Sandy River Boys are fixing for them, and they have heard that the Upper Boys are getting ready to help them – I have come up to see when they will be ready, and hurry them on. The Sandy River Boys will all be ready by Saturday next, and they want the Upper Boys to meet them on Sunday. I am going up to old friend Ponder’s; he has some sons, smart fellows; I know they will help, and then I will go up to Floyd’s; there will be more help, and I know they will hurry on the others; when they all get together I think they will be able to settle with Moffitt, if they find him, and they will soon hunt him up. I wonder, your brother don’t know better; he has some five sons and he will ruin them all.” “Ah,” said Dixon, “I have talked with him on the subject, but there is no doing anything with him: when he puts his head to anything he will have it his own way; and in fact he had two sons with Moffitt at the time you allude to – the killing of Lord Hook.”

One of the young women gave me a significant look, in which I thought there was some meaning and walked out of the house. There was a loomhouse stood close in the yard; she entered it and commenced weaving. Such was my confidence in the family, that I thought they would conceal me by any means, if any possible danger should approach, and I have not changed my opinion yet, and have often thought that women were better calculated for an enterprise of that kind, and imminent emergencies than men. I walked slowly, and passed through the yard, near the door of the loomhouse, which stood open. The young
woman beckoned me to come in; I entered when she observed to me, “You had better not
stay here too long; there are three of those upper fellows now gone below – they passed here
this morning, and have gone down to Clark’s Fork, five or six miles below; I expect they are
gone to try to get some others about that part of the country to join them in their meeting
alluded to by that old woman in the house; they said they were going to old G___s, and there
is quite a number who will be sure to help them.” “You had better,” continued she, “leave
the road here, and go down by McArthur’s: it is very little out of the way, and then you fall
into the road near Henry’s, where you will be safe. If you should keep the road you are now
on, and should meet any of those lower fellows, you will be known and your situation will be
unpleasant; it is too perilous a task for you to undertake. I entreat you take my advice this
time; the old woman will not find out anything about you.” In a few minutes I was

mounted on my horse and off in a tangent. I took the way the young lady advised me, and
passed on without interruption. In the meantime, Moffit had moved off from the place
where I left him stationed, about four miles, in order to be near a blacksmith shop, but care
was taken that I should be directed to the place. Late in the evening I arrived at the place of
my destination. I found all the men busy. I gave as correct an account as I could of all I
had seen or heard during my absence, which was listened to with earnestness by all who
heard me.

It will be, perhaps, proper here to mention, that we were a set of men acting entirely on our
footing, without the promise or expectation of any pay. There was nothing furnished us
from the public; we furnished our own clothes, composed of coarse materials, and all home
spun; our over dress was a hunting shirt, of what was called linsey woolsey, well belted
around us. We furnished our own horses, saddles, bridles, guns, swords, butcher knives,
and our own spurs; we got our powder and lead as we could, and had often to apply to the
old women of the country, for their old pewter dishes and spoons, to supply the place of
lead; and if we had lead sufficient to make balls, half lead and the other pewter, we felt well
supplied. Swords, at first, were scarce, but we had several good blacksmiths among us;
besides there were several in the country. If we got hold of a piece of good steel, we would
keep it; and likewise, go to all the sawmills, and take all the old whip saws we could find, set
three or four smiths to work, in one shop, and take the steel we had, to another. In this way,
we soon had a pretty good supply of swords and butcher knives. Mostly all of our spurs,
bridle bits, and horsemen’s caps, were manufactured by us. We would go to a turner or
wheelwright, and get head blocks turned, of various sizes, according to the heads that had
to wear them, in shape resembling a sugar loaf; we would then get some strong upper, or
light sole leather, cut it out in shape, close it on the block, then grease it well with

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tallow, and set it before a warm fire, still on the block, and keep turning it round before the
fire, still rubbing on the tallow, until it became almost as hard as a sheet of iron; we then got
two small strips or plates of steel, made by our own smiths, of a good spring temper, and
crossing in the centre above, one reaching from ear to ear, the other, in the contrary
direction; the lining was made of strong cloth, padded with wool, and fixed so as to prevent
the cap from pressing too hard on the ears; there was a small brim attached to the front,
resembling caps now worn, a piece of bear skin lined with strong cloth, padded with wool,
passed over from the front to the back of the head, then a large bunch of hair taken from the
tail of a horse, generally white, attached to the back part and hung down the back; then a
bunch of white feathers, or deer's tail, was attached to the side, which completed the cap.
The cap was heavy, but custom soon made it so that it could be worn without
inconvenience. We made the scabbards of our swords of leather, by closing on a pattern of
wood, and treating it similar to the cap. Our swords and knives, we polished mostly with a
grindstone – not a very fine polish to be sure; but they were of a good temper, sharpened to
a keen edge, and seldom failed to do execution when brought into requisition.

