they conversed in whispers for a few moments, when the guard escorted me to my quarters. I fancied that I had made some progress at this interview.

The next morning brought Mr. Brock to my loft, evidently sent to satisfy himself fully that I was Sam Munson. A delicate and difficult task was before me, and the result to my own mind very doubtful. Brock, however, was talkative, willing to carry on the conversation, and evidently quite sure that he was not mistaken in his man. I knew something of the Munsons and localities in Knoxville, and, by the aid of imagination, could fill any pauses in Brock's conversation; eight years of absence excusing failures in memory. Brock asked leading questions, saying, for illustration, "You know se-and-so." "Oh, yes," I responded, though I had not the remotest knowledge of the person. Then Brock would refer to something very ludicrous, and I would burst into laughter, as though at the recollection, while Brock, greatly enjoying it, would unconsciously tell the whole story, so that I could put in a fitting remark here and there, which seemed to come naturally from recollection. Brock went away entirely satisfied, and reported to Jeff. Davis. Two days later, a commissioned officer entered the room with a parole, pledging myself not to leave the city of Richmond without orders from the Provost Marshal. I signed it, and was released from confinement. With the freedom of the city, I continued my observations.

Walking through a street one Sunday morning, by a high board fence covered with posters concerning regiments being organized and other military announcements, from which I gleaned additional information, a man came up and slapped me on the shoulder with—

"Hallo, Baker! What are you doing here?"

The name sounded strangely under the circumstances. I was startled, but, looking around, calmly said:—

"I guess you are mistaken, sir. My name is Munson."

"Ain't your name Baker?"

"No, sir."

"Didn't you go to California in 1850?"

"No, sir. I have lived in California, but I did not go there till '52."

"Why, didn't you go across the Isthmus with me in April, 1850, when we had the fight with the natives?"

"No, sir. I guess you have mistaken the man."

"Well, I would have sworn that you were Baker. Didn't you have a brother there?"

"I had a brother there, but he came home in '53.

"Well," said he, turning away, "it's all right, I suppose; but I never saw two men look so much alike in my life!"

In the meantime I had obtained information of military movements and plans, learned where the enemy had stationed troops, or were building fortifications, and what they were doing at the Tredegar Works. I had obtained the knowledge for which I came, and was anxious to return North. Through the influence of Hayes, I got from the Provost Marshal a pass to visit Fredericksburg, making an appointment to meet the former, which, of course, I did not keep. Arriving in Fredericksburg, I made three or four ineffectual attempts to get into the country, and finally, by the aid of a negro, crossed the Rappahannock one morning four miles below the city. To reach the Potomac would tax all my powers to the utmost, but the case was desperate, and I must go forward. As, when entering upon my Southern tour, it was indispensable to success that I should even among my friends be *incog.*, so now I must return with the precious epistles in my pocket, through the Confederate lines, on my own account, having only the chances of escape which any wanderer at large might have.

My face was towards Washington, and the only question remaining was, whether the success in the attempt to reach it would equal that of my journey towards Richmond.

The Potomac was the goal of my solitary travel through forest and over open fields; for on its northern banks lay the Union army, and, once across its waters, I was safe. My appearance was that of a common citizen, and I hoped to pass unnoticed any persons with whom a meeting was unavoidable. Scarcely two miles were travelled, when, by the side of woods which bordered the road, an officer and soldier on horseback appeared, and too near to give me time to seek concealment in the forest.

The officer reined up before me and inquired:—"Have you got a pass, sir?"

"Yes, sir."

"Let me see it."

With the promptness of assurance I drew forth and handed him the pass from Richmond to Fredericksburg. If able to read I hoped he might be satisfied with a glance at the paper, and let me proceed. He studied it awhile, till his eye caught the word "Fredericksburg;" he then said:—

"I don't think this will do, sir!"

"'Tis all right."

"Well, it may be, but you'll have to go back with me to Fredericksburg."

My locomotion had not been observed, and, with a pitiful limp, I remarked that it was hard for a lame man to be compelled to walk that distance; and that, if I attempted it, I must necessarily defer my journey till another day. I made a painful effort to walk, and so far moved the compassion of the officer that he offered to take the pass to the commanding General and leave me in charge of the soldier. When he was gone, after a little pleasant conversation, the day being warm, I proposed to my guard that we go into the shade of the woods. Tying his horse to a small tree, he threw himself down on the grass. Half an hour was spent in pleasant chat, and the officer did not make his appearance.

"Ugh!" said the guard, stretching, "How sleepy I am. I didn't sleep a wink last night."

This fact, with the inviting greensward and shade, disposed him to snatch a nap; and soon he was oblivious to everything around him. It was no pleasure to me to subject him to punishment or even censure on my account; but the law of self-protection necessarily overruled my regard for the unwatchful guard, and, carefully appropriating his revolver, I unloosed and mounted his horse. Riding leisurely along the path a short time, I turned suddenly into the woods; but the ground was rough, and the bushes almost impenetrable, making progress distressingly slow. As the sun was sinking behind the trees, having travelled half-a-dozen miles, I emerged into a clearing, where a white-haired old man, who evidently had reached his threescore years and ten, was making shingles.

