

AMERICAN HISTORY STORIES
VOLUME IV

**AMERICAN HISTORY
STORIES**

VOLUME IV

BY

MARA L. PRATT

YESTERDAY'S CLASSICS

CHAPEL HILL, NORTH CAROLINA

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This edition, first published in 2007 by Yesterday's Classics, is an unabridged republication of the work originally published by Educational Publishing Company in 1891. For the complete listing of the books that are published by Yesterday's Classics, please visit www.yesterdaysclassics.com. Yesterday's Classics is the publishing arm of the Baldwin Project which presents the complete text of hundreds of classic books for children at www.mainlesson.com under the editorship of Lisa M. Ripperton and T. A. Roth.

ISBN-10: 1-59915-205-3

ISBN-13: 978-1-59915-205-9

Yesterday's Classics
PO Box 3418
Chapel Hill, NC 27515

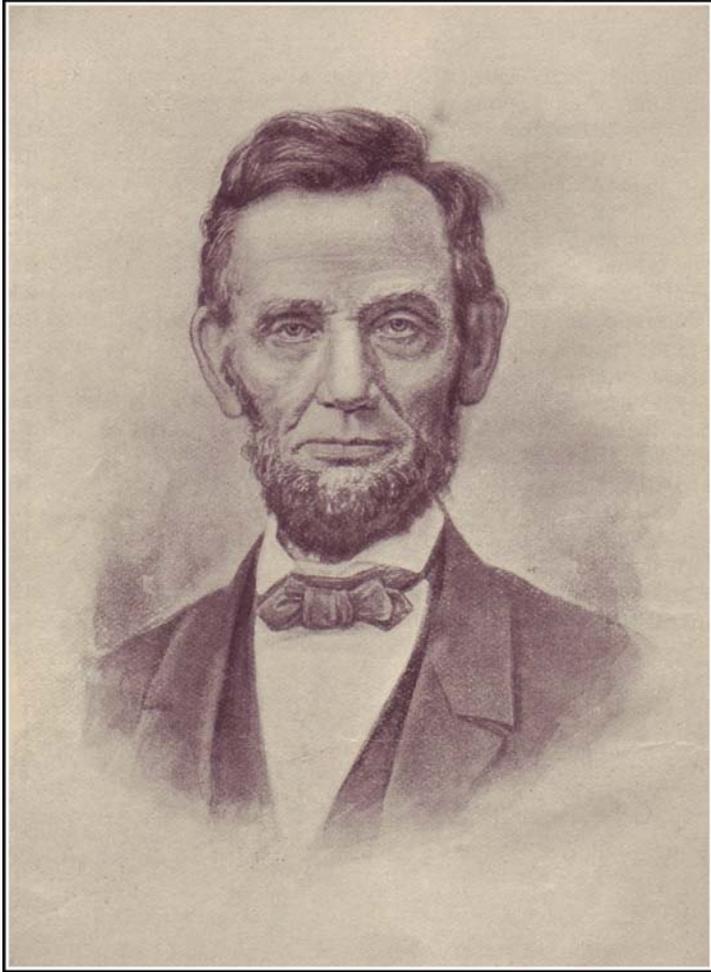
CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ABRAHAM LINCOLN..... | 1 |
| LINCOLN IS MADE PRESIDENT | 8 |
| “FORT SUMTER” | 10 |
| THE FIRST BLOODSHED..... | 16 |
| FEDERAL HILL | 19 |
| THE CONFEDERATE STATES | 23 |
| YOUNG COLONEL ELLSWORTH | 26 |
| CONTRABANDS | 28 |
| THE CONTRABAND OF PORT ROYAL | 31 |
| A NEGRO’S ANSWER..... | 33 |
| “BIG BETHEL” AND “LITTLE BETHEL” | 35 |
| DIXIE’S LAND AND JOHN BROWN’S BODY | 39 |
| THE BATTLE CRY OF FREEDOM | 40 |
| BATTLE OF BULL RUN | 41 |
| EDDY, THE DRUMMER BOY..... | 45 |
| TENTING ON THE OLD CAMP GROUND | 48 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| THE SEA-ISLAND COTTON PLANTATIONS..... | 49 |
| THE PICKET GUARD | 51 |
| "THE SEA ISLANDS" | 53 |
| SEIZURE OF MASON AND SLIDELL..... | 55 |
| THE MERRIMAC AND THE MONITOR..... | 57 |
| BATTLE OF MILL SPRING—1862..... | 63 |
| A BRAVE BOY AT FORT HENRY | 65 |
| TAKING OF DONELSON | 66 |
| A PLUCKY BOY AT FORT DONELSON | 70 |
| THE BATTLE OF SHILOH | 72 |
| THE OLD SERGEANT..... | 74 |
| BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER..... | 78 |
| QUAKER GUNS | 79 |
| DARK DAYS | 81 |
| THE SONG OF THE CAMPS..... | 84 |
| LEE IS KEPT FROM ENTERING PENNSYLVANIA. | 85 |
| BARBARA FRIETCHIE..... | 88 |
| THE VIRGINIA ARMY..... | 91 |
| CAPTURE OF NEW ORLEANS..... | 94 |
| SECESSION WOMEN..... | 100 |
| THE MOCK FUNERAL | 102 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| AFFAIRS IN THE WEST..... | 105 |
| SHARP-SHOOTERS..... | 108 |
| STEALING POTATOES | 110 |
| JOE PARSONS | 112 |
| THE HOME SIDE OF THE WAR PICTURE..... | 114 |
| LILLIE’S FIVE-DOLLAR GOLD PIECE..... | 116 |
| WHAT SOME POOR PEOPLE DID FOR THE SOLDIERS | 118 |
| PROCLAMATION OF EMANCIPATION..... | 122 |
| NEGRO SONG | 127 |
| FIRST NEGRO REGIMENT..... | 128 |
| SIEGE OF VICKSBURG..... | 130 |
| “STONEWALL JACKSON” IS KILLED. | 135 |
| STORY OF STONEWALL JACKSON | 137 |
| BATTLE OF GETTYSBURG..... | 138 |
| JOHN BURNS: JENNY WADE | 143 |
| “DRAFTING” | 146 |
| ATTACK ON CHARLESTON..... | 149 |
| THE GUERILLAS | 153 |
| BATTLE IN THE VALLEY OF CHICKAMAUGA..... | 156 |
| JOHNNY CLEM..... | 158 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| “BATTLE IN THE CLOUDS” | 160 |
| LIBBY PRISON | 164 |
| TRAMP! TRAMP! TRAMP! | 167 |
| OLD VIRGINIA | 168 |
| ON TO RICHMOND! | 169 |
| SHERIDAN’S RIDE..... | 175 |
| EVACUATION OF RICHMOND | 178 |
| FROM ATLANTA TO THE SEA | 182 |
| ON TO ATLANTA | 183 |
| TORPEDOES | 187 |
| SIGNALS | 189 |
| THE WAR IS OVER..... | 191 |
| WHEN JOHNNY COMES MARCHING HOME | 195 |
| BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLIC | 196 |