At these occupations they were busily engaged, when I returned from my last excursion.
My communication had been received in private, only by the Colonel and a few of his
confidential officers, and I peremptorily charged not to divulge the communication to any
one. In fact when I was sent out on any similar occasion, the business was known only to
the colonel and my father, and by the way, my father was promoted to the rank of a brigade
major. The troops still continued their preparations for battle until Wednesday evening,
when we were all paraded, and orders given to every man to look to his gun, and see that it
was in good order, report the amount of his stock of powder and balls, see that it was in
good order, and be ready to

march at a minute's warning, on the next morning. Most of the troops had by this time
been pretty well furnished with swords; for my own part I received one, the first I had ever
used. We carried no camp equipage, no cooking utensils, nor any thing to encumber us; we
depended on what chance or kind providence might cast our way, and were always ready to
decamp in a short time, so that we were what might be called the harum-scarum-ramstan
boys – the ranting squad. Next morning pretty early, we were mounted and under marching
orders; few could guess the object, but it was evident that there was something in the wind;
we steered on in nearly a northern direction, so that if our movement should be noticed, it
might seem that we were rather marching for Ramsour's, the other contemplated place of
rendezvous. In the evening, we turned more to the west until we were within about twelve
miles of the intended place; here we halted near a farm, where we knew we had friends, and
obtained some provisions, and forage for our horses. After placing out guards, we were
directed to keep our horses with the saddles, lie down on our arms, and be ready when
called. We all laid down, the weather was warm, and we needed no fires; some perhaps did
not sleep, but for my part, I fell asleep immediately: however, not many hours had passed
until we were called up, without much noise, and the nature of the movement explained to
all. We then mounted our horses, when profound silence was enjoined on us all. We had
good guides, who took the lead and all followed; not long before day, we had crossed the
creek at a short distance above the place of our destination; we halted and sent out spies on
foot, to ascertain the position of the enemy, who soon returned bringing intelligence that
the enemy was posted in a large log building, having three guards placed out – one in the
yard and the other two at no great distance form each end of a long lane, through which the
main road passed by the house.

As soon as day broke, we again moved on slowly, and in
silence, keeping the strip of woods between us and the building, in order to gain the main road, if possible, undiscovered. We succeeded – got close to the road, halted and again sent out two or three men to make what discovery they could. They soon returned, reported that the house doors were open, that the enemy was passing in and out, and appeared to apprehend no alarm. We then formed into regular order, the sun now coming up, moved on, and were within a short distance of the guard before we were discovered. The enemy began to rally, but they had no time – we were too close upon them; they fired a few guns, but without effect, and fled, leaving their guns; we were in the yard by the time they issued from the house. As we entered the yard, the leader came out, storming at his men. He was shot down, and two others fell by his side, with several of the guard; the other guard advanced, but the rifle balls stopped their progress, and they soon retreated. In an instant, after entering the yard, some of our men rushed into the house; the windows flew open, and the enemy tumbled out, one over the other. Numbers of them fell in their hurry, and ran some distance on all fours before they could recover their legs. Others went helter skelter, most of them bareheaded, for a large swamp on the creek, not far distant, though several were compelled to halt by the way from the effect of our rifle balls. We took possession of most of their guns, which were stacked in the yard, and also took several of them prisoners; likewise most of their ammunition, swords, and pistols. When all was over, we found that we had killed three of their best officers, and five others; sixteen were badly wounded.

On a large table set some decanters or rather cased bottles, with some peach brandy in them; our colonel ordered the man of the house who had surrendered on our first entering, to produce some more of his brandy, which was done. The men were all paraded and the roll called; it was found that all 38 were present and not a man hurt. We all fell in ranks and foaming with sweat, and thirsty from the effect of the powder, every man received one glass of brandy and no more. We next began to look out for something for our horses, and something for ourselves to eat, with both of which we were bountifully supplied. We then selected a few of the enemy’s best rifles and whatever of the swords were deemed sufficient to stand service – breaking the others. We then took all the pistols we could find, and holsters, such as we thought would answer our purpose, breaking the locks of the others and throwing them away, as unfit for further use. We took care of the powder and balls, and the guns we used similar to the pistols – breaking the locks and the mainsprings. Here I had fired my little blue barrel twice, for I still carried her, but I suspect without effect as usual, for the second time I fired, it was at a man who tumbled out of a window at a short distance; I thought that I would stop his progress, but he scampered off without halting. Here I came in possession of a brace of excellent pistols, and the most of our men that lacked swords were furnished. We exchanged two or three of our horses, that were almost tired down for the same number of the best they had. All things now being arranged, we mounted and formed in order, when each man received a small glass of the peach again, and moving off, left the dead to bury their dead.
CHAPTER IV.

