Courting Adventure in Civil War Kentucky: Sallie Rochester Ford's *Raids and Romance of Morgan and His Men*

by Sharon Talley

> I think to lose Kentucky is nearly
> the same as to lose the whole game.
> —Abraham Lincoln[1]

Southern novelists such as Maria Jane McIntosh, Augusta Jane Evans, and Sallie Rochester Ford published novels during the United States Civil War that framed the political issues and ideologies related to the war and women's roles in established literary contexts and a familiar narrative structure. As a result, they reached a popular readership that was anxious to make sense of a world turned upside down and to retain faith in the future of southern society as they knew it. In contrast to Maria Jane McIntosh's nostalgia for the antebellum past in *Two Pictures; or, What We Think of Ourselves and What the World Thinks of Us* and Augusta Jane Evans's anticipation of the post-war future in *Macaria*, Sallie Rochester Ford's *Raids and Romance of Morgan and His Men*, which was first published in June 1863, stays firmly focused on the war itself.[2] All three novels champion the southern cause; however, unlike her contemporaries, Ford uses her novel not to depict the unity of the Confederacy but rather to show the chaotic disorder and division that existed in key border states such as Kentucky, where she was born and raised. Using a curiously bifurcated structure, Ford also goes farther than her contemporaries in deviating from the conventions of the antebellum domestic novel by presenting the first half of the novel from the perspective of a male protagonist before shifting to portray the action in the second half from a female perspective. As a result, she provides her readers with close views of both military and civilian aspects of the war while using the framework of courtship to tie the two elements together. Today's readers may not agree with the political convictions espoused in *Raids and Romance*. Nevertheless, by recovering and reading it, we can enrich our understanding of the period by appreciating the contributions that Ford made during the war to sustain her society by using her novel to make her argument about the war and especially about the role of southern women.

Before the outbreak of the Civil War, Kentucky was tied to both regions, as perhaps best exemplified by the fact that it was the native state of both Abraham Lincoln and

Jefferson Davis, who would be elected to lead the opposing governments during the conflict. Strongly nationalistic, the state nevertheless also tenaciously championed the concept of states' rights. As E. Merton Coulter observes, Kentucky's "rather remarkable intermixture of the two philosophies cropped out in many ways before the Civil War, and baffled both North and South during the period of that struggle." The state was bound to the South by its position on slavery and its agricultural base, but "Kentucky was pre-eminently a land of small slaveholders, the gentry of the state. To many, slaves meant more as a constitutional right than as an economic value. . . . No Kentuckian owned over 300 slaves; only seven owned over 100; and only seventy had over 50."[3] Not surprisingly, Ford remains almost completely silent on the issue of slavery in crafting the pro-Confederate stance that characterizes *Raids and Romance*. Although slaves are occasionally present in the novel's domestic settings, the author ventures no direct comments on the "peculiar institution."

Although she avoids commenting specifically on slavery, Ford's fictionalized account of actual events that occurred in the Kentucky-Tennessee area between September 1861 and October 1862 depicts the highly charged political atmosphere that blanketed the state at this time. The novel opens with a description of the "patriotic ardor" of its nineteen-year-old male protagonist, Charley Roberts, who has yearned since Lincoln's 15 April proclamation to "seize his gun and rush to the defence [sic] of the South." Ford contrasts the emotional Charley's youthful determination with the more mature and cerebral indecision of his father, who has been "influenced by his life-long love for the old Union."[4] The Roberts family situation, though fictional, is typical of the period. In her study of families with divided loyalties during the Civil War, Amy Murrell Taylor found that border-state families often split along generational lines. In such instances, "numerous sons, who averaged twenty-two years of age, enthusiastically left home to volunteer for the Confederate service, while their fathers remained Unionist advocates of compromise and moderation."[5] Charley, however, rather than rebelling against his father, impatiently but respectfully waits for family approval, and, by September 1861, his father is drawn to permit him to join the Confederate forces because of "the fearful unfolding of the war policy of the administration." Ford lends credence to this position by emphasizing the deliberate and careful decision-making process of the elder Roberts, whom she describes as "a man distinguished for his reticence and aversion to all unnecessary political decision" but drawn to avow and defend his final position "by clear and logical argument, whenever it was attacked" (6).

When armed hostilities erupted on 12 April 1861 with the Confederate firing on Fort Sumter, Kentucky—like Charley's father—originally tried to remain neutral. Although not seceding from the Union, the state refused to respond to Lincoln's proclamation calling for 75,000 troops to repress the rebellion after the fall of Fort Sumter. On 20 May, the governor officially proclaimed the state's neutrality after the legislature resolved: "That this state and the citizens therof shall take no part in the Civil War now being waged, except as mediators and friends to the belligerent parties; and that Kentucky should, during the contest, occupy a position of strict neutrality."[6] Nevertheless, there was a strong secessionist minority within the state, and, aggravated by the 16 August election of a strongly Unionist slate of state candidates, divided loyalties soon ended any pretence of neutrality. On 18 November, a convention of southern sympathizers from 68 of Kentucky's counties passed an ordinance of secession and created a Confederate shadow government for Kentucky. "By the end of the year 35,000 Confederate troops occupied the southwest quarter of Kentucky, facing more than 50,000 Federals who controlled the rest of the state."[7]

In *Raids and Romance,* Ford depicts the divided allegiances that separated friends, as well as families, and that often resulted in courtship conflicts as the Confederates sought to wrest Kentucky from Union control. After Charley leaves to join the Confederate troops, his sweetheart, Mary Lawrence, is courted by a Union captain named Fred Morton. While speculation circulates among her friends about the likelihood of this match, Mary and the captain attend a fashionable Lexington party given by Mr. and Mrs. H, who sacrifice their southern sympathies to court the popularity that comes with hosting the elite of both factions at an opulent gathering. Maintaining a façade of gracious complacency, southern women converse with Union officers, who tease them by asking if "the trappings of war" will win their hearts and affections. Responding to this banter "spiritedly, yet with no manifestation of unkind feeling," one woman nevertheless puts the men in their place by remarking, "There is a wide difference in our views of patriotism. . . . I deem it far more noble, far more patriotic to oppose the wrong than to perpetuate it: to fight for freedom and liberty than for subjugation." Though socializing with the Yankees, these women, Ford explains, "were at heart Southern, and were only awaiting an opportunity to get through the lines to join" the Confederates (155). Similarly, Evangeline Lenoir, the female protagonist featured in the second half of the novel, is also courted by a Yankee officer, Edward Lasley, after Harry Roberts, her childhood sweetheart, enlists to serve the Confederacy. Eventually recognizing she has been misguided in allowing herself to fall under Lasley's spell, she must maneuver carefully to evade his insistent pursuit of her hand in marriage and reconcile with Harry. At the same time, the orphaned Evangeline, who has been raised in the Louisville home of her pro-Union Aunt Cecelia, must also strive to juggle her close relationship with her aunt, and the obligations that come with such familial bonds, with her own staunchly held Confederate views.

