

(Copyright, 1898, by F. A. Cummings.) INTRODUCTION.

Many years ago, long before the breaking but of the civil war, the writer of this book was a civil engineer and land surveyor in what was then and is now called the Attakapas country of Louisiana.

I had been sent to Louislana by my stepfather to learn the business, it being his intention that, after study and experience, I should return to my home in the settlement near the mouth of the Gila river on the west coast of Africa, where he lived. I left there in the year 1844, being nearly

20 years of age, and having no knowledge or acquaintance with the world except that gained from books and from the officers and crews of the various vessels that traded at our barracoon.

My stepfather was ambitious and had scheme to lay off the country into farms. colonize them and establish an independ ent government upon the west coast.

Portugal held nominal possession of the district he wished to locate, and he had obtained a grant of an enormous tract of land for that purpose. This was when the slave trade was flourishing, but the growing pressure of the English and American war vessels crippled him financially, and his barracoon being eventually destroyed he left Africa and settled in Mississippi in 1854. These changes interfered with his plans for my education and future prospects, and

I was obliged to depend upon myself. The deck of a slaver was a wild school when George Weener approached me with have your support. his extraordinary scheme he little knew the past history of his apt pupil. He often character and my knowledge of west coast cibberisb.

he died I have obtained possession of his papers and shall soon publish them. They tell a story of the life of an African

elayer that rivals the wildest romance in interest and adventure, while dealing in literal facts. Many of the actors are yet living-more are dead and at the bottom C. J. BRADLEY.

CHAPTER L The Underground Railroad.

Ten years previous to the outbreak of the late civil war and until the fall of Fore Sumter I was a resident of the state of

During the last five years before the war I was an accredited agent of the then notorious underground railroad, a corporation whose history, written and unwritten, contains enough remantic adventures, hairbreadth escapes, examples of patient endurance and pathetic scenes to furnish the annals of a nation.

The legends of this road are so interwoven with romance that it is difficult to extract the true from the false. In this story, however, I shall endeavor to present a true narrative of events in which I was personally interested, as they occurred in the Dark Belt of Louisiana in the "days before the war."

Five years of my life were passed in the service of this underground railroad, and I was a direct participant in many of the chronicled. I had a partner George L. Wesner, a young man about 25 years of age-a born leader of men-cool and determined, with a warm heart and open band to the call of the friendless-but as an enemy a man to be feared, for he was a crack shot and reckless as a river pirate. and to his cool courage and resistless enorgy our success was largely due. He was my ideal then, and although forty years lie between then and now, I thrill with admiration as I think of him.

He was the son of a sugar planter, and born a few miles from the Bayou Teche. parish of St. Mary's, Louisiana, in the Attakapas country. His father was dead, but his mother owned and worked about seventy negroes, and until the year before forming my acquaintance George managed the plan-

He was well educated, spoke English, German and French, and was an accomplished musician, but he was so thoroughly imbued with the love of adventure and danger that it almost unfitted him for business, and interfered with his popularity among the conservative planters, who constituted the bulk of the Attakapus population. But they evinced a wholesome respect for him, founded, I suspect, upon his physical as well as his intellectual qualities. for he stood six feet in his stockings, was well proportioned and an adept in all athletic exercises. On the 10th day of September, 1855, I was

sitting in my doorway, quietly smoking my cigarette and enjoying the beauty of a September afternoon. The clear air of the prairie was cool and fragrant and as I was enjoying its freshness leaning back in my chair I imagined myself the happiest of men. I was young, not 30 years of age, free from debt and owned the pretty place I lived on. My business of land surveying as loudly as I could, and so he only came brought me a good income in addition to the profit of my little plantation. This I over his head so the disease wouldn't hit worked, with the assistance of one or two him. hands hired from the neighboring planta-

away across the prairie I could faintly discern a speck, just a fleck of moving brown background upon the sea of green that rolled determined to repay her, if I could, I taught to the edge of the horizon. My eyes, prac- her to read (she already knew her latters). ticed to such scenes, assured one that it was and in a few weeks she could read undera mounted man, and with the aid of my field standingly any simple book. glass I saw that he was moving

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back, varicocele or emaciation of parts can allow cure themselves at home.