SKIRMISH WITH THE ENEMY.

Directing our course down Broad River, we then marched, after thus defeating the designs and stratagems of old Jezebel, which she had concerted – to Naboth to death and obtain the vineyard. Her schemes were all baffled, and so it would appear from the whole history of this manœuvre; we, resting our hopes under the strong and protective arm of freedom, which has paved the way and laid the foundation of this great Republic. She had this time carried no papers to betray her. We move on some miles, and encamped for the night, using at the same time every precaution, knowing that we were among enemies. Next morning, we learned that there was a party gathering below us, at one Harrison’s, a noted Tory. We immediately marched for the place, but when we arrived there, all was silent, and not a man to be seen. One of those Ponders, of whom I have spoken, being an active man, had turned out in order to raise some recruits, for the purpose of strengthening the parties contemplated by old Jezabel. They had collected, but by some means had got wind of us. When we arrived, there were several women about the house; inquiry was made if there had been some men there that morning? The reply was in the affirmative but they had gone two hours or more. “Which way did they go?” “Oh, they went off down that way some place, but we don’t know where.” We moved off our road, passed round part of the farm, and a rough thicket on the other side. Before we had proceeded far one of our men observed: “I don’t like the looks of those women; those fellows are not far off, perhaps looking at us now.” We had not proceeded more than half way round the fence, when all at once we were saluted with the report of twenty or perhaps thirty guns out of the thicket, and the whizzing balls about our heads. Down came two of our men just ahead of where I was; one soon recovered his feet, but the other in attempting to rise would stagger and fall. The thicket was not extensive and a part of the men in front dashed on to go around it: some in the rear wheeled the other way, while a number of the centre dismounted near the wounded to defend them. In a few moments four men advanced from the thicket, within a short distance, Ponder being at their head. I saw my father level his gun at Ponder; both fired at the same instant; Ponder’s gun fell from his hands; Ponder wheeled and moved off in hast, leaving his gun, the others following his example. A few guns fired on the other side of the thicket; the enemy had retreated down a steep hill into a creek swamp, pursued by our men, who soon returned. It was discovered that one of the men who fell at the first fire, by the name of Watson, a lieutenant, was uninjured; his horse was shot dead under him. The other, named Burns, was shot in the hip, the ball passing through the hind tree of his saddle, entered his hip and lodged against the bone, just below the hip-joint. We picked up Ponder’s gun, an excellent rifle, then supporting our wounded man on a horse, we bore him to a house at no great distance, where we constructed a litter and conveyed him to a place of safety. The ball was extracted, and it was but a few weeks until he was again in the field. In a few days we ascertained that Ponder had been shot through the wrist, so as to prevent him
from using a gun any more. Harrison was slightly wounded through the fleshy part of the arm. In a few days it was ascertained that the meeting had taken place at Ramsour's. We mustered and started for the place, but we were too late; we arrived at the place in the evening, where we found our friends instead of enemies. A Capt. Falls, with some other officers, and a party of men from North Carolina, had attacked them in the early part of the day, and entirely defeated them; there were several killed on both side and among the rest Capt. Falls himself lay dead. After assisting some of the wounded and helping to bury the dead belonging to our own side, we retreated to our own place. The Tory party on the west side of the Broad River, were numerous; they began to muster and threaten us; they commenced house burning and plundering. Among their leaders was one called Bill Cunningham, a man that will be execrated by some of the descendents of the sufferers, perhaps to generations yet unborn. Women were insulted, and stripped of every particle of decent clothing they might have on, and every article of bedding, clothing or furniture was taken – knives, forks, dishes, spoons, in fact everything that could be carried off. Not a piece of meat or a pint of salt was left. They even entered houses where men lay sick of the small-pox, that they knew were opposed to them, dragged them out of their sick beds into the yard and put them to death, in cold blood, in presence of their wives and children, or relatives. We were too weak to repel them, and it seemed as though they had been let loose from the bottomless pit, to execute infernal vengeance on all that disobeyed the mandates of the British. It seemed like our time, to suffer in the flesh, was at hand. In order to save ourselves a little longer, it was determined to join Sumpter, but we found we jumped out of the frying pan into the fire; we met Sumpter retreating rapidly; we joined in the retreat until we came to Fishing Creek, a place where it was thought we could halt in safety, and rest, but not so. Sumpter

