

D A T H A

By

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D A T H A

The Island of Datha is situated five miles to the east of the town of Beaufort, on the Coast of South Carolina. It was a lovely island, is now, probably more than any of the many scattered along that coast. It was bought by my grandfather and inherited from him by my Uncles, Lewis and Edward, and my father, Dr. Barnwell B. Sams. My Uncle Edward sold his interest to my father and my Uncle Lewis. They divided the island. The part owned by my father was the most picturesque. It was shaped something like a boot. It was bluffed on one side and shelved on the other. Both sides were bordered by trees. Not a wide, but a beautiful, river flowed along the eastern side, the side that was bluffed. The sands which stretched out from the bluff were precipitous. The strong tide, that was running more or less all the time, was continually washing away the soil of the bluff, and exposing the roots of the trees which grew thereon or near, and in time causing the trees to tumble into the river. Those roots were often the resort of the mink, a little chocolate-colored animal, that did much damage to the poultry. This river seemed to be a branch of the Coosaw. It started from Coosaw Island with a broad sweep, ran close up to Pol-Wannie (an island owned by Dr. L. R. Sams and situated between St. Helena and Datha) then swept around the eastern part of Datha, beginning with Big-Landing, passing Polly-Dock, then on to Bob Island and around, finally becoming what was known as Curisha Creek or River, which ran in front of Mink Point on to Bell Island and emptied into Warsaw River. The other side of Datha, that which shelved, did not present an appearance as picturesque or attractive. After passing through the thick undergrowth which bordered it, we gazed upon a long and wide stretch of short marsh, and then beyond that a still larger and wider stretch of tall marsh, on the other side of which could be seen the Warsaw River. Never seen, though, to advantage, except at full tide. This stretch of marsh was of great interest to us, because of the marsh-hens that abounded there. There is another part of the island by no means to be omitted in my attempt to describe it. It consists of Oak Island, the two Pine Islands, Cedar Island and some two or three smaller. Oak Island was the largest, the next in size, the Pines. Between Datha, Oak Island and the Pines were a number of ponds. These ponds were the result of an attempt made by my father to obtain salt land for the planting of cotton. At one time there was a great rage among the Sea Island planters for salt lands. It had several advantages over other kinds of land. From the time the seed was up there was little or no trouble. The cotton grown on it required very little working, did not suffer much from either excess of rain or sun. After, however, the dams were built, my father found there was little or no soil, no soil near the surface or lower down. It was all sand. He tried the cotton. It came up badly and grew worse. It was a failure. My father, though, determined to put the work done and money spent to some use. Being quite a sportsman, and looking upon the wild duck as the very best of game for his family, always anxious for his children to have a variety of wholesome food, having a great many sons among his children, wishing to remove as far as possible the temptation to wander from home, he converted his experiment into a kind of game preserve. Hence

these ponds that added so largely to the beauty of Datha, and contributed so much to the supplying of the table during the winter season. Take a clear wintry day, at sun set, and when these ponds were full, and you could not gaze upon a more lovely scene in nature. Go over to the opposite side of the island, stand by the Bee-Stinger Dam, look in the direction of Oak Island, after the sun had dipped behind, or go and stand between Oak Island and the larger Pine Island, and the scene would amply repay every moment you spent gazing upon it. At any rate it always seemed to us, Horace and myself, and sometimes Donald, would take one of these positions and drink in the beauty of the picture, a picture wanting not one touch to make it perfect; the wild ducks leaving the ponds in bunches of six, twelve and twenty, at different times and short intervals between; the marsh hens, cackling on every side, the curlews flying overhead for home for the night and sometimes the whooping crane, farther off and higher up and uttering their peculiar note, and other sounds from animated nature, the reflection cast by the setting sun, the quietness that stole over one's spirit, all this, and more, produced an impression too vivid ever to pass away. Between Oak Island and the smaller of the Pines there was a body of rushes. In those rushes, Horace, Donald and I often squatted to give the curlews passing over a parting salute, sometimes successfully and often times not.

Mink Point was a field at the extreme south of the island. Curisha River flowed in front, and washed its bluff dreadfully. To the east of Mink Point was Bob Island, the two connected by a dam. The interest in that island for us was mainly in the fact that it was a part of Datha. My father's part of the island was divided into different fields by means of hedges. There was an oak hedge between Tweedee and the Hill Field. Cedar hedge, between the Hill Field and a small field, running to the shore on the south. Casena hedge and another oak hedge running along the cornfield and Long Field. Corn Field, Long Field and Mink Point were again divided from each other by raised turf dams, on which were planted trees of various kinds, cedar, oak, casena, etc. This very division of the place added to its beauty.

Big Woods was not on our part of the Island but deserves some notice. It began just over what was known as the Locust Fence, the line dividing the island. It commenced at the fence, and extended down within a half a mile of the other end of the island. It was called Big Woods in distinction of a smaller body of woods, known as Little Woods. This latter had disappeared before my time. There is a story connected with Big Woods which I might as well tell here. At the time to which I allude, there were two settlements on the island. The negroes were continually passing from one to the other after night fall. On one occasion they would not leave either settlement except in day light. On inquiring the reason, it was found that there was a rumor amongst them of a white lady with long hair, who had taken up her abode in these woods, and whenever there was a storm, who would commence to scream and wring her hands. It found impossible to reason them out of this. At last my Uncle William told them

that the next time they heard the white lady, they must let him know. Accordingly not long after this, a storm of wind happened to rage, and some of the negroes came and reported that the white lady had commenced to scream. Calling his dogs and taking a hatchet, my uncle set out on a search for the white lady. It was at night. Entering the woods and making his way as well as he could in the dark, he followed the sound until he reached a tree from which it seemed to come. He barked the tree with his hatchet and then turned homeward. He passed out of the field and entered that known as Little Woods. Then he said it was his time to be frightened. Suddenly he heard around him great trampling as of many horses. The conduct of his dogs helped to alarm him. They ran in between his legs again and again, almost tripping him up. At last with yelps they dashed off, never stopping until they reached home. He said it was the first time he ever experienced the sensation of hair standing on end. He never found from what that sound came, nor could he explain the conduct of his dogs in connection with it. The white lady turned out to be two limbs of a tree which had crossed in contact with each other and, being long, whenever the wind blew they rubbed together and make a shrill, creaking sound. I believe all these so-called mysterious sounds can be traced to natural causes. I remember hearing my father tell of a little incident that happened when he was living at the parsonage on St. Helena. It was when he was practicing medicine. He was often called out at night, and my mother complained of a certain strange sound which she never heard except in his absence. The sound proceeded from the lower part of the house, something like a knocking. She did not believe that there was anything supernatural in it, nor did he. Though he tried, it was a long time before he discovered the cause. One night he was called out and had returned without his servants knowing it. Soon after he entered the house the noise commenced. He listened for some time and then slipping his boots off walked softly out of the house, down the steps, around to a door which opened into a cellar. He caught sight of some dark object within. Springing forward he grasped one of his own servants. It seems his servants were dissatisfied with staying there and hoped by alarming my mother to induce a move back to Datha.