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down the trail that led to my home with his horse at a breakneck gallop. It was George her here. Perhaps her case never could be Wesner, and as he came nearer I could see that he was excited, an unusual state for him. He rode straight toward the hitching post as was his wont, slipped the bridle I can steal her, and that I'm going to do." through the hole and over the end, and came toward me biting savagely at the end of his cigarette; he then threw himself down under the shade of a large live oak that grew a few yards from the house, beckening

sat down beside him. "Charlie," said he, after we had smoke! twhile, "I want your assistance in an affair that it is more than likely you will not meddle with. Because, if you assist, your neck will be in equal danger with my own." I was a little curious to know what the eserved, quiet George Wesner had in view

me to come out under the tree. I did so and

that enemaced the anatomy of a person's plenty of money, and it was his darling neck, and laughingly inquired, "What is it, George, steal a mule or rob a bank?" "Stop your chaffing, Charlie! It is-steal a nigger-and that in our criminal calendar is

the greatest crime. 'So it is, so it is," I replied. "You had better buy one if you are in want." "Can't do it, Charlie. I've trief and Cov-

erly won't sell her." "Coverly won't sell her! Ah! I under

"Then the nigger is a woman and belongs to Coverly? I've got the whole story. "No, you haven't, but you shall if you have patience to listen. What I have to tell you happened before you came to Attakapas, and when you have the story, you shall be In which to learn the alphabet of life, and the judge whether I am right and shall

"In September, 1850, I came home from New Orleans sick: there was no physician wondered at my easy adaptation to negro to be had this side of the city. The disease developed and my own medical knowledge told me it was smallpox. That was I commenced this narrative thirteen years enough; every living soul fled in terror and ago, before my stepfather's death. Since I was alone-no, not alone-although whites and negroes fled in terror. One bit of a chattel, one child remained-Coverly's Lucy.

1 nodded assent. "Massa George had been very good to her and she refused to leave him.

"This girl remained true, forgetting self in her anxiety for me. Her master sent for her, knowing how fatal the disease was among negroes and he feared for his property. She still refused to leave.

"Dreading the contagion, he dared no send his other negroes for her. Negroes be ing cash in Attakapas, he naturally wanted to keep his property. Lucy was valued at \$1,000 then, and gave promise of future beauty. Smallpox scars would not contribute to the market value of a girl like her.

"I had studied medicine and had a very good idea of the disease and its method of treatment. I expected that if very sick I should lose my reason, and prepared for it being determined to pull through unscarred if possible

"I prepared lashings for my arms and thin cloths to wet and put over my face. This done, I called Lucy to me and explained as fully as I could the course to take. "I told her I might lose my senses, but to

follow my instructions and not be afraid. for I should be too weak to injure her. 'I am not afraid, Marsa George. God will take care of us,' was her quiet reply. "At this time I was engaged to Miss Elsie

Coverly, as you have probably heard before. which it was evident fear predominated over her love for me. However, she was my mother's choice, not mine, I was too sick to care and my preparations being made, staggered to the bed and lay down, to live or die, as Providence should determine. This was the last I realized for two

weeks. A part of the time I lay in a stupor, out when aroused, as I afterward learned, was wild and pretty ugly through some of these long autumnal nights.

"I was weak and helpless, but thanks to Lucy's unceasing care and forethought was unscarred by the dread disease. One midsweeping over the prairie and drove the cold The candle burned dim, but by its faint light I could easily distinguish the shadow of my faithful nurse.

"I spoke; she started from her chair and came to my bedside. At one glance she quired; this we committed to memory and saw that my reason had returned, and falling on her knees, she prayed as I never heard man or woman pray before, and must have been old to George. thanked God that her prayers had been answered. Think, Charlie, she was not then 13 years of age! I tried to give her my hand, but was too weak to calse it; then I asked for the mirror; she held a small arrangements with the leading abolitionists hand-mirror before my face. One eager glance-I turned away with a sigh of satisfaction; the ordeal was passed; I was un-

scathed. "'Are you alone?' I inquired. She answered, 'Yes, sir.' 'Have any of Mr. Covorly's family been here?' 'No, sir. Miss Elsie sent their man Bill over, but she told him not to come near enough to catch the disease. I could not make him hear, scream twice; and the second time he had a bag

"I lay there six weeks. It was nearly four more before I was able to venture out. As my gaze wandered aimlessly around Meanwhile, my mother returned; however, I was weak in body and perhaps mind, and would have no other help but Lucy's. Then,

"And now, Charlie, comes the strangest part of this story. I believe that girl is a white girl. You know such things have happened in Louisiana. It was a long time as hunting for the Tribune office, so avoided about herself, and she did not say then that crners, especially Attakapas people. as a nigger slave. But she said there was time in his prime, and the most notorious something very strange in her first receller- abolitionist in the whole union. Now here is a queer thing. Charlie. When pen they most feared. I was getting well Lucy was taking a nap | There were two or three people in the ber sleep, and what she said was, 'O, non, ant mood. non, allez!" Now she can't speak French above his eyes and he scanned me closely, when she is awake and almost no Acadien. In her sleep she uses the purest accent. I've you but a few moments." make good French of it, the way French today, however. tongue; that's as sure as we are alive here business matters," he replied.