With a respectful salutation, I inquired:—

"Will you tell me the shortest road to the Potomac?"

This Southern patriarch looked at me with surprise. I said again:—

"The river—the Potomac river—which way is it?"

"I never heard of it in my life."

"How long have you lived here?"

"Always; was born here."

"And don't know where the Potomac river is?"

"I never heard about such a river."

He was equally ignorant of the existence of Aquia creek, or any of the streams or places along the river.

"Did you know that the South had seceded?" I inquired.

"Well, well! I've heard suthing was going on, but hain't taken much interest in politics no how since Jackson's time. 'Spose they are all the time getting up suthing new."

With a cup of water from the unsuspecting Jacksonian Democrat, who was enjoying Cowper's lodge in the wilderness, undisturbed by the alarms of war, I rode away, to try the next turn in the wheel of fortune. At length a house was visible in the distance, and towards it I directed my course.

Dismounting near it, I hitched my horse, and commenced observations. Two negroes only were in sight, in an out house. I went to them with a plausible story, and for ten cents obtained some bread and milk, which broke the day's fast, with refreshment for the night's adventure before me. Darkness was setting upon the forest, and unable to discern the mire and stones ahead, I became entangled among the branches, and found I must abandon my horse and plunge into the thicket alone. After wandering about bewildered for an hour, I unconsciously returned to the very house I had left. I decided to risk a rest here till morning, and working my body feet foremost under a hay stack, until completely hidden, fell into a sound sleep. Just before the dawn of the next day, I was startled from slumber, and, listening, soon learned that Rebel cavalry were in search of me, and had surrounded the house. A dozen horsemen could be seen through the lattice-work of hay, moving about in the darkness. From the dwelling they went to the outhouses, and finally came to the haystack. I prepared for the worst. With my head thinly covered, I could watch my foes, unseen by them; while my revolver lay before me. If discovered, I resolved to shoot the successful man, and run for dear life towards the wood. Several times the cavalry rode round the stack; then one of the number, dismounting, began a sword examination of my lodgings. I could hear the thrust of the blade into the hay, until it grazed my coat, and I grasped my six-shooter to spring; but he passed on, saying:—

"He ain't in there, boys."

Remounting, with his comrades, he rode off.

Watching them till out of sight, I crept cautiously into the deepening light, and started for the woods. The sun rose gloriously over the near horizon; but whether to light me towards safety or capture, was entirely uncertain.

Without breakfast or dinner, I hastened on, having not even a glimpse of a human being, and avoiding every indication of his habitation. At two o'clock in the afternoon, when emerging from a clump of bushes, I came in full view of a man hauling timber. I could not retreat, and, changing the coat hanging on one arm to the other, I put my hand on my pocket, and stood in thinking posture. I saw that I had an Irishman to deal with, and not a remarkably bright specimen of his race.

With the air of one interested, I asked:—

"What is this timber for?"

"It's fur the bathery down here, in course."

This answer settled the question of the proximity of the Potomac, and also apprised me that fortifications and plenty of Rebels were not far off. I walked along a stick of timber, measuring it by paces, and then said:—

"Tell these men they are getting this timber four feet too short, will you!"

"Yes, sur, I will sur. It's only haulin, I am, meself."

"Well," I replied, leaving him, 'I tell them to cut it four feet longer, will you? Tell them I say so."

"I will, sur."

Into the woods again, and making as good time as possible, I walked on two hours longer. Hunger began to gnaw, and create that desperation which disregards the cooler prudence of a full stomach. Striking a small creek or bayou, running into the Potomac, I resolved to follow it till it decided my fortunes for the night. No sign of anything in reach to appease hunger appeared, nor of a boat in which to get across the river. The very first sight of human existence was in a form to excite fear—a white tent, snugly pitched on the sloping point of a hill, by the water-side, and surrounded with bushes. I paused to watch for further intimations of what was there.

At length a soldier came up the bank with fish, and entered the tent. Soon after, with another man, he reappeared outside, and they sat down, lighted their pipes, and chatted, after the fashion of good-natured Dutchmen. The imperious demands of hunger urged me to join them, and, advancing, I accosted them. It turned out that they belonged to a battery on the hill above, and had moved to the bank to catch fish for the officers. I told them I lived up the creek, and had come down to see how things were getting on; then inquired:—

"Have you got anything to eat in the tent?"

"We got not much here to eat?"

"Boys, I am very hungry. I hain't had anything to eat since I came from home, and I'll pay you for something."

"Vell, dat ish tifferent matter. If you pays, dat ish tifferent matter."

"Can't you cook some fish?"

"Oh, ersh, I spose we get you some fish."

