A HISTORY OF THE LIFE OF AMOS OWENS, THE NOTED BLOCKADER, OF CHERRY MOUNTAIN, N. C.

By

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PREFACE.

In offering this work to a reading and borrowing public, the Author does not deem it necessary to make an apology.

The characters are not creations of fancy, for Amos Owens at Cherry Mountain and Jerry Bowlin at his mountain home are much in evidence. Partly at the aged, infirm but still alive blockader, this work was undertaken, and partly at our own inclination.

He did not feel adequate to the task, and was handicapped by many difficulties. The hero of Cherry Mountain, being unlettered, has kept no records, and hence has to depend on a treacherous memory that is incident to over eighty years in the making of history.

We cherished no fond hope of setting the river on fire, and should such a conflagration occur, no one would be greater surprised than the Author.

Neither has it been the aim, as J. Proctor Knott of Kentucky would say, "to strain the blankets of veracity," but these characters are given as found during a sojourn of eighteen years near the scenes of their operations; while the incidents are partly obtained from old and reliable resident witnesses.

This work was not intended as a stricture or a series of strictures on the revenue service, nor as an apology for the maker of contraband whiskey.

Neither is it expected to adorn the Sunday School library, for the hero did not die young and a picture would here be out of place of a funeral scene with a youthful figure the central figure in the repose of death surrounded by weeping friends and relatives.

Nor yet is it expected that it be recommended in a course of theology, nor that the absent-minded philosopher will draw inspiration from its

pages.

The effort to glorify crime has been avoided, and nothing here is given to cause the youthful reader to desire a life of crime.

Nay, verily; but through all these pages runs the solemn warning: "The way of the transgressor is hard," and the effort has been made to preserve a chaste and simple style.

Instead of a bewildering array of dates and an intricate plot the effort has been made to remain near the soil, which is the place if one ever expects to get an enduring hold on the public.

With the passing of Amos Owens, the present condition of affairs and the mandates of society will soon relegate the blockader to the past—there a dim and fading monument of a semi-barbarous age.

The press and pulpit hurl their denunciations at this unholy traffic, and the stately stepping of education brought about by modest, humble but none the less powerful school master who is now afoot and here to stay, will beat back many of the hordes of intemperance and other powerful agencies of darkness.

In the modest hope that no one will be worse by the perusal, but that all may be entertained if not edified, and that our next bow will be hailed with rapture, we trust this infant industry to the tender mercies of a fun loving public.

CORN CRACKER.

M. L. WHITE.

Polkville, N. C., Cleveland Co., Aug. 22, 1901.

Caption of Chapters.

CHAPTER I.

Youth of a famous maker of contraband whiskey. Parentage, and early school days. His experience at musters and record as a hunter, horseman and fighter.

CHAPTER II.

He begins his career as a distiller, and later, buys "Cherry Mountain"—now celebrated in song and story. His marriage briefly noted. Mention of Jesse R. DePriest, a quaint character of this mountain. Amos becomes a fine farmer.

He enlists as a Southern volunteer. Is a sharp shooter at Petersburg. Is at the "blow up." His experience with dropsy. Prison life, and his tobacco deal. Has typhoid fever coming home. Health restored by working hard all night at a distillery.

CHAPTER III.

Resists the revenue tax. "Bread the staff of life and whiskey life itself," saith he, backed by the sentiment of his neighbors. The "red-legged grass hopper" becomes a burden. The revenue officers given this sobriquet by ex-Governor and then Senator Vance. The famous black-heart cherry region. Part of "The Switzerland of America." Cherry bounce invented.

CHAPTER IV.

His first trial for selling "blockade," or moonshine whiskey. "Beats the bond" by masquerading, and sells forty gallons at the trial. Is a capitalist in disguise, and is the pride and envy of his

less proud companions.

CHAPTER V.

Again is brought to trial. Sketch of "Rev." Geo. Deck, of color, who alternately preaches and operates a wild cat distillery. Passing notice of "Cooney" Hunnicutt, a martyr of the whipping post. Except a predeliction to lie, cheat and steal; Honeycutt is an honest man. Col. Whangdoodle Tessiner, also a witness. His absent-mindedness, Amos comes clear, and again sells forty gallons.

CHAPTER VI.

Rise of "Invisible Empire," or "Ku Klux Klan." Troubles of "Reconstruction." Negroes and their leaders cause a clash. "The Union Leagues." The grotesque disguises and the terror of the superstitious negroes. Amos is a leader.

Dectruction of James Justice's printing plant and whipping of Aaron Biggerstaff. Martial law prevails, and Amos Owens and others arrested. Devotion of our hero. Randolph Shotwell, Adolphus DePriest, Plato Durham and others. The above named are sentenced to a term of six years at Sing Sing, Albany, New York, and all placed in durance vile, except Plato Durham. While awaiting trial, Amos sells whiskey at Rutherfordton and Marion, N. C. Plato Durham gets Amos pardoned at end of two years, and fine of $5,500 remitted.

CHAPTER VII.

Is a free man once more, but finds that the red-legged grass-hopper has again devoured his substance. Goes gunning; and lands in jail. Meets "Aunt Polly Price," a Rutherford youngster of 99 who has kept his bureau—rescuing the same from the festive grasshopper.

CHAPTER VIII.

Is haled before Judge Dick at Asheville. The dignified reprimand of "his honor," and Amos quotes the language of the governor of North Carolina to the governor of South Carolina. Again sent to Sing Sing. "Kill the fatted prodigal, for the calf has got back." "One year for rest and refreshments." "The place sought the man and not the man the place."

CHAPTER IX.

Improves his resort, or "earth," two stills destroyed, Che.ry Mountain is the Mecca of convivial spirits, and they come from everywhere. The varied festivities, dancing, flying jennies, the prize ring. The pious young man from Gastonia slays a man with an iron stirrup.

CHAPTER X.

The "gander-pulling" the dog and chicken fights, and deeds of mortal combat. Burt Franklin—an ancient warrior, and a mighty "gander puller" in the earth. Wanted to enlist in '98 to "Remember the Maine."

CHAPTER XI.

The duel between two colored Lotharios, "All on account of Eliza," Jack Badniss, colored, the victor, J. Dudley Bomar "never came back." The victor captures the one-eyed widow of 47, and her $40. Is now living in splendor on Cherry Mountain.

CHAPTER XII.

Is Amos Owens black as painted? He continues to still and sell brandy, whiskey and bounce, in spite of Uncle Sam and the "locusts." He is caught in South Carolina and imprisoned one

year. Heroic defense of Sheriff Glenn from the assault of three negroes. Become the Joseph of the prison. The bees swarm and Amos hives them. They fight "like the colored troops"—nobly, but the old blockader captures them and sings; "God Save the Queen."

CHAPTER XIII.

He improves Cherry Mountain—resolves to build a tower or observatory in interest of service. Was arrested, and the project failed.

CHAPTER XIV.

Again is captured, and is tried before Judge Dick, sent again to Sing Sing where his reception is characteristic. Amos claims he is there to take a "post-graduate course."

CHAPTER XV.

Another blockader comes on the stage—a bold bad man who shoots to kill. Terrorizes North and South Carolina. A marshall and blockader by turns. Is outlawed and traced to his lair. Desperate fight with captors, in which he is seriously shot and wounded. Recovers and is exiled by court.

CHAPTER XVI.

Another doing blockader who has reformed and has symptoms of engaging in ministry. After a desperate fight with his brother-in-law leaves the territory. Author, while not a lawyer, defends him at a Cherry Mountain temple of justice. All wept but the client, the "lawyer," and the mutes thereof. Lives an exemplary life now, and would preach, but can't read.

CHAPTER XVII.

The last trial of Amos Owens. By kindness

and an exhortation, Judge Dick wins a promise of reform. Tearful, and later, a jubilant scene in the court room. "Go your way and sin no more."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Mineral wealth, forestry, and grand and enchanting view of "The Land of the Sky" from Cherry Mountain. Gold, silver, lead, mica and monazite found here. What is, "Taxation without representation?"

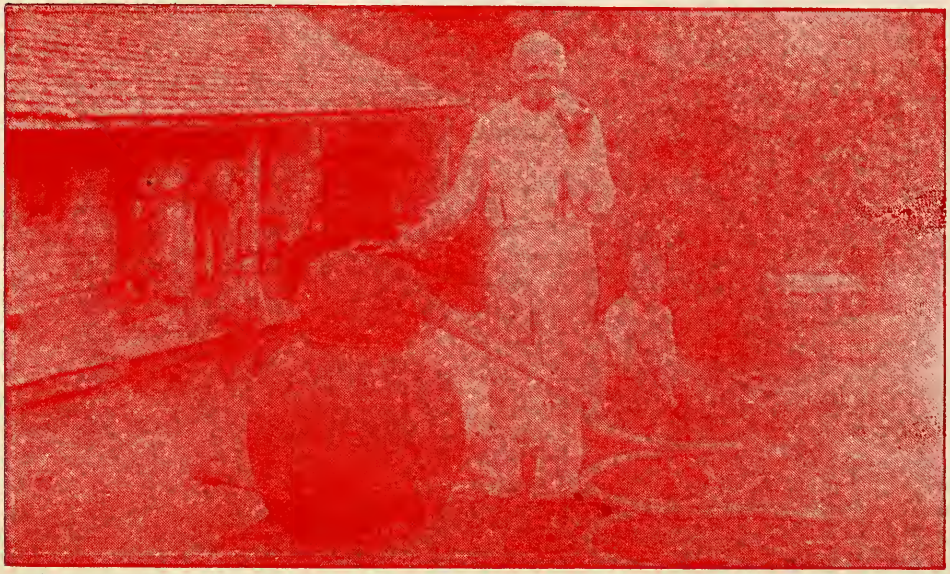
CHAPTER XIX.

