Andersonville, vol 1

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ANDERSONVILLE A STORY OF REBEL MILITARY PRISONS

FIFTEEN MONTHS A GUEST OF THE SO-CALLED SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY

A PRIVATE SOLDIERS EXPERIENCE IN RICHMOND, ANDERSONVILLE, SAVANNAH, MILLEN BLACKSHEAR AND FLORENCE

BY JOHN McELROY Late of Co. L. 16th Ill Cav.

1879

TO THE HONORABLE

NOAH H. SWAYNE.

JUSTICE OF THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES, A JURIST OF DISTINGUISHED TALENTS AND EXALTED CHARACTER; ONE OF THE LAST OF THAT ADMIRABLE ARRAY OF PURE PATRIOTS AND SAGACIOUS COUNSELORS, WHO, IN THE YEARS OF THE NATION'S TRIAL, FAITHFULLY SURROUNDED THE GREAT PRESIDENT, AND, WITH HIM, BORE THE BURDEN OF THOSE MOMENTOUS DAYS; AND WHOSE WISDOM AND FAIRNESS HAVE DONE SO MUCH SINCE TO CONSERVE WHAT WAS THEN WON, THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED WITH RESPECT AND APPRECIATION,

BY THE AUTHOR.

INTRODUCTION.

The fifth part of a century almost has sped with the flight of time since the outbreak of the Slaveholder's Rebellion against the United States. The young men of to-day were then babes in their cradles, or, if more than that, too young to be appalled by the terror of the times. Those now graduating from our schools of learning to be teachers of youth and leaders of public thought, if they are ever prepared to teach the history of the war for the Union so as to render adequate honor to its martyrs and heroes, and at the same time impress the obvious moral to be drawn from it, must derive their knowledge from authors who can each one say of the thrilling story he is spared to tell: "All of which I saw, and part of which I was."

The writer is honored with the privilege of introducing to the reader a volume written by an author who was an actor and a sufferer in the scenes he has so vividly and faithfully described, and sent forth to the public by a publisher whose literary contributions in support of the loyal cause entitle him to the highest appreciation. Both author and publisher have had an honorable and efficient part in the great struggle, and are therefore worthy to hand down to the future a record of the perils encountered and the sufferings endured by patriotic

soldiers in the prisons of the enemy. The publisher, at the beginning of the war, entered, with zeal and ardor upon the work of raising a company of men, intending to lead them to the field. Prevented from carrying out this design, his energies were directed to a more effective service. His famous “Nasby Letters” exposed the absurd and sophistical argumentations of rebels and their sympathisers, in such broad, attractive and admirable burlesque, as to direct against them the “loud, long laughter of a world!” The unique and telling satire of these papers became a power and inspiration to our armies in the field and to their anxious friends at home, more than equal to the might of whole battalions poured in upon the enemy. An athlete in logic may lay an error writhing at his feet, and after all it may recover to do great mischief. But the sharp wit of the humorist drives it before the world’s derision into shame and everlasting contempt. These letters were read and shouted over gleefully at every campfire in the Union Army, and eagerly devoured by crowds of listeners when mails were opened at country post-offices. Other humorists were content when they simply amused the reader, but “Nasby’s” jests were arguments—they had a meaningthey were suggested by the necessities and emergencies of the Nation’s peril, and written to support, with all earnestness, a most sacred cause.

The author, when very young, engaged in journalistic work, until the drum of the recruiting officer called him to join the ranks of his country’s defenders. As the reader is told, he was made a prisoner. He took with him into the terrible prison enclosure not only a brave, vigorous, youthful spirit, but invaluable habits of mind and thought for storing up the incidents and experiences of his prison life. As a journalist he had acquired the habit of noticing and memorizing every striking or thrilling incident, and the experiences of his prison life were adapted to enstamp themselves indelibly on both feeling and memory. He speaks from personal experience and from the stand-paint of tender and complete sympathy with those of his comrades who suffered more than he did himself. Of his qualifications, the writer of these introductory words need not speak. The sketches themselves testify to his ability with such force that no commendation is required.

This work is needed. A generation is arising who do not know what the preservation of our free government cost in blood and suffering. Even the men of the passing generation begin to be forgetful, if we may judge from the recklessness or carelessness of their political action. The soldier is not always remembered nor honored as he should be. But, what to the future of the great Republic is more important, there is great danger of our people under-estimating

the bitter animus and terrible malignity to the Union and its defenders cherished by those who made war upon it. This is a point we can not afford to be mistaken about. And yet, right at this point this volume will meet its severest criticism, and at this point its testimony is most vital and necessary.

Many will be slow to believe all that is here told most truthfully of the tyranny and cruelty of the captors of our brave boys in blue. There are no parallels to the cruelties and malignities here described in Northern society. The system of slavery, maintained for over two hundred years at the South, had performed a most perverting, morally desolating, and we might say, demonizing work on the dominant race, which people bred under our free civilization can not at once understand, nor scarcely believe when it is declared unto them. This reluctance to believe unwelcome truths has been the snare of our national life. We have not been willing to believe how hardened, despotic, and cruel the wielders of irresponsible power may become.

When the anti-slavery reformers of thirty years ago set forth the cruelties of the slave system, they were met with a storm of indignant denial, villification and rebuke. When Theodore D. Weld issued his “Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses,” to the cruelty of slavery, he introduced it with a few words, pregnant with sound philosophy, which can be applied to the work now introduced, and may help the reader better to accept and appreciate its statements. Mr. Weld said:

“Suppose I should seize you, rob you of your liberty, drive you into the field, and make you work without pay as long as you lived. Would that be justice? Would it be kindness? Or would it be monstrous injustice and cruelty? Now, is the man who robs you every day too tender-hearted ever to cuff or kick you? He can empty your pockets without remorse, but if your stomach is empty, it cuts him to the quick. He can make you work a life-time without pay, but loves you too well to let you go hungry. He fleeces you of your rights with a relish, but is shocked if you work bare-headed in summer, or without warm stockings in winter. He can make you go without your liberty, but never without a shirt. He can crush in you all hope of bettering your condition by vowing that you shall die his slave, but though he can thus cruelly torture your feelings, he will never lacerate your back —he can break your heart, but is very tender of your skin. He can strip you of all protection of law, and all comfort in religion, and thus expose you to all outrages, but if you are exposed to the weather, half-clad and half-sheltered, how yearn his tender bowels! What! talk of a man treating you well while robbing you of all you get, and as fast as you get it? And robbing you of yourself, too,

your hands and feet, your muscles, limbs and senses, your body and mind, your liberty and earnings, your free speech and rights of conscience, your right to acquire knowledge, property and reputation, and yet you are content to believe without question that men who do all this by their slaves have soft hearts oozing out so lovingly toward their human chattles that they always keep them well housed and well clad, never push them too hard in the field, never make their dear backs smart, nor let their dear stomachs get empty!”

In like manner we may ask, are not the cruelties and oppressions described in the following pages what we should legitimately expect from men who, all their lives, have used whip and thumb-screw, shot-gun and bloodhound, to keep human beings subservient to their will? Are we to expect nothing but chivalric tenderness and compassion from men who made war on a tolerant government to make more secure their barbaric system of oppression?

These things are written because they are true. Duty to the brave dead, to the heroic living, who have endured the pangs of a hundred deaths for their country’s sake; duty to the government which depends on the wisdom and constancy of its good citizens for its support and perpetuity, calls for this “round, unvarnished tale” of suffering endured for freedom’s sake.

The publisher of this work urged his friend and associate in journalism to write and send forth these sketches because the times demanded just such an expose of the inner hell of the Southern prisons. The tender mercies of oppressors are cruel. We must accept the truth and act in view of it. Acting wisely on the warnings of the past, we shall be able to prevent treason, with all its fearful concomitants, from being again the scourge and terror of our beloved land.

ROBERT McCUNE.

AUTHOR’S PREFACE

Fifteen months ago—and one month before it was begun—I had no more idea of writing this book than I have now of taking up my residence in China.

While I have always been deeply impressed with the idea that the public should know much more of the history of Andersonville and other Southern prisons than it does, it had never occurred to me that I was in any way charged with the

duty of increasing that enlightenment.

No affected deprecation of my own abilities had any part is this. I certainly knew enough of the matter, as did every other boy who had even a month's experience in those terrible places, but the very magnitude of that knowledge overpowered me, by showing me the vast requirements of the subject-requirements that seemed to make it presumption for any but the greatest pens in our literature to attempt the work. One day at Andersonville or Florence would be task enough for the genius of Carlyle or Hugo; lesser than they would fail preposterously to rise to the level of the theme. No writer ever described such a deluge of woes as swept over the unfortunates confined in Rebel prisons in the last year-and-a-half of the Confederacy's life. No man was ever called upon to describe the spectacle and the process of seventy thousand young, strong, able-bodied men, starving and rotting to death. Such a gigantic tragedy as this stuns the mind and benumbs the imagination.

I no more felt myself competent to the task than to accomplish one of Michael Angelo's grand creations in sculpture or painting.

Study of the subject since confirms me in this view, and my only claim for this book is that it is a contribution—a record of individual observation and experience—which will add something to the material which the historian of the future will find available for his work.

The work was begun at the suggestion of Mr. D. R. Locke, (Petroleum V. Nasby), the eminent political satirist. At first it was only intended to write a few short serial sketches of prison life for the columns of the TOLEDO BLADE. The exceeding favor with which the first of the series was received induced a great widening of their scope, until finally they took the range they now have.

I know that what is contained herein will be bitterly denied. I am prepared for this. In my boyhood I witnessed the savagery of the Slavery agitation—in my youth I felt the fierceness of the hatred directed against all those who stood by the Nation. I know that hell hath no fury like the vindictiveness of those who are hurt by the truth being told of them. I apprehend being assailed by a sirocco of contradiction and calumny. But I solemnly affirm in advance the entire and absolute truth of every material fact, statement and description. I assert that, so far from there being any exaggeration in any particular, that in no instance has the half of the truth been told, nor could it be, save by an inspired pen. I am

ready to demonstrate this by any test that the deniers of this may require, and I am fortified in my position by unsolicited letters from over 3,000 surviving prisoners, warmly indorsing the account as thoroughly accurate in every respect.

It has been charged that hatred of the South is the animus of this work. Nothing can be farther from the truth. No one has a deeper love for every part of our common country than I, and no one to-day will make more efforts and sacrifices to bring the South to the same plane of social and material development with the rest of the Nation than I will. If I could see that the sufferings at Andersonville and elsewhere contributed in any considerable degree to that end, and I should not regret that they had been. Blood and tears mark every, step in the progress of the race, and human misery seems unavoidable in securing human advancement. But I am naturally embittered by the fruitlessness, as well as the uselessness of the misery of Andersonville. There was never the least military or other reason for inflicting all that wretchedness upon men, and, as far as mortal eye can discern, no earthly good resulted from the martyrdom of those tens of thousands. I wish I could see some hope that their wantonly shed blood has sown seeds that will one day blossom, and bear a rich fruitage of benefit to mankind, but it saddens me beyond expression that I can not.

The years 1864-5 were a season of desperate battles, but in that time many more Union soldiers were slain behind the Rebel armies, by starvation and exposure, than were killed in front of them by cannon and rifle. The country has heard much of the heroism and sacrifices of those loyal youths who fell on the field of battle; but it has heard little of the still greater number who died in prison pen. It knows full well how grandly her sons met death in front of the serried ranks of treason, and but little of the sublime firmness with which they endured unto the death, all that the ingenious cruelty of their foes could inflict upon them while in captivity.

It is to help supply this deficiency that this book is written. It is a mite contributed to the better remembrance by their countrymen of those who in this way endured and died that the Nation might live. It is an offering of testimony to future generations of the measureless cost of the expiation of a national sin, and of the preservation of our national unity.

This is a11. I know I speak for all those still living comrades who went with me through the scenes that I have attempted to describe, when I say that we have no revenges to satisfy, no hatreds to appease. We do not ask that anyone shall be

punished. We only desire that the Nation shall recognize and remember the grand fidelity of our dead comrades, and take abundant care that they shall not have died in vain.

For the great mass of Southern people we have only the kindliest feeling. We but hate a vicious social system, the lingering shadow of a darker age, to which they yield, and which, by elevating bad men to power, has proved their own and their country's bane.

The following story does not claim to be in any sense a history of Southern prisons. It is simply a record of the experience of one individual—one boy—who staid all the time with his comrades inside the prison, and had no better opportunities for gaining information than any other of his 60,000 companions.

The majority of the illustrations in this work are from the skilled pencil of Captain O. J. Hopkins, of Toledo, who served through the war in the ranks of the Forty-second Ohio. His army experience has been of peculiar value to the work, as it has enabled him to furnish a series of illustrations whose life-like fidelity of action, pose and detail are admirable.

Some thirty of the pictures, including the frontispiece, and the allegorical illustrations of War and Peace, are from the atelier of Mr. O. Reich, Cincinnati, O.

A word as to the spelling: Having always been an ardent believer in the reformation of our present preposterous system—or rather, no system—of orthography, I am anxious to do whatever lies in my power to promote it. In the following pages the spelling is simplified to the last degree allowed by Webster. I hope that the time is near when even that advanced spelling reformer will be left far in the rear by the progress of a people thoroughly weary of longer slavery to the orthographical absurdities handed down to us from a remote and grossly unlearned ancestry.

Toledo, O., Dec. 10, 1879.

JOHN McELROY.

We wait beneath the furnace blast The pangs of transformation; Not painlessly

doth God recast And mold anew the nation. Hot burns the fire Where wrongs expire; Nor spares the hand That from the land Uproots the ancient evil.

The hand-breadth cloud the sages feared Its bloody rain is dropping; The poison plant the fathers spared All else is overtopping. East, West, South, North, It curses the earth; All justice dies, And fraud and lies Live only in its shadow.

Then let the selfish lip be dumb And hushed the breath of sighing; Before the joy of peace must come The pains of purifying. God give us grace Each in his place To bear his lot, And, murmuring not, Endure and wait and labor!

WHITTIER

ANDERSONVILLE

A STORY OF REBEL MILITARY PRISONS

CHAPTER I.

A STRANGE LAND—THE HEART OF THE APPALACHIANS—THE GATEWAY OF AN EMPIRE —A SEQUESTERED VALE, AND A PRIMITIVE, ARCADIAN, NON-PROGRESSIVE PEOPLE.

A low, square, plainly-hewn stone, set near the summit of the eastern approach to the formidable natural fortress of Cumberland Gap, indicates the boundaries of —the three great States of Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee. It is such a place as, remembering the old Greek and Roman myths and superstitions, one would recognize as fitting to mark the confines of the territories of great masses of strong, aggressive, and frequently conflicting peoples. There the god Terminus should have had one of his chief temples, where his shrine would be shadowed by barriers rising above the clouds, and his sacred solitude guarded from the rude invasion of armed hosts by range on range of battlemented rocks, crowning almost inaccessible mountains, interposed across every approach from the usual haunts of men.

Roundabout the land is full of strangeness and mystery. The throes of some great convulsion of Nature are written on the face of the four thousand square miles of territory, of which Cumberland Gap is the central point. Miles of granite mountains are thrust up like giant walls, hundreds of feet high, and as smooth and regular as the side of a monument.

Huge, fantastically-shaped rocks abound everywhere—sometimes rising into pinnacles on lofty summits—sometimes hanging over the verge of beetling cliffs, as if placed there in waiting for a time when they could be hurled down upon the path of an advancing army, and sweep it away.

Large streams of water burst out in the most unexpected planes, frequently far up

mountain sides, and fall in silver veils upon stones beaten round by the ceaseless dash for ages. Caves, rich in quaintly formed stalactites and stalagmites, and their recesses filled with metallic salts of the most powerful and diverse natures; break the mountain sides at frequent intervals. Everywhere one is met by surprises and anomalies. Even the rank vegetation is eccentric, and as prone to develop into bizarre forms as are the rocks and mountains.

The dreaded panther ranges through the primeval, rarely trodden forests; every crevice in the rocks has for tenants rattlesnakes or stealthy copperheads, while long, wonderfully swift “blue racers” haunt the edges of the woods, and linger around the fields to chill his blood who catches a glimpse of their upreared heads, with their great, balefully bright eyes, and “white-collar” encircled throats.

The human events happening here have been in harmony with the natural ones. It has always been a land of conflict. In 1540—339 years ago— De Soto, in that energetic but fruitless search for gold which occupied his later years, penetrated to this region, and found it the fastness of the Xualans, a bold, aggressive race, continually warring with its neighbors. When next the white man reached the country—a century and a half later—he found the Xualans had been swept away by the conquering Cherokees, and he witnessed there the most sanguinary contest between Indians of which our annals give any account—a pitched battle two days in duration, between the invading Shawnees, who lorded it over what is now Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana—and the Cherokees, who dominated the country the southeast of the Cumberland range. Again the Cherokees were victorious, and the discomfited Shawnees retired north of the Gap.

Then the white man delivered battle for the possession the land, and bought it with the lives of many gallant adventurers. Half a century later Boone and his hardy companion followed, and forced their way into Kentucky.

Another half century saw the Gap the favorite haunt of the greatest of American bandits—the noted John A. Murrell—and his gang. They infested the country for years, now waylaying the trader or drover threading his toilsome way over the lone mountains, now descending upon some little town, to plunder its stores and houses.

At length Murrell and his band were driven out, and sought a new field of operations on the Lower Mississippi. They left germs behind them, however, that

developed into horse thieve counterfeiters, and later into guerrillas and bushwhackers.

When the Rebellion broke out the region at once became the theater of military operations. Twice Cumberland Gap was seized by the Rebels, and twice was it wrested away from them. In 1861 it was the point whence Zollicoffer launched out with his legions to “liberate Kentucky,” and it was whither they fled, beaten and shattered, after the disasters of Wild Cat and Mill Springs. In 1862 Kirby Smith led his army through the Gap on his way to overrun Kentucky and invade the North. Three months later his beaten forces sought refuge from their pursuers behind its impregnable fortifications. Another year saw Burnside burst through the Gap with a conquering force and redeem loyal East Tennessee from its Rebel oppressors.

Had the South ever been able to separate from the North the boundary would have been established along this line.

Between the main ridge upon which Cumberland Gap is situated, and the next range on the southeast which runs parallel with it, is a narrow, long, very fruitful valley, walled in on either side for a hundred miles by tall mountains as a City street is by high buildings. It is called Powell’s Valley. In it dwell a simple, primitive people, shut out from the world almost as much as if they lived in New Zealand, and with the speech, manners and ideas that their fathers brought into the Valley when they settled it a century ago. There has been but little change since then. The young men who have annually driven cattle to the distant markets in Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia, have brought back occasional stray bits of finery for the “women folks,” and the latest improved fire-arms for themselves, but this is about all the innovations the progress of the world has been allowed to make. Wheeled vehicles are almost unknown; men and women travel on horseback as they did a century ago, the clothing is the product of the farm and the busy looms of the women, and life is as rural and Arcadian as any ever described in a pastoral. The people are rich in cattle, hogs, horses, sheep and the products of the field. The fat soil brings forth the substantials of life in opulent plenty. Having this there seems to be little care for more. Ambition nor avarice, nor yet craving after luxury, disturb their contented souls or drag them away from the non-progressive round of simple life bequeathed them by their fathers.

CHAPTER II.

SCARCITY OF FOOD FOR THE ARMY—RAID FOR FORAGE—ENCOUNTER WIT THE REBELS —SHARP CAVALRY FIGHT—DEFEAT OF THE “JOHNNIES”—POWELL’S VALLEY OPENED UP.

As the Autumn of 1863 advanced towards Winter the difficulty of supplying the forces concentrated around Cumberland Gap—as well as the rest of Burnside’s army in East Tennessee—became greater and greater. The base of supplies was at Camp Nelson, near Lexington, Ky., one hundred and eighty miles from the Gap, and all that the Army used had to be hauled that distance by mule teams over roads that, in their best state were wretched, and which the copious rains and heavy traffic had rendered well-nigh impassable. All the country to our possession had been drained of its stock of whatever would contribute to the support of man or beast. That portion of Powell’s Valley extending from the Gap into Virginia was still in the hands of the Rebels; its stock of products was as yet almost exempt from military contributions. Consequently a raid was projected to reduce the Valley to our possession, and secure its much needed stores. It was guarded by the Sixty-fourth Virginia, a mounted regiment, made up of the young men of the locality, who had then been in the service about two years.

Maj. C. H. Beer’s third Battalion, Sixteenth Illinois Cavalry—four companies, each about 75 strong—was sent on the errand of driving out the Rebels and opening up the Valley for our foraging teams. The writer was invited to attend the excursion. As he held the honorable, but not very lucrative position of “high, private” in Company L, of the Battalion, and the invitation came from his Captain, he did not feel at liberty to decline. He went, as private soldiers have been in the habit of doing ever since the days of the old Centurion, who said with the characteristic boastfulness of one of the lower grades of commissioned officers when he happens to be a snob:

> For I am also a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go; and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

Rather “airy” talk that for a man who nowadays would take rank with Captains of infantry.

Three hundred of us responded to the signal of “boots and saddles,” buckled on

three hundred more or less trusty sabers and revolvers, saddled three hundred more or less gallant steeds, came into line “as companies” with the automatic listlessness of the old soldiers, “counted off by fours” in that queer gamut-running style that makes a company of men “counting off”—each shouting a number in a different voice from his neighbor—sound like running the scales on some great organ badly out of tune; something like this:

One. Two. Three. Four. One. Two. Three. Four. One. Two. Three. Four.

Then, as the bugle sounded “Right forward! fours right!” we moved off at a walk through the melancholy mist that soaked through the very fiber of man and horse, and reduced the minds of both to a condition of limp indifference as to things past, present and future.

Whither we were going we knew not, nor cared. Such matters had long since ceased to excite any interest. A cavalryman soon recognizes as the least astonishing thing in his existence the signal to “Fall in!” and start somewhere. He feels that he is the “Poor Joe” of the Army—under perpetual orders to “move on.”

Down we wound over the road that zig-tagged through the forts, batteries and rifle-pits covering the eastern ascent to the Flap-past the wonderful Murrell Spring—so-called because the robber chief had killed, as he stooped to drink of its crystal waters, a rich drover, whom he was pretending to pilot through the mountains—down to where the “Virginia road” turned off sharply to the left and entered Powell’s Valley. The mist had become a chill, dreary rain, through, which we plodded silently, until night closed in around us some ten miles from the Gap. As we halted to go into camp, an indignant Virginian resented the invasion of the sacred soil by firing at one of the guards moving out to his place. The guard looked at the fellow contemptuously, as if he hated to waste powder on a man who had no better sense than to stay out in such a rain, when he could go in-doors, and the bushwhacker escaped, without even a return shot.

Fires were built, coffee made, horses rubbed, and we laid down with feet to the fire to get what sleep we could.