ABRAHAM LINCOLN

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Abraham Lincoln was the President during this dark time in our nation's history,—the Civil War.

He was not a handsome man, not an educated man, not a society-mannered man; but a more honest, more loyal-hearted, more grand-souled man than Abraham Lincoln, never stood at the head of our government. He was as honest as George Washington, as sturdy as Andrew Jackson, as brave as the bravest General, and, in the end, as noble as the noblest martyr.

He had had a hard life as a boy. He had been brought up on a Kentucky farm, where he had learned to hoe and to plant, to drive oxen, to build log-houses, to split rails, to fell trees;—everything that a farmer boy away out in a new country would have to do, this boy had done. Indeed, when he was named for President by the Republican party, the opposing parties sneered at him, calling him a “vulgar rail-splitter,” “an ignorant boor, unfit for the society of gentlemen.”

But for all his hoeing and his rail-splitting, for all his poverty and his hard labor, for all his rough home and his common companions, Abraham Lincoln soon

AMERICAN HISTORY STORIES, VOLUME IV

proved that he had a something in his head and in his heart that any gentleman might well have been proud to own—a something that a world of fine houses and fine clothes could not buy— something which, by and by, prompted him to set all the poor black men and women free.



LINCOLN'S FIRST HOUSE IN ILLINOIS

Although Abraham Lincoln did live in the backwoods, and did not go to school, nevertheless, he was all this time in the best of society. Fortunately for him, his mother was a real lady in heart, and tried always to keep her boy from growing up a coarse, ignorant “rail-splitter,” as his party opponents called him. She taught him always to keep his eyes open, and his thoughts awake to the beauties about him in nature. She taught him that it was a noble heart that could see God in the beautiful flowers, in the birds, in the fields, in the forests, and in the waters; that it was the artist’s soul that loved to watch the beautiful sunset

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

lights and the deepening shadows; she taught him to read the few books that she owned, and helped him to earn a few more; she encouraged his love for reading, and was careful that his reading was always of the best kind.

