

# IN DIXIE'S LAND

## BEFORE THE WAR.

By the late James Franklin Tifts.

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### CHAPTER I ACCORDING TO "THE CODE."

**T**HE story will be an autobiography. I, Dorr Jewett, am the narrator. I am a native of New Hampshire; but the larger part of my life has been passed in the La Fourche district of Louisiana. This should be said, in order that my personality may be understood at the start.

A worn and time-stained copy of the Vicksburg Daily Citizen of April 6, 1853, lies before me. After the occurrence of certain events with which future chapters will deal, I took the trouble to secure this paper, and have ever since preserved it. In its columns is a brief and rather unsatisfactory reference to an affair which had excited large interest in that part of Mississippi. I was not a witness of it; and the description afterward given to me by one of the actors in it was so much more in detail than the newspaper account that I prefer to adopt the former in setting this landmark at the outset of the story.

If you follow the left bank of the river down to a point where the Vicksburg bluffs sink to the ordinary level of the river banks, you will come out upon a beautiful grassy glade overlooking the water. Some small elms and cottonwoods made a pleasant shade bordering the road; a wide strip of land, possibly thirty rods across, lay between the highway and the river bank.

So early upon the morning of the 3d of that April that the sun had not yet shown his rim above the trees, three horsemen came at a brisk trot down the road, stopped at this grove, dismounted, and tied their horses.

"The other people are not here yet," one of the men observed. "There's time enough. Ah! there they are."

Three more horsemen approached from the opposite direction. They also halted here, and fastened their horses. All of the six were dressed in white duck suits, for the weather of that spring had come on hot. Two of them carried each one a case of mahogany wood, and these two, after saluting each other, came together in earnest conversation. Two of the others also approached and shook hands, and the prefix "doctor" was exchanged between them.

"A disagreeable business," one observed.

"Indeed it is. I hope we shall neither of us be needed."

"I hope so—but fear it will be otherwise. They say both are good shots. You brought your instruments?"

"Yes; I carry them in a large pocket in my saddle-flap."

"All right; my darky is on the way with mine. Now what are Dorian and Basnet about?"

These two, each with his mahogany case under his arm, had drawn off out of hearing. But as my account of the whole affair came from one of them, their conversation may be stated here.

"Has this thing really got to go on?"

"I suppose so—unless your man will withdraw his challenge."

"He can't do that. To do it would be to confess that he never had any grounds for it."

"And, do you know, Mr. Castex says that he never did have any ground for

"No. Give us another shot."

"It is time now for me to say a word," said the friend of Mr. Castex, coming up. "He does not instruct me; I interfere because it seems something like murder to allow this difficulty to go any further. Mr. Bostock, my principal has accepted your challenge because he comes of a race of fighting men; his father was killed at Waterloo; he wants no imputation upon his own courage. He has come here and has exchanged shots with you, declaring to me that you have no just cause of offense against him. Whether you have or not, nobody but you two can know. The language which gave you offense was uttered in your own house, at your own table. What it was, no one heard but you. Both of you ought now to be satisfied; both of you have vindicated your honor. Let the affair end here."

Mr. Bostock faced the speaker.

"Does that man," he asked, while his voice trembled with passion, "does that man affirm that he has not given me just cause for offense?"

"That is what I say," called out Mr. Castex from where he stood, with a strong French accent.

"Then you lie, sir!" deliberately retorted Bostock.

"Indeed! That is very good. You will observe now, messieurs, there is reason to fight, if there has not been before."

The seconds silently assented, and recharged the pistols. As they handed them back, they saw something in the faces of the principals that predicted another result this time. The steamer had advanced to a point nearly opposite where they stood, and the slow deep coughing of her pipes seemed to emphasize the scene.

Again the word was given; both pistols spoke together. As the smoke floated off, Bostock was seen standing

upright. Castex lay his full length upon the ground.

Both doctors were instantly kneeling by him. He never stirred. A small hole in the forehead showed where the bullet had traversed the brain.

Mr. Bostock looked at the group.

"Is he dead?" he asked.

His friend came over to where he stood.

"Yes," he said.

Mr. Bostock's face was getting white, and an expression of pain crossed it. His friend caught him as he was settling down to the ground.

One of the doctors hurried over and laid the sufferer on the grass.

"He hit me the last time," said Bostock, faintly. "Look at the chest."

The doctor tore open vest and shirt and found the bullet hole. He inserted the probe. Then he administered a stimulant.

"How is it, doctor?" the wounded man asked.

"I don't wish to alarm you, sir; but this is serious."

Under the temporary influence of the stimulant Mr. Bostock sat up.

"I beg of you don't try to talk," the doctor said. "Your life may depend upon your keeping quiet."

His remonstrance was not heeded.

"I want you all to know," cried the wounded man, "that I never wanted to kill him. You saw the chance I gave him. I could have put my first ball through his head just as easily as through his hat, if I'd wanted. He had a chance then to take back the damnably insulting words that he whispered to me at my own table. I wanted him just to say: 'Mr. Bostock, I'm sorry that I said it, and it was not true,' and I would have taken his hand. But no, he must die, repeating the insult. The fool would rush on his fate."

"Mr. Bostock," said the friend of the man who lay dead a few yards away, "what were those words that you claim were so insulting?"

"Not another word!" the doctor cried. "Silence and quiet, at the peril of your life!"

"I can't tell you," Bostock faintly replied. "You must not know what he said. Nobody must know. The fool—what tempted him? Say, Dorian—all of you—remember!—I have made no will—but my child, Coralie, will have it all—the plantations here and in Louisiana—all—all—"

The blood gushed from his mouth and he fell back in a faint.

