

human voices. The leader turns away to meet the inquiring face of the first violin.

"Did you hear it?"

"What, Herr Leader?"

"Did you hear that contralto, the one voice in the multitude?"

"No, Herr Leader. You are unwell, Herr Leader."

"Yes, I am heart sick—I have lost it—that voice is gone. *Ach Gott*, didst Thou send an angel to mock me?"

She and her husband went out into the crowded streets. Their holiday was over. They went to their train, and to the new home in the village, where the echoes of the great stage world came but faintly and thrilled them not. She felt a strange glow of triumph, as though this intoning of her mission of melody, this sounding her note of freedom, had fulfilled her destiny.

Radiant in her own happiness, she went to his humble home, where that one voice of all the multitude became the treasure of a fireside; where little souls, listening at her knee, learned from its loving cadences the way to eternity.

Joseph Blethen.

The Cruise of the Fleet.

WHEN the Fust Colorado Volunteer Ranger cavalry, of which I was sergeant major, was ordered into southern Texas, the general commandin' the department told our colonel to organize a naval force on the lower Rio Grande. It was to help the land forces circumvent a rebel fort our troops had been poundin' at for nigh a month. The fort had a strong position on a bend of the river, and as its south and east sides was protected by water, and we couldn't put any guns on the Mexican side of the river, the rebels had to defend only two quarters of the fort, and we couldn't take it. We had 'em blockaded so they was forced to live on the fish they ketched in the river and the cabbages that grewed in gardens near the fort, run by greasers; but we couldn't dislodge 'em jest the same.

So we was ordered to build a vessel, and what did old Colonel Hetherington do but appint Jonas G. Smalls captain of the vessel, when everybody in the regiment knew I was the man for the place! Smalls didn't know any more about river boatin' than a rabbit. He had been brought up in central New York, and had run an excursion steamer on them lakes there; and that's all he knew. I was from Mizzourah, and had run on the Mississippi, the old Big Muddy itself, the Osage, and all them rivers. I had river boatin' down to a fine point, but old Hetherington

was from New Hampshire, used to live in the White Mountains, and had more sense for lakes than rivers, seein' as rivers ain't much out there and the lakes are pretty considerable; so he appointed Jonas G. Smalls captain of the Admiral Decatur—that was our fleet.

It wasn't a steamboat, because we didn't have no machinery out there, and a good article of firewood was scarce, even if we had the machinery. The Admiral Decatur was run by four mules travelin' in a treadmill that furnished power for the big kick behind paddle wheel at the stern. She had some good lively mules, too, and, except for bein' unable to whistle, was about as good as most river steamboats. By twistin' the smallest mule's tail, you could generally fetch a bray that would let folks know yer was comin'. Another thing agin Smalls bein' commander of the fleet was his lack of knowledge about mules. Hetherington said he was a fine machinist, but that didn't help much with a boat run by mules, which same are not common in central New York, but are thick in Mizzourah.

The river was high when Smalls fust took command, and although he didn't know a slough from a main channel, or anything about heavin' a lead, he got along for a while, and old Hetherington kinder laughed at me, for he had heard I said I ought to command the fleet, and that Jonas G. Smalls would sink it before he had run it three weeks.

Two weeks after the Admiral Decatur was finished, orders come to attack the rebel fort, and Smalls was told to take the fleet down behind the fort at night, ready to bombard when the rest attacked the land side early in the mornin'.

"We won't have any trouble takin' the fort," said Hetherington. "Them fellers have been livin' on fish and cabbage so long they can't fight. 'An army is like a snake and moves on its belly,' said Napoleon, or Washington, or somebody; and in my opinion a truer military sayin' never was said. You can't put up a fust class fight without fust class food in your stomach. Beef and mutton are the stuff. Bull meat and mutton from a cross old ram put lots of metal into a soldier. That's my theory, and any book on the art of war will tell you I'm right. I'm goin' to give the boys a bull supper tonight with baked rattlesnake as a side dish, and if they don't chaw up them rebels tomorrow, I'll be mighty disappointed."

I hadn't any business with the fleet, but I sneaked around and hid aboard jest as it was startin', with the intention of showin'

I got carried off by mistake if they noticed my absence from the regiment; but in the confusion precedin' the attack on the fort, I didn't reckon they'd find out I was gone. The river had fallen a good deal, and with Smalls runnin' things I was sure I'd see a wreck before mornin', and perhaps I'd come in handy then.

The fireman fed up the mules a good snack of oats, and the Decatur went slippin' down the river at a brisk rate, mile after mile. I was beginnin' to think Smalls would get her through when I heard him call to a Mexican who was along:

"Say, Valencia, what's that over yonder? Is that the main channel, or what?"

I run out along with the crew, and see by the glare of the headlight, as it turned here and there, a very narrier sort of slough bendin' off to the north. Unlike most sloughs, it wasn't broader than the main channel, and it was runnin' swift, too, just as swift as the main channel; but I could tell from the marks familiar to any real river man which was the channel. This might be a new cut off of the river that in course of time would be the main channel, but anybody that knew anything wouldn't fool around in no new cut offs.

"I don't know what it is," said Valencia. "I don't remember ever seein' it."

"Well, I reckon it's the main channel," said Smalls, and he went on repeatin' a lot of the things I had told him about how to tell the channel, applyin' 'em to this new place, and makin' out like they was things he had always known. He shoved the wheel around, put the lights out again, and we turned into the cut off, or whatever it was. I thought we wasn't far from the fort, but I wasn't much expectin' to git there, not very much.

We hadn't been in the cut off fifteen minutes when we see it widened out a bit. Away ahead, as well as we could see in the dim light, it didn't seem to have any banks at all. "Tingaling" went the pilot's bell, and Smalls shouted down the speakin' tube for the engineer to slow up. He and the fireman tried to stop the mules some, but for some reason the critters wouldn't slow up, but worked harder and harder, sniffin' somethin' or other and gittin' eager and excited. Smalls turned on the headlight again, and sent its ray here and there over the water.