The result was, that when Abraham Lincoln came to be President, and had to write letters and make speeches, he always had the very best style of English at his command. When he said a thing, it was so simply and so correctly said, that every one knew just what he meant. And behind his words, too, there was always his big, honest, truthful heart. Is it any wonder, then, when, by and by, this good man died—shot down by an enemy of our Union—that all the country mourned for him, and felt for a time as if no one could be found to fill this good, great man's place.

Here is what a good woman says of him: "When Abraham Lincoln wrote a thing, you read what he meant. The meaning was not covered up under a heap of useless words. One thing was apparent in him from boyhood. This was his straightforward truthfulness and sincerity of purpose. No political experience ever twisted him; he ended life as he began it, an honest, sincere, trustworthy man. One of the great outcries against him by his opponents after he was elected was, 'He is an uncouth, rough backwoodsman. He is *no gentleman.*' It is true that he was very uncouth in face and figure; never handsome to look at, although the soul of the man sometimes shone through the plain features in a way that transfigured them, and his deep gray eyes were full of a great sadness, that seemed almost to prophesy his tragic fate. He had not the

AMERICAN HISTORY STORIES, VOLUME IV

manners of a court, but he did deeds from the promptings of a simple, manly heart that a king might have been proud to own, and if he was not a true gentleman, God does not make many now-a-days.”

When the Republicans chose Abraham Lincoln, the South was furious—not because they had chosen Lincoln, because they had chosen any one at all. “If a Republican President is elected,” said these Southern States, “we will go out of the Union.”

Now, it is said that the Southerners really were in hopes that a Republican President would be elected, so that they might have an excuse for leaving the Union. “We will go off by ourselves,” said one of the Southern leaders, “and build up a government of our own; and we will have slavery for its very corner stone.” They were very angry, these Southern slaveholders; for one reason, because they were now made by the United States Government to pay such high prices for slaves. One slave-dealer said, he wasn’t going to pay a thousand dollars for a slave in Virginia, when he could go to Africa and buy better ones for fifty dollars a head! What do you think of a business that employed agents to catch colored men and women as you would catch animals, bring them into market, and sell them at a price, according to their size, or weight, or age, or strength for work!

We ought all to be glad that the United States Government at last came to its senses, and made all the States give up this wicked traffic.

Lincoln was in due time elected President, and the Southern States, as they had threatened, declared

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

themselves no longer members of the Union. They made for themselves a new government, put Jefferson Davis at its head as President, and called themselves “The Confederate States of America.”



JEFFERSON DAVIS

These Southerners believed that, although the States had all at one time banded together under one government, still each State had a right to step out and set up a government of its own if it chose. This is what John C. Calhoun said in his speeches before Congress, and without doubt he believed what he said was true. This was the same old question of “State rights” of which you heard away back as far as when Washington was President. Don’t you remember how jealous of each other the political parties were even in those early times? How afraid one party was that too much power would be given to the central government, that is, to the President and Congress? And how equally afraid the other party was that the power would be too much scattered around among the different States? And do you remember in Jackson’s administration, that some of these same Southern States declared the central government “null and void,” and said they had a right to leave the Union if they wanted to? They even went so far as to form a league, and would really have made trouble enough had not Jackson rushed down upon them before they had time to do any mischief.

AMERICAN HISTORY STORIES, VOLUME IV

Here was this same old question up again, in a new dress to be sure, but it was the same old question.

The Northern people had no idea how much this matter meant to the Southern people. Even when South Carolina really “seceded” from the Union—even then the Northerners thought it was only a threat.

But lest we should be too severe in our judgment on these Southerners, let us stop and see why it was they cared so little about that “Union,” which, to a Northerner, is so dear. This is the reason: the Southerner had been brought up from his babyhood to love his *State*, his *State flag*, his *State Government*. To him, his *State* was everything. He had been brought up to say, “I am a Virginian!” or “I am a South Carolinian!” It was his *State* flag that he had seen raised on festal days; it was the *State* flag that waved over the public buildings, and over their forts. Everything to him was State! State! State! He loved his State, he was proud of her, and he was ready to die for her.

