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Title: A Boy Trooper with Sheridan

Author: Stanton P. Allen

Release date: February 26, 2014 [EBook #45024]

Most recently updated: February 21, 2021

Language: English

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**A BOY TROOPER WITH  
SHERIDAN**

**By Stanton P. Allen**

**First Massachusetts Cavalry**

**Boston**

**Lothrop Publishing Company**

**1899,**

# A BOY TROOPER

WITH SHERIDAN

BY

STANTON P. ALLEN

FIRST MASSACHUSETTS CAVALRY

*ILLUSTRATED*

BOSTON

LOTHROP PUBLISHING COMPANY

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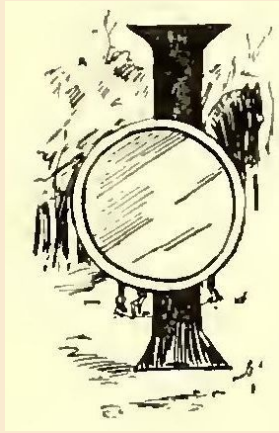
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## CHAPTER I.

*More than He Bargained for—The War Fever and How it Affected the Boys—A Disbanded Cavalryman—Going to School in Uniform—Cousin Tom from Shiloh?—Running Away to Enlist—The Draft—In the Griswold Cavalry—Habeas Corf used.*



[Original Size](#)

IN the local columns of the Troy (N. Y.) Daily Times of September 1, 1863, the following news:

### MORE THAN HE BARGAINED FOR.

"A few days ago one Stanton P. Allen of Berlin, enlisted in Capt. Boutelle's company of the twenty-first (Griswold) cavalry. We are not informed whether it was Stanton's bearing the same name as the Secretary of War, or his mature cast of countenance that caused him to be accepted; for he was regarded as nineteen years of age, while, in reality but fourteen summers had passed over his youthful, but ambitious brow. Stanton received a portion of his bounty and invested himself in one of those 'neat, but not gaudy' yellow and blue suits that constitute the uniform of the Griswold boys. A few days intervened. Stanton's 'parients,' on the vine-clad hills of Berlin, heard that their darling boy had 'gone for a sojer.' Their emotions were indescribable. 'So young and yet so valiant,' thought his female relatives. 'How can I get him out?' was the more practical query of his papa. The ways the ways and means were soon discovered. A

writ of *habeas corpus* was procured from Judge Robertson, and as the proof was clear that Stanton was only fourteen years old, he was duly discharged from the service of the United States. But the end was not yet. A warrant was issued for the recruit, charging him with obtaining bounty and uniform under false pretenses, and a release from the military service proved only a transfer to the civil power. Stanton found that he had made a poor exchange of 'situations,' and last evening gave bail before Judge Robertson in the sum of five hundred dollars."

In order that the correctness of history may not be questioned, the subject of the above deems it expedient to place on record an outline of the circumstances leading up to the incident related by the *Times*.

At the breaking out of the war my father resided in Berlin, N. Y., on the Brimmer farm, three miles or so from the village. I was twelve years old, but larger than many lads of sixteen. I was attacked by the war fever as soon as the news that Fort Sumter had been fired on reached the Brimmer farm. Nathaniel Bass worked for my father that year. The war fever got hold of Nat after haying was over, and one night along in the latter part of August, he said to me:

"I'm going to war."

"You don't mean it, Nat?"

"Yes, I do. The fall's work won't last long, and they say they're paying thirteen dollars a month and found for soldiers. That's better'n doing chores for your board."

"If you do go I'll run away and enlist."

"No; you're too young to go to war. You must wait till you're an able-bodied man—that's what the bills call for."

"O, dear! I'm afraid you'll whip all the rebels before I can get there."

I cried myself to sleep that night.

How I envied Nat when he came home on a three days' furlough clad in a full suit of cavalry uniform! He enlisted September 20, 1861, in the Second New York cavalry. The regiment was known as the Northern Black-horse cavalry. Nat allowed me to try on his jacket, and I strutted about in it for an hour or so. I felt that even in wearing it for a short time I was doing something toward whipping the Southerners. But Bass's furlough came to an end, and he returned to his regiment.

Nat came back in time to help us plant in the spring of 1862. The regiment went as far as Camp Stoneman, near Washington, where it remained in winter quarters. It was not accepted by the United States Government, and was never mounted. The reason given was that the Government had more cavalry than it could handle, and the Northern Black-horse cavalry was disbanded. The regiment was raised by Colonel Andrew J. Morrison, who subsequently served with distinction at the head of a brigade.

Nat came home "chock-full" of war stories. He was just as much a hero in my estimation as he would have been if the rebels had shot him all to pieces. I never tired of listening to his yarns about the experiences of the regiment at Camp Stoneman. He had not seen a rebel, dead or alive, but that was not his fault. Nat was something of a singer, and he had a song describing the adventures of his regiment. The soldiers were referred to as "rats." I recall one verse and the chorus:

"The rats they were mustered,  
And then they were paid;  
'And now,' says Col. Morrison,  
'We'll have a dress parade.'  
Lally boo!  
Lally boo, oo, oo,  
Lally bang, bang, bang,

Lally boo, oo, oo,  
Lally bang!"

I would join in the chorus, and although I did not understand the sentiment—if there was any in the song—I was ready to adopt it as a national hymn.

I was the proudest boy in the Brimmer district at the opening of school the next winter. I fairly "paralyzed" the teacher, George Powell, and all the scholars, when I marched in wearing Nat's cavalry jacket and forage cap. He had made me a present of them. I was the lion of the day. The jacket fitted me like a sentry-box, but the girls voted the rig "perfectly lovely." Half a dozen big boys threatened to punch my eyes out if I did not "leave that ugly old jacket at home." I enjoyed the notoriety, and continued to wear the jacket. But one day Jim Duffy, a boy who worked for Tom Jones, came into the school with an artillery jacket on. It was of the same pattern as the jacket I wore, but had red trimmings in place of yellow. The girls decided that Jim's jacket was the prettier. I made up my mind to challenge Jim at the afternoon recess, but my anger moderated as I heard one of the small girls remark:

"But Jim ain't got no sojer cap, so he ain't no real sojer—he's only a make-b'lief."

"Sure enough!" chorused the girls.

Then I expected Duffy to challenge me, but he did not, and there was no fight.

That same winter Thomas Torrey of Williamstown came to our house visiting. Tom was one of the first to respond to the call for volunteers to put down the rebellion. He was in the Western army, and fought under Grant at Shiloh. He received a wound in the second day's fight, May 7, 1862, that crippled him for life. He had his right arm extended to ram home a cartridge, when a rebel bullet struck him in the wrist. The ball shattered the bone of the forearm and sped on into the shoulder, which it disabled. Tom's good right arm was useless forever after.

Tom was a better singer than Bass, and as we claimed him as our cousin, it seemed as if our family had already shed blood to put down the rebellion.

While the wounded soldier remained at our house and told war stories and sang the patriotic songs of the day, my enthusiasm was kept at one hundred and twenty degrees in the shade. I made up my mind that I would go to war or "bust a blood vessel." I assisted in dressing Tom's shattered arm once or twice, but even that did not quench the patriotic fire that had been kindled in my breast by Bass's war stories and fanned almost into a conflagration by Tom's recital of his experiences in actual combat.

I discarded Nat's "Lally boo" and transferred my allegiance to a stirring song sung by Tom:

"At Pittsburg Landing  
Our troops fought very hard;  
They killed old Johnston  
And conquered Beauregard."

Chorus: "Hoist up the flag;  
Long may it wave  
Over the Union boys,  
So noble and so brave."

I laid awake nights and studied up plans to go to Pittsburg Landing and run a bayonet through the rebel who shot "Cousin Tom."

The summer of 1862 was a very trying time. Charley Taylor of Berlin, opened a recruiting office in the village and enlisted men for Company B, One hundred and twenty-fifth New York volunteers. I wanted to go, but when I suggested it to my father he remarked:

"They don't take boys who can't hoe a man's row. You'll have to wait five or six years."

When the Berlin boys came home on furlough from Troy, to show themselves in their new uniforms and bid their friends good-by, it seemed to me that my chances of reaching the front in time to help put down the rebellion, were slim indeed. I reasoned that if Nat Bass could have driven the rebels into Richmond alone—as he said he could have done if he had been given an opportunity—the war would be brought to a speedy close when Company B was turned loose upon the Confederates in Virginia. It seemed that nearly everybody was going in Company B except Bass and I. I urged Nat to go, but he said it would be considered "small potatoes for a man who had served in the cavalry to re-enlist in the infantry." If I had not overlooked the fact that Nat had never straddled a horse during his six months' service in Col. Morrison's regiment, I might have questioned the consistency of Bass's position.

The One hundred and twenty-fifth left Troy Saturday, August 30, 1862, and on the same day the second battle of Bull Run was fought, resulting in the retreat of the Union Army into the fortifications around Washington.

"I told you so," said Bass, when the news of the battle reached Berlin. "The boys in Company B will have their hands full. They will reach the front in time to take part in this fall's campaign. I shall wait till next summer, and then if there's a call for another cavalry regiment to fight the rebels, I'll go down and help whip 'em some more."

When the news of Grant's glorious capture of Vicksburg, and Meade's splendid victory at Gettysburg, was received in Berlin, I made up my mind that the crisis had arrived. I said to Bass:

"Nat, our time's come."

"How so?"

"We've waited a year, and they've called for another regiment of cavalry."

"Then I believe I'll go."

"So'll I."

"Where's the regiment being raised?"

"In Troy."

"Will your father let you go?"

"Of course not—don't say a word to him. But I tell you, Nat, I'm going. The Union armies are knocking the life out of the rebels east and west, and it's now or never. I can't stand it any longer. I'm going to war."

I was only a boy—born February 20, 1849—but thanks to an iron constitution, splendid health and a vigorous training in farm work, I had developed into a lad who would pass muster for nineteen almost anywhere.

Bass got away from me. My father drove to Troy with Nat, who enlisted August 7, in Company E, of the Griswold cavalry. The regiment was taken to the front and into active service by the late General William B. Tibbits of Troy.

About the first of August a circus pitched its tents in Berlin. Everybody went to the show. While the acrobats were vaulting about in the ring, a lad in a cavalry uniform entered the tent and took a seat not far from where I was sitting. The circus was a tame affair to me after that. A live elephant was nowhere when a boy in blue was around.

"Who's that soldier?" I asked my best girl.

"That's Henry Tracy; I wish he'd look this way. He's too sweet for anything."

"Where's he from?"

"Off the mountain, from the Dutch settlement near the Dyken pond. Isn't he lovely! What a nobby suit!"

When the circus was out, I managed to secure an interview with the "bold sojer boy," who informed me that he was in the same camp with Bass at Troy.

"How old are you?" I asked Tracy.

"I'm just eighteen," he answered, with a wink that gave me to understand that I was not to accept the statement as a positive fact.

"Do you think they'd take me?"

"Certainly; you're more'n eighteen."

"When are you going back?"

"Shall start to-night. Think you'll go along?"

"Yes; if you really think they'll take me."

"I'm sure they will; you just let me manage the thing for you."

"All right; I'm with you."

I went with Tracy that night—after he had seen his girl home. As we climbed the steep mountain, I expected every minute to hear the footsteps of a brigade of relatives in pursuit. We reached the Tracy domicile about midnight, and went to bed. I could not sleep. The frogs in the pond near the house kept up a loud chorus, led by a bull-frog with a deep bass voice. I had heard the frogs on other occasions when fishing in the mountain lakes, and the boys agreed that the burden of the frog chorus was:

You'd better go round!  
You'd better go round!  
We'll bite your bait off!  
We'll bite your bait off!

Somehow the chorus seemed that night to have been changed. As I lay there and listened for the sound of my father's wagon, the frogs sang after this fashion:

You'd better go home!  
You'd better go home!  
They'll shoot your head off!  
They'll shoot your head off!

And, oh! how that old bull-frog with the bass voice came in on the chorus:

"They'll shoot your head off!"

We got up at daylight, and walked over to the plank road and waited for the stage from Berlin to come along, en route to Troy. When the vehicle came in sight, I hid in the bushes until Tracy could reconnoiter and ascertain if my father was on board. He gave a signal that the coast was clear, and we took passage for the city.

"You're Alex Allen's boy?" the driver—Frank Maxon—said, as we took seats in the stage.

"What about it?"

"I heard 'em say at the post-office this morning that you'd run away."

"False report," said Tracy; "he's just going to Troy to bid me good-by."

"Well, he must be struck on you, as they say he never set eyes on you till yesterday."

The stage rattled into Troy about half-past ten o'clock. There was considerable excitement in the city over the draft. Soldiers were camped in the court-house yard and elsewhere. They were Michigan regiments, I think. There was a section of artillery in the yard of the hotel above the tunnel. I could not understand how it



was that the Government was obliged to resort to a draft to secure soldiers. To me it seemed that an able-bodied man who would not volunteer to put down the rebellion, was pretty "small potatoes."

But I was only a boy. Older persons did not look at it in the same light as I did. By the way, the draft euchred our family out of three hundred dollars. When I enlisted in the First Massachusetts, after the failure of my plan to reach Dixie in the Griswold cavalry, I was paid three hundred dollars bounty. I sent it home to my father. The draft "scooped him in," and the Government got the three hundred dollars back, that being the sum the drafted men were called on to pay to secure exemption.