Before morning we were awakened by the bitter cold. It had cleared off during the night and turned so cold that everything was frozen stiff. This was better than the rain, at all events. A good fire and a hot cup of coffee would make the cold

quite endurable.

At daylight the bugle sounded “Right forward! fours right!” again, and the 300 of us resumed our onward plod over the rocky, cedar-crowned hills.

In the meantime, other things were taking place elsewhere. Our esteemed friends of the Sixty-fourth Virginia, who were in camp at the little town of Jonesville, about 40 miles from the Gap, had learned of our starting up the Valley to drive them out, and they showed that warm reciprocity characteristic of the Southern soldier, by mounting and starting down the Valley to drive us out. Nothing could be more harmonious, it will be perceived. Barring the trifling divergence of yews as to who was to drive and who be driven, there was perfect accord in our ideas.

Our numbers were about equal. If I were to say that they considerably outnumbered us, I would be following the universal precedent. No soldier-high or low-ever admitted engaging an equal or inferior force of the enemy.

About 9 o’clock in the morning—Sunday—they rode through the streets of Jonesville on their way to give us battle. It was here that most of the members of the Regiment lived. Every man, woman and child in the town was related in some way to nearly every one of the soldiers.

The women turned out to wave their fathers, husbands, brothers and lovers on to victory. The old men gathered to give parting counsel and encouragement to their sons and kindred. The Sixty-fourth rode away to what hope told them would be a glorious victory.

At noon we are still straggling along without much attempt at soldierly order, over the rough, frozen hillsides. It is yet bitterly cold, and men and horses draw themselves together, as if to expose as little surface as possible to the unkind elements. Not a word had been spoken by any one for hours.

The head of the column has just reached the top of the hill, and the rest of us are strung along for a quarter of a mile or so back.

Suddenly a few shots ring out upon the frosty air from the carbines of the advance. The general apathy is instantly, replaced by keen attention, and the boys instinctively range themselves into fours—the cavalry unit of action. The Major, who is riding about the middle of the first Company—I—dashes to the front. A glance seems to satisfy him, for he turns in his saddle and his voice rings

out:

“Company I! FOURS LEFT INTO LINE!—MARCH!!”

The Company swings around on the hilltop like a great, jointed toy snake. As the fours come into line on a trot, we see every man draw his saber and revolver. The Company raises a mighty cheer and dashes forward.

Company K presses forward to the ground Company I has just left, the fours sweep around into line, the sabers and revolvers come out spontaneously, the men cheer and the Company flings itself forward.

All this time we of Company L can see nothing except what the companies ahead of us are doing. We are wrought up to the highest pitch. As Company K clears its ground, we press forward eagerly. Now we go into line just as we raise the hill, and as my four comes around, I catch a hurried glimpse through a rift in the smoke of a line of butternut and gray clad men a hundred yards or so away. Their guns are at their faces, and I see the smoke and fire spurt from the muzzles. At the same instant our sabers and revolvers are drawn. We shout in a frenzy of excitement, and the horses spring forward as if shot from a bow.

I see nothing more until I reach the place where the Rebel line stood. Then I find it is gone. Looking beyond toward the bottom of the hill, I see the woods filled with Rebels, flying in disorder and our men yelling in pursuit. This is the portion of the line which Companies I and K struck. Here and there are men in butternut clothing, prone on the frozen ground, wounded and dying. I have just time to notice closely one middle-aged man lying almost under my horse’s feet. He has received a carbine bullet through his head and his blood colors a great space around him.

One brave man, riding a roan horse, attempts to rally his companions. He halts on a little knoll, wheels his horse to face us, and waves his hat to draw his companions to him. A tall, lank fellow in the next four to me—who goes by the nickname of “‘Leven Yards”—aims his carbine at him, and, without checking his horse’s pace, fires. The heavy Sharpe’s bullet tears a gaping hole through the Rebel’s heart. He drops from his saddle, his life-blood runs down in little rills on either side of the knoll, and his riderless horse dashes away in a panic.

At this instant comes an order for the Company to break up into fours and press on through the forest in pursuit. My four trots off to the road at the right. A Rebel

bugler, who hag been cut off, leaps his horse into the road in front of us. We all fire at him on the impulse of the moment. He falls from his horse with a bullet through his back. Company M, which has remained in column as a reserve, is now thundering up close behind at a gallop. Its seventy-five powerful horses are spurning the solid earth with steel-clad hoofs. The man will be ground into a shapeless mass if left where he has fallen. We spring from our horses and drag him into a fence corner; then remount and join in the pursuit.

This happened on the summit of Chestnut Ridge, fifteen miles from Jonesville.

Late in the afternoon the anxious watchers at Jonesville saw a single fugitive urging his well-nigh spent horse down the slope of the hill toward town. In an agony of anxiety they hurried forward to meet him and learn his news.

The first messenger who rushed into Job's presence to announce the beginning of the series of misfortunes which were to afflict the upright man of Uz is a type of all the cowards who, before or since then, have been the first to speed away from the field of battle to spread the news of disaster. He said:

"And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

So this fleeing Virginian shouted to his expectant friends:

"The boys are all cut to pieces; I'm the only one that got away."

The terrible extent of his words was belied a little later, by the appearance on the distant summit of the hill of a considerable mob of fugitives, flying at the utmost speed of their nearly exhausted horses. As they came on down the hill as almost equally disorganized crowd of pursuers appeared on the summit, yelling in voices hoarse with continued shouting, and pouring an incessant fire of carbine and revolver bullets upon the hapless men of the Sixty-fourth Virginia.

The two masses of men swept on through the town. Beyond it, the road branched in several directions, the pursued scattered on each of these, and the worn-out pursuers gave up the chase.

Returning to Jonesville, we took an account of stock, and found that we were "ahead" one hundred and fifteen prisoners, nearly that many horses, and a

considerable quantity of small arms. How many of the enemy had been killed and wounded could not be told, as they were scattered over the whole fifteen miles between where the fight occurred and the pursuit ended. Our loss was trifling.

Comparing notes around the campfires in the evening, we found that our success had been owing to the Major's instinct, his grasp of the situation, and the soldierly way in which he took advantage of it. When he reached the summit of the hill he found the Rebel line nearly formed and ready for action. A moment's hesitation might have been fatal to us. At his command Company I went into line with the thought-like celerity of trained cavalry, and instantly dashed through the right of the Rebel line. Company K followed and plunged through the Rebel center, and when we of Company L arrived on the ground, and charged the left, the last vestige of resistance was swept away. The whole affair did not probably occupy more than fifteen minutes.

This was the way Powell's Valley was opened to our foragers.

CHAPTER III.

LIVING OFF THE ENEMY—REVELING IN THE FATNESS OF THE COUNTRY—SOLDIERLY PURVEYING AND CAMP COOKERY—SUSCEPTIBLE TEAMSTERS AND THEIR TENDENCY TO FLIGHTINESS—MAKING SOLDIER'S BED.

For weeks we rode up and down—hither and thither—along the length of the narrow, granite-walled Valley; between mountains so lofty that the sun labored slowly over them in the morning, occupying half the forenoon in getting to where his rays would reach the stream that ran through the Valley's center. Perpetual shadow reigned on the northern and western faces of these towering Nights—not enough warmth and sunshine reaching them in the cold months to check the growth of the ever-lengthening icicles hanging from the jutting cliffs, or melt the arabesque frost-forms with which the many dashing cascades decorated the adjacent rocks and shrubbery. Occasionally we would see where some little stream ran down over the face of the bare, black rocks for many hundred feet, and then its course would be a long band of sheeny white, like a great rich, spotless scarf of satin, festooning the war-grimed walls of some old

castle.

Our duty now was to break up any nuclei of concentration that the Rebels might attempt to form, and to guard our foragers—that is, the teamsters and employee of the Quartermaster's Department—who were loading grain into wagons and hauling it away.

This last was an arduous task. There is no man in the world that needs as much protection as an Army teamster. He is worse in this respect than a New England manufacturer, or an old maid on her travels. He is given to sudden fears and causeless panics. Very innocent cedars have a fashion of assuming in his eyes the appearance of desperate Rebels armed with murderous guns, and there is no telling what moment a rock may take such a form as to freeze his young blood, and make each particular hair stand on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine. One has to be particular about snapping caps in his neighborhood, and give to him careful warning before discharging a carbine to clean it. His first impulse, when anything occurs to jar upon his delicate nerves, is to cut his wheel-mule loose and retire with the precipitation of a man having an appointment to keep and being behind time. There is no man who can get as much speed out of a mule as a teamster falling back from the neighborhood of heavy firing.

This nervous tremor was not peculiar to the engineers of our transportation department. It was noticeable in the gentry who carted the scanty provisions of the Rebels. One of Wheeler's cavalrymen told me that the brigade to which he belonged was one evening ordered to move at daybreak. The night was rainy, and it was thought best to discharge the guns and reload before starting. Unfortunately, it was neglected to inform the teamsters of this, and at the first discharge they varnished from the scene with such energy that it was over a week before the brigade succeeded in getting them back again.

Why association with the mule should thus demoralize a man, has always been a puzzle to me, for while the mule, as Col. Ingersoll has remarked, is an animal without pride of ancestry or hope of posterity, he is still not a coward by any means. It is beyond dispute that a full-grown and active lioness once attacked a mule in the grounds of the Cincinnati Zoological Garden, and was ignominiously beaten, receiving injuries from which she died shortly afterward.

The apparition of a badly-scared teamster urging one of his wheel mules at break-neck speed over the rough ground, yelling for protection against "them

Johnnies," who had appeared on some hilltop in sight of where he was gathering corn, was an almost hourly occurrence. Of course the squad dispatched to his assistance found nobody.

Still, there were plenty of Rebels in the country, and they hung around our front, exchanging shots with us at long taw, and occasionally treating us to a volley at close range, from some favorable point. But we had the decided advantage of them at this game. Our Sharpe's carbines were much superior in every way to their Enfields. They would shoot much farther, and a great deal more rapidly, so that the Virginians were not long in discovering that they were losing more than they gained in this useless warfare.

Once they played a sharp practical joke upon us. Copper River is a deep, exceedingly rapid mountain stream, with a very slippery rocky bottom. The Rebels blockaded a ford in such a way that it was almost impossible for a horse to keep his feet. Then they tolled us off in pursuit of a small party to this ford. When we came to it there was a light line of skirmishers on the opposite bank, who popped away at us industriously. Our boys formed in line, gave the customary, cheer, and dashed in to carry the ford at a charge. As they did so at least one-half of the horses went down as if they were shot, and rolled over their riders in the swift running, ice-cold waters. The Rebels yelled a triumphant laugh, as they galloped away, and the laugh was re-echoed by our fellows, who were as quick to see the joke as the other side. We tried to get even with them by a sharp chase, but we gave it up after a few miles, without having taken any prisoners.

But, after all, there was much to make our sojourn in the Valley endurable. Though we did not wear fine linen, we fared sumptuously—for soldiers—every day. The cavalryman is always charged by the infantry and artillery with having a finer and surer scent for the good things in the country than any other man in the service. He is believed to have an instinct that will unfailingly lead him, in the dankest night, to the roosting place of the most desirable poultry, and after he has camped in a neighborhood for awhile it would require a close chemical analysis to find a trace of ham.

We did our best to sustain the reputation of our arm of the service. We found the most delicious hams packed away in the ash-houses. They were small, and had that; exquisite nutty flavor, peculiar to mast-fed bacon. Then there was an abundance of the delightful little apple known as "romanites." There were

turnips, pumpkins, cabbages, potatoes, and the usual products of the field in plenty, even profusion. The corn in the fields furnished an ample supply of breadstuff. We carried it to and ground it in the quaintest, rudest little mills that can be imagined outside of the primitive affairs by which the women of Arabia coarsely powder the grain for the family meal. Sometimes the mill would consist only of four stout posts thrust into the ground at the edge of some stream. A line of boulders reaching diagonally across the stream answered for a dam, by diverting a portion of the volume of water to a channel at the side, where it moved a clumsily constructed wheel, that turned two small stones, not larger than good-sized grindstones. Over this would be a shed made by resting poles in forked posts stuck into the ground, and covering these with clapboards held in place by large flat stones. They resembled the mills of the gods—in grinding slowly. It used to seem that a healthy man could eat the meal faster than they ground it.

But what savory meals we used to concoct around the campfires, out of the rich materials collected during the day's ride! Such stews, such soups, such broils, such wonderful commixtures of things diverse in nature and antagonistic in properties such daring culinary experiments in combining materials never before attempted to be combined. The French say of untasteful arrangement of hues in dress "that the colors swear at each other." I have often thought the same thing of the heterogeneities that go to make up a soldier's pot-a feu.

But for all that they never failed to taste deliciously after a long day's ride. They were washed down by a tincupful of coffee strong enough to tan leather, then came a brier-wood pipeful of fragrant kinnikinnic, and a seat by the ruddy, sparkling fire of aromatic cedar logs, that diffused at once warmth, and spicy, pleasing incense. A chat over the events of the day, and the prospect of the morrow, the wonderful merits of each man's horse, and the disgusting irregularities of the mails from home, lasted until the silver-voiced bugle rang out the sweet, mournful tattoo of the Regulations, to the flowing cadences of which the boys had arranged the absurdly incongruous words:

"S-a-y—D-e-u-t-c-h-e-r-will-you fight-mit Sigel! Zwei-glass of lager-bier, ja! ja! JA!"

Words were fitted to all the calls, which generally bore some relativeness to the sigmal, but these were as, destitute of congruity as of sense.

Tattoo always produces an impression of extreme loneliness. As its weird, half-availing notes ring out and are answered back from the distant rocks shrouded in night, and perhaps concealing the lurking foe, the soldier remembers that he is far away from home and friends—deep in the enemy's country, encompassed on every hand by those in deadly hostility to him, who are perhaps even then maturing the preparations for his destruction.

As the tattoo sounds, the boys arise from around the fire, visit the horse line, see that their horses are securely tied, rub off from the fetlocks and legs such specks of mud as may have escaped the cleaning in the early evening, and if possible, smuggle their faithful four-footed friends a few ears of corn, or another bunch of hay.

If not too tired, and everything else is favorable, the cavalryman has prepared himself a comfortable couch for the night. He always sleeps with a chum. The two have gathered enough small tufts of pine or cedar to make a comfortable, springy, mattress-like foundation. On this is laid the poncho or rubber blanket. Next comes one of their overcoats, and upon this they lie, covering themselves with the two blankets and the other overcoat, their feet towards the fire, their boots at the foot, and their belts, with revolver, saber and carbine, at the sides of the bed. It is surprising what an amount of comfort a man can get out of such a couch, and how, at an alarm, he springs from it, almost instantly dressed and armed.

Half an hour after tattoo the bugle rings out another sadly sweet strain, that hath a dying sound.

CHAPTER IV.

A BITTER COLD MORNING AND A WARM AWAKENING—TROUBLE ALL ALONG THE LINE— FIERCE CONFLICTS, ASSAULTS AND DEFENSE—PROLONGED AND DESPERATE STRUGGLE ENDING WITH A SURRENDER.

The night had been the most intensely cold that the country had known for many years. Peach and other tender trees had been killed by the frosty rigor, and sentinels had been frozen to death in our neighborhood. The deep snow on which we made our beds, the icy covering of the streams near us, the limbs of the trees

above us, had been cracking with loud noises all night, from the bitter cold.

We were camped around Jonesville, each of the four companies lying on one of the roads leading from the town. Company L lay about a mile from the Court House. On a knoll at the end of the village toward us, and at a point where two roads separated,—one of which led to us,—stood a three-inch Rodman rifle, belonging to the Twenty-second Ohio Battery. It and its squad of eighteen men, under command of Lieutenant Alger and Sergeant Davis, had been sent up to us a few days before from the Gap.

The comfortless gray dawn was crawling sluggishly over the mountain-tops, as if numb as the animal and vegetable life which had been shrinking all the long hours under the fierce chill.

The Major's bugler had saluted the morn with the lively, ringing tarr-r- r-a-ta-ara of the Regulation reveille, and the company buglers, as fast as they could thaw out their mouth-pieces, were answering him.

I lay on my bed, dreading to get up, and yet not anxious to lie still. It was a question which would be the more uncomfortable. I turned over, to see if there was not another position in which it would be warmer, and began wishing for the thousandth time that the efforts for the amelioration of the horrors of warfare would progress to such a point as to put a stop to all Winter soldiering, so that a fellow could go home as soon as cold weather began, sit around a comfortable stove in a country store; and tell camp stories until the Spring was far enough advanced to let him go back to the front wearing a straw hat and a linen duster.

Then I began wondering how much longer I would dare lie there, before the Orderly Sergeant would draw me out by the heels, and accompany the operation with numerous unkind and sulphurous remarks.

This cogitation, was abruptly terminated by hearing an excited shout from the Captain:

"Turn Out!—COMPANY L!! TURNOUT ! ! !"

Almost at the same instant rose that shrill, piercing Rebel yell, which one who has once heard it rarely forgets, and this was followed by a crashing volley from apparently a regiment of rifles.

I arose-promptly.

There was evidently something of more interest on hand than the weather.

Cap, overcoat, boots and revolver belt went on, and eyes opened at about the same instant.

As I snatched up my carbine, I looked out in front, and the whole woods appeared to be full of Rebels, rushing toward us, all yelling and some firing. My Captain and First Lieutenant had taken up position on the right front of the tents, and part of the boys were running up to form a line alongside them. The Second Lieutenant had stationed himself on a knoll on the left front, and about a third of the company was rallying around him.

My chum was a silent, sententious sort of a chap, and as we ran forward to the Captain's line, he remarked earnestly:

"Well: this beats hell!"

I thought he had a clear idea of the situation.

All this occupied an inappreciably short space of time. The Rebels had not stopped to reload, but were rushing impetuously toward us. We gave them a hot, rolling volley from our carbines. Many fell, more stopped to load and reply, but the mass surged straight forward at us. Then our fire grew so deadly that they showed a disposition to cover themselves behind the rocks and trees. Again they were urged forward; and a body of them headed by their Colonel, mounted on a white horse, pushed forward through the gap between us and the Second Lieutenant. The Rebel Colonel dashed up to the Second Lieutenant, and ordered him to surrender. The latter-a gallant old graybeard—cursed the Rebel bitterly and snapped his now empty revolver in his face. The Colonel fired and killed him, whereupon his squad, with two of its Sergeants killed and half its numbers on the ground, surrendered.

The Rebels in our front and flank pressed us with equal closeness. It seemed as if it was absolutely impossible to check their rush for an instant, and as we saw the fate of our companions the Captain gave the word for every man to look out for himself. We ran back a little distance, sprang over the fence into the fields, and rushed toward Town, the Rebels encouraging us to make good time by a sharp fire into our backs from the fence.

While we were vainly attempting to stem the onset of the column dashed against us, better success was secured elsewhere. Another column swept down the other road, upon which there was only an outlying picket. This had to come back on the run before the overwhelming numbers, and the Rebels galloped straight for the three-inch Rodman. Company M was the first to get saddled and mounted, and now came up at a steady, swinging gallop, in two platoons, saber and revolver in hand, and led by two Sergeants-Key and McWright,—printer boys from Bloomington, Illinois. They divined the object of the Rebel dash, and strained every nerve to reach the gun first. The Rebels were too near, and got the gun and turned it. Before they could fire it, Company M struck them headlong, but they took the terrible impact without flinching, and for a few minutes there was fierce hand-to-hand work, with sword and pistol. The Rebel leader sank under a half-dozen simultaneous wounds, and fell dead almost under the gun. Men dropped from their horses each instant, and the riderless steeds fled away. The scale of victory was turned by the Major dashing against the Rebel left flank at the head of Company I, and a portion of the artillery squad. The Rebels gave ground slowly, and were packed into a dense mass in the lane up which they had charged. After they had been crowded back, say fifty yards, word was passed through our men to open to the right and left on the sides of the road. The artillerymen had turned the gun and loaded it with a solid shot. Instantly a wide lane opened through our ranks; the man with the lanyard drew the fatal cord, fire burst from the primer and the muzzle, the long gun sprang up and recoiled, and there seemed to be a demoniac yell in its ear-splitting crash, as the heavy ball left the mouth, and tore its bloody way through the bodies of the struggling mass of men and horses.

This ended it. The Rebels gave way in disorder, and our men fell back to give the gun an opportunity to throw shell and canister.

The Rebels now saw that we were not to be run over like a field of cornstalks, and they fell back to devise further tactics, giving us a breathing spell to get ourselves in shape for defense.

The dullest could see that we were in a desperate situation. Critical positions were no new experience to us, as they never are to a cavalry command after a few months in the field, but, though the pitcher goes often to the well, it is broken at last, and our time was evidently at hand. The narrow throat of the Valley, through which lay the road back to the Gap, was held by a force of Rebels evidently much superior to our own, and strongly posted. The road was a

slender, tortuous one, winding through rocks and gorges. Nowhere was there room enough to move with even a platoon front against the enemy, and this precluded all chances of cutting out. The best we could do was a slow, difficult movement, in column of fours, and this would have been suicide. On the other side of the Town the Rebels were massed stronger, while to the right and left rose the steep mountain sides. We were caught-trapped as surely as a rat ever was in a wire trap.

As we learned afterwards, a whole division of cavalry, under command of the noted Rebel, Major General Sam Jones, had been sent to effect our capture, to offset in a measure Longstreet's repulse at Knoxville. A gross overestimate of our numbers had caused the sending of so large a force on this errand, and the rough treatment we gave the two columns that attacked us first confirmed the Rebel General's ideas of our strength, and led him to adopt cautious tactics, instead of crushing us out speedily, by a determined advance of all parts of his encircling lines.

The lull in the fight did not last long. A portion of the Rebel line on the east rushed forward to gain a more commanding position.

We concentrated in that direction and drove it back, the Rodman assisting with a couple of well-aimed shells.—This was followed by a similar but more successful attempt by another part of the Rebel line, and so it went on all day—the Rebels rushing up first on this side, and then on that, and we, hastily collecting at the exposed points, seeking to drive them back. We were frequently successful; we were on the inside, and had the advantage of the short interior lines, so that our few men and our breech-loaders told to a good purpose.

There were frequent crises in the struggle, that at some times gave encouragement, but never hope. Once a determined onset was made from the East, and was met by the equally determined resistance of nearly our whole force. Our fire was so galling that a large number of our foes crowded into a house on a knoll, and making loopholes in its walls, began replying to us pretty sharply. We sent word to our faithful artillerists, who trained the gun upon the house. The first shell screamed over the roof, and burst harmlessly beyond. We suspended fire to watch the next. It crashed through the side; for an instant all was deathly still; we thought it had gone on through. Then came a roar and a crash; the clapboards flew off the roof, and smoke poured out; panic-stricken Rebels rushed from the doors and sprang from the windows-like bees from a

disturbed hive; the shell had burst among the confined mass of men inside! We afterwards heard that twenty-five were killed there.