Ford's personal opinion of Kentucky's self-division is never in doubt. After describing "the Lincoln hordes pouring into Kentucky" without opposition during the early years of the war, Ford makes her own judgment clear by appending a pointed authorial comment:

> Poor degraded, subjugated Kentucky, thine is a sad story of vacillation and fear; of wrong and oppression. The faithful chronicler of this wicked war must pen with shame and regret thy irresolution and its ruinous results. While I write as one of thy children, I weep as my thoughts go back to thee in thy deep humiliation, and linger amid thy once lovely scenes—thy once free and happy sons and daughters, now so oppressed, so downtrodden. (43-44)

Still hopeful that Kentucky "wilt rise from thy fallen position," she nevertheless must concede its failure to do so as of the date of her writing (44).

Although he had been captured and was imprisoned at Camp Chase in Columbus, Ohio, at the time *Raids and Romance* was first published, the flamboyant figure of John Hunt Morgan provides Ford's vehicle for exemplifying the spirit through which Kentucky could free itself from what she saw as shameful Yankee subjugation.[8] Born in Alabama but a longtime resident of Lexington, Kentucky, Morgan, who eventually reached the rank of brigadier general, commanded a Confederate cavalry brigade that made four raids through Kentucky before he was finally killed on 3 September 1864. Morgan was disparaged for his guerrilla warfare tactics and branded "King of the Horse Thieves" by Northerners, and he frustrated the Confederate military command, as well as some of his own men, because of his failure to maintain discipline or obey orders.

Nevertheless, at a time of rising discontent in Kentucky against the military regime, he was viewed as a larger-than-life hero and potential savior by many residents.[9]

Depicting Morgan in his early years before he became bitter and disillusioned, Ford tracks history as she shows him raising and organizing his cavalry, leading some minor skirmishes in Tennessee, and then launching his first major raid through Kentucky in the summer of 1862. In the novel, Morgan never interacts personally with Charley, who comes to serve with pride in Company C of Morgan's Second Kentucky Regiment, but the devotion of Charley and his comrades to their commander is clear from the beginning. When Morgan first appears, before he is even introduced, his description is as singular as Charley's response:

> He [Morgan] was about medium height, well-formed, and sat his horse with an elegance not often equaled even by the best riders. Every feature of his face bespoke daring and determination. . . . As he rode forward to the group he lifted his hat, and spoke. There was manly dignity, combined with graceful ease, in the movement. His manner fixed the attention of our young hero [Charley], who felt, he scarce knew why, an irresistible impulse to move forward towards the stranger. (28)

Described as "eager for an adventure," Charley initially finds his expectations met in the daring early skirmishes in which he participates as one of Morgan's raiders and that serve to reinforce his idealistic view of war (29).

Ford picks her examples from Morgan's exploits carefully and then embroiders them to present a thoroughly dashing and gallant portrait of Morgan and the Second Kentucky. Her depiction of the 11 May 1862 raid of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad at Cave City, Kentucky, illustrates her approach throughout the novel. In this raid, Morgan first seized the depot and then stopped the next train that arrived. As presented in the brief and somewhat flat account of Basil W. Duke, Morgan's brother-in-law and second-in-command, "Forty freight cars and a fine engine were captured in this train, and destroyed."[10] According to other reports, Morgan set the train afire and then sent it "at full throttle . . . down the track toward Nashville. 'It was a grand sight,' he said, 'that burning train going at headlong speed to destruction.' The subsequent explosion, when it came, was deafening."[11] To avoid having to explain or mask Morgan's gleeful enjoyment of this act, which the *New York Times* of 25 May 1862 estimated resulted in a loss of "$40,000 or $50,000 worth of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad rolling stock," Ford wisely omits any mention of the first train.[12] Instead, she focuses on the passenger train from Louisville that arrived shortly thereafter and on Morgan's gallant assurance to one frightened woman on this train that he would not kill her husband. According to Ford, "[t]he grateful woman, in the joy of her heart, grasped the knees of the noble benefactor, and thanked him in the most passionate strains" (135).[13] In Ford's account, Morgan also tells a cotton agent concerned about $30,000 of funds in a nearby safe, "Give yourself no uneasiness, sir, . . . my men are not thieves. Be assured, not one cent of private property shall be touched" (136). Imbuing her title character with the traits of romantic chivalry, Ford here depicts Morgan as only making "such disposition of government funds and stores as he deemed proper" before surrendering the train with instructions to return straight to Louisville (136). Although Morgan and his men were not always so conscientious, contemporaneous reports do not dispute that Morgan took only government funds in the Cave City raid; unlike Ford, however, they clearly stipulate that the amount confiscated was between $6,000 and $10,000.[14]

In describing Morgan's July 1862 raid through Kentucky, Ford concedes that the main object of the expedition was the destruction of the Louisville and Nashville Railroad, which was a defensible act of war to disrupt the North's supply line, but she minimizes the destruction involved and never acknowledges any disregard for property rights or thievery by Morgan's troops or their lack of discipline.[15] At one point, after she describes Morgan taking possession of Georgetown, Ford quotes at length from a proclamation that he published on 15 July as a recruiting manifesto:

> Kentuckians! I come to liberate you from the despotism of tyrannical fanaticism, and to rescue my native State from the hands of your oppressors. Everywhere the cowardly foes have fled from my avenging arms. My brave army is stigmatized as a band of guerillas and marauders. Believe it not. I point with pride to their deeds as a refutation of this foul assertion.
>
> We come not to molest peaceable individuals, nor to destroy private property, but guarantee absolute protection to all who are not in arms against us. We ask only to meet the hireling legion of Lincoln. The eyes of your brothers of the South are upon you. Your gallant fellow-citizens are flocking to our standard. Our armies are rapidly advancing to your protection. Then greet them with the filling hands of fifty thousand of Kentucky's bravest sons. Their advance is already with you. (207)[16]

Imbuing her tale with just such touches of righteous valor and romantic chivalry, Ford uses the charismatic Morgan sparingly to inspire her audience to maintain hope that by emulating his bold and adventurous spirit, Kentucky—and the South as a whole—can still emerge victorious against Yankee injustice.