In a few minutes they set before me a supper simply of fish, cooked in their primitive style, and yet no luxury was ever so grateful to the taste. After it was finished, I asked for a pipe, and began to puff away, entirely at home; but all the while revolving in my mind the chances and expedients for a final parting with my Dutch friends. Finally, my eye fell upon a small boat lying in the bushes below; and the conviction followed the discovery, that it was my only hope of crossing the Potomac. Learning that the fishermen owned it, I said to them:—

"I want to buy that boat. What will you take for it?"

"I no sells dat poat," replied one.

"I'll give you $20 for it in gold."

"It's worth more as that to us. The Yankees ish breaking up all poats on the Potomac."

There was an end to the prospect of a purchase; and a new plan must be devised. The sun sank behind the trees, and in the pleasant shade we smoked and talked away the hours. I found, in the course of conversation, that the battery was not over 200 yards from us, and the Potomac a few rods below.

The evening advanced, and I begged the privilege of sleeping in the tent, as I was too tired to think of returning home before morning. Permission was reluctantly granted, and, spreading their blanket, they "turned in," while I continued without, smoking, till the moon rose. I had practical business on hand, which excluded contemplation of the romantic scene—the silver light tipping and then flooding the hills, and creeping down to the quiet spot of anxious wakefulness. For the illumination was to aid me in my design to escape. I could now watch the movements of my companions in the tent sufficiently to see when they were apparently asleep, depending on the ear for the further evidence of the desirable fact. When all was still, indicating profound slumber, suddenly a change of position, a grunt, and a look outside would dispel the illusion.

Towards midnight I heard a shout:—

"Hellow, there! you come to ped to-night?"

"Yes, I am coming in."

Soon after entering tent, I found that room had been left between the men, and the effort to get on an outer edge of the blanket was fruitless.

A suspicion had evidently crossed the mind of the one who had just spoken to me, respecting the stranger, and there was a design to guard against any unpleasant results from the visit.

The day's fatigue made my own inclination to sleep almost irresistible; but I watched anxiously for the favoring moment to leave the bed unobserved. Repeated trials found the distrustful soldier sufficiently wakeful to look after his guest. Overcome by the slumberous influences of fatigue, my comfortable quarters, and the "stilly night," I sank into a restless repose. Scarcely an hour had passed, when I suddenly awoke, starting with alarm lest the opportunity to escape was lost. On the contrary, I found my companions were thoroughly asleep, their loud breathing the only sign of life. I carefully crawled from between them, till half my body was out of the tent. The suspicious man, with a sound of unrest, turned over. I remained perfectly still till he made another turn and stretched out his arm to see if all was right in the middle. I drew back to my old place, and he laid his hand upon me several times before he seemed satisfied that I was there. Several attempts to leave the tent ended in a similar failure. Daylight began to steal into the tent, and the night of suspense must end in some decisive effort to secure the boat and cross the Potomac. The soldier-fishermen were sleeping quite as soundly as at any time before, and to another moment I stood before the door watching the effect of my movement. There was a little stir, and I stood mechanically poking the embers of our evening fire, as if looking out to see the breaking day; but with my pistol in one hand ready for service. Returning it to my pocket, muzzle down, I hastened to the bank. To my great disappointment, there were no oars in the boat. Upon making search among the willows, I found a short one, partially decayed. Noiselessly as possible I launched the frail bark, fearing each sound on the sand or in the water would bring my Dutch friends down the bank. In a few moments, which suspense made impressively long, I floated away into the stream, at this point not over thirty feet in width. Taking the middle of the current, I pulled off my coat, and began to row for life. The tide favored me, and I was congratulating myself upon the prospect of an unmolested voyage, when a shout drew my attention to the vigilant Dutchman, whose gesticulations could not be misunderstood. He called loudly to his bed-fellow:—"Meyer! Meyer! the poat ish gone! the poat ish gone!"

He seized his musket and made for the bank, not more than a dozen feet from me, shouting:—

"Come pack here! come pack mit that boat!"

My only answer was a more vigorous use of the oar. Placing my right hand upon the pistol, and watching the soldier, I propelled the boat with my left.

"Come pack!" he continued, following me along the bank. He then paused, levelled his musket, and was about to fire. I did not want to kill "mine host," but the law of self-defense again demanded a sacrifice. With quick and sudden aim I fired; with a cry of distress, he staggered and fell lifeless beside his musket. His comrade was running down the hill, when, seeing what had happened, he turned back to the tent. He soon returned with a double-barrelled shot-gun, and stole along cautiously through the bushes, until within forty yards of the boat, and then fired. The shot fell around me in the water. Catching a glimpse of my enemy in the thicket, I discharged my revolver. He ran away, evidently unhurt. The reports had given the alarm, and several soldiers soon came in sight. An instant later a bullet whistled over my shoulder. I had reached the decisive moments of my last efforts to get out of "Dixie." Again getting sight of the Dutchman in the bushes, I once more took deliberate aim and fired. He threw up one arm, gave a yell, and fell to the ground. In a moment he rose again, and, groaning, staggered away. Then two or three shots saluted me unceremoniously, striking and splintering the side of the boat. I was now at the mouth of the creek, and rapidly left the shore behind me. A squad of soldiers, by this time, stood on the brow and at the base of the hill, firing their muskets. The *chug* of the bullets in the water reminded me that my transit to loyal soil was not yet certain. Both hands were laid to the oar, and striking the broad current of the Potomac, which was here four miles wide, I rapidly receded from musket range. A high wind swept the waters, and, while rounding a bluff, a sudden gust carried away my hat, and lifted my coat, lying in the bow of the boat, dropping it into the water. But it was no time to look backwards to those articles of apparel, floating between me and my foes, whose bullets still came unpleasantly near. Their shots continued until they fell far in the wake of my boat. The sun had risen above the horizon, warm and bright, while, for two hours and a half, I worked with a single oar, and, aided by the drifting tide, approached the Maryland shore. With an inexpressible sense of relief I heard the boat's bow touch the sand. I was near Chapel Point, ten miles below the creek on which I embarked, and so exhausted that with difficulty I reached the bank. On its green carpet, and under the cooling shade of its trees, I laid down to rest, leaving the boat to which I owed my deliverance to the winds and waves of the Potomac.