Work written by a man who never saw inside a moonshine distillery. The work is attested by good and living witnesses. No drawing on imaginations for buccaneers, pirates or bandits. No incarcerated maidens who are sought out by spider-legged dudes who wear tin shields and carry dark lanterns and swamp angel pistols.

CHAPTER XX.

No romance worth mentioning, is on record as to his courtship and marriage. The old man worming and suckering tobacco and the girl peeling walnuts. Married by a justice who took a quart and a coonskin. "Took an observation," over the bottle. Went to a house three stories long and one story high. Both still there. Squatter Sovereignty. Jerry Bowlin as hard to dislodge as Amos is to stop from stilling. The Syndicate, backed by the majority of the law, tries to dislodge him. The house comes down, but Phoenix-like, it rises again. Jerry testifies on Sunday occasions, that lightning in the north is a "shore" sign of rain. Given over to his devices, he still digs, sand, peels tan bark, hunts squirrels and has frequent "shindigs."

AMOS OWENS.



Amos Owens' Residence, Still and Grand Child.

A History of the Life

Of Amos Owens.

The saying has become trite, that truth is stranger than fiction.

The realms of the latter abound in scenes of blood and thunder, where pirates, indians, counterfeiters, cow-boys and others are the central figures, but another class exists in the mountain regions of Kentucky, Tennesee, North Carolina, Virginia and Georgia, that a true recital of their adventures, made of life, together with their fierce conflicts with the minions of the law known as deputy marshals, would be more thrilling than any recital of deeds of daring or shrewd cunning that adorn the realms of romance.

While these latter day Ishmaelites are not always depraved by nature, their peculiar calling forces them to often become outlaws, and some of them, outside of a deep-seated hatred of the "revenuers," as they are called in the vernacular of the moonshiner, and a deep-seated defiance of the "Government" are good neighbors, and in all other respects, honest men, the noblest work of God.

In their isolated environments, they can raise little but corn, and being remote from railroads or commercial centres, the bread and butter problem requires that they make all they can of this cereal.

Most of them are illiterate, and, therefore unprogressive. The "mixed team" of a mule and ox,

yea, sometimes the mule and milk cow, the tar-axle wagon, with the obsolete pattern of plow that flourished in the days of Andrew Jackson, are their equipment to wrest a living from the bosom of mother earth.

While corn is worth from twenty five to fifty cts. per bushel, and perhaps a two days drive from their homes to a town where their quaint costumes and grotesque teams provoke derision, and where, after trying the market they are told they will have to "take in trade" something they do not want, they resolve to convert the same into whiskey—a commodity that the depraved appetites of mankind makes a "legal tender." They, like all other ignorant people, live in the "good old days" when whiskey was untaxed.

For their infraction of the revenue laws they have been hunted like wild beasts and ferocious bandits, and the fierce sanguinary encounters between them and the officers of the government, when fairly written, would be a series of thrilling recitals. While "Redmond, the Outlaw," a noted moonshiner of this State, has been the hero of romance, and has contributed to recent history as an avenger of blood for the "blockaders" or makers of contraband whiskey as called in this state; a greater than Redmond is here. While the deeds of Redmond and his henchmen rivalled the reign of terror in Robeson, Richmond and Cumberland counties of North Carolina which were perpetrated by Henry Berry and Steve Lowery, Croaton bandits descended from John White's last colony; the remarkable adventures of Amos Owens, who is now enthroned on Cherry Mountain, causes all the deeds of the other moonshining ilk to pale into insignificance. This remarkable man was born over eighty years since on Sandy Run, in Rutherford County, North Carolina. His father was a ne'er do well, and would

fill the literary character of the present known as the "cheerful idiot." The grandfather of Amos was also a native Tar-heel, and was a patriot in the Revolution.

He was at King's Mountain where the dashing and intrepid Col. Ferguson made the ranting boast that "God Almighey could not dislodge him." But the deadly marksmen of the McDowell contingent, among whom was the Amos Owens for whom the subject of this sketch was named, with their deadly hair triggered rifles hurled the minions of King George from this eminence celebrated in song and story. Ferguson was slain, and in five miles of the present castle of Amos Owens, about twenty tories were hung, and the site of the famous "gallows oak" is still pointed out to the passer-by.

Except a rugged well knit frame, a constitution like boarding-house butter, digestion like the bowels of a threshing machine, there was nothing specially unbearable about the youth of Amos Owens. He was strong, active, an unerring shot, and, while peaceable, would fight desperately when aroused.

Good markmanship, and athletic sports were common with all young men and boys of that period, and all grievances were adjusted by fistic encounters. Amos is unlettered, having never attended school but a few days. His instructor was a queer Irishman known as "Old man O'Neil." The principal educational helps used in this temple of knowledge were harness tugs and barrel staves, and the play time diversions were bull-pen and dog-fighting. Amos at this age showed aversion to restraint, and a few applications of the harness tug caused him to "side-track" on the road to learning.

At nine years of age he was hired out, and was a "hewer of wood and a drawer of water" till he

attained the age of twenty three.

Among his neighbors were some wealthy gentlemen, who had a great passion for deer hunting and fox-chasing. These men were respectively: Dr. James Cabaniss, John Lattimore, Joe Lattimore, D. D. Lattimore, William Elliott and Col. A. J. Elliott.

Except D. D. Lattimore, aged 82, and the hero of this story, all have passed over the river—J. C. Lattimore dying two years since at the age of 84. Amos was a fine rider, with the woodcraft and hunting instinct of the red man of the forest, and was, therefore, a welcome acquisition to any hunting party. He, also, became a noted breaker of horses, and as such was in great demand.

Nothing eventful occured during this period except his marriage to a Miss Sweezy, a near neighbor, who still lives, aged 82. He took great delight in attending the military "musters" of this region, which did more to keep up the martial spirit in actual pugilistic encounters, than to develop a knowledge of military tactics. Men for real or fancied grievances stripped to the waist and fought in a ring, sometimes as high as twenty such encounters taking place in one day at a muster. In these encounters Amos was a frequent participant, and was never known to strike his colors. At the shooting matches he became so expert, that he was ruled out of matches for beef. The only condition on which he was allowed to compete, was to shoot for the "lead" which he almost invariably won.

CHAPTER II.

In 1845 he bought 100 acres of land from Thomas Calton near Cherry Mountain. He planted a crop, but this was a season of universal drought. All old people speak of the "dry year of 45."

In '46 he began his career as a distiller, little

dreaming this career was to make him famous. He had no tax to pay, and being a good distiller, he made money. Six years later, he bought the historic Cherry Mountain, or rather 100 acres from Jesse R. DePriest.

The latter was a celebrity, who figured as a famous fighter, and was never downed in telling of a more remarkable experience than any other man he ever met, be he a stranger or home-talent. As a stage driver, a fighter, or a ladies man, he had the call over anything quick or dead he ever met or read about.

Later, Amos bought 140 acres from William DePriest, the father of the celebrated Jesse. Nobody wondered at the DePriests' for selling this property, but all marvelled at Amos for making the purchase. Jesse DePriest used to relate that every crow that flew over Cherry Mountain had a canteen of water and a haversack of rations strapped to his person.

But Amos caused the desert to blossom as the rose.

He made fine corn and oats, and his yield of wheat was about 150 bushels every season. Neither was he unmindful of the mountain "legal tender." He kept his still running, and his coffers bulged with filthy lucre.

When the war of '61 opened, he cast his fortunes with the South, and enlisted as a volunteer in the company made up by Capt. H. D. Lee, afterwards promoted to major. His regiment was the 16th N. C., and he was in the Valley Mountain region of Virginia and also at Manassas. At Wolf Run, after serving twelve months, was discharged, the army surgeons saying he had an incurable case of dropsey. He was sent home, and his neighbors thinking dropsey was "ketching," shunned him as they would the roving pestilence.

He stayed at home twelve months and entirely

recovered. His martial spirit chafed at inaction, and he paid his own transportation to Salisbury, N. C., where he enrolled in the 56th N. C. regiment, in company under Capt. J. B. Harrill. He wae detailed to hunt deserters, and to this line of service was admirably adapted.

Later, he was in the seige of Petersburg as a sharp-shooter. It is related that he always fired after a careful aim, and as he took his smoking rifle from his face, would say: "And may the Lord have mercy on the soul of that blue-coat."

At the celebrated "blow up" a South Carolina regiment was over the mine, and they were annihilated by the explosion. The regiment of Amos was near, and when the smoke lifted from the "crater," a division of colored troops were pushed into the yawning chasm by the federals. This was the most terrible scene of carnage afforded by that bloody war. The Southern troops fired one volley, and gave them the bayonet. Every negro in this charge perished, and Amos was a participant in the sanguinary scene. He says no more revolting sight was ever witnessed in this lost and ruined world.

As a soldier Amos was brave and remarkably vigilant. He seemed to love battle for battle's sake, and although "a high private in the rear rank," frequently cursed his comrades for shooting up in the trees when the Yankees were just as close to the ground as they could git."

He was captured at Dinwiddie, and carried as a prisoner to Point Lookout. Here he suffered the privations incident to prison life, but with his characteristic buoyancy of spirits, resolved te make the best of the situation.

He tried to laugh and grow fat, but learned that all laughter and no food would not add to his corporacity. Always a shrewd trader he considered one dollar in the hand, when a man was

starving, worth five in the bush at his Cherry Mountain home. He found a money changer in the temple, who was a shining light of philanthropy. This gentleman, touched by the round unvarnished tale of woe, which Amos did unfold, generously tendered Amos one dollar in "green back" in consideration of a note bearing legal interest for five dollars in gold. With this dollar, Amos made a deal with the shylock who posed as Sutler, and got all the plug tobacco purchasable for one hundred cents. This he cut into "chaws" and did not make them too large. He then became a retailer of a concoction made of fodder, cabbage and lamp black, but veneered with tobacco.