The Georgetown episode, thus, fits Ford's political agenda by emphasizing the rising discontent against the Yankee military regime that had established itself in Kentucky, as well as the residents' positive response to Morgan. As Howard Swiggert makes clear, however, Morgan's position at Georgetown was tenuous at best, and although his men camped for two more days in the vicinity, "they could not stay forever. Kentucky did not rise around them."[17] Rather than acknowledging that only a disappointing number of recruits actually came forward in response to Morgan's exhortation, she states instead that "[t]he citizens believed his words, and reinforcements assembled around his standard from Franklin, Scott, Trimble, Owen, and Bourbon counties. Brave hearts and strong arms rallied to swell the number of Kentucky's deliverers" (207). With such comments, Ford strives to characterize Morgan's departure from Georgetown simultaneously as an "advance" and a daring evasion of Union forces, although it was just as clearly also a lucky escape (212).

Ford's portrait of Kentucky during the late summer and fall of 1862 emphasizes the disruption, confusion, and chaos that reigned among the civilian population as the Confederacy made its last concerted effort to gain control of the state. Lack of reliable information caused much of the turmoil as rumors spread, not only about Morgan's anticipated movements but also about what to expect from the invading forces of Confederate General Braxton Bragg. For instance, after Morgan leaves Lebanon and the citizens of Shelbyville contemplate his arrival in their town, Ford writes that "the wildest confusion prevailed. Here, as at Lebanon, the most conflicting rumors ran riot through the streets." Although Morgan was actually pursuing a course through Springfield to Mackville at the time, the men of Shelbyville "flocked to the town to hear the news, each one receiving a different statement from every informant he met" (176). Meanwhile, in what Ford describes as the "seething cauldron of Unionism" at Danville, news of "Morgan's deeds at Lebanon," filled the residents' "hearts with

terror. They knew their guilt in oppressing the Southern men in their midst, and while, like the Babylonian king, they saw the handwriting on the wall, fear seized their souls. There was alarm, anxiety, consternation, depicted on every face. Fear and confusion characterized every movement" (180).

As the novel's plotline follows historical time, Ford documents the increasing uncertainty about the eventual outcome. One Southern sympathizer explains, "There is a great contrariety of opinion respecting Bragg's intensions; some believing that he designs to remain here through the winter—others that he only wishes to force Buell from Tennessee, and regain Cumberland Gap, by forcing General Morgan to abandon it" (271). Meanwhile, the Yankees use the time to increase their presence around Louisville and to move prisoners, arms and supplies, and other valuables out of danger, while bystanders continue to debate the state of affairs. One citizen acknowledges the truth that others still refuse to accept: "It would not be worth the trouble and loss of life" for Bragg and his men to attempt to take Louisville now since "[e]very thing of value has been removed beyond the river" and since holding the city would be impossible "against the gunboats and the artillery the enemy could bring against it from the opposite side of the river" (272). Finally, on 22 September, as Bragg approaches, Union General "Bull" Nelson issues an evacuation order for all noncombatants to leave the city and threatens to destroy Louisville if necessary to keep it from Bragg. Ford details the "fearful rush of thousands, eager to escape the dreadful doom of conflict," that respond to what turns out to be just another false alarm (341). With no Confederate victory to celebrate, Ford must settle for reintroducing Morgan into the action so that she can end the war commentary on a hopeful note as he mounts another raid through Kentucky in October.

Although Morgan's exploits do not ultimately bring the desired results, Ford consistently presents her title character as indisputably heroic; however, in depicting the two paired sets of sweethearts around whom the dual storylines revolve, it is the females rather than the males whom she draws with similar bold strokes of courage, determination, and strength of character. For his part, Charley Roberts is a bland and lovesick youth who seems oddly lacking in the stamina and grit that Southern readers of the day would hope to find on the battlefield defending their honor. In his first weeks at Morgan's "Camp Secret," he quickly adjusts to military life. Ford observes that "[h]e could stand on picket or guard, go scouting or foraging, make coffee or corn-bread," and because he is "[p]rompt, obedient, kind," he soon wins "the respect of his officers and the esteem of his fellow-soldiers" (42). During this mostly idle period of waiting for action, Charley's "letters to his friends at home [are] characterized by a spirit of cheerful endurance of present discipline, and heroic determination to make good his cause in the field of conflict" (43). As a youthful volunteer, however, Charley, like many of his comrades, is ill-prepared for the exigencies of war. Even before he is truly tested in battle, he begins "to experience something of the hardships of the campaign" as the weather turns cold and he thinks of home: "Tears sprung to his eyes, and he wept like a child. It was not sorrow nor apprehension, but tender remembrances of the past that caused him thus to grieve" (45). Charley attempts to control his emotions by focusing on the justness of the Confederate cause, but his morale plunges as he experiences prolonged separation from loved ones, illness, the trauma of battle, imprisonment, and fear of death.