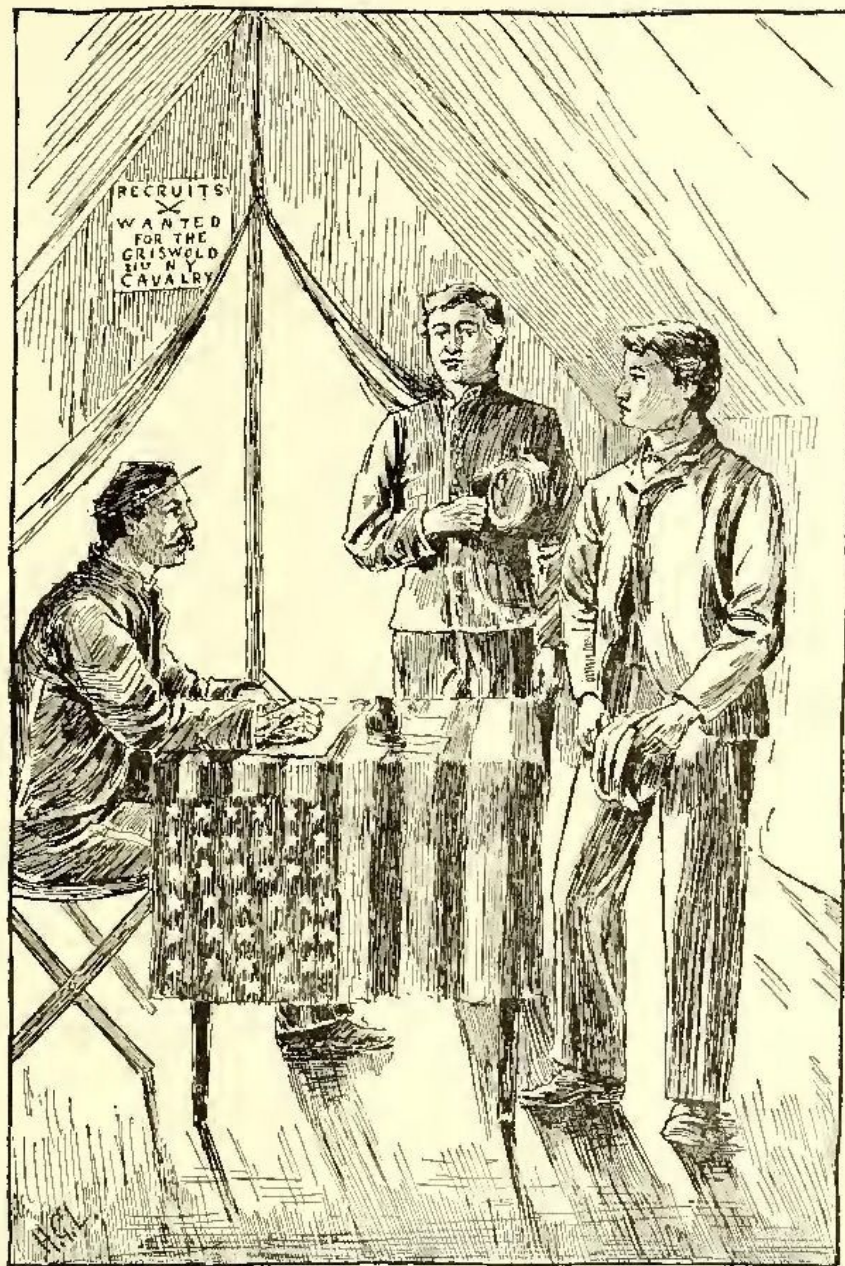
Tracy escorted me to Washington Square, where there were several tents in which recruiting officers were enlisting men for the Griswold cavalry. A bounty of two dollars was paid to each person bringing in a recruit. Tracy sold me to a sergeant named Cole for two dollars, but he divided the money with me on the way to camp. As we entered the tent where Sergeant Cole was sitting, Tracy said:

"This young man wants to enlist, Sergeant."

"All right, my boy; how old are you—nineteen, I suppose?"

"Of course he's nineteen," said Tracy.

I did not contradict what my soldier friend had said, and the sergeant made out my enlistment papers, Tracy making all the responses for me as to age. After I had been "sworn in" for three years, or during the war, I was paid ten dollars bounty. Then we went up to the barracks, and I was turned over to the first sergeant of Captain George V. Boutelle's company. I drew my uniform that night. The trousers had to be cut off top and bottom. The jacket was large enough for an overcoat. The army shirt scratched my back—but what is the use of reviving dead issues!



FIRST ENLISTMENT.

[\*Original Size\*](#)

One day orders came for Capt. Boutelle's company to "fall in for muster." The line was formed down near the gate. I was in the rear rank on the left. The mustering officer stood in front of the company with the roll in

his hand. Just at this time, my father with a deputy sheriff arrived with the *habeas corpus*, which was served on Capt. Boutelle, and I was ordered to "fall out."

Then we went to the city, to the office of Honorable Gilbert Robertson, Jr., provost judge, and after due inquiry had been made as to "the cause of detention by the said Capt. Boutelle of the said Stanton P. Allen," the latter "said" was declared to be discharged from Uncle Sam's service. My father refunded the ten dollars bounty, and offered to return the uniform, but Capt. Boutelle refused to accept the clothes, charging that I had obtained property from the Government under false pretenses. Under that charge I was held in five hundred dollars bail, as stated in the *Times*, but the court remarked to my father that "that'll be the end of it, probably, as the captain will be ordered to the front, and there will be no one here to prosecute the case."

As we were leaving Judge Robertson's office, a policeman arrested me. He marched me toward the jail. Pointing to the roof of the prison he said:

"My son, I'm sorry for you."

"What are you going to do with me?" I asked.

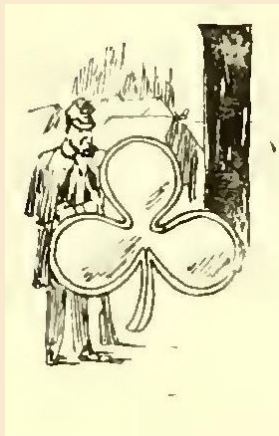
"Put you in jail."

"What for?"

"Defrauding the Government. But I'm sorry to see you go to jail. They may keep you there for life. They'll keep you there till the war is over, any way, for people are so busy with the war that they can't stop to try cases of this kind. You are charged with getting into the army without your father's consent. Maybe they won't hang you, but it'll go hard with you, sure. I don't want to see you die in prison. If I thought you'd go home and not run away again, I'd let you escape." That was enough. I double-quickened it up the street and hid in the hotel barn where my father's team was until he came along. I was ready to go home with him. I did not know at that time that the arrest, after I had been bailed, was a put-up job. It was intended to frighten me. And it worked to a charm. It was a regular Bull Run affair.

## CHAPTER II.

*The War Fever Again—Going to a Shooting Match—Over the Mountains to Enlist—A Question of Age—Sent to Camp Meigs—The Recruit and the Corporal—The Trooper's Outfit—A Cartload of Military Traps—Paraded for Inspection—An Officer who Had Been through the Mill.*



RETURNED to Berlin very much discouraged. There had not been anything pleasant about our camp life in Troy—the food was poorly cooked, the camp discipline was on the go-as-you-please order at first, and sleeping on a hard bunk was not calculated to inspire patriotism in lads who had always enjoyed the luxury of a feather bed. Yet the thought that I was a Union soldier, and a Griswold cavalryman to boot, had acted as an offset to the hardships of camp life, and after my return home the "war fever" set in again. The relapse was more difficult to prescribe for than the first attack. The desire to reach the front was stimulated by the taunts of the wiseacres about the village who would bear down on me whenever I chanced to be in their presence, as follows:

"Nice soldier, you are!"

"How do the rebels look?"

"Sent for your father to come and get you, they say."

"Did they offer you a commission as jigadier brindle?"

"When do you start again?"

[Original Size](#)

Quite a number of the boys about the village and from the back hollows interviewed me now and then in respect of my army experience. I was a veteran in their estimation. After several conferences, a company of "minute-men" was organized. We started with three members—Irving Waterman, Giles Taylor and myself. I was elected captain, Waterman first lieutenant and Taylor second lieutenant. We could not get any of the other boys to join as privates. They all wanted to be officers, so we secured no recruits. It was decided that we would run away and enlist at the first opportunity. Taylor was considerable of a "boy" as compared with Waterman and myself, as he was married and a legal voter. Waterman was nearly two years my senior, but as I had "been to war" they insisted that I should take the lead and they would follow.

We finally fixed upon Thanksgiving Day in November, 1863, the time to start for Dixie. Waterman had scouted over around Williamstown, and he came back with the report that two Williams College students were raising a company of cavalry. Thanksgiving morning I informed my mother that I was going to a shooting match. It proved to be more of a shooting match than I expected. The minute-men met at a place that had been selected, and started for Dixie.

At the Mansion House, Williamstown, we introduced ourselves to Lieutenant Edward Payson Hopkins, son of a Williams College professor. The lieutenant was helping his cousin, Amos L. Hopkins, who had been commissioned lieutenant and who expected to be a captain, to raise a company.

"As soon as he secures his quota, I shall enlist for myself," said the lieutenant, who added, that we could put our names down on his roll and he would go with us to North Adams, at which place we could take cars



for Pittsfield, where Captain Hopkins's recruiting office was located. We rode to North Adams in a wagon owned by Professor Hopkins and which was pressed into service for the occasion by the professor's soldier son. The lieutenant handled the lines and the whip, he and I occupying the seat, and Taylor and Waterman sat on a board placed across the wagon behind.

At North Adams we were taken into an office where we were examined by the town war committee.

One of the committee was Quinn Robinson, a prominent citizen. I was called before the committee first, and having been through the mill before, I managed to satisfy the committee that I was qualified to wear a cavalry uniform and draw full rations. I remember that in canvassing the question of age—or rather what we should say on that subject—we had agreed to state that we were twenty-one. I was not fifteen until the next February. The examiners did not question my age.

"We won't say twenty-one years," said Waterman, "and so we won't lie about it."

After I had been under fire for some time I was told to step aside, and Waterman was brought before the examiners.

"He looks too young," said Mr. Robinson to Lieutenant Hopkins.

"Well, question him, suggested the lieutenant.

"How old are you? inquired the committee man.

"Twenty-one, sir," replied Waterman.

"When were you twenty-one?"

"Last week."

"I think you're stretching it a little."

"No, sir; I'm older than Allen, who has just been taken in."

"I guess not; you may go out in the other room by the stove and think it over."

Our married man Taylor was next called in.

"We can't take you," said Robinson.

"What's matter?" exclaimed Giles.

"You're not old enough."

"How old've I got to be?"

"Twenty-one, unless you get the consent of your parents."

"Taylor's a married man," I whispered to Lieutenant Hopkins.

"Don't tell that, or he'll be asked to get the consent of his wife," said the lieutenant, also in a whisper.

The committee contended that Taylor would not fill the bill. Waterman was recalled, and Mr. Robinson said:

"Well, you've had time to think it over. Now how old are you?"

"Twenty-one, last week."

"I can't hardly swallow that."

"See here, Mr. Quinn" (I had not heard the committee man's other name then), I interrupted. "We three have come together to enlist. You have said that I can go. Taylor may be a trifle under age, but what of it? If you don't take the three of us none of us will go."

There was more talk of the same kind, but finally the war committee decided to send us on to Pittsfield and let the recruiting authorities of that place settle the question of Taylor and Waterman's eligibility.

There was no trouble at Pittsfield, and we were forwarded to Boston in company with several other recruits. The rendezvous was at Camp Meigs in Readville, ten miles or so below the city. Arriving at the camp we were marched to the barracks of Company I, Third Battalion, First Massachusetts cavalry, to which company we had been assigned.

When we entered the barracks we were greeted with cries of "fresh fish," etc., by the "old soldiers," some of whom had reached camp only a few days before our arrival. We accepted the situation, and were ready as soon as we had drawn our uniforms to join in similar greetings to later arrivals. The barracks were one-story board buildings. They would shed rain, but the wind made itself at home inside the structures when there was a storm, so there was plenty of ventilation. The bunks were double-deckers, arranged for two soldiers in each berth.

"I'm not going to sleep in that apple bin without you give me a bed," said Taylor to the corporal who pointed out our bunks.

"Young man, do you know who you're speaking to?" thundered the corporal.

"No; you may be the general or the colonel or nothing but a corporal—"

"Nothing but a corporal!" I'll give you to understand that a corporal in the First Massachusetts cavalry is not to be insulted. You have no right to speak to me without permission. I'll put you in the guard house and prefer charges against you."

"See here," said Taylor. "Don't you fool with me. If you do I'll cuff you."

"Mutiny in the barracks," shouted a lance sergeant who heard Giles's threat to smite the corporal.

The first sergeant came out of a little room near the door, and charged down toward us with a saber in his hand.

"What's the trouble here?" he demanded.

"This recruit threatened to strike me," replied the corporal.

"And he threatened to put me in the guard house for saying I wouldn't sleep in that box without a bed," said Taylor.

"Did you ever hear the articles of war read?" asked the sergeant.

"No, sir."



"Well, then, we'll let you go this time; but you've had a mighty narrow escape. Had you struck the corporal the penalty would have been death. Never talk back to an officer."

"Golly! that was a close call," whispered Taylor, after he had crawled into his bunk.

We each had a blanket issued to us for that night, but the next day straw ticks were filled, and added to our comfort. Waterman and I took the upper bunk, and Giles slept downstairs alone until he paired with Theodore C. Hom of Williamstown, another new-comer.

One of the most discouraging experiences that a recruit was called upon to face before he reached the front was the drawing of his outfit—receiving his uniform and equipments. I speak of cavalry recruits. If there ever was a time when I felt homesick and regretted that I had not enlisted in the infantry it was the morning of the second day after our arrival at Camp Meigs. I recall no one event of my army life that broke me up so completely as did this experience. I had drawn a uniform in the Griswold cavalry at Troy before my father appeared on the scene with a *habeas corpus*, but I had not been called on to take charge of a full set of cavalry equipments. If I had been perhaps the second attack of the war fever would not have come so soon.

A few minutes after breakfast the first sergeant of Company I came out from his room near the door and shouted:

"Attention!"

"Attention!" echoed the duty sergeants and corporals in the barracks.

"Recruits of Company I who have not received their uniforms fall in this way."

