

## JEFF. DAVIS' CAPTURE.

The Version Authorized by the Ex-Confederate President—Denial of the Female Disguise Story.

[Correspondence of the N. Y. Herald.]

RICHMOND, VA., Feb. 27, 1878.—Innumerable stories of the flight and capture of Jefferson Davis have been published both North and South by writers in both sections. Until now, however, Jefferson Davis' own account has never been in print. The Southern Historical Society Papers, in its March issue, will contain a full narrative of that memorable affair, written by Major W. T. Walthall, the private Secretary of Mr. Davis. It is known here that this article was gotten up under the eye of Mr. Davis, and under his special supervision, and it is therefore regarded as Davis' own account of his flight and capture. The writer says:

"On the evening of the second day (which was the 9th of May) preparations were made for departure immediately after nightfall, when Col. W. P. Johnston returned from a neighboring village with the report that a band of 150 men were to attack the camp that night.

"Meantime his horse (Davis'), already saddled, with his holsters and blanket in place, was in charge of his body servant, and he himself was lying clothed, booted, and even spurred, when, a little after dark, the alarm was given that the camp was attacked. Springing to his feet and stepping out of the tent, he saw at once, from the manner in which the assailants were deploying around the camp, that they were trained soldiers, and not irregular banditti, and, returning, he so informed Mrs. Davis.

"As we have said, the President was already fully dressed. He hastily took leave of his wife, who threw over his shoulders a waterproof cloak or wrapper, either as a protection from the dampness of the early morning or in the hope that it might serve as a partial disguise, or perhaps with woman's ready and rapid thoughtfulness of its possible use for both these purposes. Mrs. Davis also directed a female servant, who was present, to take an empty bucket and accompany him in the direction of the spring, his horse, on the other side of the camp, being cut off from access by the interposition of the assailants.

"He had advanced only a few steps from the door of the tent when he was challenged by a mounted soldier, who presented his carbine and ordered him to 'surrender.' The answer was, 'I never surrender to a band of thieves.' The carbine was still presented, but the man refrained from firing—it is but fair to presume from an unwillingness to kill his adversary—while the President continued to advance. This was not from deliberation or foolhardy recklessness, but of deliberate purpose. \* \* \* Observing that the man, who was finely mounted, was so near as to be considerably above him, he had little apprehension of being hit, and believed that by taking advantage of the excitement of the shot he might easily tip him from the saddle and get possession of his horse. The feasibility of this design was not to be tested, however, for at this moment Mrs. Davis, seeing only his danger, and animated by a characteristic and heroic determination to share it, ran forward and threw her arms around his neck, with some impassioned exclamation, which probably none of the parties present would be able to repeat correctly. The only hope of escape had depended upon bringing the matter to an immediate issue, and, seeing that this was now lost, the President simply said, 'God's will be done,' as he quietly turned back and seated himself upon a fallen tree, near which a camp fire was burning."

A letter written by Colonel William Preston Johnston, late Aid to Mr. Davis, to the writer of the article, Major Walthall, confirms this statement:

"LEXINGTON, VA., July 14, 1877.—Major W. T. Walthall, Mobile, Ala.—My Dear Sir: Your letter has just come to hand, and I reply at once. Wilson's monograph is written with a very strong animus, not to say virus. It is in no sense historical. It bears upon its face all the marks of special pleading. He states as matters of fact numbers of circumstances which could not be of his own knowledge, and which he must have picked up as rumor or mere gossip. Single errors of this sort are blemishes; but when they are grouped and used as fact and argument they become, what you truly call them, 'calumny.'"

"For instance, Mrs. Davis is represented as leaving Richmond with the President. My recollection is that she left some weeks beforehand. Breckinridge left on horseback and went to General Lee, rejoining Mr. Davis at Danville. I do not doubt that all the account of 'the preparations for flight' is purely fictitious. His statement of the conditions of the armistice is incorrect. \* \* \*

"You will have the facts of our retreat and capture from many sources. My best plan is to tell you only what I know and saw myself. The testimony is chiefly negative, but in so far as it goes will probably aid you. My understanding was that we were to part with Mrs. Davis' train on the morning of the 9th. We did not, and the President continued to ride in the ambulance. He was sick and a good deal exhausted, but was not the man to say anything about it. The day previous he had let little Jeff shoot his Beringers at a mark, and handed me one of the unloaded pistols, which he asked me to carry, as it incommoded him. At that time I spoke to him about the size of our train and our route, about which I had not previously talked, as he had said nothing and I did not wish to force his confidence. It was, however, distinctly understood that we were going to Texas. I that day said to him that I did not believe we could get west through Mississippi, and that, by rapid movements and a bold attempt by sea from the Florida coast we were more likely to reach Texas safely and promptly. He replied, 'It is true—every negro in Mississippi knows me.' I also talked with Judge Reagan and Colonel Wood on this topic. The impression left on my mind was, however, that Mr. Davis intended to turn west south of Albany; but I had no definite idea of his purpose whether to go by sea or land. Indeed, my scope of duty was simply to follow and obey him; and, so long as I was not consulted, I was well content to do this and no more. I confess I did not have great hopes of escape, though not apprehensive at the time of capture, as our scouts, ten picked men, were explicit that no Federals were near and that pickets were out. Both of these were errors. On the night of the 9th I was very much worn out with travel and watching, and lay down at the foot of a pine tree to sleep.