General Baker seems to have been fertile in expedients and unusually adroit in maintaining his disguises. Wishing to effect the arrest of a prominent Confederate at the Clifton House, Niagara Falls, he assumed the name of Philip Herbert (the Southern Congressman, who, it will be remembered, killed a waiter at Willard's Hotel some years ago), figured for some days at the Clifton House in his chosen character, and at last persuaded the man whom he was in search of to walk with him on the Suspension Bridge, where an officer in waiting arrested him, a few feet this side of the American line.

Two or three exciting chapters are devoted to the bounty-jumping frauds in New York, and the means adopted by the Government detectives to arrest the guilty parties.

I had been told that soldiers would receive the bounty, re-enlist the same day, be sent to the Island, and repeat the process the day following. I was, at the time, skeptical respecting such facility in deception and incredible assurance, and to satisfy myself in regard to the truth of the matter, I dressed myself in the garb of a regular jumper, and repaired, February 9, to a recruiting office in the public square near the Astor House, New York. Assuming the air of a veteran in the business, I asked the officer what he was paying for recruits.

Before the question could be answered, the gentlemanly broker, always on hand, inquired of me my name and place of residence, which I gave him. In a low tone of voice, and with a knowing wink, he said, "Have you been through before in New York?" I answered, "Not since last fall." He added, "All right, come inside." And in less time than it has taken to relate the incident I was one of "Uncle Sam's boys."

My friend gave me $100, promising the remainder due me when I should arrive at the Island; then, directing me to remain where I was for a while, he left me.

Returning within an hour, he opened the following conversation with me:—"Have you ever been on the Island?" I replied, "Yes." Evidently enlightened in regard to the matter, he immediately remarked, "You know how to get off, then? When you *do*, come up to Tammany Hall, and I will put you through up town;" meaning, of course, he would enlist me again. While this conversation was passing between us, another broker stepped up and said, "Gentlemen, let us take a drink." We accepted the invitation, and they conducted me across the Park to a saloon, where I saw, at a glance, they were quite at home. Liquor was called for, and while the vender was getting it one of the brokers quietly stepped behind the bar and addressed some conversation to him.

We then all drank to the success of the Union, or, rather, all of us *appeared* to do so.

I raised the glass to my lips, and, unobserved by the rest, poured its contents into my bosom, as I had done many times before when compelled to join the convivial ring. I was convinced that my potation had been drugged. Next followed a proposition to repair to an adjoining room and engage in a game of cards.

We played until I thought it necessary to affect drowsiness and insensibility. My eyes began to close, until at length my head rested on the table in front of me, and my whole appearance indicated to my betrayers my entire helplessness in their hands.

At this juncture one of them left the room, but soon returning, exclaimed, "All right." Immediately I caught the sound of carriage wheels, and, as I anticipated, was carried to the door, and, supported by broker number one, lifted into a vehicle, and driven rapidly to the Cedar street rendezvous. My hat was then unceremoniously pushed over my face, and I was hurried into the presence of the recruiting officer in attendance, who asked me, "Do you wish to enlist?" Number two answered, in a tone to represent my own voice, "Ye-e-s."

I was again declared to be one of the volunteers, taken into another room, and laid on a bench, where I remained an hour, in company with three other recruits, who had been drugged in the same manner, my friends the brokers supposing they had disposed of me.

In the meantime broker number one returned, and said:—"Well, ol' fellow, how do you feel?" to which I replied, "Very sick." Then remarking, "You'll be all right by-and-by," he left me.

I looked about me to judge of the possibility of escape. I saw at once that I could not pass out by the door, as a sentry was stationed there, and came to the conclusion that I would have to try my chances at a window.

I opened one which overlooked a back yard, sprang out, and after walking through a long passage-way, which led me into the open street, I went deliberately to my room in the Astor House.

Here I masked my face, disguised myself anew, and proceeded directly to the office of Mr. Blunt, where I offered myself to the army service, to make my third enlistment for that day.