A dozen "Johnny come Latelys," including the Berlin trio, fell in as directed. The sergeant entered our names in a memorandum book. Then we were turned over to a corporal, who marched us to the quartermaster's office where we stood at attention for an hour or so while the requisition for our uniforms was going through the red-tape channels. Finally the door opened, and a dapper young sergeant with a pencil behind his ear informed the corporal that "all's ready."

The names were called alphabetically, and I was the first of the squad to go inside to receive my outfit.

"Step here and sign these vouchers in duplicate," said the sergeant.

I signed the papers. The sergeant threw the different articles of the uniform and equipments in a heap on the floor, asking questions and answering them himself after this fashion:

"What size jacket do you wear? No. 1. Here's a No. 4; it's too large, but you can get the tailor to alter it.

"Here's your overcoat; it's marked No. 3, but the contractors make mistakes; I've no doubt it's a No. 1.

"That forage cap's too large, but you can put paper in the lining.

"Never mind measuring the trousers; if they're too long you can have 'em cut off.

"The shirts and drawers will fit anybody; they're made that way.

"You wear No. 6 boots, but you'll get so much drill your feet'll swell so these No. 8's will be just the fit.

"This is your bed blanket; don't get it mixed with your horse blanket.

"I'll let you have my canteen and break in the new one; mine's been used a little and got jammed a bit, but that don't hurt it.

"This is your haversack; take my advice and always keep it full.

"This white piece of canvas is your shelter tent; it is warranted to shelter you from the rain if you pitch it inside a house that has a good roof on it.

"These stockings are rights and lefts.

"Here's your blouse. We're out of the small numbers, but it is to be worn on fatigue and at stables, so it's better to have plenty of room in your blouse.

"You will get white gloves at the sutler's store if you've got the money to settle. He'll let you have sand paper, blacking, brushes, and other cleaning materials on the same terms.

"Here's a rubber poncho.

"Let's see! that's all in the clothing line. Now for your arms and accoutrements!"

I appealed to the sergeant:

"Let me carry a load of my things to the barracks before receiving my arms and other fixings?"

"Can't do it—take too much time; and if you did go over with part of your outfit, somebody'd steal what you left in the barracks before you returned with the rest."

"Go it, then," I exclaimed in despair, and the sergeant continued:

"This carbine is just the thing to kill rebels with if you ever get near enough to them. It's a short-range weapon, but cavalymen are supposed to ride down the enemy at short range.

"The carbine sling and swivel attaches the carbine over your shoulder.

"This cartridge box will be filled before you go on the skirmish line; so will the cap pouch.

"This funny-looking little thing with a string attached is a wiper with which to keep your carbine clean inside.

"The screw-driver will be handy to take your carbine apart, but don't do it when near the enemy. They might scoop you in before you could put your gun together.

"Your revolver is for short-range work. You can kill six rebels with it without reloading, if the rebels will hold still and you are a crack shot. You can keep the pistol in this holster which attaches to your waist-belt, as does also this box for pistol cartridges.

"These smaller straps are to hold your saber scabbard to the waist-belt, and this strap goes over the shoulder to keep your belt from slipping down around your heels.

"This is your saber inside the scabbard. I've no doubt it's inscribed 'Never draw me without cause or sheathe me with dishonor,' but we can't stop to look at it now. If it isn't inscribed, ask your first sergeant about it. The saber knot completes this part of the outfit. The saber is pretty big for you, but we're out of

children's sizes. The horse furniture comes next."

"Will you please let Taylor and Waterman come in here and help me?" I petitioned to the sergeant.

"Everybody for himself is the rule in the army," said the sergeant. "Tie up your clothing and arms in your bed blanket. You can put your horse furniture in your saddle blanket."

Section 1,620 of the "Revised United States Army Regulations of 1861, with an Appendix Containing the Changes and Laws Affecting Army Regulations and Articles of War to June 25, 1863," reads as follows:

"A complete set of horse equipments for mounted troops consists of 1 bridle, 1 watering bridle, 1 halter, 1 saddle, 1 pair saddle-bags, 1 saddle blanket, 1 surcingle, 1 pair spurs, 1 curry-comb, 1 horse brush, 1 picket pin, and 1 lariat; 1 link and 1 nose bag when specially required."

The section reads smoothly enough. There is nothing formidable about it to the civilian. But, ah me! Surviving troopers of the great conflict will bear me out when I say that section 1,620 aforesaid, stands for a great deal more than it would be possible for the uninitiated to comprehend at one sitting. The bridle, for instance, is composed of one headstall, one bit, one pair of reins. And the headstall is composed of "1 crown piece, the ends split, forming 1 cheek strap and 1 throat lash billet on one side, and on the other 1 cheek strap and 1 throat lash, with 1 buckle, .625-inch, 2 chapes and 2 buckles, .75-inch, sewed to the ends of cheek piece to attach the bit; 1 brow band, the ends doubled and sewed from two loops on each end through which the cheek straps and throat lash and throat lash billet pass." So much for the headstall. It would take three times the space given to the headstall to describe the bit, and then come the reins. The watering bridle "is composed of 1 bit and 1 pair of reins." The halter's description uses up one third of a page. "The saddle is composed of 1 tree, 2 saddle skirts, 2 stirrups, 1 girth and girth strap, 1 surcingle, 1 crupper." Two pages of the regulations are required to describe the different pieces that go to make up the saddle complete, and which include six coat straps, one carbine socket, saddle skirts, saddle-bags, saddle blanket, etc. The horse brush, curry-comb, picket pin, lariat, link and nose bag all come in for detailed descriptions, each with its separate pieces.

Let it be borne in mind that all these articles were thrown into a heap on the floor, and that every strap, buckle, ring and other separate piece not riveted or sewed together was handed out by itself, the sergeant rattling on like a parrot all the time, and perhaps a faint idea of the situation may be obtained. But the real significance of the event can only be understood by the troopers who "were there."

As I emerged from the quartermaster's office I was a sight to behold. Before I had fairly left the building my bundles broke loose and my military effects were scattered all around. By using the loose straps and surcingle I managed to pack my outfit in one bundle. But it was a large one, just about all I could lift.

When I got into the barracks I was very much discouraged. What to do with the things was a puzzle to me. I distributed them in the bunk, and began to speculate on how I could ever put all those little straps and buckles together. The more I studied over it the more complicated it seemed. I would begin with the headstall of the bridle. Having been raised on a farm I had knowledge of double and single harness to some extent, but the bridles and halters that I had seen were not of the cavalry pattern. After I had buckled the straps together I would have several pieces left with no buckles to correspond. It was like the fifteen-puzzle.

As I was manipulating the straps Taylor arrived with his outfit. He threw the bundle down in the lower bunk, and exclaimed:

"I wish I'd staid to home."

"So do I, Giles."

"Where's Theodore?"

"I haven't seen him since I left him at the quartermaster's."

"He got his things before I did and started for the barracks."

Taylor left his bundle and went in search of Hom who was found near the cook-house. His pack had broken loose, and he was too much disgusted to go any further. Taylor assisted him, and they reached the bunk about the time Waterman arrived. We held a council of war, and decided to defer action on the horse furniture till the next day.

"We'll tog ourselves out in these soldier-clothes and let the harness alone till we're ordered to tackle it," said Taylor, and we all assented.

"Attention!"

The orderly sergeant again appeared.

"The recruits who have just drawn their uniforms will fall in outside for inspection with their uniforms on in ten minutes!"

There was no time for ceremony. Off went our home clothes and we donned the regulation uniforms. Four sorrier-looking boys in blue could not have been found in Camp Meigs. And we were blue in more senses than one. My forage cap set down over my head and rested on my ears. The collar to my jacket came up to the cap, and I only had a "peek hole" in front. The sleeves of the jacket were too long by nearly a foot, and the legs of the pantaloons were ditto. The Government did not furnish suspenders, and as I had none I used some of the saddle straps to hold my clothes on. Taylor could not get his boots on, and Hom discovered that both of his boots were lefts. He got them on, however. When Waterman put on his overcoat it covered him from head to foot, the skirts dragging the floor. Before we had got on half our things the order came to "fall in outside," and out we went. Taylor had his Government boots in his hands, as a corporal had informed him that if he turned out with citizen's boots on after having received his uniform he would be tied up by the thumbs. So he turned out in his stocking feet.

We were "right dressed" and "fronted" by the first sergeant, who reported to the captain that the squad was formed. The captain advanced and began with Taylor, who was the tallest of the squad, and therefore stood on the right.

"Where are your boots?"

"Here," replied the frightened recruit, holding them out from under the cape of his great coat.

"Fall out and put them on."

"I can't."

"Why not?"

"I wear nines and these are sevens."

"Corporal, take this man to the quartermaster's and have the boots changed."

Taylor trotted off, pleased to get away from the officer, who next turned his attention to Hom.

"What's the matter with your right foot; are you left-handed in it?"

"No, sir; they gave me both lefts."

"Sergeant, send this man to the quartermaster's and have the mistake rectified."

Waterman was next in line.

"Who's inside this overcoat?" demanded the captain. "It's me, sir—private Waterman."

"Couldn't you get a smaller overcoat?"

"They said it would fit me, and I had no time to try it on."

"Sergeant, have that man's coat changed at once. Fall out, private Waterman."

Then came my turn. The captain looked me over. My make-up was too much for his risibility.

"Where did you come from?" he asked, after the first explosion.

"Berlin."

"Where's that?"

"York State."

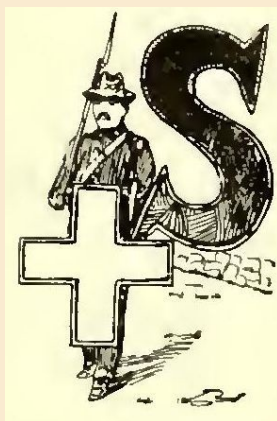
"Well, you go with the sergeant to the quartermaster and see if you can't find a rig that will come nearer fitting you than this outfit."

I was glad to obey orders, and after the captain's compliments had been presented to the quartermaster, directions were given to supply me with a uniform that would fit. Although the order could not be literally complied with, I profited by the exchange, and the second outfit was made to do after it had been altered somewhat by a tailor, and the sleeves of the jacket and the legs of the trousers had been shortened.

The captain did not "jump on us" as we had expected. The self-styled old soldiers had warned us that we would be sent to the guard house. The captain had seen service at the front, and had been through the mill as a recruit when the First Battalion was organized. He knew that it was not the fault of the privates that their clothes did not fit them. This fact seemed to escape the attention of many commissioned officers, and not a few recruits were censured in the presence of their comrades by thoughtless captains, because the boys had not been built to fill out jackets and trousers that had been made by basting together pieces of cloth cut on the bias and every other style, but without any regard to shapes, sizes or patterns.

## CHAPTER III.

*The Buglers' Drill—Getting Used to the Calls—No Ear for Music—A Visitor from Home—A Basket full of Goodies—Taking Tintypes—A Special Artist at the Battle of Bull Run—Horses for the Troopers—Reviewed by a War Governor—Leaving Camp Meigs—A Mother's Prayers—The Emancipation Proclamation—The War Governors' Address.*



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HOULD there be living to-day a survivor of Sheridan's Cavalry Corps of the Army of the Potomac who can, without shuddering, recall the buglers' drill, his probationary period on earth must be rapidly drawing to a close. I do not mean the regular bugle calls of camp or those sounded on company or battalion parade. I refer to the babel of bugle blasts kept up by the recruit "musicians" from the sounding of the first call for reveille till taps. A majority of the boys enlisted as buglers could not at first make a noise—not even a little toot—on their instruments, but when, under the instruction of a veteran bugler, they had mastered the art of filling their horns and producing sound they made up for lost time with a vengeance. And what a chorus! Reveille, stable call, breakfast call, sick call, drill call retreat, tattoo, taps—all the calls, or what the little fellows could do at them, were sounded at one time with agonizing effect.

The first sergeant of Company I said to me one day while we were in Camp Meigs:

"The adjutant wants more buglers, and he spoke of you as being one of the light weights suitable for the job. You may go and report to the adjutant."

"I didn't enlist to be a bugler; I'm a full-fledged soldier."

"But you're young enough to bugle."

"I'm twenty-one on the muster-roll. I want to serve in the ranks."

"Can't help it; you'll have to try your hand."

I reported to the adjutant as directed, and was sent with a half-dozen other recruits to be tested by the chief trumpeter. After a trial of ten minutes the instructor discovered that there was no promise of my development into a bugler, and he said with considerable emphasis:

"You go back mit you to de adjutant and tell him dot you no got one ear for de music."

I was glad to report back to the company, for I preferred to serve as a private.

The recruits soon became familiar with the sound of the bugle. The first call in the morning was buglers' call—or first call for reveille. The notes would be sounding in the barracks when the first sergeant, all the duty sergeants and the corporals would yell out:

"Turn out for reveille roll-call!"

"Be lively, now—turn out!"

As a result of this shouting by the "non-coms" the boys soon began to pay no attention to the bugle call, but naturally waited till they heard the signal to "turn out" given by the sergeants and corporals. And in a very short time they ceased to hear the bugle when the first call was sounded.

In active service in the Army of the Potomac so familiar with the calls did the soldiers become that when cavalry and infantry were bivouacked together, and the long roll was sounded by the drummers, it would not be heard by the troopers, and when the cavalry buglers blew their calls the foot soldiers would sleep undisturbed. In front of Petersburg troops would sleep soundly within ten feet of a heavy battery that was firing shot and shell into the enemy's works all night. But let one of the guards on the line of breastworks behind which they were "dreaming of home" discharge his musket, and the sleepers would be in line ready for battle almost in the twinkling of an eye. And let the cavalry trumpeter make the least noise on his bugle, and the troopers would hear it at once.