### CHAPTER II. AMONG THE GRANITE HILLS.

As has been said, the scenes described in my first chapter were not witnessed by me. But I had seen and known one of the chief actors long before that memorable morning. I had seen and known him under circumstances that make it necessary to a due comprehension of the narrative to state where, when and how.

It was five years before. To be exact, it was the spring of 1848. I was

planting corn with my father, on one of

the almost sterile hillsides of the New

Hampshire farm. The humble roof under which I was born was visible down near the river.

The Merrimac wound along two sides of our little

homestead, furnishing the only cheerful feature of the scene. Hills—sterile hills—encompassed us. Twenty

miles away I could see the granite top of Mount Kearsarge soaring to the clouds.

I was a boy of eleven, rather precocious for my years. I attended the public school four months in the year, and labored with my father the balance of the time among these rocks. I went to "meeting" on Sundays in the old edifice on top of a high hill, on the steeple of which a veering wooden codfish denoted the direction of the wind, and saved the people from the profanation which a cross in that place would have caused. I listened to the choir, elevated to a fearful height in the rear gallery, as they thundered forth resounding anthems and fugues. I heard the doleful-visaged and drawling-voiced minister pray forty minutes at a stretch, and preach ninety, frequently devoting nine-tenths of the whole race to exquisite and eternal torment. I had a thirst for knowledge that the public school could not supply. A stray copy of the Boston Daily Journal, coming like an enchanter from the outside world, sometimes stimulated this thirst. I was generally regarded as "a green boy," "an odd stick," etc.; and I once heard of Deacon Halleck telling my father that a boy with such outlandish notions as Dorr ought to be whipped regularly twice a week. Doubtless I should have been, had the deacon been given the ordering of me earlier than he was; but my father, although reared in all the vigor of Puritanism, was by nature kind and tender-hearted, and religious fanaticism could not change him. To my own puzzled youthful mind, it often seemed as though a grave mistake had been made in my allotment. I seemed to have been set down in the wrong corner of the world, among a people with whom I had no affinity.

I was still a mere boy. I learned as I grew older, and long before I bade farewell to my northern home, to respect the intelligence, the force, the sturdy honesty of this people, whose very "failings leaned to virtue's side." Still, I thought then, as I think now, that I should always have been dwarfed and cramped among them.

Returning to the bleak hill-side where my father and I were striving to plant corn on that afternoon, I record how I suddenly stopped work, leaned on my hoe, and contemplated my father. He was in his shirt-sleeves; his graying hair and refined but wrinkled face were turned to me as he bent over his toil. A sudden inspiration seized me.

"Father! Do you suppose that when I get to be as old as you are, I shall be planting corn in these rocks?"

He stopped and looked up in surprise.

"I hope not, Dorr—I hope you won't!"

But what put such a question into your head just now?"

"It's in my head all the time. The way things are going on here, there

don't seem to be anything coming to me but the same poverty and the same labor that you have always had."

He looked at me—a serious, pitying glance it was—and sat down on a granite bowlder. He leaned his head on his hand and sighed.

"My boy, I've often thought of this. Your poor mother and I have laid awake nights talking about it; but I never thought it had troubled you any. What do you want?"

"To go to the academy—maybe to college—and by and by to get out into the world, try to make a man of myself, like the men I read of, and to see something besides these hills and these people. I'd like to get rich, and come back and build a big house for you and mother over on the lake. Yes, I'd like to do anything rather than live here all my life."

He smiled at my youthful enthusiasm; but his look of painful reflection quickly returned.

"Dorr, I had just such dreams myself, when I was young, and I presume that my father before me had them. I wanted an education, and couldn't have it. Poverty, hard toil and embarrassment seem to be the lot of those who cleave to this soil. God knows, I wish things might be shaped as you wish them; but how to contrive it I do not know."

His hoe dropped from his hand, and his eyes sought the ground. I chanced to look down toward the river road and I saw a man in a buggy stop at our gate. A woman, my mother, of course, as there was none other about the house, came to the door. There was a brief parley; then the man got out, hitched the horse, climbed the fence and strode over the upland toward us.

### [TO BE CONTINUED.]

### PREVENTION OF CONSUMPTION.

#### Certain Breathing Movements Claimed to Be of the Greatest Value.

I think it is evident that proper development and expansion of the lungs by means of well-regulated breathing must be regarded as of the greatest value in the prevention and in the treatment of the inactive stages of pulmonary consumption, says Dr. Thomas J. Mays in the Century. The more simple the method the more effective and practical will be the results which flow from it. Among the many exercises which are recommended for this purpose the following movements are very valuable: The arms, being used as levers, are swung backward as far as possible on a level with the shoulders during each inspiration, and brought together in front on the same level during each expiration. Or the hands are brought together above the head while inspiring, and gradually brought down alongside the body while expiring. A deep breath must be taken with each inspiration, and held until the arms are gradually moved forward, or downward, or longer, in order to make both methods fully operative.

Another very serviceable chest exercise is to take a deep inspiration, and during expiration in a loud voice count or sing as long as possible. A male person with a good chest can count up to sixty or eighty, while in a female, even with good lungs, this power is somewhat reduced. Practice of this sort will slowly develop the lungs, and the increased ability to count longer is a measure of the improvement going on within the chest. Or, again, the taking of six or eight full and deep breaths in succession every hour during the day, either while sitting at work or walking out in the open air, will have a very beneficial effect.

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