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The Confederacy had nothing as their money was worthless. So they had to do the best they could. Stealing horses was the worst of all. They called themselves horse traders,--when they were really horse thieves. There were three men that stayed in part of the house in the main bread where Pappy took his boys. He suspected something was wrong about them. They too called themselves horse traders but they were very friendly and nice. Pappy said they were all right. After the other boys left Mother thought it best to bring Noah up to stay with us so

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we could be together. Pappy was still looking after the place. He was not so well. It seemed that he could not get over all the trouble we had been through and he was getting older. He was past seventy and had gone through more than any man could stand without breaking down. He told Noah to go and saddle Selem and he would ride down and see how things were in the bottom. When he got ready to go he said he could not go so he sent Noah in his place. Mother told him not to stay late and get out of the main before dark but it got late and he still did not come. Mother began to get uneasy but Pappy told her not to worry that he was staying in town. We had lots of friends there so we went to bed thinking that everything was all right. Next morning I was up bright and early.

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I ran back into the house and told Mother that Selem was out at the gate with the saddle and the bridle on. She ran out there and said she knew last night that something had happened. Pappy got up and as soon as Mother fixed him some breakfast he went to see what was the matter. When he got to town he met a friend who told him that Noah had been shot. They went back to the house where Noah was. He told them all about what had happened. He said that he had gone and looked all around and found everything all right. He ate his snack and lay down on a bunk back in the corner and went to sleep. When he woke up he heard those horse traders talking and from what they said he knew they were horse thieves. They were stealing the horses and selling them. Then they would not

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let him go. They tied him up and told him that they were going to tie a rock to him and throw him into the river. Then they went to sleep. He worked at the rope until he got his hands loose,--then he slipped out. The horse was still out where he left it. The boy did not get far before they missed him. They were getting near him when they began to fire on him. A bullet hit him in the small of his back which paralyzed him from his waist down. He fell off the horse and crawled into the cain. The horse ran on and the men followed him until they lost the trail and my poor brother lay there until next morning when a man riding by saw where something had been dragged and found that poor suffering boy and took him to town. The horse went

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home and there was where I first saw him standing at the gate with his bridle and saddle on. I called Mother and she called Pappy as soon as he could he got on the horse and started to town and met a man coming after him. He told what had happened to Noah. Pappy came back and told Mother and they both went back to town. They found Noah in a serious condition but his mind was all right. He told everything just as it was. Next the news came that Noah had killed one of the men. He had a gun and was fighting for his own life. Those men did their best to kill him. We never knew who those men were,--they may not have used their right name. My brother was very sorry that he killed one of them. Mother told him not to worry

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about that any more that was in self defense. Everyone was so good to us and tried to help us in everyway they could. Mother stayed with Noah all the time and Pappy stayed with us. He would go as often as he could. It was eighteen miles and he would come back the same day. So one day he was not well so he sent me. I was fifteen and I had been there before. So it was nearly dark when I got back. I found my brother gradually sinking away and he sent word to my father that he was all ready to go when he was called. Pappy got up and began to walk the floor and sing those fine old songs. I told him that I would sit up

with him and help him bear this trouble. Next morning when I woke up I was in bed and Pappy was fixing our breakfast. He said that he was going to see

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Noah and for me to stay in the house. He told Johnny not to go far from the house. He was seventeen now and we were growing up fast. Pappy came back and said we were going to move to the bottom place so we all went to work and got ready to go the next day. The weather was getting cooler and he still had that place to look after. It was cotton ginning time. He told us to stay in the house until he came home. He came in about dark and he looked tired and worried. I told him that he had better stay at home and rest but he said that he would have to go and after that he would stay at home. He came home late and brought Mother. I knew then that Noah had gone on to that better land where there was no sorrow, and the weary are at rest. My poor grief stricken Mother, --how much more

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will she have to bear. She came in, ---she looked pale and warm. She sat down by the fire and looked up at me. It seemed that we had reached the end of our endurance, and I cried in despair. Oh, Mother, God did not help us out this time. We have failed in some way. Our faith had grown weak. We were too sure that all our troubles were over. We failed to keep that little ray of light ever before us. It seemed that we were drifting over sunken rocks. We never knew how soon our frail boats will strike those rocks and go down, where will we go?? Then a great fear over came me and I was uneasy for fear our Mother would be taken away from us. Then I went back into the room and put her to bed and told her to rest and I would fix something good to eat. We were a silent family

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that gathered around the table that never to be forgotten night. Then in a few days the letters began to come in from the rest of the family back home and their sympathy helped us to bear this our greatest sorrow. Pappy was so quiet I was uneasy about him too. I was afraid. I went back into the kitchen and prayed for