I was hardly seated, when broker number three approached me, saying:—

"You want to enlist, do you?"

"Yes, I am thinking of it. What are you paying recruits now?"

"Six hundred dollars. Where are you from?"

"Steuben county. I would like to enlist if I could get a situation as clerk. I can write a pretty good hand, and am hardly able to go into the ranks."

He replied quickly, "Oh, I can fix that all right."

A conversation then followed between him and the recruiting officer, when I was made a soldier of the Union army once more. I was requested to be seated for a few moments. Soon after the broker asked me to take "a glass." I went with him to an old drinking-saloon in Cherry street, where I found brokers numbers one and two, who immediately recognized me, but expressed no surprise at the meeting. My successful escape from the Cedar street headquarters convinced my friends that I was an old expert in tricks of the trade.

Their admiration for me became so great that they received me into full fellowship, regarded me as a shrewd member of the bounty-jumping brotherhood, and after freely discussing their plans and prospects, declared me to be a "perfect trump." Propositions were made to enter into partnership at once.

I was greatly amused while listening to the exploits of each, as he in turn detailed them. One related, that at a certain period he left New York, and having enlisted at Albany, Troy, Utica, Buffalo, and Chicago, returned via Elmira, at which place he likewise enlisted. Another had enlisted at every rendezvous from New York to Portland, Maine; while a third boasted of the amounts he had received, and mentioned those paid to recruiting officers, surgeons, brokers, and detectives. The den in which I spent the evening was a favorite haunt of the bounty-jumpers. It contained a wardrobe of wearing apparel, consisting of both soldiers' and citizens' outfits. The idea of this I easily comprehended; here the jumpers could assume whatever dress they pleased, to carry out their designs. Three times that night, before 2 o'clock, I saw the interesting operation performed.

I selected one of my assistants to experiment in this military lottery. He dressed himself in the appropriate apparel, and in one day enlisted three times; he was sent to the Island, bought himself off, and reported for duty the following day.

The scenes described were followed by numberless arrests of bounty-brokers, bounty-jumpers, and others in the business, and consequently by the disclosures of their crimes, which have since attracted much public attention.

I shall select only one additional, very peculiar, and highly interesting narrative from the mass of fragmentary materials in my possession—that of the kidnapping of the idiot boy Cornelius Garvin, of Troy, N. Y. Some of the facts found their way into the newspapers at the time of their occurrence.

Mrs. Garvin, the mother of the boy, was a poor, but honest and respectable Irishwoman, who supported her family by hard daily labor. She had placed her imbecile son in the Almshouse at Troy, happy in the consciousness of his safety, and being near enough to visit him occasionally. The child, while playing in the grounds, was carried off by bounty brokers, and transported to Albany, where he was enlisted and sent to the front.

The mother, upon receiving the news, became nearly frantic, and, leaving her work, managed to get to Washington, where, through the interest which her story awakened, she gained an interview with the President.

That good man, whose ear was ever open to the appeals of humanity and justice, gave her a note to the Secretary of War, who referred the case to me. I detailed a detective to accompany her to the battle-field. Nearly a month was spent in the fruitless search for the lost boy, notwithstanding it was proved that "poor Con" was somewhere in the army. The disappointed but not discouraged mother went back to her toil again, to get money to bring her once more to the capital.

Seven months passed over in the search, with no clue to the boy. Officers lent their assistance, and no means were left untried to find the wanderer. The persistency of purpose, the undying hope and affection of the sorrowing mother for her simple "Con," were hardly ever surpassed in human experience.

Unable to read or write, she carried always in her apron a large number of letters, and other memoranda, from prominent officers and others, given to aid her unrewarded search. Yet she could, as if by intuition, or the inspiration of her love, place her hand upon any of the documents she desired to use, and repeat their contents. And whenever she found an interested listener to her mournful story, she would select the particular document she wanted and give its statements.

After exhausting the subject, she would sit in a musing mood, gazing into vacancy for several moments, and then start from her revery, gather up her treasure of manuscripts, and exclaiming, "My poor Con; I must go and find him!" she would start again on her journey among the regiments of the Union army.

When the money which was given her, and earned by the severest toil, was gone, she would get back to Troy, replenish her purse by her daily labor, and return to the hunt for "Con," along a new path of adventure, on which had suddenly fallen a ray of hope from some quarter respecting the absent boy.

Thus month after month passed away, and the undying love of this mother for the imbecile child, over whose unsteady steps and aimless wanderings she had watched with a fondness intensified by his very helplessness, led her along the army lines, and into the camps, at the heart of the great and bloody war.

"Poor Con?" was on her lips when she sought brief and restless sleep, and at the dawn of day, when she resumed the travel which would have no pause until darkness made it impossible.

While she was roaming at will, followed by the sympathizing interest of the President, and the humblest officials in the army, I received the following letter;—

BUREAU OF MILITARY JUSTICE, WAR DEPARTMENT, June 1, 1865—Colonel:—The case of Cornelius Garvin, an idiot boy, enlisted into the 32d Regiment of New York Volunteers, has been referred to this bureau for report.