At another time a considerable force of rebels gained the cover of a fence in easy range of our main force. Companies L and K were ordered to charge forward on foot and dislodge them. Away we went, under a fire that seemed to drop a man at every step. A hundred yards in front of the Rebels was a little cover, and behind this our men lay down as if by one impulse. Then came a close, desperate duel at short range. It was a question between Northern pluck and Southern courage, as to which could stand the most punishment. Lying as flat as possible on the crusted snow, only raising the head or body enough to load and aim, the men on both sides, with their teeth set, their glaring eyes fastened on the foe, their nerves as tense as tightly-drawn steel wires, rained shot on each other as fast as excited hands could crowd cartridges into the guns and discharge them.

Not a word was said.

The shallower enthusiasm that expresses itself in oaths and shouts had given way to the deep, voiceless rage of men in a death grapple. The Rebel line was a rolling torrent of flame, their bullets shrieked angrily as they flew past, they struck the snow in front of us, and threw its cold flakes in faces that were white with the fires of consuming hate; they buried themselves with a dull thud in the quivering bodies of the enraged combatants.

Minutes passed; they seemed hours.

Would the villains, scoundrels, hell-hounds, sons of vipers never go?

At length a few Rebels sprang up and tried to fly. They were shot down instantly.

Then the whole line rose and ran!

The relief was so great that we jumped to our feet and cheered wildly, forgetting in our excitement to make use of our victory by shooting down our flying enemies.

Nor was an element of fun lacking. A Second Lieutenant was ordered to take a party of skirmishers to the top of a hill and engage those of the Rebels stationed on another hilltop across a ravine. He had but lately joined us from the Regular Army, where he was a Drill Sergeant. Naturally, he was very methodical in his

way, and scorned to do otherwise under fire than he would upon the parade ground. He moved his little command to the hilltop, in close order, and faced them to the front. The Johnnies received them with a yell and a volley, whereat the boys winced a little, much to the Lieutenant's disgust, who swore at them; then had them count off with great deliberation, and deployed them as coolly as if them was not an enemy within a hundred miles. After the line deployed, he "dressed" it, commanded "Front!" and "Begin, firing!" his attention was called another way for an instant, and when he looked back again, there was not a man of his nicely formed skirmish line visible. The logs and stones had evidently been put there for the use of skirmishers, the boys thought, and in an instant they availed themselves of their shelter.

Never was there an angrier man than that Second Lieutenant; he brandished his saber and swore; he seemed to feel that all his soldierly reputation was gone, but the boys stuck to their shelter for all that, informing him that when the Rebels would stand out in the open field and take their fire, they would d likewise.

Despite all our efforts, the Rebel line crawled up closer an closer to us; we were driven back from knoll to knoll, and from one fence after another. We had maintained the unequal struggle for eight hours; over one-fourth of our number were stretched upon the snow, killed or badly wounded. Our cartridges were nearly all gone; the cannon had fired its last shot long ago, and having a blank cartridge left, had shot the rammer at a gathering party of the enemy.

Just as the Winter sun was going down upon a day of gloom the bugle called us all up on the hillside. Then the Rebels saw for the first time how few there were, and began an almost simultaneous charge all along the line. The Major raised piece of a shelter tent upon a pole. The line halted. An officer rode out from it, followed by two privates.

Approaching the Major, he said, "Who is in command this force?"

The Major replied: "I am."

"Then, Sir, I demand your sword."

"What is your rank, Sir!"

"I am Adjutant of the Sixty-fourth Virginia."

The punctillious soul of the old “Regular”—for such the Major was swelled up instantly, and he answered:

“By –, sir, I will never surrender to my inferior in rank!”

The Adjutant reined his horse back. His two followers leveled their pieces at the Major and waited orders to fire. They were covered by a dozen carbines in the hands of our men. The Adjutant ordered his men to “recover arms,” and rode away with them. He presently returned with a Colonel, and to him the Major handed his saber.

As the men realized what was being done, the first thought of many of them was to snatch out the cylinder’s of their revolvers, and the slides of their carbines, and throw them away, so as to make the arms useless.

We were overcome with rage and humiliation at being compelled to yield to an enemy whom we had hated so bitterly. As we stood there on the bleak mountain-side, the biting wind soughing through the leafless branches, the shadows of a gloomy winter night closing around us, the groans and shrieks of our wounded mingling with the triumphant yells of the Rebels plundering our tents, it seemed as if Fate could press to man’s lips no cup with bitterer dregs in it than this.

CHAPTER V.

THE REACTION—DEPRESSION—BITTING COLD—SHARP HUNGER AND SAD REFLEXION.

“Of being taken by the Insolent foe.”—Othello.

The night that followed was inexpressibly dreary: The high-wrought nervous tension, which had been protracted through the long hours that the fight lasted, was succeeded by a proportionate mental depression, such as naturally follows any strain upon the mind. This was intensified in our cases by the sharp sting of defeat, the humiliation of having to yield ourselves, our horses and our arms into the possession of the enemy, the uncertainty as to the future, and the sorrow we felt at the loss of so many of our comrades.

Company L had suffered very severely, but our chief regret was for the gallant Osgood, our Second Lieutenant. He, above all others, was our trusted leader. The Captain and First Lieutenant were brave men, and good enough soldiers, but Osgood was the one “whose adoption tried, we grappled to our souls with hooks of steel.” There was never any difficulty in getting all the volunteers he wanted for a scouting party. A quiet, pleasant spoken gentleman, past middle age, he looked much better fitted for the office of Justice of the Peace, to which his fellow-citizens of Urbana, Illinois, had elected and reelected him, than to command a troop of rough riders in a great civil war. But none more gallant than he ever vaulted into saddle to do battle for the right. He went into the Army solely as a matter of principle, and did his duty with the unflagging zeal of an olden Puritan fighting for liberty and his soul’s salvation. He was a superb horseman—as all the older Illinoisans are and, for all his two-score years and ten, he recognized few superiors for strength and activity in the Battalion. A radical, uncompromising Abolitionist, he had frequently asserted that he would rather die than yield to a Rebel, and he kept his word in this as in everything else.

As for him, it was probably the way he desired to die. No one believed more ardently than he that

Whether on the scaffold high, Or in the battle’s van; The fittest place for man to die, Is where he dies for man.

Among the many who had lost chums and friends was Ned Johnson, of Company K. Ned was a young Englishman, with much of the suggestiveness of the bull-dog common to the lower class of that nation. His fist was readier than his tongue. His chum, Walter Savage was of the same surly type. The two had come from England twelve years before, and had been together ever since. Savage was killed in the struggle for the fence described in the preceding chapter. Ned could not realize for a while that his friend was dead. It was only when the body rapidly stiffened on its icy bed, and the eyes which had been gleaming deadly hate when he was stricken down were glazed over with the dull film of death, that he believed he was gone from him forever. Then his rage was terrible. For the rest of the day he was at the head of every assault upon the enemy. His voice could ever be heard above the firing, cursing the Rebels bitterly, and urging the boys to “Stand up to ‘em! Stand right up to ‘em! Don’t give a inch! Let them have the best you got in the shop! Shoot low, and don’t waste a cartridge!”

When we surrendered, Ned seemed to yield sullenly to the inevitable. He threw his belt and apparently his revolver with it upon the snow. A guard was formed around us, and we gathered about the fires that were started. Ned sat apart, his arms folded, his head upon his breast, brooding bitterly upon Walter's death. A horseman, evidently a Colonel or General, clattered up to give some directions concerning us. At the sound of his voice Ned raised his head and gave him a swift glance; the gold stars upon the Rebel's collar led him to believe that he was the commander of the enemy. Ned sprang to his feet, made a long stride forward, snatched from the breast of his overcoat the revolver he had been hiding there, cocked it and leveled it at the Rebel's breast. Before he could pull the trigger Orderly Sergeant Charles Bentley, of his Company, who was watching him, leaped forward, caught his wrist and threw the revolver up. Others joined in, took the weapon away, and handed it over to the officer, who then ordered us all to be searched for arms, and rode away.

All our dejection could not make us forget that we were intensely hungry. We had eaten nothing all day. The fight began before we had time to get any breakfast, and of course there was no interval for refreshments during the engagement. The Rebels were no better off than we, having been marched rapidly all night in order to come upon us by daylight.

Late in the evening a few sacks of meal were given us, and we took the first lesson in an art that long and painful practice afterward was to make very familiar to us. We had nothing to mix the meal in, and it looked as if we would have to eat it dry, until a happy thought struck some one that our caps would do for kneading troughs. At once every cap was devoted to this. Getting water from an adjacent spring, each man made a little wad of dough—unsalted—and spreading it upon a flat stone or a chip, set it up in front of the fire to bake. As soon as it was browned on one side, it was pulled off the stone, and the other side turned to the fire. It was a very primitive way of cooking and I became thoroughly disgusted with it. It was fortunate for me that I little dreamed that this was the way I should have to get my meals for the next fifteen months.

After somewhat of the edge had been taken off our hunger by this food, we crouched around the fires, talked over the events of the day, speculated as to what was to be done with us, and snatched such sleep as the biting cold would permit.

CHAPTER

“ON TO RICHMOND!”—MARCHING ON FOOT OVER THE MOUNTAINS —MY HORSE HAS A NEW RIDER—UNSOPHISTICATED MOUNTAIN GIRLS—DISCUSSING THE ISSUES OF THE WAR—PARTING WITH “HIATOGA.”

At dawn we were gathered together, more meal issued to us, which we cooked in the same way, and then were started under heavy guard to march on foot over the mountains to Bristol, a station at the point where the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad crosses the line between Virginia and Tennessee.

As we were preparing to set out a Sergeant of the First Virginia cavalry came galloping up to us on my horse! The sight of my faithful “Hiatoga” bestrid by a Rebel, wrung my heart. During the action I had forgotten him, but when it ceased I began to worry about his fate. As he and his rider came near I called out to him; he stopped and gave a whinny of recognition, which seemed also a plaintive appeal for an explanation of the changed condition of affairs.

The Sergeant was a pleasant, gentlemanly boy of about my own age. He rode up to me and inquired if it was my horse, to which I replied in the affirmative, and asked permission to take from the saddle pockets some letters, pictures and other trinkets. He granted this, and we became friends from thence on until we separated. He rode by my side as we plodded over the steep, slippery hills, and we beguiled the way by chatting of the thousand things that soldiers find to talk about, and exchanged reminiscences of the service on both sides. But the subject he was fondest of was that which I relished least: my—now his—horse. Into the open ulcer of my heart he poured the acid of all manner of questions concerning my lost steed’s qualities and capabilities: would he swim? how was he in fording? did he jump well! how did he stand fire? I smothered my irritation, and answered as pleasantly as I could.

In the afternoon of the third day after the capture, we came up to where a party of rustic belles were collected at “quilting.” The “Yankees” were instantly objects of greater interest than the parade of a menagerie would have been. The Sergeant told the girls we were going to camp for the night a mile or so ahead, and if they would be at a certain house, he would have a Yankee for them for

close inspection. After halting, the Sergeant obtained leave to take me out with a guard, and I was presently ushered into a room in which the damsels were massed in force, —a carnation-checked, staring, open-mouthed, linsey-clad crowd, as ignorant of corsets and gloves as of Hebrew, and with a propensity to giggle that was chronic and irrepressible. When we entered the room there was a general giggle, and then a shower of comments upon my appearance,—each sentence punctuated with the chorus of feminine cachination. A remark was made about my hair and eyes, and their risibles gave way; judgment was passed on my nose, and then came a ripple of laughter. I got very red in the face, and uncomfortable generally. Attention was called to the size of my feet and hands, and the usual chorus followed. Those useful members of my body seemed to swell up as they do to a young man at his first party.

Then I saw that in the minds of these bucolic maidens I was scarcely, if at all, human; they did not understand that I belonged to the race; I was a “Yankee”—a something of the non-human class, as the gorilla or the chimpanzee. They felt as free to discuss my points before my face as they would to talk of a horse or a wild animal in a show. My equanimity was partially restored by this reflection, but I was still too young to escape embarrassment and irritation at being thus dissected and giggled at by a party of girls, even if they were ignorant Virginia mountaineers.

I turned around to speak to the Sergeant, and in so doing showed my back to the ladies. The hum of comment deepened into surprise, that half stopped and then intensified the giggle.

I was puzzled for a minute, and then the direction of their glances, and their remarks explained it all. At the rear of the lower part of the cavalry jacket, about where the upper ornamental buttons are on the tail of a frock coat, are two funny tabs, about the size of small pin-cushions. They are fastened by the edge, and stick out straight behind. Their use is to support the heavy belt in the rear, as the buttons do in front. When the belt is off it would puzzle the Seven Wise Men to guess what they are for. The unsophisticated young ladies, with that swift intuition which is one of lovely woman’s salient mental traits, immediately jumped at the conclusion that the projections covered some peculiar conformation of the Yankee anatomy—some incipient, dromedary-like humps, or perchance the horns of which they had heard so much.

This anatomical phenomena was discussed intently for a few minutes, during

which I heard one of the girls inquire whether “it would hurt him to cut ‘em off?” and another hazarded the opinion that “it would probably bleed him to death.”

Then a new idea seized them, and they said to the Sergeant “Make him sing! Make him sing!”

This was too much for the Sergeant, who had been intensely amused at the girls’ wonderment. He turned to me, very red in the face, with:

“Sergeant: the girls want to hear you sing.”

I replied that I could not sing a note. Said he:

“Oh, come now. I know better than that; I never seed or heerd of a Yankee that couldn’t sing.”

I nevertheless assured him that there really were some Yankees that did not have any musical accomplishments, and that I was one of that unfortunate number. I asked him to get the ladies to sing for me, and to this they acceded quite readily. One girl, with a fair soprano, who seemed to be the leader of the crowd, sang “The Homespun Dress,” a song very popular in the South, and having the same tune as the “Bonnie Blue Flag.” It began,

I envy not the Northern girl Their silks and jewels fine,

and proceeded to compare the homespun habiliments of the Southern women to the finery and frippery of the ladies on the other side of Mason and Dixon’s line in a manner very disadvantageous to the latter.

The rest of the girls made a fine exhibition of the lung-power acquired in climbing their precipitous mountains, when they came in on the chorus

Hurra! Hurra! for southern rights Hurra! Hurra for the homespun dress, The Southern ladies wear.

This ended the entertainment.

On our journey to Bristol we met many Rebel soldiers, of all ranks, and a small number of citizens. As the conscription had then been enforced pretty sharply for

over a year the only able-bodied men seen in civil life were those who had some trade which exempted them from being forced into active service. It greatly astonished us at first to find that nearly all the mechanics were included among the exempts, or could be if they chose; but a very little reflection showed us the wisdom of such a policy. The South is as nearly a purely agricultural country as is Russia or South America. The people have, little inclination or capacity for anything else than pastoral pursuits. Consequently mechanics are very scarce, and manufactories much scarcer. The limited quantity of products of mechanical skill needed by the people was mostly imported from the North or Europe. Both these sources of supply were cutoff by the war, and the country was thrown upon its own slender manufacturing resources. To force its mechanics into the army would therefore be suicidal. The Army would gain a few thousand men, but its operations would be embarrassed, if not stopped altogether, by a want of supplies. This condition of affairs reminded one of the singular paucity of mechanical skill among the Bedouins of the desert, which renders the life of a blacksmith sacred. No matter how bitter the feud between tribes, no one will kill the other's workers of iron, and instances are told of warriors saving their lives at critical periods by falling on their knees and making with their garments an imitation of the action of a smith's bellows.

All whom we met were eager to discuss with us the causes, phases and progress of the war, and whenever opportunity offered or could be made, those of us who were inclined to talk were speedily involved in an argument with crowds of soldiers and citizens. But, owing to the polemic poverty of our opponents, the argument was more in name than in fact. Like all people of slender or untrained intellectual powers they labored under the hallucination that asserting was reasoning, and the emphatic reiteration of bald statements, logic. The narrow round which all from highest to lowest—traveled was sometimes comical, and sometimes irritating, according to one's mood! The dispute invariably began by their asking:

"Well, what are you 'uns down here a-fightin' we 'uns for?"

As this was replied to the newt one followed:

"Why are you'uns takin' our niggers away from we 'uns for?"

Then came:

“What do you ‘uns put our niggers to fightin’ we’uns for?” The windup always was: “Well, let me tell you, sir, you can never whip people that are fighting for liberty, sir.”

Even General Giltner, who had achieved considerable military reputation as commander of a division of Kentucky cavalry, seemed to be as slenderly furnished with logical ammunition as the balance, for as he halted by us he opened the conversation with the well-worn formula:

“Well: what are you ‘uns down here a-fighting we’uns for?”

The question had become raspingly monotonous to me, whom he addressed, and I replied with marked acerbity:

“Because we are the Northern mudsills whom you affect to despise, and we came down here to lick you into respecting us.”

The answer seemed to tickle him, a pleasanter light came into his sinister gray eyes, he laughed lightly, and bade us a kindly good day.

Four days after our capture we arrived in Bristol. The guards who had brought us over the mountains were relieved by others, the Sergeant bade me good by, struck his spurs into “Hiatoga’s” sides, and he and my faithful horse were soon lost to view in the darkness.

A new and keener sense of desolation came over me at the final separation from my tried and true four-footed friend, who had been my constant companion through so many perils and hardships. We had endured together the Winter’s cold, the dispiriting drench of the rain, the fatigue of the long march, the discomforts of the muddy camp, the gripings of hunger, the weariness of the drill and review, the perils of the vidette post, the courier service, the scout and the fight. We had shared in common

The whips and scorns of time, The oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely, The insolence of office, and the spurns

which a patient private and his horse of the unworthy take; we had had our frequently recurring rows with other fellows and their horses, over questions of precedence at watering places, and grass-plots, had had lively tilts with guards of forage piles in surreptitious attempts to get additional rations, sometimes coming

off victorious and sometimes being driven off ingloriously. I had often gone hungry that he might have the only ear of corn obtainable. I am not skilled enough in horse lore to speak of his points or pedigree. I only know that his strong limbs never failed me, and that he was always ready for duty and ever willing.

Now at last our paths diverged. I was retired from actual service to a prison, and he bore his new master off to battle against his old friends.

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Packed closely in old, dilapidated stock and box cars, as if cattle in shipment to market, we pounded along slowly, and apparently interminably, toward the Rebel capital.

The railroads of the South were already in very bad condition. They were never more than passably good, even in their best estate, but now, with a large part of the skilled men engaged upon them escaped back to the North, with all renewal, improvement, or any but the most necessary repairs stopped for three years, and with a marked absence of even ordinary skill and care in their management, they were as nearly ruined as they could well be and still run.

One of the severe embarrassments under which the roads labored was a lack of oil. There is very little fatty matter of any kind in the South. The climate and the food plants do not favor the accumulation of adipose tissue by animals, and there is no other source of supply. Lard oil and tallow were very scarce and held at exorbitant prices.

Attempts were made to obtain lubricants from the peanut and the cotton seed. The first yielded a fine bland oil, resembling the ordinary grade of olive oil, but it was entirely too expensive for use in the arts. The cotton seed oil could be produced much cheaper, but it had in it such a quantity of gummy matter as to render it worse than useless for employment on machinery.

This scarcity of oleaginous matter produced a corresponding scarcity of soap and similar detergents, but this was a deprivation which caused the Rebels, as a

whole, as little inconvenience as any that they suffered from. I have seen many thousands of them who were obviously greatly in need of soap, but if they were rent with any suffering on that account they concealed it with marvelous self-control.

There seemed to be a scanty supply of oil provided for the locomotives, but the cars had to run with unlubricated axles, and the screaking and groaning of the grinding journals in the dry boxes was sometimes almost deafening, especially when we were going around a curve.

Our engine went off the wretched track several times, but as she was not running much faster than a man could walk, the worst consequence to us was a severe jolting. She was small, and was easily pried back upon the track, and sent again upon her wheezy, straining way.

The depression which had weighed us down for a night and a day after our capture had now been succeeded by a more cheerful feeling. We began to look upon our condition as the fortune of war. We were proud of our resistance to overwhelming numbers. We knew we had sold ourselves at a price which, if the Rebels had it to do over again, they would not pay for us. We believed that we had killed and seriously wounded as many of them as they had killed, wounded and captured of us. We had nothing to blame ourselves for. Moreover, we began to be buoyed up with the expectation that we would be exchanged immediately upon our arrival at Richmond, and the Rebel officers confidently assured us that this would be so. There was then a temporary hitch in the exchange, but it would all be straightened out in a few days, and it might not be a month until we were again marching out of Cumberland Gap, on an avenging foray against some of the force which had assisted in our capture.

Fortunately for this delusive hopefulness there was no weird and boding Cassandra to pierce the veil of the future for us, and reveal the length and the ghastly horror of the Valley of the Shadow of Death, through which we must pass for hundreds of sad days, stretching out into long months of suffering and death. Happily there was no one to tell us that of every five in that party four would never stand under the Stars and Stripes again, but succumbing to chronic starvation, long-continued exposure, the bullet of the brutal guard, the loathsome scurvy, the hideous gangrene, and the heartsickness of hope deferred, would find respite from pain low in the barren sands of that hungry Southern soil.

Were every doom foretokened by appropriate omens, the ravens along our route would have croaked themselves hoarse.

But, far from being oppressed by any presentiment of coming evil, we began to appreciate and enjoy the picturesque grandeur of the scenery through which we were moving. The rugged sternness of the Appalachian mountain range, in whose rock-ribbed heart we had fought our losing fight, was now softening into less strong, but more graceful outlines as we approached the pine-clad, sandy plains of the seaboard, upon which Richmond is built. We were skirting along the eastern base of the great Blue Ridge, about whose distant and lofty summits hung a perpetual veil of deep, dark, but translucent blue, which refracted the slanting rays of the morning and evening sun into masses of color more gorgeous than a dreamer's vision of an enchanted land. At Lynchburg we saw the famed Peaks of Otter—twenty miles away—lifting their proud heads far into the clouds, like giant watch-towers sentineling the gateway that the mighty waters of the James had forced through the barriers of solid adamant lying across their path to the far-off sea. What we had seen many miles back start from the mountain sides as slender rivulets, brawling over the worn boulders, were now great, rushing, full-tide streams, enough of them in any fifty miles of our journey to furnish water power for all the factories of New England. Their amazing opulence of mechanical energy has lain unutilized, almost unnoticed; in the two and one-half centuries that the white man has dwelt near them, while in Massachusetts and her near neighbors every rill that can turn a wheel has been put into harness and forced to do its share of labor for the benefit of the men who have made themselves its masters.

Here is one of the differences between the two sections: In the North man was set free, and the elements made to do his work. In the South man was the degraded slave, and the elements wantoned on in undisturbed freedom.

As we went on, the Valleys of the James and the Appomattox, down which our way lay, broadened into an expanse of arable acres, and the faces of those streams were frequently flecked by gem-like little islands.

CHAPTER VII.

