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Our brave Mother. She prayed and blessed us, and put us to bed and we slept like the tired little children that we were. Next morning when I got up it was a sun shiny April morning and I saw Mother by the fire. That carried my mind back to that other April morning when the Shiloh battle

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was fought. Mother was sitting there then with the baby in her lap, and now Mother begins her lonely battle of life. I went out into the yard and found the little boys playing with the pigs. Johnny was sitting there watching them. He was growing up to be quite a big boy now. I called them in and the pigs came into the kitchen too and we promised to help Mother in every way we could. I told them that Mother was not use to doing things by herself and we did help her. Some of the neighbors came in. Miss Janie picked up the kettle with the potato in it and said that Mr. Duncan never got his potato. She took it away,--poor Pappy he had his fun almost to the last breath. The Doctor called to see how we were getting along. He was very kind to us. He told Mother that anytime she needed him he would come

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free of charge which she did and he was lots of help to her in many ways, for he felt that it was partly his fault that our Father died. Death is a sure and certain thing. When the death angel calls we must leave all and follow Him. Like Matthew of old,--when Jesus called him he arose, left all and followed Him. That is like the Death Angles call. We must obey that call. I loved my Father with a love beyond expression. I thought he could do everything except raise the dead. Only God could do that. I thought he was like God for he was made in the image of God. I grieved for him in my silent way. I think Mother knew for she treated me like she was sorry for me because she too was grieving for a loved one gone on before. We will meet again

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over there where there is no death, no more weeping and the weary are at rest. For in Heaven alone no sin is found and there is no trouble there. I told Mother that

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we must bear our grief alone and try to make the boys happy. Mother you know that boys take things better than girls. It does not hurt them like it does us. Mr. Smith came and told Mother that he and Pappy had looked around and they could not find any thing better than where we were so we decided to stay there. They were log houses, new and clean. Mother renewed her mid-week prayer meetings at different houses. They pleased everyone since they were not having any night meetings. The boys went to work. We had our own stock so things were not so bad at all.

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Mother kept us up with our school work ever since we left the old home at Rockville Hill. So we did not go to school the rest of the term. We made many friends among the rich and the poor. They were all alike to us. Just as our dear Father taught us. That it was not how much a man was worth in this world that makes him good but it was how much he helped the stranger at his door. He also must visit the sick and help the needy. Mother told us that we must follow in the foot steps of our dear Father and all would be well with us. I believe we did in every way that we could. We never forgot that last talk he gave us as we stood around his bedside just before he left us, that beautiful April day. It made me think of another April day when we buried Joe Stratton

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on a sunny hillside after the Shiloh battle. I will never forget those Yankee boys how they took care of us little rebels. Sometimes there would be some low class men come by and mis-treat us and talk ugly to Mother but it did not take our friends long to put a stop to that. I will never forget them. I often wonder how many of them came through that cruel war alive. We will never know. I hope they did. This is Saturday,--Johnny went to town to get some things for us to use. He brought some letters from back home. Among them was one from a lawyer asking Mother to come and bring Pappys will. There was some land to be divided among her step children. They wanted her to help them to decide what was the best to do. The lawyer was an old schoolmate of Mothers,

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back in Alabama and she knew that he would do what was right, but she went anyway. We thought it would help her to go back for a while and visit among old friends so I was chief cook and house keeper. We got along fine. Mother took our baby brother with her. I was glad she did as I knew she would be better satisfied to have him with her. Mother found everything all right except some of the heirs thought she got too much land. They did not think about our Mother having six children to take care of. So they tried to break the will but could not so everything was all right after all. Mother had a nice visit and we were glad to have her back with us again looking much better. We had so much to tell each other and we were glad and so much happier than we had been for

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a long time. (1870) Summer was fast passing away. The boys had to hurry to get their work done by the time school was to start. We went to the old Antioch school house. Spring came in warm and beautiful. Another April and our Father has been gone a year and we still have our dear Mother for which we are very thankful. Mother had a letter from Jim saying that he was coming to spend the spring and summer with us. That made us very happy. We had not seen him in three years. Little brother did not know him. He was surprised to see his baby sister such a big girl. I told him that I was seventeen--almost as big as Sis and I could cook almost as good as Mother. We were a happy family that night even though it was another April. I hope nothing bad would happen to us this time to make