Amos, among his other accomplishments had never cultivated the habit of using the weed. For one "chaw" he exacted a "tin" of soup and if some rash speculator wanted two "chaws" he parted company with a rasher of bacon. Amos said on one side it was liberality and starvation, while on the other was extorsion and high living. He chose the latter, and in the experience and observation of this corn-fed philosopher who how holds the pen, such a man as Amos who sell chews of tabacco at ten prices are wiser in their generation than the children of light who open the brand of liberality.

In three months he was paroled, and an arrival at terminus of railroad, 60 miles from home, was stricken with typhoid fever. Here he was, out of money, out of tobacco, and among strangers. But ever fertile in resources, he got home, and for twenty-eight days the watchers sat in vigil at his bedside, and Dr. Phillip Carson, a fine physician said: "He is bound to die." But his grim willpower fought back the enemy, and in three months an amaciated skeleton with little left of Amos Owens, but his fierce black eyes and mar-

tial spirit said he was going to his brandy distillery. Dr. Carson was present and expostulated. He declared if Amos rode that horse to the distillery all the doctors in the State could not keep him out of perdition.

The reply of Amos was characteristic. He said; "Doctor you say if I go I'll be damned, and I say if I don't go I'll be damned." By that time a horse was brought around, that nobody but Amos dared ride at any time.

The audacious patient mounted him and rode to the distillery, and then worked hard all night. From that time his recovery was rapid, and he was soon the picture of rugged health.

CHAPTER III.

By this time a heavy tax was inposed on all whisky and brandy, but Amos registered a blood red oath that this tax he'd never pay.

He reverently believed that while bread was the staff of life whiskey was life itself. That it was the chief end of man to raise enough corn to make whiskey, and convert the remainder into bread. He had fought the government, been imprisoned by the government, been starved by the government, and he didn't propose to divide profits of his whiskey business with the government.

The still was his, the corn was his, the land was his, and the raiders of Kirk and Holden had looted his property. Besides, the government had freed the only negro he had, and he'd see them about getting tax.

Truth to tell, nearly all the people in the south were in sympathy with such men as Amos. While many of them were opposed on general principles to the manufacture and sale of whiskey, the espionage of the federal revenue officers was odious.

Amos owned Cherry Mountain which was 3000

feet above the level of the sea. From here was a most enchanting view of the mountain scenery that is called the "Switzerland of America," and from here could be seen Shelby, Rutherfordton, King's Mountain, with a view of the mountains of Georgia, Virginia and Tennessee. Here could be breathed the pure air of heaven, and here as pure limpid water as ever gurgled from the bosom of mother earth rippled down the delves of the mountains. Here grew the famous cherry trees, some three feet in diameter, and are found nowhere else; that yielded every June a crop of fruit remarkable for its size and flavor. Here was found the ideal honey producing flavors of poplar, chestnut and sourwood, and here was the ideal range for the cattle of a thousand hills. The home of the cow, the honey-bee, pure water and invigorating mountain air, and not excelled on earth for the fruit tree and the vine. Amos said here would he build a castle like the baron of feudal times, and here should be the land of milk and honey, peach and honey, and the abiding place of cherry bounce. No man had ever before tried to adorn and beautify Cherry Mountain, nor had it ever occurred to anybody to offer to a convivial public this drink now celebrated in song and story.

The preparation made and warranted by Amos Owens is a compound of 44 blue steel whiskey, honey and cherry juice. Later on, will deal more minutely with cherry bounce, but at this period Amos built a large cattle-like building and offered to a pubiic this elixir.

CHAPTER IV.

The powers that be had issued the fiat that all whiskey and brandy must be tax paid, or there would be fines, imprisonment and confiscation.

Amos had said he would make what whiskey and brandy he pleased; and tendered the government the same pious message issued by the late lamented Vanderbilt to the public.

In those days, the revenue officers were often adventurers of the most unscrupulous character. The inimitable Zeb Vance, ex-governor and senator, of North Carolina, satirically called them "red-legged grasshoppers." As Amos continued to do business at the old stand regardless of the government and the nuisance thereof, two officers came up one day and placed him under arrest, and otherwise harassed him, till the red-legged grass-hopper became a burden. They were satisfied that he'd go if he promised, and as he made no resistance they took his recognizance to appear at Asheville, N C.

He loaded up a barrel of "blockade" or moonshine whiskey, and told one of his henchmen to come on three days after to Asheville. The fellow was shrewd and loaded a barrel of brandy into a wagon, and filled up with sweet potatoes and chestnuts.

Amos went on afoot, and his masquerading would have done credit to "Old Sleuth" of dime novel creation. He put on a pair of slick copperas breeches, a hat that like the "Niobe of nations," was "crownless and childless," the same having been used as a "holder," in smoothing iron and parlance. For two years it had been used to lift hot things around the distillery. His shoes were red stogas and his suspenders were leather. Above Rutherfordton he overtook two others who were likewise making a pilgrimage to Asheville on the same errand. Our hero tried to stimulate the appearance of an inspired idiot, while his companions tried to masquerade as high-rollers. They looked with scorn on the vile-looking walking delegate, and seemed ashamed of his

company. When they arrived, all hands were placed on trial, and Amos employed a lawyer for all three. When the hat circulated the two haughty high-rollers had depleted exchequers, but Amos had a very plethoric roll. When the dudish blockaders saw this, they imagined him a capitalist in disguise, and treated him with marked consideration. All were acquitted and Amos went out to sell his load of "taters" that had just arrived. It was soon evident that "taters" were in great demand, all the bar-rooms, hotels, and many private families, being "just out."

Amos went home in his wagon, having sold 20 bushels and 40 gallons of "taters," and Cherry Mountain was again a place where the still-worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.

CHAPTER V.

In a few months he had another visitation of red-legged grasshoppers. This time he was arraigned before 'Squire Wilson of Rutherfordton. The witnesses against him were the Rev. George Deck of color, Cooney Honeycutt, and Col. Whangdoodle Tessiner, known generally by the euphonious cognomen of "Rosineer," (roasting ear.)

The Reverend Deck was a maker and retailer of wild cat whiskey, and, in his own language, had heard a very audible and peremptory call to work in "de Laud's tanyard." Like most of his race, he was an artist on the barjoseph; and wore a very ancient "derby" and a James Swinger coat of obselete pattern. In the spring and winter he distilled whiskey, and when the sultry dog days drew nigh apace, he blossomed out as an evangelist and called sinners to repentance. His favorite text was: "It is easier for a needle to go through the eye of a camel than for a rich man to see the Kingdom of Gaud." His hearers were

invariably negroes who daily wrestled with the problem as to how buckle and tongue could be made to meet, but he addressed them as though all were capitalists, and painted in lurid colors the final woe of the bloated-bond-holder. He always took up a collection, and left them as penniless as though he was a professor of "thimble-rig."

On one occasion he had an appointment for himself to preach, and a confederate to sell some of his wild-cat whiskey at the same appointment. At the evening service many of his auditors came in with very suspicious bottles of the mother-hubbard variety sticking out their pockets.

The Rev. Deck looked at them in solemn gravity and expatiated thusly; "De gates of heben am berry narer men an' bredren, an' you'll do well to squeeze frough your self; let alone a great bottle swingin to Ye, Come right on an' let us offer dem as a sacrifice to the Laud." When the time came for the night service, it is related that Bro. Deck was too drunk to brush a horse-fly from the end of his nose.

Mr. Honeycutt was conversant with the whipping post, having been there interviewd for letting a hog follow him home and putting the same in a pork-barrel, also, for looting his grandma's spee's, and for taking a "pea-fowl" fly-brush at Christmas time. He, however, interpolated every expression with: "God knows I'm an honest man,"

Col. Whangdoodle Tessineer was noted for being rather absent-minded. When hogs ran out in the range, nearly all owners had ear-marks. His ear mark was "two smoothcrops." That obliterated all other marks, and he frequently practiced this in moments of absent-mindedness.

Amos knew the layout and defended his own case. The roars of laughter he evoked caused the

whole thing to develop into a roaring farce, and he was acquitted.

Ever after this episode Tessiner has been called "Shacknorty," and Honeycutt, "Greasy Jim." Both have since left these regions, and Deck is alternately preaching and stilling.

CHAPTER VI.

We now approach a time momentous in the history of North Carolina, and eventful in the career of Amos Owens. So far he had outwitted the red-legged grasshopper except in two instances, and his court experience was but amusement. When the war closed and the Southern Slave became a citizen and later, was, in the language of Bill Nye, "clothed with the divine right of suffrage," discordant elements clashed. However patriotic may have been the motives of the federal administration, the work of "re-construction" was as the sowing of dragon's teeth.

The leading white people of the South were indignant at seeing their former slaves their political equals, and a season of rapine, blood-shed and anarchy ensued.

The negroes, intoxicated with the boon of freedom, and instigated by unscrupulous politicians, became insolent. While no people in their condition had ever been so loyal to the women and children while the men of the South were battling to forge their fetters, a feeling of unrest and distrust had now settled on both races. By some strange frenzy or hallucination, many of the freed slaves that were styled by General Butler, "contraband of war," were arrayed against the kind old master and his family, whom, during the struggle when the negro's destiny hung in the b[illegible]ce, they would have died to maintain and protect.

On the side of the administration were organized Union Leagues, and, with many of the negroes, liberty degenerated into license.