Now let us see how the Northerner had been brought up. He, I am inclined to think, hardly knew what his State flag was—he never heard anything about it, never saw it. It was always the “Stars and Stripes” that floated before him in these Northern States. “The Star Spangled Banner,” “My Country, ’tis of Thee,” “God Bless Our Union,” were the songs he had always sung. He never said, “I am a New Yorker!” or “I am a Rhode Islander!” but always, “*I am an American!*” Everything to him was Union! Union! Union! He loved the Union, he was proud of her, he was ready to die for her. So you see, these two parties

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

could not understand each other. The Northerner could not believe that the Southerner would do such an *awful* thing as to break up the sacred Union, and the Southerner, on the other side, could not see that there was anything awful at all in breaking up the Union, which to him was not sacred at all.

LINCOLN IS MADE PRESIDENT

While this quarrel was boiling and bubbling, the day was drawing near when Lincoln was to take his place at the head of the nation.

He started from his simple home full of hope for his country, even in so threatening a time as this; full of honest intention to serve her faithfully, and with no wish to wage war upon any State or States. Innocent in his own heart, free from all malice, he could not believe it when he was told that a plot had been laid to murder him as he passed through the city of Baltimore. It was too true, however; and the friends of the new President found it necessary to have him pass through this city at night, under the cover of darkness.

On reaching the capital, he made his inaugural address, as all the Presidents have done since the time when Washington made his from the balcony to the people on the green below.

This address was honest and manly, as everything that Lincoln said was sure to be. He told the South that he had no wish to make any trouble for

LINCOLN IS MADE PRESIDENT

those States, no wish to interfere with their rights; he only desired that they should abide by the laws of the country. He said, however, that they had no right to withdraw from the Union, no right to take into their own hands the forts or any other property belonging to the Union; if they did these things, it was his duty, as the chief officer of the Government, to demand that they return to the Union, and give up any property they had taken.

Now, as both these things had already been done in the South, that party at once said, "Lincoln has no right to say we *shall* stay in the Union; we will *not* give up the forts that are on our own coasts; we will fight for them; we will not be ruled by any Union Government." And now the war was close at hand.



“FORT SUMTER”



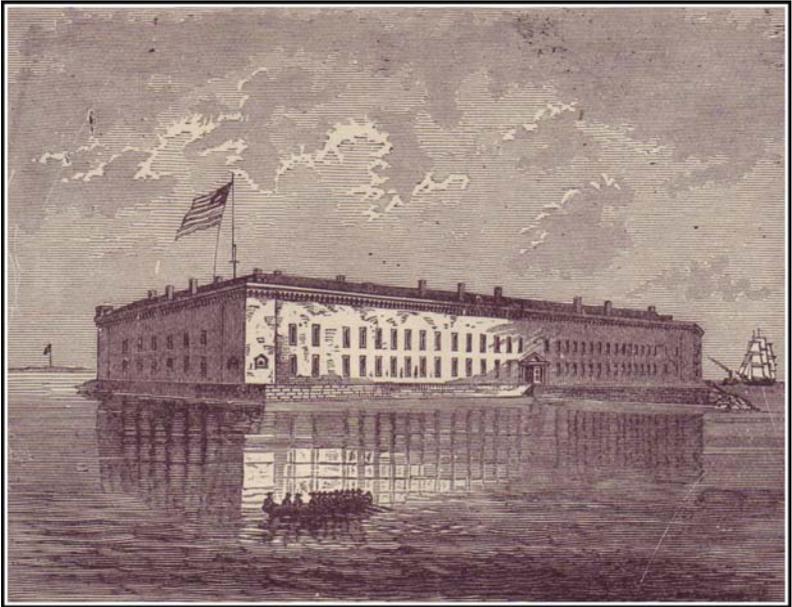
MAJOR ANDERSON

During the last months of Buchanan’s administration, Major Robert Anderson, who held command over the forts in Charleston harbor, had asked over and over again for men and provisions for these forts. He had shown the President plainly that he could not much longer hold them against the “seceding”

States, unless help were given; but still no help had come. When Lincoln became President, Anderson asked again. Lincoln replied that help should at once be sent. The leaders of the “Confederates” or “Seceders”—you must remember both these names, for they both mean the Southern people—the leaders of these Southerners, hearing of this, went to Major Anderson and ordered him to surrender the fort to them it once.