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strength to bear this and all other troubles that may come to us. Dear God bless us and help us to be brave. Teach us to love one another and hold together that we may be strong and brave to help the weak to bear the hardships of life as we pass along the uncertain pathway of the things to come. Give us strength to bear this added sorrow. Help us to have faith in the goodness and mercy. Bless us and keep us from all harm. Next morning we were all up early. Mother was looking much

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better and more resigned to her loss of her dear son. We went through with that tragedy with aching hearts and now we must turn our thoughts to the rest of the family that had been spared to us. Pappy said there would be plenty to do with finishing gathering and ginning the cotton. The hands had been faithful and stood ready to help finish up the work. Our boys helped too. Everything was going on all right except Mother. She was not getting along so well but we could not expect that after all that she had been through. We were having beautiful October weather. We were playing in the cain and we found a cow with a little calf. We drove her to the house and called Mother to come and see what we had found. She came out and smiled at us and that made us very happy. We knew that she was getting better. We were so glad.

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We still grieved for our dear brother but our loss was his gain for he had made peace with God and we all knew that he was happy in that land of rest and peace, away from the hardships and heartaches of this life. We knew that Mother was going to be all right. Pappy was not so well. He said that he was going to quit work when we got through here and he was going to rest a long time. We went to work with a will running the gin. It was new for us and we enjoyed every day of it. Mother was gaining strength and we were well and happy. There was nothing to worry about. Sometimes a man would stop over night with us. We would be glad to have him. We lived on the bank of the Tallahassee River and the crossing was just below us. So it was handy for anyone going over the river to

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stay with us. Then we would have a party and have pop corn balls, and parch corn and play hull grill with it which is lots of fun. We loved to hear our Pappy laugh with his soft mellow laugh,--much to our joy, happiness, and pleasure. We had lots of fun living in the cain brakes, away from all the heartaches and suffering of our war torched family. Mother taught us our lessons. She had been a school te cher and we had our bible lessons and Pappy prayed and blessed us all. We found four little pigs,--they must have gotten lost from their Mother and we made pets of them. M re fun for the little rebels which we have never ceased to be since we helped fight the Shiloh battle,--even if we did get whipped, which we would not have been if Bouregard had been a full blood American and a Baptist.,

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but that is all gone on the wings of time. Pappy came in and said that the cotton pickers were about through. He kept two men to run the gin. He brought lots of things from town so he would not have to go back until we got through ginning, The cotton and then we would start in on our long rest and we will play around a while. We were glad. Next morning we were all up early and ready to answer the bugle call. He came marching in calling his little soldiers to work and we went to work in earnest. We soon learned how to run everything and it was lots of fun. Mother came and helped some but I knew she came because she was afraid that some of us might get hurt in some way. We had been very careful. We were afraid not

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to be for we did not want anymore trouble to come to us again. One night Pappy came in and asked Samie if he had locked the gin house door. He said no that he had forgotten . Then Pappy said that he would have to go back and lock it. Samie began to cry,--then Pappy told him that the rest of us would stay to guard him. He got the gun, Johnny got the shovel, I got the broom, ? got the tongs and Boga got a stick. I asked Mother if she was coming but she said that she had better stay and guard the supper. So we marched to the gin house and Samie locked that door. He came running in and told Mother that he would never forget anymore. She told him that it was a lesson for him not to forget anything that he was told to do.

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We ate our supper like a pack of hungry little savages

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that we were. The little pigs are real pets now. When the little boys would wallow on the ground they would all get down and play like the little pigs, (that they were). A little dog came and began to play with the pigs. We adopted him too. We were getting quite a family down in the cain brakes. Pappy went to town Saturday to get us some things that we needed. He stayed over Sunday and spent the day with friends. He came home much refreshed all ready to go to work. He said that we must get trought next week and then we would start in on our vacation. The weather would be getting cooler soon. We started in early Monday morning with the two men to run the gin. We did the rest and Pappy was the "boss". Mother was the cook and chief dish washer and we worked with a will

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like the healthy little rebels that we were. Mother had a big job herself cooking for that gang of hungry little workers, and two men. Pappy said we would get all of the cotton baled up this week and would be ready to take it to market. He said he would get two more men to do that so we could start on our vacation next week. We finished up Friday and came in like a pack of savages, with with joy and delight. Pappy came in and said well done my little soldiers. You did well,--you were faithful in little things and I hope and pray that you will do well in larger things. Be brave and true in all things as you pass along the rugged pathway of life. Then he bowed his head and asked Gods blessings upon all of us as we go through life. God bless us everyone,--is my earnest prayer