A few weeks before our battalion left Camp Meigs for the front Mrs. E. L. Waterman of Berlin, mother of Irving Waterman, paid us a visit. She brought with her a basket full of goodies. Home-made pies, bread, butter, cheese, cookies and fried cakes were included in the supplies. She took up her quarters at the picture gallery of Mr. Holmes, the camp photographer, and we went to see her as often as our duties would permit. She brought us socks knit by our friends at home, and many articles for our comfort. About the first thing she said was: "My boys, what do they give you to eat?"

"Bread and meat and beans and coffee," we answered.

"No butter?"

"No."

"I thought not. I had heard the soldiers had to eat their bread without butter, with nothing but coffee to wash it down, so I brought you a few pounds of butter."

And the dear woman remained at the gallery, and Irving and I would drop over and eat the good things she fixed for us. If we had taken our commissary stores to the barracks they would have been stolen.

Mrs. Waterman asked Irving and myself to have our pictures taken. Neither of us had ever been photographed or tintyped, but we took kindly to the idea. We sat together, and the picture, a tintype, was pronounced an excellent likeness. What a trying performance it was, though! We were all braced up with an iron rest back of the head, and told to "look about there—you can wink, but don't move." Of course the tintype presented the subject as one appears when looking into a mirror. The right hand was the left, and our buttons were on the wrong side in the picture. But Mrs. Waterman declared the tintype to be "as near like them as two peas," and we accepted her verdict. The dear old lady has kept that picture all these years.

The soldier boys resorted to all sorts of expedients to "beat the machine." That is, to so arrange their arms and accoutrements that when the tintype was taken it would not be upside down or wrong end to. To this end the saber-belt would be put on wrong side up so that the scabbard would hang on the right side—that would bring it on the left side, where it belonged in the picture. I tried that plan one day and then stood at "parade rest," with the saber in front of me. I put back my left foot instead of my right to stand in that position, and when the picture was presented, I congratulated myself that I had made a big hit. But when I showed it to an old soldier in the company he humiliated me by the remark:

"It's all very fine for a recruit, but a soldier wouldn't hold his saber with his left hand and put his right hand over it at parade rest."

Sure enough. I had changed my feet to make them appear all right, but had forgotten the hands. But recruits were not supposed to know everything on the start.

We had photographs taken as well as tintypes. But the art of photography has greatly improved since the war. Most of the photographs of that day that I have seen of late are badly faded, and it is next to impossible to have a good copy made. Not so with the tintypes. They remain unfaded, and excellent photographic copies can be secured. In many a home to-day hang the pictures of the soldier boy, some of them life-sized portraits copied from the tintypes taken in the days of the war.

I know homes where the gray-haired mothers still cling to the little tintype picture—the only likeness they have of a darling boy who was offered as a sacrifice for liberty. How tenderly the picture is handled! How sacredly the mother has preserved it! The hinges of the frame are broken—worn out with constant opening. The clasp is gone. The plush that lined the frame opposite the picture is faded and worn. But the face of the boy is there. Surviving veterans understand something of the venerable lady's meaning when she puts the picture to her lips and with tears in her eyes says:

"Yes, he was only a boy. I couldn't consent to let him go, and I couldn't say no. I could only pray that he would come back to me—if it were God's will. He didn't come back. But they said he did his duty. He died in a noble cause, but it was hard to say 'Thy will be done,' at first, when the news came that he'd been killed. I'm so thankful I have his picture—the only one he ever had taken. He was a Christian boy, and they wrote me that his last words as his comrades stood about him under a tree where he had been borne, were, that he died in the hope of a glorious resurrection, and that mother would find him in Heaven to welcome her when she came. There's comfort in that. And I'll soon be there. I shall meet my boy again, and there will be no more separation. No more cruel rebellions." The early war-time pictures are curiosities to-day, particularly to veterans who study them. Not a few of the special artists of the first year of the war seemed to have gained whatever knowledge of the appearance of troops in battle array that they had from tintype pictures. I have before me as I write, a battle scene "sketched by our special artist at the front." The officers all wear their



swords on the right side, and in the foreground is an officer mounting his horse from the off side—a feat never attempted in military experience but once, to my knowledge, and then by a militia officer on the staff of a Troy general, since the war. In some of these pictorial papers of the early war-days armies are represented marching into battle in full-dress uniform and with unbroken step and perfect alignment.

One thing, however, always puzzled me in these pictures—before I went to war—and that was how the infantry could march with measured tread—regulation step of twenty-eight inches, and only one hundred and ten steps per minute—and keep up with the major-generals and other officers of high rank who appeared in front of their men, and with their horses on a dead run in the direction of the enemy! These heroic leaders always rode with their hats in one hand and their swords in the other, so there was no chance for them to hold in their horses. But the puzzle ceased to be a puzzle when I reached the front. I found that the special artists had drawn on their imagination instead of “on the spot,” and that it was not customary for commanding generals to get in between the contending lines of battle and slash right and left and cut up as the artists had represented. In the majority of cases, great battles were fought by generals on both sides who were in position to watch, so far as possible, the whole line of battle, and to be ready to direct such movements and changes as were demanded by the progress of the fight. To do this they must necessarily be elsewhere than in front of their armies, riding down the enemy's skirmishers, and leaping their horses over cannon.

It is possible, however, that the special artists did not fully understand the danger to which a commanding general would be exposed, galloping around on his charger between the armies just coming together in a terrible clash. At any rate, the specials were willing to take their chances with their heroes—on paper. I have in my possession a picture of the “Commencement of the Action at Bull Run—Sherman's Battery Engaging the Enemy's Masked Battery.” In this picture, sketched by an artist whose later productions were among the best illustrations of actual warfare, the officers are, very considerably, placed in rear of the battery. But in front of the line of battle, in advance of the cannon that are belching forth their deadly fire, stands the special artist, sketching “on the spot.”

There was a good deal of stir in Camp Meigs the day that horses were issued to the battalion. The men were new and so were the horses. It did not take a veteran cavalryman but a day or two to break in a new horse. But it was different with recruits. The chances were that their steeds would break them in.

I had had some experience with horses on a farm—riding to cultivate corn, rake hay and the like—but I had never struggled for the mastery with a fiery, untamed war-horse. Our steeds were in good condition when they arrived at the camp, and they did not get exercise enough after they came to take any of the life out of them. The first time we practiced on them with curry-comb and brush, the horses kicked us around the stables *ad libitum*. One recruit had all his front teeth knocked out. But we became better acquainted with our chargers day by day, and although we started for Washington a few days after our horses had been issued, some of us attained to a confidence of our ability to manage the animals that was remarkable, considering the fact that we were thrown twice out of three times whenever we attempted to ride.

One day orders came for us to get ready to go to the front. None but old soldiers can appreciate the feelings of recruits under such circumstances. All was bustle and confusion. There was a good deal of the hip, hip, hurrah! on the surface, but there was also a feeling of dread uncertainty—perhaps that expresses it—in the breasts of many of the troopers. They would not admit it, though. The average recruit was as brave as a lion to all outward appearances, and if he did have palpitation of the heart when orders came to go “On to Richmond”—as any advance toward the front was designated—the fact was not given out for publication.

The first thing in order was a general inspection to satisfy the officers, whose duty it was to see that regiments sent out from the Old Bay State were properly armed and equipped, that we were in a condition to begin active service. After all our belongings were packed on our saddles in the barracks, before we took them over to the stables to saddle up, the department commander with his inspecting officers examined our pack kits. As originally packed, the saddles of a majority of the troopers were loaded so heavily that it would have required four men to a saddle to get one of the packs on the horse's back. When the inspection was completed each trooper could handle his own saddle.

The following articles were thrown out of my collection by the inspectors:—

Two boiled shirts; one pair calfskin shoes; two boxes paper collars; one vest; one big neck scarf; one bed quilt; one feather pillow; one soft felt hat; one tin wash basin; one cap—not regulation pattern; one camp stool—folding; one blacking brush—extra; two cans preserves; one bottle cologne; one pair slippers; one pair buckskin mittens; three fancy neckties; one pair saddle-bags—extra; one tin pan; one bottle hair oil; one looking-glass; one checker-board; one haversack—extra—filled with home victuals; one peck bag walnuts; one hammer.

Some of the boys had packed up more extras than I had, and it went against the grain to part with them. But the inspectors knew their business—and ours, too, better than we, as we subsequently discovered—and we were made to understand that we were not going on a pleasure excursion. It is hardly necessary to say that there was scarcely an article thrown out by the inspectors that the soldiers would not have thrown away themselves on their first expedition into the enemy's country.

After we had been inspected and trimmed down by the officers, we were reviewed by Governor John A. Andrew. He was attended by his staff, the department commander and other officers. Each company was drawn up in line in its barracks—it was sleeting outside. As the governor came into our quarters, the captain gave the command, “Uncover!” and the company stood at attention as the chief executive of the Old Bay State walked slowly down the line, scanning the faces of the men.

I remember that the governor looked at me with a sort of “Where-did-you-come-from, Bub?” expression, and I began to fear that my time had come to go home. The governor said to a staff officer:

“Some of the men seem rather young, Colonel!”

“Yes, sir; the cavalry uniform makes a man look younger than he is.”

"I see. They are a fine body of men, and I have no doubt we shall hear of their doing good service at the front."

A few words of encouragement were spoken by the governor, and he passed on to the barracks of the next company.

It strikes me that Governor Andrew reviewed us again as we were marching from the barracks to the railroad station, but I am not clear on this point. I know there was a good deal of martial music, waving of flags, cheering and speech-making by somebody. Our horses claimed our undivided attention till after we had dismounted and put them aboard the cars. On the way down to the railroad an attempt was made somewhere near the barracks to form in line, so that we could be addressed by the governor or some other dignitary. It was a dismal failure. Our steeds seemed to be inspired by "Hail to the Chief," "The Girl I Left Behind Me," and other patriotic tunes played by the band, and they pranced around, stood upon their hind legs and pawed the air with their fore feet, to the great terror of the recruits and the delight of all the boys in the neighborhood who had gathered to witness our departure. How the boys shouted!

"Hi, Johnny, it's better'n a circus!"

"Guess 'tis—they don't fall off in a circus; they just make b'lief."

"Well, these fellows stick tight for new hands."

It was fun for the boys—the spectators—but just where the laugh came in the recruits failed to discover. I was told that the governor—or somebody—[Original Size](#) gave us his blessing as we rode by the reviewing officer, but I have no personal knowledge on the subject.

After we had put our horses on board we waited a few minutes before entering the cars while the other companies were boarding the train. There was a chain of sentinels around us, and Mrs. Waterman was outside the line. She caught sight of us as we stood there, and she advanced toward us.



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"Halt—you can't go through here!" commanded one of the sentinels.

"I must go through."

"But my orders—"

"I don't care; my boys are there, and I'm going to speak to them again."

She came through and gave us her parting blessing once more.

"Boys, I'll pray God to keep you and bring you both back to your mothers—God bless you; good-by." The

mother's prayers were answered. Her son and his tentmate were spared to return at the close of the war.

There was a scramble to secure seats when orders were given to board the cars. Good-bys were said. Mothers, wives and sweethearts were there, and with many it was the last farewell. The whistle blew, the bells rang, the band played, the troops remaining at Camp Meigs cheered and we cheered back. The train moved away from the station, and we were off for the front.

I never saw Governor Andrew again, but I recall his appearance as he reviewed our company in the barracks very distinctly. I observed that while inspecting officers paid more attention to the arms and accoutrements of the men the governor was particular in looking into the faces of the recruits, to satisfy himself, no doubt, that they could be trusted to uphold the honor of the State when the tug of war should come. John A. Andrew was one of the "war governors" whose loyal support of President Lincoln's emancipation programme held the Northern States in line when the time came for the President to issue the proclamation that freed the slaves of the States in rebellion against the Government.

The proclamation was promulgated September 22, 1862, a few days after the battle of Antietam. It is on record that Lincoln had made the draft of the document in July, and had held it, waiting for a Union victory, that he might give it to the country at the same time that a decisive defeat of the rebels was announced. The second battle of Bull Run came, and Pope's shattered army retreated into the works around the national capital. Lee, with his victorious followers, crossed the Potomac into Maryland. The Confederate chief hoped to rally the disloyal element in that State and along the border under the rebel flag. It began to look as though the victory Lincoln was waiting for would never come. It was one of the darkest hours of the conflict. What would have been the effect of issuing the Emancipation Proclamation at that time? The rebels had invaded the North! The Union army had been defeated—everything seemed to be going to destruction!

Lincoln is credited with saying in respect of the rebels crossing the Potomac just before the battle of Antietam:

"I made a solemn vow before God, that if General Lee were driven back from Maryland, I would crown the result by a declaration of freedom to the slaves."

September 24, 1862, two days after the proclamation was issued, Governor Andrew, with the governors of other loyal States, at a meeting at Altoona, Penn., adopted an address to the President that must have set at rest any doubts the chief magistrate may have had that his policy was the policy of the loyal people of the North. The document was inspired and executed by patriots in whom the citizens of the loyal States reposed unbounded confidence. They declared:

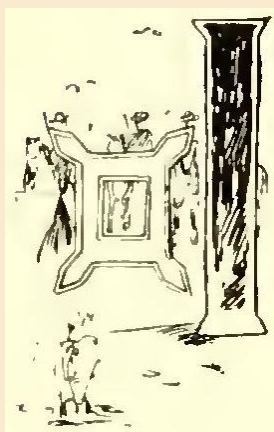
"We hail with heartfelt gratitude and encouraged hope the proclamation of the President, issued on the 22d inst., declaring emancipated from their bondage all persons held to service or labor as slaves in rebel States where rebellion shall last until the first day of January ensuing.

"Cordially tendering to the President our respectful assurances of personal and official confidence, we trust and believe that the policy now inaugurated will be crowned with success, will give speedy and triumphant victories over our enemies, and secure to this nation and this people the blessing and favor of Almighty God. We believe that the blood of the heroes who have already fallen and those who may yet give up their lives to their country will not have been shed in vain.