divined what happened. This child's family they were all down Name your time and place. Bring your among the negroes to be taken care of, whom you can trust, for if this conspiracy and making comments. I called two of the got sick, the negroes sickened and died is made public I am an exile from home or three to step in and try the new boat. probably, and this dark-haired baby was my angry townsmen will suspend me from Three of the boys did so, and I paddled out sold with the remains of the family prop- the nearest tree, and as I am worth a fine perhaps a half mile and back again. erty by some one who did not guess or did little property in Louisiana, I do not wish not want to consider the chances for a hor- to be exiled; liking life pretty well, I do curiosity to try the capacity of my beat, and rible blunder. I know the marks of negro | not care to be hanged." blood pretty well; I've recognized it in blueeyed, blond-haired niggers in a minute, but will tell you, finger nails, palms of her hands, wherever you look, there is not a

proven before the law, and if I made a move to investigate old Coverly would sell her or do something worse right off. But Of course, I could not be as sure as Wesner that Coverly's Lucy was a pure white, but still, even with no romantic sentiments to warp my judgment, I thought it possible enough that his surmise was correct. As he said, such things had happened in the great rascal rather than a petty one, and south, and his own theory in this case was continued my preparations. plausible enough. As he talked a wild

me by its daredevil quality, and I knew, too, that rightly put through it could be and Monday passed and I had received no this was to buy a small stock of general made profitable. When he stopped speaking news from Mr. Greeley. without entering on the question of Lucy's race, I said: "You know that it is you and not I who have fallen in love with Coverly's Lucy, ing.

notion had come into my head; it attracted

states. Lucy included, I will assist you to abduct her at all hazards." "It is agreed," he replied.

If you can give me encouragement, say so, Hudson, undentably a perfect success.

"What is your object? Nothing but

"Yes," said I. "love of adventure and desire to destroy the whole slave system." sign of it in Lucy. I can do nothing for "What is your address?" he asked. This I gave him, and, promising to write me a note specifying when and where he would meet me, he bowed me out and this ended my first interview with Horace Greeley.

I took a long walk after the interview and half determined to retreat, content with assisting Wesner to abduct Lucy, but in either case, I was risking my neck, and concluded I should prefer to be hanged as a

CHAPTER III.

but I honor you and will enter into an I waited impatiently for the hour to come free negroes in our district. agreement with you to devote our time to and about 7:45 the waiter brought up the The purchase of these goods took somerunning negroes from this country into free | card of Mr. Stephens.

> that Mr. Entwissle wished to see me at his in Cairo. Our boats were packed in two office and requested me to accompany him. boxes, marked for Bradley's yard, Arkansas.

plague she has ever seen. I tell you I have risk my life; others must bear the expense, use and floating upon the bosom of the A crowd of boys and men lined the river company, I will unfold the plans. Bring bank, gazing and watching our movements.

> would like to have a few of you step in. will promise not to drown you I held her well up to the bank until fifteen men and half grown boys were

"Now, gentlemen," said I, "I have a great

seated on her thwarts, then shoved her off. She floated handsomely, with her gunwale at least ten inches out

This was better than I expected. We paddled around for perhaps fifteen minutes. landed, hauled our boat on the shore, went to the hotel for our dinner, returned and started down the river in the canoe, arriving at New York-yes, at Colson's shop-in less than four hours. I was well satisfied.

CHAPTER V.

At the expiration of a week George Wesner one evening walked into the Astor house. I was glad enough to see him, as I The next day was the Sabbath. Both it had already another project in my mind, and Tuesday afternoon I found a note at the plantation, a very good location, and the botel clerk's office, requesting me to remain store would have a tendency to help our in my room from 7 o'clock until 8 that even- scheme, extend our acquaintance and bring us into more immediate contact with the

what longer than we expected and it was He was a thick-headed fellow and said the last of November before we were back



AT THE WORD, MY BULLET STARTED FIRST.

out of that country negroes to the value of and was sent by Mr. Greeley. I, therefore, weighed about 280 pounds. upward of \$300,000

ing in the district they robbed and one of without some suspicions of trouble. time we were never betrayed nor discovered She sent me a polite note of condolence, in and only once suspected by our neighbors (I mean to our injury.) This will be explained hereafter.

CHAPTER II.