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us unhappy. Well Jim said maybe he would bring good luck this April. And I guess he did for we did not have any more April trouble. Jim was the same happy go-lucky boy that he had always been,--even when he was chained to the floor. He would talk and laugh with Mother. I believe that jolly laugh took us over many hard places. No wonder we loved him so much,--we were very proud of our Big Bud. I told Mother that we had the best boys of any one,--it must be because we love them so much. Mother you know that love is the greatest thing in the world and faith is like unto it. Love never fails if we have faith, hope. And love is the greatest of

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these. We could face the world with all its trouble and hardships. We lost two loved ones by the wayside and yet we have

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so many things to be thankful for. Mother said that we must forget all that we had been through and make Jim's visit with us a pleasure that he will always remember for we may not all be together again. So we did. Mother was looking fine,—the roses' were blooming again in her cheeks and Jim helped the boys do their work. Mother had to go back to Shiloh to attend Spring Court. It seemed that the older children were not satisfied with the way that land was divided. Mother was gone two weeks. She had a nice visit. Still that will stand as it was at first. We were glad to have Mother back with us. Jim stayed with us until mid-summer. We were so sorry to have him go. He went to the plantation where he was manager. Then soon after that he married his boss' daughter and that was good

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news to us. We sure did miss him. Mother said she was glad that he was married. She was the only child. Her Father was dead and her Mother was the boss so it will feel more like home to Jim. Mother told us all about the folks back home. I think she was a little homesick. We had a nice time the rest of the summer. We went to the summer school and ran around with the young folks. Then cotton picking time came and we had plenty to do. After that Mother and I were busy making our winter clothes. I noticed for the first time that Mother was getting gray. It seemed that time went rushing by on the wings of the wind and we are getting grown up. It is a true saying that time and tide waits for no man. Mother said that we must get through with our work in plenty of time to

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fix up for Christmas for we never know what may happen before the next one comes around. We all may not be together again. We never can tell. So we did have a big time with Christmas trees and parties. Then the biggest Christmas tree and dance was given in a new store and the same man that had asked me to marry him before asked me again and I married him. I was eighteen. Mother seemed to be pleased with the

Major Branch Tanner Hurt, Jr., born March 26, 1835 in Petersburg, VA. According to Elsie's obituary in the Memphis Commercial Appeal in 1943: "In 1870 at the old Peabody Hotel [in Memphis] she was married to Major Branch Tanner Hurt of Petersburg, VA. He had served through the entire four years of battle in General Robert E. Lee's army of Northern VA. After her marriage she lived at Courtland, MS, until 1900 when she came to Memphis. Her husband died in 1890."

marriage. Soon after that Mother decided to take the boys and go back to Shiloh. She left early in the year and that was the hardest cut of all. No one ever knew how much hard I took it when Mother and the boys left. I was alone,--even the little pigs grew into big hogs and they sold them. Even my little pet calf was grown. One of my boy friends gave me a little white pig,

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another one gave me a kitten so I had some pets anyway. I had a long letter from Mother telling about her trip. She was in Corinth visiting among friends and relatives. She was going to ? to see Susie and Margie before going on to Shiloh. She found Margie doing well but Susie was all broken up. She had not heard from Joe. "Big" little Joe was still working the mills as lumber setter. They seemed to be doing well. Then Mother and the boys went on to Shiloh and as she said,--that desolate place stared her in the face. Where the house had stood was a brier patch. A man came up and she told him all about it. He said Parson Duncan was the man that gave his Father the water on that fatal battle field. So he took Mother and the boys home with him and treated them as honored guests.

