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**ULSTER GUARD**  
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- Return to  
Prince William
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offered "entertainment for man and beast," at the same board and in the same stalls—never changing; never adding a rood of land to their possessions; never enlarging or improving buildings or lands, scarcely restoring a shingle or board to exclude the elements. What the tavern and stable were in the beginning, they are now, "the natural wear and tear thereof, and damage by the elements excepted," the Gooding establishment is a type of Virginia conservatism, as it manifests itself in the rural districts.

Passing through Fairfax Court House, Centreville, Manassas Junction, where we struck the Orange and Alexandria Railroad track, we went into camp at a railroad station called "Bristoe," at two o'clock, P. M., on the sixth of April. We had marched thirty-eight miles.

The next day a terrible storm of rain, snow and sleet, set in, and continued for sixty hours. The only protection the men had from this bitter storm, were the wretched, brown paper affairs, called "*tents d'abri*," the only earthly use of which are to arrest the fall of a gentle dew. The officers fared but little better than the men, and the horses suffered fearfully. There were no buildings into which either man or beast could take refuge, and it only remained to us to endure—hoping for a speedy change. The people who had lived thereabout said they had never had such a storm before at that season of the year, and they insinuated that it was a judgment upon the "invading Yanks."

Soon after taking command of the brigade, General Patrick introduced the practice of having prayers at his headquarters, when in camp, conducted by some one of the several chaplains of the brigade. The chaplain of the Twentieth thus describes the situation in which he found the General, when he went to his quarters, during the storm at Bristoe, to conduct the evening service:

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"I found the General sitting before his tent, wrapped in his india-rubber robe, his feet resting on a log, and striving to get some warmth from a fire of logs, which was struggling with the storm for its very existence. He was far from well, but received me cordially, expressing his gratification that I had ventured to come half a mile through such a storm for such a purpose. He feared, however, that his usual attendance of officers would be missing, which proved true, for on the sounding of the bugle none came, and a chapter was read and a prayer offered in his tent, with none present but ourselves."

While tarrying at this place three or four of our officers rode off some miles to the house of a Mr. Marcellus, who was the prominent man of that section of country. He stood at the gate in front of his house when the officers came up, and received them with an air of unmitigated disdain. While they were transacting their business with him, he did not ask them to dismount. After this was over, one of them inquired if he could not accommodate them with something to eat ?

He then very reluctantly invited them to dismount and walk into the house. The parlor was a pleasant room, uncarpeted and plainly furnished, and contained a book-case with a very good selection of rather ancient literature.

Leaving the officers here some little time, Mr. Marcellus announced dinner in an adjoining room. There they found a table spread with a dish of cold baked beans, a few slices of fat pork, and a plate of corn bread. After partaking of these substantials, they returned to the parlor, whither Mr. Marcellus had gone immediately after showing them to the table, and one of the party offered him the contents of a pocket flask. It was politely accepted, and under its mollifying influence our host's austerity yielded to a more genial mood and a more benign manner.

He took the trouble to produce and exhibit an old-fashioned silver-mounted horse-pistol, which he said was one of a pair General Washington carried, and which had somehow become an heir-loom in the Marcellus family. He professed to regard it with great veneration, and had concealed it on the approach of the Northern vandals; but a little good bourbon had removed all his fears and inspired him with unreserved confidence in his visitors.

As his unbidden guests were about to depart, one of them, considering that their entertainment, such as it was, had been very reluctantly furnished, hinted as delicately as he could, that they would like to make some compensation for it. This was too much for the blood of one of the first five families! Straightening his tall form and putting on an air of insulted dignity, he exclaimed: "*Sir, I am a Virginian!*" Of course, an adequate apology was tendered, and the parties separated on the best of terms.

This incident is related merely to show the inordinate conceit of these lords of the South. It was this overweening vanity—this self-ascribed superiority and importance, which manifested itself in such expressions, as "*Sir, I am a Virginian;*" "*Sir, I am a South Carolinian,*" that did so much to engender a disdain for the non-slave-holding portions of the country.

A reasonable degree of State pride is certainly allowable, but to suppose that the accident of birth or the circumstance of residence in any particular State confers superior virtues and dignity, was the antiquated notion of an arrogant aristocracy.

To appreciate the absurdity of this fond conceit, imagine, if you can, a citizen of one of our rich and growing Western States, under like circumstances, clothing himself with an oppressive weight of dignity, and exclaiming to his startled guest: "*Sir, I am a Mich-i-gander!*"

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No! Let us not glory in that we are citizens of an Eastern, Western, Northern or Southern State, for all are equal under the Constitution and Laws. But let us glory rather in the inestimable civil and religious privileges which we enjoy, as *American* citizens.

Another, and a much more numerous class, with which a longer sojourn in the State brought us in contact, was what was known in the South as "poor white-trash," and probably this term describes the despised people to whom it was applied, as well as any English words can. There are nowhere else in this country, a people who can be likened to these pitiable specimens of degraded humanity.

In the North, the poorest and most ignorant of our population have some sentiment of manliness and independence—some enterprise and thrift.

But these poor creatures were the veriest slaves of a race of slaves, and possessed no sentiment above the instincts of the brute.

Dwelling in miserable kennels and sustaining a bare existence by the fitful tillage of a few acres of worn out land—the property of some neighboring planter—they came and went at the beck or nod of their imperious landlords, and were as obedient to their commands as the colored slave, who felt it a degradation to associate with these dependent whites.

Grown up themselves, and their children growing up in the most abject ignorance—mentally, morally and physically debased by their condition and habits of life—excluded from intercourse with the planters around them, and barely tolerated by the slaves, they were the dupes of the nearest demagogue and the willing tools of their task-masters.

Ignorant of the simplest forms of intelligible expression, they had an idiom constructed of negro dialect and words of unknown derivation. If you asked one of them the name of his country or township, it was an

even chance he could not tell you. If you inquired the distance to the nearest planter's, and he ventured upon the intellectual effort to inform you, it would be executed by a combination something like "*two rises and a right smart level,*" or, "*three sights and a go-by, I reckon.*" He "*totes*" your baggage and "*carries*" your horse to water.

It was such men who made up the great mass of the rebel army, and who knew no more of the cause or purpose of the war, than they did of the planetary system. If light ever breaks in upon their clouded perceptions, they will realize that it was not the blacks alone who were emancipated by the failure of their master's rebellion.