The last place of note I mentioned was Big Woods. The other places of importance along the eastern shore of our part of the island, beginning from the side of Bob Island were, Murphy's Dam, Bee Stinger Dam, Polly Dock, Big and Little Landings, Spring Well and Salt Hole. Salt Hole was the place which supplied us with arrows. I remember it, though, for another reason. One December there was a great excitement among the negroes in regard to an alligator, which, they said, had eaten some of the hogs. After a good deal of talk about the matter his den was discovered near Salt Hole. The negroes reported the discovery to the overseer. He took his gun and went to join in battle with this alligator, which was reported as being very large. Several of the negroes accompanied him. Sure enough after getting to the Salt Hole, and passing through the canes, down on the sand to the left was the alligator in his den, under the bluff,

seeming asleep. He had either found a natural cave, or he had made one for himself and had taken possession. The overseer approached as near as he could and taking aim, shot him while asleep. The negroes soon had him out and he was indeed an ugly customer. I always doubted whether he was the real thief of the hogs. But whether or not he was an alligator and no love is thrown away on alligators.

I ought to say something about the house. My recollections cling more around the house than anything else. It was not a common house. It was uncommon. It was not one house but three, three distinct houses. The roof above was so constructed and the passage within, as to be, to all intents and purposes, one house. It was built of tabby, a mixture of shells, lime and sand. The way of construction was to make a box or several boxes according to the length and width of the buildings, each box so many feet long, say about fifteen or twenty feet, and about one and a half feet wide. These boxes were put in place, filled with the mixture, which was packed or pestled down, and allowed to stand until dry. The sides and ends of the boxes were held by movable pins. When these pins were drawn out, the box would fall to pieces. The box was taken down and put upon the tabby already dry, and so box after box was packed or pestled until the walls were as high as you designed. My father had a great preference for this kind of building, and put up a great many houses built in this way, upon his plantation and on his premises in the town of Beaufort. On one occasion he made a very narrow escape with his life. He was building an outhouse of large dimensions in Beaufort. He found that there was something wrong with its construction. It had been carried up beyond the first story. While walking around it, it fell well nigh covering him with its ruins. The defect had been in one of the boxes. It had not been placed in a direct line, square with the others. In other words, it produced a bowing wall, and a bowing wall will certainly fall. He generally superintended the work himself, knowing how particular it was necessary to be. His success as a planter was largely owing to his knowing everything about everything that was to be done. He owned tailors, blacksmiths and carpenters, but he seemed always to know more about these trades than the servants themselves. He knew exactly what was to be done, how much in a given time. He could always correct mistakes. His acquired practical knowledge of all the work necessary to successful planting operations, kept his negroes in orderly condition, in which they always were. He had several plantations and a great many negroes. He allowed them to visit on these different plantations, and nowhere else. Nor did he permit strange negroes to visit on his plantations. He employed missionaries for the religious instruction of his negroes. I do not think there was another body of negroes in the whole district more orderly or well cared for, physically and religiously. He had administrative talents, was systematic in everything and always in trim. Many of the planters in the Beaufort district were just as energetic as my father, but they seemed never to get on. They were always busy doing, doing, but never successful. The seasons were always too fast for their

work, and their expenditures too fast for the crops.

To return to the house; it had three names, or rather the three houses of which it was composed had three distinct names. West, East and Middle. The middle house was the old and original home. It was much older than my grandmother's time. It consisted of two rooms, a narrow passage between, two attic rooms above and two cellars below. My father added the two wings, each consisting of two rooms, and each wing as large as the original house. The two wings were connected by a large passage way, running back of the middle house, not only connecting the east and west house, but also connecting the middle house. The narrow passage in the middle house opened into this large passage on its side. The two ends of this large passage were entered from two doors respectively in the parlours, and piazzas of the east and west house. The three houses had each its own piazza. That of the middle house was most isolated. This large passage opened to the north upon the brick steps, as they were always called.

The description of the surroundings of the house will complete the description of the Island. In front of each house there was a large sycamore, beyond there were two large walnut trees, beyond these again was the old garden, which stretched to a little pond. On this side of which, that is, between the house and pond, was a large grove of poplar trees. On a moonlight night they looked like so many ghosts. Back of the house was the dairy, on the east side of the dairy, the well with the old oaken bucket. On the other side, directly on the north, was the pear orchard. East of it the old plum orchard, great place for setting traps and catching red birds. Northwest of the house was the orange orchard. Southwest the fig orchard and beyond that, the apple orchard. There were pear, fig, apple and orange trees elsewhere. The Island was well supplied with fruit. West of the orange orchard was our family burying ground. It was shaded all over by the spread of the largest live oak tree I ever saw. This tree grew in the middle of the graveyard, and threw its limbs out and around in all directions, even taking under its cover the wall which encircled the yard. On the east of the oak between it and the orange orchard, was a chapel, which was so placed as to form part of the wall, which ran around the whole spot. Northeast of the house, and almost directly behind the east house, was the old tabby blade house. This was one of the popular resorts when we were little fellows. We would go up there to hunt for hens' nests, and a dozen hens could not have made as much cackling over their newly laid eggs, as we did when we discovered a nest, which was often our reward. One other object was to climb on the blades to the top of the ceiling and then slide down or turn somer-saults. We generally came out looking quite fuzzy with bits and chips of blades hanging or sticking to us. Our clothes and hair always telling where we had been. In our way, we always cackled loudly or noisily over the nests we happened to find. Of course we wanted everybody to know we had found a nest, but I often thought the hens were very foolish to set up a

great cackling, as they did, when they laid their eggs, thus telling every egg-sucking dog within hearing that a new egg was ready for him. There were some of the dogs which ran direct to the spot, as soon as they heard the hens. I suppose this is the evil mixed up with the good. Eggs being so excellent for food, Providence never intended they should be secreted. On the same line with the old tabby blade house was the stable. Between that and the tabby house was the barn. Probably the barn was never open without our trying to get in, especially if there were any pigs in the hog pen, which was made by the fence running all around the barn. We would get into the barn, stand at the door and drop a few grains of corn near the steps. "Now, Horace", I would say, "I'll drop the corn and you catch that spotted fellow." "Well, wait till I get ready." And Horace would get on his knees and reach a little oat of the door; I standing by with the corn. As soon as it was dropped, up the little stupid pig would run and before he knew what he was about, Horace would grab him by the tail or leg. When it was by the tail, I always helped him. Fortunately for us it never broke, but when it escaped us, it was by slipping away. A pig running about with the tail half off would have told a tale on us, the sequel of which would not have been very pleasant to think of. Well, he would twist and turn, draw himself up and struggle and squeal, but between us two, we managed to hold fast and draw him in. Then the fun commenced. We would pull his ears, tickle his ribs, catch him by the hind legs and shake him up and down, to make him squeal. Our whole fun was in that. The old mother would get angry of this treatment of her precious little pigs and rushing up would guff, guff at us in a most fierce manner, chopping her jaws and looking daggers. The more they fumed and fretted, the more delighted we were. We took good care though to let the little pigs go before we ventured to come out of the barn. I used to think certainly that hogs had no brains, or, if they had, the brains of those little pigs would be so churned and addled and mixed up by the jerking up and down that, when let go, instead of switching their tails and scampering off in a straight line to the old sows, they would reel from side to side and tumble about. There was an old sow we called Old Hag. She was tall, long-sided and thin, a very good old creature she was. I believe she had some temper, however, and I think if she could have spoken she would have retorted on us by calling, little -----, never mind, I won't say. It would have been some comfort to her no doubt, could she have known how dreadfully afraid we were of her. At the cry, Old Hag is coming, were up the steps and on the fence, in a moment. We used to always halloo at her, throw corn cobs, worry and tease her little pigs, but always stood in great awe of her. Hogs are very greedy animals and, as a rule, eat all their food greedily. I have witnessed one exception. It would have been a study for a painter. It was in the eating of sugar cane. My father believed in sugar cane both for his children and the animals. We always had free access to it. It never hurt the teeth or the digestion, never took away the appetite. As a change of diet the work animals were fed on it one month. Of course the hogs often got it. A perfect picture of animal contentment and delight was when a hog got a piece of cane he could not take into his mouth,