My motive for undertaking this dangerou business was love of adventure, to assist my friend and some small hope of gain. Wesner's heart was in the work as it pro gressed. He became an enthusiast and l much the same.

Before starting we agreed never to write one word upon the subject, never to trust a negro with the secret of our identity or a white man with our business-save in one night I awoke. The October winds were instance we never did. Negro testimony we well knew, would not be taken in court rain in sheets against the window panes, but if we were suspected even we would never live to see the inside of a court room,

so strong would be the feeling against us. We arranged a cipher by which we could write or telegraph in case necessity rethen destroyed. I afterwards learned that it was known to "Coverly's Lucy," so i

As my business called me frequently from at any point in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio cr home no notice would be taken of my ab-I, therefore, started immediately sence. for New York, where we expected to make \$300, and for all children less than 6 years to furnish the sinews of war, taking passage on the steamer Fannie Bullit from New Orleans, and leaving her at a landing a few

owned a woodyard. I had nothing to do here except to sound More (my head man) and learn his views that our part was fulfilled. He was not well, and consequently a little cross, so I gave up this interview for a time, and, halling a passing steamer, kept

on to Cincinnati. The transit by rail to Albany, N. Y., consumed little time. From there I took the steamer, and about 7 o'clock p. m., October the Astor house, then the leading hotel in

When morning came I left the hotel upon tour of exploration in search of that the New York Tribune. This place I preferred to find without

various summer resorts. I was well known on the Mississippi and Red rivers, and did not care to be reported

before she told me what she remembers or at least tried to avoid meeting any south she thought she was white. Poor child, I I found the building, sent up my card as don't suppose she did think so, it was too Mr. Smith and requested an interview with incredible to a girl that had spent her life Mr. Greeley. Herace Greeley was at this

That she used to be petted and I confess I was a trifle nervous as I enloved by a lady who must have been a white tered the building. In a very few minutes, lady, and that the lady did not talk Eug- I was ushered into the room and presence of lish to her, she was sure. She says she the redoubtable Horace, the man of all the knows she thought that lady was her mother. world southerners most despised and whose

one day (she had enough sleep to make up room writing. Mr. Greeley was sitting I can tell you), tying on a pallet in my tilted back in his chair chewing the end of demonstrated. room. She had a bad dream, and cried out in a pine stick and evidently in no very pleas-His spectacles were pushed "Mr. Smith: your business: I can afford

"Mr. Greeley, I must see you alone." cause a language other people don't know replied, "my business will take hours inmight come in handy, but her tendency to stead of minutes. Two minutes will do me Matthew Colson, an Irishman, and a very

> "No, sir! not to me." I answered. He opened the door leading to his private office and nodded. I followed him. "Now, your business, quickly."

Charles J. Bradley from Parish St. Mary's, was about eighteen feet long, four feet wid-Louisiana. I am here to try to make ar- eighteen inches deep and was to be use she knows is that, but for this dim dream rangements with the leading free soil men more for exploring and working. that is not a dream, she has always been a to run negroes from that and adjoining parnigger slave. Charlie, she would have been ishes into the free states. "I am a soldier of fortune and not a phil- bank, opened it, and in just twenty-eight

cocted the plan that kept the planters of the plied that he did not know him, though he dies to suit, and a few other little tools, the southwestern part of Louisiana in a tur- know where the office was; that he (Steph- whole weighing a trifle over 350 pounds. The moil of excitement for five years and ran ens) was a pressman in the Tribune office other contained the canoe covers and

> few steps from Broadway, I have forgotten the street, as I was only there once It was about 7 o'clock in the forencon In that office I met Horace Greeley, Gerrit Smith, a member of congress from the state of New York (whose name I will not men-

tion, as he is still living), and a gentleman whom they introduced as Mr. Samuel Ent-After that night's interview it was Mr. Entwissle with whom I chiefly dealt. From words inadvertently spoken and allusions made I do not think that was his real name.

but all checks and drafts were drawn and signed or indorsed by Samuel Entwissie. Later in the evening another gentleman made his appearance. This was Mr. Birney of Philadelphia, a former abolition candidate for president. Mr. Greeley briefly stated to the other gentlemen my proposi tion and called upon me to explain it, which

I did, recapitulating to them all the reader knows and fully explaining my views. The proposition advanced by me and as

cepted by them was: For every negro man or woman delivered to the agent of the underground railroad any other free state where they could be best delivered we were to receive a sum of of age \$150 (all over 6 years to count as men or women). A sum sufficient to cover all expenses was to be paid by sight drafts drawn by myself upon some financial agent miles below the little town of Oreola, where of the Anti-Slavery society at New York, the report of the agent who received the fugitives being deemed sufficient voucher

The Anti-Slavery society was also to pay for such material and outfit as I then wanted to enable us to begin operations, which would amount to about \$1,500. Some heartancy being shown on their part regarding this item I cut it short by agreeing to fursteamer, and about . nish the money myself, leaving them the if we were successful in our first venture.

