

HODSON'S HIDE-OUT.

(A TRANSCRIPT FROM SAND MOUNTAIN.)



W HERE the great line of geologic upheaval running down from Virginia through North Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia finally breaks up into a hopeless confusion of variously trending ridges and spurs, there is a region of country somewhat north of the center of Alabama, called by the inhabitants thereof "The Sand Mounting." It is a wild, out-of-the-way, little-known country, whose citizens have kept alive in their mountain fastnesses nearly all that backwoods simplicity and narrowness of ambition peculiar to their ancestors, who came mostly from the Carolinas, in the early part of the present century, following the mountain lines in their migrations, as fish follow streams. They are honest and virtuous, as mountain folk usually are, rather frugal and simple than industrious and enterprising, knowing nothing of books, and having very indefinite information touching the doings of the great world whose tides of action foam around their mountain-locked valleys like an ocean around some worthless island. They have heard of railroads, but many of them have never seen one. They do not take newspapers, they turn their backs upon missionaries, and they nurse a high disdain for the clothes and the ways of city folk. Most of them are farmers in a small way, raising a little corn and wheat, a "patch" of cotton now and then, a few vegetables, and a great deal of delicious fruit.

In the days of secession the men of Sand Mounting were not zealous in the Southern cause, nor were they, on the other hand, willing to do battle for the Union. So it happened that when the Confederate authorities began a system of conscription, Sand Mountain was not a healthful place for enrolling officers, many of whom never returned therefrom to report the number of eligible men found in the remote valleys and "pockets."

One citizen of the mountain became notorious, if not strictly famous, during the war. His name was Riley Hodson, better known as Ginerl Hodson, though he never had been a soldier. He may have been rather abnormally developed to serve as a representative Sand Mountain figure in this or any other sketch of that region. The reader may gather from the following outlines of Hodson's character, drawn by certain of his neighbors, a pretty fair idea of what the picture would be when filled out and properly shaded and lighted.

"Ginerl Hodson air not jest ezactly what ye'd call a contrayee man, but he's a mighty p'inted an' a' orful sot in 'is way sort o' a feller," said Sandy Biddle, who stood six feet two in his home-made shoes, and weighed scarcely one hundred and twenty pounds, "an' ef anybody air enjoyin' any oncommon desires for a fight, he may call on the ginerl with a reas'nable expectation of a-ketchin' double-barrel thunder an' hair-trigger lightnin'."

"He never hev be'n whirpt," observed old Ben Iley, himself the hero of some memorable rough and tumble fights, "an' he hev managed to hev his own way, in spite o' 'ell an' high water, all over the mounting for more 'n forty year tor my sartin' knowledge."

"When it come ter doctrin', es the scrip'ter p'intedly do show it, he kin preach all round any o' yer Meth'dist bible-bangers 'at ever I see, don't keer ef ye do call 'im a Hardshell an' a Forty-gallon, an' a' Iron-Jacket Baptus," was Wes. Beazly's tribute; "an' I kin further say," he added, cutting a quid from a twist of Sand Mounting tobacco and lodging it in his jaw, "'at Ginerl Hodson air hones', an' when he air a feller's frien' he air a good un,

an' when he don't like ye, then hit air about time fer ye ter git up an' brin'le out 'n the mounting."

Turning from these verbal sketches to look at Riley Hodson himself, we shall find him leaning on the rickety little gate in front of his rambling log-house. In height he is six feet three, broad-shouldered, strong limbed, rugged, grizzled, harsh-faced, unkempt. He looks like the embodiment of obstinacy. Nor is he out of place as a figure in the landscape around him. Nature was in no soft mood when she gave birth to Sand Mountain, and, in this particular spot, such labor as Riley Hodson had bestowed on its betterment had rendered the offspring still more unsightly. Some yellowish clay fields, washed into ruts by the mountain rains, lay at all sorts of angles with the horizon; the fences were grown over with sassafras bushes and sour-grape vines, and there was as small evidence of any fertility of soil as there was of careful or even intelligent husbandry. It was in the spring of 1875, ten years after the close of the war, that Riley Hodson leaned on that gate and gazed up the narrow mountain trail at a man coming down.

"Hit air a peddler," he muttered to himself, taking the short-stemmed pipe from his mouth with a grimace of the most dogged dislike, "hit air a peddler, an' ef them weeming ever git ther eyes sot onto 'im, hit air good-by ter what money I hev on han', to a dead sartin'gy." He opened the gate and passed through, going slowly along the trail to meet the coming stranger. Once or twice he glanced furtively back over his shoulder to see if his wife or daughter might chance to be looking after him from the door of the old house. He walked, in the genuine mountain fashion, with long, loose strides, his arms swinging awkwardly at his sides, and his head thrust forward, with his chin elevated and his shoulders drawn up. He soon came face to face with a young man of rather small stature and pleasing features, who carried a little pack on the end of a short fowling-piece swung across his left shoulder.