without first pressing under his feet and tearing with his teeth. I have often seen a hog take a piece, get it fairly within his jaw, throw his head up so as to prevent the juice escaping, shut his eyes, and then set to work and chew and squeeze and swallow down, as though the piece of sugar cane was something so sweet that it could not be put in words. In front of the stable was the overseer's house. To return to the hog pen. It furnished us with another amusement in the catching line. My father had a large pigeon house right back of the west wing of the dwelling house. He raised a great many pigeons. The pigeons were very fond of visiting the hog pens to pick up whatever grain they could find. In the large hog pens there were several little pens in which some little pigs or their brothers and sisters would be confined for staying out too late, or not coming home for several nights. Into these pens the pigeons would fly to get the corn, that was our time. We would go to the fence, I standing outside, Horace jumping in, and after a great deal of scrambling and catching, would at last seize one pigeon. We would talk to each other very much in this way. "You got him?" "No! You got him now?" "No, he dodges me". "I can't". "Never mind, try again." "I got him now." "Well, bring him out." A moment after he would be climbing the fence, holding on with one hand and the other holding the pigeon, which I waited to receive. We would play with it some time and at last throw it up in the air, when it would sail a-way and come back the next morning to undergo the same fright.

Like all children, we were mischievous, often disobedient, but not from any evil disposition. There was an old African, who was a hog-minder. He was a little old man, honest and good-natured. In the afternoon he used to stand at the hog pen, near the gate and cry Poo-goo, Poo-goo, Poo-goo -until I thought he would split his throat. I seem to have him before me now. We were very fond of playing tricks upon him. He loved the hogs, sows, pigs, mothers, little pigs, all, and was very anxious to have them in the pen before night fall. The hogs tried his patience a great deal, but it was very wonderful what he did with them. Some times when he would see a hog coming along in that slow way, peculiar to them when not driven, he would blurt out at them in a way to make one think he was really angry. We noticed this, and every now and then would go up the road, towards the cedar hedge, and pretend that we were the hogs. There was a road running direct from cedar hedge to the pen. We would go up as far as cedar hedge, get on our knees (as we never thought of the pantaloons) and make our way down to the pen. Being dressed in dark clothes, dark caps on our heads, and the sun having set or very near to it, it was very easy to deceive old Brutus. We would creep a little, then stop, as the hogs did, sometimes going a little out of the road, then we would stop, putting our heads down, as if rooting for something. We could see him facing in our direction and when we got near we would jump up with a giggle and laugh, delighted with the success of our deception. I believe the old man was really deceived. He never seemed to suspect. Of course we took good care not to do it too often, or with too much regularity. When we played this trick, we always waited until, from

the lateness of the hour, we thought nearly all the hogs had gone home, and we noticed that as soon as we made ourselves known the old man would pin the gate and go home.

But to us the most exciting of the scenes connected with the hogs was the catching of those that were to be fattened for bacon. They were generally caught early in the morning. A squeal would wake us. Up we would jump, hurry on our clothes, look at the water in the basin, knock the comb one way, and the brush the other, dash down the steps, and, in a moment, would be strung along the fence which constituted the hog pen - not to see the hogs caught, that ended the fun, but to see the negroes catching the hogs. If you put a coward in a corner, he will fight. This was often the case with the hogs. At first when the negroes jumped into the pen they would scatter or crowd together, and run here and there, into one corner then another. Some times under the barn, and would then try to climb the fence. After a while, however, they would turn with their tails to the fence, and their heads towards the negro man, facing the enemy as it were, some of them chopping their jaws together, and looking quite savage. I have seen three or four men in front of one or two hogs which were the doomed ones. The hogs would stand facing the negroes, their snouts dropped a little to the ground and their eyes raised, giving them a rather singular appearance, a picture of savageness and determination. It was a look that gave a kind of challenge, it seemed to say, come on if you dare. The negroes were very fond of encouraging each other to make an attack, but not fond of setting an example. At last one of them would make a dash, miss his aim and tumble down flat. The hog would make at him, and he would scramble upon all fours, making the dust and straw fly all around him, escaping, but at the expense of a laugh from the others; or he would make at the hog, the hog would make at him, he would then make for the fence, and not jump but tumble over heels, head, body, all and land not on his feet but on his back, and again a laugh. But even Cuffee was too smart for the hog. Whilst two or three negroes would be in the pen engaging the attention of the hog, another would slip outside, and putting his hand between the rails, seize one leg, the others then would rush in, and that generally ended the contest.

I return to the house. The extreme west room was my Father's chamber. The room next that, a parlor. Often on a mild December night we would sit in the piazza of the west house and enjoy the scene, commonplace enough when looked at under sun light, but of uncommon beauty when the view was at night, and the moon was shining. It was a survey of the field known as the corn field. It commenced outside of the Fig Orchard and ran away down as far as the woods that fringed the edge of the first pond. The field was long, and just with breadth enough to make it complete. At the season of the year, to which I am alluding, the stalks from which the grain had been gathered were tall, strong and covered with the empty shocks that had held the ear. These stalks had been bleached by successive hoarfrosts. The light of the rising moon first

fell upon the stalks, bright and white, interspersed for awhile by the shadow from the pines at Polly Dock, stretching full across one part of the field, it fell upon the woods that bordered the first pond, then seemed to settle upon the tops of the pine and oak in Oak Island, massed together, and which formed part of the beauty and glory of Oak Island. This was no common picture, looked at when the sun was down and the moon was rising. Often did we sit in the Piazza of the west house and enjoy the scene, listening at the same time to the Too whoo, Too whoo, whoo-whoop of the great white owl, which came from the woods of Oak Island. This reminds me of an early adventure on that island with my brother Horace. If I am not mistaken, we had gone there to cut a palmetto cabbage. I had just learned to shoot, he not yet. I carried the gun, he the ax. We left the house rather late in the afternoon. By the time we reached the island day was well nigh gone, and night was coming on. The ducks had left the ponds. The last flock of Curlews had passed over. The doves had commenced to gather around the little ponds in Oak Island which they always did about sun set, the negroes had left the adjoining field, the cows, hogs and sheep had all gone home, not even the call of the cowboy shouting at some stray member of the flock, ya-e-e-e. "You sukey, come back dere". "May; whar you gwine?" "Cut-teet, cut-teet, get out of dat bush, you always war a fool cow". No, the silence was unbroken. There was a still and sombre look about everything. "Horace, you are not afraid?" "Afraid? Not I", "No, not I either". Thus we tried to bolster each other up. Of what should we be afraid? There was nothing to harm us. Even if so, we had a gun and an ax. We marched on, and marched in. After proceeding a little distance an owl commenced to hoot. Neither of us liked the sound. We would have enjoyed it more if we had been seated in the Piazza of the west house. We both had a kind of feeling that the ill omened bird was laughing at us as though it had caught us in a trap by ourselves, and our day had come; our night. However, we both knew it was only an owl, and that it was really more afraid of us than we were of it. I rallied therefore and determined to put my best foot foremost, and attack his owlship. When I look back and take in all the circumstances, I am a little surprised at my own resolution and his agreeing. I stopped, told him to stand where he was and watch to see whether the owl would fly, should he cross the road after I had passed on. It had darkened more. The music of the owl had not become any more pleasant to us than to the squirrel. I went on softly, leaving Horace as I thought behind in the road and on the watch. I walked on, peering with my eyes into the palmetto pines and oaks on either side, to see if I could see his owlship and get a shot. After awhile I heard a slight foot fall, and looking behind whom should I see but Horace, who scared me as much as if the owl had suddenly clutched me by the hair. Horace explained himself. "Well", I said, "What's the matter"? "Why, I am not going to stay in the road by myself and an old owl hooting and flying all around me". We concluded to give up both owl and cabbage and get out of the woods as quickly as we could. We both breathed a little more freely and talked a little more loudly after we got clear of the island. A year after he took to his gun and

it was a poor chance for any owl that crossed his path.