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We ate our supper with thankful hearts happy because we had done our duty in helping our dear Mother and Pappy and I knew that we had made them happy too. We came down here into the cain brake to find rest and peace and to be together to bear our greatest sorrow. God has blessed us and led us through the darkness into the light of his wonderful love. We must have faith and hope for the best

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and pray that he gives us the strength to bear whatever trouble there is in store for us. Sometimes I have that little uneasy feeling but I try to cast it aside and keep that little line of light ever before me. God bless us and keep us from all harm as we go through the stormy pathway of life that may be said of us. Well done thou faithful which we hope will be

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said of us. I told Mother that our vacation had started but what about here. I think it best to let the boys have theirs out of doors with the pigs and the dog and we would have ours in the house together. You have worked as hard as we did and I don't want to go out with the boys anyway. She said that would just suit her. So we had a big time down in the cain brakes. We had lots to do,-- cooking and fixing good things for the boys to eat. You know it is not hard to work for the ones we love but it is hard to work for the ones you don't love. You know that love is the greatest thing in the world and faith is like unto it. So we had it all to suit everyone and made us all happy. They will be through with the cotton by Saturday,--then it will be one week until Christmas and you know we didn't have any Christmas last year.

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I am a rebel soldier fighting for my home
The Yankees and the homeguards have caused me to roam

If the Yankees don't kill me I will live until I die.

This Soldier boy was found sitting leaning against a tree with a note book in one hand and a pencil in the other. He had been shot,--he died all alone.

Birdie Elsie

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Pappy came home and he brought us lots of things that we badly needed and the best of all he brought a lot of things for Christmas. Then our happiness was complete then Mother and I got busy fixing up for Christmas. The old cow is still giving milk. She has been a great help to us. No one ever called for her. We sure had a big Christmas down in the cain brake. We missed the dear one that has gone on before us into that land above, where all is peace and happiness where the wicked cease to trouble and the weary are at rest. We bowed our heads while our dear

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Pappy blessed us and put us in the care of our Father in heaven who will care for us if we put our trust in Him. We had so many things to be thankful for that filled our hearts

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with joy. We ate our dinner like hungry little soldiers that we were and everyone was happy and gay. Next morning I asked Mother if we did not have to fix up our cloths. She said we would have to fix up the boys everyday things. We had not worn our best things while we were down in the cain brakes. We rarely ever saw anyone except now and then some one would be passing through and would spent the night with us. We were glad to have them. I loved to hear them talk. Pappy never charged any one for staying all night. He welcomed the coming and blessed the parting guest. Pappy will be going to town to town to collect his cotton money and I could go with him if I wanted too. I told Mother that I did not want to leave her there with just the boys. He was taking Johny with him to get him a new suit of clothes.

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He had out grown his old ones. Just think, Johny is eighteen years old. We will all soon be grown up. Time is passing by and we know not what the future will bring us. We have been happy down here,--pappy is looking so much better and I think he has enjoyed every day of the time that we have stayed here. I feel uneasy for fear something will happen to us. I feel as if we were going to have the Resurrection. We know not where we are going,--to heaven or be sent to the bad place where all of the wicked go. I don't mean to say that we are wicked because we are not. Who could be with such a grand Mother and Pappy as we have. I am going to shake off that uneasy feeling and have more faith, hope and love which is the greatest thing in the world. Mother there is

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a man coming in with Pappy and they are talking and laughing like old friends. When they come into the house Pappy introduced him. Mother said she thought he was an old friend of ours. They seemed so glad to see each other. He said that he hoped

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they would be the best of friends after this. He said that he was going to give Pappy a letter of recommendation to a Baptist church. He stayed all night with us and said that he hoped to see us again, which he never did. I told Mother that I was not going to have an uneasy spell about this. It seemed to be a brighter prospect than we were looking for but we can never tell but that little ray of light is still shining. That means hope and faith and love which is the greatest thing in the world. That will always lead us through the darkest despair

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of our lives. Still there is that everlasting arm of God that has been leading us and will never forsake us as long as we trust him. Well Mother, we have something to look forward to now. I am going to run those little old uneasy spells off but that will not keep trouble away. Mother, I haven't seen the little dog around any where. I hope he hasn't run off. Johnny came in and said that the dog had been stolen. He may come back again but he never did. We were sorry to lose him but Mother said that he was a stray when he came here so I guess he strayed away again. The pigs are growing so fast and the little calf is growing too. Mother, I am sorry that we are going to leave here it has been so nice, peaceful and quiet here. Will we take the cow and the pigs with us? She said, we will take