ENTERING RICHMOND—DISAPPOINTMENT AT ITS APPEARANCE—

EVERYBODY IN UNIFORM—CURLED DARLINGS OF THE CAPITAL—THE REBEL FLAG—LIBBY PRISON— DICK TURNER—SEARCHING THE NEW COMERS.

Early on the tenth morning after our capture we were told that we were about to enter Richmond. Instantly all were keenly observant of every detail in the surroundings of a City that was then the object of the hopes and fears of thirty-five millions of people—a City assailing which seventy-five thousand brave men had already laid down their lives, defending which an equal number had died, and which, before it fell, was to cost the life blood of another one hundred and fifty thousand valiant assailants and defenders.

So much had been said and written about Richmond that our boyish minds had wrought up the most extravagant expectations of it and its defenses. We anticipated seeing a City differing widely from anything ever seen before; some anomaly of nature displayed in its site, itself guarded by imposing and impregnable fortifications, with powerful forts and heavy guns, perhaps even walls, castles, postern gates, moats and ditches, and all the other panoply of defensive warfare, with which romantic history had made us familiar.

We were disappointed—badly disappointed—in seeing nothing of this as we slowly rolled along. The spires and the tall chimneys of the factories rose in the distance very much as they had in other Cities we had visited. We passed a single line of breastworks of bare yellow sand, but the scrubby pines in front were not cut away, and there were no signs that there had ever been any immediate expectation of use for the works. A redoubt or two—without guns—could be made out, and this was all. Grim-visaged war had few wrinkles on his front in that neighborhood. They were then seaming his brow on the Rappahannock, seventy miles away, where the Army of Northern Virginia and the Army of the Potomac lay confronting each other.

At one of the stopping places I had been separated from my companions by entering a car in which were a number of East Tennesseeans, captured in the operations around Knoxville, and whom the Rebels, in accordance with their usual custom, were treating with studied contumely. I had always had a very warm side for these simple rustics of the mountains and valleys. I knew much of their unwavering fidelity to the Union, of the firm steadfastness with which they endured persecution for their country’s sake, and made sacrifices even unto death; and, as in those days I estimated all men simply by their devotion to the

great cause of National integrity, (a habit that still clings to me) I rated these men very highly. I had gone into their car to do my little to encourage them, and when I attempted to return to my own I was prevented by the guard.

Crossing the long bridge, our train came to a halt on the other side of the river with the usual clamor of bell and whistle, the usual seemingly purposeless and vacillating, almost dizzying, running backward and forward on a network of sidetracks and switches, that seemed unavoidably necessary, a dozen years ago, in getting a train into a City.

Still unable to regain my comrades and share their fortunes, I was marched off with the Tennesseeans through the City to the office of some one who had charge of the prisoners of war.

The streets we passed through were lined with retail stores, in which business was being carried on very much as in peaceful times. Many people were on the streets, but the greater part of the men wore some sort of a uniform. Though numbers of these were in active service, yet the wearing of a military garb did not necessarily imply this. Nearly every able-bodied man in Richmond was; enrolled in some sort of an organization, and armed, and drilled regularly. Even the members of the Confederate Congress were uniformed and attached, in theory at least, to the Home Guards.

It was obvious even to the casual glimpse of a passing prisoner of war, that the City did not lack its full share of the class which formed so large an element of the society of Washington and other Northern Cities during the war—the dainty carpet soldiers, heros of the promenade and the boudoir, who strutted in uniforms when the enemy was far off, and wore citizen's clothes when he was close at hand. There were many curled darlings displaying their fine forms in the nattiest of uniforms, whose gloss had never suffered from so much as a heavy dew, let alone a rainy day on the march. The Confederate gray could be made into a very dressy garb. With the sleeves lavishly embroidered with gold lace, and the collar decorated with stars indicating the wearer's rank—silver for the field officers, and gold for the higher grade,—the feet compressed into high-heeled, high-instepped boots, (no Virginian is himself without a fine pair of skin-tight boots) and the head covered with a fine, soft, broad-brimmed hat, trimmed with a gold cord, from which a bullion tassel dangled several inches down the wearer's back, you had a military swell, caparisoned for conquest—among the fair sex.

On our way we passed the noted Capitol of Virginia—a handsome marble building,—of the column-fronted Grecian temple style. It stands in the center of the City. Upon the grounds is Crawford's famous equestrian statue of Washington, surrounded by smaller statues of other Revolutionary patriots.

The Confederate Congress was then in session in the Capitol, and also the Legislature of Virginia, a fact indicated by the State flag of Virginia floating from the southern end of the building, and the new flag of the Confederacy from the northern end. This was the first time I had seen the latter, which had been recently adopted, and I examined it with some interest. The design was exceedingly plain. Simply a white banner, with a red field in the corner where the blue field with stars is in ours. The two blue stripes were drawn diagonally across this field in the shape of a letter X, and in these were thirteen white stars, corresponding to the number of States claimed to be in the Confederacy.

The battle-flag was simply the red field. My examination of all this was necessarily very brief. The guards felt that I was in Richmond for other purposes than to study architecture, statuary and heraldry, and besides they were in a hurry to be relieved of us and get their breakfast, so my art-education was abbreviated sharply.

We did not excite much attention on the streets. Prisoners had by that time become too common in Richmond to create any interest. Occasionally passers by would fling opprobrious epithets at "the East Tennessee traitors," but that was all.

The commandant of the prisons directed the Tennesseeans to be taken to Castle Lightning—a prison used to confine the Rebel deserters, among whom they also classed the East Tennesseeans, and sometimes the West Virginians, Kentuckians, Marylanders and Missourians found fighting against them. Such of our men as deserted to them were also lodged there, as the Rebels, very properly, did not place a high estimate upon this class of recruits to their army, and, as we shall see farther along, violated all obligations of good faith with them, by putting them among the regular prisoners of war, so as to exchange them for their own men.

Back we were all marched to a street which ran parallel to the river and canal, and but one square away from them. It was lined on both sides by plain brick warehouses and tobacco factories, four and five stories high, which were now

used by the Rebel Government as prisons and military storehouses.

The first we passed was Castle Thunder, of bloody repute. This occupied the same place in Confederate history, that, the dungeons beneath the level of the water did in the annals of the Venetian Council of Ten. It was believed that if the bricks in its somber, dirt-grimed walls could speak, each could tell a separate story of a life deemed dangerous to the State that had gone down in night, at the behest of the ruthless Confederate authorities. It was confidently asserted that among the commoner occurrences within its confines was the stationing of a doomed prisoner against a certain bit of blood-stained, bullet-chipped wall, and relieving the Confederacy of all farther fear of him by the rifles of a firing party. How well this dark reputation was deserved, no one but those inside the inner circle of the Davis Government can say. It is safe to believe that more tragedies were enacted there than the archives of the Rebel civil or military judicature give any account of. The prison was employed for the detention of spies, and those charged with the convenient allegation of “treason against the Confederate States of America.” It is probable that many of these were sent out of the world with as little respect for the formalities of law as was exhibited with regard to the ‘suspects’ during the French Revolution.

Next we came to Castle Lightning, and here I bade adieu to my Tennessee companions.

A few squares more and we arrived at a warehouse larger than any of the others. Over the door was a sign

THOMAS LIBBY & SON, SHIP CHANDLERS AND GROCERS.

This was the notorious “Libby Prison,” whose name was painfully familiar to every Union man in the land. Under the sign was a broad entrance way, large enough to admit a dray or a small wagon. On one side of this was the prison office, in which were a number of dapper, feeble-faced clerks at work on the prison records.

As I entered this space a squad of newly arrived prisoners were being searched for valuables, and having their names, rank and regiment recorded in the books. Presently a clerk addressed as “Majah Tunnah,” the man who was superintending these operations, and I scanned him with increased interest, as I knew then that he was the ill-famed Dick Turner, hated all over the North for his

brutality to our prisoners.

He looked as if he deserved his reputation. Seen upon the street he would be taken for a second or third class gambler, one in whom a certain amount of cunning is pieced out by a readiness to use brute force. His face, clean-shaved, except a “Bowery-b’hoy” goatee, was white, fat, and selfishly sensual. Small, pig-like eyes, set close together, glanced around continually. His legs were short, his body long, and made to appear longer, by his wearing no vest—a custom common them with Southerners.

His faculties were at that moment absorbed in seeing that no person concealed any money from him. His subordinates did not search closely enough to suit him, and he would run his fat, heavily-ringed fingers through the prisoner’s hair, feel under their arms and elsewhere where he thought a stray five dollar greenback might be concealed. But with all his greedy care he was no match for Yankee cunning. The prisoners told me afterward that, suspecting they would be searched, they had taken off the caps of the large, hollow brass buttons of their coats, carefully folded a bill into each cavity, and replaced the cap. In this way they brought in several hundred dollars safely.

There was one dirty old Englishman in the party, who, Turner was convinced, had money concealed about his person. He compelled him to strip off everything, and stand shivering in the sharp cold, while he took up one filthy rag after another, felt over each carefully, and scrutinized each seam and fold. I was delighted to see that after all his nauseating work he did not find so much as a five cent piece.

It came my turn. I had no desire, in that frigid atmosphere, to strip down to what Artemus Ward called “the skanderlous costoom of the Greek Slave;” so I pulled out of my pocket my little store of wealth—ten dollars in greenbacks, sixty dollars in Confederate graybacks—and displayed it as Turner came up with, “There’s all I have, sir.” Turner pocketed it without a word, and did not search me. In after months, when I was nearly famished, my estimation of “Majah Tunnah” was hardly enhanced by the reflection that what would have purchased me many good meals was probably lost by him in betting on a pair of queens, when his opponent held a “king full.”

I ventured to step into the office to inquire after my comrades. One of the whey-faced clerks said with the supercilious asperity characteristic of gnat-brained

headquarters attaches:

“Get out of here!” as if I had been a stray cur wandering in in search of a bone lunch.

I wanted to feed the fellow to a pile-driver. The utmost I could hope for in the way of revenge was that the delicate creature might some day make a mistake in parting his hair, and catch his death of cold.

The guard conducted us across the street, and into the third story of a building standing on the next corner below. Here I found about four hundred men, mostly belonging to the Army of the Potomac, who crowded around me with the usual questions to new prisoners: What was my Regiment, where and when captured, and:

What were the prospects of exchange?

It makes me shudder now to recall how often, during the dreadful months that followed, this momentous question was eagerly propounded to every new comer: put with bated breath by men to whom exchange meant all that they asked of this world, and possibly of the next; meant life, home, wife or sweetheart, friends, restoration to manhood, and self-respect— everything, everything that makes existence in this world worth having.

I answered as simply and discouragingly as did the tens of thousands that came after me:

“I did not hear anything about exchange.”

A soldier in the field had many other things of more immediate interest to think about than the exchange of prisoners. The question only became a living issue when he or some of his intimate friends fell into the enemy’s hands.

Thus began my first day in prison.

CHAPTER VIII

INTRODUCTION TO PRISON LIFE—THE PEMBERTON BUILDING AND ITS OCCUPANTS— NEAT SAILORS—ROLL CALL—RATIONS AND CLOTHING—CHIVALRIC “CONFISCATION.”

I began acquainting myself with my new situation and surroundings. The building into which I had been conducted was an old tobacco factory, called the “Pemberton building,” possibly from an owner of that name, and standing on the corner of what I was told were Fifteenth and Carey streets. In front it was four stories high; behind but three, owing to the rapid rise of the hill, against which it was built.

It fronted towards the James River and Kanawha Canal, and the James River—both lying side by side, and only one hundred yards distant, with no intervening buildings. The front windows afforded a fine view. To the right front was Libby, with its guards pacing around it on the sidewalk, watching the fifteen hundred officers confined within its walls. At intervals during each day squads of fresh prisoners could be seen entering its dark mouth, to be registered, and searched, and then marched off to the prison assigned them. We could see up the James River for a mile or so, to where the long bridges crossing it bounded the view. Directly in front, across the river, was a flat, sandy plain, said to be General Winfield Scott’s farm, and now used as a proving ground for the guns cast at the Tredegar Iron Works.

The view down the river was very fine. It extended about twelve miles, to where a gap in the woods seemed to indicate a fort, which we imagined to be Fort Darling, at that time the principal fortification defending the passage of the James.

Between that point and where we were lay the river, in a long, broad mirror-like expanse, like a pretty little inland lake. Occasionally a busy little tug would bustle up or down, a gunboat move along with noiseless dignity, suggestive of a reserved power, or a schooner beat lazily from one side to the other. But these were so few as to make even more pronounced the customary idleness that hung over the scene. The tug’s activity seemed spasmodic and forced—a sort of protest against the gradually increasing lethargy that reigned upon the bosom of

the waters— the gunboat floated along as if performing a perfunctory duty, and the schooners sailed about as if tired of remaining in one place. That little stretch of water was all that was left for a cruising ground. Beyond Fort Darling the Union gunboats lay, and the only vessel that passed the barrier was the occasional flag-of-truce steamer.

The basement of the building was occupied as a storehouse for the taxes-in-kind which the Confederate Government collected. On the first floor were about five hundred men. On the second floor—where I was—were about four hundred men. These were principally from the First Division, First Corps distinguished by a round red patch on their caps; First Division, Second Corps, marked by a red clover leaf; and the First Division, Third Corps, who wore a red diamond. They were mainly captured at Gettysburg and Mine Run. Besides these there was a considerable number from the Eighth Corps, captured at Winchester, and a large infusion of Cavalry-First, Second and Third West Virginia—taken in Averill's desperate raid up the Virginia Valley, with the Wytheville Salt Works as an objective.

On the third floor were about two hundred sailors and marines, taken in the gallant but luckless assault upon the ruins of Fort Sumter, in the September previous. They retained the discipline of the ship in their quarters, kept themselves trim and clean, and their floor as white as a ship's deck. They did not court the society of the "sojers" below, whose camp ideas of neatness differed from theirs. A few old barnacle-backs always sat on guard around the head of the steps leading from the lower rooms. They chewed tobacco enormously, and kept their mouths filled with the extracted juice. Any luckless "sojer" who attempted to ascend the stairs usually returned in haste, to avoid the deluge of the filthy liquid.

For convenience in issuing rations we were divided into messes of twenty, each mess electing a Sergeant as its head, and each floor electing a Sergeant-of-the-Floor, who drew rations and enforced what little discipline was observed.

Though we were not so neat as the sailors above us, we tried to keep our quarters reasonably clean, and we washed the floor every morning; getting down on our knees and rubbing it clean and dry with rags. Each mess detailed a man each day to wash up the part of the floor it occupied, and he had to do this properly or no ration would be given him. While the washing up was going on each man stripped himself and made close examination of his garments for the body-lice,

which otherwise would have increased beyond control. Blankets were also carefully hunted over for these “small deer.”

About eight o’clock a spruce little lisping rebel named Ross would appear with a book, and a body-guard, consisting of a big Irishman, who had the air of a Policeman, and carried a musket barrel made into a cane. Behind him were two or three armed guards. The Sergeant-of-the-Floor commanded:

“Fall in in four ranks for roll-call.”

We formed along one side of the room; the guards halted at the head of the stairs; Ross walked down in front and counted the files, closely followed by his Irish aid, with his gun-barrel cane raised ready for use upon any one who should arouse his ruffianly ire. Breaking ranks we returned to our places, and sat around in moody silence for three hours. We had eaten nothing since the previous noon. Rising hungry, our hunger seemed to increase in arithmetical ratio with every quarter of an hour.

These times afforded an illustration of the thorough subjection of man to the tyrant Stomach. A more irritable lot of individuals could scarcely be found outside of a menagerie than these men during the hours waiting for rations. “Crosser than, two sticks” utterly failed as a comparison. They were crosser than the lines of a check apron. Many could have given odds to the traditional bear with a sore head, and run out of the game fifty points ahead of him. It was astonishingly easy to get up a fight at these times. There was no need of going a step out of the way to search for it, as one could have a full fledged article of overwhelming size on his hands at any instant, by a trifling indiscretion of speech or manner. All the old irritating flings between the cavalry, the artillery and the infantry, the older “first-call” men, and the later or “Three-Hundred-Dollar-men,” as they were derisively dubbed, between the different corps of the Army of the Potomac, between men of different States, and lastly between the adherents and opponents of McClellan, came to the lips and were answered by a blow with the fist, when a ring would be formed around the combatants by a crowd, which would encourage them with yells to do their best. In a few minutes one of the parties to the fistic debate, who found the point raised by him not well taken, would retire to the sink to wash the blood from his battered face, and the rest would resume their seats and glower at space until some fresh excitement roused them. For the last hour or so of these long waits hardly a word would be spoken. We were too ill-natured to talk for amusement, and there was nothing

else to talk for.

This spell was broken about eleven o'clock by the appearance at the head of the stairway of the Irishman with the gun-barrel cane, and his singing out:

"Sargint uv the flure: fourtane min and a bread-box!"

Instantly every man sprang to his feet, and pressed forward to be one of the favored fourteen. One did not get any more gyrations or obtain them any sooner by this, but it was a relief, and a change to walk the half square outside the prison to the cookhouse, and help carry the rations back.

For a little while after our arrival in Richmond, the rations were tolerably good. There had been so much said about the privations of the prisoners that our Government had, after much quibbling and negotiation, succeeded in getting the privilege of sending food and clothing through the lines to us. Of course but a small part of that sent ever reached its destination. There were too many greedy Rebels along its line of passage to let much of it be received by those for whom it was intended. We could see from our windows Rebels strutting about in overcoats, in which the box wrinkles were still plainly visible, wearing new "U. S." blankets as cloaks, and walking in Government shoes, worth fabulous prices in Confederate money.

Fortunately for our Government the rebels decided to out themselves off from this profitable source of supply. We read one day in the Richmond papers that "President Davis and his Cabinet had come to the conclusion that it was incompatible with the dignity of a sovereign power to permit another power with which it was at war, to feed and clothe prisoners in its hands."

I will not stop to argue this point of honor, and show its absurdity by pointing out that it is not an unusual practice with nations at war. It is a sufficient commentary upon this assumption of punctiliousness that the paper went on to say that some five tons of clothing and fifteen tons of food, which had been sent under a flag of truce to City Point, would neither be returned nor delivered to us, but "converted to the use of the Confederate Government."

"And surely they are all honorable men!"

Heaven save the mark.

CHAPTER IX. BRANS OR PEAS—INSUFFICIENCY OF DARKY TESTIMONY—A GUARD KILLS A PRISONER—PRISONERS TEAZE THE GUARDS—DESPERATE OUTBREAK.

But, to return to the rations—a topic which, with escape or exchange, were to be the absorbing ones for us for the next fifteen months. There was now issued to every two men a loaf of coarse bread—made of a mixture of flour and meal—and about the size and shape of an ordinary brick. This half loaf was accompanied, while our Government was allowed to furnish rations, with a small piece of corned beef. Occasionally we got a sweet potato, or a half-pint or such a matter of soup made from a coarse, but nutritious, bean or pea, called variously “nigger-pea,” “stock-pea,” or “cow-pea.”

This, by the way, became a fruitful bone of contention during our stay in the South. One strong party among us maintained that it was a bean, because it was shaped like one, and brown, which they claimed no pea ever was. The other party held that it was a pea because its various names all agreed in describing it as a pea, and because it was so full of bugs- -none being entirely free from insects, and some having as many as twelve by actual count—within its shell. This, they declared, was a distinctive characteristic of the pea family. The contention began with our first instalment of the leguminous ration, and was still raging between the survivors who passed into our lines in 1865. It waxed hot occasionally, and each side continually sought evidence to support its view of the case. Once an old darky, sent into the prison on some errand, was summoned to decide a hot dispute that was raging in the crowd to which I belonged. The champion of the pea side said, producing one of the objects of dispute:

“Now, boys, keep still, till I put the question fairly. Now, uncle, what do they call that there?”

The colored gentleman scrutinized the vegetable closely, and replied,

“Well, dey mos’ generally calls ‘em stock-peas, round hyar aways.”

“There,” said the pea-champion triumphantly.

“But,” broke in the leader of the bean party, “Uncle, don’t they also call them beans?”

“Well, yes, chile, I spec dat lots of ‘em does.”

And this was about the way the matter usually ended.

I will not attempt to bias the reader’s judgment by saying which side I believed to be right. As the historic British showman said, in reply to the question as to whether an animal in his collection was a rhinoceros or an elephant, “You pays your money and you takes your choice.”

The rations issued to us, as will be seen above, though they appear scanty, were still sufficient to support life and health, and months afterward, in Andersonville, we used to look back to them as sumptuous. We usually had them divided and eaten by noon, and, with the gnawings of hunger appeased, we spent the afternoon and evening comfortably. We told stories, paced up and down, the floor for exercise, played cards, sung, read what few books were available, stood at the windows and studied the landscape, and watched the Rebels trying their guns and shells, and so on as long as it was daylight. Occasionally it was dangerous to be about the windows. This depended wholly on the temper of the guards. One day a member of a Virginia regiment, on guard on the pavement in front, deliberately left his beat, walked out into the center of the street, aimed his gun at a member of the Ninth West Virginia, who was standing at a window near, and firing, shot him through the heart, the bullet passing through his body, and through the floor above. The act was purely malicious, and was done, doubtless, in revenge for some injury which our men had done the assassin or his family.

We were not altogether blameless, by any means. There were few opportunities to say bitterly offensive things to the guards, let pass unimproved.

The prisoners in the third floor of the Smith building, adjoining us, had their own way of teasing them. Late at night, when everybody would be lying down, and out of the way of shots, a window in the third story would open, a broomstick, with a piece nailed across to represent arms, and clothed with a cap and blouse, would be protruded, and a voice coming from a man carefully protected by the wall, would inquire:

“S-a-y, g-uarr-d, what time is it?”

If the guard was of the long suffering kind he would answer:

“Take yo’ head back in, up dah; you kno hits agin all odahs to do dat?”

Then the voice would say, aggravatingly, “Oh, well, go to –- you –- Rebel –-, if you can’t answer a civil question.”

Before the speech was ended the guard’s rifle would be at his shoulder and he would fire. Back would come the blouse and hat in haste, only to go out again the next instant, with a derisive laugh, and

“Thought you were going to hurt somebody, didn’t you, you –- –- –- –- –-. But, Lord, you can’t shoot for sour apples; if I couldn’t shoot no better than you, Mr. Johnny Reb, I would –-”

By this time the guard, having his gun loaded again, would cut short the remarks with another shot, which, followed up with similar remarks, would provoke still another, when an alarm sounding, the guards at Libby and all the other buildings around us would turn out. An officer of the guard would go up with a squad into the third floor, only to find everybody up there snoring away as if they were the Seven Sleepers. After relieving his mind of a quantity of vigorous profanity, and threats to “buck and gag” and cut off the rations of the whole room, the officer would return to his quarters in the guard house, but before he was fairly ensconced there the cap and blouse would go out again, and the maddened guard be regaled with a spirited and vividly profane lecture on the depravity of Rebels in general, and his own unworthiness in particular.