As I have already said the Piazza of the west house and the parlor opened upon the passage. On the south side of the passage, and between its two ends, a door opened into the small passage of the middle house. The first room of the middle house was called the girls' room. It was the scene of all the Christmas preparation and completion. Its very atmosphere seemed to savor of jelly, mince pie, cheese, cakes (a perished pastry, I believe) and Syllabub. The room opposite was known as the big bed-room. After you left the middle house you came to the east house. The first room was called the drawing room. Both in regard to painting and panelling, it was more finished than any room in the house. It was sometimes used as a bed-room, and sometimes as a school-room. My Father once engaged, a man both as an overseer and teacher. His name was Rushing. He was above the overseer and not equal to the teacher. I do not think he was strict. That seems not to have been his fault. Anyhow, Horace and myself took it into our heads to run off from school and hide among the potato banks. We escaped and were enjoying ourselves very much, playing in the sand, when we were suddenly pounced upon by an elder brother and arrested as fugitives from justice. We knew that we were guilty and made no attempt, either to flee or fight, but surrendered at the instant. If I remember right, we had a grape vine thrown around us and were marched back to school. Of course we enjoyed the return almost as much as the escape. It was just like playing horse. My brother was the driver and we were the horses. I have no recollection of being afraid, which makes me think Mr. Rushing was not strict. To play truant is about the greatest offense a boy can commit, as a school boy, and about the meanest. We were quite young and did not understand the criminality and the meanness of it. Probably, however, we were reported to headquarters, for we never again helped ourselves to a holiday.

I mention one more incident in connection with the house and myself and then dismiss it. If one were at all superstitious, a night spent alone in the Datha house would play very much on his weakness. I did it more than once and I confess that, as the noise and sounds of plantation life ceased and everything became still, the various creakings and creakings that are more or less in all houses of the kind, were painfully distinct. I remember one night in particular after sitting up very late, I retired to the middle room, or rather the girls' room, of the middle house. I was in bed some time and was just beginning to forget myself as sleep was coming on, when I was suddenly aroused and startled by some one coming down from one of the attic rooms. It was first a soft sound, and then a hard, just like a person walking with one shoe off, and the other on. I felt rather queer. I did not believe in ghosts, did not believe that any ghost could make that sound; and knew there was no servant in the house. Still I did not like the sound and drew the covering over my head. After awhile I fell asleep. The next morning I examined and found a very

simple explanation of the whole affair. My Father had selected some corn for seed and stowed it away in one of the rooms above, in the shock. A rat had got possession of one of the ears and had tried to bring it down the steps. The hard sound was that of the corn as it struck step after step, the soft sound was that of his own body. That staircase frightened me on another occasion, and the result might have been much more serious. We were playing hide and seek. I thought some of the children had hidden themselves on the narrow piece above the stairs, but running its length, and next the east of the attic rooms. Accordingly I got on my hands and knees and commenced to creep in the dark on this piece, when suddenly I got to the edge without knowing I was near, tumbled over, fell upon the steps, beginning pretty high up, falling to the bottom, my head bumping, bumping on each step, until I reached the platform at the bottom. With it all, I was more frightened than hurt.

Before I go on further, I would say a word about my parents. I have already spoken of my Father's business capacities. He always had family prayer, night and morning. I know I was so much accustomed to this that, after I entered the ministry and took charge of a parish, I was very much surprised on visiting my parishioner and spending the night at being asked to have family worship at night, but not in the morning. As children, we were required to attend family worship, school and church, and ask no questions. As I have already said, he provided religious instruction for his servants. While he exacted of us obedience, there never was a Father who did more to make home pleasant to his children. He educated his children to believe in his word, whether that word was a threat or promise, good training for believing in the word of the Heavenly Father. With all of us, home was the spot most dear on earth. This again giving us some idea of what the Heavenly Home is and how we ought to feel in regard to it. There is no influence on earth more for the good or evil of children than the home influence. It is in every parent's power to do something towards making that a pleasant and wholesome influence. Every parent ought so to arrange it that his children have the most tender recollection of home, will always leave it with regret, long for it when away, and return to it with joy and gladness. Every cent spent towards beautifying home and making home-life attractive is well spent, economically, wisely and lovingly spent.

My recollections of my Mother are connected more or less with little incidents. I remember sitting on the carpet in Beaufort playing with one or two of my brothers, and a servant - Diana - coming in and asking how she was. At that time my Mother was standing at the end of a table cutting out some kind of work. I have now on my mind the expression of her face. I have no recollection of the words and her answer, but the answer itself drew my attention to her. I remember again we were with her in the carriage and stopped at a store to buy tin cups. Some painted ones were brought out with sharp half-diamond points all around the edges. Of course we all clutched after these and wanted them. But of

course we did not get them. Though of a very mild disposition, yet my Mother was always firm enough to deny what she thought would hurt us. I remember riding out with her in the carriage one summer morning and clutching at the limbs and twigs of trees and bushes that swept against the carriage. My last recollection of her carries me back to Datha. I walked out with her one afternoon. The live oak log at which we stopped and rested was still in Long Field when I was there some three years ago. Well, one morning I was awakened and told in a whisper that my Mother was dead. Young as I was, I knew a dark shadow had crossed our threshold. But it was not until after years I found out how very dark that shadow was. My brothers and myself were called into the chamber and one after the other, kneeling in front of our Father, who was sitting by the bed, we put our hands in one of his and he with the other uncovered her face. It was the last I saw of her, except in a dream some months after. She died in Beaufort. That winter we moved to Datha. I dreamt of her one night, only once. I called to my Father, he replied and I fell asleep again. He mentioned next morning my calling to him but I never explained it. I ascribe the dream to seeing the grave the day before.

Before I go any further, I would mention one other incident connected with my brother, Horace, and with which I had something to do. The house in Beaufort was on Sams' Point, as it was called. The whole of that part of the town was owned by my grandfather. And a very popular drive for carriages was around our premises. We were much given to running after carriages. We would catch on behind, draw ourselves up and swing our feet off the ground and ride about half a square. This was not in accordance with my Father's good judgment or sense of propriety. He had his office midway between the ends of the lot on the south side of the premises. One evening Horace and myself fancied a ride. An excellent carriage came by with a pair of very fast horses, -that unhappy evening. And Horace and myself concluded to take a ride from the gate around to the office. So we waited a little while, and as the carriage passed, we made a dash, seized hold, swung ourselves up, giggling a little at our success in overtaking the carriage, and enjoying ourselves the more for thinking how ignorant the sitters within were of the riders without. As soon as we reached the office we dropped off, but judge of our dismay when we saw Father standing in the door looking at us. We knew what that look meant. The next carriage that drove by was not troubled with any outriders. Here were right and wrong. Father was right and we were wrong. But probably our disobedience was oftener in regard to fruit than anything else. Adam and Eve fell by eating fruit, and I think it is the most difficult of all temptations for a boy to resist.