The southern soldier had accepted the fortunes of war in the generous terms of surrender at Appomattox, and while he went to a desolated home, and fields that grim war had ravaged he felt that he could again take up the burden of life. But when he saw the slave of yesterday the intolerant master of to-day, it was too much for the proud Cavalier. No, doubt, both sides made mistakes, but certain it is that, in retaliation, was organized the "Kuklux Klan," The intention of this was to put in subjection the negroes, and to hold their unscrupulous white leaders in abeyance.

By subjection is not of course, meant to again impose the shackles of slavery, but to bridle their domineering and lustful spirit. The Kuklux were a secret and oath bound organization, that rode about at night in grotesque disguise. This struck terror to the hearts of the superstitious negroes, for their ghostly array and the phantom like tread of their muffled horses made the negro believe they were the ghostly avengers of the south from the battle-fields of the southern slain. While no mob violence is to be commended, their visitations were said, at first, to have a salutary effect. The organization was at first controlled by men of coolness and discretion, who would tolerate no excesses. But a lawless and vicious element crept in, who had personal scores to settle.

Many offenders were whipped, some banished, and others even slain. Early in the action, Amos Owens became a member, and his energy, persistence and courage, made him a leading spirit.

In the first place he had no love for a government that would allow a red-legged grass-hopper prey upon him, and in the next he didn't like to see "Cuffey" in the saddle. It is said that every

white "red string" that felt the rod of the avenger could see the fine Italian hand of this muscular Kuklux, and every negro that felt the stinging lark thought if it were not some phantom cavalier from Gettysburg it must be Amos.

At length James Justice, a Republican editor, of Rutherfordton, was seized, treated with indignity and his press and fixtures destroyed.

On the same night, Aaron Biggerstaff a noted and very unpopular "red-string," as the republicans were called, was given a very severe castigation. Soldiers and deputy marshalls were sent to the scene of disturbance, and soon the counties of Cleveland and Rutherford swarmed with men whose mission was to uphold the majesty of the law. On information of Aaron Biggerstaff warrants were sworn out against Amos as a participant in the whipping of himself, and as a perpetrator in the destruction of the printing office and the rough treatment of Editor Justice. Many fled the State, some turned State's evidence, but Amos Owens, Plato Durham, Randolph Shotwell, Adolphus DePriest, etc., stood their ground like stern old Romans.

Five soldiers and three marshalls came for Amos, and found him making malt. He went to Rutherfordton jail where he was incarcerated two weeks. Before he had been there three days his trusty potato peddler was on hand, and Amos was enabled, by the kindness of his captors, to sell 20 more bushels and 40 gallons of "taters."

He got a change of venue to Marion, N. C., and in two days his bewhiskered confederate was on deck with more "taters." Like Rutherfordton, the market was unusually active that day, and with the alleged eagle-eyed marshalls at his heels, he sold out "20 bushels and 40 gallons."

He and the others were taken thence to the capital City, Raleigh, and there they were ar-

raigned before Judge Baird. Many turned State's evidence here, or "puked" as it was called by the the ones who stood the ordeal. Every overture was made to induce Amos Owens, Randolph Shotwell, Adolphus DePriest and Plato Durham to betray their comrades, but all such propositions were met with indignant scorn. When the evidence was taken the sentence was, "six years in Sing Sing at hard labor, and a fine of $5500 each."

Adolphus DePriest was turned out to die before his sentence expired and died in a few weeks after reaching home. Randolph Shotwell served part of his sentence and died soon after, but is venerated as a true and great man, and the memory of Adolphus DePriest is also venerated. Plato Durham was released, and threw his whole powerful influence into the scale for his unfortunate comrades. He went to Washington City and had an interview with the president. By his courage, zeal and eloquence, he caused the sphinx-like hero of Appomattox to sign the order for the release of Amos Owens.

CHAPTER VII.

At the end of two years Amos was again on the soil of Cherry Mountain, and felt like Mr. Greggor on his native heath. But again had the red-legged grasshopper become a burden. In his absence the festive grass-hoppers had carried away three horses, three wagons, several cows, his bureau, beds, and even his grindstone. Three strong petitions had been sent up for his pardon, but the "grass-hoppers" whom Amos hated as veritable locusts from the bottomless pit, had sent counter petitions which said, "Nay, verily, for he is a pestilent fellow and mover of sedition." The scene of desolation he met at home would have crushed a spirit less bold, but Amos was cast in heroic mold. He got his trusty gun and hunted

his plunder. For this he was placed in durance vile in Rutherford jail and there languished until court, when the judge ordered his release. One incident worthy to relate, perhaps, is the recovery of his bureau. It was at "Aunt" Polly Price's. He went for it and she said it was left there by "grass hopper" and that she was glad to restore it.

She being 99 years of age, then informed him she would soon attain 100 years. On that occasion, if Amos would send over a few "taters," she would set a big dinner and they would dance the "highland fling." Amos said nothing would please him better, but he had promised shoe shop "No. 1" at Sing Sing he'd soon be back, and he never liked to disappoint them.

He saved what he could out of the wreck and soon his bounce and other products of his labratory were on the market and his coffers were full of filthy lucre.

CHAPTER VIII.

But a Nemisis was on his trail, and the villain still pursued him. Like the ghost of Banquo, the revenue officers would not "avaunt," but like the unbidden ghost at the feast the red-legged grasshopper was ever present. He was sent to Sing Sing for kuklux outrages in 1872, and in 1876 while performing his sorrowful vigil at the bed side of a dying neighbor, he felt the grasp of personified law. He was in the toils of the "locusts," and was the same night remanded to Rutherford jail. Later, he appeared for trial before Judge Dick, at the revenue court of Asheville, N. C. Judge Dick heard the evidence, and before passing sentence said: "Amos Owens stand up, Once before you have trodden the winepress as a Sing Sing convict, and you have stiffened

your neck and hardened your heart again, against the majesty of the law you have made whiskey and sold the same. Why will you persist in your lawless course? Look at me, I am sixty years of age, was never drunk, and have never incurred the woe pronounced against him that putteth the bottle to his neighbor's lips. What have you to say, why the sentence of the law should not be pronounced upon you?"

Amos cocked one eye, cleared his throat and with mock solemnity, said: "Well, Judge, you have missed a durned lot of fun if you haint never made, drunk nor sold no licker. As to what I have to say about being sentenced—Judge, do you know what the Governor of North Carolina said to the Governor of South Carolina? "Them's my sentiments."

"One year in Sing Sing and twelve hundred dollars fine," roared the irate Judge. Amos was promptly taken to this bastile of Uncle Sam, and it is said the officials of that institution of learning had a torch-light procession in his honor: Amos entered with glee into the festivities; and approached the gate between two "red-legged grass-hoppers," singing: "Hold the fort for I am coming." The wardens said: "Kill the fatted prodigal for the calf has got back."

All the Sing Sing contingent hailed his appearance with great joy.

The warden continued; "My unconverted friend, Amos, though long absent, has returned to his first love. As the ox knoweth his master's crib, so doth Amos come to the high tower and rock of refuge for the transgressor. Let the band play: "Jordan is a hard road to travel."

The superintendent also extended the following royal welcome: "My unconverted friend, this is neither a pleasant nor disagreeable surprise, In fact, it is no surprise at all, for we were expect-

ing you, and you are welcome to do business at the old stand. We never shake an old friend or an honored acquaintance, and our motto is as ever: "While the lamp holds out to burn, The vilest sinner may return." Bring hither the razor and the shears, and let us put a new striped robe on him. One Year, Amos, for rest and refreshments."

Amos rose to the emergency, gave the military salute, and replied in kind: "Colonel, this is a case of the place seeking the man, and not the man seeking the place. But when I dance I pay the fiddler, and never shirk when the hat comes round. When my country needed my services her call was as the voice of God, and I did all in my power to beat back the nothern invader,

When the ruthless carpet bagger preyed like a cormorant on the substance of the South, I joined the Invisible Empire, and when Cuffy commenced that foolishness about the "bottom rail being on top," I helped revive the old song; "Run! nigger, run! patroller catch you." When my grateful constituents became so dry they spit bales of cotton I tried with my "labratory" to fill a long-felt want and fill it to overflowing.

At the end of ten months he was informed that he could again breathe the pure air of heaven, and that other place—Cherry Mountain, if he'd pay up a little matter of $1200 fine and $75 cost. Amos solemnly winked the other eye, and confined himself to the hammer and last. At the end of thirty days he was discharged. Bidding the whole push a hasty good bye, he telegraphed to have malt prepared to make a "run." Always a shrewd financier, he felt that a matter of $1275 for 30 days labor was a pretty fair dividend on the original investment. The malt was prepared, the people sounded aloud the great hew-gag and beat the loud tom-tom. The practiced eyes of

Amos were fastened on the charcoal receptacle. and when the first fiery shots commenced "beading at the worm," he made hill and valley echo with the glad refrain: "Come thou fount of every blessing."

His motto was still; "millions for defence but not a cent for revenues."

CHAPTER IX.

When the next spring had spread her vernal mantle over the earth, he, as ever, had a generous supply of copper—distilled, hand-made, standard-proof goods, and the bibulous saw it and were glad. He had made great improvements in his summer resort, and at his castle summer was to last twelve months in the year. While the leaves of his Cherry trees were not recommended for the healing of the nations, his bounce had a reputation rivaling the celebrated "bourbon" of Kentucky. Cherry Mountain was truly celebrated in song and story. Twice had his stills been destroyed, but he reported as ever with a flourish of trumpets and a new out-fit.