"And now presenting to our chief magistrate this conclusion of our deliberations, we devote ourselves to our country's service, and we will surround the President in our constant support, trusting that the fidelity and zeal of the loyal States and people will always assure him that he will be constantly maintained in pursuing with vigor this war for the preservation of the national life and hopes of humanity."

## CHAPTER IV.

*Arrival at Warrenton—Locating a Camp—Dog Tents—Building Winter Quarters—On Picket—A Stand-off with the Rebels—A Fatal Post—Alarm at Midnight—Bugle Calls—The Soldier's Sabbath—The Articles of War and the Death Penalty.*



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It rained the day the third battalion of the First Massachusetts cavalry arrived at Warrenton, Va., and it rained for three days, almost without a let-up, after we, reached our destination.

Recruits always received a hearty welcome at the front—the less the old soldiers had to do in the way of picket duty, the better they liked it. The recruits were—at first—ready to do all the duty, and the veterans were willing to let the new arrivals have their own way along this line. But after a few weeks of wear and tear at the front, the raw recruits could generally give the old soldiers points on dodging duty and feigning sickness, so as to have "excused from picket," or "light duty" marked opposite their names on the sick book. These peculiarities of soldier-life were characteristic of camp and winter quarters. As a rule, when the troops were brought face to face with the "business of the campaign," there was a sort of freemasonry among them. Then the veteran was ready to share his last cracker with the recruit, and they drank from the same canteen. An engagement with the enemy was sure to place all who stood shoulder to shoulder on a level. In the jaws of death, with comrades dropping on every hand, all were "boys," and all were soldiers—comrades.



Our first night's experience at Warrenton was not calculated to inspire us with love for the place. When we arrived we were drawn up in line in front of headquarters.

"You will camp your men just south of that row of tents," a brigade staff officer said to the major in command of our battalion. "You can pitch tents till such time as you can build winter quarters. Stretch your picket lines so as to leave proper intervals between your camp and the regiment next to it."

The staff officer hurried back into his log-house, to get out of the rain. We broke into columns of fours, and were marched to the ground on which we were to build our winter quarters. The outlook was discouraging. The camp was laid out on a side hill, down which good-sized brooks of water were flowing. And the ground! It was like a bed of mortar. Next to prepared glue, Virginia mud is entitled to first prize for its adhesive qualities.

"See here," exclaimed Taylor, "they're only just making fools of us. No general could order us to get off our horses and make camp in this mud-hole."

Taylor's indiscretion was always getting him into trouble, and his talking in ranks this time secured him another tour of double duty.

Down came the rain, and we were in for it. In due time the horses were picketed and their nosebags put on. As soon as the animals were taken care of and fed, the weary troopers, drenched to the skin, were directed to "pitch tents!" The tents with which we were provided were known as shelter, or dog tents, the latter name being most popular, as they often failed to afford anything but a poor apology for shelter. Each soldier had half a tent—till he lost it. The half-tent was a piece of canvas about five feet by four, or somethinglike it. Along one edge was a row of buttonholes, and a little further back a row of buttons. Two pieces buttoned together were put over a ridge-pole, supported by two crotches, and the bottom edges of the tent were fastened to the ground by little cord loops through which sticks were driven. Both gable ends of the tent were open to the weather, but sometimes a third "bunkey" would be taken in, and one end of the tent closed up with his piece. The shelter tents were always too short at both ends. Think of a man like Corporal Goddard of our company, who was an inch or two over six feet, trying to "shelter" himself under such a contrivance. A man of medium height could find cover only by doubling himself up in the shape of a capital N, and it was necessary to "spoon it" where two or three attempted to sleep under one dog tent.

Waterman and I continued as bunkies. At Camp Stoneman, Taylor and Hom had occupied the upper bunk in our log-house, and the same quartette had decided to go together when we should build winter quarters at our new location. Hom was detailed for stable guard as soon as we dismounted, and Taylor, Waterman and myself concluded to pitch tents together.

The ground was so soft that the sticks would not hold, and the tent was blown down several times. All our blankets were wet. Long after dark, however, we made fast the tent as best we could, and crawled in. Taylor being the oldest and largest, was assigned by a majority vote of Waterman and myself, to the side from which the wind came. I took the middle. It was close quarters.

"I don't see what's the use of getting up to fix it again," said Taylor, as the dog tent was blown down the third time after we had turned in. "I'm just as wet's I can be, and I'd rather sleep than get up again."

I had managed to raise myself a few inches above the water. My saddle was under my head, and I had two canteens under my back. The water was running a stream between Waterman and Taylor.

"I'll sit up and hold the tent while you fellows sleep," volunteered the genial Taylor the next time the tent went down.

There was nothing selfish about Taylor. After we had gone to sleep he "hadn't the heart to disturb us," as he expressed it the next day, and when the wind shifted and there was a slight let-up in the deluge, he took the three pieces of tent, our rubber ponchos, saddle blankets and bed blankets and, selecting the driest spot he could find on the side-hill, he rolled himself up in them and slept till reveille. Just before daybreak Waterman and I were drowned out, and sought shelter in an old brick building up on the hill.

The erection of log huts for winter quarters at Warrenton was no "joke." We had to go on Water Mountain to cut the trees for building material. Then we waited our turn for teams and wagons to haul the logs.

It was thirteen days before we got our log-house built and our shelter tents nailed on for a roof. Two bunks, one over the other, were made of poles. Taylor and Hom had the upper bunk, while Waterman and I slept "downstairs."

"There's more of Giles than there is of us," suggested Waterman, "and we'll put him and Hom in the top bunk so that when it rains and the roof leaks they'll absorb a good deal of the water before it gets to us."

Waterman and I chuckled over our success in securing the lower bunk, but one night when the upper bunk broke, and Taylor and Hom came tumbling down upon us, we realized, indeed, that there was a good deal more of Giles than there was of us.

We went on picket in our turn. The line ran along the top of Water Mountain for some distance, and we occasionally exchanged compliments with Mosby's men. The first night we were on picket, a little down to the south of the mountain, I went on duty at nine o'clock. The post was across a creek and near an old stone mill. It rained, sleeted and snowed during the night, and the creek filled up so that the "relief" could not cross over to my post when the time came to change the pickets. As a result I remained on post till daylight. It was one of the longest nights I ever put in during my army service.

Of course, every noise made by the wind was a bushwhacker. I was so thankful to find myself alive at daybreak that I forgot to growl at the corporal for not relieving me on time. When I unbosomed myself to Taylor, and told him how nervous I felt out there by the old mill, he laughed and said:

"Don't you never feel nervous again when you're caught in such a scrape, for, mark my word, no rebel, not even a 'gorilla' would be fool enough to go gunning for Yankee recruits such a night as last night was." I found a good deal of comfort in Taylor's logical admonition after that when alone on picket in stormy weather.

Just over the divide on Water Mountain, on the side toward the rebel camp, was an old log shanty. We called it the block house. Our pickets occupied it by day, and the rebels had possession of it by night. This happened because the Union picket line was drawn in at night, and the pickets were posted closer together



than during the day. Our line was advanced soon after daylight.

One morning when we galloped down to the block house from our reserve, we surprised the Johnnies. They had been a little late in getting breakfast, and their horses had their nosebags on. We were just as much surprised as they were, and we stood six to six. Carbines and revolvers were pointed, but no one fired.

"Give us time to put on our bridles and we'll vacate," said the sergeant of the rebel picket.

"All right; go ahead," our sergeant replied.

The Johnnies bridled their horses, mounted and rode down the mountain.

"We kept a good fire for you all," the rebel sergeant remarked as they left.

"And you'll find it burning when you come back tonight," was the Yankee sergeant's assuring reply.

After the rebels had got out of sight our boys began to feel that they had missed a golden opportunity to destroy a detachment of the Confederate army. We had longed for a "face-to-face" meeting with the rebels.

"I could have killed two rebels had I been allowed to shoot," said Taylor.

"Who told you not to shoot?" demanded the sergeant.

"Well, nobody gave the order to fire. I had my gun cocked and if the rest of you had killed your man I'd killed mine."

"Bu-bu-bu-but they had si-si-six t-t-to ou-ou-our si-si-six, di-di-didn't they?" interrupted Jack Hazelet, whose stammering always caused him to grow red in the face when he wanted to get a word in in time and couldn't.

"Yes; we stood six to six, but if each one of us had killed his man they would all be dead."

"Je-je-jesso; bu-bu-bu-but di-di-didn't they ha-ha-have gu-gu-guns, t-t-too?"

"Of course they did."

"Sup-po-po-posed they ha-ha-had ki-ki-killed 's mama-many f us a-a-as we di-di-did o-o-o-of th-th-them, wh-wh-where wo-wo-would wc-we-we b-b-be n-n-now? co-co-confound you!"

As we found that only two of our party had their carbines loaded when we surprised the rebels, we concluded that it was just as fortunate for us as it was for the enemy that the meeting had resulted in a stand-off, although Taylor insisted that if any one had given the command "fire" he would have killed his man. When his attention was called to the fact that his carbine was not loaded, he said:

"Well, I could have speared one of them with my sword before they could all get away."

"Bu-bu-bu-but wh-wh-what wo-wo-would th-th-the re-re-reb be-be-been do-do-doing; yo-yo-you in-in-infernal blockhead!" exclaimed Hazelet, and Taylor subsided.

There was one picket post half-way down Water Mountain, toward the Federal camp, that was dreaded by all the boys. It was within three hundred yards of the picket reserve or rendezvous. There was an old wagon road winding through a narrow ravine, and a stone wall crossed at right angles with the road opposite the reserve. On either side of the ravine was thick underbrush, and just back a little were woods. We were informed that four pickets had been shot off their horses near the old tree. The bushwhackers would ride to within a few hundred yards of the stone wall, dismount and while one would remain with the horses another would crawl like a snake in the grass up behind the wall and pick off the Union cavalymen. It was cold-blooded murder, committed at night, without cause or provocation. Let it be said to the credit of the Confederate rank and file, that the boys in butternut—the regularly organized troops—discountenanced the cowardly acts of the guerrillas and bushwhackers.

A soldier was shot on picket at the old tree one night, and our company relieved the company to which he belonged the next morning. The murdered trooper was strapped across his saddle and taken to camp for burial. When our boys were counted off for picket Taylor "drew the fatal number," as it was called.

"If I'm murdered on post, boys," he said, "don't bother about taking my carcass to camp. Bury me where I fall."

Taylor made a poor attempt to appear unconcerned. But he was a droll sort of a boy. He continued:

"I've no doubt I was cut out for an avenger; so if any of you fellows want me to avenge your death just swap posts with me to-night. If any infernal gorilla steals up on you and takes your life, I pledge you that I'll follow him to Texas, but what I'll spill his gore."

"I'd rather go unavenged than to take chances on that post from eleven o'clock to one o'clock to-night," chorused several of Taylor's friends.

I had the post next to Taylor toward the reserve. The rain was falling, and it was dark down in the ravine. I could hear Taylor's horse champing his bit, and once my horse broke out with a gentle whinny, the noise of which startled me tremendously at first. And I have no doubt it operated the same on Taylor. Soon after that the rain let up and the clouds broke away so that the moon could be seen now and then. All at once there was a flash and a loud report.

"That's the last of poor Giles," I exclaimed, as the sound of the shot reverberated through the ravine.

Then I rode toward Taylor's post as cautiously as I could. I was pleasantly startled by the challenge in his well-known voice:

"Who comes there?"

The reserve came galloping down the hill. After the usual challenges and answers had been given, the lieutenant inquired:

"Who fired that shot?"

"'Twas me," replied Taylor.

"What did you fire at?"

"A bushwhacker."

"Where?"

"Over by the wall."

"Did you see him?"

"Of course I did; you don't suppose I'd fire at the moon, do you?"

The reserve rode forward to the wall and a few hundred yards beyond. It was decided that it would be useless to follow the guerrillas in the darkness. The pickets were doubled, two men on a post, for the rest of the night. I was put on the same post with Taylor, and after the reserve had returned to the rendezvous I questioned him about the alarm:

"Are you sure you saw a live bushwhacker, Giles?"

"If I hadn't seen him I'd be dead now."

"You didn't challenge him?"

"Well, I should say not. I saw him raise his head over the wall, just as the moon broke through a cloud. I first saw the glint of his gun. Then I fired, and I believe I singed his hair, for I took good aim. If the moon had staid behind the clouds three seconds longer, the gorilla would 'a' had me sure. After I fired I heard him run, and then there were voices, followed by the noise of horses' hoofs as the bushwhackers galloped away. It was a close call for Taylor, but I tell you I sat with my carbine cocked and pointed at that wall all the time till the gorilla appeared. If my horse hadn't shied a little, that fellow would never have gone back to tell the story of his failure to murder another picket."

The next day arrangements were made to surprise the guerrillas in the event of another visit. Two dismounted troopers were stationed behind the stone wall, within easy range of the opening down the road toward the rebel lines. But the bushwhackers did not return during our tour of picket.

It was never clearly explained why the post at the old tree had been used, when the picket could be so much more safely stationed up behind the wall. There were a good many things that seemed strange to privates, but whenever an enlisted man made an effort to suggest that the plan of operations of his superiors be revised or corrected, it did not take him long to discover that he had made "one big shackass of mineself," as a recruit from Faderland expressed it when he was booted out of a sergeant's tent at Warrenton for simply informing the wearer of chevrons that in "Shermany the sergeants somedimes set up der lager mit de boys."

The experiences of the First Massachusetts cavalry at Warrenton during the winter were similar to those of other regiments in camp at that station. Some of us would have been fearfully homesick if we had found any spare time between calls. We scarcely had opportunity to answer letters from home, so thick and fast came the bugle blasts. One of our boys received a letter from his sweetheart, and she wondered what the soldiers could find to occupy their time—"no balls, no parties, no corn-huskings," as she expressed it. Her soldier boy inclosed a copy of the list of calls for our every-day existence in camp, and when we were not on picket duty.