"Just at gray dawn Mr. Davis' servant Jim awakened me. He said, 'Colonel, do you hear that firing?' I sprang up and said, 'Run and wake the President.' He did so. Hearing nothing as I pulled on my boots, I walked to the camp fire, some fifty or less steps off, and asked the cook if Jim was not mistaken. At this moment I saw eight or ten men charging down the road toward me. I thought they were guerrillas trying to stampede the stock. I ran to my saddle, where I had slept, and began unfastening the holster to get out my revolver, but they were too quick for me. Three men rode up and demanded my pistol, which, as soon as I got out, I gave up to the leader, a bright, slim, soldierly fellow, dressed in Confederate gray clothes. The same man, I believe, captured Colonel Wood and Lubbock just after one of my captors ordered me to the camp fire and I had guard over me. I soon became aware that they were Federals."

"In the meantime the firing went on. After about ten minutes, may be more, my guard left me and I walked over to Mrs. Davis' tent, about fifty yards off. Mrs. Davis was in great distress. I said to the President, who was sitting outside on a camp stool, 'This is a bad business, sir.' He replied, supposing I knew about the circumstances of the capture, 'I would have heaved the scoundrel off his horse as he came up, but she caught me around the arms.' I understood what he meant, now he had proposed to dismount the trooper and get his horse, for he had taught me the trick. I merely replied, 'It would have been useless.'"

"Mr. Davis was dressed as usual. He had on a knit woolen visor, which he always wore at night for neuralgia. He wore cavalry boots. He complained of chilliness, and said they had taken away his 'raglan.' I believe they were so called, a light aquascutum or spring overcoat, sometimes called a 'waterproof.' I had one exactly similar, except in color. I went to look for it, and either I, or some one at my instance, found it, and he wore it afterward. His own was not restored.

"As I was looking for this coat, the firing still continuing, I met a mounted officer, who, if I am not mistaken, was a Captain Hodson. Feeling that the cause was lost, and not wishing useless bloodshed, I said to him, 'Captain, your men are fighting each other over yonder.' He answered very positively, 'You have an armed escort.' I replied, 'You have our whole camp; I know your men are fighting each other. We have nobody on that side of the slough.' He then rode off. Colonel Lubbock had a conversation nearly identical with Colonel Pritchard, who was not polite I believe. You can learn from Col. Lubbock about it.

"Not long afterward, seeing Mr. Davis in altercation with an officer—Colonel Pritchard—I went up. Mr. Davis was denunciatory in his remarks. The account given by Wilson is fabulous, except so far as Mr. Davis' remark is concerned—that 'their conduct was not that of gentlemen, but ruffians.' Pritchard did not make the reply attributed to him; I could swear to that. My recollection is that he said, in substance, and in an offensive manner, that 'he (Davis) was a prisoner, and could afford to talk so,' and walked away. Colonel Hamden's manner was conciliatory, if he was the other officer. If I am not mistaken, the first offense was his addressing Mr. Davis as 'Jeff,' or some such rude familiarity. But this you can verify. I tried just afterward to reconcile Mr. Davis to the situation.

"On the route to Macon, three days afterward Mrs. Davis complained to me with great bitterness that her trunks had been ransacked, the contents taken out and tumbled back with the leaves sticking to them. \* \* \* I never herd of Mr. Davis' alleged disguise until I saw it in a New York Herald the day I got to Fort Delaware. I was astonished and denounced it as a falsehood. The next day I was placed in solitary confinement and remained there. I do not believe it possible that these ten days could have been passed with our captors without allusion to it if it had not been an afterthought or something to be kept from us. \* \* \* Very sincerely yours, WILLIAM PRESTON JOHNSTON."

## "Dot Leedle Loweeza."

BY CHARLES F. ADAMS.

How dear to dis heart vas mine granshild,  
Loweeza,  
Dot shveet leetle taughter off Yawcob,  
mine son!  
I never vas tired to hug and shqueeze her  
When home I gets back, und der day's work  
vas done  
When I vas away, oh, I know dot she miss  
me,  
For when I come homeward she rushes  
bell-mell,  
Und poots oup dot shveet leetle mout' for  
to kiss me—  
Her "darlin' oldt gampa" dat she lofe so  
vell.