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the pigs but not the cow, she will find a home down here like she found us. Yes mother we found the little pigs,—something must have happened to the mother hog because the pigs were nearly starved. I guess they are ours now. Pappy came in and said somebody has a birthday, I wonder who it is? I jumped up and said it is my birthday,—I am sixteen years old today. I will soon be as big as sis. That was always my fondest ambition. Mother baked a cake and we had a nice little dinner and Pappy blessed us and we were very happy down there in the cabin, but we are going to move on soon. Mother was looking a little worried, I too was afraid of the trip but I told her to cheer up that I was a big girl now and I could help do everything. We are not going far this time. You know how Pappy is; he has so many friends he will

stop over and tell them goodbye. They had been very kind to us in every way. Most of them had been old Army friends. We had two wagons, four mules and those four blessed little pigs. So we loaded up our things and started on our trip to Long Creek, Miss. where Pappy wanted to buy a farm and take charge of the old Antioch Baptist Church. Mother you know that is something to look forward to. We stoped over in Charlestown among friends there. We went on the the place out from Oakland where we had lived a while. We did not see many friends out there. Some of them had moved away. "Uncle" Al had gone to another plantation so the boys did not get to see him. We drove on and stopped over with a man that had been in the army with Pappy. So they ^{had} would have us stay over with them a few days which we were glad to do. It suited me fine,--some how or other I never did want to go to Long Creek. It seemed that something was going to happen. I guess it was one of my uneasy spells. I told Mother about it and she said that she did not want to go either. She said not to say anything about it. There is nothing to it anyway. We had been through so much trouble. Next morning we told our friends goodbye and drove on to Long Creek. We met Col. Johnson and we met Mr. Smith. He was another man we had been sent to. He said that he had two new cabins that we could live in until we found a better place. They were nice, clean, and new. So we moved in and when we got everything fixed they were not bad at all. When we got rested up from our trip Pappy began to ride around to look at the country. He still had his bay horse.

He had selected the place that he was going to buy and was going to preach his trial sermon at, ^{the} Antioch church Sunday. Then he had planned to go back to Tenn. to sell land. He had 1,500 acres in different tracts of land. Sunday morning he was not able to get up when Mr. Smith came after him. So we children went and heard a good sermon by old Brother Baywood. He came from Grenada and preached every fourth Sunday. Pappy said that he would be all right in a few days,--so we all thought. One day I came in and told him that old Selem was dead. It seemed that a wave of sorrow passed over his face and he calmly said it was his time next. I told Mother and she said that she had been afraid of that all the time. She was not well herself.

It seemed that there was an

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end of human endurance. It seemed that a pall of darkness was closing all around us. Mr. Smith came and Mother asked if she had better send for a Doctor. He sent for Doctor Pearson and when he came in the room Pappy said, that if size had anything to do with it he sure would get well right away. He gave Pappy some powders. He said Pappy had a cold and would be all right. There was a lady visiting the Smiths. She just lost her husband so she came in to help nurse Pappy. He did not seem to be very sick talking and laughing with everyone that came in. Next morning he did not seem so very well. He looked tired. The nurse came in and said that her "big baby" had been having too much company and she was going to put a stop to that. He told her he wanted a potato boiled with the

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skin on it. She found one after a long search. She put it in a tea kettle and put it on the fire and Pappy said she could not find it in that big pot. She said yes she could after she had looked all over the neighborhood to find it. Then he fell asleep for a little while and when he awoke he said that he felt queer. Then he called Mother and said call the children that he felt like he was dying. When we came in and went to his bedside he said that he had felt like dying before. He talked to us and gave us lots of good advice. Then he blessed us and left us in the hands of God. Then he fell asleep in the arms of our dear Saviour to be carried away to that beautiful land above where there is no death, no sorrow, no more weeping over loved ones gone

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on before. And as we stood there and looked at that dear face so calm and peaceful I looked up and saw my beautiful Mother tall and stately with her grief stricken face. I said oh, mother, what will we do now. I felt as if the whole world was falling to pieces. Then all was dark and the next thing I knew some one was picking me up and took me to another house where Mother was with her baby son. Other kind friends took care of the other boys. That was the last time we ever saw the face of our dear Father. Kind friends took him away to the old Antioch grave-yard, the church where he was going to take charge; -- man proposes and God disposes. We must bow our heads in submission to his wisdom although our hearts are breaking with grief and sorrow for the loss of our dear Father. Although our loss was his gain for he told

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us that he saw nothing in the way. We were a sad little family that sat around the fire that never-to-be-forgotten night. Mother talked to us and tried to sooth this our greatest grief and sorrow; when her own heart was torn and bleeding. She was like a ship without a rudder tossed by the angry waves of a stormy sea.