Hodson had made up his mind to drive this young adventurer back, thinking him an itinerant peddler; but a strange look came into the old man's face, and he stopped short with a half-frightened start and a dumb gesture of awe and surprise.

The stranger, David D'Antinac by name, and an ornithologist by profession, was a little startled by this sudden apparition; for Riley Hodson at best was not prepossessing in appearance, and he now glared so strangely, and his face had such an ashy pallor in it, that the strongest heart might have shrunk and

trembled at confronting him in a lonely mountain trail.

"Well, ye blamed little rooster!" exclaimed Hodson in a breathless way, after staring for a full minute.

D'Antinac recoiled perceptibly, with some show of excitement in his face. He was well aware that he was in a region not held well in hand by the law, and he had been told many wild tales of this part of Sand Mountain.

"Ye blamed little rooster!" repeated the old man, taking two or three short backward steps, as if half alarmed and half meditating a sudden leap upon D'Antinac, who now summoned voice enough to say:

"How do you do, sir?"

Such a smile as one might cast upon the dead—a white, wondering, fearful smile—spread over Hodson's face. It seemed to D'Antinac that this smile even leaped from the face and ran like a ghastly flash across the whole landscape. He will remember it as long as he lives.

"W'y, Dave, er thet you?" Hodson asked, in a harsh, tremulous tone, taking still another backward step.

"My name certainly is David, but I guess you don't know me," said D'Antinac, with an effort at an easy manner.

"Don't know ye, ye pore little rooster! Don't know ye! W'y, Dave, are ye come ag'in?" The old man wavered and faltered, as if doubtful whether to advance or retreat. "Don't know ye?" he repeated. "W'y, Dave, don't *you* know *me*? Hev ye furgot the ole man?"

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I believe I never saw you before in my life," said D'Antinac, lowering his little pack to the ground and leaning on his gun. "You are certainly laboring under some mistake."

"Never seed me afore!" exclaimed Hodson, his voice showing a rising belligerency. "Ye blamed little rooster, none o' yer foolin', fer I won't stand it. I'll jest nat'rally war' ye out ef ye come any o' thet air." Hodson now advanced a step or two with threatening gestures. Quick as lightning, D'Antinac flung up his gun and leveled it, his face growing very pale.

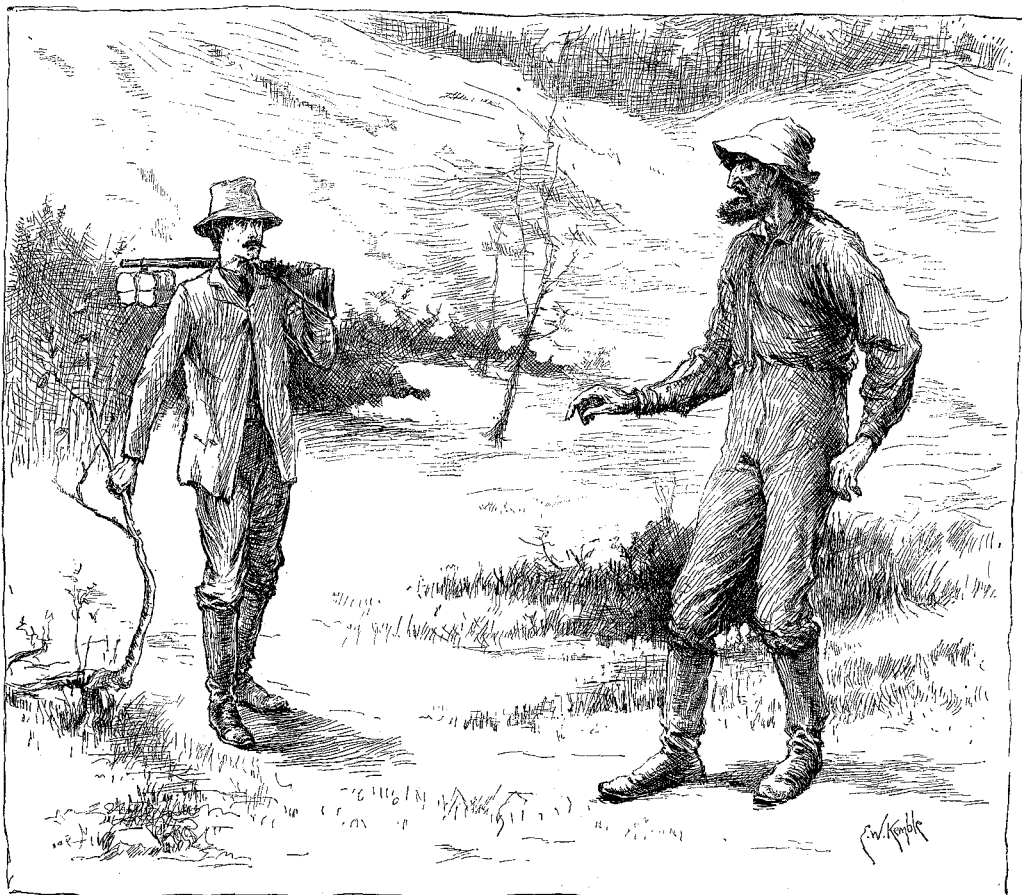
"Another step," he cried excitedly, "and I'll shoot two holes through you!"