“FORT SUMTER”

Anderson, of course, refused. He knew only too well that he had no men, guns or powder with which to hold the fort, if the Confederates saw fit to fire upon it; still, loyal Unionist that he was, he determined to hold out to the very last. “It shall not be said that the Stars and Stripes are hauled down without a struggle,” said he.



FORT SUMTER

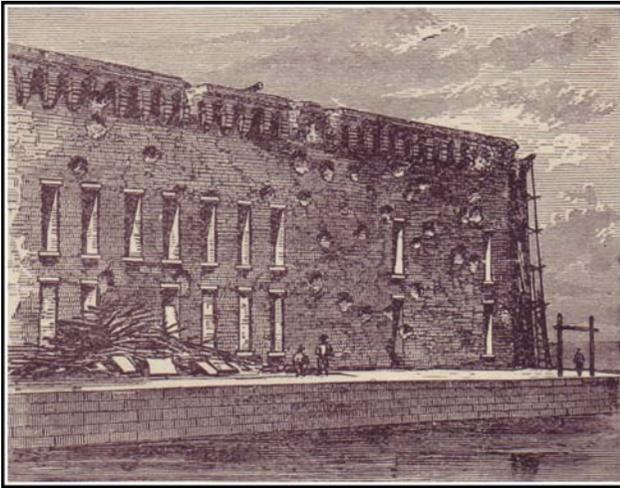
He had only eighty men, but he thought he could hold out as long as the provisions lasted, and so this little band prepared for action.

There were three more forts in the harbor, all in Confederate hands, and beside this, they had built two great rafts upon which they had fixed cannons. These

AMERICAN HISTORY STORIES, VOLUME IV

they floated round in front of the fort, and on *Friday, April 12, 1861*, the Confederates opened fire from these five points, all upon the one little fort with its eighty men. The “Civil War” had begun.

Down came the rain of shot and shell, around the fort, across the fort, into the fort. The wooden barracks inside took fire again and again; and on the second day, they were burned to the ground. It was a hot time for the brave little garrison. The air was so hot, and the smoke was so choking and so blinding, that they could work only with their faces covered with wet cloths. Every hour the fort grew to look more and more like a great ruin.



FORT SUMTER AFTER THE FIRING

It was plain enough that Major Anderson must surrender. All this time, however, the Stars and Stripes

“FORT SUMTER”

had been kept flying from above the fort. Even when they had been torn down by the flying balls from the enemy, some man had always been ready to nail them up again. But now the white flag of surrender had to be shown. The firing ceased, and the Confederates came over to the fort in boats to make terms with Major Anderson. It was agreed, after long discussion, that Anderson and his men should be allowed to march out with flying colors, should be allowed to salute the dear old flag with fifty guns, and then should march away in peace.

This was done; and as soon as they had gone, General Beauregard, the Confederate leader, marched into the ruined fort, tore down the “Stars and Stripes,” and ran up the South Carolina State flag in its place.

This is a brief story of the bombarding of “Fort Sumter.” Not a single life was lost on either side; but if millions upon millions of lives had been lost, there could not have been greater excitement throughout the country. Ask your fathers and your mothers, or your grandfathers and your grandmothers, to tell you about it. It was less than thirty years ago, and anywhere you can find men and women who remember those early times of the Civil War.



THE SOUTH
CAROLINA FLAG

They were exciting days indeed! The different political parties of the North, forgetting all differences, all ill feelings, all quarrels, now joined hands and hearts

AMERICAN HISTORY STORIES, VOLUME IV

in this terrible time. There was but one cry in the hearts of all—"Save the Union! Save the Union!" Nothing more was to be heard about Democrats or Republicans, tariff or no tariff,—Unionists or Confederates were the words now on every lip. No longer was it Republicans against Democrats, but the North against the South, the South against the North.

And now, President Lincoln sent forth a call for help—for men to go against the South. Seventy-five thousand men, he asked for, to help him "to preserve the Union." From every city, and town, and village, answers came. It seemed as if every man in the country was ready. Rich men and poor men marched away together side by side; willing to bear all the hardships of the soldiers' lot.

The women, too, were as alive as the men. It seemed as if the Revolutionary spirit had revived again in them. No woman was too rich or too poor, too high or too low, too strong or too weak, not to do something for the Union soldier. Little children, too, caught the spirit of the times. When they saw their fathers and their big brothers march away, their little hearts were full of tears, I fear, but they were all the readier to work for the soldiers because their own dear ones had gone away with them.