Well we were positively forbidden to eat green fruit. In looking back upon this specific disobedience I get an illustration of the Heavenly Father from the Father on earth. In our desire for green fruit, we were governed by the pleasure of the moment, the immediate gratification of appetite. We did not think of consequences. The possibility of having to

take jalap and hippo, or oil, was too remote, was as dust in the balance when weighed against this immediate gratification of the palate or appetite. Father would not have us sacrifice the future for the present, health for a morbid taste. His prohibition meant good, not evil. Thus do the Commandments of God respect our future and everlasting good. God forbids us to do what will either make us unhappy here or unhappy hereafter. Carried away by passion and appetite we disobey him, and sacrifice health, conscience, Heaven itself, for some momentary sinful pleasure or gratification.

When a boy at school Horace was much given to laughing. He laughed at almost everything that happened. He escaped reprimand and discipline, through the good sense of the teacher. The teacher was one of those men who had sense enough to see the differences when others could only see analogies. He could detect the difference between evil and the appearance of evil, good and the appearance of good. The difference between Horace and myself was, I was always inclined to laugh at incongruities. An old cart horse, turned out and trying to rear and pitch and be graceful generally, would make me laugh but not if the horse was a fine good-looking thoroughbred. Anything said in the pulpit which struck me as very out of place would make me laugh when the same thing said elsewhere would scarcely attract my attention. He laughed at things funny in themselves. I remember a little occurrence that took place at Datha (of which we felt very much ashamed) that illustrated this. Dinner had been brought in and we were standing, I on one side and he on the other, before saying grace, which I was to do. While we were standing, old Phillis came in with a pitcher of water. Horace had been trying to remember the name but could not. He asked old Phillis. "Dat dog name - Sir - I neber remember, I firgat." Horace then said. "Well, call him Forget", and I commenced to laugh. I was standing up waiting to say grace. He was shaking with laughter in front of me, trying to control himself. I kept waiting, and at last the whole thing seemed so incongruous that I joined with him. I need not say there was no grace said that meal. His first introduction of himself into the Steward Hall at College almost introduced him out of college. After prayer in the chapel the students went to the Hall for supper. I was Senior, Horace was Freshman, rising Soph. He was not in the same room with me. This special afternoon some of the students pitched one or two biscuits at some of the others. Horace caught at it immediately, and gathering some biscuits around his plate he threw them right and left in every direction. It was such great disrespect to the biscuits that one could hardly expect the Bursar whose judgment, taste and economy had put them there, would submit without resentment. Accordingly a day or two after, I was summoned to appear before the President at his house. He soon informed me of the object of my summons. He said, "Your brother has been guilty of a little indiscretion at the Steward Hall and the Faculty concluded to speak to you on the subject, thinking it might prevent any serious course adopted in regard to him". I understood the President and

told him it would not happen again. I reported to Horace and he was glad to get off as easily as he did.

I come back to Datha, mention some of the ways we entertained ourselves before learning to shoot. Setting traps came first. Datha was rich in trap birds, bull finches, sparrows, reed birds, thrushes and many others. It also abounded in places for trap setting. All the small Islands, the hedges and a number of places. Our traps were sometimes unsuccessful. I cannot say as often as they ought to have been. There is no business that has not its drawback. Sometime the cows mashed them - sometimes the hogs rooted them and sometimes the fowls scratched them. But the cow, hog or fowl caught near one of our traps learned what brickbats were in the bands of indignant boys, three or four of them at that. When we found a bird in a trap, one of us would hold the trap down and then either dig a hole near it, slip his hand through the hole under the trap, and grab the nuisance. We would then carry him home, put him in a cage, enjoy him for a day or two - and the third day fling him out, a dead bird. We never succeeded in keeping them alive very long. I suppose being unaccustomed to it, they were unable to stand the confinement.

Oyster-picking was one of our great pleasures. We enjoyed the oyster-picking, but precious few oysters did we ourselves pick. The negro boys did the rowing of the boat, and the picking of the oysters, Big Landing was our starting point. We had a little row boat for our special use. In looking back it seems to me the great pleasure was in returning to eat a cold dinner, or rather in having an appetite for dinner, whether cold or hot. I know we always enjoyed oyster-picking more if the tide suited so as to keep us away beyond the dinner hour. We had to consult the tide. It was hand-picking, it was done on the banks, and of course the tide must be low. We would push off from Big Landing shore, run up into Big Landing Creek, or Pol-Wannee, or some other, gather two or three buckets, return and sit down to cold ham, turkey, hominy and potatoes, and some other vegetable (all cold, cold and stale) and lick the platter clean. We needed nothing to give us an appetite. The body wanted food, and enjoyed the food it got.

An amusement second to none was camping. The cold and cloudy days were the days we most liked. There was a grove of pines near Bee Stinger Dam that, of all the places for camp ground, we fancied. The grass was thick. We would cut eight long poles. We would then tie four from one pine to another in the form of a square, as high as we wished the camp to be. We would then, in the same way, tie four more midway between them and the ground. Next we would cut some soft Palmettoes and tie them all along the poles as near as possible to each other. Finally we would lay some poles across on the top and cover them with brush. This would complete the camp. The next thing was the potatoe. To make up a fire inside and thrust into the ashes some raw potatoes, take them out half done and eat them, imagining all the time that we were Indians.

This was the next best thing in camp life. The best thing was for the camp to catch fire - accidentally - it must be accidentally. We always made great efforts to do so, we pretended to, but we never succeeded in putting out the fire. The fun was to build the camp, eat the half roasted potatoes, fancy ourselves Indians and then for the camp to burn down after the most heroic efforts on our part to extinguish the fire. Before we took to gunning, camping was a great source of amusement. It was one of which we never grew weary.

Before I pass on to gunning, I want to tell you a little about the dogs. Like most country gentlemen and sportsmen, my Father was very fond of dogs. He fancied the New Foundland and Spaniel - Belisle, Breton, Beta, Ulay and Fool come to my memory. Belisle and Breton were famous, though I have no recollection of Breton. After hunting or walking about the place my Father would sometimes sit under a tree. I heard him say that, on such occasions, none of the negroes, however familiar were with the dogs, could venture to approach near to him. They had to call to him from a distance. Belisle had the dropsy. I remember seeing my Father tap her. I wondered where all the water came from. It would come again and again and seemed to increase the more it was drawn away. Beta was the puppy of the two. She was a dog of a great deal of uncommon sense but without common sense enough to know her own feet when swimming 'in the water. Everytime she raised them up to strike the water she would bark and snap at them - of course never catching them. She would continue this until forced to shore from weariness. Ulay's fondness for a gun amounted to a passion. He was beyond any dog I ever knew. If you put your hand upon a gun and he was in the house and saw you, he would commence to turn and twist and whine and bark. If he was with you out shooting, he always became so excited that he would frighten the birds away. It was idle to carry him duck hunting. While you would be creeping and crawling, afraid even to break a twig, he would be dancing and prancing up and down making a low moan as though he knew that some kind of silence must be observed. We generally shut him up before going to the ponds. But I have known him to sneak out of, the house and dash off ahead of us. As for catching him after he once saw the guns in our hands, it was impossible. You could neither coax him to come to you or overtake him by running at him. Shooting was his fun, and if there was a hunting party going out he would join it if possible. But the dogs in which were most interested were the squirrel dogs, Gouge, Grab and Wallace. Gouge was remarkable. I never knew her to fail. If ever she barked at the foot of a tree, we were as sure that a squirrel was in it as though we had it in our hand. She was a very nervous dog, bright-eyed, quick in her movements, good at squirrels, good at rats, and good at everything. Even good at snapping up fowls. Many a whipping she got for killing fowls before they were needed. I think it arose from her indignation at being disturbed when grabbing for rats. The fowls were very fond of coming round her to pick up the insects she would throw up with the dirt. She would snap at them in an instant. Bite their heads or break their necks, and then go on

grabbling away, as though she had done nothing amiss, only removed an obstruction to her business. Grab was more sedate and not so smart. Gouge would turn around twice while Grab seemed to be thinking whether he would turn at all. Gouge and Grab were terriers. Gouge was black with white legs. Grab was black with tan legs. Another dog that came on the state at that time was called Wallace. He was left on the Island by an overseer. He was black and tan and a most excellent squirrel dog.