Hodson stopped and said in a deprecating tone:

"W'y Dave, ye wouldn't shoot yer daddy, would ye, Dave?"

"If *you* run onto me I'll shoot *you*," was the firm response.

"W'y, ye blasted mean little rooster!" thundered Hodson, and before D'Antinac in his excitement could pull trigger, the old man had him



"W'y, Dave, er thet you?"

down and was sitting astride of him, as he lay at full length on his back. "Now I'll jest nat'rally be dinged, Dave, ef I don't whirp ever'last striffin' o' hide off'n ye ef ye don't erhave yerself!" He had both of D'Antinac's arms clasped in one of his great hands, and was pressing them so hard against the young man's breast that he could scarcely breathe. "Ye nasty little rooster, a-comin' back an' a-tryin' ter shoot yer pore ole daddy fer nothin'. I'll jest wear ye out an' half-sole ye ag'in ef ye open yer mouth!"

D'Antinac lay like a mouse under the paw of a lion. He was afraid to attempt to speak, and it was quite impossible for him to move. The old man's weight was enormous. "I'm er great notion ter pound the very day-lights out'n ye afore I let ye up," Hodson continued. "Hit meks me mad 'nuff fur ter bite ye in two like er tater an' jest nat'rally chaw up both pieces, on'y ter think 'at ye'd deny yer own daddy, what's larruped ye a many a time, an' 'en try ter shoot 'im! I'm teetotally ershamed of ye, Dave. An' what'll yer mammy say?"

D'Antinac was possessed of a quick mind,

and he had schooled it in the art of making the most of every exigency. He had been several years in the mountain regions of the South, and had discovered that the mountaineers liked nothing better than a certain sort of humor, liberally spiced with their peculiar slang.

"Speaking of biting a tater in two," he ejaculated rather breathlessly, "reminds me that I'm as hungry as a sitting hen. Have you got anything like a good mellow iron wedge, or a fried pine-knot in your pocket?"

Hodson's face softened a little, and he smiled again, in that half-ghastly way, as he said:

"Ye dinged little rooster! W'y, Dave, der ye know the ole man now? Say, Dave, do ye?"

"Oh, yes, perfectly; never knew any one better in my life," promptly responded D'Antinac. "Your face is quite familiar, I assure you. How're the folks?"

Hodson chuckled deep down in his throat, at the same time somewhat relaxing his hold on the young man's arms.

"Sarah an' Mandy 'll jest nat'rally go

'stracted over ye, Dave, an' I want ye ter 'have yerself an' come on wi' me down ter the house, like er white boy. This here foolin' 's not gwine ter do ye no good. Ye've got ter toe the mark, Dave."

"Oh, I'll behave," exclaimed D'Antinac, "I'll do whatever you want me to. I was only joking just now. Let me up, you're mashing me as flat as a flying-squirrel."

"Well, I don't want ter hurt ye, but afore I ever let ye up, ye must promerse me one thing," said Hodson.

"What is it? quick, for you really are making jelly of me," D'Antinac panted forth, like Encelados under Sicily.

"Thet ye'll not deny yer mammy ner Mandy; an' ef ye *do* deny 'em, I'll jest nat'rally be blamed ef I don't whale yer jacket tell ye won't know yer hide from a meal-sifter. Do ye promerse?"

"Yes," said D'Antinac, though, in fact, he did not understand the old mountaineer's meaning. The young man's mother had died in his babyhood, and he felt safe in promising never to deny her.

Hodson got up, leaving D'Antinac free to rise; but the old fellow got possession of the gun and pack and then said:

"Now come 'long home, Dave, an' le's see what yer mammy and Mandy'll say ter ye. Come 'long, I say, an' don't stan' ther' a-gawpin' like er runt pig in er peach orchard. I do 'spise er fool. Come on."