We intended to use two avenues for trans portation, one by vessel or steamer from the seacoast or on the Atchafalaya river, the abomination to all southerners, the office of other across the country via the tributaries of the Red and Arkansas rivers, following the different bayous, to us well known, and questions, as New York was coming out on the bank of the Mississippi at filled with southerners returning from the my woodyard. Here we could keep a party one hundred, if necessary, for months, as the country around was swamp and wilderness, and no person landed there from the river except the deckhands of steamers calling for wood, and they seldom left the bank wher the word was piled.

CHAPTER IV.

What we most needed was a couple of pats or canoes capable of carrying ter men each and built so as to be folded and put into a box or trunk, for transportation I already had a plan for their construction and had the drawings of an ideal boat, but whether these would develop into anything practical or useful when criticised by mechanic or on actual trial was yet to b

The next day I called upon Mr. Wilson and told him my plans. Together we wen to a blacksmith's shop, where I showed th smith my drawings, but he was thick-headeand totally devoid of mechanical ideas. I wasted no time with him, but went to manufacturer of small machinery, on ingenious man, who comprehended the ide as soon as I explained the drawing. I mad a bargain with him to construct two canoes These were a marvel of simplicity, strength carrying capacity and lightness. One wa twenty feet long, six feet wide at the center about two feet deep and would carry twelve "Mr. Greeley, my name is not Smith, I am men (we have had fifteen in it); the other

When the boats were completed we car ried the box containing them to the rive awept New Orleans out with the worst anthropist. I will make the venture and minutes I stepped into the cance, ready for

concluded that he was all right and followed Boats and utensils weighed less than 700 This was accomplished by two men liv- him to the place of meeting, not, however, pounds. We had several coils of rope, rigging and bolt rope and had also provided them owning several slaves and working a He took me to the back office of a ourselves with a small tent of No. 8 duck, plantation at the same time. During this building situated on a little court, a simply a fly—with no walls or ends. This was similar to one already owned by me and used when surveying.

> December 10, 1855, when I landed at the woodyard. Standing beside the boxes, watched my partner on the deck of the fast receding steamer, as it swept down tho muddy river. Then for the first time a realizing sense of the work I had undertaken began to stare me in the face.

It is well known that back some miles from the Mississippi the waters of the various streams running into the Red and Arkansas rivers make a water course almost

parallel to the former river. My idea was to make a path to the waters of the St. Francis on one of its tributaries carry our canoes through to the stream and from thence open a way down the various creeks and bayous to the Teche and there construct a rendezvous as near our base of operations as convenient

My woodyard was situated just below a little place called Oreolg. West of the yard, at a distance of about eleven miles, was a small stream called Baker creek. From the creek to Bradley's yard was a

lense wilderness and through this I determined to make a path so plain that parties ould get to the yard in one day after leav ing the steamer It was important for us to have a reliable ian at this end of the route-one whom threats could not intimidate or money buy.

captain in the confederate army and was shot at Shiloh, so this narrative cannot in jure him. Poor Moore! His parents were on the steamer L. H. Smith when her boiler exploded at Vidalia in 1840. Both were killed and left him a child, penniless and friend-Since then he had roamed the world

I found such a one in Daniel V. Moore,

native of Mississippi; he was afterward

and finally engaged with me to take charge of my woodyard, where he had been, I be lieve, about two years. To him I unfolded my plans, careful not mention Wesner's name. I felt sure of his co-operation, first from his love of ad-

venture, second from his hatred of the plant rs, and, lastly, because of the possible chance to make money, which this scheme romised. To him we owed, in a great measure, the

uccess of our work. I had ten men cutting wood-slaves bired for the season, but as they camped and worked two miles from the landing they saw nothing of us (To be Continued.)

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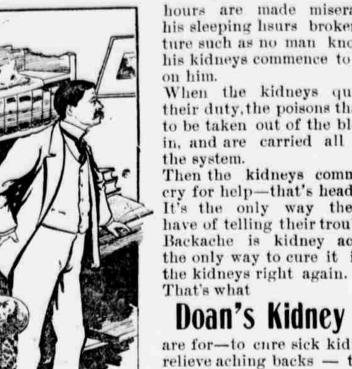
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