One night in January things took a more serious turn. The boys on the lower floor of our building had long considered a plan of escape. There were then about fifteen thousand prisoners in Richmond—ten thousand on Belle Isle and five thousand in the buildings. Of these one thousand five hundred were officers in Libby. Besides there were the prisoners in Castles Thunder and Lightning. The essential features of the plan were that at a preconcerted signal we at the, second and third floors should appear at the windows with bricks and irons from the tobacco presses, which a should shower down on the guards and drive them away, while the men of the first floor would pour out, chase the guards into the board house in the basement, seize their arms, drive those away from around Libby and the other prisons, release the officers, organize into regiments and brigades, seize the armory, set fire to the public buildings and retreat from the City, by the south side of the James, where there was but a scanty force of Rebels, and more could be prevented from coming over by burning the bridges behind us.

It was a magnificent scheme, and might have been carried out, but there was no one in the building who was generally believed to have the qualities of a leader.

But while it was being debated a few of the hot heads on the lower floor undertook to precipitate the crisis. They seized what they thought was a favorable opportunity, overpowered the guard who stood at the foot of the stairs, and poured into the street. The other guards fell back and opened fire on them; other troops hastened up, and soon drove them back into the building, after killing ten or fifteen. We of the second and third floors did not anticipate the break at that time, and were taken as much by surprise as were the Rebels. Nearly all were lying down and many were asleep. Some hastened to the windows, and dropped missiles out, but before any concerted action could be taken it was seen that the case was hopeless, and we remained quiet.

Among those who led in the assault was a drummer-boy of some New York Regiment, a recklessly brave little rascal. He had somehow smuggled a small fourshooter in with him, and when they rushed out he fired it off at the guards.

After the prisoners were driven back, the Rebel officers came in and vapored around considerably, but confined themselves to big words. They were particularly anxious to find the revolver, and ordered a general and rigorous search for it. The prisoners were all ranged on one side of the room and carefully examined by one party, while another hunted through the blankets and bundles. It was all in vain; no pistol could be found. The boy had a loaf of wheat bread, bought from a baker during the day. It was a round loaf, set together in two pieces like a biscuit. He pulled these apart, laid the fourshooter between them, pressed the two halves together, and went on calmly nibbling away at the loaf while the search was progressing.

Two gunboats were brought up the next morning, and anchored in the canal near us, with their heavy guns trained upon the building. It was thought that this would intimidate as from a repetition of the attack, but our sailors conceived that, as they laid against the shore next to us, they could be easily captured, and their artillery made to assist us. A scheme to accomplish this was being wrought out, when we received notice to move, and it came to naught.

CHAPTER X.

THE EXCHANGE AND THE CAUSE OF ITS INTERRUPTION—BRIEF RESUME OF THE DIFFERENT CARTELS, AND THE DIFFICULTIES THAT LED TO THEIR SUSPENSION.

Few questions intimately connected with the actual operations of the Rebellion have been enveloped with such a mass of conflicting statement as the responsibility for the interruption of the exchange. Southern writers and politicians, naturally anxious to diminish as much as possible the great odium resting upon their section for the treatment of prisoners of war during the last year and a half of the Confederacy's existence, have vehemently charged that the Government of the United States deliberately and pitilessly resigned to their fate such of its soldiers as fell into the hands of the enemy, and repelled all advances from the Rebel Government looking toward a resumption of exchange. It is alleged on our side, on the other hand, that our Government did all that was possible, consistent with National dignity and military prudence, to secure a release of its unfortunate men in the power of the Rebels.

Over this vexed question there has been waged an acrimonious war of words, which has apparently led to no decision, nor any convictions—the disputants, one and all, remaining on the sides of the controversy occupied by them when the debate began.

I may not be in possession of all the facts bearing upon the case, and may be warped in judgment by prejudices in favor of my own Government's wisdom and humanity, but, however this may be, the following is my firm belief as to the controlling facts in this lamentable affair:

1. For some time after the beginning of hostilities our Government refused to exchange prisoners with the Rebels, on the ground that this might be held by the European powers who were seeking a pretext for acknowledging the Confederacy, to be admission by us that the war was no longer an insurrection but a revolution, which had resulted in the 'de facto' establishment of a new nation. This difficulty was finally gotten over by recognizing the Rebels as belligerents, which, while it placed them on a somewhat different plane from mere insurgents, did not elevate them to the position of soldiers of a foreign power.

2. Then the following cartel was agreed upon by Generals Dig on our side and Hill on that of the Rebels:

HAXALL’S LANDING, ON JAMES RIVER, July 22, 1882.

The undersigned, having been commissioned by the authorities they respectively represent to make arrangements for a general exchange of prisoners of war, have agreed to the following articles:

ARTICLE I.—It is hereby agreed and stipulated, that all prisoners of war, held by either party, including those taken on private armed vessels, known as privateers, shall be exchanged upon the conditions and terms following:

Prisoners to be exchanged man for man and officer for officer. Privateers to be placed upon the footing of officers and men of the navy.

Men and officers of lower grades may be exchanged for officers of a higher grade, and men and officers of different services may be exchanged according to the following scale of equivalents:

A General-commanding-in-chief, or an Admiral, shall be exchanged for officers of equal rank, or for sixty privates or common seamen.

A Commodore, carrying a broad pennant, or a Brigadier General, shall be exchanged for officers of equal rank, or twenty privates or common seamen.

A Captain in the Navy, or a Colonel, shall be exchanged for officers of equal rank, or for fifteen privates or common seamen.

A Lieutenant Colonel, or Commander in the Navy, shall be exchanged for officers of equal rank, or for ten privates or common seamen.

A Lieutenant, or a Master in the Navy, or a Captain in the Army or marines shall be exchanged for officers of equal rank, or six privates or common seamen.

Master’s-mates in the Navy, or Lieutenants or Ensigns in the Army, shall be exchanged for officers of equal rank, or four privates or common seamen. Midshipmen, warrant officers in the Navy, masters of merchant vessels and commanders of privateers, shall be exchanged for officers of equal rank, or three privates or common seamen; Second Captains, Lieutenants or mates of merchant vessels or privateers, and all petty officers in the Navy, and all noncommissioned officers in the Army or marines, shall be severally exchanged for persons of equal rank, or for two privates or common seamen; and private soldiers or

common seamen shall be exchanged for each other man for man.

ARTICLE II.—Local, State, civil and militia rank held by persons not in actual military service will not be recognized; the basis of exchange being the grade actually held in the naval and military service of the respective parties.

ARTICLE III.—If citizens held by either party on charges of disloyalty, or any alleged civil offense, are exchanged, it shall only be for citizens. Captured sutlers, teamsters, and all civilians in the actual service of either party, to be exchanged for persons in similar positions.

ARTICLE IV.—All prisoners of war to be discharged on parole in ten days after their capture; and the prisoners now held, and those hereafter taken, to be transported to the points mutually agreed upon, at the expense of the capturing party. The surplus prisoners not exchanged shall not be permitted to take up arms again, nor to serve as military police or constabulary force in any fort, garrison or field-work, held by either of the respective parties, nor as guards of prisoners, deposits or stores, nor to discharge any duty usually performed by soldiers, until exchanged under the provisions of this cartel. The exchange is not to be considered complete until the officer or soldier exchanged for has been actually restored to the lines to which he belongs.

ARTICLE V.—Each party upon the discharge of prisoners of the other party is authorized to discharge an equal number of their own officers or men from parole, furnishing, at the same time, to the other party a list of their prisoners discharged, and of their own officers and men relieved from parole; thus enabling each party to relieve from parole such of their officers and men as the party may choose. The lists thus mutually furnished, will keep both parties advised of the true condition of the exchange of prisoners.

ARTICLE VI.—The stipulations and provisions above mentioned to be of binding obligation during the continuance of the war, it matters not which party may have the surplus of prisoners; the great principles involved being, First, An equitable exchange of prisoners, man for man, or officer for officer, or officers of higher grade exchanged for officers of lower grade, or for privates, according to scale of equivalents. Second, That privates and officers and men of different services may be exchanged according to the same scale of equivalents. Third, That all prisoners, of whatever arm of service, are to be exchanged or paroled in ten days from the time of their capture, if it be practicable to transfer them to

their own lines in that time; if not, so soon thereafter as practicable. Fourth, That no officer, or soldier, employed in the service of either party, is to be considered as exchanged and absolved from his parole until his equivalent has actually reached the lines of his friends. Fifth, That parole forbids the performance of field, garrison, police, or guard or constabulary duty.

JOHN A. DIX, Major General.

D. H. HILL, Major General, C. S. A.

SUPPLEMENTARY ARTICLES.

ARTICLE VII.—All prisoners of war now held on either side, and all prisoners hereafter taken, shall be sent with all reasonable dispatch to A. M. Aiken's, below Dutch Gap, on the James River, in Virginia, or to Vicksburg, on the Mississippi River, in the State of Mississippi, and there exchanged of paroled until such exchange can be effected, notice being previously given by each party of the number of prisoners it will send, and the time when they will be delivered at those points respectively; and in case the vicissitudes of war shall change the military relations of the places designated in this article to the contending parties, so as to render the same inconvenient for the delivery and exchange of prisoners, other places bearing as nearly as may be the present local relations of said places to the lines of said parties, shall be, by mutual agreement, substituted. But nothing in this article contained shall prevent the commanders of the two opposing armies from exchanging prisoners or releasing them on parole, at other points mutually agreed on by said commanders.

ARTICLE VIII.—For the purpose of carrying into effect the foregoing articles of agreement, each party will appoint two agents for the exchange of prisoners of war, whose duty it shall be to communicate with each other by correspondence and otherwise; to prepare the lists of prisoners; to attend to the delivery of the prisoners at the places agreed on, and to carry out promptly, effectually, and in good faith, all the details and provisions of the said articles of agreement.

ARTICLE IX.—And, in case any misunderstanding shall arise in regard to any clause or stipulation in the foregoing articles, it is mutually agreed that such misunderstanding shall not affect the release of prisoners on parole, as herein provided, but shall be made the subject of friendly explanation, in order that the object of this agreement may neither be defeated nor postponed.

JOHN A. DIX, Major General. D. H. HILL, Major General. C. S. A.

This plan did not work well. Men on both sides, who wanted a little rest from soldiering, could obtain it by so straggling in the vicinity of the enemy. Their parole—following close upon their capture, frequently upon the spot—allowed them to visit home, and sojourn awhile where were pleasanter pastures than at the front. Then the Rebels grew into the habit of paroling everybody that they could constrain into being a prisoner of war. Peaceable, unwarlike and decrepit citizens of Kentucky, East Tennessee, West Virginia, Missouri and Maryland were "captured" and paroled, and setoff against regular Rebel soldiers taken by us.

3. After some months of trial of this scheme, a modification of the cartel was agreed upon, the main feature of which was that all prisoners must be reduced to possession, and delivered to the exchange officers either at City Point, Va., or Vicksburg, Miss. This worked very well for some months, until our Government began organizing negro troops. The Rebels then issued an order that neither these troops nor their officers should be held as amenable to the laws of war, but that, when captured, the men should be returned to slavery, and the officers turned over to the Governors of the States in which they were taken, to be dealt with according to the stringent law punishing the incitement of servile insurrection. Our Government could not permit this for a day. It was bound by every consideration of National honor to protect those who wore its uniform and bore its flag. The Rebel Government was promptly informed that rebel officers and men would be held as hostages for the proper treatment of such members of colored regiments as might be taken.

4. This discussion did not put a stop to the exchange, but while it was going on Vicksburg was captured, and the battle of Gettysburg was fought. The first placed one of the exchange points in our hands. At the opening of the fight at Gettysburg Lee captured some six thousand Pennsylvania militia. He sent to Meade to have these exchanged on the field of battle. Meade declined to do so for two reasons: first, because it was against the cartel, which prescribed that prisoners must be reduced to possession; and second, because he was anxious to have Lee hampered with such a body of prisoners, since it was very doubtful if he could get his beaten army back across the Potomac, let alone his prisoners. Lee then sent a communication to General Couch, commanding the

Pennsylvania militia, asking him to receive prisoners on parole, and Couch, not knowing what Meade had done, acceded to the request. Our Government disavowed Couch's action instantly, and ordered the paroles to be treated as of no force, whereupon the Rebel Government ordered back into the field twelve thousand of the prisoners captured by Grant's army at Vicksburg.

5. The paroling now stopped abruptly, leaving in the hands of both sides the prisoners captured at Gettysburg, except the militia above mentioned. The Rebels added considerably to those in their hands by their captures at Chickamauga, while we gained a great many at Mission Ridge, Cumberland Gap and elsewhere, so that at the time we arrived in Richmond the Rebels had about fifteen thousand prisoners in their hands and our Government had about twenty-five thousand.

6. The rebels now began demanding that the prisoners on both sides be exchanged—man for man—as far as they went, and the remainder paroled. Our Government offered to exchange man for man, but declined—on account of the previous bad faith of the Rebels—to release the balance on parole. The Rebels also refused to make any concessions in regard to the treatment of officers and men of colored regiments.

7. At this juncture General B. F. Butler was appointed to the command of the Department of the Blackwater, which made him an ex-officio Commissioner of Exchange. The Rebels instantly refused to treat with him, on the ground that he was outlawed by the proclamation of Jefferson Davis. General Butler very pertinently replied that this only placed him nearer their level, as Jefferson Davis and all associated with him in the Rebel Government had been outlawed by the proclamation of President Lincoln. The Rebels scorned to notice this home thrust by the Union General.

8. On February 12, 1864, General Butler addressed a letter to the Rebel Commissioner Ould, in which be asked, for the sake of humanity, that the questions interrupting the exchange be left temporarily in abeyance while an informal exchange was put in operation. He would send five hundred prisoners to City Point; let them be met by a similar number of Union prisoners. This could go on from day to day until all in each other's hands should be transferred to their respective flags.

The five hundred sent with the General's letter were received, and five hundred

Union prisoners returned for them. Another five hundred, sent the next day, were refused, and so this reasonable and humane proposition ended in nothing.

This was the condition of affairs in February, 1864, when the Rebel authorities concluded to send us to Andersonville. If the reader will fix these facts in his minds I will explain other phases as they develop.

CHAPTER XL

PUTTING IN THE TIME—RATIONS—COOKING UTENSILS—“FIAT” SOUP—“SPOONING”— AFRICAN NEWSPAPER VENDERS—TRADING GREENBACKS FOR CONFEDERATE MONEY— VISIT FROM JOHN MORGAN.

The Winter days passed on, one by one, after the manner described in a former chapter,—the mornings in ill-nature hunger; the afternoons and evenings in tolerable comfort. The rations kept growing lighter and lighter; the quantity of bread remained the same, but the meat diminished, and occasional days would pass without any being issued. Then we receive a pint or less of soup made from the beans or peas before mentioned, but this, too, suffered continued change, in the gradually increasing proportion of James River water, and decreasing of that of the beans.

The water of the James River is doubtless excellent: it looks well—at a distance—and is said to serve the purposes of ablution and navigation admirably. There seems to be a limit however, to the extent of its advantageous combination with the bean (or pea) for nutritive purposes. This, though, was or view of the case, merely, and not shared in to any appreciably extent by the gentlemen who were managing our boarding house. We seemed to view the matter through allopathic spectacles, they through homoeopathic lenses. We thought that the atomic weight of peas (or beans) and the James River fluid were about equal, which would indicate that the proper combining proportions would be, say a bucket of beans (or peas) to a bucket of water. They held that the nutritive potency was increased by the dilution, and the best results were obtainable when the symptoms of hunger were combated by the trituration of a bucketful of the peas-beans with a barrel of ‘aqua jamesiana.’

My first experience with this “flat” soup was very instructive, if not agreeable. I had come into prison, as did most other prisoners, absolutely destitute of dishes, or cooking utensils. The well-used, half-canteen frying-pan, the blackened quart cup, and the spoon, which formed the usual kitchen outfit of the cavalryman in the field, were in the haversack on my saddle, and were lost to me when I separated from my horse. Now, when we were told that we were to draw soup, I was in great danger of losing my ration from having no vessel in which to

receive it. There were but few tin cups in the prison, and these were, of course, wanted by their owners. By great good fortune I found an empty fruit can, holding about a quart. I was also lucky enough to find a piece from which to make a bail. I next manufactured a spoon and knife combined from a bit of hoop-iron.

These two humble utensils at once placed myself and my immediate chums on another plane, as far as worldly goods were concerned. We were better off than the mass, and as well off as the most fortunate. It was a curious illustration of that law of political economy which teaches that so-called intrinsic value is largely adventitious. Their possession gave us infinitely more consideration among our fellows than would the possession of a brown-stone front in an eligible location, furnished with hot and cold water throughout, and all the modern improvements. It was a place where cooking utensils were in demand, and title-deeds to brown-stone fronts were not. We were in possession of something which every one needed every day, and, therefore, were persons of consequence and consideration to those around us who were present or prospective borrowers.

On our side we obeyed another law of political economy: We clung to our property with unrelaxing tenacity, made the best use of it in our intercourse with our fellows, and only gave it up after our release and entry into a land where the plenitude of cooking utensils of superior construction made ours valueless. Then we flung them into the sea, with little gratitude for the great benefit they had been to us. We were more anxious to get rid of the many hateful recollections clustering around them.

But, to return to the alleged soup: As I started to drink my first ration it seemed to me that there was a superfluity of bugs upon its surface. Much as I wanted animal food, I did not care for fresh meat in that form. I skimmed them off carefully, so as to lose as little soup as possible. But the top layer seemed to be underlaid with another equally dense. This was also skimmed off as deftly as possible. But beneath this appeared another layer, which, when removed, showed still another; and so on, until I had scraped to the bottom of the can, and the last of the bugs went with the last of my soup. I have before spoken of the remarkable bug fecundity of the beans (or peas). This was a demonstration of it. Every scouped out pea (or bean) which found its way into the soup bore inside of its shell from ten to twenty of these hard-crusted little weevil. Afterward I drank my soup without skimming. It was not that I hated the weevil less, but that

I loved the soup more. It was only another step toward a closer conformity to that grand rule which I have made the guiding maxim of my life:

‘When I must, I had better.’

I recommend this to other young men starting on their career.

The room in which we were was barely large enough for all of us to lie down at once. Even then it required pretty close “spooning” together— so close in fact that all sleeping along one side would have to turn at once. It was funny to watch this operation. All, for instance, would be lying on their right sides. They would begin to get tired, and one of the wearied ones would sing out to the Sergeant who was in command of the row—

“Sergeant: let’s spoon the other way.”

That individual would reply:

“All right. Attention! LEFT SPOON!!” and the whole line would at once flop over on their left sides.

The feet of the row that slept along the east wall on the floor below us were in a line with the edge of the outer door, and a chalk line drawn from the crack between the door and the frame to the opposite wall would touch, say 150 pairs of feet. They were a noisy crowd down there, and one night their noise so provoked the guard in front of the door that he called out to them to keep quiet or he would fire in upon them. They greeted this threat with a chorus profanely uncomplimentary to the purity of the guard’s ancestry; they did not imply his descent a la Darwin, from the remote monkey, but more immediate generation by a common domestic animal. The incensed Rebel opened the door wide enough to thrust his gun in, and he fired directly down the line of toes. His piece was apparently loaded with buckshot, and the little balls must have struck the legs, nipped off the toes, pierced the feet, and otherwise slightly wounded the lower extremities of fifty men. The simultaneous shriek that went up was deafening. It was soon found out that nobody had been hurt seriously, and there was not a little fun over the occurrence.

One of the prisoners in Libby was Brigadier General Neal Dow, of Maine, who had then a National reputation as a Temperance advocate, and the author of the famous Maine Liquor Law. We, whose places were near the front window, used

to see him frequently on the street, accompanied by a guard. He was allowed, we understood, to visit our sick in the hospital. His long, snowy beard and hair gave him a venerable and commanding appearance.

Newsboys seemed to be a thing unknown in Richmond. The papers were sold on the streets by negro men. The one who frequented our section with the morning journals had a mellow; rich baritone for which we would be glad to exchange the shrill cries of our street Arabs. We long remembered him as one of the peculiar features of Richmond. He had one unvarying formula for proclaiming his wares. It ran in this wise:

“Great Nooze in de papahs!

“Great Nooze from Orange Coaht House, Virginny!

“Great Nooze from Alexandry, Virginny!

“Great Nooze from Washington City!

“Great Nooze from Chattanoogy, Tennessee!

“Great Nooze from Chahlston, Sou’ Cahlina!

“Great Nooze in depapahs!”

It did not matter to him that the Rebels had not been at some of these places for months. He would not change for such mere trifles as the entire evaporation of all possible interest connected with Chattanooga and Alexandria. He was a true Bourbon Southerner—he learned nothing and forgot nothing.

There was a considerable trade driven between the prisoners and the guard at the door. This was a very lucrative position for the latter, and men of a commercial turn of mind generally managed to get stationed there. The blockade had cut off the Confederacy’s supplies from the outer world, and the many trinkets about a man’s person were in good demand at high prices. The men of the Army of the Potomac, who were paid regularly, and were always near their supplies, had their pockets filled with combs, silk handkerchiefs, knives, neckties, gold pens, pencils, silver watches, playing cards, dice, *etc.* Such of these as escaped appropriation by their captors and Dick Turner, were eagerly bought by the guards, who paid fair prices in Confederate money, or traded wheat bread,

tobacco, daily papers, etc., for them.

There was also considerable brokerage in money, and the manner of doing this was an admirable exemplification of the folly of the “fiat” money idea. The Rebels exhausted their ingenuity in framing laws to sustain the purchasing power of their paper money. It was made legal tender for all debts public and private; it was decreed that the man who refused to take it was a public enemy; all the considerations of patriotism were rallied to its support, and the law provided that any citizens found trafficking in the money of the enemy—i.e., greenbacks, should suffer imprisonment in the Penitentiary, and any soldier so offending should suffer death.

Notwithstanding all this, in Richmond, the head and heart of the Confederacy, in January, 1864—long before the Rebel cause began to look at all desperate—it took a dollar to buy such a loaf of bread as now sells for ten cents; a newspaper was a half dollar, and everything else in proportion. And still worse: There was not a day during our stay in Richmond but what one could go to the hole in the door before which the guard was pacing and call out in a loud whisper:

“Say, Guard: do you want to buy some greenbacks?”

And be sure that the reply would be, after a furtive glance around to see that no officer was watching:

“Yes; how much do you want for them?”

The reply was then: “Ten for one.”

“All right; how much have you got?”

The Yankee would reply; the Rebel would walk to the farther end of his beat, count out the necessary amount, and, returning, put up one hand with it, while with the other he caught hold of one end of the Yankee’s greenback. At the word, both would release their holds simultaneously, the exchange was complete, and the Rebel would pace industriously up and down his beat with the air of the school boy who “ain’t been a-doin’ nothing.”