It is probable that no man was ever more bewildered than D'Antinac was just then; in fact, he could not command himself sufficiently to do more than stand there, after he had risen, and stupidly stare at Hodson. The latter, however, did not parley, but, seizing one of the young man's arms in a vise-like grip, he began jerking him along the trail toward the house.

It was a subject fit for an artist's study. The old giant striding down the path, with the young man following at a trot. D'Antinac could not resist. He felt the insignificance of his physique, and also of his will, when compared with those of this old man of the mountain.

"I bet yer mammy 'ell know ye, soon es she lays eyes on ye, spite of yer blamed new-fangled clo's an' yer fancy mustachers. An' es fur Mandy, don't s'pose she'll 'member ye, case she wus too little w'en ye—w'en ye war—w'en they tuck ye off. She wus nothin' but er baby then, ye know. Well, not ezactly a baby, nuther, but er little gal like, le's see, she air sevingteen now; well, she wer' 'bout five er six, er sich a matter, then. Mebbe she mought know ye too."

D'Antinac, as he listened to this, began to understand that in some way he had been identified in the old man's mind as a long-lost

son, and it seemed to him that his only safety lay in ready and phant acceptance, if not in active furtherance, of the illusion. He was roughly hustled into the Hodson dwelling, a squat old house, built of the halves of pine logs, with the cracks between boarded over with clapboards.

"Sarah, der ye 'member this yere little rooster?" Hodson exclaimed, with a ring of pride in his harsh, stubborn voice, as he



"SHE TOOK THE PIPE FROM HER MOUTH AND GAZED AT D'ANTINAC."

twisted D'Antinac around so as to bring him face to face with a slim, sallow, wrinkled little old woman, who stood by an enormous fireplace smoking an oily-looking clay pipe. "Don't he jest hev a sort er nat'ral look ter ye? Hev he be'n killed in the wa', Sarah, eh?"

The woman did not respond immediately. She took the pipe from her mouth and gazed at D'Antinac. Her face slowly assumed a yearning look, and at length, with a sort of moaning cry of recognition, she fell upon him and clasped him close, kissing him and wetting him with her tears. Her breath, heavy with the malodor of nicotine, almost strangled him, but he dared not resist.

During this ordeal he got broken glimpses of a bright girlish face, a heavy rimpled mass of lemon-colored hair, and a very pretty form clothed in a loose homespun gown

"Mandy, hit air Dave come back, yer brother Dave; do yer 'member 'im?" he heard the old man say. "Do yer 'member the little rooster 'at they conscriptered an' tuck erway ter the wa'? Well, thet air's 'him, thet air's Dave! Go kiss 'im, Mandy."

The girl did not move, nor did she seem at all inclined to share the excitement of her parents.

"Go kiss yer bud, Mandy, I say," Hodson commanded. "He wusn't killed in no wa'. Kiss the little rooster, Mandy."

"Won't," stubbornly responded Mandy.

"Well, now, I'll jest ber dinged, sis, ef this yere hain't jest too bad," the old man exclaimed in a whining, deprecatory tone of voice, quite different from the gruff, bullying sounds usually emitted by him. "I wouldn't er thort 'at ye'd 'fuse ter be glad w'en yer little brother come."

"'Tain't none o' my brother, neither," she said, blushing vermillion, as she half-shyly gazed at D'Antinac, with her finger in her mouth.

Mrs. Hodson hung upon the young man for a space that seemed to him next to interminable, and when at last she unwound her bony arms from his neck and pushed him back, so as to get a good look at him, he felt such relief as comes with the first fresh breath after a season of suffocation.

"Ye air be'n gittin' rich, hain't ye, Dave? an' ye air fatter'n ye wus, too," she remarked. Then she went back to the hearth and relighted her pipe, meantime eying him curiously. D'Antinac never before had found himself so utterly at a loss for something to do or say. The occasion was a singularly dry, queer, and depressing one. He felt the meanness of his attitude, and yet a side glance at Hodson's stubbornly cruel face and giant form was enough to enforce its continuance.

"Yer mammy's jest es poorty es ever, *hain't* she, Dave?" said the old man, with a wheedling note in his rasping voice, "she hain't changed none, *hev* she, Dave?"

"I don't know — I guess — well, perhaps she's more flesh — that is, stouter than when — than when —"

"Ye-e-s, that air hit, Dave," said Hodson, "she air fatter."