In the South the same feeling of loyalty to what they believed was right was shown among the men and women there. Remember they loved their States as truly as the Northerners loved the Union.

When the news that Fort Sumter had fallen into their hands was heard throughout the South, men and

“FORT SUMTER”

women were wild with joy. Songs were sung, verses were written, public meetings were held, and the South was boiling over with excitement.

Such was the excitement in the North and in the South after the taking of Fort Sumter by the Confederates. Let us see now what next was done.

THE FIRST BLOODSHED

Do you remember what happened in the Revolution on one 19th of April?

And now we have another 19th of April to learn about—19th of April, 1861.

In answer to Lincoln's call for seventy-five thousand men, many a small company from the different States had been got together, and were training for service. One of these companies, the "Sixth Massachusetts Regiment," reached Baltimore, on its way to Washington, on this morning of the 19th of April, 1861. When the cars which brought them reached the city, it was met by a crowd of angry people armed with sticks, and clubs, and guns—a blacker, angrier mob was never seen.

These cars were drawn through the city from one depot to another, the soldiers inside. The mob followed, throwing stones and brick-bats into the windows from every side.

At last, unable to endure it any longer, the officer, ordered the soldiers to form into ranks, and march in a solid column to the depot.

THE FIRST BLOODSHED



PASSING THROUGH BALTIMORE

AMERICAN HISTORY STORIES, VOLUME IV

On they marched, the brick-bats and balls whizzing about their ears. Just as they reached the depot, the command was given, "Fire!"

Then the troops turned their guns into the crowd; and many a man fell before the fire of these soldiers whom they had attacked. For a moment there was a lull! The mob itself stood still before its awful work! But only for a moment; then with yells of rage and threats of revenge, they fell upon the troops, surrounded the cars, filling the air with howls and curses. Amid this terrible scene the cars rolled out of the depot. Three of the soldiers had been killed, and there were eighteen wounded.



FEDERAL HILL

During all this time the Confederates had been threatening to attack Washington, and tear down the Union flag from the Capitol. They had even said they would yet have their own flag waving over Faneuil Hall in Boston. Think of it, imagine anything but the “Stars and Stripes” waving over that old “Cradle of Liberty.”

Even then the Northerners did not realize how full of hate the Southerners were. Washington was indeed poorly guarded, but the idea of attacking the Nation’s Capitol! It didn’t seem possible. But now there came a cry, “Washington is in danger! Help, help for Washington!” And help came. The Seventh Regiment of New York, a regiment of young men, kept up to this time only for parades, never expecting to be called into real war, came forward and *volunteered*, that is, offered to go to protect the capital.

How the people shrank from accepting this noble sacrifice! This pet regiment of the State! made up

AMERICAN HISTORY STORIES, VOLUME IV

of the very “flower of volunteer troops,” as it was said then, to go into battle to be shot down, very likely, like dogs! But they were ready; the country needed them, and so, one morning in April, this regiment marched down Broadway, the main street of New York city, to the cars that should carry them to Washington.

That was a great day in New York city! Crowds and crowds of men and women filled the squares and the sidewalks, and cheers upon cheers rent the air as these boys marched down the street. Theodore Winthrop, one of the young men in this noble regiment, in writing of this day, says:

“It was worth a life, that march. Only one who passed as we did through that tempest of cheers, two miles long, can know the terrible enthusiasm of the day. We knew now, if we had not known before, that our great city was with us as one man, united in the cause we were marching to sustain.”

This regiment was joined by the Eighth Massachusetts Regiment, with General Benjamin F. Butler as one of its volunteer generals. It was supposed that General Butler had always had much sympathy with the South, and had been always in favor of allowing the South all the freedom to carry out their own ideas that could possibly be given them without real harm to the Government. But, when the South set out to break up the Union, no one rose quicker in its defence than did General Butler. When one of his Southern friends told him what the South was planning to do, Butler said:

“If you do that, I trust you are ready for war.”

FEDERAL HILL

“Pooh! the North will not fight,” said the Southerner.

“The North *will* fight,” replied Butler. “You touch the Union flag and you’ll find that the North will rise in a solid body against you; and if war *does* come, down will go your Confederacy, slavery and all.”