There was never any risk in approaching any guard with a proposition of this kind. I never heard of one refusing to trade for greenbacks, and if the men on guard could not be restrained by these stringent laws, what hope could there be

of restraining anybody else?

One day we were favored with a visit from the redoubtable General John H. Morgan, next to J. E. B. Stuart the greatest of Rebel cavalry leaders. He had lately escaped from the Ohio Penitentiary. He was invited to Richmond to be made a Major General, and was given a grand ovation by the citizens and civic Government. He came into our building to visit a number of the First Kentucky Cavalry (loyal)—captured at New Philadelphia, East Tennessee—whom he was anxious to have exchanged for men of his own regiment—the First Kentucky Cavalry (Rebel)—who were captured at the same time he was. I happened to get very close to him while he was standing there talking to his old acquaintances, and I made a mental photograph of him, which still retains all its original distinctness. He was a tall, heavy man, with a full, coarse, and somewhat dull face, and lazy, sluggish gray eyes. His long black hair was carefully oiled, and turned under at the ends, as was the custom with the rural beaux some years ago. His face was clean shaved, except a large, sandy goatee. He wore a high silk hat, a black broadcloth coat, Kentucky jeans pantaloons, neatly fitting boots, and no vest. There was nothing remotely suggestive of unusual ability or force of character, and I thought as I studied him that the sting of George D. Prentice's bon mot about him was in its acrid truth. Said Mr. Prentice:

"Why don't somebody put a pistol to Basil Duke's head, and blow John Morgan's brains out!" [Basil Duke was John Morgan's right hand man.]

CHAPTER XII.

REMARKS AS TO NOMENCLATURE—VACCINATION AND ITS EFFECTS—"N'YAARKER'S"— THEIR CHARACTERISTICS AND THEIR METHODS OF OPERATING.

Before going any further in this narrative it may be well to state that the nomenclature employed is not used in any odious or disparaging sense. It is simply the adoption of the usual terms employed by the soldiers of both sides in speaking to or of each other. We habitually spoke of them and to them, as "Rebels," and "Johnnies ;" they of and to us, as "Yanks," and "Yankees." To have said "Confederates," "Southerners," "Secessionists," or "Federalists," "Unionists," "Northerners" or "Nationalists," would have seemed useless

euphemism. The plainer terms suited better, and it was a day when things were more important than names.

For some inscrutable reason the Rebels decided to vaccinate us all. Why they did this has been one of the unsolved problems of my life. It is true that there was small pox in the City, and among the prisoners at Danville; but that any consideration for our safety should have led them to order general inoculation is not among the reasonable inferences. But, be that as it may, vaccination was ordered, and performed. By great good luck I was absent from the building with the squad drawing rations, when our room was inoculated, so I escaped what was an infliction to all, and fatal to many. The direst consequences followed the operation. Foul ulcers appeared on various parts of the bodies of the vaccinated. In many instances the arms literally rotted off; and death followed from a corruption of the blood. Frequently the faces, and other parts of those who recovered, were disfigured by the ghastly cicatrices of healed ulcers. A special friend of mine, Sergeant Frank Beverstock—then a member of the Third Virginia Cavalry, (loyal), and after the war a banker in Bowling Green, O.,—bore upon his temple to his dying day, (which occurred a year ago), a fearful scar, where the flesh had sloughed off from the effects of the virus that had tainted his blood.

This I do not pretend to account for. We thought at the time that the Rebels had deliberately poisoned the vaccine matter with syphilitic virus, and it was so charged upon them. I do not now believe that this was so; I can hardly think that members of the humane profession of medicine would be guilty of such subtle diabolism—worse even than poisoning the wells from which an enemy must drink. The explanation with which I have satisfied myself is that some careless or stupid practitioner took the vaccinating lymph from diseased human bodies, and thus infected all with the blood venom, without any conception of what he was doing. The low standard of medical education in the South makes this theory quite plausible.

We now formed the acquaintance of a species of human vermin that united with the Rebels, cold, hunger, lice and the oppression of distraint, to leave nothing undone that could add to the miseries of our prison life.

These were the fledglings of the slums and dives of New York—graduates of that metropolitan sink of iniquity where the rogues and criminals of the whole world meet for mutual instruction in vice.

They were men who, as a rule, had never known, a day of honesty and cleanliness in their misspent lives; whose fathers, brothers and constant companions were roughs, malefactors and, felons; whose mothers, wives and sisters were prostitutes, procuresses and thieves; men who had from infancy lived in an atmosphere of sin, until it saturated every fiber of their being as a dweller in a jungle imbibes malaria by every one of his, millions of pores, until his very marrow is surcharged with it.

They included representatives from all nationalities, and their descendants, but the English and Irish elements predominated. They had an argot peculiar to themselves. It was partly made up of the “flash” language of the London thieves, amplified and enriched by the cant vocabulary and the jargon of crime of every European tongue. They spoke it with a peculiar accent and intonation that made them instantly recognizable from the roughs of all other Cities. They called themselves “N’Yaarkers;” we came to know them as “Raiders.”

If everything in the animal world has its counterpart among men, then these were the wolves, jackals and hyenas of the race at once cowardly and fierce—audaciously bold when the power of numbers was on their side, and cowardly when confronted with resolution by anything like an equality of strength.

Like all other roughs and rascals of whatever degree, they were utterly worthless as soldiers. There may have been in the Army some habitual corner loafer, some fistic champion of the bar-room and brothel, some Terror of Plug Uglyville, who was worth the salt in the hard tack he consumed, but if there were, I did not form his acquaintance, and I never heard of any one else who did. It was the rule that the man who was the readiest in the use of fist and slungshot at home had the greatest diffidence about forming a close acquaintance with cold lead in the neighborhood of the front. Thousands of the so-called “dangerous classes” were recruited, from whom the Government did not receive so much service as would pay for the buttons on their uniforms. People expected that they would make themselves as troublesome to the Rebels as they were to good citizens and the Police, but they were only pugnacious to the provost guard, and terrible to the people in the rear of the Army who had anything that could be stolen.

The highest type of soldier which the world has yet produced is the intelligent, self-respecting American boy, with home, and father and mother and friends behind him, and duty in front beckoning him on. In the sixty centuries that war has been a profession no man has entered its ranks so calmly resolute in

confronting danger, so shrewd and energetic in his aggressiveness, so tenacious of the defense and the assault, so certain to rise swiftly to the level of every emergency, as the boy who, in the good old phrase, had been “well-raised” in a Godfearing home, and went to the field in obedience to a conviction of duty. His unfailing courage and good sense won fights that the incompetency or cankering jealousy of commanders had lost. High officers were occasionally disloyal, or willing to sacrifice their country to personal pique; still more frequently they were ignorant and inefficient; but the enlisted man had more than enough innate soldiership to make amends for these deficiencies, and his superb conduct often brought honors and promotions to those only who deserved shame and disaster.

Our “N’Yaarkers,” swift to see any opportunity for dishonest gain, had taken to bounty-jumping, or, as they termed it, “leppin’ the bounty,” for a livelihood. Those who were thrust in upon us had followed this until it had become dangerous, and then deserted to the Rebels. The latter kept them at Castle Lightning for awhile, and then, rightly estimating their character, and considering that it was best to trade them off for a genuine Rebel soldier, sent them in among us, to be exchanged regularly with us. There was not so much good faith as good policy shown by this. It was a matter of indifference to the Rebels how soon our Government shot these deserters after getting them in its hands again. They were only anxious to use them to get their own men back.

The moment they came into contact with us our troubles began. They stole whenever opportunities offered, and they were indefatigable in making these offer; they robbed by actual force, whenever force would avail; and more obsequious lick-spittles to power never existed—they were perpetually on the lookout for a chance to curry favor by betraying some plan or scheme to those who guarded us.

I saw one day a queer illustration of the audacious side of these fellows’ characters, and it shows at the same time how brazen effrontery will sometimes get the better of courage. In a room in an adjacent building were a number of these fellows, and a still greater number of East Tennesseeans. These latter were simple, ignorant folks, but reasonably courageous. About fifty of them were sitting in a group in one corner of the room, and near them a couple or three “N’Yaarkers.” Suddenly one of the latter said with an oath:

“I was robbed last night; I lost two silver watches, a couple of rings, and about fifty dollars in greenbacks. I believe some of you fellers went through me.”

This was all pure invention; he no more had the things mentioned than. he had purity of heart and a Christian spirit, but the unsophisticated Tennesseeans did not dream of disputing his statement, and answered in chorus:

“Oh, no, mister; we didn’t take your things; we ain’t that kind.”

This was like the reply of the lamb to the wolf, in the fable, and the N’Yaarker retorted with a simulated storm of passion, and a torrent of oaths:

“–- –- I know ye did; I know some uv yez has got them; stand up agin the wall there till I search yez!”

And that whole fifty men, any one of whom was physically equal to the N’Yaarker, and his superior in point of real courage, actually stood against the wall, and submitted to being searched and having taken from them the few Confederate bills they had, and such trinkets as the searcher took a fancy to.

I was thoroughly disgusted.

CHAPTER XIII.

BELLE ISLE—TERRIBLE SUFFERING FROM COLD AND HUNGER—FATE OF LIEUTENANT BOISSEUX’S DOG—OUR COMPANY MYSTERY—TERMINATION OF ALL HOPES OF ITS SOLUTION.

In February my chum—B. B. Andrews, now a physician in Astoria, Illinois — was brought into our building, greatly to my delight and astonishment, and from him I obtained the much desired news as to the fate of my comrades. He told me they had been sent to Belle Isle, whither he had gone, but succumbing to the rigors of that dreadful place, he had been taken to the hospital, and, upon his convalesence, placed in our prison.

Our men were suffering terribly on the island. It was low, damp, and swept by the bleak, piercing winds that howled up and down the surface of the James. The first prisoners placed on the island had been given tents that afforded them some shelter, but these were all occupied when our battalion came in, so that they were compelled to lie on the snow and frozen ground, without shelter, covering of any kind, or fire. During this time the cold had been so intense that the James had

frozen over three times.

The rations had been much worse than ours. The so-called soup had been diluted to a ridiculous thinness, and meat had wholly disappeared. So intense became the craving for animal food, that one day when Lieutenant Boisseux—the Commandant—strolled into the camp with his beloved white bull-terrier, which was as fat as a Cheshire pig, the latter was decoyed into a tent, a blanket thrown over him, his throat cut within a rod of where his master was standing, and he was then skinned, cut up, cooked, and furnished a savory meal to many hungry men.

When Boisseux learned of the fate of his four-footed friend he was, of course, intensely enraged, but that was all the good it did him. The only revenge possible was to sentence more prisoners to ride the cruel wooden horse which he used as a means of punishment.

Four of our company were already dead. Jacob Lowry and John Beach were standing near the gate one day when some one snatched the guard's blanket from the post where he had hung it, and ran. The enraged sentry leveled his gun and fired into the crowd. The balls passed through Lowry's and Beach's breasts. Then Charley Osgood, son of our Lieutenant, a quiet, fair-haired, pleasant-spoken boy, but as brave and earnest as his gallant father, sank under the combination of hunger and cold. One stinging morning he was found stiff and stark, on the hard ground, his bright, frank blue eyes glazed over in death.

One of the mysteries of our company was a tall, slender, elderly Scotchman, who appeared on the rolls as William Bradford. What his past life had been, where he had lived, what his profession, whether married or single, no one ever knew. He came to us while in Camp of Instruction near Springfield, Illinois, and seemed to have left all his past behind him as he crossed the line of sentries around the camp. He never received any letters, and never wrote any; never asked for a furlough or pass, and never expressed a wish to be elsewhere than in camp. He was courteous and pleasant, but very reserved. He interfered with no one, obeyed orders promptly and without remark, and was always present for duty. Scrupulously neat in dress, always as clean-shaved as an old-fashioned gentleman of the world, with manners and conversation that showed him to have belonged to a refined and polished circle, he was evidently out of place as a private soldier in a company of reckless and none-too-refined young Illinois troopers, but he never availed himself of any of the numerous opportunities

offered to change his associations. His elegant penmanship would have secured him an easy berth and better society at headquarters, but he declined to accept a detail. He became an exciting mystery to a knot of us imaginative young cubs, who sorted up out of the reminiscential rag-bag of high colors and strong contrasts with which the sensational literature that we most affected had plentifully stored our minds, a half-dozen intensely emotional careers for him. We spent much time in mentally trying these on, and discussing which fitted him best. We were always expecting a denouement that would come like a lightning flash and reveal his whole mysterious past, showing him to have been the disinherited scion of some noble house, a man of high station, who was expiating some fearful crime; an accomplished villain eluding his pursuers—in short, a Somebody who would be a fitting hero for Miss Braddon's or Wilkie Collins's literary purposes. We never got but two clues of his past, and they were faint ones. One day, he left lying near me a small copy of "Paradise Lost," that he always carried with him. Turning over its leaves I found all of Milton's bitter invectives against women heavily underscored. Another time, while on guard with him, he spent much of his time in writing some Latin verses in very elegant chirography upon the white painted boards of a fence along which his beat ran. We pressed in all the available knowledge of Latin about camp, and found that the tenor of the verses was very uncomplimentary to that charming sex which does us the honor of being our mothers and sweethearts. These evidences we accepted as sufficient demonstration that there was a woman at the bottom of the mystery, and made us more impatient for further developments. These were never to come. Bradford pined away an Belle Isle, and grew weaker, but no less reserved, each day. At length, one bitter cold night ended it all. He was found in the morning stone dead, with his iron-gray hair frozen fast to the ground, upon which he lay. Our mystery had to remain unsolved. There was nothing about his person to give any hint as to his past.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOPING FOR EXCHANGE—AN EXPOSITION OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHANCES— OFF FOR ANDERSONVILLE—UNCERTAINTY AS TO OUR DESTINATION—ARRIVAL AT ANDERSONVILLE.

As each lagging day closed, we confidently expected that the next would bring some news of the eagerly-desired exchange. We hopefully assured each other

that the thing could not be delayed much longer; that the Spring was near, the campaign would soon open, and each government would make an effort to get all its men into the field, and this would bring about a transfer of prisoners. A Sergeant of the Seventh Indiana Infantry stated his theory to me this way:

“You know I’m just old lightnin’ on chuck-a-luck. Now the way I bet is this: I lay down, say on the ace, an’ it don’t come up; I just double my bet on the ace, an’ keep on doublin’ every time it loses, until at last it comes up an’ then I win a bushel o’ money, and mebbe bust the bank. You see the thing’s got to come up some time; an’ every time it don’t come up makes it more likely to come up the next time. It’s just the same way with this ‘ere exchange. The thing’s got to happen some day, an’ every day that it don’t happen increases the chances that it will happen the next day.”

Some months later I folded the sanguine Sergeant’s stiffening hands together across his fleshless ribs, and helped carry his body out to the dead-house at Andersonville, in order to get a piece of wood to cook my ration of meal with.

On the evening of the 17th of February, 1864, we were ordered to get ready to move at daybreak the next morning. We were certain this could mean nothing else than exchange, and our exaltation was such that we did little sleeping that night. The morning was very cold, but we sang and joked as we marched over the creaking bridge, on our way to the cars. We were packed so tightly in these that it was impossible to even sit down, and we rolled slow ly away after a wheezing engine to Petersburg, whence we expected to march to the exchange post. We reached Petersburg before noon, and the cars halted there along time, we momentarily expecting an order to get out. Then the train started up and moved out of the City toward the southeast. This was inexplicable, but after we had proceeded this way for several hours some one conceived the idea that the Rebels, to avoid treating with Butler, were taking us into the Department of some other commander to exchange us. This explanation satisfied us, and our spirits rose again.

Night found us at Gaston, N. C., where we received a few crackers for rations, and changed cars. It was dark, and we resorted to a little strategy to secure more room. About thirty of us got into a tight box car, and immediately announced that it was too full to admit any more. When an officer came along with another squad to stow away, we would yell out to him to take some of the men out, as we were crowded unbearably. In the mean time everybody in the car would pack

closely around the door, so as to give the impression that the car was densely crowded. The Rebel would look convinced, and demand:

“Why, how many men have you got in de cah?”

Then one of us would order the imaginary host in the invisible recesses to—

“Stand still there, and be counted,” while he would gravely count up to one hundred or one hundred and twenty, which was the utmost limit of the car, and the Rebel would hurry off to put his prisoners somewhere else. We managed to play this successfully during the whole journey, and not only obtained room to lie down in the car, but also drew three or four times as many rations as were intended for us, so that while we at no time had enough, we were farther from starvation than our less strategic companions.

The second afternoon we arrived at Raleigh, the capitol of North Carolina, and were camped in a piece of timber, and shortly after dark orders were issued to us all to lie flat on the ground and not rise up till daylight. About the middle of the night a man belonging to a New Jersey regiment, who had apparently forgotten the order, stood up, and was immediately shot dead by the guard.

For four or five days more the decrepit little locomotive strained along, dragging after it the rattling’ old cars. The scenery was intensely monotonous. It was a flat, almost unending, stretch of pine barrens and the land so poor that a disgusted Illinoisan, used to the fertility of the great American Bottom, said rather strongly, that,

“By George, they’d have to manure this ground before they could even make brick out of it.”

It was a surprise to all of us who had heard so much of the wealth of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia, to find the soil a sterile sand bank, interspersed with swamps.

We had still no idea of where we were going. We only knew that our general course was southward, and that we had passed through the Carolinas, and were in Georgia. We furbished up our school knowledge of geography and endeavored to recall something of the location of Raleigh, Charlotte, Columbia and Augusta, through which we passed, but the attempt was not a success.

Late on the afternoon of the 25th of February the Seventh Indiana Sergeant approached me with the inquiry:

“Do you know where Macon is?”

The place had not then become as well known as it was afterward.

It seemed to me that I had read something of Macon in Revolutionary history, and that it was a fort on the sea coast. He said that the guard had told him that we were to be taken to a point near that place, and we agreed that it was probably a new place of exchange. A little later we passed through the town of Macon, Ga, and turned upon a road that led almost due south.

About midnight the train stopped, and we were ordered off. We were in the midst of a forest of tall trees that loaded the air with the heavy balsamic odor peculiar to pine trees. A few small rude houses were scattered around near.

Stretching out into the darkness was a double row of great heaps of burning pitch pine, that smoked and flamed fiercely, and lit up a little space around in the somber forest with a ruddy glare. Between these two rows lay a road, which we were ordered to take.

The scene was weird and uncanny. I had recently read the “Iliad,” and the long lines of huge fires reminded me of that scene in the first book, where the Greeks burn on the sea shore the bodies of those smitten by Apollo’s pestilential-arrows

For nine long nights, through all the dusky air, The pyres, thick flaming shot a dismal glare.

Five hundred weary men moved along slowly through double lines of guards. Five hundred men marched silently towards the gates that were to shut out life and hope from most of them forever. A quarter of a mile from the railroad we came to a massive palisade of great squared logs standing upright in the ground. The fires blazed up and showed us a section of these, and two massive wooden gates, with heavy iron hinges and bolts. They swung open as we stood there and we passed through into the space beyond.

We were in Andersonville.

CHAPTER XV.

GEORGIA—A LEAN AND HUNGRY LAND—DIFFERENCE BETWEEN UPPER AND LOWER GEORGIA—THE PILLAGE OF ANDERSONVILLE.

As the next nine months of the existence of those of us who survived were spent in intimate connection with the soil of Georgia, and, as it exercised a potential influence upon our comfort and well-being, or rather lack of these—a mention of some of its peculiar characteristics may help the reader to a fuller comprehension of the conditions surrounding us—our environment, as Darwin would say.

Georgia, which, next to Texas, is the largest State in the South, and has nearly twenty-five per cent. more area than the great State of New York, is divided into two distinct and widely differing sections, by a geological line extending directly across the State from Augusta, on the Savannah River, through Macon, on the Ocmulgee, to Columbus, on the Chattahoochie. That part lying to the north and west of this line is usually spoken of as “Upper Georgia;” while that lying to the south and east, extending to the Atlantic Ocean and the Florida line, is called “Lower Georgia.” In this part of the State—though far removed from each other—were the prisons of Andersonville, Savannah, Millen and Blackshear, in which we were incarcerated one after the other.

Upper Georgia—the capital of which is Atlanta—is a fruitful, productive, metalliferous region, that will in time become quite wealthy. Lower Georgia, which has an extent about equal to that of Indiana, is not only poorer now than a worn-out province of Asia Minor, but in all probability will ever remain so.

It is a starved, sterile land, impressing one as a desert in the first stages of reclamation into productive soil, or a productive soil in the last steps of deterioration into a desert. It is a vast expanse of arid, yellow sand, broken at intervals by foul swamps, with a jungle-life growth of unwholesome vegetation, and teeming With venomous snakes, and all manner of hideous crawling thing.

The original forest still stands almost unbroken on this wide stretch of thirty thousand square miles, but it does not cover it as we say of forests in more favored lands. The tall, solemn pines, upright and symmetrical as huge masts, and wholly destitute of limbs, except the little, umbrella-like crest at the very top, stand far apart from each other in an unfriendly isolation. There is no fraternal interlacing of branches to form a kindly, umbrageous shadow. Between

them is no genial undergrowth of vines, shrubs, and demi-trees, generous in fruits, berries and nuts, such as make one of the charms of Northern forests. On the ground is no rich, springing sod of emerald green, fragrant with the elusive sweetness of white clover, and dainty flowers, but a sparse, wiry, famished grass, scattered thinly over the surface in tufts and patches, like the hair on a mangy cur.

The giant pines seem to have sucked up into their immense boles all the nutriment in the earth, and starved out every minor growth. So wide and clean is the space between them, that one can look through the forest in any direction for miles, with almost as little interference with the view as on a prairie. In the swampier parts the trees are lower, and their limbs are hung with heavy festoons of the gloomy Spanish moss, or “death moss,” as it is more frequently called, because where it grows rankest the malaria is the deadliest. Everywhere Nature seems sad, subdued and somber.

I have long entertained a peculiar theory to account for the decadence and ruin of countries. My reading of the world’s history seems to teach me that when a strong people take possession of a fertile land, they reduce it to cultivation, thrive upon its bountifulness, multiply into millions the mouths to be fed from it, tax it to the last limit of production of the necessities of life, take from it continually, and give nothing back, starve and overwork it as cruel, grasping men do a servant or a beast, and when at last it breaks down under the strain, it revenges itself by starving many of them with great famines, while the others go off in search of new countries to put through the same process of exhaustion. We have seen one country after another undergo this process as the seat of empire took its westward way, from the cradle of the race on the banks of the Oxus to the fertile plains in the Valley of the Euphrates. Impoverishing these, men next sought the Valley of the Nile, then the Grecian Peninsula; next Syracuse and the Italian Peninsula, then the Iberian Peninsula, and the African shores of the Mediterranean. Exhausting all these, they were deserted for the French, German and English portions of Europe. The turn of the latter is now come; famines are becoming terribly frequent, and mankind is pouring into the virgin fields of America.