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And there

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was where my Father cast the bread upon the water which returned unto my Mother after several years had passed by. When a man goes over the battle field after the battle under protection of a white flag loaded down with canteens of cool water he does not think of friend or foe. He goes among the dead and the dying and is doing the Lords work. They all look alike to him,-- the blue and the gray. They were Gods people and a cool drink of water saved the lives of many a poor soldier lying helpless soaked in his own blood. Paul said that Love is the greatest thing in the world. I believe that kindness should come next, then faith and hope. If we kept all of the greatest words of the blessed promises of the bible and obeyed the words

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of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ there would not be any wars, and peace, love, kindness, faith and hope would reign all over Gods beautiful world. But yet the

Bible says there shall be wars and rumors of war until the end of time, and then the first resurrection when all of the good people shall rise from the dead and live on this earth 1,000 years. Then they will be courted up into the sky and then the greatest war of all will be fought between God and the devil and that will be the last war. And now the son of this man that my Father found on that bloody battle field said he did not die only because he had a drink of water. The son may not know anything about this. It is the

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way our Savior moves in a mysterious way to reward our acts of kindness to each other here below. When I was a little girl I use to be afraid that the fish would eat the bread up before it reached some one that needed kindness. Margie said that God took care of that and she knew more than anyone except Pappy and Mother. Some kind friends and old neighbors came and helped Mother and soon they had a nice log house and out houses. They had planned to build a house on the same plot where the old home had stood later on. She planted out the old orchard that was shot all to pieces during the battle. Just one peach tree was left. I went to see her with my fifteen month-old

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baby. I stayed two months with her and we visited around and had a very pleasant time. We went back to Rock Hill. They had torn the old house down and built a white cottage over the front yard on top of the rose bushes and other smaller flowers. It made my heart ache to look at them. I was sorry that we went there. All during the war and the years after I had an uneasy feeling as if something was going to happen and now I have a little ache in my heart for the things long gone by. All of the things that I thought were so beautiful were all gone. We went up on the hill side to see Joes grave but we could not find where it was. No one had cared for it like I did. I told Mother that I did not want to see anything else so we went back home where everything

Following the war, Joe's remains were moved to the Shiloh National Cemetery, Grave #639 of Section E of the National Cemetery. You can see a photograph of his grave at this link:
<http://www.shilohbattlefield.org/cemetery/detail1.asp?GRAVE=E-0639>

was new and nice. It was indeed a pleasant land and that was its name. My visit was about over. We all enjoyed being together again very much. So we all dressed up to go to Corinth twenty miles away. Mother looked so young and pretty with her rosy cheeks,--my beautiful Mother. That little ache in my heart came again to let me know how hard it was to leave her. We stopped ^{on} by the way and ~~said~~ stayed all night with friends. Then we said good by to them and went on to Corinth and stayed all night with friends there. Then I went on to Memphis and met my husband and we took a boat to Shreveport and there we bought a wagon and team and other things and rambled all over Texas until November. Then Mother came and stayed two months with us and

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in that way we got to see each other real often. That helped my little ache ever so much. Next time I went to see them they had started the new house. It was not going to be as large a house as the old one. My two older brothers were married and they had children. That made Mother happy. Then she turned the housekeeping over to them and that set Mother free to go where she pleased. About that time the government began to talk about making the Shiloh park there. It was only a rumor at that time but it caused some excitement among the people that had come back there and had built their homes and the others that had bought land there and built homes on it. The boys wanted to finish the house. Mother thought best to wait

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a while and see what they were going to do about the park. My two youngest brothers went to Texas to take charge of a school there and Mother went with them. When school closed they came back home and spent the summer. Then I went to see Mother again. When my husband died she came and stayed with me until I could get use to losing him. She was a great comfort to me in time of need. Two years later I went to see her. They were sure the park was going to be there. Mother was all excited over it. She would have to get a court order to seal her land. Things like that work slowly. I had a nice visit with her,--they were all so glad to have me.

Major Branch Tanner Hurt
died December 12, 1890,
in Courtland, MS.

