

R. M. JOLLY AS A HUNTER

All my life the chase has allured me. When only eight years old I began hunting rabbits. They were a source of unending pleasure. When I was twelve years old, an aged negro, George, who belonged to my grandfather and who was a great hunter, and his good dog, Sandy, initiated me in the opossum hunt. About my grandfather's place was all manner of rabbits, deer, squirrels, turkeys, and opossums. However, only the last interested George at all. He loved 'possum, soups and juicy sweet potato. Noah Webster was undoubtedly fond of opossum. Otherwise he would not have placed that big "o" in front of the word, "possum."

One dark and drizzly night three of us started out down on the river. We had been hearing about Jack-o-lanterns, and were thinking about the possibility of one appearing to us, when we saw before us a light about the size of a man's hand moving up and down a tree. We did not stop to investigate but ran at a rapid trot. I had repeatedly to beg them not to run. However, if I had begun to run I suspect that I would not have seen home that night because we had no intention of being ridden by a Jack-o-lantern.

That did not break up the hunt because old faithful Ring had passed the house and had treed an opossum on the hill called Old Blinkey, a hill famous for opossums, the same hill on which George caught his opossums and raised his potatoes. The next day for dinner we had the old gray opossum that Ring had treed. He was boiled well done. Oh, that 'possum and tater! I can taste him yet!

Just beyond the Blinkey hill is what was called Granser's Alum Mountain, on the north side of Broad River, a large mountain noted for the alum which drips down in the summer and with which the women of the Confederacy set the dyes used in making clothing for their children. I do not know what the Boys in Gray would have done had it not been for the mothers back home.

At the top is a large overhanging rock. The space beneath served as a hiding place for a Tory during the Revolution who, Judging from the leather scraps about, spent his time making boots.

That mountain was full of opossums and foxes. On this mountain I had my first experience fox hunting. I liked it so well that I spent many nights in the fox chases and coon chases. When my father moved into Spartanburg County, South Carolina, during my seventeenth year, there were many foxes there. I had the time of my life. Oftentimes have I caught two in one morning.

I, yet, dearly love to hear a pack of dogs on the chase, but since I lost a leg, I cannot go fast enough to keep up in a fox chase, yet I can do some way on an opossum hunt at eighty-two years of age.

