

troops. These men were dangerous. There were Indians in the swamps, who had been allies of Rawdon and Balfour, and who had cause to dread the vengeance of those who had served under Marion. There were run away negroes, who had not succeeded in getting across the Florida line, but were living by marauding wherever they could. There were stragglers from both armies, who had reason to fear contact with authority of any kind and knew themselves guilty of robberies that would be speedily and ruthlessly punished, were they once in the power of those whom they had wronged. The roads were therefore unsafe for single passengers, and it was customary for those who had to travel to go well armed and in company with men whom they could trust.

Yet at this hour of sunset on the lovely day you have been called to note, there rode a solitary traveler toward the great inn at Rantowles. He had expected to reach Charleston that night. But the roads were very bad from the recent transport of heavy canon and of trains of baggage wagons and the tramp of horse and foot for many months over them; and the good horse, stout gray of Norman blood though he was, had been so often mired in the deep places that it was plain he could not carry his rider much farther.

Yet the rider was loth to stop at the Rantowles inn, for the place had an evil name. He knew little of this part of the country, having come up to Savannah from the old Highlander settlement of Darien; but at the inn by the Edisto ferry where he had stopped an hour for a noonday snack and to give his horse a bait, the hostler had whispered him to have a care how he spent the night at Rantowles. On his pressing the man to be more explicit, he could get nothing more from him than the vague statement that solitary travelers were never seen again, who had put up at that hostelry. He had laughed to himself as he rode on, saying inwardly that this was nothing but the rivalry between two inns on the same highway. Yet the hint had gone deep, and he caught himself looking to the priming of his pistols and feeling his sword to see that it would slip easily from its sheath. As he