



# The Mississippi Bearcat

by  
Charles L. Swem

**T**HE Bearcat was on a rampage. Down the center of the narrow French street he roamed, followed by a pack of yelping hounds and a score of admiring French urchins. Bearcats in their native habitat are reputed to be wild; this one was of the Mississippi variety and far away from his lair. His gait was unsteady, his khaki blouse open at the neck, and his overseas cap dangled precariously over his left ear.

“Allez, frogs!” he shouted, “I’m a bearcat from Mississippi, and when I roars the Kaiser listens. Whoopee!”

The youngsters dropped back in awe. They had never seen anything like the Bearcat outside of the cinema which came from America, the far-away land of cowboys and Indians. Eagerly they had watched for the coming of the Americans, to see these wildmen of the cinema, but, alas, when they came they were not greatly different from their own beloved *poilus*.

Their childish confidence had been betrayed. The Americans wore no feathers, put no fantastic colors on their faces, and they didn’t go whooping through the town swinging a rope and tripping up unsuspecting

citizens. Instead, they gave them candy and chocolate to eat, and played with square marble stones that clicked as they rolled.

But here at last was a real, live cowboy in the person of the Bearcat. He carried no rope or six-shooter, but his manner was unmistakable. The civil population deployed against the walls and into convenient alleys as the Bearcat covered the narrow-road from side to side in his progress. Seven vermouths he had consumed, not counting the *vin rouge* and the *blanc*, when he suddenly remembered that he hadn’t notified the first sergeant or the C. O. of his departure. He decided to return immediately and correct the oversight.

“Take ease, frogs, take ease,” he shouted. “I’m a bearcat from Mississippi, but I ranks no shalutes.” “Shalutes for people with Sam Brownies on outside; mine’s underneath holdin’ up pants,” he explained.

The Bearcat illustrated his remarks by snapping his hand to his forehead, in deference to a passing French officer. His forearm was not at an angle of forty-five degrees, as regulations specified, and his fingers were not “together”—indeed they were suspiciously spread and far apart—but he

brought the hand down with a crack.

“Dash a good American shalute,” he soliloquized proudly: “can’t tell a frog shalute from Odd Fellows’ countersign.”

When he felt particularly good, the Bearcat instinctively avoided officers. Instead of continuing up the main street to the center of the town, he executed a column right and staggered down a by-street which he vaguely remembered led out of the town. The Bearcat’s company had been one of those unlucky ones to draw an assignment on the outskirts, the others being billeted in the town, where the eats were better and one stood a chance of drawing a comfortable bed.

The Bearcat never had been lucky. Hadn’t he been the first one drafted in his town when the war came along: and then, when everybody else who had any drag at all was pulling down something soft for himself, hadn’t he—notwithstanding his protests that he couldn’t fight and wouldn’t fight—having read that some others had got away with it by calling themselves some kind of objectors which he had forgotten—hadn’t he been thrown into the infantry, handed a young-cannon and a pack and drilled ten hours a day?

And, then, when he had finally got across and begun to like it all, hadn’t they taken his gun away from him and given him a pick instead, and assigned him to the trench squad? When he didn’t want to fight, they gave him a gun and said he had to; and now when fighting was what he wanted most, they wouldn’t let him.

They didn’t know what they wanted. It was his idea of no man’s army. If you said you wanted to fly, they would make a sapper of you; and if you couldn’t do anything at all, they would hand you a commission and make a shavetail of you. That was the only theory on which the Bearcat, could account for the shavetails he knew. The time when the great call of duty and sacrifice had come to the Bearcat and he determined to become a spy,

and he went and told the C. O. about it—what did they do but tell him he could spy on the cooks in the kitchen while he did a week of K. P.

The Bearcat brooded silently over his troubles as he made his way across a shell-pitted field toward D Company. Occasionally he disappeared from sight as his feet faltered on the brink of a shell hole, but always he reappeared and persisted, for somehow he couldn’t help wondering what the sarge would say if he should find him missing. Funny man, the sarge; always snooping about and wanting you when you didn’t want to be wanted.

Overhead the drone of an airplane was audible. A shadow fell across the Bearcat, and a hundred yards to the right a geyser of sand was shot into the air, amid the sound of a huge explosion. The Bearcat suddenly fell into another shell hole; pulled himself out again and looked disapprovingly in the direction of the noise—and staggered onward.