Among the papers in the case is a letter of yours to the Mayor of the City of Troy, New York, in which you state that Captain Degner—in whose company the boy is supposed to have been—refused, or neglected, to search for him, when ordered to do so, although repeatedly assured that he was in his company, under an assumed name; but, instead of doing so, endeavored to intimidate, by threats, privates of his company who were disposed to aid in the search for the boy.

Be pleased to furnish this bureau with any proof that may be in your possession of the statements referred to, or which may otherwise throw light on the case.

It is desirable that any material information you have in the case should be communicated at your earliest convenience.

Your obedient servant,
W. W. WINTHROP,
Major, and Judge Advocate for Judge Advocate-General.

To COLONEL L. C. BAKER, Special Agent War Department.

Mr. Trott, from this bureau, has twice called at your office on this subject.

But all efforts to find Cornelius Garvin were in vain. Several times the mother seemed to be near him; but the joy at the prospect of meeting him soon faded before cruel disappointment.

It was rumored that he died in the army; which was doubtless true, for no further tidings to this hour, I believe, have been received of his fate.

The final scene in the assassination conspiracy is indirectly connected with the famous case of Mrs. Cobb, the Washington pardon broker, who, it will be remembered, caused General Baker to be indicted for extorting money from her, and for false imprisonment. Our readers may also recollect that the trial resulted in a verdict of guilty, and that the General was sentenced to a fine of one dollar. He had encountered Mrs. Cobb and her husband several times in the course of his duty, before the celebrated pardon case. His narrative of this affair is so extraordinary that we give it in his own words:—

At Baltimore, while going towards the Harrisburg depot, I met one of my detective officers, who informed me that Isaac Surratt was then in that city. I repaired immediately to the telegraph office, and sent a telegram to Mr. Stanton, in cipher, that Isaac Surratt was in Baltimore; at the same time telegraphing to my assistant, Colonel Asmussen, and directing him to look out for Surratt. I proceeded to Canada, and was absent two weeks. When I returned, ignorant of what had transpired, and anxious to know, I questioned my assistant as to what had occurred; he told me that he had detailed two detective officers to go to the White House, with instructions to remain outside, and not to make their business known to any individual. This he had done solely as a matter of precaution, to prevent any suspicious characters from entering the Executive mansion. Nothing unusual, however, had occurred. I then sent for S. S. Jones, one of the detectives detailed for this service, and interrogated him with reference to seeing any persons of doubtful business or character about the Executive Mansion. He also assured me that nothing alarming had transpired, but remarked, "There's some strange proceedings there;" that the second day after he entered on duty his business became known to some of the attaches of the White House, who invited him inside, and he became familiar soon with many of the frequent visitors at the National Homestead. He informed me that a regular system of pardon brokerage was in successful operation, both by the conspicuous Rebels in the capital and by a certain class of disreputable women, well known to the local police of this city; among whom he mentioned the name of Mrs. Cobb, who he said was a constant visitor, was there at all hours of the day and night, boasting openly that she had procured, and could procure, pardons from the President at any time in six hours, and she exhibited to him on one occasion two pardons which she had obtained for Rebels at Richmond, declaring on that day she had made a thousand dollars. When questioned as to her mode of proceeding, she simply remarked she had an understanding with the President, and he dare not refuse to grant her requests. She further claimed that in the prosecution of her business she found it necessary to divide a portion of the money received for pardons with certain Government officials.

I decided to bring such a record of facts before the President, with respect to her case, as would satisfy him of her unworthy conduct, and the nefarious business in which she was engaged. To accomplish this I determined to manufacture a fictitious application for pardon. To represent an applicant I selected Captain H. H. Hine, formerly Assistant Provost Marshal-General at St. Louis, who was then in Washington endeavoring to procure the revocation of a sentence passed upon him by a military commission under General Rosecrans. It seems Captain Hine had been tried, convicted (as he claimed unjustly), and sentenced to the Alton Penitentiary. Before the sentence was carried into execution, however, he escaped and fled to Canada. While there he was known as a Rebel officer, and consequently became very familiar with all the Rebel officers then engaged in organizing raids and committing depredations upon the border. He wrote me a number of letters giving information as to the movements of the Rebel emissaries in Canada. After the assassination of the President, he communicated many important facts to the Government, in consideration of which the Assistant Secretary of War gave him permission to visit Washington, with the view of obtaining a revocation of his previous sentence. While he was there, waiting to have a hearing at the War Department, the case of Mrs. Cobb came up, and I selected him to represent an applicant for a pardon. A regular application was made, in the name of Clarence J. Howell. In this fictitious application were set forth fully the offenses committed by the applicant. The detective officer before mentioned, who was placed on duty at the White House, and who had become acquainted with Mrs. Cobb and her business, being in the secret, introduced Howell to Mrs. Cobb as an applicant for a pardon. However censurable, unjustifiable, or illegal my course may have been, my only desire was to serve the President and the Government. The fact is familiar to jurists, that in such case of emergency, when prompt action for the public good is demanded, the courts have decided that a margin of authority transcending the letter of the law is allowable. The charge and verdict pronounced by the judge, in the disposal of the case, clearly indicate his unwillingness to regard the letter at the sacrifice of the spirit of legislation.