From every town of size and importance in the Old North State came votaries to do homage at the shrine of gay Bacchus, and from the Lone Star State, the Palmetto State, from the red hills of Georgia and the festooned-forests of Alabama. came the festive cow-boy, the unadulterated "Goobergrabber," the wild and woolly "Yallerhammer," together with the imperious "Sand-lapper" and the brawny "man-behind the gun," from Old Kentuck. In the June revelries, the guests sportively pelted each other with Irish potatoes at meal time, and sometimes plates, dishes, axe handles, ox-yokes and bed-posts were used to convince the on-looker in Venice that Southern hospitality was not stinted.

One contingent would be dancing furiously to

the sound of fiddle and barjoseph others trying to eat and the battle royal in progress had caused all the dishes to be smashed over the heads of opposing factions. Still another group of merry makers would be engaged in pistol target practice at each other, and another squad up the trees picking cherries, and get winged by a stray ball.

Amos was a host of remarkable versatility. If a man wanted to eat, a bountiful table was always prepared; if he wanted to fight, all he had to do was to go out a few steps and enter the ring. If anybody got "past varigation" he was piled into the cellar. One man was killed outright here and others have been probed, dismembered, maimed and their faces made to resemble an animated war-map.

One man of Gastonia thus giveth his experience at this noted resort. This was his first visit, and he was not conversant with cherry-bounce and its effects on the human system or society. He was noted for deep piety, and had never felt the pangs of the worm of the still "outvenomous all the worms of the Nile." He asked a man of very benign visage would bounce cause intoxication. The old pilgrim skinned his eye-balls devoutly heaven-ward, and said: "Oh no, son, the pangs of cherry bounce are not venomous." Like the blessed dew from heaven it blesses him that gives and him that takes." The unsophisticated youth of a pious turn of mind quaffed sundry glasses. The next thing he remembers, he was offering a standing salary for some one to step on the smoking tails of his coat.

A wooly-necked walking delegate from Taylorsville, N. C. told him he was there or thereabout. The model young man cast his eyes about him and saw, in close proximity, a magnificent ruin in the way of horseflesh. On this ancient ruin was an old saddle with iron stirrups. The pious youth

from Gastonia cut the stirrup leather off near the saddle and had a fine sling-shot. He smote the offending gentleman from Taylorsville and has not seen or heard of him since. He rather thinks the man died.

CHAPTER X.

In the days of so-called chivalry, there were trials of skill among the knighthood, in which the tournament contest was a principal feature.

Knights fought on horse-back armed with lances animated by the victors privilege of crowning the queen of love and beauty. The scenes at Cherry Mountain were dashed with a flavor of this spirit, and contests and rivalries of every description were adjusted at this place during the cherry season, under the martial inspiration of bounce. Did a man suffer the pangs of unprized love? Here he could meet his successful rival, and the blended ceremonies of the gladiatorial ring, the tournament, and the code of the antebellum Kentucky corn shucking were at his service. Sometimes it was an encounter between two agile and muscular giants who gloried in their skill with their dukes. In these contests they stripped to the waist entered the ring, and each principal was backed by a second.

No regard was had for recognized ring rules under which prize fighters strive for supremacy, but either participant was allowed to strike above or below the belt, and no restrictions or limitations were provided against biting, gouging. or stamping an adversary. Sometimes in the language of James Owens the cousin of Amos, "pieces of noses, fingers, toes and ears, fairly 'kivered' the earth." A difficulty of this kind generally resulted in a free fight, in which perhaps fifty would participate.

While a law has been for a long time on our

statute books against duelling, many affairs of this kind have resulted at this rendezvous.

In perhaps a dozen cases, men have been placed at twenty paces, fired at the word of command, and shot to kill. The fact that many of them were in the condition of having a "wabble in the gait and an uncertain look in the eye," cheap pistols and bad markmanship, is all that has prevented fatal ending.

As it is many have been slightly wounded in these affairs of honor, and as before stated, in the free fights where pistols, guns, knives and brickbats were as plentiful as "razors in the air" at a colored church festival, many were injured. Another diversion was gander pulling. This relief of barbarism has been absolute for probably fifty years every where else, but at Cherry Mountain it made its last stand. A gander would be caught, his legs tied together, and tied to a horizontal bar. He would be left swinging eight feet from the ground, and his neck and head greased.

Every participant in this diversion would be mounted, and was to ride at full speed by the gander and try to pull off his head. The greased neck made this difficult, as the gander, realizing that self preservation is the first law of nature, would dodge, and the scene would become revolting.

The mounts would be grostesque in the extreme. Horses with one eye, horses in the last stage of poverty and enfeebled age, blind horses, mules of every age, color and previous condition of servitude, and actually oxen, bore these modern knights in this peculiar and revolting tournament. To those who never saw an ox under the saddle, it may be incredible that he can be made to gallop, but a mountaineer with two spurs can dispel that illusion. To see old Burt Franklin on his muley ox, barefooted and wearing two spurs,

no one would think the bovine either slow or patient. Burt was the champion "gander-puller," and was, withal, a character of peculiar interest. He had served he said, in the Indian war under the stern old Hickory Jackson, was in the Mexican war under General Scott, and later, served as a volunteer under the stormy cross of Lee and Jackson in the Southern Confederacy. He never accumulated any property, and never seemed to want anything better than to be at every festivity of Cherry Mountain.

He had the strength of a giant, could walk sixty miles a day, and ride like a Centaur.

He is still living at the age of 98, and when the cry came up from the stricken Pearl of the Antilles, he rode his ox twenty miles to a recruiting station with his "old enfield" on his shoulder, togething with the ancient cartridge box that was bullet pierced in the days of '61 to '65, and wanted to "remember the Maine." The recruiting officer laughed and told him to go home, prepare to meet his God, and send some of his grand children.

He straightened his tall form, flashed his eye, and swore he could out-run, out-jump, out-side, out-march and out shoot his own or any body else's grand-children. He tried several other times to enlist, and will die mad, if he ever dies at all, because he was not allowed to help subdue the haughty Dons.

Another popular diversion of this celebrated resort, is chicken fighting. No man is allowed to put a goff on his champion, but the encounters are slugging matches pure and simple.

Dog fighting is also popular, for the canine is more venerated in this region than the sacred white elephant in Indian or the crocodile in Egypt. In Kentucky they talk horse and here they talk dog. The exercises, during the June

carnival season, reminds one of a modern "midway plaisance." At one place "a break-down" is in progress, when the dancing to the music of fiddle and banjo is fast and furious, while others will be out riding a "flying Jennie." At another place a chicken dispute is in progress, in which a gigantic dung-hill is trying conclusions with a Georgia "shawlneck." Other groups are telling the old story, sighing like a furnace, alternately coquetting and exchanging vows of eternal constancy.

Another contingent, headed by old Burt Franklin, who are lustily cheering the gander pulling tournament.

In another quarter a free fight is in progress, and a scene is being enacted that would relegate hitherto classic and celebrated Donybrook to eternal obscurity. Still another squad are having a passage at arms between a "bench legged fice" and a mangy hound of uncertain age.

CHAPTER XI.

The pistol duel at word of command is not of frequent occurrence, but one was pulled off five years since between two gentlemen of color that was characteristic. One coon by the name of "Jack Badness," and another known as J. Dudley Bomar had an ancient grudge which was all on account of Eliza. Her name was Eliza Biggerstaff and she was a decided brunette. She had lost an eye and was aged 47. The eye loss was the result of a contest with her former husband who had gone from rest to refreshment, but before his departure had stabbed her in the eye with a scribe awl, for he was a shoe maker.

While he lived they both nearly starved but when he shuffled off some six feet of mortal coil, she became a colored capitalist. As a cook she was in demand, and rumor said she had over

$40 to her credit. Here was an opportunity to capture an heiress, and while Jack Badness was 23, and J. D. Bomar 25 years of age, that matter of $40 covered a multitude of defects, one-eyed and otherwise, and removed any disparity in years. Both would call every evening at the hours in which "little Annie Rooney" received visits, and would eat a hearty meal at the expense of their insomoratta. They would then scowl at each other and strap their razors.

At length their aggrieved "honor" could no longer tolerate such a state of affairs, and J. Dudley Bomar sent by his friend and second, the Rev. Geo. Washington Deck, the following challenge: "To the lazy, pokey, lowzy, good for uuthin nigger what is called Jack Badness, who is always loofin round whar he haint wanted.

Ef you haint skeered to deth, you can meet me at Cherry Mounting day after to-morrow.

Bring your gun, for I is goin to shoot you so full of holes that ef all de places is filled with wooden pins you'd make a good hat rack.

Yours to kill,

J. Dudley Bomar."

Jack Badness, after a very labored composition, evolved the following, and sent it back by his trusted friend and second, "Spotted Buck Sweezy:"

"To de lyin, loofin, thevin son of a gun what stole de money offen a dead man's eyes, and am a coward an blow hard, allow me to say dot you axed me to be at Cherry Mounting if I aint skeered.

Never you mine, I'll be dar. Talk about gunnin. I is gwine to fill you so full of lead dat youll out-weigh old Burt Franklin's big roan steer. Don't you fret, Ill be dar.

Yours on de shoot,

Jack Badness."

Day after to-morrow came around and J. Dud-

ley Bomar and his staff came near beating "day after to-morrow" under the string. His first question was, "whar is dat flat-nosed kidney—footed niggah?" Hethen drew a British bull dog, Calibre 38, and seemed eager for the fray.

In about an hour Jack Badness, with his friend Spotted Buck Sweezy, came leisurely up the mountain. The news had spread, and people were there from Rutherfordton, Shelby, Marion, Morganton and Forest City to witness the encounter.

The vaunting Bomar began to show signs of agitation as Col. Jack Badness pulled an eight-inch "cap-and-ball" six-shooter.