Nothing could have been more ridiculous than this assertion. Mrs. Hodson, like most old mountain women who live on salt pork and smoke tobacco, was as thin and withered and dry, as a last year's beech-leaf. D'Antinac sheepishly glanced at Mandy. The girl put her hand over her really sweet-looking mouth, and uttered a suppressed titter, at the same time deepening her blushes and shrugging her plump, shapely shoulders.

"Well, Dave, jest es I 'spected, Mandy hev furgot ye," said Hodson; "but ye know she wer' not no bigger'n a nubbin o' dry-weather co'n w'en ye wer' tuck away. But hit's all right, Dave, yer mammy an' me hev allus felt like ye'd turn up some day, an' lo an' behole, ye hev."

Once more D'Antinac bravely tried to deny this alleged kinship to the Hodson household, but the old man instantly flew into a passion and threatened all sorts of condign punishment, not the worst of which was "swiping" him "all over a' acre o' groun'."

"But, my dear sir, I can't afford to have you for a moment think——"

"Dry up! ye little sniv'lin' conscript, er I'll mop up this yere floo' wi' ye in a minute! Hain't ye got no sense 't all? Hev I got ter down ye ag'in?"

D'Antinac could not help himself. He made a full surrender, and accepted, for the time, his rôle of returned son and brother, trusting that something would soon turn up to free him from the embarrassment. He was not long in discovering that Mrs. Hodson's faith in his identity was much weaker than the old man's, and as for Mandy, she very flatly refused to accept him as a brother.

It was now sundown, and the evening shadows were gathering in the valley. Far and near, the brown thrushes, the cardinal grosbeaks, and the cat-birds were singing in the hedges of sassafras that overgrew the old worm fences of the Hodson farm. The woods along the mountain-sides were almost black with their heavy leafage, and the stony peaks of the highest ridge in the west, catching the reflection from the sunset clouds, looked like heaps of gold. A peculiar dryness seemed to pervade earth, air, and sky, as if some underground volcanic heat had banished every trace of moisture from the soil, whilst the sun had dessicated the atmosphere. Even the clouds, scudding lazily overhead, had the look of being crisp and withered.

With all a Sand Mountain man's faith in the universal efficacy of fried bacon, Hodson ordered supper to be prepared. Mandy rolled up the sleeves of her homespun dress, showing arms as white and plump as those of a babe, and proceeded to cut some long slices of streaked "side-meat," as the mountaineers term smoked breakfast-bacon, while her father started a fire on the liberal hearth. The supper was rather greasy, but not unpalatable, the fried corn-bread and the crisp meat being supplemented by excellent coffee. During the meal Hodson plied D'Antinac with questions as to where he had spent all these years of absence, questions very hard to answer satisfactorily. Mrs. Hodson silently watched the young man,

with a doubting, wistful look in her watery eyes, as if she could not make up her mind to trust him wholly, and yet was anxious to accept him, as her long-lost son. Mandy scarcely lifted her face after she sat down at the table, but D'Antinac fancied he could detect a dimpling ripple of suppressed merriment about her rosy cheeks and mouth.

When supper was over and Mandy had washed the dishes and put them away, Hodson proposed music; he was almost hilarious

trying to scoop up a coal to light her pipe, that the bashful girl got up and walked across the room. As she passed D'Antinac, she whispered:

"Ye must 'member Jord soon es ye see 'im—don't ye fail. Save er rumpus."

"All right," whispered D'Antinac.

Hodson reëntered in due time, followed by a slender, bony negro man, whose iron-gray wool and wrinkled face indexed his age at near seventy years.

"Jording, der ye know this yere gentleman?" said Hodson.

"Naw, sah, don't fink er do," answered the negro, twirling his banjo in a self-conscious way, and bowing obsequiously.

Mrs. Hodson and Mandy interchanged quick, half-frightened grimaces, followed by furtive glances toward the master of the house.

"Jording," said Hodson, "ef ye don't tell me who this yere feller air in less'n a minute, I'll jest nat'rally take the ramrod out'n Horner," pointing to a long rifle that hung over the door, "an' I'll jest wax hit to ye, tell ye'll be glad ter 'member mos' anybody."

"Why, Jord, old fellow, don't you remember Dave!" exclaimed D'Antinac, taking a step forward, and simulating great joy and surprise.

"W-w-w'at Dave is yer tarkin' 'bout?" stammered the poor old negro.

Hodson's face instantly swelled with rage, and he certainly would have done something desperate had not D'Antinac just then closed up the space between himself and Jord. Mandy, too, joined the group and whispered:

"Don't be er fool, Jord, say hit's Dave come back f'om the wa'."

Jord's wits and conscience were a little refractory, but Mandy's advice found an able auxiliary in the fact that Hodson had by this time got possession of the rifle-ramrod, and was flourishing it furiously.