But the South did not believe it, although they had good reason to know that General Butler had a “long head,” as we often say when we mean that a person understands what he is talking about. Imagine their surprise then, when they found that even Butler himself was against them, when it came to be a real question with him whether to stand by the South, or to stand by the Union. Alas! it took the Southerners a long time to understand what the *Union* meant to a Northerner. And, alas, it took the Northerners a long time to understand what the *State* meant to the Southerner. It proved a bitter, bitter lesson to them both.

These regiments, the Seventh New York and the Eighth Massachusetts, arrived safely at Washington, and the capital was safe. But on account of the Secessionists in Baltimore, these troops had been obliged to get to Washington in a very roundabout way, to avoid being attacked as the Massachusetts Sixth had been.

“Now,” said Butler, when he had fairly got his regiment in order after their march, “the city of Baltimore must be taken. The city is made up of Union men and women, but they are kept down by the few “Secessionists” there. That city must be freed. We

AMERICAN HISTORY STORIES, VOLUME IV

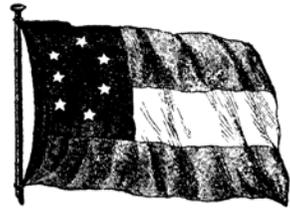
can't bother to take our troops around through the woods and up the rivers every time we want to bring them to Washington, when there is a railroad straight through that city. No, Baltimore must be taken; and I will go and take it!"

Accordingly, he marched to Baltimore; and one night, when the sky was black and the rain was pouring, the wind howling, the lightning flashing and the thunder mumbling and rolling on every side, up he marched with his men and his cannon to the top of Federal Hill. There he was when the morning dawned, his flags flying, his guns ready, his great black cannons looking down upon the city as much as to say, "Make one move against the Union, lift one finger against our troops, and our black throats are ready to pour out fire and death upon you."

The Secessionists understood the language of the cannons, and from that time the Union soldiers marched in peace through the city of Baltimore.

THE CONFEDERATE STATES

The States that first withdrew from the Union were States farthest removed from the North. These States supposed that all the other slave States would at once join with them in their Confederacy. Those States which were farther north, nearer the Northern States, had more of the neighborly feeling than the first seceding States had ever dreamed of. In those States, Unionists and Confederates dwelt side by side, and in their legislatures, Unionists and Confederates voted side by side. So you see it was not so easy after all to pass "Secession" laws in these States.



THE
CONFEDERATE
FLAG

Virginia was the first State to join the seven that had banded together to form their Confederacy. "Hurrah! hurrah!" cried the Confederates, "Virginia, Old Virginia, Virginia the mother of the Presidents, the home of George Washington, has joined us!"

AMERICAN HISTORY STORIES, VOLUME IV

But the Confederate joy was dampened a little when the western part of Virginia rose in rebellion, and said she would not belong to a secession State. This western Virginia held meetings, withdrew from the State, appealed to Congress, and, as a reward for her loyalty to the Union, was set off a State by herself, known ever after as "West Virginia."

Soon Arkansas joined the Confederacy; then followed North Carolina, then Tennessee. It is believed that Tennessee would not have seceded, had the Unionists not been threatened with "bullets and cold steel" if they dared say one word against the South, in the convention which was to be held in that State.

Kentucky and Missouri wished to have nothing to do with either side. They would stand by the Union, but they would not fight the South. Maryland, awed by the prompt action of Butler, was kept in the Union. Delaware, loyal little State that she was, and cautious too, preferred to stay where she was in comfort, rather than to join so uncertain a movement as this surely seemed to be.

The Confederacy then stood as follows:

These were the States that had left the Union and were ready to fight for their State rights, as they believed them to be. These were the States that had hauled down the "Stars and Stripes," and had hoisted in its place the Secession flag.

SEVEN ORIGINAL SECESSION STATES.

SOUTH CAROLINA.
ALABAMA.
GEORGIA.
MISSISSIPPI.
FLORIDA.
LOUISIANA.
TEXAS.

THE LATER STATES.

OLD VIRGINIA.
TENNESSEE.
NORTH CAROLINA.
ARKANSAS.

THE SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY.

SOUTH CAROLINA.
OLD VIRGINIA.
GEORGIA.
TENNESSEE.
ALABAMA.
ARKANSAS.
LOUISIANA.
FLORIDA.
NORTH CAROLINA.
MISSISSIPPI.
TEXAS

President of the Confederacy JEFFERSON DAVIS