Now before I take up our shooting, I should say a few words about shooting itself. I have never liked that kind of sentimentality that spent so much of itself on the dumb animal. There are those also who seem to think of mere animal life as much as they think of human life. I believe God has made man an entirely different being from the mere creature. One is immortal, the other is not. The one is accountable, the other is not. The one has a conscience, the other has not. The creature was made to serve man, and man was made to serve God. I have never had any scruples about hunting, no more than about fishing. Some people make a difference. I would like to know on what grounds. God has given us both the fish of the sea and the fowl of the air. There is just as much suffering to the fish when it is hooked, pulled by main force out of its native element and allowed to beat and thump itself about and suffocate in the air, as there is to a bird when it is shot. There is excitement attending both fishing and shooting and were it not for that excitement probably we would not be so much induced to take, and use what God has given us. The Apostles were fishermen. Of course they were. They made their living by fishing. If the country had been favorable for it, they might have been hunters. And had they been, they would not have been barbarians or savages for that reason. Hooks sometimes run into the feel and cause lockjaw. Boats upset, guns also explode and destroy human life. But ten are lost at sea for everyone that is killed in land. God gave man cunning to manufacture guns and hooks. Through carelessness and abuse they become dangerous and destructive. In gunning no evil passions are aroused, no revenge, malice, hate or any other. It does not demoralize the moral man. Persons sit down and cry out against God and what he has permitted man to do and yet the doing of which is unattended with immoral effects. Any evil temper indulged in towards a human being is ten thousand times worse than all the shooting of all the birds the sportsman could accomplish in his life time. Gambling, saloons, theatres - performances which play upon human sensibilities without exciting to active demoralize, but not the killing of a partridge or catching of a trout. My brothers B. and H. were considered the most affectionate in the family and they were the great sportsmen. My brother D. was also very affectionate and he was very fond of his gun. The best boys in the town of Beaufort spent their Saturdays gunning. The worst boys lounged and lolled about the wharves and streets. You could find more sportsmen in Beaufort than any other place of its size. And no where would you find a more high toned and moral community.

The squirrels on Datha always got a great deal of our attention as

sportsmen. Early in the morning, or as soon after breakfast as was possible, we would get out guns and commencing at Little Landing we would take the woods along the margin, and make our way to Big Woods, which was considered the great squirrel hunting grounds. Horace, D. and myself generally composed the hunting party. Our hunt was very thorough. There was not a Palmetto or Oak or piece of woods that was not searched. If there were any vines running up into the tree they were pulled and shaken. When we reached Big Woods the real hunt commenced. The other was a kind of skirmishing. Sometimes we would go there in the evening, or late in the afternoon, and take a silent hunt. We would separate and each take his stand near some tree. The squirrel would come out, if everything was quiet and run and bark. We would follow the sound and generally managed to kill a few before sunset. When we hunted in the morning we would take the dogs. As soon as a dog barked we would start off in a run and surround the tree. The effect of the barking of the dog was to frighten the squirrel, and make it stop on the tree up which it ran or on which the dog found it. It was somewhat amusing to see us standing like three statues around the tree at some little distance from each other - each holding his gun cocked, muzzle up and each hoping that one of the other two should make some noise and cause the squirrel to move around to himself. If you get to a tree on which a squirrel is he will always go around to the side of the tree opposite where you are standing. The only way to get him round to you is to throw something on the opposite side and that making a noise would make him move round to you. It was not considered fair play to do this on these occasions. Hence we would stand as stiff as marble statues, each hoping that some accidental move on the part of one of the others or the noise made by the dog would cause the squirrel to come round to him. And woe be unto the squirrel that made any display of himself, whether head, side or tail. Bang! Bang!! Bang!!! would be the salutation. After all they sometimes escaped, running up to the topmost branches of the tree or hiding themselves in the mass.

The marsh hens that frequented the low marsh on the northwestern side of the Island were not neglected. After we had finished shooting in the afternoon around the ponds, we would turn homeward and take our way through that body of short marsh, scaring up the marsh hens and shooting them on the wing - or rather shooting at them. They were very deceptive. They had a way of starting up very suddenly and sometimes when shot at dropping very suddenly - producing the impression they had been shot down. But when we ran up expecting to pick up our bird, to our great astonishment, for we never got accustomed to it, we would hear it cackling away in the taller marsh, as though laughing at us.

Hunting the mink ought to come in for some notice. The mink was not a favorite on Datha. No one had any pity for him, he was so wasteful of fowl life. Nothing but blood would satisfy him. He would kill half a dozen fowls to satisfy his thirst besides maiming others. I once had a hen with scalp torn off by a mink, without being killed. High tide was the time for hunting them. They would then leave the marshes and hide themselves

under the roots of those trees which had fallen from the washing of the bluff. He has the power of emitting an odor of a most abominable kind, which no doubt was given him as a protection or probably to warn weaker animals of his approach. He has a silent but quick way of moving. If the odor was defensive the dogs did not care for it and shot could not smell it. His practice was to get under the tree into the roots, as high up as possible after the dogs had discovered him. You must either poke him out or smoke him out. The smoking generally did the business. When he made a dash it was always for the water. And when once he was generally safe, he would dive immediately and not rise until at a distance. And when he did rise all you could see of him would be a little bit of his skull. Whatever it was it was never hit and from its position the shot glanced off. He was seldom or ever killed in the water. When he fell, it was generally at the mouth of the dogs. They would sometimes overtake him before he reached the water and snap him up. Then came the struggle. He would bite them and they would yell, but hold on. He squealed, but would keep on biting until he could bite no more. If the dogs once caught him, he was doomed. He always bit and drew blood to the last. He fought to the end and the dogs always came out of the fight with bloody noses, scratched eyes and with a smell that made them an abomination of everybody for a day or two.

But the kind of game most eagerly pursued was the wild duck. The rivers and ponds around and about Datha supplied us with the game, some seasons in abundance. I have now in my mind that special river running on the east of Datha, along Big Landing, Polly Dock, Bee Stinger Dam, on to Bob Island. I cannot say however that we were very successful on these occasions. Whether it was that the bluff was too high, thus deceiving us in regard to distance. Still, with all our dodging and creeping behind trees and bushes and getting on our knees so as to approach as near as possible to the edge, I cannot remember more than two or three killed in that river. Sometimes we would shoot together, thinking to make sure of our game, yet after the sound from the explosion would die away, there would be a great flapping of wings on the water and the next thing we would see would be the game on the wing, making its way as fast as possible up or down the river, or over the great stretch of marsh between Datha and Pol-wanie.