I have no doubt the dear girl was satisfied that her boy in blue would suffer little, if any, for the want of something to keep his mind occupied. As near as I can remember, the list of calls for each day's programme—except Sunday, when we had general inspection and were kept in line an hour or two extra—was as follows:

Buglers' call . . . . .	Daybreak
Assembly . . . . .	Five minutes later
Reveille . . . . .	Immediately after
Stable call . . . . .	Immediately after
Breakfast call . . . . .	(about) 7 A. M.
Sick call . . . . .	7.30 A. M.
Fatigue call . . . . .	8 A. M.
First call for guard mount . . . . .	8.50 A. M.
Adjutant's call . . . . .	9 A. M.
Water call . . . . .	9.15 A. M.
Drill call . . . . .	9.30 A. M.
Recall from drill . . . . .	11 A. M.
Orderly call . . . . .	11.30 A. M.
Dinner call . . . . .	12 M.
Drill call . . . . .	1 P. M.
Recall from drill . . . . .	2 P. M.
Water call . . . . .	2.30 P. M.
Stable call . . . . .	3-30 P. M.
Dress parade . . . . .	Half-hour before sunset.
Retreat . . . . .	Sunset.
Tattoo . . . . .	8.30 P. M.
Taps . . . . .	9 P. M.

Original Size

The roll was called at reveille, drill, retreat and tattoo. The boys had "words set to music" for nearly all the calls. The breakfast call was rather inelegantly expressed when infantry and cavalry troops were camped close together. The foot soldiers, not having horses to groom and feed, had their breakfast the first thing after reveille. Then they would stand around, and as the cavalry bugler-boys would sound the breakfast call after stables, the heroes of the knapsack would chorus:

“Go and get your breakfast,  
Breakfast without meat.”

But a cavalry poet tried his hand, and after that whenever the infantry fellows shouted the above at us to the tune of breakfast call, we all joined in the refrain:

“Dirty, dirty doughboy,  
Dirty, dirty feet.”

That settled it. The doughboys soon fell back. If they had not, there might have been a riot, for our poet was at work on another verse that he said would settle their hash. Judging from the result of his first effort, I can readily see that the infantry had a narrow escape.

We had inspection every Sunday morning after stables. Each company was looked over by its first sergeant. Then the captains would appear and take charge. If it were to be a regimental inspection, all the companies would be marched to the parade-ground, and the colonel or regimental commander would be the inspecting officer. Every now and then a brigade review would follow the inspection. It was fun for the brigadier, or inspector, but after the rear rank privates had been in the saddle two hours or more, sitting bolt upright, with eyes fixed square to the front while waiting to have the inspector come round to them, and go through the motions of examining their carbines, revolvers, sabers and equipments, the affair became tedious.

But our regiment was blessed with an excellent band. The members rode white horses, and on all grand reviews and parades they took position on the right of the regiment. Whenever the inspection was particularly protracted and severe, the band would play inspiring selections, and many a poor fellow who was on the point of asking permission to fall out of the ranks, would cheer up as the strains of “The Girl I Left Behind Me,” or some other popular air, would reach his ear. Survivors of the Army of the Potomac—and all other armies—will recall that the playing of a single tune as the comrades rushed forward into the heat of battle, was worth more than the spread-eagle speeches of scores of generals. The soldier that could muster backbone enough to turn tail and run when his comrades were presenting a solid front to the enemy, and the bands were playing national airs, was made of queer material, indeed.

On one of these Sunday morning inspections, Taylor remarked to me in a low tone of voice:

“I'd like to know how they expect us to diligently attend divine worship when they keep us harnessed up all day after this fashion?”

“Keep still, Giles; if the sergeant hears you he'll tie you up by the thumbs.”

Yet Taylor's inquiry was to the point. The articles of war had been read to us only the day before that inspection. Here is what we were given along the line referred to by Taylor:

“Article 2.—It is earnestly recommended to all officers and soldiers, diligently to attend divine service; and all officers who shall behave indecently or irreverently at any place of divine worship, shall, if commissioned officers, be brought before a general court-martial, there to be publicly and severely reprimanded by the President; if non-commissioned officers or soldiers, every person so offending shall, for his first offense, forfeit one sixth of a dollar, to be deducted out of his next pay; for the second offense he shall not only forfeit a like sum, but be confined twenty-four hours; and for every like offense, shall suffer and pay in like manner; which money, so forfeited, shall be applied by the captain or senior officer of the troop or company, to the use of the sick soldiers of the company or troop to which the offender belongs.”

The boys called the regulations the army Bible. Of course, many of the articles were intended for troops in garrison.

When in active service, on the march and on the battle field, divine services were impracticable until there was at least a temporary cessation of hostilities. Regimental chaplains exhibited remarkable fortitude, courage and self-sacrifice in administering spiritual consolation to the wounded and dying at the front, even under heavy fire from the enemy. There were services in camp in such organizations as had ministers of the gospel with them, but many regiments were without chaplains, and had to forage for religious food, if they had any.

I do not remember attending divine service in the army, except once in the Wilderness campaign. It was at night, and the congregation stood around a blazing camp-fire. The good old chaplain exhorted the boys to prepare the way, and buckle on the whole armor. It was a striking scene. Some of the boys wept as the minister alluded to the loved ones at home, who were looking to the Army of the Potomac for a victory that would crush out the rebellion. There were few dry eyes when the benediction was pronounced, after the chaplain had urged his hearers to “be prepared to stand an inspection before the King of kings.”

It was the last religious service that many who were present that night ever attended. The next day rebel bullets mowed them down by scores. They died in defense of the right—that the Union might be preserved. Of those who fell as they fell a poet has written:

“No more the bugle calls the weary one,  
Rest, noble spirit, in your grave unknown;  
We will find you and know you,  
Among the good and true,  
When the robe of white is given  
For the faded coat of blue.”

I may have had many opportunities to hear the Gospel preached during the war, but I do not recall the circumstances now. Yet I am sure that if I had diligently reconnoitered the camps, I could have found faithful disciples preaching the Word of Life to such as had ears to hear. And I believe that when the general roll shall

be called on the shores of eternity, the noble Christian soldiers who held aloft the banner of their Master on the battle fields of the great Civil War, will not only hear the welcome, "Well done," but they will be crowned with diadems bedecked with many stars.

The third commandment laid down in the regulations was probably violated more frequently than any of the one hundred and one articles of war. It read:

"Article 3.—Any non-commissioned officer or soldier who shall use any profane oath or execration, shall incur the penalties expressed in the foregoing article; and a commissioned officer shall forfeit and pay, for each and every such offense, one dollar, to be applied as in the preceding article."

Had this article been lived up to, the "sick soldiers" referred to would have been provided for for life, as would their children and children's children. There would have been no call for the sanitary and Christian commissions to raise money to alleviate the sufferings of the sick. All that money could have supplied would have been provided. I do not mean to convey the idea that the Union soldiers were particularly profane, but something like a half-million of men were under arms at one time, about the close of the war. Some of them swore. Even generals blasphemed before their men. The general-in-chief, however, was an exception. No soldier in the Army of the Potomac ever heard Gen. Grant utter an oath. There were officers and soldiers in all regiments who did not swear. But they were in the minority. Had the penalty for using profane oaths been enforced, seventy-five per cent, of the soldiers would have been in the guard house all the time, and at the end of a week they would have been indebted to the Government more than their three years' salary would have footed up, and the guard house would have had a mortgage on them for years to come.

The third article of war was read to one company in our regiment by a first sergeant, who gave such an emphasis to the reading of the penalty for swearing that the boys began to feel that they must "swear off" on profanity. Said the sergeant:

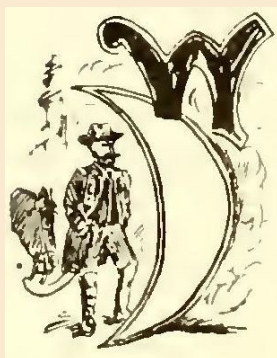
"I want you men to understand that in this company the articles of war will be strictly lived up to. If I hear any man use profane language, be he non-commissioned officer or soldier, I'll bring him up for punishment as prescribed."

Then the sergeant swore a "blue streak" for a minute or two before he gave the order to "break ranks." Yet he did it unconsciously, as he said when his attention was called to it by a corporal, and only intended to emphasize the interdiction.

Quite a number of the articles of war enumerated offenses for which the penalty provided that the offender "shall suffer death, or such other punishment as by a court-martial shall be inflicted." In the reading the officers always emphasized the penalty "shall suffer death," and then dropped their voices till the "or such other punishment" could scarcely be heard by the soldiers standing the nearest to the reader. The death penalty was sandwiched all through the articles of war, and at the close of the reading the average recruit felt condemned, and could remember nothing but "shall suffer death," and expected to hear the captain order out a detail to execute the sentence. But the death penalty was inflicted, except in rare instances, only upon spies or men who had deserted to the enemy and been recaptured.

## CHAPTER V.

*General Grant as Commander-in-chief with the Army of the Potomac—How Grant Fought His Men—Not a Retreating 'Man—The Overland Campaign—The Grand Finale—After the War—The Old Commander in Troy—En Route to MacGregor—Mustered Out.*



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HEN U. S. Grant was promoted to lieutenant-general, and assigned to command all the armies of the United States, the announcement was received by the Army of the Potomac without any marked evidence of approval or disapproval. There was no enthusiasm whatever among the troops in winter quarters around Warrenton.

A few expressed the opinion that the "Western importation" would not come up to the country's expectations when brought face to face with the great rebel chief, who was personally acquainted with every inch of the ground on which the battles of Virginia must be fought. Then there was a feeling, though not outspoken to any great extent, that the new-comer, being a stranger to Lee's tactics, and unacquainted with the Eastern troops, would be placed at such a disadvantage, that the Confederate leader would be enabled to "play all around" Grant, and demoralize the Union army. The veterans of the grand old Army of the Potomac were prepared to fight—to the death, if need be—no matter who received the three stars of a lieutenant-general. They were loyal to their flag, and that carried with it loyalty to the new commander.

Probably it did not occur to a dozen soldiers in the Army of the Potomac that Grant would adopt tactics of his own, instead of following in the beaten paths of former commanders. No one suspected that the lieutenant-general would be able to knock the bottom out of the Southern Confederacy inside of twelve months after his first order for the advance of the army had been promulgated. We all believed that the Union cause would triumph. But when? Three years had rolled round since the rebels fired on Sumter. And "Uncle Robert," with his veterans in butternut, still flaunted the stars and bars as defiantly as ever, within a few miles of the national capital.

Company I, First Massachusetts cavalry, received the news at first in the same spirit that other companies



in our locality received it. The new commander's qualifications were discussed in the light of what had been heard of his career in the West. How much light we had received may be inferred from a discussion around the reserve picket fire on Water Mountain, a detachment of the Sixth Ohio and First Pennsylvania cavalry being on duty with our regimental detail:

"Who's this Grant that's made lieutenant-general?"

"He's the hero of Vicksburg."

"Well, Vicksburg wasn't much of a fight. The rebels were out of rations, and they had to surrender or starve. They had nothing but dead mules and dogs to eat, as I understand it."

"Yes; but it required a good deal of strategy to keep Pemberton's army cooped up in Vicksburg till they were so weak for want of grub that they couldn't skedaddle even if they had found a hole to crawl out of."

"I don't believe Grant could have penned any of Lee's generals up after that fashion. Early, or Longstreet, or Jeb Stuart would have broken out some way and foraged around for supplies."

"Maybe so."

"Pemberton couldn't hold a candle to Lee."

"Of course not."

"What else has Grant done?"

"He has whipped the Johnnies every time they have faced him, all the way from Fort Donelson to Chattanooga."

"He's a fighter, then?"

"That's what they call him."

"Bully for Grant!"

"Where does he hail from?"

"Galena, Ill. He was clerking in a leather store when the war broke out."

"I don't care if he was in Illinois when the war began, he was born in Ohio, graduated at West Point, and served in Mexico and out West."

"Hurrah for Ohio!" (chorus of the Sixth Ohio cavalry). "Hurrah for Grant!"

"Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!"

"Hurrah!"

"Tiger!"

I do not know but what the "Ohio idee" was inaugurated on our picket line away back there in 1864. At any rate the Sixth Ohio boys insisted, when they were assured that the lieutenant-general was a native of that State, that "Bob Lee's goose was as good as cooked already." It was rather a crude way of expressing a prophecy that proved as true as Holy Writ. The Ohio Volunteers were ready to cross sabers with the enemy without more ado. Grant was from Ohio, and that settled it.

The Bay State boys indorsed Grant after his record had been established. To be sure there was our own Gen. Butler, the hero of New Orleans. Butler was then in command of the Army of the James, with Fortress Monroe as his base of supplies. Somehow we had come to associate Butler with naval expeditions, and never thought of him in connection with a campaign on land beyond the support of the gunboats. It is probable that our estimates of military men were influenced by what we read in the newspapers. One of the boys declared that in a description of the capture of New Orleans he had read, mention was made of Butler being "lashed to the maintop," while the fleet under Farragut was fighting its way up the Mississippi under fire from the guns of Forts Jackson and St. Philip. Said an Ohio trooper:

"I don't believe that story."

"Neither do I. I'm only telling you what I read."

"I think Butler had better stay in the navy."

"But he isn't a sailor; he's a major-general of volunteers."

"Well, there's no telling how he might cut up on dry land. He'd better keep his sea legs on and stay where if he gets whipped he can't run."

The veterans from the Keystone State had not lost faith in "Little Mac." They contended that McClellan had been handicapped just at a moment when he was "about to execute a *coup de main* that would prove a *coup de grâce* to the Southern Confederacy!" Meade was the second choice of the Pennsylvanians. His splendid victory over Lee at Gettysburg had brought him into the front rank. He had won the gratitude of the whole North, Copperheads excepted. Checking Lee's advance Northward, whipping the rebel army and compelling the defeated Confederacy to "about face" and put for home, gave Gen. Meade a big place in the hearts of the soldiers and the loyal people of the Keystone State. Surely the patriots of the North had good cause to rejoice on the eighty-seventh anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. On that day Grant's victorious army raised the stars and stripes over the rebel fortifications at Vicksburg, and the Mississippi was opened to the sea; and Lee's army of Northern Virginia was retreating from the scene of its unsuccessful attack on Meade's army at Gettysburg.