Although she crafted her novel as a propaganda piece for the Confederacy, Ford makes no attempt to blunt the harsh realities of war itself. Even though Charley has "a fine constitution, which had been well preserved and developed," he is unused to the rigors of marching and exposure to the weather, which eventually result in "a severe

attack of pneumonia" (46). According to George F. Linderman, "The first shock for the Civil War soldier was the extent and deadliness of disease," as he discovered firsthand that he was twice as likely to die of disease as being killed or mortally wounded in combat."[18] Thus, Charley's adamant refusal to be sent to the hospital—because he associates it with "almost certain death"—rings with the authority of truth (46). During his convalescence, "after weeks of pain and feebleness," the youth's feelings of homesickness and nostalgia for his sweetheart Mary intensify his natural fears of death. Charley eventually regains his strength and is able to rejoin his regiment as 1861 draws to a close, but he observes that many are now absent, some having been sent to the hospital and others having succumbed to illness rather than battle wounds.

In February, the still melancholy and increasingly lovesick Charley is sent with the Second Kentucky to reinforce the troops at Fort Donelson. Here his idealistic notions of war are further compromised as he, for the first time, experiences the horrors of actual battle. This battle ended with the unconditional surrender of General Simon B. Buckner and his 12,000-13,000 Confederate troops to Union General Ulysses S. Grant.[19] Attempting to put a positive spin on this catastrophic defeat, Ford prefaces her fictionalized account by declaring, "This dreadful war hath many a page all bright and glorious with the heroic caring, the patriotic fortitude, the brilliant victory of Southern freeman, but none can ever be more lustrous, can ever speak in words of more thrilling eloquence to the generations of all coming years, than that of Donelson, the synonym of all that is sublime in suffering, heroic in daring, and nobly triumphant in patriotism (53). She then, however, forsakes romantic hyperbole for naturalistic detail in the lengthy description of the battle that follows.

Even as she recounts the early success by the Confederates in repulsing the enemy, Ford clearly takes no glee in the toll of human life extracted as she observes,

> Ah, it was a fearful sight to witness the carnage and death that swept along that close, dense line. Like grain before the reaper's sickle, they fell, mowed down by bullet, shell, and shot. Affrighted, they paused—'twas but for a moment: rallying, they pressed forward. Again sped the horrid missiles of death from the intrenchments, and down went scores of the rash besiegers, mangled, torn, bleeding, writhing in the tortures of agony and death. Discomfited, the decimated regiments retire, to make room for others, who dash on to the same dreadful fate. (55)

As the first day ends, the enemy retires, "leaving the field covered with his dead and dying. Ah," she again laments, "it was a sad, sad sight to see them there, cut down in their manhood's prime, in servile obedience to the behest of a tyrant." In this carefully modulated account, Ford honors these dead soldiers of the North, faulting them only for their servility to what she deems a tyrannical government. Because of the close proximity of the two sides, many of the wounded could not be removed from the field. Ford acknowledges the agony endured by those who were left to suffer and die by observing that "[m]any weltered in their gore far away from all relief, sending out on the dead, dull ear of night, piteous moans and cries for help, which, alas, would never come; for when the morning rose and woke to life their comrades, they had passed away" (56).

Continuing her account, Ford acknowledges the ghastly human bond created by Donelson, where

> [o]n the bloody battle-field lay friend and foe in ghastly death enwrapt. Everywhere were mingled, mangled forms of men and horses, and broken remains of guns and caissons. In

> some places the dead bodies lay piled several feet deep. In many instances, the wounded lay pinned to the moist, cold ground by the forms of dead comrades, whose fixed and agonizing eyes looked out as if in search of the foe; while the shrieks of the suffering and dying broke in horrid cries on the ears of those who could give them no aid (56).

Through her description of the gruesome scene at Donelson, Ford provides an apt illustration of the shocking effect of the Civil War on antebellum sensibilities. The mass scale of human suffering and destruction created by the war contradicted the domesticated concept of death as an individual and personal experience through which human perfection and sanctification might be achieved, shared, and commemorated through deathbed rituals, mourning practices, and the conventions of sentimental literature.[20] Shivering with cold as freezing sleet falls, Charley and his friend John Lawrence, who has also joined the Second Kentucky, at last can no longer remain in their trench as they nerve themselves to respond to the desperate calls of a nearby sufferer for water and then manage to pull him to safety so that a surgeon can dress his wounds. Many, however, were not so fortunate.

In the hard-fought struggle at Donelson, which Ford clearly strived to document authentically, the fictional Charley, like the Confederacy he serves, is also disabused of the common notion that the war would be short and that the South would easily triumph. By the third day of combat, the Confederates are thoroughly exhausted, not only from lack of sleep and exposure to the elements but also because of the determination and stamina of the Union forces, who they are surprised to discover have "fought like men in earnest" (59). Persevering, however, the Confederates launch a desperate breakout attack that finally succeeds in driving the enemy back and gaining them an opening on the field. Surprisingly, they are then ordered to fall back just "at the point when the object for which the men had fought desperately for seven hours was gained" (65). As a result of this ill-conceived strategy, the men are forced back into their trenches. In the lull that follows, Grant capitalizes on the Confederate indecision and regains the field, eventually forcing Buckner's unconditional surrender.

Ford acknowledges the moral dilemma that Buckner faced in deciding whether to surrender or to sacrifice the lives of his men for what he saw as his own personal honor, but she chooses to emphasize the response of the Confederate troops, who also saw their own honor at stake in the decision. As "the dreadful intelligence" that they are now "prisoners of the hated foe" is circulated, Ford unifies the soldiers' reaction to serve her purpose: "Never," she writes, "never will they submit to this ignominy. Sooner shall their own swords drink their life-blood, than they become the scoff and butt of Yankee vengeance. The whole garrison was moved as one man to oppose this shameful fate" (71). According to Bertram Wyatt-Brown, the Civil War soldier believed that courage was "the first dictum of honor. Cowardice was, of course, its contemptible opposite."[21] Thus, to be forced to surrender suggested the unthinkable to most soldiers. Although Buckner's staff, "knew it was all the general could do, and every man expressed himself ready to share his leader's fate," Charley and the other soldiers on the field sit "stupefied under the consciousness of being captives in the hands of the Yankees." As they realize that resistance is futile, Charley tells his friend, "I have fought for three days, John; I have slept in those muddy trenches, exposed to driving snow and sleet; have gone without a mouthful of food for twenty-four hours; my feet are frost-bitten, and my clothes are frozen on me, but I would rather endure all this a thousand times over than go to one of those Yankee prisons" (72). With these words he suggests the underlying fear of imprisonment that also underlies his resistance to surrendering.