Oblivious to the augmented volume of the droning above him and the crack-crack of the aerial battle, the Bearcat reached the confines of the camp and halted before entering. A soldier stood on guard, his rifle at right shoulder and his eyes heavenward, tensely watching the loops and *vrilles* of the rival avions.

The situation was much to the Bearcat’s liking. Buttoning his blouse and revising the tilt of his cap, he straightened the kinks out of his legs and marched past the guard.

By the time the engagement was ended, and the German plane was spinning madly toward the ground, the Bearcat had gained the company street, unnoticed.

The army has a way about it of sizing up a recruit on the spot, picking out some particularly prominent or obnoxious trait, and slapping a name to him which somehow sticks. A leopard may change his spots, but an

army name never. You have got to change companies.

When the Bearcat arrived at the draft camp on the first day, he looked like hundreds of others arriving hourly from that section of the country—big, awkward, slow-moving farmer boys to whom the drudgery of the fields was play beside the life of discipline that lay before them.

It came hard at first. Some shirked, and some just lagged. The shirkers were punished, and the sluggards were fed on drill and K. P. But among the delinquents, none had quite that inherent listlessness common to the Bearcat. He was eternally tired. The drill sergeant despaired of teaching him anything beyond the manual of arms, and with that he was invariably a second late on every motion—like the echo of the others.

The sergeant tried him in the rear rank and in the front. In the rear he got off with the file closers; in the front, the line had to be held until the Bearcat came abreast. But one day a young reserve lieutenant was given the squad, and after fussing and swearing himself blue, he found a place for the Bearcat. The man was an ideal pivot, he said; without undue exertion, he could stand in one spot and execute a turn, which was essential for a pivot, the rest of the line meanwhile walking or running abreast.

The problem of the Bearcat was solved. It was this same lieutenant who named him Ambitious, which stuck during the training period. It was France and vermouth which gave to the world the Bearcat.

The Bearcat hadn't been keen on the army. Neither was his mother. But the old man, of Confederate fame and tradition, was for it, and besides, "'twould make a man of him," he said. "He ain't done nothin' but hang around Sam Robinson's shop and loaf and drink sasparilla. Can't get him out in the mornin' to plant, and when it's harvest time, he lays on his back and gathers nothin' but

sunburn, and dern little of that. Trouble is he's too lazy to fight and might get kilt layin' on his back—but 'twill make a man of him."

D Company stood on a line at five forty-five on a gray French morning. The C. O. glanced up and down the line and consulted a paper handed him by the first sergeant.

"Private Cook," he said, "you were absent yesterday from afternoon inspection. Anything to say about it?"

"Nothing, sir," responded the Bearcat, with the faintest sign of a grin.

"Two weeks K. P. Step out and report to the kitchen."

The Bearcat took a step forward, saluted, right-faced, and marched leisurely in the direction of the long tent in the center of the camp. And for two weeks the Bearcat washed dishes, scrubbed pans, and peeled potatoes, though as a disciplinary measure it was a failure, for of all the tiresome routine of army life—and he had been tried at all—K. P. held for him the least terror.

Didn't he there get all he wanted to eat without the tiring necessity of standing in line and then getting only leavings sometimes? Who would count that punishment to the Bearcat?

The Bearcat's division had been in training behind the lines for two months, learning the ever-changing art of modern warfare within the sound of the big guns. Two weeks before they had been pronounced proficient, were issued battle equipment, and ordered to the St. Mihiel front.

After six months of routine, at last they were on the eve of action, and the spirits of the troops ran high. Each man cheerfully shouldered his fifty pounds of equipment, with not a grumble in the line—not even from the Bearcat—and took the road smiling and singing. It was a great day. A week's delay on the march, which couldn't be explained to the ranks, proved bad on discipline. The tension to

which every man had been keyed threatened to break—did break in some cases, as in that of the Bearcat, and the effect, while not serious, called for disciplinary action.

The officers—most of them—dealt understandingly with the offenders, many of whom for misdemeanors which during the training period would call for court-martial escaped with a reprimand. The Bearcat's two weeks in the kitchen did him no harm—nor good. He and the captain broke even.

Whenever the Bearcat went to town of his own locomotion, it was cause for celebration. Usually he sprawled on his back at the edge of the camp until a stray army truck came lumbering along. On his second excursion to the little French town, the Bearcat walked, there being no truck in sight after an hour's wait, and he walked unerringly in the direction of the little cafe.