Within forty-eight hours after the Union troops had crossed the Rapidan under the direction of Gen. Grant, there was not a soldier in the Army of the Potomac but what felt that the lieutenant-general meant business. The official records on file at Washington show that during that two days' terrible struggle in the Wilderness—May 5 and 6, 1864—the loss sustained by the Army of the Potomac was 13,948, of which 2,261 were killed, 8,785 wounded and 2,902 taken prisoners or missing. Then came Spottsylvania, with an aggregate Union loss of 13,601. The total loss sustained by the Army of the Potomac, the Army of the James and by Sheridan's operations in the valley, from May 1, 1864, to the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, April 9, 1865, is given in official compilations at 99,772—14,601 killed, 61,452 wounded and 23,719 missing. In the meantime the

Federal forces operating in Virginia captured 81,112 Confederates, and Lee's killed and wounded are believed to have been equal to Grant's, but the "scattering" of the rebels after Richmond fell, and the destruction of Confederate records, made it impossible to arrive at the exact figures.

As already stated, the veterans of the Army of the Potomac were satisfied that Grant was a fighting man. During the period beginning with the opening skirmish in the Wilderness, and continuing down to the end of the conflict at Appomattox, there was not wanting evidence of Grant's determination to "fight his men" for all they were worth whenever opportunity presented for hammering the rebels. There was no going back this time. It was "On to Richmond" in earnest. The Army of the Potomac was ready to be led against the enemy. There was general rejoicing all along the line when the command was given, "By the left flank, forward!" and the Federals moved toward Spottsylvania instead of retreating across the Rapidan, as President Lincoln said any previous commander of the Army of the Potomac would have done at the close of such a battle as that fought in the Wilderness.

In Richardson's "Personal History of U. S. Grant," it is stated that in the rebel lines it was believed that our army was falling back at the close of the conflict in the Wilderness. The account continues:

Gordon said to Lee: "I think there is no doubt but that Grant is retreating."

"You are mistaken," replied the Confederate chief earnestly, "quite mistaken. Grant is not retreating; he is not a retreating man."

Lee was right. The Army of the Potomac was never again marched back across the Rapidan until after the backbone of the Confederacy had been broken, and the gallant Union soldiers were en route to Washington to be mustered out.

I first saw Gen. Grant while the battle of the Wilderness was going on. In changing position during the fight, our regiment was marched around by Meade's headquarters. There were a dozen or more officers grouped about Gen. Grant and Gen. Meade. The latter wore the full uniform of a major-general, including sword and sash. He was somewhat fussy in giving directions, and a stickler for red tape. But Meade was a soldier "from heels up." Grant was plainly dressed, and wore no sword. His coat was unbuttoned, and not until he was pointed out as the commander-in-chief was he recognized by the troopers who were riding across the field.

"There's Gen. Grant."

"Where?"

"On the left of Gen. Meade."

"That officer with his coat open?"

"Yes; that's Grant."

Off went our caps, and the commander acknowledged our cheer by raising his hat.

Just then there was a terrific firing along Hancock's front, and Grant galloped over in that direction after a moment's conversation with Meade. We took up the trot, and in a few minutes found plenty to do out on the road leading to Todd's tavern. When a breathing spell came, the boys had their say about the lieutenant-general.

"I expected to see him all covered with gold lace and other fixin's," said one.

"He looks as if he would stay with 'em till somebody cried enough."

"He's got good qualities, anyway," remarked Taylor.

"How can you tell?"

"Because he smokes fine cigars, and rides a good hoss. I got a smell of that cigar as he cantered by to see what was going on in front of the second corps. I think—"

The discussion was cut short by another attempt of the Johnnies to hustle us back from the position held by our brigade. We protested so vigorously that the rebels retreated after making three or four dashes against our advance squadrons. It was warm work in the Wilderness. One of our boys exclaimed:

"If any of us get out of this Wilderness alive, our chances will be good to see the end of the Southern Confederacy."

"Yea, verily," groaned a corporal who had been shot in the arm.

That Grant had no suspicion of being in a tight box, as the rebel sympathizers at the North declared he was, is shown by the fact that at the very moment when his defamers asserted he was so badly crippled that had Lee attacked the Union army Grant's forces would have been destroyed, the lieutenant-general was so much on the aggressive that he was marching to renew the battle at Spottsylvania, and felt able to spare Sheridan and his splendid cavalry corps for a raid on Lee's communications.

We saw Grant again when we rejoined the army; at Cold Harbor, on the march to the south side of the James several times, and during the assaults in front of Petersburg. While in winter quarters we saw the lieutenant-general often at City Point and along the line, and the more we saw of him the higher he rose in our estimation. Then came the campaign of 1865, ending with the surrender of the rebel army at Appomattox. Grant was a modest officer, not given to display, but when the Army of the Potomac awoke to the fact that Lee's army was in the "last ditch," then, and not till then, did the soldiers begin to appreciate the true greatness of the commander-in-chief.

The downfall of Richmond and the capture of Lee's army silenced even the assistant Confederates at the North. It was a grand victory—a magnificent triumph of superior generalship combined with a patriotism that had never wavered in the face of armed rebellion.

After the surrender I next saw Grant in Washington on the grand review in May, 1865. He was on the stand in front of the White House with a large crowd of dignitaries, including President Johnson.

I saw the old commander but three times after the war closed. The first time was on the occasion of his visit to Troy, N. Y., several years ago. He attended and spoke at a public installation of Post Willard, Grand Army of the Republic, at Music Hall. He was accompanied to the city by Governor Cornell, and a grand parade was

had in which all the local military organizations and veterans participated. The general and the governor occupied a carriage with Gen. J. B. Carr and Honorable John M. Francis, and dined with Mr. Francis at his residence. I was glad of the opportunity to grasp the old commander's hand.

I had the pleasure, as a representative of the *Troy Daily Times*, to accompany the Grant family from Albany to Saratoga about the middle of June, 1885. It was, indeed, a pleasure to meet the hero of Appomattox again, but the heart of the soldier who had served under Grant from the Wilderness to Appomattox and had been present when the surrender took place, was saddened to find the old warrior only a shadow of his former self. Only once on the trip to Mount MacGregor did the general display any of that martial spirit that twenty years before had animated the commander-in-chief and inspired his gallant army. It was at Saratoga Springs during his transfer from the palace coach on which he traveled from New York to Saratoga to the car that was to convey him up the mountain to MacGregor. The Grand Army veterans and the local national guard company gave the distinguished visitor a military salute. The general raised himself on his crutches, took in the situation at a glance, and as he acknowledged the salute with his hand, the old-time light came into the eye, and the foremost general of modern times was recognized in the person of the almost helpless invalid.

Thursday, July 23, 1885, the news of the brave general and honored ex-President's death was flashed over the wires from the top of Mount MacGregor, and a whole nation was in mourning. Old soldiers met in the streets and grasped each other by the hand. "The old commander's dead," was about all they could say; their sorrow was too deep for words. From all sections of the Union, and from across the ocean messages of condolence and sympathy were sent to the bereaved family at MacGregor.

I attended the funeral of the dead hero at Mount MacGregor, Tuesday, August 4, 1885. Of the pallbearers two, Buckner and Joe Johnston, had fought under the stars and bars, while Sherman and Sheridan had been the deceased commander's most trusted lieutenants. Never before had a funeral taken place under such circumstances. The exercises were remarkably impressive. The closing verse of the beautiful hymn which was sung before the Rev. Dr. J. P. Newman began his memorial sermon seemed particularly appropriate:

"When ends life's transient dream;  
When death's cold, sullen stream  
Shall o'er me roll;  
Blest Saviour, then in love,  
Fear and distress remove;  
O bear me safe above  
A ransom'd soul."

After Dr. Newman's glowing tribute came the closing hymn, led by Mrs. Whitney, soprano, of Boston, and in which the congregation joined:

"Nearer, my God, to Thee,  
Nearer to Thee!  
E'en though it be a cross  
That raiseth me;  
Still all my song shall be—  
Nearer, my God, to Thee!  
Nearer to Thee!"

As the echoes of the general's favorite hymn rang through the tall trees that surmounted the mountain top, the benediction was pronounced, and the remains of the old commander were borne to the funeral train. Gen. Hancock was in charge. Down the mountain to Saratoga the train proceeded. At the village the casket was transferred to the funeral car in which the remains were taken to Albany and subsequently to New York. The gallant Sherman, Sheridan, Hancock and other noble heroes have since answered their last roll-call on earth—gone to swell the ranks of the great majority beyond the river. In a few years the veterans who fought under Grant will all pass over, but their deeds of valor will ever live in song and story. The name of Grant is inscribed on the nation's roll of patriots side by side with that of the martyred Lincoln. Of the hero of Appomattox it can be truly said that he was—

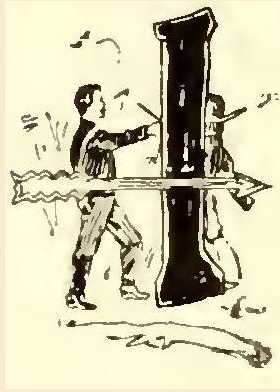
"Our greatest, yet with least pretense,  
Great in council and great in war,  
Foremost captain of his time,  
Rich in saving common sense,  
And, as the greatest only are,  
In his simplicity sublime."

Note—This chapter was published in the *Troy Daily Times* at the time of Gen. Grant's death, and it is deemed best to insert it without change, although the events are not presented in chronological order with the other chapters.—S. P. A.

## CHAPTER VI.



*The Company Cook and the Soldiers' Rations—Soap in the Soup—A Stag Dance—The Army Sutler—A Whiskey Barrel Tapped at Both Ends—The Long Roll—Breaking up—Tinter Quarters—Good Things from Home—Stripped for the Fight.*

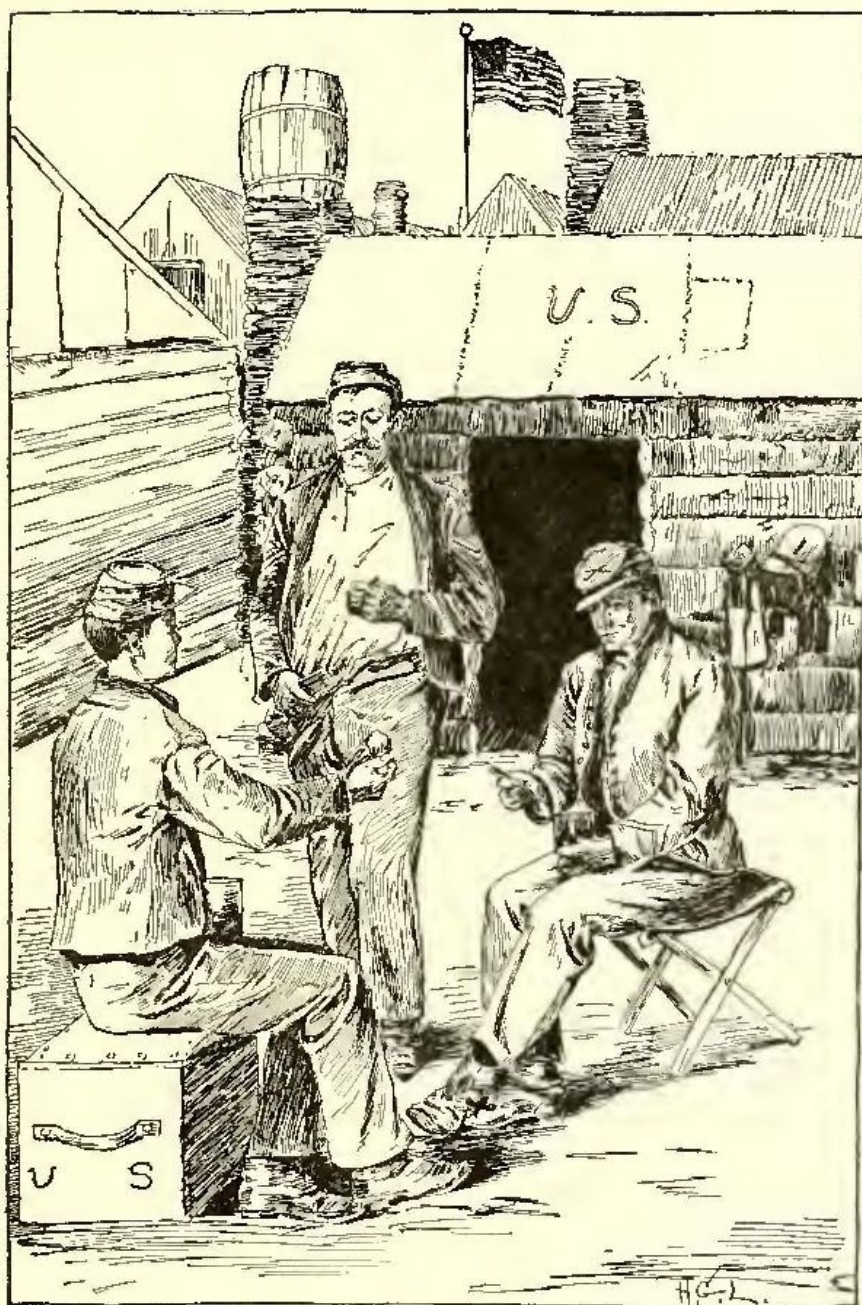


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IN winter quarters kitchens were erected and men were detailed from each company to act as cooks. It was easy enough to find soldiers who would sing out "here!" when the first sergeant inquired if there was a good cook in the ranks. Thoughts of extra food and "every night in bed" sometimes prompted men who had never even fried a slice of pork to step to the front and announce themselves as experts in the culinary art. These pretenders, however, were not permitted to spoil more than one day's rations. As soon as the soldiers had sampled the mystery into which their allowance of food had been transformed by the greenhorn kettle slingers, there was trouble in the camp until a change was made in the cook house.