But the ponds around Oak Island and between that Island and Datha and the smaller islands were the favorite places. The best time for shooting them was early in the morning. Before day break we would get up, go down and taking our position behind some one of the blinds on the Dam would wait and wait, and just about sun rise we would bang, bang away. The object in getting up early and getting behind the blinds (generally made of the soft Palmetto) was to be ready for the ducks when they came into the ponds. It was generally cold business, but you warmed up by the shir - r - r made on the water by the ducks as they came in flocks of four or twelve or twenty at a time. From the time of this peculiar noise, made by them as they lit on the water, until sun

rise you were in a constant excitement. The ducks generally lit in the middle of the pond, and after being quiet for a while as though listening and looking to see if any enemy was near, they would swim towards the dam for the purpose of feeding where the water was shallow, and the grass seed more easily reached, at the same time eyeing the blinds, as though speculating as to the probability of some enemy being ambushed behind. At that early hour even the slightest sound could be heard, and the snapping of a small twig or piece of sedge would alarm them. I always suspected though that they saw much more than we gave them credit for. The blinds mostly faced the rising sun. The sun blinded us but not the ducks. I have no doubt they often got sight of our dark clothes or a flash from the sun on the gun barrel when we changed our position or when we ourselves were unable to see them. I used to be provoked sometimes when, just as I was getting ready, they would wheel around, and in a much shorter time than one could imagine take themselves off back into the middle of the pond. And when once alarmed they were always more wary in approaching the next time, coming up more slowly and feeding with more or less excitement. No doubt all animals much hunted become more and more fearful and fear is transmitted from one generation to another. I always found that as the season advanced the ducks became more and more shy. I put that down to this inherited fear increased by being themselves hunted or shot at.

Horace killed more ducks than I. He aimed at the wing and I at the head. My idea was that when the head was struck the duck was dead, you either missed or killed. There was no fluttering about, no trouble in getting, no escaping in a crippled condition. To be successful it needed much creeping and patience and much waiting. The bogging outside the dam in a stooping position, with the soft mud splashing up in your eyes, mouth and nostrils was something I could never do to perfection. The ducks often got wind of what I was doing though in creeping I was out of their sight. They would either paddle off into the middle of the pond, beyond gun range or they would take to the wing and take themselves off. Besides I found it difficult to resist the temptation of popping up my head every now and then, as I crept down, to see whether they were in shooting distance. Besides, shooting excited me Very much. Sometimes I would shoot too quickly. I remember walking down to the ponds one afternoon, three or four of us together, and after crossing one of the dams and approaching another that ran across that, I saw a duck just on the other side in some water near the dam and moving a little from side to side. In an instant my gun was up to my shoulder and away I banged. I was very much startled by a laugh all around me. We had a wooden decoy duck that had been anchored there with a bullet and piece of twine. I had shot at it. I remember at another time I was so excited as to have been unable to shoot. I was at the end of the island walking round the margin hunting for game. After getting near what had been a pond and which opened into a creek, I heard some black ducks quacking. I ducked down in some soft Palmetto, and waited to find out where they were. While waiting some

nine or ten large fat ducks came waddling along on the mud, within easy shooting distance. I was taken so much by surprise, and was so excited that, though I raised my gun, my hand trembled so I could not shoot at the proper time, and when I had recovered myself they had gone. Sometimes sportsmen do very foolish things. I remember hearing of a little incident connected with a friend of one of my elder brothers, who had been invited by him to visit Datha. This young man went down to one of the ponds in which there were a great many widgeon. When feeding, the widgeon very often plunge their heads down into the water and throw their tails up. If you stopped and looked at them when there was a large flock it presented a very curious and somewhat interesting sight. This young man got a position and waited an opportunity, as soon as the ducks threw their tails up he banged at them. Of course they were very much surprised at the whizzing of shot through their tail feathers. And when they got their heads up they took themselves off. The proper plan was to take advantage of their putting their heads under, and creep nearer. When you thought you were near enough you gave a low whistle. Then the whole flock would lift their heads, that was the proper time to shoot.

The great enemy to duck shooting was the eagle. There seemed always to be some two or three every winter hovering about Datha, watching the ponds. I do not know whether they killed many ducks, but they frightened them a great deal. They were killed from time to time. I only remember having killed one. It was a cold dark day. I was at the ponds near Oak Island. Some of the negroes came and reported to me there was an eagle on a pine tree near the Negro Settlement, watching the turkeys. I hurried off. When I came to the place I got on my knees and scrambled as well as I could through the brush so as to get near enough to shoot. My gun was loaded with small shot. I fired at his head, believing it was my only hope. I was much surprised to see him drop his head, lean over and tumble from the limb. In my excitement I ran up and put my foot upon him, thinking he was either only frightened or slightly stunned and that he would get up and fly away. But he was dead, stone dead. The shot had struck him in the throat. For the reason already given we had no love for the great, screaming American Eagle. Even when we knew he was beyond shooting range, we would send shot at him. There was one that used to post himself on the top of a tall dead tree, near that end of Bell Isle which we passed in going to and from Ladies Island and Datha. And many a load of shot did we send after him. Sometimes he would fly away when he saw the boat coming, and at other times he would stay as though knowing he could not be hurt.

Christmas was the merriest and saddest time. The merriest, because we were all together. The saddest, because the time was coming for us to part again. The girls' room (as it was called) and the Brick Oven of all places were the most attractive places to us. We were continually peeping in at the door of the room asking for little bits of crust to put in the over, to be baked with the more respectable pies. Then we would

come back and beg for little bits of cinnamon out of the jelly bag to put in our mouths, and go off chewing as though they were quids of tobacco, enjoying them more for this conceit than because they were pieces of cinnamon and penetrated with the other sweet things with which they had been mixed in the jelly bag.

The fixture was this: two chairs, back to back, and bag between suspended by a string to each, full of all kinds of sweet mixtures and dripping away, drip, drip, drip. We always wondered whether it would get through in time for Christmas and more than that whether there would be enough for all. But slow and sure, clear as crystal, solid, plenty and to spare. And then the Middle piazza was never much frequented by us until Christmas times. The girls' room, where all the Christmas mysteries were carried on, opened into a narrow passage which lead out into the middle piazza. How our little feet did trot up and down those steps in and out that passage, all around peeping in and wishing to enter but knowing it was forbidden ground. The old brick oven was in the yard. We took a great interest in the heating of it, always thinking the cook too slow and rejoicing in the good tidings, hot enough, hot enough. We were very active in carrying the news from the oven to the room. Then such a number of waiters, all full of all kinds of pies would come streaming out of that room down the steps to the oven. We never felt uneasy about the pies. The wonder was where were the people to eat them all. Twenty-seven mouths though as was often the case, soon left shelves empty that had been crowded. On Christmas Eve we generally formed our plans for the morning. They were generally two. One was put into our heads by the negroes. They told us that at midnight the sheep got on their knees. We often planned to get up and go out and see this wonderful sight. But if ever we went it must have been in our dreams. The other plan was to get up by daylight, go around to some of the negro houses and cry, Merry Christmas. This we did, but there was not much enjoyment in it. The mutterings of the negroes in their half awakened condition rather dampened our enthusiasm.