The government of the United States gave the Bearcat five francs forty-five for every one of his dollars, and five francs forty-five would buy enough *vin rouge* in France to float a submarine. The Bearcat was not stingy, and his taste was refined. It craved variety—red, white, and sparkling, though the only things that the Bearcat knew to sparkle before going to France were diamonds and “pop.” And when the Bearcat's appetite was satisfied, France positively twinkled.

“I'm a bearcat from Mississippi,” he muttered, tuning up.

Leaving a franc on the table and kissing the tiny French waitress, he staggered out the door and stood dully watching the convoy of trucks that were rumbling down the narrow street. Great, dusty trucks they were, filled with ammunition and supplies, the Bearcat knew, for the big drive which was commencing soon. The Bearcat laboriously counted them as they passed—there were seven—and when the last one had gone he stepped out into the middle of the road and followed. The Bearcat's morale was high.

“I'm the king of the K. P.'s,” he sang; “I skins 'em alive and I gouches out their eyes, for I'm the champion spud-peeler of this man's army.”

The Bearcat did not believe in hiding his light under a bushel. He was exceedingly proud of his talents.

“Yes, sir, frogs,” he shouted, “I'm the official counter of this year's potato crop, than which there ain't none bigger.” Meaning, of course, the crop.

The Bearcat met no contradiction, and he came to the edge of the town.

“I'm a bearcat from Mississippi and I—”

“Haw!”

The Bearcat stopped and rocked back and forth. He looked around, but there was no one in sight. Yet the Bearcat had the distinct impression that he heard a laugh.

“Haw-w-w!”

The Bearcat caught the direction. He turned quickly, almost overbalancing himself by the effort, to find a drove of army mules standing by the roadside, one of them in the act of perpetrating the sound which he had heard.

The Bearcat counted ten by the first count, but by concentrating on the spot he eliminated all but two. One of them continued to laugh. The Bearcat looked all around, but there was, no one else present. He could only assume that the animal was laughing at him.

Now, nobody enjoys being laughed at, whether by man or beast. The Bearcat resented it. It was enough to have one's dignity compromised by being put in the kitchen to scour pans; it was too much to be made the joke of a common army jackass. The Bearcat stared moodily at the offender, undetermined what action the occasion called for. By all means, he must preserve his dignity—and his honor.

The mule threw up his head and broke into another loud and joyous roar. The Bearcat

could stand it no longer. He calmly drew an automatic, cocked it, took deliberate aim and shot the offender between the eyes. The Bearcat saw his mocker fall in a heap. His honor was safe.

"I'm a bearcat from Mississippi, and I laughs last," he sang, putting up his gun and continuing on his way.

"Hey!" called a voice from the rear.

The Bearcat turned, to see a soldier running wildly down the road toward him. He could distinguish a red band on the soldier's arm, which marked him as an M. P. But the Bearcat had no time to wait for a meddling M. P. to catch up to him and ask him fool questions. He didn't like M. P.'s anyway, and he had a foreboding that this one would ask fool questions.

He quickened his pace. But the M. P. quickened his in direct ratio. Moreover, the M. P. followed a straight line, while the Bearcat zigzagged, in true seagoing style, to escape his pursuer. The inevitable happened.

"What do you think this is, shootin' practice?" growled the M. P., grabbing the arm of the Bearcat.

"I'm a Mississippi bearcat, and I brooks no inshults," muttered the Bearcat.

"Gimme that gun and come along!"

It was thus that the Bearcat was dragged across the shell-pitted field to the tune of his own grumblings and the cursing of the M. P., as the Bearcat insisted upon sounding the depths of each shell hole along the way. They were ushered into the presence of the C. O.

The captain glanced up and acknowledged the salute of the M.P. The Bearcat laboriously lifted his hand to his cap.

"Well!"

"Drunk, sir—and shot a mule." reported the M. P.

"Hump!" growled the officer. "What have you got to say, Cook?"

The Bearcat brought his hand down

with a crack.

"I'm a bearcat from Mississippi, cap'n," he confided.

The C. O. glared at the offender. "Take him out and sober him up!" he ordered.

Ten minutes later the Bearcat appeared in the doorway, his hair and his blouse drenched, waiting for permission to enter. The captain looked up and nodded. The Bearcat came to attention before the C. O., and saluted.