"W'y, Mars Dave! dis you? 'Clar' ter goodness de ole niggah's eyes gittin' pow'ful pore! Didn' know yer no mo'n nuffin' at fus; but yer look jes es nat'ral es de ole mule ter me now. Wha' ye been all dis time, Mars Dave? 'Clar' ter goodness ye s'prise de ole niggah's senses mos' out'n 'im, yer does fo' sho'!"

While Jord was thus delivering himself, he kept one eye queerly leering at D'Antinac, and the other glaring wildly at the wavering ramrod.

"Ther', what'd I tell ye?" exclaimed Hodson, vociferously; "what'd I tell ye! Jord 'members 'im! Hit *air* Dave, sho' 's ye bo'n, Sarah! Hit air our boy, fur a fac', the blamed little rooster! He wusn't killed in no wa', Sarah! I allus tole ye 'at he'd come back, an', sho' 'nuff, yer he air! Hallooyer!" As he



"W-W-W'AT DAVE IS YER TARKIN' 'BOUT?"

"Ye ricollec' Jord, don't ye, Dave? Our ole nigger feller—course ye do, yer boun' ter ricollec' 'im, couldn't never furgit 'im; mean ole villyun, but er good hand ter hoe cotting an' pull fodder. Well, he's jest got in from the upper co'n-fiel', an' is er feedin' 'is mule. Soon es he comes ter 'is cabing, I'll call 'im in ter pick the banjer fur ye, an' I don't want ye ter say nothin' 'bout who ye air, an' see ef he 'members ye."

Of course D'Antinac assented; there was nothing else for him to do. In fact, he was beginning to feel a sharp interest in the progress of this queer farce. He tried to get a look into Mandy's roguish eyes, that he might be sure of her sympathy, but she avoided him, her cheeks all the time burning with blushes, and her yellowish hair tossed loosely over her neck and shoulders. Presently Hodson went out to fetch in Jord and the banjo. It was during his absence, and while Mrs. Hodson was stooping over the embers on the hearth,



"JORD ER GONE!"

spoke, he capered awkwardly over the floor, to the imminent danger of every one's toes. When his ecstasy had somewhat abated, he turned to Jord, his face beaming with delight. "Now, Jording," he said, "give us my favoryte song; an', Jording, put on the power, put on the power! This yere's a 'cashun of onlimeted rejoicin'! Hain't it, Sarah?"

"Hit air," responded Mrs. Hodson, puffing lazily at her old pipe.

Hodson took a chair, and, placing it close beside his wife, sat down, and, with his hand caressing her shoulder, whispered in her ear:

"Hain't this yere jest glor'us?"

"Hit air," she answered, lifelessly.

Mandy's face was as pink as the petals of a wild rose and her heart was fluttering strangely.

D'Antinac, keenly alive to the dramatic situation, and somewhat troubled as to how it was to end, glanced around the room, and, despite his mental perturbation, became aware of the rude but powerful setting of the scene. The pine-smoked walls and ceiling, the scant, primitive furniture, the scrupulously clean puncheon floor, the long flint-locked rifle, the huge "stick-and-dirt" fire-place, the broad, roughly laid hearth and the smoke-grimed wooden crane, all taken together, made an *entourage* in perfect accord with the figures, the costumes, and the predicament.

Jord tuned his banjo with some show of fal-

tering, and presently he began to play and sing. The following, which were the closing stanzas, will serve to give an idea of the performance

"Ab'um Linkum say he gwine ter
Free ole niggah in de wah,
But Mars Hodson say he mine ter
See how Ab'um do dat dar!
Hoop-te-loody, how ye gwine ter
When Mars Hodson not er mine ter?
Den ole Ab'um say: 'You free um!'
But Mars Hodson cut an' shoot,
An' say to Ab'um dat he see um
At de debbil 'fore he do 't!
Hoop-te-loody, how ye gwine ter
When Mars Hodson not er mine ter?"

"That air a fac'," exclaimed Hodson, almost gleefully, "that air a fac'. Here's what never guv in yit, Dave! They tried fur ter mek me fight fur the Confed'ret States an' they never done hit, an' 'en they tried ter conscrip' me, like they did you, Dave, but I cut 'em an' shot 'em an' hid out aroun' in these yere woods tell they guv my place the name o' Hide-out, an' they didn't conscrip' me, nuther; an' 'en the tother gov'ment proclaimed and sot ever'body's niggers free, but yer daddy hel' on ter his one lone nigger jes' ter show 'em 'at he could; fur ther's not a gov'ment onto the top side o' yearth 'at kin coerce er subjugate yer daddy, Dave."