During the Civil War, "409,608 soldiers—one out of every seven who served in the Union or Confederate armies—became prisoners of war. . . . Of the 194,743 Yankees who were confined in Confederate prisons, 30,218 died; of the 214,865 Rebels who entered Union camps, 25,976 never left them alive." The management of prisoners on both sides was plagued by a lack of organization and inadequate facilities during the first year of the conflict. Because of Lincoln's refusal to establish a formal exchange cartel until July 1862, the number of prisoners held mounted steadily during this time period, creating problems of "overcrowding, exposure, inadequate medical care, and shortages of rations and basic supplies."[22] As they are transported and taunted by their Yankee captors, whom Ford terms "a base and inhuman foe," Charley and his comrades, though wearing "garb looking worse by far than their slaves at home, . . . nevertheless remembered they were born freemen, and on every occasion . . . hurled back with defiant scorn the ruthless jests of their coarse and ill-breed assailants" (75). Charley's bravado evaporates, however, as he weeps at the thought of home. Embarrassed by his tears, he admits to the more stoic John, "I am unmanned, . . . but I cannot help it" (76).

In describing the prisoners' arrival at Camp Chase, Ford writes that they are "herded like swine," as they are "driven into this filthy inclosure [stet], there to remain through long months of dreary suffering, deprived of every thing like comfort or cleanliness, subjected to neglect and coarse insult, and in many instances to violent death at the hands of their brutal guard" (79). In his history of Camp Chase, which was first published in 1906, William H. Knauss uses terms strikingly similar to Ford's in describing the condition of arriving prisoners: "Often they came here sick and in tatters and were driven to Camp Chase like so many cattle, and when they got there they were lucky to find an open shed to lie in."[23] The make-shift facility, which was originally intended as a Union training depot, received its first prisoners on 5 July 1861. Intended to accommodate only 450 inmates securely, the prison at one point during the war housed as many as 8,000 Confederate soldiers—mostly privates and noncommissioned officers. According to Charles W. Sanders, Jr., "during the Spring of 1862"—at the time period Ford depicts—"conditions rapidly deteriorated. . . . The prison buildings were filthy, and basic sanitation was so wanting that a 'nauseating and disgusting stench' permeated the entire area. . . . The prisoners were 'in rags' and rations at the camp were 'very inferior."[24] Ford is, thus, justified in the alarming depiction of the prison that she incorporates into her novel:

> It was a loathsome, disgusting place, unfit for the abode of the most wretched criminals. Filled with every species of offensive vermin, the mud knee-deep, in which the men had to stand like beasts in the stall, with no room for exercise by day, and nothing but the bare floor of an open plank shanty, through which the bleak winds and driving snows had free access, to sleep on at night; their disgusting food doled out to them in such scant measure as wholly to fail to meet the actual demands of nature; without medicines or nurses for the sick; could it be expected that these weary, half-clad men could do otherwise than die by scores? (78)

Although the officers are soon transferred to a separate facility at Johnson's Island, as was common practice, Charley and the other soldiers, remain here for two months, with little contact from home to console them.

Charley and John, along with another soldier named Bob, are convinced that escape is their only hope of leaving Camp Chase alive; however, "[n]o scheme suggested itself that was not attended with great difficulties" (86). While they idle in indecision,

Charley's sister Lu and Mary, who is not only Charley's fiancée but also John's sister, take more daring and forthright action. Travelling from Louisville to Columbus and disguising themselves as Catholic nuns to avoid suspicion or arrest and possible imprisonment, they enter Camp Chase and find the three men.[25] When she learns that they have been unable to determine a plan to escape, Mary takes charge, finding solutions to the obstacles that the three men seem curiously unable to resolve for themselves. Although Charley has determined that digging out is the only method with probability for success, he has been unable to decide how to get rid of the accumulated dirt to avoid detection as they work. Mary swiftly resolves this issue by telling him, "Why, the dirt—that's but a small matter, Charley. Put it in your hats and pockets until you get out" (90). When he next questions how they will be able to pass through Ohio to safety in Kentucky, the ineffectual men directly appeal to Mary and Lu to "solve this difficulty for us! Woman's wit is always ready for an emergency" (90). And the women do not disappoint as Lu quickly directs Charley to seek help from their cousin, who lives about fifteen miles from Columbus. Having succeeded in moving the men from their paralyzing state of inertia, the two adventurous women depart.

"In trying to gain a prisoner's freedom," as George C. Rable argues, "women entered a political and logistical labyrinth. The task demanded assertiveness, persistence, luck, and, above all, influence."[26] Before the prisoner exchange cartel was established, women often had no alternative but to rely on their own ingenuity, as well as deception and subterfuge, to locate, visit, and attempt to free their loved ones from prison. Although such escape plans as Mary and Lu devise may sound ludicrous to modern readers, they were possible at the time because security was slipshod. When he was incarcerated at Camp Chase in 1863, Morgan himself was able to dig himself out "after twenty-three days of unrelenting labor, and getting through a granite wall six feet in thickness" to reach the soil.[27]

Anticipating Morgan's later feat, Charley and his friends succeed in digging out of the prison, but they then remain passively content to depend on others—and especially on women—to ensure their safe return to Kentucky. John tells Charley, "We will have to trust ourselves to the ingenuity of the girls to provide for our safety to Louisville." Agreeing with the confidence John places in their sisters, Charley acknowledges that "[t]heir visit to us proves them equal to any emergency. It was a novel affair, really. Who would have thought that those two demure-looking nuns, with their baskets of tracts, were our merry, timid sisters, come to plan our escape from prison? If I were a writer I'd immortalize these heroines." Bob concurs by responding, "Your sisters deserve immortality and fame, boys. I do believe we should now and forever have been in that miserable place if they had not encouraged us in our undertaking" (97). With this exchange and her depiction of strong decisive women throughout the novel, Ford clearly attempts to extend recognition of the critical role that women were playing in the war effort. As Nina Silber argues, Southern women were "[c]loser to the chaos of the battlefield, frequently subjected to the constraints of Union occupation, and often shaped by the trauma of defeat," and so "felt the repercussions of war far more directly than Northern ones."[28] Though constrained more than Northern women by conventions of female decorum, they nevertheless were moved to subvert traditional restrictions in sometimes creative ways as they fought to protect their society and established way of life.

