

The Civil War was almost over. The Union Army was pushing through the South. Food was short. Often the Northern soldiers had to take what they needed from people's homes. The Southerners, of course, tried to stop them. Here a Union soldier tells of one such try.

Our orders were to take only what we needed. We were not to steal people's belongings. But food for men and horses was all right. We were quite a sight when we returned to camp each night. Our mule would have all kinds of things on its back. There would be flour, meat, and beans. There would be chickens with their feet tied together. Sometimes we even brought back a calf. We would tie it to the mule's tail.

Our canteens, too, were often filled with milk. When we found a cow, we always milked it. Oh, how mad those Southern ladies got when they saw that!

The citizens soon learned to hide their food. But we became very good at finding it. One time we came to a big house. We found several people gathered in the family graveyard. They told us that one of the family had died. They had just buried the body. We asked who had passed away. They

didn't say much—just that it was a child.

We said we were sorry. But we explained that we had to have food. They said they had none. We searched the house, but found nothing.

Then we noticed something odd. The family certainly did not seem to feel very sad. A few times we saw them smiling. Then we knew. Their food was hidden somewhere. And we had a good idea where.

We told them we were going to dig up the body. The women screamed and cried. They begged us not to disturb the grave. "Let the dear departed rest in peace," they said. "Do you think I would lie to you?" said the old man. "I'm a Southern gentleman."

We paid no attention. We ordered the family servants to dig. The farmer told them he would whip them if they did. We said we would shoot them if they didn't. They were more afraid of us. They opened the grave. There lay a long box.

The women had stopped crying. Now they were calling us names.

We opened the box. It was filled with hams, bacon, and flour. We loaded the "dear departed" on our mules. And as soon as the hungry men got hold of it, it truly departed—for good.

CHECK YOUR READING

1. This story takes place
 - A at the start of the Civil War
 - B near the end of the Civil War
 - C after the Civil War
2. The Union soldiers had orders not to take such things as
 - A watches
 - B hay
 - C beans
3. When they brought a calf to camp, they would
 - A carry it on a pole
 - B ride it like a horse
 - C tie it to the mule
4. When the Southern ladies saw the soldiers milking cows, they were
 - A puzzled
 - B proud
 - C angry
5. When the soldiers came to the big house, they found the family in the
 - A garden
 - B basement
 - C graveyard
6. The family said that they had just buried a
 - A child
 - B stranger
 - C servant
7. The soldiers guessed the truth because the family did not
 - A talk very much
 - B look very sad
 - C seem very afraid
8. The grave was opened by the
 - A family
 - B servants
 - C soldiers
9. In the box the soldiers found
 - A money
 - B guns
 - C food
10. Everything in the box was
 - A buried again
 - B given to the family
 - C taken to the camp