The distance, twenty paces, was measured and the principals told to take their positions. Henry Houser, of Grassy Branch, was to give the word command, and stepping forward, said: "Gentlemen, are you ready?" "I is," came the defiant answer of Jack Badness, but Bomar gasped, and the words he tried to utter seemed to die away in the rafters of his mouth. His knees were knocking and his teeth chattering, while his face took on the blue gray hue, that always betrays agitation in the negro.

Henry Houser continued: "Attention! At the word one, raise your pistols. At the word two, take aim. At the word three, fire." J. Dudley Bomar was so agitated that all he knew was, he heard the word fire. He pressed the trigger of his pistol and a roar showed he had commenced the fray. But his ball missed his adversary at least twenty five feet, and went into an upper story of the famous castle Owens; knocking the tail feathers out of an eight day clock. Discretion then got the better part of valor, and he fled incontinently. Then Badness started in swift pursuit, firing his eight inch navy at every jump. Several pine boughs fell around the fleeing Bomar, but to this day no one knows the extent of

his injuries. He never came back, and two weeks later Jack Badness had captured the widow with $40, and now has an oyster, sardine and cider saloon on historic Cherry Mountain. His wife still has one eye, and still cooks and takes in washing. But she and that $40 have parted company.

CHAPTER XII.

Though this historic place is in twelve miles of Rutherfordton twenty-five miles of Shelby, both good law abiding towns, by common consent this has, until very recently, been no man's land as far as the enforcement of law is concerned. Amos Owens has repeatedly heard the ornate charges of the judge to the jury and grand jury where the resonant language of his honor would recite: "The majesty of the law stands on eternal vigil at the threshold of every home, and the dweller in the lowly hovel as well as the palace comes alike under her beneficent protection." Amos knew, as far as his own expenience was concerned, that he could be maltreated, his property destroyed, and no legel redress for him in his rights of person or property. On the other hand, until very recently, whoever went there to engage in the festivities took his life in his hand, and had to be quick-triggered to command respect.

Boys and girls have performed acts of vandalism at this place, that would have disgraced the wild orgies of a negro festival, and nobody purnighed.

Such treatment has done much to determine his hitherto lawless character. While this writer is not upholding the whiskey traffic or manufacture, legal or otherwise, it seems that Amos has, in many instances, been a peculiar object of persecution by the red-legged grass-hopper.

While he has defiantly and persistently violated

the revenue laws, in the hackneyed language of the present "there are others."

Many persons by an unfortunate combination of circumstances, become outlaws, that no amount of prevention and coercion can reclaim, and Amos is a man of this character.

We left him on his second return from Sing Sing, defiant and impenitent. The tall spectral pines stood on eternal vigil near the defile where his distillery was in operation, the flickering lights of his furnace were shed on the eternal rock-ribbed heights of his famous mountain, and his work pursued the noiseless tenor of its way. We can but think, that at times, when "far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife, with none to see his "deeds of darkness" but God and the radiant stars above, his bitter nature would assert itself and a voiceless cry would go out from his heart in the silent watches of the night; but if so, he suffered and gave no sign. The minister would rise in his pulpit, wax eloquent in the recital of the sins of Amos Owens against God and against society, but did one ever go and administer words of brotherly reproof? The staid church member would inveigh against the evils of intemperance, and then have some vagabond to go and see if "Old Amos Owens" would not send him two gallons to take the bad taste out of his mouth. The young man, who parted his hair in the middle and taught a class in Sunday School, would go up in cherry time, get drunk as the Pied Piper of Hamelin, break dishes, knock-down doors, smash windows, turn over the milk and swear like a seaman; and then say it was all the fault of old Amos Owens. The adoring uncles, cousins, aunts and parents would say it was even so, and pray the good Lord to bless the labors of the red-legged grass-hopper. Then would it occur to this hunted arch-blockader that "man's inhumanity to

man makes countless millions mourn."

Soon the avenger was again on his track, for as he rode through the state of "Pitchfork Ben Tillman," he was held up near Gaffney, and his fine horse, new wagon, and a barrel of contraband, confiscated. He was placed behind the bars of the Columbia jail, and was later tried and sentenced to a term of six month's imprisonment and a fine of one hundred dollars imposed. Being allowed to name his prison he chose Yorkville, South Carolina. Here an incident occurred that showed his courage, sense of gratitude, and devotion to friends. Men of deep-seated convictions and great firmness are almost invariably bitter enemies and ardent friends.

Sheriff Glenn of York county was a man of humane and generous impulses, and by his kindness won the undying friendship of Amos. On one occasion three desperate negroes resolved in making a break for liberty. Jumping on the Sheriff while alone, they would have soon taken his life, for the brutal instinct of a savage shows no mercy to a fallen foe. Amos and a man from Catawba county, of this state, came to the relief of the brave officer, and the blows of our stalwart hero went with the force of a catapult. One giant fell at his first blow, and his comrade and the exhausted sheriff entertained the other, who was also an Ethiopian Hercules. The daring leader of the three was yet on foot, and with his firm visage, broad shoulders, and corded muscles, developed in a turpentine orchard "pulling boxes," was not to be despised. Towering six feet two, and weighing 205, he felt that he could use up all opposition. He let out a terrific right at our hero which was nimbly dodged. Then with a left that would have won the admiration of Col. John L. Sullivan, Amos dropped the colored son of Anak senseless to the floor. The sheriff had now recov-

ered, and with the help of the man from Catawba, the other two were secured. The Sheriff was too generous to let such conduct on the part of our hero and his confederate go unrewarded. Except nominally, they were free men, and carried the prison keys. Amos was the Joseph of the prison, but unlike the Joseph of inspiration, he was not an interpreter of dreams.

Certain it is however, that ever after during his incarceration, he had a whiff every morning of the medical preparation known as peach and honey, and on the morning after their heroic adventure, he and his campanion were the recipient of a pound cake, which, to use his own quaint expression, was "bigger'n a hosses head." At the end of five months he was released, and one hundred dollars extra were paid into his hand. To this day he is touched by this act of benevolence, and the humane treatment accorded him here is like the shadow of a great rock in a weary land in his varied and melancholly experience.

He further gives an amusing experience with bees, during this period of incarceration.

All mountain men have bees, and are expert in their management. One day Amos heard the warning whirr, and notified the sheriff's wife. She sent for that official, but he was busy in the office, and sent word to let Amos Owens hive the bees.

The bees had on full war-paint and charged a passing minister, and tasted the lovely complexion of the beautiful belle of the ball who was also passing. Her shrieks brought out a policeman with blue coat and button, but they respected not his badge of office. A "sissy" looking dude was riding by on a thorough bred, and the the bees fired at this horse and rider by file and then by volley. The dude being unhorsed, lifted up his voice and said he was stabbed, but the bees heed-

ed not his signal of distress. Then Amos advanced, and to use his expression, "the pickets fired and run in." Like Grant, he moved immediately on their works, and demanded unconditional surrender. They charged him but what cared he for a few upstart Italian bees, when he had never been vanguished by Uncle Sam, and his legions of red-legged grass-hoppers?

The bees rose and took to flight, but he camped on their trail. They settled in a big oak 30 feet from the ground, but he built a high scaffold. He hived ever mother's son of them, brought them back, a distance of 400 yards, and deposited the hive in the colony, singing, in the meantime; "God Save the Queen."

CHAPTER XIII.

On his discharge he went home, and as his still was destroyed, he bought another outfit. The order was, on with the dance, and for three years the work boomed serenely on, with no revenue interference to molest or to make afraid. Besides his calling as maker and dispenser of bounces he resolved to build a kind of tower, or observatory, Reference has before been made to the glorious view from this eminence, and our hero set himself to work to build this towering edifice which was to be several stories in height, and to be provided with up-to-date opera glasses, field glasses and a powerful telescope for the use of tourists and scientific men. Like the sweet singer of captive Israel he prepared his material and like the sweet singer he was not allowed to build.

It is here worthy of mention, that in the complex character of our hero, there is a strange contradiction of terms. While a difiant blockader that no amount of punishment could chasten and subdue, he yet shows some of the generous attributes of a great nature. In his heroic defense of

Sheriff Glenn at Yorkville jail, while he escaped unscathed, he boldly imperiled his life and limb, showing the almost divine character portrayed in Revelation: "Greater love hath no man than this that a man should lay down his life for his friend."

Now we see him, an unlettered man who does not know the lost pleaides from Col. Henry Watterson's "Star-eyed goddess of Reform," preparing a temple in the wilderness for the patronage of science, and for the comfort and convenience of the people that have calumniated and betrayed him; erecting a place of rest and enjoyment, placing the enchanting grandsur of "The Land of the Sky" in the range of every one's vision who will sweep the grand panorama with these auxiliaries of science.

We are reminded of the saying of Jesus of Nazareth that sinners and publicans shall enter the kingdom of the Lord before the self-righteous Pharisee, and of the sweet but sad couplet from the "Quaker Poet":

"In the hereafter, angels may
Roll the stone from its grave away."

CHAPTER XIV.

Again he had an invasion from the cohorts of the red-legged grass hopper, and was taken to Asheville to again sit on the mourner's bench before Judge Dick. It is here worthy of remark, that with all his fierce hatred of the revenue officers, he never resisted arrest. He therefore was as usual like a sheep before its shearers, but had his teamster to load up with "taters," Asheville was still a great market for taters, and the deal resulted in a sale of "20 bushels and 40 gallons." His still was again destroyed but everything was not found. Again did Judge Dick impose a term of twelve months imprisoment, a fine of one hun-

dred dollars and a scathing rebuke. Again did Amos gaze at the whole judiciary with mingled scorn and defiance, and gleefully hop "onto" the black moriah that conveyed him to the bastile, preparatory to going for a third visit to Sing Sing. The officials of that famed institution of learning tendered the glad hand, and joy was unconfined. As the conductor announced the station, our hero cackled with ungodly glee and yelled out: "One year for rest and refreshments." The superintendent said: Amos, I knew you would not disappoint us. Others have said that the memory of the venerable delegate from North Carolina would henceforth be: "Like the touch of a hand that is vanished, And a voice that forever is stilled," but I said, "You don't know Amos."