There was no trace of his recent spree; that was gone with the water. He stood like a well-ordered soldier before his commanding officer.

"Cook," said the captain, "you are said to have been drunk—we will leave that. You are also charged with shooting a government mule. Is that true?"

"Can't say for sure, captain, but I reckon it is," admitted the Bearcat.

"Hell!" roared the captain, "don't you know it is?"

"Well, I recollect doin' some shootin'; kinda knocked it out of my head the wettin' they gave me, but I reckon I done it all right."

"Why did you do it?" questioned the officer.

"Don't remember, captain."

"Hump!" grunted the C. O. He stared incredulously at the Bearcat, looked him over from head to foot, and turned to the orderly.

"Lock him up!" he ordered. "That's all"—to the Bearcat.

From that time on the Bearcat was the subject of marked attention from his superiors. He never suspected a buck private could be so important before. He was sought and questioned and cross-examined, until he thought his advice might be asked on the big drive that was coming. The height of his glory was reached when he was ushered into the presence of a squad of officers, all assembled to consider him—and his acts. The verdict was six months' confinement and six months'

forfeiture of pay—for disorderly conduct and the wilful slaughter of an army mule.

The Bearcat sat in the guard tent and thought it all over. It was pretty tough on a chap who didn't remember what he had done at all. Of course, he knew now, and he recalled the details of the afternoon it happened, from the hour he left camp to the time he had been doused and sent to the C. O.

He remembered going to the cafe, of ordering *vin rouge*, and then some *blanc*. After that, events were considerably jumbled, like a movie comedy. He did have an uncertain knowledge of shooting the mule, though for the life of him he didn't know why he did it. But he reckoned he had got what was coming to him. His record had been full of petty infractions, and he reckoned that had gone against him.

What rankled in him most was, not the fine, or the confinement for that matter—reckon he could stand that—but to get right up to the fighting and then be deprived of the chance to get into it was the worst punishment of all. That was hard! Maybe in six months the war would be going on just the same, but then, here he was right behind the front—and going to be sent back in disgrace!

How would the folks, take it, anyway? Of course, they would hear. He didn't care much what the old man said; the old man had been too willing to see him in the army. What would his mother do? Funny, he should think of his mother then, just when he was in trouble; he hadn't written since he landed.

Important events soon commenced to happen. The big guns began to bark more steadily, ammunition and supplies were rolling in continuously, and it was rumored that the division would soon be ordered into the line. The orders came at night. By the following morning the troops were on the march for the front lines, not twenty-five kilometers distant.

The Bearcat heard the preparations,

sitting in the guard tent, and anxiously waited. When were they going to ship him back? Was it possible that they would take him along? He would give his right eye for the chance to go. The tent flap was thrown back and a head thrust in.

“Captain wants you; come along.”

The Bearcat stood before the captain and waited.

“Cook, we are going into the lines tomorrow or the next day. This is a bad sector. You are under arrest, with your sentence of court-martial pending before the reviewing authority: I can send you back to a base port or take you with us. I leave it to you. You will be given a gun and will have the same chance as everybody else.”

“I'll go with you, sir,” said the Bearcat.

Of course, the Bearcat understood. He was given a chance—to be shot—but the Bearcat had no intention of being shot. If the captain expected him to fling himself against the first German bayonet he saw glistening in the sunlight, he had another guess! As between the bayonet and the six months' confinement, the Bearcat would take his chance on the latter. Guardhouses are made of wood and swinging doors; bayonets of steel, tempered. The Bearcat wanted to see the fighting. He would take his chances with the rest, stay sober, and trust to luck.

The Bearcat tried honestly to remain sober, but even in the front line, amid the din of battle, there are temptations. Five weary hours the Bearcat had marched along a hot and dusty road, and he was thirsty. He arrived at dusk behind the sector they were taking over, and at daybreak the next morning, after traversing a maze of communication trenches, lighted fitfully by the glare of exploding shells, he found himself in a dirty, slimy ditch, facing No Man's Land.

The Bearcat had had water to drink, but he was thirsty. He received instructions

from the platoon officer and made his way to a dugout, where he sat gloomily in the candlelight, his gun across his knees and his eye on his wrist watch. Outside the noise of the artillery was deafening. It had been firing for three hours. Forty-five minutes more and—zero!