Ford reflects the transformation of gender roles that occurred during this period of national crisis by fashioning feisty, heroic female characters who repeatedly must prop up their more traumatized, embattled male counterparts. After returning to his regiment, Charley's spirits soon dip again as he begins to fear that Mary is being unfaithful to

him in his absence. As if these fears are not enough to test his endurance, he is also repeatedly captured and imprisoned. Charley initially refuses to take the pledge of allegiance to the Union that would result in his release, steadfastly insisting, "Never, never! Death a thousand deaths first!" (116). His strength of conviction quickly fades, however, and, after rationalizing his decision in a debate with himself, he determines to take the oath to gain his freedom. Back at camp, Charley grows alarmingly despondent over false rumors of Mary's engagement to Morton. Ford depicts her young hero as internalizing his fears and eventually falling into a suicidal despair in which "[t]he world to him was one wide-spread void, over which rested the blackness of darkness. Despair, deep, fearful, had unfolded her sombrous wings over his heart, shutting out all hope—all joy. Gladly would he have lost his weary weight of anguish in that long sleep where dreams do never come" (146). As McPherson observes, "[l]etters from home have been of crucial importance in sustaining morale in all literate armies," and, for the volunteer regiments of the Civil War, which were composed of community-based companies like the Second Kentucky, this was especially true. Although such correspondence could sustain a soldier, "the wrong kind of letter could have the opposite effect."[29] Thus, when even Lu believes the gossip and writes to warn her brother that "he has been deceived—wronged—cursed—in bestowing his wealth of love on this unworthy girl," Charley loses all faith in Mary's love and determines that "[h]enceforth, he would court death" (158, 174).

The two lovers are finally reconciled only when Mary confronts Charley as he and Morgan's men pass through the area near Louisville, giving her the opportunity to prove his doubts of her loyalty to him and to the region are groundless. In finally facing and verbalizing his fears—both with John and Mary—Charley realizes how foolish he was to credit "idle rumors, when he had received from her whom he had known from childhood vows of eternal faith" (196). Shortly after they part and the regiment returns to Tennessee, however, he falls ill with typhoid fever and in his weakened condition is not allowed to accompany his comrades on Morgan's July raid through Kentucky. The last remnants of his patriotic ardor evaporate as he reacts to this unfortunate situation by foundering in self-pity:

> "Gone—gone—to Kentucky!" he sadly murmured to himself. "And I am here alone—left without a friend—perhaps to die! They go to meet with parents and sisters, and mingle with them in joy and gladness amid the haunts of olden times, while I, in sickness and pain, must linger here in a strange land, with strange faces around me, where no one will care for me—and all the kindness I shall receive will be bestowed because I am a Southern soldier. Hard—hard fate! Oh, the horrors of this dreadful strife! When shall it end, and we be permitted to return to homes and friends in peace?" (259)

In spite of both his doctor's and John's assurances to the contrary, the melodramatic Charley exaggerates his condition by maintaining he probably will die from his illness, insisting that his friend take a lock of his hair and other death mementos to give to Mary and his family at home.

It was not unusual for Civil War soldiers to experience periods of discouragement and depression as their naïve expectations of war were tested by actual encounters with illness, battle injury and death, with the hardships of camp life, and with other traumatic experiences such as imprisonment. "Forced to absorb the shocks of battle, to remodel combat behavior, to abandon many of the war's initial tenets, to bear discipline of an order intolerable not long before, to rationalize a warfare of destruction, and to come to terms with changes in their relationships with commander, conscripts,

and civilians, soldiers suffered a disillusionment more profound than historians have acknowledged."[30] Charley's constitution seems ill-suited to such stress, rendering him unable to adjust to the reality of his situation and to maintain his psychic equilibrium. Unfortunately, Ford's melodramatic presentation of his character minimizes the readers' sympathy for his inability to withstand the traumas to which he has been exposed. As a result, even modern readers with an appreciation for the debilitating psychological effects of war may fail to empathize with his condition.[31]

At this point, Ford moves the novel's point of view away from her passive male hero's sickbed to focus the rest of the novel on the civilian side of the war and especially on the role of women. When death does occur shortly thereafter, it comes not to Charley but to Mary's mother, leaving Mary not only to grieve for her own loss but also to take full responsibility for herself since her father decides to leave Louisville to enlist in the Confederate army. Because he refuses to take her with him, she must devise and execute her own plan to leave Louisville and get within the Confederate lines to see Charley in Tennessee. In this endeavor, she enlists the support of her friend Evangeline, who is trying to extricate herself from her relationship with Lasley so that she can reconcile with her Confederate sweetheart Harry, who has been arrested and imprisoned by the Yankees for attempting to visit her in Louisville.

Echoing the earlier adventures of Mary and Lu at Camp Chase, Evangeline visits Harry in prison under the auspices of Mrs. Hanna, "a Union lady" and friend of her aunt, who manages to outwit the illiterate guard by producing a gas bill when he asks for her permit to enter the facility (282). Determined that he must escape before he is transferred to Camp Chase, Evangeline slips Harry a "small purse filled with gold," instructing him to use it to bribe the guard, and she also tells him that she has detailed her plan for his escape in a note that she has concealed in the bouquet of flowers she has brought him. To ensure that he understands what he must do, she then gives him clear and precise verbal instructions: "If you find you can carry out the plan, be at the second window on Third-street Sunday evening, at four o-clock, and give the signal mentioned. Be plain, distinct, so that I can understand you. I will attend to the rest. . . . Be careful; don't betray yourself. You will be shot if you do!" Taken aback by her forthright assurance, Harry gazes at her in wonder and astonishment "[t]o behold her so calm, collected, planning his escape from prison" (288). With this exchange, Ford again seeks to illustrate the heroic strength of character, composure, and resourcefulness with which elite Southern women responded to the national crisis. To drive home her point, she counterpoints Evangeline's calm assurance with Harry's lack of composure. Evangeline must warn him to guard his expressions to avoid the guard's suspicions. Further, as he extracts the note to hide it in his pocket with the purse, she observes his nervousness; fortunately, however, "the others, unacquainted with the young man's manner, did not" (289).