Jord hung his head in the utmost humility while his master was speaking. A keen pang of sympathy shot through D'Antinac's bosom. The thought that this kindly-faced old negro was still a slave, the one lone man of his race whose shackles remained unbroken, was touching beyond compare. And yet it seemed quite in consonance with the nature of things that such a person as Hodson should be able, situated as he was, to resist, for any length of time, the tide of the new *régime*. This easy turn from the absurd to the pathetic gave a new force to the situation, hardening and narrowing its setting, whilst it added infinite depth to its meaning. Here, indeed, was the very heart of Sand Mountain, and well might it be called Hodson's Hide-out, where slavery's last instance had been hidden safe from the broad eyes of freedom.

D'Antinac could not sleep when at last he had been left by Hodson in a little dingy room, whither his gun and pack had also been transported. The bed was soft and clean, and the moonlight pouring through a low, square, paneless window invited to sleep; but he lay there pondering and restless. Hodson's last words, before bidding him good-night, kept ringing in his ears:

"Thet ole Jording air a livin' example o' my 'termination an' endurance, Dave, an' hit shows what 'stuff yer daddy's made out'n The whole eternal worl' kin never free that

air nigger. He er mine ter keep, es the ole hymn say, 'Whatever may erpose.'"

D'Antinac was small of stature and not at all a hero mentally; but he had come of a liberty-loving ancestry, and was, despite his foreign-looking name, an American to his heart's core. No doubt the wild, roving life he had for years been leading, as an emissary of an ornithological society, had served to emphasize and accentuate his love of freedom in every sense.

He had turned and tossed on his bed for several hours, when a peculiar voice, between a chant and a prayer in its intonations, came in through the little window, along with the white stream of moonlight. He got up and softly went to the aperture. The voice came from a little detached cabin in the back yard. It was Jord praying.

"Lor', hab' de ole man sarb ye well an' true? Mus' I die er slabe an' come 'ome ter glory wid de chain on? What I done, Lor', 'at ye 'zart me when I's ole? Is I nebber gwine ter be free? Come down, Lor', an' 'stain de ole man in he 'fiction an' trouble, an' oh, Lor', gib 'im oleeyes one leetle glimps ob freedom afore he die. Amen."

Such were the closing words of the plaintive and touching prayer. No wonder that suddenly d'Antinac's whole life focused itself in the desire to liberate that old slave. He forgot every element of his predicament, save his nearness to the last remnant of human bondage. He drew on his clothes, seized his pack and gun, and slyly crept out through the little window. The cool, sweet mountain air braced him like wine. This ought to be the breath of freedom. These rugged peaks surrounding the little "pocket" or valley ought not to fence in a slave or harbor a master.

Riley Hodson slept soundly all night, and did not get up before breakfast was ready.

"Let the little rooster sleep; hit air Sunday, anyhow; let 'im git up when he whants ter," said the old man, when d'Antinac failed to appear.

Mandy had fried some ham and eggs for breakfast, and she came to the table in a very becoming blue calico gown. Mrs. Hodson appeared listless, and her eyes had no cheerful light in them.

The old man ate ravenously the choicest eggs and the best slices of ham, with the air of one determined upon vicariously breaking fast for the entire household. But Mandy had saved back in the frying-pan some extra bits for the young stranger.

An hour passed.

"Guess the blamed little rooster air a-goin'

ter snooze all day. Mebbe I'd better wake 'im," Hodson at last said, and went to the little bedroom. He tapped on the door, but got no response. Then he pounded heavily and called out:

"Hullo, Dave!"

Silence followed. He turned and glared at Mrs. Hodson, then at Mandy.

"The blamed little rooster!" he muttered, flinging open the door. For many seconds he stood peering into the room. Presently he clutched the door-post to steady himself, then he reeled round, and his face grew white.

"Dave er gone!" he gasped. "Dave er gone! Lord, Sarah, he air gone ag'in!"

Almost involuntarily Mandy went to the bedroom door and confirmed her father's assertion. Mrs. Hodson was quiet. The whole house was quiet. Indeed, there seemed to have fallen a perfect hush over the valley and the mountains.

Riley Hodson soon rallied. He sprang to his feet like a tiger.

"Mandy," he stormed, "go tell Jording ter bridle an' saddle the mule, quick!"

Mandy went at his command, as if blown by his breath. In a few minutes she returned, white as a ghost, and gasped:

"Jord er gone!"

"What! How! Gone! Jording!"

"He air gone," Mandy repeated, holding out a two-dollar "greenback" bill in one hand and a piece of writing-paper in the other. "I got these yere off'n Jord's table."