Lower Georgia, the Carolinas and Eastern Virginia have all the characteristics of these starved and worn-out lands. It would seem as if, away back in the distance of ages, some numerous and civilized race had drained from the soil the last atom of food-producing constituents, and that it is now slowly gathering back, as

the centuries pass, the elements that have been wrung from the land.

Lower Georgia is very thinly settled. Much of the land is still in the hands of the Government. The three or four railroads which pass through it have little reference to local traffic. There are no towns along them as a rule; stations are made every ten miles, and not named, but numbered, as “Station No. 4”—“No. 10”, *etc.* The roads were built as through lines, to bring to the seaboard the rich products of the interior.

Andersonville is one of the few stations dignified with a same, probably because it contained some half dozen of shabby houses, whereas at the others there was usually nothing more than a mere open shed, to shelter goods and travelers. It is on a rudely constructed, rickety railroad, that runs from Macon to Albany, the head of navigation on the Flint River, which is, one hundred and six miles from Macon, and two hundred and fifty from the Gulf of Mexico. Andersonville is about sixty miles from Macon, and, consequently, about three hundred miles from the Gulf. The camp was merely a hole cut in the wilderness. It was as remote a point from, our armies, as they then lay, as the Southern Confederacy could give. The nearest was Sherman, at Chattanooga, four hundred miles away, and on the other side of a range of mountains hundreds of miles wide.

To us it seemed beyond the last forlorn limits of civilization. We felt that we were more completely at the mercy of our foes than ever. While in Richmond we were in the heart of the Confederacy; we were in the midst of the Rebel military and, civil force, and were surrounded on every hand by visible evidences of the great magnitude of that power, but this, while it enforced our ready submission, did not overawe us depressingly, We knew that though the Rebels were all about us in great force, our own men were also near, and in still greater force—that while they were very strong our army was still stronger, and there was no telling what day this superiority of strength, might be demonstrated in such a way as to decisively benefit us.

But here we felt as did the Ancient Mariner:

Alone on a wide, wide sea, So lonely ‘twas that God himself Scarce seemed there to be.

CHAPTER XVL

WAKING UP IN ANDERSONVILLE—SOME DESCRIPTION OF THE PLACE—OUR FIRST MAIL—BUILDING SHELTER—GEN. WINDER—HIMSELF AND LINEAGE.

We roused up promptly with the dawn to take a survey of our new abiding place. We found ourselves in an immense pen, about one thousand feet long by eight hundred wide, as a young surveyor—a member of the Thirty-fourth Ohio—informed us after he had paced it off. He estimated that it contained about sixteen acres. The walls were formed by pine logs twenty-five feet long, from two to three feet in diameter, hewn square, set into the ground to a depth of five feet, and placed so close together as to leave no crack through which the country outside could be seen. There being five feet of the logs in the ground, the wall was, of course, twenty feet high. This manner of enclosure was in some respects superior to a wall of masonry. It was equally unscalable, and much more difficult to undermine or batter down.

The pen was Longest due north and south. It was! divided in the center by a creek about a yard wide and ten inches deep, running from west to east. On each side of this was a quaking bog of slimy ooze one hundred and fifty feet wide, and so yielding that one attempting to walk upon it would sink to the waist. From this swamp the sand-hills sloped north and south to the stockade. All the trees inside the stockade, save two, had been cut down and used in its construction. All the rank vegetation of the swamp had also been cut off.

There were two entrances to the stockade, one on each side of the creek, midway between it and the ends, and called respectively the “North Gate” and the “South Gate.” These were constructed double, by building smaller stockades around them on the outside, with another set of gates. When prisoners or wagons with rations were brought in, they were first brought inside the outer gates, which were carefully secured, before the inner gates were opened. This was done to prevent the gates being carried by a rush by those confined inside.

At regular intervals along the palisades were little perches, upon which stood guards, who overlooked the whole inside of the prison.

The only view we had of the outside was that obtained by looking from the

highest points of the North or South Sides across the depression where the stockade crossed the swamp. In this way we could see about forty acres at a time of the adjoining woodland, or say one hundred and sixty acres altogether, and this meager landscape had to content us for the next half year.

Before our inspection was finished, a wagon drove in with rations, and a quart of meal, a sweet potato and a few ounces of salt beef were issued to each one of us.

In a few minutes we were all hard at work preparing our first meal in Andersonville. The debris of the forest left a temporary abundance of fuel, and we had already a cheerful fire blazing for every little squad. There were a number of tobacco presses in the rooms we occupied in Richmond, and to each of these was a quantity of sheets of tin, evidently used to put between the layers of tobacco. The deft hands of the mechanics among us bent these up into square pans, which were real handy cooking utensils, holding about—a quart. Water was carried in them from the creek; the meal mixed in them to a dough, or else boiled as mush in the same vessels; the potatoes were boiled; and their final service was to hold a little meal to be carefully browned, and then water boiled upon it, so as to form a feeble imitation of coffee. I found my education at Jonesville in the art of baking a hoe-cake now came in good play, both for myself and companions. Taking one of the pieces of tin which had not yet been made into a pan, we spread upon it a layer of dough about a half-inch thick. Propping this up nearly upright before the fire, it was soon nicely browned over. This process made it sweat itself loose from the tin, when it was turned over and the bottom browned also. Save that it was destitute of salt, it was quite a toothsome bit of nutriment for a hungry man, and I recommend my readers to try making a “pone” of this kind once, just to see what it was like.

The supreme indifference with which the Rebels always treated the matter of cooking utensils for us, excited my wonder. It never seemed to occur to them that we could have any more need of vessels for our food than cattle or swine. Never, during my whole prison life, did I see so much as a tin cup or a bucket issued to a prisoner. Starving men were driven to all sorts of shifts for want of these. Pantaloons or coats were pulled off and their sleeves or legs used to draw a mess’s meal in. Boots were common vessels for carrying water, and when the feet of these gave way the legs were ingeniously closed up with pine pegs, so as to form rude leathern buckets. Men whose pocket knives had escaped the search at the gates made very ingenious little tubs and buckets, and these devices enabled us to get along after a fashion.

After our meal was disposed of, we held a council on the situation. Though we had been sadly disappointed in not being exchanged, it seemed that on the whole our condition had been bettered. This first ration was a decided improvement on those of the Pemberton building; we had left the snow and ice behind at Richmond—or rather at some place between Raleigh, N. C., and Columbia, S. C.—and the air here, though chill, was not nipping, but bracing. It looked as if we would have a plenty of wood for shelter and fuel, it was certainly better to have sixteen acres to roam over than the stiffing confines of a building; and, still better, it seemed as if there would be plenty of opportunities to get beyond the stockade, and attempt a journey through the woods to that blissful land— "Our lines."

We settled down to make the best of things. A Rebel Sergeant came in presently and arranged us in hundreds. We subdivided these into messes of twenty-five, and began devising means for shelter. Nothing showed the inborn capacity of the Northern soldier to take care of himself better than the way in which we accomplished this with the rude materials at our command. No ax, spade nor mattock was allowed us by the Rebels, who treated us in regard to these the same as in respect to culinary vessels. The only tools were a few pocket-knives, and perhaps half-a-dozen hatchets which some infantrymen-principally members of the Third Michigan—were allowed to retain. Yet, despite all these drawbacks, we had quite a village of huts erected in a few days,—nearly enough, in fact, to afford tolerable shelter for the whole five hundred of us first-comers.

The wither and poles that grew in the swamp were bent into the shape of the semi-circular bows that support the canvas covers of army wagons, and both ends thrust in the ground. These formed the timbers of our dwellings. They were held in place by weaving in, basket-wise, a network of briers and vines. Tufts of the long leaves which are the distinguishing characteristic of the Georgia pine (popularly known as the "long-leaved pine") were wrought into this network until a thatch was formed, that was a fair protection against the rain—it was like the Irishman's unglazed window-sash, which "kep' out the coarsest uv the cold."

The results accomplished were as astonishing to us as to the Rebels, who would have lain unsheltered upon the sand until bleached out like field-rotted flax, before thinking to protect themselves in this way. As our village was approaching completion, the Rebel Sergeant who called the roll entered. He was very odd-looking. The cervical muscles were distorted in such a way as to suggest to us the name of "Wry-necked Smith," by which we always designated

him. Pete Bates, of the Third Michigan, who was the wag of our squad, accounted for Smith's condition by saying that while on dress parade once the Colonel of Smith's regiment had commanded "eyes right," and then forgot to give the order "front." Smith, being a good soldier, had kept his eyes in the position of gazing at the buttons of the third man to the right, waiting for the order to restore them to their natural direction, until they had become permanently fixed in their obliquity and he was compelled to go through life taking a biased view of all things.

Smith walked in, made a diagonal survey of the encampment, which, if he had ever seen "Mitchell's Geography," probably reminded him of the picture of a Kaffir village, in that instructive but awfully dull book, and then expressed the opinion that usually welled up to every Rebel's lips:

"Well, I'll be durned, if you Yanks don't just beat the devil."

Of course, we replied with the well-worn prison joke, that we supposed we did, as we beat the Rebels, who were worse than the devil.

There rode in among us, a few days after our arrival, an old man whose collar bore the wreathed stars of a Major General. Heavy white locks fell from beneath his slouched hat, nearly to his shoulders. Sunken gray eyes, too dull and cold to light up, marked a hard, stony face, the salient feature of which was a thin-upped, compressed mouth, with corners drawn down deeply—the mouth which seems the world over to be the index of selfish, cruel, sulky malignance. It is such a mouth as has the schoolboy—the coward of the play ground, who delights in pulling off the wings of flies. It is such a mouth as we can imagine some remorseless inquisitor to have had—that is, not an inquisitor filled with holy zeal for what he mistakenly thought the cause of Christ demanded, but a spleeny, envious, rancorous shaveling, who tortured men from hatred of their superiority to him, and sheer love of inflicting pain.

The rider was John H. Winder, Commissary General of Prisoners, Baltimorean renegade and the malign genius to whose account should be charged the deaths of more gallant men than all the inquisitors of the world ever slew by the less dreadful rack and wheel. It was he who in August could point to the three thousand and eighty-one new made graves for that month, and exultingly tell his hearer that he was "doing more for the Confederacy than twenty regiments."

His lineage was in accordance with his character. His father was that General William H. Winder, whose poltroonery at Bladensburg, in 1814, nullified the resistance of the gallant Commodore Barney, and gave Washington to the British.

The father was a coward and an incompetent; the son, always cautiously distant from the scene of hostilities, was the tormentor of those whom the fortunes of war, and the arms of brave men threw into his hands.

Winder gazed at us stonily for a few minutes without speaking, and, turning, rode out again.

Our troubles, from that hour, rapidly increased.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PLANTATION NEGROS—NOT STUPID TO BE LOYAL—THEIR DITHYRAMBIC MUSIC— COPPERHEAD OPINION OF LONGFELLOW.

The stockade was not quite finished at the time of our arrival—a gap of several hundred feet appearing at the southwest corner. A gang of about two hundred negros were at work felling trees, hewing legs, and placing them upright in the trenches. We had an opportunity—soon to disappear forever—of studying the workings of the “peculiar institution” in its very home. The negros were of the lowest field-hand class, strong, dull, ox-like, but each having in our eyes an admixture of cunning and secretiveness that their masters pretended was not in them. Their demeanor toward us illustrated this. We were the objects of the most supreme interest to them, but when near us and in the presence of a white Rebel, this interest took the shape of stupid, open-eyed, open-mouthed wonder, something akin to the look on the face of the rustic lout, gazing for the first time upon a locomotive or a steam threshing machine. But if chance threw one of them near us when he thought himself unobserved by the Rebels, the blank, vacant face lighted up with an entirely different expression. He was no longer the credulous yokel who believed the Yankees were only slightly modified devils, ready at any instant to return to their original horn-and-tail condition and snatch him away to the bluest kind of perdition; he knew, apparently quite as well as his master, that they were in some way his friends and allies, and he lost no opportunity in communicating his appreciation of that fact, and of offering his

services in any possible way. And these offers were sincere. It is the testimony of every Union prisoner in the South that he was never betrayed by or disappointed in a field-negro, but could always approach any one of them with perfect confidence in his extending all the aid in his power, whether as a guide to escape, as sentinel to signal danger, or a purveyor of food. These services were frequently attended with the greatest personal risk, but they were none the less readily undertaken. This applies only to the field-hands; the house servants were treacherous and wholly unreliable. Very many of our men who managed to get away from the prisons were recaptured through their betrayal by house servants, but none were retaken where a field hand could prevent it.

We were much interested in watching the negro work. They wove in a great deal of their peculiar, wild, mournful music, whenever the character of the labor permitted. They seemed to sing the music for the music's sake alone, and were as heedless of the fitness of the accompanying words, as the composer of a modern opera is of his libretto. One middle aged man, with a powerful, mellow baritone, like the round, full notes of a French horn, played by a virtuoso, was the musical leader of the party. He never seemed to bother himself about air, notes or words, but improvised all as he went along, and he sang as the spirit moved him. He would suddenly break out with—

"Oh, he's gone up dah, nevah to come back agin,"

At this every darkey within hearing would roll out, in admirable consonance with the pitch, air and time started by the leader—

"O-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!"

Then would ring out from the leader as from the throbbing lips of a silver trumpet

"Lord bress him soul; I done hope he is happy now!"

And the antiphonal two hundred would chant back

"O-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!"

And so on for hours. They never seemed to weary of singing, and we certainly did not of listening to them. The absolute independence of the conventionalities of tune and sentiment, gave them freedom to wander through a kaleideoscopic

variety of harmonic effects, as spontaneous and changeful as the song of a bird.

I sat one evening, long after the shadows of night had fallen upon the hillside, with one of my chums—a Frank Berkstresser, of the Ninth Maryland Infantry, who before enlisting was a mathematical tutor in college at Hancock, Maryland. As we listened to the unwearying flow of melody from the camp of the laborers, I thought of and repeated to him Longfellow's fine lines:

THE SLAVE SINGING AT MIDNIGHT.

And the voice of his devotion Filled my soul with strong emotion; For its tones by turns were glad Sweetly solemn, wildly sad.

Paul and Silas, in their prison, Sang of Christ, the Lord arisen, And an earthquake's arm of might Broke their dungeon gates at night.

But, alas, what holy angel Brings the slave this glad evangel And what earthquake's arm of might. Breaks his prison gags at night.

Said I: "Now, isn't that fine, Berkstresser?"

He was a Democrat, of fearfully pro-slavery ideas, and he replied, sententiously:

"O, the poetry's tolerable, but the sentiment's damnable."

CHAPTER XVIII.

SCHEMES AND PLANS TO ESCAPE—SCALING THE STOCKADE—ESTABLISHING THE DEAD LINE—THE FIRST MAN KILLED.

The official designation of our prison was "Camp Sumpter," but this was scarcely known outside of the Rebel documents, reports and orders. It was the same way with the prison five miles from Millen, to which we were afterward transferred. The Rebels styled it officially "Camp Lawton," but we called it always "Millen."

Having our huts finished, the next solicitude was about escape, and this was the burden of our thoughts, day and night. We held conferences, at which every man

was required to contribute all the geographical knowledge of that section of Georgia that he might have left over from his schoolboy days, and also that gained by persistent questioning of such guards and other Rebels as he had come in contact with. When first landed in the prison we were as ignorant of our whereabouts as if we had been dropped into the center of Africa. But one of the prisoners was found to have a fragment of a school atlas, in which was an outline map of Georgia, that had Macon, Atlanta, Milledgeville, and Savannah laid down upon it. As we knew we had come southward from Macon, we felt pretty certain we were in the southwestern corner of the State. Conversations with guards and others gave us the information that the Chattahooche flowed some two score of miles to the westward, and that the Flint lay a little nearer on the east. Our map showed that these two united and flowed together into Appalachicola Bay, where, some of us remembered, a newspaper item had said that we had gunboats stationed. The creek that ran through the stockade flowed to the east, and we reasoned that if we followed its course we would be led to the Flint, down which we could float on a log or raft to the Appalachicola. This was the favorite scheme of the party with which I sided. Another party believed the most feasible plan was to go northward, and endeavor to gain the mountains, and thence get into East Tennessee.

But the main thing was to get away from the stockade; this, as the French say of all first steps, was what would cost.

Our first attempt was made about a week after our arrival. We found two logs on the east side that were a couple of feet shorter than the rest, and it seemed as if they could be successfully scaled. About fifty of us resolved to make the attempt. We made a rope twenty-five or thirty feet long, and strong enough to bear a man, out of strings and strips of cloth. A stout stick was fastened to the end, so that it would catch on the logs on either side of the gap. On a night dark enough to favor our scheme, we gathered together, drew cuts to determine each boy’s place in the line, fell in single rank, according to this arrangement, and marched to the place. The line was thrown skillfully, the stick caught fairly in the notch, and the boy who had drawn number one climbed up amid a suspense so keen that I could hear my heart beating. It seemed ages before he reached the top, and that the noise he made must certainly attract the attention of the guard. It did not. We saw our comrade’s. figure outlined against the sky as he slid, over the top, and then heard the dull thump as he sprang to the ground on the other side. “Number two,” was whispered by our leader, and he performed the feat as successfully as his predecessor. “Number, three,” and he followed noiselessly

and quickly. Thus it went on, until, just as we heard number fifteen drop, we also heard a Rebel voice say in a vicious undertone:

“Halt! halt, there, d—n you!”

This was enough. The game was up; we were discovered, and the remaining thirty-five of us left that locality with all the speed in our heels, getting away just in time to escape a volley which a squad of guards, posted in the lookouts, poured upon the spot where we had been standing.

The next morning the fifteen who had got over the Stockade were brought in, each chained to a sixty-four pound ball. Their story was that one of the N’Yaarkers, who had become cognizant of our scheme, had sought to obtain favor in the Rebel eyes by betraying us. The Rebels stationed a squad at the crossing place, and as each man dropped down from the Stockade he was caught by the shoulder, the muzzle of a revolver thrust into his face, and an order to surrender whispered into his ear. It was expected that the guards in the sentry-boxes would do such execution among those of us still inside as would prove a warning to other would-be escapes. They were defeated in this benevolent intention by the readiness with which we divined the meaning of that incautiously loud halt, and our alacrity in leaving the unhealthy locality.

The traitorous N’Yaarker was rewarded with a detail into the commissary department, where he fed and fattened like a rat that had secured undisturbed homestead rights in the center of a cheese. When the miserable remnant of us were leaving Andersonville months afterward, I saw him, sleek, rotund, and well-clothed, lounging leisurely in the door of a tent. He regarded us a moment contemptuously, and then went on conversing with a fellow N’Yaarker, in the foul slang that none but such as he were low enough to use.

I have always imagined that the fellow returned home, at the close of the war, and became a prominent member of Tweed’s gang.

We protested against the barbarity of compelling men to wear irons for exercising their natural right of attempting to escape, but no attention was paid to our protest.

Another result of this abortive effort was the establishment of the notorious “Dead Line.” A few days later a gang of negros came in and drove a line of stakes down at a distance of twenty feet from the stockade. They nailed upon

this a strip of stuff four inches wide, and then an order was issued that if this was crossed, or even touched, the guards would fire upon the offender without warning.

Our surveyor figured up this new contraction of our space, and came to the conclusion that the Dead Line and the Swamp took up about three acres, and we were left now only thirteen acres. This was not of much consequence then, however, as we still had plenty of room.

The first man was killed the morning after the Dead-Line was put up. The victim vas a German, wearing the white crescent of the Second Division of the Eleventh Corps, whom we had nicknamed “Sigel.” Hardship and exposure had crazed him, and brought on a severe attack of St. Vitus’s dance. As he went hobbling around with a vacuous grin upon his face, he spied an old piece of cloth lying on the ground inside the Dead Line. He stooped down and reached under for it. At that instant the guard fired. The charge of ball-and-buck entered the poor old fellow’s shoulder and tore through his body. He fell dead, still clutching the dirty rag that had cost him his Life.

CHAPTER XIX.

CAPT. HENRI WIRZ—SOME DESCRIPTION OF A SMALL-MINDED PERSONAGE, WHO GAINED GREAT NOTORIETY—FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH HIS DISCIPLINARY METHOD.

The emptying of the prisons at Danville and Richmond into Andersonville went on slowly during the month of March. They came in by train loads of from five hundred to eight hundred, at intervals of two or three days. By the end of the month there were about five thousand in the stockade. There was a fair amount of space for this number, and as yet we suffered no inconvenience from our crowding, though most persons would fancy that thirteen acres of ground was a rather limited area for five thousand men to live, move and have their being a upon. Yet a few weeks later we were to see seven times that many packed into that space.

One morning a new Rebel officer came in to superintend calling the roll. He was an undersized, fidgety man, with an insignificant face, and a mouth that protruded like a rabbit’s. His bright little eyes, like those of a squirrel or a rat,

assisted in giving his countenance a look of kinship to the family of rodent animals—a genus which lives by stealth and cunning, subsisting on that which it can steal away from stronger and braver creatures. He was dressed in a pair of gray trousers, with the other part of his body covered with a calico garment, like that which small boys used to wear, called “waists.” This was fastened to the pantaloons by buttons, precisely as was the custom with the garments of boys struggling with the orthography of words in two syllables. Upon his head was perched a little gray cap. Sticking in his belt, and fastened to his wrist by a strap two or three feet long, was one of those formidable looking, but harmless English revolvers, that have ten barrels around the edge of the cylinder, and fire a musket-bullet from the center. The wearer of this composite costume, and bearer of this amateur arsenal, stepped nervously about and sputtered volubly in very broken English. He said to Wry-Necked Smith:

“Py Gott, you don’t vatch dem dam Yankees glose enough! Dey are schlippin’ rount, and peatin’ you efery dimes.”

This was Captain Henri Wirz, the new commandant of the interior of the prison. There has been a great deal of misapprehension of the character of Wirz. He is usually regarded as a villain of large mental caliber, and with a genius for cruelty. He was nothing of the kind. He was simply contemptible, from whatever point of view he was studied. Gnat-brained, cowardly, and feeble natured, he had not a quality that commanded respect from any one who knew him. His cruelty did not seem designed so much as the ebullitions of a peevish, snarling little temper, united to a mind incapable of conceiving the results of his acts, or understanding the pain he was Inflicting.

I never heard anything of his profession or vocation before entering the army. I always believed, however, that he had been a cheap clerk in a small dry-goods store, a third or fourth rate book-keeper, or something similar. Imagine, if you please, one such, who never had brains or self-command sufficient to control himself, placed in command of thirty-five thousand men. Being a fool he could not help being an infliction to them, even with the best of intentions, and Wirz was not troubled with good intentions.