In a conversation between Evangeline and Mary, Ford extends her treatment of this issue. When Mary expresses doubts about her friend's ability to accomplish her objectives of freeing Harry and, if necessary, leaving Kentucky with him, Evangeline tells her, "These are times when the very foundations of society are moved, and what would be regarded under ordinary circumstances as insanity, will pass current now for heroism. Many females in every age have dared every thing for their lovers' sake; why may not I do the same? If I can once get within the Confederate limits, I shall have nothing to fear" (295). Mary encapsulates Ford's central theme when she responds, much like Harry, "Why, Evangeline, you astonish me! You are really a heroine. Who could have thought that you—always so thoughtless, so gay—would have ventured upon an experiment so full of danger and requiring so much thought and courage?" (295). Mary herself, however, reflects this same courage in her desire to follow her

father to the South and to find Charley in Tennessee to ensure that he is recovering. When they despair of the Confederates coming to free Louisville from Union control, the two women join forces to achieve their goals.

Drew Gilpin Faust argues that "[a]midst the overwhelming uncertainties and changes brought by Civil War, women clung ever more tenaciously to structures of authority and belonging that had given them both identity and security. As cherished relationships seemed ever more imperiled by the rising death toll, preserving their traditional forms may have appeared all the more important."[32] Thus, Ford endeavors to show that the self-conscious transformation of her female characters, though momentous, is initiated only out of their sense of duty to their loved ones. In reflecting on Evangeline's situation, the narrator observes, "How strange, how wildly strange, to her was her present position! She who had been the petted child of fortune—who had lived so dependent on others, and who, hedged about by kind protection, had never felt otherwise than safe from all danger, from all care! It was the turning-point of her life. She had now assumed to act for herself." At the same time, however, Evangeline declares that her plan, "is for Harry . . . and whether or not I am successful, I must make the attempt. For his sake I will encounter every obstacle, endure every trial, meet every reproach. He is worthy of all this on my part, and I shall not show myself unworthy of him. If I accomplish my purposes, I secure my happiness for life; if I fail, I have done my duty—all—all I could—and this, poor as it is, will be some consolation to me amid my grief and helplessness" Although fearful of failure and close to despair in her loneliness, she nevertheless determines, "Yes, yes, if I perish in the attempt, I'll try it! I will not shrink now, that dangers seem to surround me on every side; I'll nerve this heart of mine to bear all things, that I may accomplish my purpose" (313-14). Mary suggests the same strength of conviction when she adamantly refuses to evacuate to the North despite the urging of friends and neighbors. As she tells one woman, "I shall never cross the river to seek for safety. I will die on Kentucky soil first" (346).

In spite of complications in executing Evangeline's plan, Harry finally succeeds in escaping from his captors, but in seeking to rejoin Morgan he is again arrested and imprisoned in Bardstown as a result of Lasley's attempt to seek revenge against him and Evangeline. Thwarted by conventions of the day that deemed it inappropriate for women to travel alone—even in times of safety—Evangeline and Mary nevertheless persevere in securing suitable chaperones so that they can journey to Bardstown. When Lasley steadfastly refuses to release Harry unless Evangeline promises to marry him, she sorrowfully consents with the stipulation that she be allowed one last visit with her sweetheart to say goodbye. Meanwhile, Mary decides to proceed south, determined to build a future there, assuring her friend, "It is all darkly wild, fearfully strange; but I will brave it all, believing it to be right" (377). Before they part, however, Morgan and his men sweep into town, freeing Harry, imprisoning Lasley in his place, and extracting Evangeline from her promise.

Ford's depiction of female heroism does not end here, however, as Evangeline and Mary accompany the raiders so that Evangeline can be with Harry and Mary can seek her father and Charley. In doing so, they gain their "first acquaintance with the 'art of war," as they witness a small skirmish in the area between New Haven and Elizabethtown. Although the Kentucky campaign has failed, Ford reminds her readers that Morgan's "object was to secure recruits, and give opportunity to the guerillas . . . to get through into Tennessee, and in this he succeeded finely, accomplishing his purpose, besides destroying Federal stores at many points, and interrupting communication with Nashville" (381). All is not lost, thus, and Kentuckians should keep the faith that the Confederacy will emerge as victors in the end. Ford, thus, chooses to end her novel

on a cool evening in October 1862, as the two young couples are married and "four tried but heroic hearts found at last the full consummation of their hopes, the fruition of earthy joy" (385). She acknowledges that the young lovers must again separate and that the pain and suffering of war is not yet over. Nevertheless, rather than anticipating and dwelling on "the cares, the anxieties, the fearful looking-for of news from the dread battlefield" that will follow, she instead closes with determination that "[v]ictories must yet be won; many an ensanguined pain must yet attest the heroic and successful struggles of Morgan and his men, before a nation can shout, in loud and grateful strains, 'Victory! victory!! independence! independence!!" In crafting this conclusion, Ford pins her hopes, and those of the South, on Morgan and "numbers of unknown heroes, whose endurances and achievements, full of chivalry and romance, will yet be added to the page of history . . . and whose names, covered with glory, shall become household words with a free and prosperous posterity" (386). At the same time, however, the reader recalls most vividly the steadfast and heroic courage of the women behind these men and their contributions to the Confederacy.

Endnotes

1. On 22 September 1861, Kentucky-born Abraham Lincoln expressed this view in a letter to Orville H. Browning, who was a senator from Illinois and a personal and political friend of the President. For a complete copy of the letter see Lincoln, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 8 vols., ed. Roy B. Basler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press), 4: 532-33.