The boys went back to Texas and Mother came by to see me and stayed about a month. Then she went on to Texas to stay with the boys and that was the last time I ever saw her alive. Little we know of what is coming to us or how soon

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we will be stricken with sorrow more than we can bear,--sorrow that will cause our hearts to ache for the rest of our lives. One morning I was sitting at the desk writing to my dear Mother when a boy brought me a letter telling me that my Mother was not expected to live. They had taken her back to Shiloh to the dear old home where she loved to live so well. I left home on the first train. I got to Shiloh late in the afternoon. My brother met me at the gate. All he said was, "she will not know you." The yard was full of people. The men took off their hats,--the women bowed their heads. I went into that room of death, and saw the Doctor sitting on the bedside of her. Not a word was spoken. I knew then that she would not wake until she awoke in that better land where there is no death, no shedding of tears, of sorrow or bitter regrets. I went into

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the kitchen. There was no one in there. All was silent. I went back into the room,--night was falling. Mother was silently breathing her life away. The friends out in the yard had gone silently away. Others were coming in but not a word was spoken. Who knows the house may have been full of angels waiting to bear our beautiful Mother away on their snowy wings to that peaceful home above where Pappy and Noah are waiting for her. She passed away next morning while we joined hands that formed a ring around her and it seemed that we could almost feel the angels wings around us as they bore her away to her home in Heaven. Mother always said that she wanted to be buried at sunset. ??? ? ? ? ? They took Mother to the church and kept her there nearly all day.

September 27, 1895

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I never saw such a big crowd in my life. They sang sacred songs and made talks until nearly sunset. Then they buried her there in the old Shiloh grave yard. Just as they finished Jim rode up. He fell down and said, I was his little sister. (?)

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It was the most pathetic sight I ever saw. It was enough to melt a heart of stone. We were a silent grief stricken family as the children gathered around that table that night. It was almost more than we could bear. Next day a friend had us to dinner and we spent the day with them. Kindness helps to heal an aching heart and soften our greatest sorrow,--The loss of our beautiful Mother. Jim went after Sister Middie. I saw her sitting there in silent grief. I knelt by her and laid my head on her lap and she talked to me and that helped me so much. Dear Middie, we

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children loved her so much. I went to sleep kneeling there by her side. When I awoke she was gone. I never saw her again. She died five months later. My baby brother was with her when the angels took her away to that peaceful land above. I stayed with the boys awhile,--then one of them went home with me. I was glad to have him. Then he went back to Shiloh where he was born. Mother did well with her four boys. Johnny and Samie became preachers,--Paulie and Boga became lawyers. Mother was very proud of them. We kept up with each other as best we could after we lost our dear Mother. They were beginning to work on the park. Johnny stayed there on the home place where he could get all of the work he could and preach on Sunday. Samie had gone to Adamsville where it suited him best.

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Margie came and stayed with the boys until they became use to doing without Mother. She went to Mothers grave and kneeling there she held her hand up toward Heaven. There it was again,--Mistress and maid parting for the last time until they meet in that home above where there is no more parting, no more aching hearts and desolate homes. I was so glad that Johnny and Sallie stayed there in the old home with the children until the Shiloh park was finished. Samie stayed in Adamsville where it suited his calling best. He did evangelistic work too. The two younger ones went to Arkansas where they could practice law. As the years have gone by all of my brothers have passed away except one. We two are the only ones left of nineteen children. There are grand sons and great grandsons

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left to carry the name on clean and honorable as it always has been of which we are very proud. Soon we two will board the old ship of Zain that will land us safely on that shining shore and oh, I will be sorrowful if in heaven there is no one to meet us. Will we know each other there? Yes I believe we will know our loved ones there in that peaceful land of promise and I still thank God for the blessed promises of the bible which I have read through many many times and I believe every work in it. And I have tried so hard to follow its teachings and examples. I wish I could take my children and other loved ones and lay them at the foot of the cross and ask the dear Lord to bless them and take them through the beautiful gates that stand ajar

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open for all who wish to enter there. Many brave hearts have fallen by the wayside over the stumbling blocks that have been cast in their pathway. We should not tell others of their faults when we are loaded down with our own short comings. Do unto others as we would have others do unto us. This is one of the hardest mottos that ever was written, AND the hardest to keep.