Katrina, mine frau, she could not do mit-  
outd her  
She vas sooch a gomfort to her day py day;  
Dot shild she make efr yon happy about  
her,  
Like sunshine she drife all dheir droubles  
away;  
She holdt der vool yarn vville Katrina she  
vind it,  
She pring her dot camfire bottle to shmell;  
She fetch me mine pipe, too, when I don't  
can vind it,  
Dot plue-eyed Loweeza, dot lofe me so vell.

How shveet vhen der toils off der veek vas  
all ofer,  
Und Sunday vas come mit its quiet und  
rest,  
To walk mid dot shild 'mong der daisies  
und clofer,  
Und look at der leetle birds building dheir  
nest!  
Her pright leetle eyes how dey sparkle mit  
bleasure—  
Her laugh it rings outd shust as clear as a  
bell;  
I dink dheir vas nobody haf sooch a dreasure

As dot shmall Loweeza, dot lofe me so vell  
Vhen vinter vas come, mit its coldt stormy  
wedder,  
Katrina und I ve must musdt sidt in der  
houze  
Und talk off der bast, py der fireside toged-  
der,  
Or blay mit dot taughter of Yawcob  
Strauss.

Oldt age mit its wrinkles pegins to remind  
us  
Ve cannot sthay mit our shildren to dwell;  
Budt zoon ve shall meet mit der poys left  
behind us,  
Und dot shveet Loweeza dot lofe us so vell.

## WHICH SHALL IT BE.

[A rich man, who had no children, proposed to his poor neighbor, who had seven, to take one of them, and promised, if the parents would consent, that he would give them property enough to make themselves and their other six children comfortable for life.]

Which shall it be? Which shall it be?  
I looked at John, John looked at me,  
And when I found that I must speak,  
My voice seemed strangely low and weak;  
"Tell me again what Robert said;  
And then I, listening, bent my head—  
This is the letter:

"I will give  
A house and land while you shall live,  
If, in return, from out your seven,  
One child to me for aye is given."

I looked at John's old garments worn;  
I thought of all that he had borne  
Of poverty, and work, and care,  
Which I, though willing, could not share;  
I thought of seven young mouths to feed,  
Of seven little children's need,  
And then of this.

"Come, John," said I,  
We'll choose among them as they lie  
Asleep." So walking hand in hand,  
Dear John and I surveyed our band,  
First to the cradle lightly stepped,  
Where Lillian, the baby, slept.  
Softly the father stopped to lay  
His rough hand down in a loving way,  
When dream or whisper made her stir,  
And huskily he said: "Not her."

We stooped beside the trundle bed,  
And one long ray of lamplight shed  
Athwart the boyish faces there,  
In sleep so beautiful and fair.  
I saw on James' rough red cheek  
A tear undried. Ere John could speak,  
"He's but a baby too," said I,  
And kissed him as we hurried by.  
Pale, patient Robbie's angel face  
Still in his sleep bore sufferings' trace;  
"No, for a thousand crows, not him!"  
He whispered, while our eyes were dim.

Poor Dick! bad Dick! our wayward son—  
Turbulent, restless, idle one—  
Could he be spared! Nay, He who gave  
Bade us befriend him to the grave;  
Only a mother's heart could be  
Patient enough for such as he.  
"And so," said John, "I would not dare  
To take him from our bedside prayer."

Then stole we softly up above,  
And knelt by Mary, child of love.  
"Perhaps for her 'twould better be,"  
I said to John. Quite silently  
He lifted up a curl that lay  
Across her cheek in a wilful way,  
And shook his head, "Nay, love, not thee;"  
The while my heart beat audibly.

Only one more, our eldest lad,  
Trusty and truthful, good and glad,  
So like his father. "No, John, no!  
I cannot, will not, let him go."

And so we wrote in a courteous way,  
We could not give one child away;  
And afterward toil lighter seemed,  
Thinking of that which we dreamed,  
Happy in truth that not one face  
Was missed from its accustomed place;  
Thankful to work for all the seven,  
Trusting the rest to One in Heaven.

SONNET.

'Tis here beside our own bright fireside clime,  
With thee, my love, that life is full of bliss.  
I find here all that when away I miss:  
Forbearance with my faults, a faith sublime—  
A love so true that change it can not time;  
A love as pure as Heaven's great love is;  
A foretaste of the other life in this;  
And childish voices that round my knees do gather;  
Wee little forms that close-clinging in caress;  
Fond little arms close-clinging in caress.  
My love, my love! no, guardian angel, rather,  
My priceless gift from God thou art no less,  
Cling close and guide the husband and the father  
Is all I ask—my sum of happiness.

JOHN SJOLANDER.

CEDAR BAYOU, TEXAS.