I ought not to forget the Chapel under the great oak tree that shaded the grave yard. In those days I cannot say that I was especially fond of the Chapel at Christmas. And yet it is Christmas that reminds me of it. My Father had a book of sermons by Burden. There was one on the text, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see, etc." and even now whenever I hear that text read, or read it myself, it matters not where I am or about what I am thinking at the time, my thoughts immediately go to the Christmas sermon in that Chapel. The power of association is wonderful. Yesterday I was returning home, after paying some visits, when seven or eight wild ducks flew over my head with that whistling sound, caused by the wings cutting the air and immediately my thoughts ran back to the days of which I am writing and in the quickest time possible brought up scene after scene of things that happened then. I said that Christmas was not only the merriest but the saddest time. The saddest, because we were

about to separate, some to return to their home on one island, some to their home on another, and others to Beaufort. We boys were amongst these last. It was indeed the saddest time for us, because we were about to stop playing before we were tired of play and to go to work before we were ready to work. But when would we have been tired of the one or ready for the other?

And here I could remember with gratitude the kind Providence that protected us from accidents. Sometimes there were four or five guns in our party, yet no accident ever occurred. Occasionally we would flush a covey of partridges. They would seek shelter in the soft Palmetto, a growth very difficult to pass through and often done with much stumbling and catching. We ourselves would be as much excited as the partridges were frightened. They would shoot in any direction, more impulsively from the fact that we had no pointer, yet there was never an accident. I believe in the use of means with looking to God for a blessing upon them. Our Savior Himself used means when words were possible. I mention an instance or two. I am writing thus to show you that whether or not it be true we have no right to say, what is to be will be. Our duty is to use means and when the result comes accept of it as the will of God. Christ used clay to heal the blind man. He could have healed him without the clay. He used a few loaves and fishes to feed the multitude. He could have fed them without one crumb and one bit of fish. He commanded men to use their strength to roll the stone from the grave of Lazarus, when he could have commanded the stone to come away as He commanded Lazarus to rise and come out. In the first place, we believed a gun would go off even without a finger put on the trigger. In the second place, we kept in mind the old saying, a gun can go off without lock, stock or ball. Then we always turned our muzzles out and up and never aimed even in joke and for a moment at any one, whether the gun was loaded or unloaded. And never shot, unless we could see the game and knew positively it was. Terrible accidents have happened where persons shooting without clearly seeing the object at which they shot, only taking it for granted. I remember a sad case of the kind that happened near the town of Beaufort. A young man and his uncle went turkey shooting. Turkey hunters convert one of the wing bones of the turkey into a kind of whistle with which they imitate the turkey call and thus attract them. The imitation is perfect. And when they have decoyed the turkey within shooting distance, they kill it. This young man and his uncle went out on a certain day turkey shooting, intending the next day to go drum fishing. After getting into the woods they separated and each commenced to call. The nephew, however, stood still. The uncle thought that his nephew's whistle was a turkey answering his, and crept slowly in that direction. The nephew thought his uncle's whistle was the call of a turkey coming up in answer to his and prepared himself. He was concealed behind a clump of bushes and peering into some underbrush beyond. His gun cocked his body half-raised and his finger on the trigger. Suddenly he saw a dark spot, glistening through an opening in one of the bushes. In an instant his gun

was up to his shoulder and fired. He rushed forward, but not to exult over a fine turkey. He stood aghast and horror-stricken by the dead body of his uncle. His uncle wore a glazed cap which he had mistaken for the head of a turkey. Three times I can remember having been endangered by a gun, but never when shooting with my brothers. Once I was crossing a fence to get at some ducks that were in the pond nearest the house and at the end of the corn field. In jumping I tripped and fell with both muzzles of the gun under my chin. The next time I was in the cotton field shooting doves with a friend. He shot and struck my thigh but never entered. The third time, I was in a group of boys in the town of Beaufort. One of them had a gun that was loaded and capped, but the cap would not come down on the nipple. When this is the case you must take the hammer as it rests upon the cap, and with your thumb press it slowly down. Instead of doing so, the boy tried to get it down by lifting the hammer, letting it slip out of his hand, and strike the nipple. I was standing in front and said, "Well I will move one side". I had scarcely done so when the gun exploded. It was the nearest escape I ever made. He had been doing it for some time with the gun pointed to me. I got other escapes, but not from guns. I was on a roof of a fowl house with a hatchet in my hand. The roof fell in and I fell down, the hatchet coming after and cutting me in the crown of my head. The next escape was in going drum fishing. Early one morning in April we left Bermuda, a small island where we generally camped. We started, sails spread and soon were on our way to Middle Bank, the great fish grounds. A great storm of wind had arisen, which we did not feel until we passed Lands End, the last piece of the shore that protected us. As soon as we passed that point, a tremendous gust of wind struck the boat and buried her head in the waves. I thought we were all going down head foremost. The boat recovered herself though and we made an effort to furl the sails and stop her, but did not succeed in doing so until we had reached a very dangerous part of Middle Bank. Father came after us in the stream water and we all made our way to land, thankful enough to get there. Middle Bank was considered the best fishing ground in Broad River and was a very dangerous place. It was far away from shore and the waves were furious when started by the wind. I remember when I was quite young I was there with my Father. A violent storm came up so suddenly that it was down on the boat before anchor could be raised. Fortunately this time the wind blew towards the St. Helena shore, the shore from which we had come. After the anchor was raised the boat's head was turned landward, and the oarsmen went to pulling with a hearty good will. I sat in the stern with my Father and could not help looking back upon the great rolling waves that seemed actually greedy to get us. I think I was a little frightened, but would keep up my courage by watching my Father to see if he was frightened. After we got to the shore I heard him tell some one he saw me watching him.

So many years have gone and so many changes have taken place, that I cannot recall all the events and incidents of the past nor have I even dotted down those I have recalled in the order in which they happened. In writing the little I have, my object was to set before you some of the events and incidents of the Datha life. Datha was to us a kind of terrestrial Paradise. With the help of sword and canon and foreign soldiery, the Yankee people have wrested it from us. They have impoverished a rich, rendered unhappy a happy family, scattered a united family and deprived you of your inheritance, small as it was. You must forgive them and I forgive them. I do forgive them, for I know I need forgiveness. I know no man or set of men can sin against any other man as much as each man sins against God. After all earthly things and ourselves are bound to part, either they must leave us or we must leave them. This is the inevitable. It does not excuse human agents, but even the most trying and saddening events of life we must resolve unto the will of God. We must always say the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. I believe the war waged by the North against the South to have been the most unjust, fraudulent and ungrateful ever waged by one people upon another. They called us Rebels. We allowed them once to draw us into a rebellion. The war of the Revolution was a rebellion. It was a rebellion of the Northern Colonies against England. Those colonies sent one of the Adams family to beseech South Carolina to come to the help of Massachusetts and the others. It was not a quarrel between South Carolina and England. South Carolina was a pet colony. But South Carolina yielded to the tempter and took up arms against England, hoping to right the wrongs of Massachusetts and the rest of the Northern Colonies. In return for this and, in less than one hundred years after, those same Northern States declared war against South Carolina, killed her sons, laid her in waste in every way possible. God's ways are strange, but he is always just, true and righteous. We will see this hereafter, if we cannot see it now. Those who began in the rebellion against England were used as instruments for punishing us for having gone to their help. A descendant of that same Adams, whom I have mentioned, visited Charleston after the last war and standing almost in the same spot where his ancestor stood as a suppliant, looked around upon the destruction and misery caused by those who had been helped to those who had helped. Still you must forgive them. All the Yankees in the world cannot deprive you of that better and happier life in store beyond the grave for those who repent of their sins and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. If on the one hand I had the choice for you between the highest position possible to be obtained in this world and the greatest wealth possible to be possessed, but with the loss of your soul, and on the other, the lowest place, and absolute poverty, but with the salvation of your soul, I would gladly choose the latter. And I pray God that my own children and my brother's children may have eternal life whatever else they may not have.