I mention the probability of his having been a dry-goods clerk or book-keeper, not with any disrespect to two honorable vocations, but because Wirz had had some training as an accountant, and this was what gave him the place over us. Rebels, as a rule, are astonishingly ignorant of arithmetic and accounting,

generally. They are good shots, fine horsemen, ready speakers and ardent politicians, but, like all noncommercial people, they flounder hopelessly in what people of this section would consider simple mathematical processes. One of our constant amusements was in befogging and “beating” those charged with calling rolls and issuing rations. It was not at all difficult at times to make a hundred men count as a hundred and ten, and so on.

Wirz could count beyond one hundred, and this determined his selection for the place. His first move was a stupid change. We had been grouped in the natural way into hundreds and thousands. He re-arranged the men in “squads” of ninety, and three of these—two hundred and seventy men— into a “detachment.” The detachments were numbered in order from the North Gate, and the squads were numbered “one, two, three.” On the rolls this was stated after the man’s name. For instance, a chum of mine, and in the same squad with me, was Charles L. Soule, of the Third Michigan Infantry. His name appeared on the rolls:

“Chas. L. Soule, priv. Co. E, 8d Mich. Inf., 1-2.”

That is, he belonged to the Second Squad of the First Detachment.

Where Wirz got his, preposterous idea of organization from has always been a mystery to me. It was awkward in every way—in drawing rations, counting, dividing into messes, *etc.*

Wirz was not long in giving us a taste of his quality. The next morning after his first appearance he came in when roll-call was sounded, and ordered all the squads and detachments to form, and remain standing in ranks until all were counted. Any soldier will say that there is no duty more annoying and difficult than standing still in ranks for any considerable length of time, especially when there is nothing to do or to engage the attention. It took Wirz between two and three hours to count the whole camp, and by that time we of the first detachments were almost all out of ranks. Thereupon Wirz announced that no rations would be issued to the camp that day. The orders to stand in ranks were repeated the next morning, with a warning that a failure to obey would be punished as that of the previous day had been. Though we were so hungry, that, to use the words of a Thirty-Fifth Pennsylvanian standing next to me—his “big intestines were eating his little ones up,” it was impossible to keep the rank formation during the long hours. One man after another straggled away, and again we lost our rations. That afternoon we became desperate. Plots were

considered for a daring assault to force the gates or scale the stockade. The men were crazy enough to attempt anything rather than sit down and patiently starve. Many offered themselves as leaders in any attempt that it might be thought best to make. The hopelessness of any such venture was apparent, even to famished men, and the propositions went no farther than inflammatory talk.

The third morning the orders were again repeated. This time we succeeded in remaining in ranks in such a manner as to satisfy Wirz, and we were given our rations for that day, but those of the other days were permanently withheld.

That afternoon Wirz ventured into camp alone. He vas assailed with a storm of curses and execrations, and a shower of clubs. He pulled out his revolver, as if to fire upon his assailants. A yell was raised to take his pistol away from him and a crowd rushed forward to do this. Without waiting to fire a shot, he turned and ran to the gate for dear life. He did not come in again for a long while, and never afterward without a retinue of guards.

CHAPTER XX.

PRIZE-FIGHT AMONG THE N'YAARKERS—A GREAT MANY FORMALITIES, AND LITTLE BLOOD SPILT—A FUTILE ATTEMPT TO RECOVER A WATCH—DEFEAT OF THE LAW AND ORDER PARTY.

One of the train-loads from Richmond was almost wholly made up of our old acquaintances—the N'Yaarkers. The number of these had swelled to four hundred or five hundred—all leagued together in the fellowship of crime.

We did not manifest any keen desire for intimate social relations with them, and they did not seem to hunger for our society, so they moved across the creek to the unoccupied South Side, and established their camp there, at a considerable distance from us.

One afternoon a number of us went across to their camp, to witness a fight according to the rules of the Prize Ring, which was to come off between two professional pugilists. These were a couple of bounty-jumpers who had some little reputation in New York sporting circles, under the names of the "Staleybridge Chicken" and the "Haarlem Infant."

On the way from Richmond a cast-iron skillet, or spider, had been stolen by the crowd from the Rebels. It was a small affair, holding a half gallon, and worth to-day about fifty cents. In Andersonville its worth was literally above rubies. Two men belonging to different messes each claimed the ownership of the utensil, on the ground of being most active in securing it. Their claims were strenuously supported by their respective messes, at the heads of which were the aforesaid Infant and Chicken. A great deal of strong talk, and several indecisive knockdowns resulted in an agreement to settle the matter by wager of battle between the Infant and Chicken.

When we arrived a twenty-four foot ring had been prepared by drawing a deep mark in the sand. In diagonally opposite corners of these the seconds were kneeling on one knee and supporting their principals on the other by their sides they had little vessels of water, and bundles of rags to answer for sponges. Another corner was occupied by the umpire, a foul-mouthed, loud-tongued Tombs shyster, named Pete Bradley. A long-bodied, short-legged hoodlum, nicknamed “Heenan,” armed with a club, acted as ring keeper, and “belted” back, remorselessly, any of the spectators who crowded over the line. Did he see a foot obtruding itself so much as an inch over the mark in the sand—and the pressure from the crowd behind was so great that it was difficult for the front fellows to keep off the line—his heavy club and a blasting curse would fall upon the offender simultaneously.

Every effort was made to have all things conform as nearly as possible to the recognized practices of the “London Prize Ring.”

At Bradley’s call of “Time!” the principals would rise from their seconds’ knees, advance briskly to the scratch across the center of the ring, and spar away sharply for a little time, until one got in a blow that sent the other to the ground, where he would lie until his second picked him up, carried him back, washed his face off, and gave him a drink. He then rested until the next call of time.

This sort of performance went on for an hour or more, with the knockdowns and other casualities pretty evenly divided between the two. Then it became apparent that the Infant was getting more than he had storage room for. His interest in the skillet was evidently abating, the leering grin he wore upon his face during the early part of the engagement had disappeared long ago, as the successive “hot ones” which the Chicken had succeeded in planting upon his mouth, put it out of his power to “smile and smile,” “e’en though he might still be a villain.” He

began coming up to the scratch as sluggishly as a hired man starting out for his day's work, and finally he did not come up at all. A bunch of blood soaked rags was tossed into the air from his corner, and Bradley declared the Chicken to be the victor, amid enthusiastic cheers from the crowd.

We voted the thing rather tame. In the whole hour and a-half there was not so much savage fighting, not so much damage done, as a couple of earnest, but unscientific men, who have no time to waste, will frequently crowd into an impromptu affair not exceeding five minutes in duration.

Our next visit to the N'Yaarkers was on a different errand. The moment they arrived in camp we began to be annoyed by their depredations. Blankets—the sole protection of men—would be snatched off as they slept at night. Articles of clothing and cooking utensils would go the same way, and occasionally a man would be robbed in open daylight. All these, it was believed, with good reason, were the work of the N'Yaarkers, and the stolen things were conveyed to their camp. Occasionally depredators would be caught and beaten, but they would give a signal which would bring to their assistance the whole body of N'Yaarkers, and turn the tables on their assailants.

We had in our squad a little watchmaker named Dan Martin, of the Eighth New York Infantry. Other boys let him take their watches to tinker up, so as to make a show of running, and be available for trading to the guards.

One day Martin was at the creek, when a N'Yaarker asked him to let him look at a watch. Martin incautiously did so, when the N'Yaarker snatched it and sped away to the camp of his crowd. Martin ran back to us and told his story. This was the last feather which was to break the camel's back of our patience. Peter Bates, of the Third Michigan, the Sergeant of our squad, had considerable confidence in his muscular ability. He flamed up into mighty wrath, and swore a sulphurous oath that we would get that watch back, whereupon about two hundred of us avowed our willingness to help reclaim it.

Each of us providing ourselves with a club, we started on our errand. The rest of the camp—about four thousand—gathered on the hillside to watch us. We thought they might have sent us some assistance, as it was about as much their fight as ours, but they did not, and we were too proud to ask it. The crossing of the swamp was quite difficult. Only one could go over at a time, and he very slowly. The N'Yaarkers understood that trouble was pending, and they began

mustering to receive us. From the way they turned out it was evident that we should have come over with three hundred instead of two hundred, but it was too late then to alter the program. As we came up a stalwart Irishman stepped out and asked us what we wanted.

Bates replied: “We have come over to get a watch that one of your fellows took from one of ours, and by – we’re going to have it.”

The Irishman’s reply was equally explicit though not strictly logical in construction. Said he: “We havn’t got your watch, and be ye can’t have it.”

This joined the issue just as fairly as if it had been done by all the documentary formula that passed between Turkey and Russia prior to the late war. Bates and the Irishman then exchanged very derogatory opinions of each other, and began striking with their clubs. The rest of us took this as our cue, and each, selecting as small a N’Yaarker as we could readily find, sailed in.

There is a very expressive bit of slang coming into general use in the West, which speaks of a man “biting off more than he can chew.”

That is what we had done. We had taken a contract that we should have divided, and sub-let the bigger half. Two minutes after the engagement became general there was no doubt that we would have been much better off if we had staid on our own side of the creek. The watch was a very poor one, anyhow. We thought we would just say good day to our N’Yaark friends, and return home hastily. But they declined to be left so precipitately. They wanted to stay with us awhile. It was lots of fun for them, and for the, four thousand yelling spectators on the opposite hill, who were greatly enjoying our discomfiture. There was hardly enough of the amusement to go clear around, however, and it all fell short just before it reached us. We earnestly wished that some of the boys would come over and help us let go of the N’Yaarkers, but they were enjoying the thing too much to interfere.

We were driven down the hill, pell-mell, with the N’Yaarkers pursuing hotly with yell and blow. At the swamp we tried to make a stand to secure our passage across, but it was only partially successful. Very few got back without some severe hurts, and many received blows that greatly hastened their deaths.

After this the N’Yaarkers became bolder in their robberies, and more arrogant in their demeanor than ever, and we had the poor revenge upon those who would

not assist us, of seeing a reign of terror inaugurated over the whole camp.

CHAPTER XXI

DIMINISHING RATIONS—A DEADLY COLD RAIN—HOVERING OVER PITCH PINE FIRES —INCREASE ON MORTALITY—A THEORY OF HEALTH.

The rations diminished perceptibly day by day. When we first entered we each received something over a quart of tolerably good meal, a sweet potato, a piece of meat about the size of one's two fingers, and occasionally a spoonful of salt. First the salt disappeared. Then the sweet potato took unto itself wings and flew away, never to return. An attempt was ostensibly made to issue us cow-peas instead, and the first issue was only a quart to a detachment of two hundred and seventy men. This has two-thirds of a pint to each squad of ninety, and made but a few spoonfuls for each of the four messes in the squad. When it came to dividing among the men, the beans had to be counted. Nobody received enough to pay for cooking, and we were at a loss what to do until somebody suggested that we play poker for them. This met general acceptance, and after that, as long as beans were drawn, a large portion of the day was spent in absorbing games of "bluff" and "draw," at a bean "ante," and no "limit."

After a number of hours' diligent playing, some lucky or skillful player would be in possession of all the beans in a mess, a squad, and sometimes a detachment, and have enough for a good meal.

Next the meal began to diminish in quantity and deteriorate in quality. It became so exceedingly coarse that the common remark was that the next step would be to bring us the corn in the shock, and feed it to us like stock. Then meat followed suit with the rest. The rations decreased in size, and the number of days that we did not get any, kept constantly increasing in proportion to the days that we did, until eventually the meat bade us a final adieu, and joined the sweet potato in that undiscovered country from whose bourne no ration ever returned.

The fuel and building material in the stockade were speedily exhausted. The later comers had nothing whatever to build shelter with.

But, after the Spring rains had fairly set in, it seemed that we had not tasted misery until then. About the middle of March the windows of heaven opened, and it began a rain like that of the time of Noah. It was tropical in quantity and

persistency, and arctic in temperature. For dreary hours that lengthened into weary days and nights, and these again into never-ending weeks, the driving, drenching flood poured down upon the sodden earth, searching the very marrow of the five thousand hapless men against whose chilled frames it beat with pitiless monotony, and soaked the sand bank upon which we lay until it was like a sponge filled with ice-water. It seems to me now that it must have been two or three weeks that the sun was wholly hidden behind the dripping clouds, not shining out once in all that time. The intervals when it did not rain were rare and short. An hour's respite would be followed by a day of steady, regular pelting of the great rain drops.

I find that the report of the Smithsonian Institute gives the average annual rainfall in the section around Andersonville, at fifty-six inches- —nearly five feet—while that of foggy England is only thirty-two. Our experience would lead me to think that we got the five feet all at once.

We first comers, who had huts, were measurably better off than the later arrivals. It was much drier in our leaf-thatched tents, and we were spared much of the annoyance that comes from the steady dash of rain against the body for hours.

The condition of those who had no tents was truly pitiable.

They sat or lay on the hillside the live-long day and night, and took the washing flow with such gloomy composure as they could muster.

All soldiers will agree with me that there is no campaigning hardship comparable to a cold rain. One can brace up against the extremes of heat and cold, and mitigate their inclemency in various ways. But there is no escaping a long-continued, chilling rain. It seems to penetrate to the heart, and leach away the very vital force.

The only relief attainable was found in huddling over little fires kept alive by small groups with their slender stocks of wood. As this wood was all pitch-pine, that burned with a very sooty flame, the effect upon the appearance of the hoverers was, startling. Face, neck and hands became covered with mixture of lampblack and turpentine, forming a coating as thick as heavy brown paper, and absolutely irremovable by water alone. The hair also became of midnight blackness, and gummed up into elflocks of fantastic shape and effect. Any one of us could have gone on the negro minstrel stage, without changing a hair, and put

to blush the most elaborate make-up of the grotesque burnt-cork artists.

No wood was issued to us. The only way of getting it was to stand around the gate for hours until a guard off duty could be coaxed or hired to accompany a small party to the woods, to bring back a load of such knots and limbs as could be picked up. Our chief persuaders to the guards to do us this favor were rings, pencils, knives, combs, and such trifles as we might have in our pockets, and, more especially, the brass buttons on our uniforms. Rebel soldiers, like Indians, negros and other imperfectly civilized people, were passionately fond of bright and gaudy things. A handful of brass buttons would catch every one of them as swiftly and as surely as a piece of red flannel will a gudgeon. Our regular fee for an escort for three of us to the woods was six overcoat or dress-coat buttons, or ten or twelve jacket buttons. All in the mess contributed to this fund, and the fuel obtained was carefully guarded and husbanded.

This manner of conducting the wood business is a fair sample of the management, or rather the lack of it, of every other detail of prison administration. All the hardships we suffered from lack of fuel and shelter could have been prevented without the slightest expense or trouble to the Confederacy. Two hundred men allowed to go out on parole, and supplied with ages, would have brought in from the adjacent woods, in a week's time, enough material to make everybody comfortable tents, and to supply all the fuel needed.

The mortality caused by the storm was, of course, very great. The official report says the total number in the prison in March was four thousand six hundred and three, of whom two hundred and eighty-three died.

Among the first to die was the one whom we expected to live longest. He was by much the largest man in prison, and was called, because of this, "BIG JOE." He was a Sergeant in the Fifth Pennsylvania Cavalry, and seemed the picture of health. One morning the news ran through the prison that "Big Joe is dead," and a visit to his squad showed his stiff, lifeless form, occupying as much ground as Goliath's, after his encounter with David.

His early demise was an example of a general law, the workings of which few in the army failed to notice. It was always the large and strong who first succumbed to hardship. The stalwart, huge-limbed, toil-inured men sank down earliest on the march, yielded soonest to malarial influences, and fell first under the combined effects of home-sickness, exposure and the privations of army life.

The slender, withy boys, as supple and weak as cats, had apparently the nine lives of those animals. There were few exceptions to this rule in the army—there were none in Andersonville. I can recall few or no instances where a large, strong, “hearty” man lived through a few months of imprisonment. The survivors were invariably youths, at the verge of manhood,—slender, quick, active, medium-statured fellows, of a cheerful temperament, in whom one would have expected comparatively little powers of endurance.

The theory which I constructed for my own private use in accounting for this phenomenon I offer with proper diffidence to others who may be in search of a hypothesis to explain facts that they have observed. It is this:

a. The circulation of the blood maintains health, and consequently life by carrying away from the various parts of the body the particles of worn-out and poisonous tissue, and replacing them with fresh, structure-building material.

b. The man is healthiest in whom this process goes on most freely and continuously.

c. Men of considerable muscular power are disposed to be sluggish; the exertion of great strength does not favor circulation. It rather retards it, and disturbs its equilibrium by congesting the blood in quantities in the sets of muscles called into action.

d. In light, active men, on the other hand, the circulation goes on perfectly and evenly, because all the parts are put in motion, and kept so in such a manner as to promote the movement of the blood to every extremity. They do not strain one set of muscles by long continued effort, as a strong man does, but call one into play after another.

There is no compulsion on the reader to accept this speculation at any valuation whatever. There is not even any charge for it. I will lay down this simple axiom:

No strong man, is a healthy man

from the athlete in the circus who lifts pieces of artillery and catches cannon balls, to the exhibition swell in a country gymnasium. If my theory is not a sufficient explanation of this, there is nothing to prevent the reader from building up one to suit him better.

CHAPTER XXII.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ALABAMIANS AND GEORGIANS—DEATH OF "POLL PARROTT"— A GOOD JOKE UPON THE GUARD—A BRUTAL RASCAL.

There were two regiments guarding us—the Twenty-Sixth Alabama and the Fifty-Fifth Georgia. Never were two regiments of the same army more different. The Alabamians were the superiors of the Georgians in every way that one set of men could be superior to another. They were manly, soldierly, and honorable, where the Georgians were treacherous and brutal. We had nothing to complain of at the hands of the Alabamians; we suffered from the Georgians everything that mean-spirited cruelty could devise. The Georgians were always on the lookout for something that they could torture into such apparent violation of orders, as would justify them in shooting men down; the Alabamians never fired until they were satisfied that a deliberate offense was intended. I can recall of my own seeing at least a dozen instances where men of the Fifty-Fifth Georgia Killed prisoners under the pretense that they were across the Dead Line, when the victims were a yard or more from the Dead Line, and had not the remotest idea of going any nearer.

The only man I ever knew to be killed by one of the Twenty-Sixth Alabama was named Hubbard, from Chicago, Ills., and a member of the Thirty-Eighth Illinois. He had lost one leg, and went hobbling about the camp on crutches, chattering continually in a loud, discordant voice, saying all manner of hateful and annoying things, wherever he saw an opportunity. This and his beak-like nose gained for him the name of "Poll Parrot." His misfortune caused him to be tolerated where another man would have been suppressed. By-and-by he gave still greater cause for offense by his obsequious attempts to curry favor with Captain Wirz, who took him outside several times for purposes that were not well explained. Finally, some hours after one of Poll Parrot's visits outside, a Rebel officer came in with a guard, and, proceeding with suspicious directness to a tent which was the mouth of a large tunnel that a hundred men or more had been quietly pushing forward, broke the tunnel in, and took the occupants of the tent outside for punishment. The question that demanded immediate solution then was:

“Who is the traitor who has informed the Rebels?”

Suspicion pointed very strongly to “Poll Parrot.” By the next morning the evidence collected seemed to amount to a certainty, and a crowd caught the Parrot with the intention of lynching him. He succeeded in breaking away from them and ran under the Dead Line, near where I was sitting in, my tent. At first it looked as if he had done this to secure the protection of the guard. The latter—a Twenty-Sixth Alabamian— ordered him out. Poll Parrot rose up on his one leg, put his back against the Dead Line, faced the guard, and said in his harsh, cackling voice:

“No; I won’t go out. If I’ve lost the confidence of my comrades I want to die.”

Part of the crowd were taken back by this move, and felt disposed to accept it as a demonstration of the Parrot’s innocence. The rest thought it was a piece of bravado, because of his belief that the Rebels would not injure, him after he had served them. They renewed their yells, the guard again ordered the Parrot out, but the latter, tearing open his blouse, cackled out:

“No, I won’t go; fire at me, guard. There’s my heart shoot me right there.”

There was no help for it. The Rebel leveled his gun and fired. The charge struck the Parrot’s lower jaw, and carried it completely away, leaving his tongue and the roof of his mouth exposed. As he was carried back to die, he wagged his tongue rigorously, in attempting to speak, but it was of no use.

The guard set his gun down and buried his face in his hands. It was the only time that I saw a sentinel show anything but exultation at killing a Yankee.

A ludicrous contrast to this took place a few nights later. The rains had ceased, the weather had become warmer, and our spirits rising with this increase in the comfort of our surroundings, a number of us were sitting around “Nosey”—a boy with a superb tenor voice—who was singing patriotic songs. We were coming in strong on the chorus, in a way that spoke vastly more for our enthusiasm for the Union than our musical knowledge. “Nosey” sang the “Star Spangled Banner,” “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” “Brave Boys are They,” etc., capitally, and we threw our whole lungs into the chorus. It was quite dark, and while our noise was going on the guards changed, new men coming on duty. Suddenly, bang! went the gun of the guard in the box about fifty feet away from us. We knew it was a Fifty-Fifth Georgian, and supposed that, irritated at our

singing, he was trying to kill some of us for spite. At the sound of the gun we jumped up and scattered. As no one gave the usual agonized yell of a prisoner when shot, we supposed the ball had not taken effect. We could hear the sentinel ramming down another cartridge, hear him “return rammer,” and cock his rifle. Again the gun cracked, and again there was no sound of anybody being hit. Again we could hear the sentry churning down another cartridge. The drums began beating the long roll in the camps, and officers could be heard turning the men out. The thing was becoming exciting, and one of us sang out to the guard:

“S-a-y! What the are you shooting at, any how?”

“I’m a shootin’ at that –- –- Yank thar by the Dead Line, and by – if you’uns don’t take him in I’ll blow the whole head offn him.”

“What Yank? Where’s any Yank?”

“Why, thar—right thar—a-standin’ agin the Ded Line.”

“Why, you Rebel fool, that’s a chunk of wood. You can’t get any furlough for shooting that!”

At this there was a general roar from the rest of the camp, which the other guards took up, and as the Reserves came double-quicking up, and learned the occasion of the alarm, they gave the rascal who had been so anxious to kill somebody a torrent of abuse for having disturbed them.

A part of our crowd had been out after wood during the day, and secured a piece of a log as large as two of them could carry, and bringing it in, stood it up near the Dead Line. When the guard mounted to his post he was sure he saw a temerarious Yankee in front of him, and hastened to slay him.

It was an unusual good fortune that nobody was struck. It was very rare that the guards fired into the prison without hitting at least one person. The Georgia Reserves, who formed our guards later in the season, were armed with an old gun called a Queen Anne musket, altered to percussion. It carried a bullet as big as a large marble, and three or four buckshot. When fired into a group of men it was sure to bring several down.

I was standing one day in the line at the gate, waiting for a chance to go out after wood. A Fifty-Fifth Georgian was the gate guard, and he drew a line in the sand

with his bayonet which we should not cross. The crowd behind pushed one man till he put his foot a few inches over the line, to save himself from falling; the guard sank a bayonet through the foot as quick as a flash.

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