The Bearcat and his fellows would go over the top and, protected by the curtain which was now falling fiercely over the opposing trenches, would occupy what remained. It sounded all right when the lieutenant said it, but the Bearcat's spirits were low. He felt he could go over better with just one drink.

The Bearcat's knees had an unmistakable numbness about them as he stood at the foot of the short ladder leading to the top of the parapet, waiting for the fateful signal. He anxiously watched the lieutenant, who stood next to him with left forearm raised before him and his eyes glued to the slowly-creeping hour hand.

The Bearcat wondered if he would hear the order when given, for the artillery roared unabated. Suddenly it ceased. A deadly silence hovered over the trenches.

Ten seconds more—the lieutenant dropped his arm and started up the ladder.

"Everybody over!" he shouted, just as the guns commenced again.

A protecting screen was sweeping the ground clean in front of them. The Bearcat hesitated but gritting his teeth, he stepped firmly on the first rung, climbed over the parapet, and started off toward the dawn—and the German trenches.

After a memorable trudge through barbed wire and over shell holes, the Bearcat's confidence growing with each step, he stepped into his first German trench, and looked around him. He was disappointed. He hadn't been killed, or even hit. Where were the Germans?

The Bearcat looked up and down the

battered trench. He was alone. He hadn't the least idea what he was supposed to do. Lighting a cigarette, he sat on a box that had not been completely demolished by the high-explosives, and watched with interest a dugout hole on the opposite side of the trench.

Something moved there in the darkness. Presently a head, topped by a gray helmet, began to emerge from the hole, then a body in a gray uniform, and then two black heavy boots—and a pair of hands elevated above the head. The Bearcat regarded the apparition with disapproval, and leveled his bayonet as if to charge. "Kamerad!" it shouted in a lusty voice. The Bearcat cocked his rifle, as the lieutenant and three privates appeared on the scene.

"Nine," counted the officer with but a glance and passed on.

"What shall I do with him?" called the Bearcat.

"Play with him until I come back!" growled the lieutenant.

The privates gathered around. "Better go through him now while you've got the chance," advised one of them.

"What for?" questioned the Bearcat.

"Waluables, you fool—souvenirs, and things."

"Don't want 'em," said the Bearcat, "too much trouble to carry. You can have—hold on there, he's mine," yelled the Bearcat, as the three made a dive for the prize.

For the Bearcat had noticed something. Walking over to the prisoner, he lifted his coat tail and extracted from a rear pocket a metal flask. The Bearcat pulled out the cork and sniffed—then transferred the canteen to his own pocket.

"Now, you can have the rest of him." he said and walked off.

With the German line occupied and coordinated, the staff determined to follow up their advantage and strike again, while the iron was hot. In front of the Americans lay an

open field, skirted at the far edge by a tender growth of wood. Behind the woods rose a gentle slope, covered with foliage.

To this slope the enemy had retired, though only to offer temporary resistance, his second line of defense having been prepared still further back. If he could prevent the Americans from crossing the field and gaining the forest and the slope, he could later, by a concentrated fire, make untenable the trenches in the lowland and regain the ground just lost.

It was because the American staff realized this also that they decided to take the slope immediately. Hoping to catch the enemy completely by surprise, barely an hour after the capture of the first lines, a wave of khaki emerged and started across the field. But the Germans, now familiar with American tactics, were prepared. Hardly had the first head appeared over the top when the big guns began barking and the field became a seething volcano.

A curtain of fire fell in front of the trench from which the Americans were pouring—some being caught beneath it, the rest being forced to cover. Those who had gone ahead were caught within the arc, and soon found themselves cut off by a second, third, and fourth barrage—boxing in the entire field. Then came the gas shells, dropped with deadly accuracy within the box, to smother out the life of the victims, caught like rats in a trap.

“Whoopee! I’m a Mississippi bearcat, and I smells my prey!” shouted the Bearcat, as he climbed over the top for the second time. The Bearcat sparkled with enthusiasm and he sang his praises to the world.

Among the first over, the Bearcat rapidly outpaced the lieutenant and was soon in the lead, going “great guns for Germany,” as he told the world. On and on he staggered, oblivious to the din about him and the efforts of his lieutenant to call him back.

A shell burst ahead of him at the edge

of the woods, the concussion of which threw him flat. Another and another, and still another burst with an awful roar on the same level, until the forest was completely blotted out by a steady stream of explosions.