2. In response to the popularity of the limited first edition, Goetzel released a "typographically reset, enlarged, second edition of Ford's book, dated 1864." The 1864 pirated edition, which was published by the New York firm of Charles B. Richardson, carries the notation "Reprinted from the Mobile Edition" on its title page and appears to have been based on Goetzel's first edition, as it does not incorporate some of the corrections of Goetzel's 1864 version. See Cathleen A. Baker, *The Enterprising S. H. Goetzel: Antebellum and Civil War Publisher in Mobile, Alabama* (Ann Arbor, MI: Legacy Press, 2008), 15.

3. E. Merton Coulter, *The Civil War and Readjustment in Kentucky* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina P, 1926), 3, 7-8.

4. Sallie Rochester Ford, *Raids and Romance of Morgan and His Men* (New York: Charles B. Richardson, 1864), 354-5. For ease of reference, all further quotations from the novel will appear parenthetically within the text.

5. Amy Murrell Taylor, *The Divided Family in Civil War America* (Chapel Hill: U of N Carolina Press, 2005), 15.

6. Lowell H. Harrison, *The Civil War in Kentucky* (Lexington: UP of Kentucky, 1987), 9.

7. James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Ballantine, 1989), 297.

8. Captured near Lisbon, Ohio, on 26 July 1863, Morgan escaped from Camp Chase four months later.

9. Numerous biographies of Morgan and chronicles of his command have been written. For the first chronicle, originally published in 1867, see Basil W. Duke, *A History of Morgan's Cavalry,* ed. Cecil Fletcher Holland, Civil War Centennial Series (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960). Other accounts include Edison H. Thomas, *John Hunt Morgan and His Raiders* (Lexington: U P of Kentucky); Howard Swiggert, *The Rebel Raider: A Life of John Hunt Morgan* (Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing, 1937); Dee Alexander Brown, *The Bold Cavaliers: Morgan's 2nd Kentucky Cavalry Raiders* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1959); and Betty J. Gonn, *Morgan Is Coming: Confederate Raiders in the Heartland of Kentucky* (Prospect, KY: Harmony House Publishers, 2006).

10. Duke, 165.

11. George Walsh, *"Those Damn Horse Soldiers": True Tales of the Civil War Cavalry,* (New York: Forge Books, 2006), 52-53.

12. "Affairs in Kentucky: John H. Morgan Again," *New York Times*, 25 May 1862.

13. Duke reports the conversational exchange between Morgan and the woman in almost the same terms as Ford (166).

14. The *New York Times* of 25 May 1862 reported that Morgan "grabbed $10,000 from the express agent" ("Affairs in Kentucky"). According to Duke, "About eight thousand dollars in greenbacks—Government funds—were captured" (166). Walsh, who bases his account on the *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies,* records the figure at $6,000 (53).

15. As Thomas observes, even before Morgan defied orders and crossed the Ohio River in July 1863, his men's lack of discipline and their insensitive "disregard for property had manifested itself" (xiii).

16. Ford's representation of Morgan's proclamation is almost *verbatim* what appeared in print. See Brown, 85-86.

17. Swiggert, 66.

18. George F. Linderman, *Embattled Courage: The Experience of Combat in the American Civil War* (New York: Macmillan-Free Press, 1987), 115.

19. No official report of the number of Confederate soldiers surrendered at Donelson was made. Of the 17,000 or more men in the garrison, some 500 were killed in the battle, at least 1,000 of the wounded were evacuated before the surrender, and 2,000 or more escaped. See McPherson, *Battle Cry*, 402n.

20. For an in-depth study of the transformational effects of the Civil War on American attitudes toward death, see Gary L. Laderman, *The Sacred Remains: American Attitudes toward Death, 1799-1883* (New York: Yale U P, 1996). Although Laderman focuses on the North, his base argument is also applicable to the South. See also Randy J. Sparks, "The Southern Way of Death: The Meaning of Death in Antebellum White Evangelical Culture," *Southern Quarterly* 44.1 (Fall 2006): 32-50. Sparks argues that "Evangelicalism fundamentally shaped the southern way of death and surrounded the death-bed with a complex and highly ritualized culture" that served to domesticate the process as a way to convert "the terrors and grief surrounding death and dying into a sense of triumph and rejoicing" (43).

21. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s-1880s* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2001), 209.

22. Charles W. Sanders, Jr., *While in the Hands of the Enemy: Military Prisons of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State U P, 2005), 1, 3.

23. William H. Knuass, *The Story of Camp Chase,* 1906 (Galloway, OH: Camp Chase Memorial Association, 1994), 122.

24. Sanders, 100.

25. Ford was a staunch protestant, married to a respected Baptist minister, and co-editor with her husband of the *Christian Repository*. Nevertheless, her representation of Catholicism and the nuns who visited prisons such as Camp Chase, while acknowledging religious tensions, suggests that the Catholic Church's war effort was well intentioned. When John hands a religious tract to Charley, he complains, "I am tired to death . . . of these Catholic books. I'm a Protestant, and don't believe one word in their holy water, and penance, and purgatory, and saints." John, however, responds, "But this doesn't say a word about saints and crucifixes. It is an appeal to sinners, and you know you are one" (89). For a study of the roles played by Catholic nuns in the Civil War South, see Virginia Gould, "'Oh, I Pass Everywhere': Catholic Nuns in the Gulf South during the Civil War," *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War,* ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (Oxford: Oxford U P, 2006), 41-60.

26. George C. Rable, *Civil Wars: Women and the Crisis of Southern Nationalism* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1989), 66.

27. Knauss, 131.

28. Nina Silber, Introduction, "Colliding and Collaborating: Gender and Civil War Scholarship," *Battle Scars: Gender and Sexuality in the American Civil War,* ed. Catherine Clinton and Nina Silber (Oxford: Oxford U P, 2006), 7.

29. McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford U P, 1997), 133.

30. Linderman, 240.

31. It was not until the Vietnam era that the long-lasting psychological impact of war was fully documented and recognized. For an in-depth study of the connection between the psychological and readjustment problems experienced by Vietnam soldiers and those of the Civil War, see Eric T. Dean, Jr., *Shook Over Hell: Post-Traumatic Stress, Vietnam, and the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1997).

32. Drew Gilpin Faust, *Mothers of Invention: Women and the Slaveholding South in the American Civil War* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997), 122.