The old offender with anger in his eye and reproach in his tones, said: "What have I ever done to cause any one to doubt my loyalty to this institution? Did I not graduate here, and did I not tell you and your minions I was coming back to take a post-graduate course? If I ever hear another doubt expressed, I'll confer my patronage on some other institution. This is not the only "pen" in the world, and there are others that would be glad to have me." It will be observed that Amos uses good language for an unlettered man. No one to converse with him, would consider that he is not a man of scholarship. He served his dreary sentence, again getting off thirty days for good behavior and paying his fine of one hundred dollars by thirty days labor. So, at the end of twelve months he bought a new "still" and went, even as the dog returneth to his vomit, to his old vocation. In all he has had nine distilling out-fits destroyed, and has served three terms in the penitentiary. A reaction took place, and for a time he had respite from his persecutions. But the work went bravely on, and his

whiskey, brandy and bounce was still a legal tender in North Carolina.

CHAPTER XV.

About this time another Richmond appeared in the field, and his scene of operations was near classic Cherry Mountain. Alternately, he was a maker of moonshine, and a red-legged grass-hopper. When a maker of contraband he was like a bold buccaneer of the Spanish main, and he had many bloody encounters. He was a Hercules in strength and stature, and shot to kill. He led a lawless life, and while a generous man to those he liked, was a vindictive and uncompromising foe. He kept up a trade between North and South Carolina, and shot and maimed several parties in personal encounters, and finally the state of South Carolina became too hot to be comfortable. He was imprisoned several times, but by the aid of confederates, and fertility of resources, he always managed to escape. Like Mark Twain's war experience, he "had fought on both sides," and the moonshiners never forgave him for being a red-legged grass-hopper, and the marshals despised him for being a dealer in contraband whiskey. The plot thickened, and he had so many personal difficulties that he resorted to deeds of violence that caused a price to be placed on his head. He armed himself, and in the defiles of Cherry Mountain defied the conservators of law and order. His retreat was discovered, and a posse led by a veteran red-legged grass-hopper, invaded his lair. "Slipping up on him," in mountain parlance, the posse enjoined him to surrender. He turned at bay, threw his rifle to his face, and whistled a bullet through the hair of the man he most intensely hated on earth—the reviled publican or red-legged grass-hopper. His shot was answered by a volley from the Winchesters, shot-guns and

revolvers of his hunters. He fell bleeding from half a dozen wounds, but with fierce oaths, tried to again "pump lead" with his Winchester. He was disarmed and carried to prison. His leg was shattered at the thigh by a ball from a 44 Winchester, three pistol balls had struck him and two charges of No. 4 shot were in his body. Every one thought he would die, but, as usual, every one was mistaken. He languished in jail till court, when the Judge in compassion for his terrible wounds, gave him the privilege of leaving the state. He took the offer, and speedily absented himself from North Carolina society. With all his faults he was a generous, hospitable fellow, and a warm friend of the writer. His people still live in the counties of Rutherford and Cleveland, and are among the most honored citizens of both counties.

CHAPTER XVI.

Before we give the final chapter in the life and public serrices of Amos Owens, brief notice shall be taken of an ex-blockader who has reformed and shows symptoms of engaging in the minisitry. He was a maker of whiskey, a salesman of the same, and feared neither God nor regarded man. To him the red-legged grass-hopper also became a burden, and on more than one occasion he trod the wine-press of tribulation, and "played checkers with his nose upon the prison bars." At length his own familiar friends became his enemies, and he and his brother-in-law tried conclusions in which a pistol, a sling shot, and a rock all figured. The hero of this sketch pulled for greener fields and pastures new, but the villians still pursued him. He was leading a very exemplary life at Polkville in Cleveland county, when a Rutherford constable, with the power of apparently, the entire county at his back, told the

offender to put up his hands. This he did, and a search of his pockets revealed nothing more deadly than a small plow-wrench. He was placed under heavy bond, with orders to report at Cherry Mountain on a day and date provided. The unfortunate came to this writer and said that our services were desired as attorney in his behalf. He was told that Ye scribe was not a lawyer, but tried to be an honest man. He was asked why we were taken for a lawyer. He said: "a man who contested everything, conceded nothing and talked by the hour was a lawyer by nature, instinct and profession." We reported at the temple of justice on Cherry Mountain, one mile from Castle Owens, and found every-body in that region was a partisan, on one side or the other. The learned magistrate looked at me, and asked if I had a license to practice law. He was informed that some men have a roving commission and can practice where they please. The trial proceeded, and it was racy. When we cross-examined a woman in the case, she invariably used her last and strongest argument—tears. Finally everything wept, but the "lawyer," his client and the mules that furnished our means of transportation to the trial. The magistrate looked wise, said it was a "haynous" offense with which my client was charged. He gave it as his opinion that my client should be hung, and called on him to stand up and receive the death sentence. He was informed that the defendant should not hang, or if he did, I'd see that the other fellow was hung too. He finally released the defendant who came home, took the pledge, and now wants to preach, but can't read.

CHAPTER XVII.

We now come to the last time Amos Owens was called to appear before a tribunal for violation of

the revenue laws.

In 1890 he was arrested, and taken before Judge Dick in Charlotte, N. C. His head was now white as the driven snow, and the tender heart of Judge Dick was touched with pity. Tears rose to his kindly eyes, for the official was a man of generous and humane impulses. In a voice vibrant with emotion, he said: "Amos Owens, stand up. Three times you have worn the garb of a convict, and time and again have you been fined and imprisoned. You are said to be a man of noble impulses and many worthy traits of character. Your gray hairs should be a crown of glory instead of a badge of infamy. Amos, you and I are on the shady side of the hill of life, and soon shall be called from time to eternity. Why do you live the life of an Ishmael with your hand raised against the majesty of the law and the hand of organized society against you? Amos, I can but believe there are deep and hidden wellsprings of good in your nature, and ere I am called to the bar of a just God, I shall appeal to the generosity of your better nature. Amos, as man speaks to man, will you cease to violate the laws of you country and to be an out-cast of society?" An intense hush pervaded the court room, for never before had any appeal been made to the generous nature of this ancient transgressor.

Then something happened that the shock of battle, the groans and shrieks of dying comrades, the privations of army prison life and the frowning walls of Sing Sing has failed to call forth.

The hardened look of defiance faded from his face, tears welled to his eyes, his rugged frame shook with feeling. In a voice choking with emotion he said; "Judge, I'll—try." The effect was electrical. All the judicial dignity in the State could not have restrained the rapturous yell that

rose from the audience, for the house was packed to everflowing. The sight of the audacious moonshiner who had hitherto seemed to have a demoniac spirit that no man could tame, weeping, with contrition at the bar of Justice, and the dignified judge in tears; convinced all present that "a touch of nature makes us all wondrous kind."

The lawyers present, the representatives of the press, and many others, including a red legged-grass hopper, grasped his hand in welcome. Then and thereupon the lawyers of Shelby, Charlotte and Rutherfordton "chipped in" and bought him a fine beaver and a pair of gold-baned eye-glasses. His storm-rent and battle scarred visage took on a softer light than ever before, and he went his way, it is hoped, to sin no more.

Judge Dick has been called to his record, and Amos venerates his memory. Pretty much all his original enemies have likewise passed over the river, and he is now enthroned at Cherry Mountain—listening at the wind wailing through his forest pines, aud looking with pride on his one thousand broad acres. With the exception of George Vanderbilt, he is the only man that owns an entire mountain in the State. While the red-legged grass-hopper has ceased to be a burden, his head flourishes like the almond tree, those that look out of the window are becoming darkened, and the strong man begins to tremble. Let us hope, that when the pitcher is broken at the fountain and the golden cord be loosened, when the mourners go about the streets; that he shall be with the redeemed around the great white throne. Should he be with that favored multitude, it can certainly apply to his case: "These are they who came up through great tribulations." Whatever may be his fate in eternity, he is certainly the most wonderful blockader, quick or

dead, and it can be said of him as of Napoleon, the Great, "The man without a model and without a shadow."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Recently, signs have been discovered that this mountain is full of valuable mineral. Three-fourths of the world's supply of mica is found in North Carolina, and a mine is being worked here that contains this mineral in paying quantities. The forest wealth of this mountain, were it near a good market, would be the means of an immense fortune to some shifty up-to-date investor. This State has more varieties of timber than the same area anywhere else on earth, and every kind of tree is found here that grows in the State except about three species that abound in the tide-water region. It is, besides, the natural home of many medicinal herbs, among others the famous ginseng or "Sang" as it is called in mountain parlance. All who have ever read "The Sang Digger" by Amelia Rino Chandler, know that the ginseng root has great commercial value. The best customers are the "heathen Chinese," who use it in their Joss houses in burning incense, and also for medical properties. Gold has been found on this mountain, also silver and lead. There is a well-founded tradition that one of the Withrows in the shooting matches popular in his day and generation, always got his lead from here, but would never tell any one the location of his mine. The secret perished with him, but he revealed to some confidential friends, that it was somewhere on Cherry Mountain.