The Bearcat arose and looked around. Behind him he saw two of his comrades running to the rear, his lieutenant with them, turning as he ran to motion for the Bearcat to follow.

Looking thoughtfully at his fleeing comrades, and then at the barrage in front, the Bearcat slowly turned and retreated.

“I’m a Mississippi bearcat, but I listens to reason,” he muttered.

Almost to the home trench, the earthworks of which he could barely see through the curtain of explosions, the Bearcat stumbled over a body and fell. It was the lieutenant. Beside him were two others, cut and bleeding, but all three alive. One called for water and the Bearcat generously gave him a sip from the German flask.

The Bearcat glanced toward the trench and scratched his head. If there were only one, he might carry him in, but what could he do with three? At that moment a burst occurred directly behind the Bearcat which had the effect of bowling him over and quickening him to action. He stooped over the lieutenant.

“Lieutenants ranks privates,” he said apologetically, as he shouldered the officer and reeled under the weight toward shelter. Zigzagging luckily between the bursts, and falling but once, he arrived at the parapet and slid the wounded man over where he saw him fall on the heads of a trio of cursing doughboys. Without a word, he turned and followed the same path, reaching the two wounded men without mishap.

“Sarge ranks a buck,” he muttered, glancing at the chevrons on the fellow’s sleeve. “Regulations gotta be obeyed.”

With a heave, he had the man on his back and, watching the bursts, attempted to



follow a neutral path. A shell bursting overhead rained shrapnel all over the vicinity, rattling off the Bearcat's helmet and cutting him in the arm and the leg that he knew of. "All right, pard, only a scratch or two," whispered the wounded man in his ear, and the Bearcat knew that he still carried a live man.

His burden disposed of in the same manner as the first, the Bearcat started off for the last man. Two close bursts floored him, tearing a gash in his cheek and a piece out of his arm, before he reached the side of the buck private who, according to regulations, had to come last. Had he gone West in the meantime, it was regulations that was to blame, not the Bearcat!

Once on his way with the last man, the Bearcat began to sparkle again.

"I'm the king of the K. P.'s," he sang proudly. "I'm—" but a tiny puff to the left of the Bearcat moved him to unwonted action. With a quick sniff, he dropped his burden and, holding his own breath, tore drunkenly at the knapsack depending from the shoulder of the other and adjusted the mask over the wounded man's face.

A heavy vapor spread rapidly over the ground, encircling the Bearcat and burning into his flesh, before he had time to repeat the performance for himself. His eyes burned painfully, but resuming his charge, he blindly ran the gauntlet for the third time.

"I'm a bearcat from Mississippi," he sang, "I eats barrages and smokes mustard gas."

The Bearcat was conscious of a loud report smiting his eardrums. He reeled, stumbled, and fell headlong with his burden on the heads of a trio of cursing doughboys.

The Bearcat opened his eyes and groaned. His head was splitting and his body

ached all over. Lord, what a hangover! He glanced questioningly around him.

He lay flat on the soft grass in the shade of a tree, a reclining soldier on either side of him, one with his head bound in white, the other with an arm, limp and bandaged, across his breast. There was a curious rumbling in the distance.

His efforts to remember anything only set his head to throbbing more violently. Of course, he had been drinking—he always woke up like that—and his mind as usual had recorded but little of his life in the interim. With a start he remembered his last awakening—under arrest—and he glanced apprehensively around him. No mule, no M. P.—only a private with a red cross on his arm.

Presently an ambulance drove up and the Bearcat was painfully lifted on a stretcher and shot off to a hospital, where he gradually pieced together a vague recollection of what had occurred. His captain came later and pinned on his breast a Distinguished Service Cross, and conveyed to him the action of the reviewing authority.

"Sentence of confinement set aside, for this," he smiled, touching the decoration, "but you're to pay for the mule; the fine stands!"

The Bearcat grinned.

Down in old Mississippi, Colonel Cook, of Confederate fame, proudly read to Mother Cook the full column story, with picture, of the local boy who had won the D. S. C., and the Croix de Guerre for bravery on the field of battle. Mother Cook took off her glasses and wiped them dry, while the colonel laid down the paper and planked his hand on his knee.

"I knowed 'twould make a man of him," he said, "soon's he got away from Sam Robinson's and sasparilla!"