Captain Howell stated his case to Mrs. Cobb, and she agreed to procure a "full, complete, and unconditional pardon for all his past offenses," as the contract reads, for the sum of three hundred dollars. It is proper here to remark, that the usual routine at the Executive mansion and the Attorney-General's office, in procuring pardons, requires from two to five weeks, a record of the names of the applicants being placed on the books of the Attorney-General's office, which names are taken up in their order and disposed of. For an extraordinary consideration, however, Mrs. Cobb agreed to procure the pardon in question in twelve hours, as appears from the following contract:—

WASHINGTON, D. C., November 5, 1865.—For and in consideration of the sum of $300 paid to me by Captain Clarence J. Howell, I hereby agree as follows, to wit:—To take from Captain Howell his statement in regard to his case, and procure for him the full and complete pardon for his past offenses. The money to be paid as follows:—$100 in hand, and the remaining $200 on the delivery of his pardon on Monday evening at 8 o'clock. I further agree that in case I do not succeed in getting the pardon as agreed, I will return to him the $100 received of him.

(Signed) Mrs. L. L. COBB.

The above contained the following receipt on the back:—

WASHINGTON, D. C., November 5, 1865.—Received on the within $100.

(signed) Mrs. L. L. COBB.

This occurred on the 5th of November. To secure positive and indisputable evidence against Mrs. Cobb, I took six $50 Treasury notes and marked them in the presence of five persons, that they might be identified as the bills paid for the pardon. On the evening of the 7th, when Howell was to have it, accompanied by a detective officer, I went with him to the Avenue House, where he was to receive the document, determined, as soon as the money was paid by him to Mrs. Cobb, and he had the pardon in his hands, to demand of her the money. As shown by Mrs. Cobb's testimony, the pardon was not procured on the 7th, she alleging that the President was sick, that Mr. Seward was not in the city, and that a friend of hers in the Treasury Department, who assisted her, was also absent from the city, in New York, but on the following evening she would certainly have the pardon ready. Accordingly, on the evening of the 8th, I again visited the Avenue House with a detective, and the moment Howell paid the money to Mrs. Cobb and received his papers, I entered the room and demanded from Mrs. Cobb the $200. She at once recognized me, and remarked she "had met me before." I informed her I had been watching her for several days, I believed I was posted as to her doings at the White House, and said, "You shall not impose upon the President by your presence. He, doubtless, regards you as an honest woman, and when he is made aware of your real character, and the business in which you are engaged, I think you will not be permitted again to visit the White House." She refused to return the money, when I asked her to go with me to my office; she consented, and asked me if I had any objection to her husband accompanying us; I replied, "Certainly not," and, entering the carriage with Mr. and Mrs. Cobb, went to my headquarters. I took Mrs. Cobb into my private office, and requested her to return to me the money paid her by Howell, stating to her distinctly that it was my money; I had marked it for the purpose of entrapping her; the person for whom she had obtained the pardon was not Captain Howell but Captain Hine; I had devised this plan to ascertain how and through what means she obtained pardons; she should not impose upon the President any longer, and I should lay all the facts before him at once, awaiting his decision in the matter. She became very much excited and extremely abusive, declaring she had obtained a great many pardons from the President, and she should continue to obtain them as long as she could find customers; she and the President had a perfect understanding, and he dare not refuse to sign any paper she presented to him. I asked her how many pardons she had procured. She said she could not tell, but a great many; she had got three in a single day, and very indignantly claimed that she had as much right to do so as other brokers. I asked her who among her acquaintances were engaged in the business. She mentioned the name of Mrs. Ella B. Washington, she, and one of the Rebel colonels and others; she said that Mrs. Washington had obtained ten pardons where she (Mrs. Cobb) had obtained one; she did not see why she should be selected for arrest while Mrs. Washington and others were allowed to be unmolested, adding the remark, "Your action in arresting me will cost you your commission; I shall see the President to-morrow, and have you mustered out of service." I replied to her, "The President will probably require some other reason for my dismissal from service than the statement of a vile creature like you."