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encamped on the main road, near the creek; we were encamped a short distance above, on his left, where another road crossed the creek; there was a guard or picket posted at a short distance in the rear; the men were all fatigued; some had kindled fires and were cooking and eating; others tumbled down and were fast asleep, and all scattered in every direction. We had drawn some provisions, and forage for our horses, and were engaged in about the same way, with, however, but few asleep. Our horses were mostly close at hand, and but few saddles off; all at once the picket guns gave the alarm – they retreated on the main body with the enemy on their heels. Before Sumpter could wake his men and form, the enemy were among them cutting down everything in their way. Sumpter, with all the men he had collected, retreated across the creek at the main road, leaving the remainder to the mercy of the enemy. It was a perfect rout, and an indiscriminate slaughter. No quarter was given; we were preparing in all haste to secure our own safety. The greater part of our number dashed through the creek, at the fording place, and pushing on with all possible speed, reached the highland. After we had gotten fairly to the top of the hill, we halted. No enemy appeared, and we remained quiet for some time, waiting form some of our men, who were missing; but no tidings – no one, neither friend or foe appearing. There had been but little firing, except the pistols of the enemy, and all seemed to be silent. At length a few blasts of the bugle brought some of our men in sight, who in their hurry had missed the fording place, and had gone up the creek where they found it difficult to pass, and were looking for our trail. Near sunset, a few more came up, but there were still some missing, of whom we
could hear nothing. We then left the road, keeping a high, open ridge and went off some distance; night coming on, we dismounted in the woods and tied our horses; we had nothing for man or beast to eat, and the weather being warm, (August,) we kindled no fires. We lay down,

every man with his sword by his side, his gun in his hands, and his pistol near his head. All were silent, for we expected the whole army had been taken prisoner, or put to the sword.

After I had laid down, I began to reflect. Well, thought I, if this be the fate of war, I would willingly be excused. I devised several plans to get out of the scrape, but none appeared likely to have the desired effect. The thing had gone too far, and there was no safety in retreating. At length, weary with thinking, I fell asleep. Before it was light, in the morning, we were all up, and on enquiry, it was found that five of our number were missing. It was resolved that we should return to the battle ground; a few spies having been sent forward, we followed at some distance. When we arrived, there was no appearance of the enemy – all was silent. In a few moments, a party of Sumpter’s men made their appearance, crossing the creek. The dead and wounded lay scattered in every direction over the field; numbers lay stretched cold and lifeless; some were yet struggling in the agonies of death, while here and there, lay others, faint with the loss of blood, almost famished for water, and begging for assistance. The scene before me, I could not reconcile to my feelings and I began to repent that I had ever taken any part in the matter; however, by custom, such things become familiar. We commenced our search, and soon found two of own party, one named Enloe, and the other Jackson, some distance apart, both setting up, unable to walk without assistance, and mangled by the sword. The other three we could not find among the living or the dead; what their fate was, we never knew, for we never heard of them afterwards. One was a lieutenant named Bryan, one of our most active men. We collected all the wounded we could; but poor fellows, we had little nourishment to give them; they all craved water, and even the little they received, seemed to revive them. We then began to look out for some provisions, for ourselves and horses; we found corn lying about in many places, that had not been consumed the day before, and there were several kettles setting about, where the fire had been kindled, with provisions ready cooked – and provisions scattered about on the ground in various places. There was no time for choosing, and every man ate whatever he got hold of, asking no questions; then taking a glass of cold water, we all felt some what braced up. There were several horses grazing about the old field, that appeared to be nearly worn out, some with bridles and saddles on, others without.

The guns lay scattered over the field, also various articles of camp equipage. Among the guns there was one picked up, a good looking rifle, with a shot-bag and all the apparatus belonging. The gun had apparently been laid down by some one who intended taking a little sleep, in order to have her ready when he awoke. The gun was presented to the Colonel, and after viewing her some time, he observed “Well, boys I have a use for this gun – I shall have to claim her as my part of the spoils.” Then calling me up, said, “Well, James, you have been wanting a rifle for some time; here is one I think will suit you; she is light, and I think, a good one; she has an excellent lock; lay down you little shot-gun; take her, and
take good care of her; I think you can do better with her than with the little shot-gun.” A Capt. Chambers, who stood by, exclaimed, “That is right colonel, you have made a good disposition of the gun. I hope we shall have need of James, yet; he seems to be a lucky boy, and it is well to encourage him.” I confess it had the effect of a stimulent, and in some measure reconciled me to my lot. After giving what help we could in burying the dead, in haste,—poor fellows it was badly done,—we caught two of the best looking horses we could find, and placing our two wounded men upon them, and supporting them as well as we could, we moved off, taking with us no plunder, (or very little) of what was considered of right to belong to Sumter’s men, being the property of their companions who had fallen. All the baggage, and everything valuable, had fallen into the hands of the enemy, and they had taken it off. We got to a house, a few miles distant, where we obtained an old horse-cart, we placed them in it, and next day, got them to their home, where they both recovered, but not without being much disfigured by their wounds.