A few years since, a firm in Germany discovered that monazite, a yellow sand found here, has a great commercial value. It was used to generate an incandescent light, being like mica, imperious to ordinary heat. The first and most

valuable mine of monazite was located on Cherry Mountain, and this industry made L. A. Gettys, then, a struggling and obscure school teacher, a capitalist. For beautiful wild flowers this place is not surpassed on earth, and mention has been before made of the grand panorama of scenery that unfolds itself before your gaze. The crest of this mountain being in the Iso-Thermal belt, peaches, apples, grapes, and other fruit crops are unfailing, as they are above the frost-line. Were a good road built to the top of this mountain, a nice boulevard or driveway on top, an up to date hotel and observatory, this would be an ideal resort. In the sultry summer season it would be a welcome retreat for the southerner who wishes surcease from heat, malaria and mosquitoes, while it would, also, be a delightful winter resort for those who wish to escape the rigors of a winter in more northern climes. The present owner of Cherry Mountain, as before stated, is unlettered, and in his circumscribed sphere, could see no way under heaven or among men to make a living except to still and make bounce. He reverently believed that he should be allowed to make free whiskey, and regarded the acts of the government as a species of "taxation without representation." Like the bold barons that came from Runnymede, and at the point of the sword, forced the haughty King John who bore the scepter of power and wore the purple of authority, to grant the charter of human rights, he has alone tried to resist the government, in the zeal worthy of a better cause.

In the light of successful achievement, we can honor our forefathers for resisting a tax on tea and glass, which was levied to meet expenses of a war for our interest, but when it comes to Redmond, Amos Owens and others of that ilk raising the flag of revolt—why that is altogether a different matter.

While whiskey is evidently a curse, is it not as blighting in its effects on society, if made by a trust of steam distilleries and the tax evaded as for Amos Owens to make a few gallons by hand and decline to pay the revenue? Such is the reasoning of this man of such a wonderful experience and such is the fair verdict, in practic justice or otherwise.

CHAPTER XIX.

This work was written by one who never saw a moonshine distillery, and who deplores the moonshiner's persistence in their precarious calling.

The important datas were given by Amos Owens, by Dr. Thomas Carson of Bostic, J. C. Elliott of Polkville and other men of probity and character. At the request of Amos Owens, himself, the work was written and is hereby offered to the public. It would have been just as easy to picture him as the leader of a ferocious banditti who revelled in scenes of blood. It would have been just as easy to say that as a land-pirate he kidnapped beautiful maidens, and extorted heavy ransoms for their deliverance. The flights of fancy might also have conjured a spider-legged dude of twenty-three summers, who, with a signal service tin shield under his lapel. a dark lantern in one hand a cast barrelled swamp angel in the other, rushed on Amos Owens and one hundred beetle-browed confederates, and bellowed at them to surrender in the name of the State. The same process could have evolved a beautiful maiden of "nineteen," wild-eyed, haggard and dishevelled, who rushed before the foot-lights and shrieked: "Oh, Sirs, spare him for I love him." Candor compels the statement that nothing so tragical ever occurred in the experience of this bold blockader. He is blood-guiltless as far as officers are concerned, but as a sharp shooter in the ranks of

the Confederacy, he may have slain some of the opposing foemen.

CHAPTER XX.

In all well-regulated novels the hero has to steal his bride, and is pursued by her irate father and about five hundred horsemen.

They camp three days on the trail of the fugitives, the old man and his retinue swearing they are going to bathe their hands in gore.

On the fourth day they overhaul the fleeing pair, who are both mounted on the same "richly caparisaned steed," and the hunted Lochinar turns at bay. After a fierce struggle, in which about seventy-five of the attacking party bites the dust, the facts develop that the couple were married not two hours since by a wandering justice of the peace, and the marriage certificate is placed in evidence. By strawberry marks and infantile attire, the bride-groom proves his lineage on one side from a sored-eye wandering minstrel of an Italian count, and on the other from a pig-sticker of Chicago.

These credentials are satisfactory, and the old man knows his son-in-law is no plebian, but a high roller. They go back to his palace and for six weeks there is a round of merry-making and war sail.

CHAPTER XXI

Amos Owens was married once and but once, to Miss May Sweezy. When his time came to marry he got on his horse, "Old Hickory" and rode over to old man Sweezy's. The old man was worming and suckering tobacco, and on seeing Amos, got off the original observation. "Light and look at yer saddle-" "I hain't got time," said Amos, "whar is Mary Ann?" "She has gone to peel some walnuts to dye some cloth, what's up?"

"Oh, nothing, particular," said Amos, we thought we'd marry this evening." "Marry! the devil!" Quoth the old man, pretending as is usual under such conditions, to be greatly surprised. "No I just wanted his daughter," quoth the irrepressible Amos, "and had no idea of marrying the whole family."

The old man grinned, humped himself over a tobacco plant, and Amos hunted up the future partner of his joys and sorrows. She was found, bare-headed and bare-footed, coming with a basket of walnut hulls. This she delivered, and making no other changes in her toilet except to put on her home made shoes and "wagon cover" bonnet, she gayly mounted on old Hickory behind Amos. They hunted up a justice of the peace and stated their business. He soon pronounced the ceremony, and was then and there tendered a coon-skin and a quart bottle of brandy. He threw the coon-skin on the floor and then and there took an observation of the heavens over the end of that bottle. Amos brought her to his three story house, which was not three stories high but three stories long, and she that evening milked the cow and set a hen, while Amos made an ox-yoke and repaired his wagon harness. That is all there is in the way of romance about his marriage, and it is to be observed that he has been kind to his family and through all his privations and vicissitudes, she has been a help-meet true as steal.

Sketches and cuts of this remarkable man have appeared from time to time in Police Gazette, Chicago Blade, Pennsylvania Grit, Charlotte Observer, Cleveland Star, Morganton Herald, Shelby Aurora and other periodicals and publications, and as the author first "dug him up," so to speak, he now offers to the public the inclosed matter in book form. As the hero has kept no diary, many interesting facts are omitted. The work is closed,

in the hope that the reader will be at least entertained.

"CORN CRACKER."

CHAPTER XXII.

In connection with the history of this notorious blockader, notice will be taken of another celebrated character, likewise a mountaineer. He is known to profane history as Jerry Bowlin, and is the greatest exponent, living or dead, of "squatter soverignty." Like Amos Owens he is unlettered, and like him in other respects, he is well nigh redoubtable. His age is about seventy-five years, and in person he is strong, rugged, and of medium height. His hair is dark his eyes are gray, while his firmly compressed mouth and resolute chin, indicate great determination.

On the corner of the counties of Rutherford, Burke and McDowell, he staked a claim, so long since that the memory of man runneth not back to the contrary. He married a wife at an early age, and, in a pine pole "sway-backed" cabin, undertook to rear a family. For their meagre subsistence they planted a patch of corn, raised a small garden every year, hunted squirrels, pulled tanback, and hunted herbs of a commercial value.

At length "pay dirt" was found in the vicinity, and the syndicate known as the Golden Valley Mining Company was organized and began operation. The land was what is called speculation land, and they bought up a large boundary. In this boundary, was the modest mansion of Jerry Bowlin, with the small clearing he had opened. Here was a clash of interests, and the haughty representative of the corporation told Jerry to absquatulate. But Jerry took another hitch at his belt, tightened his coon-skin cap on his head, and told them he was there for the season. Scare-

head notices with heavy penalties were posted and read in his hearing, but Jerry took a fresh nip of long green, and pursued the even terror of his way.

The writ of ejectment was served by the sheriff, but Jerry observed that he had always noticed that lightning in the north was a mighty good sign of rain. The sheriff came with the regulation posse of sixteen stalwart men, but found nothing to throw out of the house but a maul and wedge. Not a bed, cooking utensil, or article of apparel was in sight, Jerry again remarked that lightning in the north was a "shore" sign of rain, getting out his "twist" meantime, and taking a very consoling nip of long green. That night there was a sound of revelry in his halls, and the flickering light of pine knots shone over fair women and brave men, while beds stood in their accustomed places, raiment for male and female dangled from wooden pins in the wall, while the savory smell of frying pork rose from a "spider," and corn bread "ripened" in the skillet. The next morning he met a representative of the syndicate, that informed him with some asperity that he had to vambose the ranch—that money was no object. That they had money to burn, and would dislodge him if it cost one hundred thousand dollars. He meditated for five minutes, and remarked that he had been noticing the weather nearly seventy years, and never saw it fail to rain when it lightened in the north. The dignitary of a syndicate said when their company tried to "raise" a man from their territory they "raised" him whether it lightened at all or not; and they each went his way. The next morning the Sheriff of Rutherford county again reported with his regulation posse of sixteen brawny men, at the domicle of Jerry. The latter came out, bowed gracefuly, and remarked: "Gentlemen, I may have never told you before, but I have taken per-

tickler notice that when it lightens in the north—The Sheriff here stuck a gun in his face, and said: You old whelp, where are your goods? Yesterday you had nothing to throw out but a maul and wedge, and last night your house was full up, of beds, clothing, and cooking utensils, and you were having a shin-dig. Now I'am going to pull down "your durned old house." The house was pulled down, and not a woman, child, article of clothing or cooking utensil was visible. The Sheriff left, and the syndicate rejoiced. But the next night the sound of revelry was again heard, and some members of the syndicate went down to reconnoiter. They found the house up and in tact but still sway-backed, the beds and clothing in their places, Pork and Squirrel frying, and Jerry leading a break-down. They slunk back to their places, feeling that syndicates sometimes met their match. On the next morning Jerry passed the mining shaft with his long rifle on his shoulder, and remarked: "If you see the Sheriff, I wish you'd tell him I said it is a good sign of rain to see it lighten in the north."

CORN CRACKER.

M. L. WHITE.

Polkville, N. C.

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