To satisfy me of her intimacy with the President and with the attaches at the White House, she entered into a long and minute statement of conversations she had had with him, assuring me that he had informed her that I was to be mustered out of service on the 15th of November; that Mr. Stanton would not be retained in the Cabinet beyond the 1st of January; that many of the Black Republican and Abolitionist office-holders were to be removed, and she knew who they were; that the President had informed her, on one occasion, that the Detective Bureau was to be broken up, and that Stanton's friend, Baker, would retire into private life. After listening for more than an hour to conversation of this character, I decided immediately to see the President. I took the pardon, as delivered by Mrs. Cobb to Captain Hine; Mrs. Cobb's written contract with Captain Hine for procuring the same, the marked $50 notes paid by Hine to Mrs. Cobb and by her returned to me, and, leaving Mrs. Cobb in charge of one of my officers, I went to the Executive mansion about 8 o'clock. I found the President alone in his room, and, after the usual salutation, I said, "Mr. President, I have some papers here that I desire to show you." He said, "Take a seat, sir." I immediately unfolded the pardon and laid it on the table before him. He put on his spectacles, looked at it, and said, "Sir, where did you get this?" "I got it from Mrs. Cobb." I then handed to him Mrs. Cobb's written contract for procuring said pardon. He read it, when I exhibited to him the marked money, and began a detailed statement of all the facts connected with the case. He interrupted me in a moment, and said, "Where did you get this pardon?" I replied, "From Mrs. Cobb;" and was proceeding to narrate the circumstances, when he again interrupted me, and added, "Well, what is all this about?" I began a third time to relate the circumstances, when he interrupted me, with rising passion, "This is a detective job, isn't it?" I answered, "Yes, sir; and if you will listen to me a moment I will explain it." He raised the pardon from the table and said, "But what business have you with this pardon?" When I again attempted to make an explanation, he broke in by saying, "Well, this is a very strange affair. This pardon has not been recorded. You have no business with it, sir. There is no oath of amnesty attached to it." I then politely requested the President to listen to me, stating that I would explain the whole matter. I had not proceeded far, however, when he became very much excited, rose from his chair, and said, "Sir, what business have you to interfere here? What business has this woman to use my name in connection with this matter? How did this pardon get out of the Attorney-General's office without being recorded?" Looking at the pardon, he remarked, "This is my signature. I did not sign this pardon until very late this afternoon, and here I find it returned, as you say, through a pardon broker." He called his son Robert, and inquired, "Robert, do you know anything about this pardon?" Robert answered, "Yes, father; that is the pardon you signed for Mrs. Cobb this afternoon." He took the pardon from his drawer, unfolded it, and remarked, "This is a pretty business. Where is Mrs. Cobb?" I replied, "At my headquarters." "Did you arrest her, sir?" I replied, "No, sir; I simply asked her to go to my headquarters to make an explanation." Again he became very much excited, walked the room to and fro, and suddenly turned ferociously upon me and exclaimed, "Who employs you to interfere with the duties of the President or the Attorney-General?" My answer was, I certainly intended no wrong; I did not conceive it to be possible that he could know the real character of this woman; my only desire was to exhibit to him the character of the persons engaged in procuring pardons, and the means employed; and if I had done wrong I was very sorry. He became more composed, and wanted to know who this Mrs. Cobb was. I stated to him, as far as possible, who she was. He then asked me if I would request Mrs. Cobb to come and see him the following evening at 8 o'clock. I replied, "Certainly." He also requested me to come and see him the next evening, which I promised to do, and, leaving the pardon and Mrs. Cobb's contract with Captain Howell in his possession, I returned to my headquarters.

But to return to Mrs. Cobb. On arriving at my headquarters, I informed her that she was at liberty to go home, and immediately furnished herself and husband with a conveyance. Before leaving, she reiterated her determination to lay the whole matter before the President, and have me summarily dismissed the service. She told me that she had very influential friends in Washington, and she would go before the Grand Jury and have me indicted for false imprisonment, etc.

In compliance with the President's request, I went to his mansion the next evening, and found him in a state of great excitement. He denounced "my interference with matters at the White House; Mrs. Cobb was a respectable, virtuous lady, and I had no right to interfere with her occupation." I had sincerely believed I could render the President a great service by exposing the character and business of this woman. When, however, I found that he was determined to put a wrong construction upon my motives, and to sustain Mrs. Cobb, I felt mortified and indignant. Never was there a greater contrast between anticipations and the result. It was coming down from the summit of human glory, when the unworthy ruler of a great people was conquered and led captive apparently by the vile protege of his fancy. The Grand Jury of the District of Columbia then being in session, on the following day, very much to my surprise, I learned that four indictments had been found against me—one for false imprisonment of Mrs. Cobb; one for false imprisonment of Mr. Cobb; one for robbery in taking from her the $200 I had marked and given to Captain Howell, and one for extortion. It would be difficult to imagine how a Grand Jury could ever find evidence in this case on which to base these indictments; but when it is recollected that nearly every member of this Grand Jury was a secessionist; that many of them, if not all, had at some time during the previous four years fallen under my official notice, these facts will, perhaps, furnish an explanation. When it became known that these indictments had been found against me, the disloyal press throughout the country hailed the event as one likely to terminate my official connection with the Government, and declared that President Johnson would never permit himself to be compromised by permitting the continuance of the Detective Bureau. Especially were pains taken by the Associated Press to send the news broadcast everywhere, that Colonel Baker had been indicted for robbery, without giving any of the circumstances in connection with the case. To these reports I made no reply, determined to wait patiently, satisfied that if an impartial investigation could be had, I should stand not only honorably acquitted before the community, but that my action in the case would be commended rather