"Look yonder!" screamed the fust mate. "The light don't cast no reflection in the water on ahead a piece. There ain't no water there!"

"Back her, back her!" yelled Smalls frantic down the speakin' tube.

The engineer and fireman tried to make the mules back, but the critters wouldn't, and commenced gallopin' in the treadmill. In a minute we felt the boat touch ground, and the decks resounded with the trampin' of men runnin' with poles to push her off.

"*Valgamedios!*" shouted Valencia in the confusion. "We're in the San Ildefonso cabbage plantation, and we came in through the big irrigation ditch they open every Wednesday night. The mules smell the cabbages!"

Smalls tried to turn the boat around, for the mules wouldn't back, and the water was now spread over so much ground that there wasn't hardly any of it; but we had hardly got back into the main current of the ditch when somebody closed the gates at the river, and there wasn't any water at all.

The dawn was jest breakin', and we see we was on the land side of the fort and about three quarters of a mile from it. We jumped off the boat, sloped through the cabbage fields, and met our regiment comin', after we had gone three miles. Hetherington didn't wait to hear much about the disaster, but pushed on, hopin' to surprise the rebels. Imagine our feelin's when we was opened on by our own guns from the Admiral Decatur and see the rebels eatin' the mules—the first meat they'd had for a month!

Well, we didn't take the fort. Lord love you, friend, men fed on rattlesnakes and bull meat ain't no match for men that's been eatin' mule!

Old Hetherington was reprimanded by the general commandin' the department, and he was sore and mad. I said what I thought about it, and pointed out to the boys how I ought to have run the fleet instead of Smalls. Some mean cuss went and told Hetherington what I said, and he sent for me.

"Jasper," said he, "do I understand that you knew the expedition would end badly if Smalls commanded the fleet and would come out all right if you commanded it?"

"It looks like it. Seems as if things proved I knew it. I can run a river boat and Smalls can't."

"Jasper, it is the duty of every soldier to report all important knowledge they may possess about projected moves. You knew you could git the fleet through all right and didn't tell me so. You have neglected your duty. Take them chevrons off your sleeves. The orders reducing you to the ranks will be read at retreat."

Eustace Raoul La Ferronnays.

LITERARY CHAT

BALLADE OF THE ATHLETIC NOVELISTS.

Of old, in bidding ladies hail
 To ranks of story telling skill,
 The paragraphers, in detail,
 Told how each loved her domicile;
 Described her eager and athrill
 Concerning matters dietetic;
 She was most housewifely until
 The world became so much athletic.

Last spring fair Betty wrote a tale
 Of vegetation by a rill,
 Pauline a diatribe 'gainst ale,
 And Jane a novel volatile.
 The "book notes" all their hopes fulfil,
 And are most amiably prophetic,
 Yet this the chief truth they instill—
 That these new writers are athletic!

Miss Jones, of whose tremendous sale
 Her publishers make clamor shrill,
 Can track her moose and bag her quail—
 Her gun seems very versatile!
 Miss Smith swims like an aquatile
 In pauses of her work poetic;
 Miss Brown has climbed each Alpine hill—
 In short, they've all grown most athletic.

L'ENVOI.

Prince, were the vizier's daughter still
 Romancing to her king splenetic,
 Down each Arabian daily quill
 Would flow the news: "She's most
 athletic!"

A LIFE OF FORREST — Captain Mathes' biography of the famous Confederate cavalry commander.

The forthcoming memoirs of the Boer generals have been loudly heralded, but it will not be surprising if they prove to possess little permanent value, from either the literary or the military viewpoint. It is not at all likely that any of them will be as well worth reading as the recently published life of General Nathan B. Forrest by Captain Harvey Mathes.

Whatever the Boer commandants may accomplish with the pen, it is certain that their achievements in the field cannot be compared with those of the Confederate

cavalry leader. The disadvantages under which he fought were fully equal to theirs; the results he gained were much more substantial. For instance, when he frustrated Streight's attempt to strike at the rear of Bragg's position in Tennessee, in April, 1863, by capturing the Federal officer and his entire force, Forrest had with him less than half as many men as his prisoners, and his artillery was inferior to theirs. In February, 1864, when Sooy Smith invaded Mississippi with seven thousand men, Forrest with four thousand drove him back to Memphis.

In September of the same year Forrest moved upon Sherman's communications with about four thousand troopers. On the 24th he captured the post at Athens, Alabama, almost without firing a shot, by a ruse as "slim" as any of De Wet's. Extending his command around the Federal fortifications, which were held by fourteen hundred men, he sent in a demand for surrender to prevent useless bloodshed. Colonel Campbell, commanding the garrison, refused to yield without further evidence that his position was hopeless—which indeed it was by no means. Forrest let him ride along the Confederate lines, where he saw three or four thousand cavalry and about the same number of infantry. Considering such a force too strong for him, he surrendered, unaware that while he made the circuit Forrest had had most of his men make a lightning change from cavalry to infantry, or vice versa, and had showed them twice over.

That day Forrest captured not only the fortified post at Athens, with its guns and valuable stores, but also a regiment that came up to its assistance, and several blockhouses, with their garrisons. On the next day, September 25, he pushed along the railroad towards Nashville, and took another post, defended by a thousand Federals. He continued his daring raid for two weeks longer, capturing detachments, seizing stores, destroying bridges, and seriously dislocating the plans of the Union commanders. Half a dozen generals and thirty thousand men were in the field against him, but his rapid movements baffled pursuit, and on October 9 he recrossed the Tennessee into safety.

The most famous and most controverted