

arm and gave him a sudden jerk. It was an unceremonious proceeding, but a very timely one, for the next moment the sapling against which the captain had been lightly leaning was shattered by a ball from the Confederate side.

“ ’Tis an old friend of mine, sor,” said O’Halloran; “ I know ’im by his handwritin’. They had a muddlehead there yesterday, sor. I set in full sight of ’im, an’ he blazed at me twice; the last time I had me fist above me head, an’ he grazed me knuckles. ‘ Bedad,’ says I, ‘ you ’re no good in your place; ’ an’ when he showed his mug, I plugged ’im where the nose says howdy to the eyebrows. ’T was no hurt to ’im, sor; if he seen the flash, ’t was as much.”

To the left, in a little clearing, was a comfortable farmhouse. Stacks of fodder and straw and pens of corn in the shuck were ranged around. There was every appearance of prosperity, but no sign of life, save two bluebirds, the pioneers of spring, that were fighting around the martin gourds, preparing to take possession.

“ There ’s where I was born.” The captain pointed to the farmhouse. “ It is five years since I have seen the place.”