

The House

It was sunset in one of the lush days of June 1870. On the westerly slope of the divide which separates the waters of Bush Creek from those of Country Run, in Township No 6, of Castle-ton County North Carolina, stood a small house perhaps sixteen by twenty eight feet in its exterior dimensions. It was roughly built, of unseasoned pine logs simply notched and fitted at the corners, considerably smaller than those usually known as "hewn-logs" in that section, simply notched and fitted where they crossed each other at the corners. The roof was made of thin long, split shingles, split out by hand and known as "boards" at the South and as "shakes" at the West - It had evidently been hastily con-

plated and not long occupied, for the spaces
 between the logs were not yet "chinked" except in
 a few places and none of them had been "doub-
 ed" - The chimney was of rock to the height of some
 six or eight feet, and from that point was top-
 ped out with small sticks piled cob-houm
 fashion one above the other and plastered with
 a heavy coat of the tenacious clay which is so
 abundant in that section - It stood at
 the south end of the house, which was a gable and
 had upon either side of it, a small window
 closed with a wooden shutter which fastened
 with a hook upon the inside. The house had but one
 room though some boards laid across the rough
 sleepers above, constituted a sort of attics to
 which access was had by means of a ladder
 which was turned up against the wall when not
 in use. There were two doors, opposite each
 other in the Eastern and western sides.

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— In front of the house some fifty steps
run the public road from Progsbor to Shallows
Ford and some ~~two~~ hundred yards to the
Northward this was intersected by the old
Stage road running East from Jameville the
County of Castleton which was ^{situated} ~~some~~
five miles to the westward.

In front of this house stood the owner, leaning upon a hoe and gazing abstractedly upon a somewhat pretentious structure which was in process of erection upon the corner northward of his own. He was a man rather past the middle-age, - short, thickset, long-armed, bow-legged and black. His color was that peculiar degree of nigritude which requires no modifier to describe. Neither "cinnamon-color", "ginger-cake" or any of the refinements of the blue-mark would apply. He was just simply black. ^{The lower part of} His face was dotted over with conical tufts of tightly-twisted, grizzly beard, giving it a savage, scruffy appearance, which his wide mouth and the rows of strong white teeth displayed ^{heavy brows,} ~~and~~ clouded in the process of masticating a huge quid of tobacco and the streaks of yellowish-brown saliva which ^{ran} ~~went~~ from the corners of his mouth to the angle of his jaw, tended with a little to increase.

— a hat which was so beset with
accumulated ⁺ layers of dirt as to offer
no reasonable data, in regard to its color
or material, and which defied inspection
to determine where the crown ended or hair
began. ^{clues in some mysterious manner upon} ~~removed~~ the mass of thickly matted
fiber — whether hair or wool let scientists
decide — which grew upon his head; ^a A shirt,
once white, with the sleeves soiled above
the elbows and displaying the elbow ^{interna-}
ment, ^{beneath} the rough numerous rents of ^{consider-}
erable magnitude, and a pair of the pecu-
liar light-blue pants, heavily reinforced in
the rear, which the Yankee cavalrymen were
wont to wear in the civil war, constituted
his ^{apparel} ~~toilette~~. The latter were evidently made
for some one much longer bodied and
being kept up by suspenders even nearly

to his corn pits. His feet were mashed
the yellowish-white nails showing dul-
ly through the of dust which
the day's labor had deposited on the bare
feet.

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY NY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2013