With great difficulty and in a breathless way, she read aloud what was hastily scrawled on the paper:

"MR. HODSON.

"Dear Sir: You are greatly mistaken; I am not your son. I never saw you in my life before yesterday. Your wife and daughter are both well aware of your curious illusion. Jordan, whom I take with me to freedom, knows that I am not your lost son. In fact, I am,

Very respectfully yours,

DAVID D'ANTINAC.

"P. S. A letter to me will reach me if directed in care of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, D. C. I inclose two dollars to pay for the trouble I have given you."

Hodson caught his mule, bridled it and saddled it, and rode away up the zigzag mountain trail in pursuit of the fugitives; but he did not catch them. At nightfall he returned in a somber mood, with a look of dry despair in his eyes. For a long while he did not speak; but at length, when his wife came and sat down close beside him, he muttered:

"Wer' hit Dave, Sarah?"

"Hit wer' not," she answered; "Dave never hed no mole onter 'is chin."

Maurice Thompson.

THE BOSTONIANS.*

BY HENRY JAMES,

Author of "Portrait of a Lady," "Daisy Miller," "Lady Barberina," etc.

VI.

"Oh, thank you," said Miss Birdseye; "I shouldn't like to lose it; it was given me by Mirandola!" He had been one of her refugees in the old time, when two or three of her friends, acquainted with the limits of his resources, wondered how he had come into possession of the trinket. She had been diverted again, after her greeting with Doctor and Mrs. Tarrant, by stopping to introduce the tall, dark young man whom Miss Chancellor had brought with her to Doctor Prance. She had become conscious of his somewhat somber figure, uplifted against the wall, near the door; he was leaning there in solitude, unacquainted with opportunities which Miss Birdseye felt to be, collectively, of value, and which were really, of course, what strangers came to Boston for. It did not occur to her to ask herself why Miss Chancellor didn't talk to him, since she had brought him; Miss Birdseye was incapable of a speculation of this kind. Olive, in fact, had remained vividly conscious of her kinsman's isolation until the moment when Mrs. Farrinder lifted her, with a word, to a higher plane. She watched him across the room; she saw that he might be bored. But she proposed to herself not to mind that; she had asked him, after all, not to come. Then he was no worse off than others; he was only waiting, like the rest; and before they left she would introduce him to Mrs. Farrinder. She might tell that lady who he was first; it was not every one that would care to know a person who had borne such a part in the Southern disloyalty. It came over our young lady that when she sought the acquaintance of her distant kinsman she had indeed done a more complicated thing than she suspected. The sudden uneasiness that he flung over her in the carriage had not left her, though she felt it less now she was with others, and especially that she was close to Mrs. Farrinder, who was such a fountain of strength. At any rate, if he was bored, he could speak to some one; there were excellent people near him, even if they *were* ardent reformers. He could speak to that pretty girl who had just come in—the one with red hair—if he liked;

Southerners were supposed to be so chivalrous!

Miss Birdseye reasoned much less, and didn't offer to introduce him to Verena Tarrant, who was apparently being presented by her parents to a group of friends at the other end of the room. It came back to Miss Birdseye, in this connection, that, sure enough, Verena had been away for a long time—for two or three years; had been on a visit to friends in the West, and would therefore naturally be a stranger to most of the Boston circle. Doctor Prance was looking at her—at Miss Birdseye—with little, sharp, fixed pupils; and the good lady wondered whether she were angry at having been induced to come up. She had a general impression that when genius was original its temper was high; and all this would be the case with Doctor Prance. She wanted to say to her that she could go down again if she liked; but even to Miss Birdseye's unsophisticated mind this scarcely appeared, as regards a guest, an adequate formula of dismissal. She tried to bring the young Southerner out; she said to him that she presumed they would have some entertainment soon—Mrs. Farrinder could be interesting when she tried! And then she bethought herself to introduce him to Doctor Prance; it might serve as a reason for having brought her up. Moreover, it would do her good to break up her work now and then; she pursued her medical studies far into the night, and Miss Birdseye, who was nothing of a sleeper (Mary Prance, precisely, had wanted to treat her for it), had heard her, in the stillness of the small hours, with her open windows (she had fresh air on the brain), sharpening instruments (it was Miss Birdseye's mild belief that she dissected) in a little physiological laboratory which she had set up in her back room, the room which, if she hadn't been a doctor, might have been her "chamber," and perhaps was, even with the dissecting, Miss Birdseye didn't know! She explained her young friends to each other, a trifle incoherently, perhaps, and then went to stir up Mrs. Farrinder.

Basil Ransom had already noticed Doctor Prance; he had not been at all bored, and

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