One day a company I boy found a piece of soap in his soup. The discovery was not made until he had stowed away nearly all the contents of his quart cup. He had felt the lump in the bottom with his spoon, and had congratulated himself on the supposed mistake of the cook in leaving a piece of beef in the broth. He raised it out of the cup and held it up on his spoon to exhibit it to less fortunate comrades, saying:

"Nothing like being on the right side of the cook, boys. How's that for beef?"



"SOAP IN MY SOUP!" HE EXCLAIMED.

[Original Size](#)

"It's rather light-colored for Government ox—let me see! If it isn't soap I'm a marine.",



"Soap?"

"Yes, soap!"

"And in my soup! Boys, that cook's time has come. Who'll stand by me till I make him eat this piece of soap?"

"You'll have to go it alone; you're on the right side of the cook, you know. We've got nothing to do with it. He knows better than to give us soup with soap in it."

"But, hold on a minute; all the soup came out of the same kettle."

"Sure enough; he's soap-souped us all. Go ahead; we're with you."

The cook would have been roughly handled had he not called on the officer of the day for protection. The cook protested that the soap had not been in the soup kettle, but must have fallen off the shelf over the window as the soldier held his tin cup through the opening to receive his soup. This theory was gladly accepted by all but the trooper who had found the soap in his cup. By this time he was too sick to be aggressive.

"Boys, send my body home," he moaned.

"Soap suds," chorused the troopers who had been relieved from the terrible suspicion that they had been fed on soap also. The poor victim was given a drink of hospital brandy as soon as he could retain anything on his stomach. He was on the sick report for four or five days.

Paragraph 1,190 of the Revised Regulations for the Army (1863), fixed the soldier's daily ration as follows:

*Twelve ounces of pork or bacon, or one pound and four ounces of salt or fresh beef; one pound and six ounces of soft bread or flour, or one pound of hard bread, or one pound and four ounces of corn meal; and to every one hundred rations, fifteen pounds of peas or beans, and ten pounds of rice or hominy; ten pounds of green coffee, or eight pounds of roasted (or roasted and ground) coffee, or one pound and eight ounces of tea; fifteen pounds of sugar; four quarts of vinegar; one pound and four ounces of adamantine or star candles; four pounds of soap; three pounds and twelve ounces of salt; four ounces of pepper; thirty pounds of potatoes, when practicable, and one quart of molasses.*

I have quoted the exact language of the regulations for the information of civilians who every now and then inquire of the veterans: "What did the Government feed you fellows on down in Dixie?" Hard-tack, salt pork and coffee were the soldier's mainstay. The sweetest meal I ever ate consisted of crumbs of hardtack picked up out of the dirt, where the boxes had been opened to issue crackers to the troops, and a piece of salt pork that had been thrown away by an infantry soldier. I still cherish the memory of that feast.

There were two or three violinists in our battalion, and the boys occasionally induced these musicians to fiddle for a "stag dance," as they called the old-fashioned quadrille in which troopers with their caps off went through "ladies' chain" and other figures prescribed for the fair partners in the regulation dance. The dances took place by the light of the camp fires between retreat and tattoo. The boys managed to get a good deal of enjoyment out of these gatherings.

During the war a great many men made fortunes by selling goods of various kinds, including provisions, to the soldiers. The army traders took big chances after the spring campaign opened, unless they packed up and moved to the rear as the troops marched to the front. Yet there were sutlers who followed the army even on dangerous expeditions into the enemy's country. The boys contended that if a trader could sell one wagon load of goods at sutler's prices—and get his pay—he could afford to retire or to lose five or six wagon loads. There was much truth in the statement.

Among many stories current in the Army of the Potomac about "euchring the sutler," as the soldiers called any trick by which they could secure goods without coming down with the cash, was the following:

The troops were in bivouac on the James River. The boys received four months' pay, and there was no place to buy anything except at the sutler's. The trader took advantage of the situation and marked his goods up fifty per cent. He had just received a barrel of whiskey, which he was retailing at fifty cents a glass. The sutler's glass held a little more than a thimbleful. There was a run on the whiskey for a time. Then trade slacked up, and the sutler was at a loss to account for it, as it was contrary to all precedent, the rule being that the more liquor the boys got the more they wanted. Finally the call for whiskey ceased.

"What's the matter with the men?" the sutler asked one of his clerks.

"I don't know—they never acted like this before."

"They're not buying our whiskey."

"No."

"And many of them seem to be getting drunk."

"That's so."

"Must be somebody else's selling in camp. I thought we had a corner on whiskey."

"So did I."

"Well, you go out and see what you can find."

The clerk was gone about five minutes.

"Have we competition?" inquired the sutler, as the clerk returned to the tent.

"Well, I should say so."

"What are they selling at?"

"Twenty-five cents a drink."

"Just half our price?"

"Yes."

"Where are they located?"

"Right outside our tent."

"Where do they keep their liquor?"

"Take hold of the barrel with me and I'll show you." The sutler was surprised to find a faucet in the rear end of the barrel as well as in the front end from which he had been drawing.

"Somebody tapped this barrel from the outside," he exclaimed.

"Yes, and retailed your liquor at twenty-five cents a drink while you asked fifty. It's no wonder they drew all the customers," said the clerk.

"There's but a little whiskey left in the barrel—not more'n a gallon. Don't sell another drop for less than two dollars a glass."

A Down East Yankee had made the discovery that the sutler's whiskey barrel was so placed that one end of it, as it was resting on boxes, touched the canvas. He went around behind the tent, cut a hole through the canvas, and after borrowing a brace and bit from an extra-duty man in the quartermaster's department and a faucet from another comrade in the commissary department.

Union men, enlisted to put down the rebellion, had a way of thinking for themselves, and of making observations of what transpired around them, that was exasperatingly fatal to the regular red-tape idea that a soldier was a machine and nothing more. When it became necessary to perform daring deeds in the very jaws of death, the intelligent Yankee volunteers were capable of understanding, he tapped the sutler's whiskey barrel and did a thriving business, the enterprise being advertised by word of mouth through the camp.

It never failed to be noised about that something was in the wind several days before the receipt of orders for any movement of importance. The great multitudes of citizens who bore arms under the flag of the that sacrifice was demanded. And they made it, bravely and without complaint.

Whenever a big thing was on the programme it was next to impossible to keep it quiet. The old soldiers seemed to grasp the situation intuitively, and the recruits generally knew more about it, or thought they did, than the generals themselves.

There were certain signs in our military existence that came to be accepted as reliable. Orders from brigade headquarters to have the horses well shod at once, meant a cavalry expedition into the enemy's country. Extra ammunition for the light batteries that belonged to the cavalry corps meant that the movement was to be a reconnaissance in force. The assembling of a division or two of infantry in battle trim near the cavalry outposts, with several days' commissary stores in transit, showed that an attempt was to be made to gobble up another slice of the Confederacy or make a break in the communications of the rebels. The issuing of dog tents, extra ammunition and commissary supplies as a rule preceded the starting of an expedition against the enemy. A sudden dashing out of camp, light saddle, and unencumbered with anything but arms and ammunition, in response to a signal from the outposts, always gave rise to the suspicion, frequently confirmed in the heat of battle, that the Johnnies were making an expedition against us.

The rumors of a general advance came thicker and faster the last week in April, and May the third the long roll was sounded by the brigade buglers. The breaking up of winter quarters was always attended with scenes that were excruciatingly funny. What a lot of worthless old plunder the soldiers would accumulate! It always required sorting over a dozen times before the boys could really determine just what to leave behind. And then it invariably happened that after the very last thing that they could spare or think of abandoning had been cast out the inspecting officers would poke around and order us to throw out the articles we prized most highly.

Railroad communication with Washington and the North had made it comparatively easy for us to secure creature comforts, and many delicacies from the homes of the boys in blue reached our camp. Waterman had received a large-sized packing box full of good things to eat, from his parents. The goodies were shared among "our four"—Waterman, Taylor, Hom and myself.

The first feed we had after the cover of Waterman's box was taken off brought tears to our eyes—tears of joy, of course—but somehow the taste of the home-made pies and cake produced a longing for home and mother which was made all the more intense as the contents of the box disappeared and we came face to face with the stern reality that a return to "mule beef and hard-tack" was inevitable.

Waterman's parents resided only a short distance from where my father and mother lived in Berlin, and when his box was sent my family helped to fill and pack the box. Then when the dear people at home thought our food must be getting low another box was packed by my parents, and Waterman's family contributed some of the good things. It was sent by express, but owing to the increased demand upon the railroads and trains to forward munitions of war to the Army of the Potomac, my box did not reach Warrenton until the morning that we started for the Wilderness. The company was drawn up in line waiting to move forward when a Government wagon arrived loaded with boxes and packages for the troopers. My long-expected box was thrown out of the wagon, and I obtained permission to interview it.

I pried off the cover, and as I caught a glimpse of the good things from home, I felt like annihilating the quartermaster's department that had held back my box while extra supplies of ammunition and commissary stores had been dispatched to the front. Just then the bugler at brigade headquarters sounded "forward." There was no time to waste. I did the best I could under the circumstances—filled my haversack, and invited the boys in the company to help themselves, after "our four" had stowed away all we could. The second platoon swept down on that box, and in less than a minute the boys were eating home-made pies and cookies



TAPPING THE SUTLER'S WHISKEY BARREL.

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all along the line. A picture or two, a pair of knit socks and a few souvenirs were secured by Waterman and myself.

“Attention, company!”

“Prepare to mount!”

“Mount!”

“Form ranks!”

“By fours, march!” and we were en route to the Rapidan. It was the last taste of home-made grub that we enjoyed till the campaign was over. We secured the makings of a square meal now and then while raiding around Richmond, but the territory had been foraged so often that it was considered mighty poor picking the last two years of the war.

As we rode forward, we found that everybody was on the march or getting ready to leave. Lines of tents were disappearing on all sides as the long roll sounded through the camps. Supply trains were moving out, and everything was headed about due south. As we rode by the bivouacs of the infantry, the foot soldiers, imitating the Johnnies, would sing out:

“Hay, there! where be you all goin’?”

“Bound for Richmond.”

“But we all are not ready to move out yet.”

“Then we’ll drive you out.”

“You all can’t whip we all. Bob Lee will drive you all back as he has done before.”

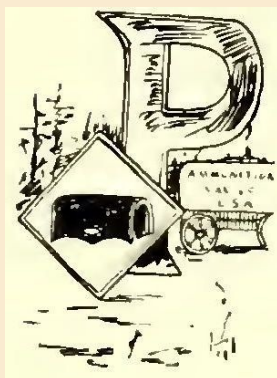
Then there would be a general laugh all along the line at the expression in this semi-serious way of an idea that had gained a strong lodgment in the minds of many “peace patriots” at the North. The soldiers at the front who were doing their best to crush out rebellion did not share in the feeling that the Jeff Davis government would carry the day. The veterans of Gettysburg and of Antietam knew that the Union army was in no respect inferior to the chivalry of the South—man to man. All the Army of the Potomac needed to enable it to fight Lee’s army to the finish, and win, was a commander that knew what fighting to a finish meant. Would the new commander fill the bill?

President Lincoln, in presenting Grant’s commission as lieutenant-general at the White House, March 9, 1864, assured the modest hero from the West that “as the country herein trusts you, so, under God, it will sustain you.” A few days after the lieutenant-general remarked: “The Army of the Potomac is a very fine one, and has shown the highest courage. Still, I think it has never fought its battles through.” The Army of the Potomac was waiting for a general who would give it an opportunity to “fight its battles through.” All eyes were fixed on the lieutenant-general. The result is recorded in history.

As we pressed toward the Rapidan there were evidences all about us that the Army of the Potomac was stripping for the fight. All superfluous baggage and trappings were left behind. The army was ready to strike a powerful blow at its old adversary, and the conflict was at hand. Sheridan was at the head of the cavalry corps. As we came in sight of the Rapidan and made preparations for swimming the river with our horses to cover the laying of the pontoon bridges, so that the infantry and artillery could cross, we felt that a few days would determine whether the Army of the Potomac would go “on to Richmond,” or, bleeding and shattered from an unsuccessful onslaught upon Lee’s veterans, fall back to its old quarters, as it had done on other occasions.

## CHAPTER VII.

*The very Man Grant Wanted—Sheridan at the Head of the Cavalry—Lively Times in the Wilderness—Falling Back—Little Phil to the Rescue—A Close Call for the Doctors—The First Night After the Opening of the Fight—A Town in Mourning.*



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HIL SHERIDAN never led his men into a ticklish place and left them to get out by themselves. He never sent his soldiers on a dangerous expedition without arranging to have assistance at hand if there was a suspicion that help would be needed. And he never asked his men to go where he was not willing to go himself.

I wish I had known all this on the morning of Thursday, May 5, 1864. It would have saved me from a great deal of worry about the fate of the cavalry corps in the Wilderness, and also from no little anxiety as to what was to become of the youngest trooper in Company I, First Massachusetts cavalry. But Sheridan was new to the Army of the Potomac. He came East with Grant. The old soldiers in our brigade had done considerable kicking because a number of cavalry generals who had raided around in Virginia, had been jumped by Sheridan.

Gen. Grant in his “Memoirs,” says, referring to his assuming command of the Army of the Potomac: “In one of my early interviews with the President, I expressed my dissatisfaction with the little that had been accomplished by the cavalry so far in the war, and the belief that it was capable of accomplishing much more than it had done if under a thorough leader. I said I wanted the very best man in the army for that command. Halleck was present, and spoke up,

saying, 'How would Sheridan do?' I replied, 'The very man I want.' The President said I could have anybody I wanted. Sheridan was telegraphed for that day, and on his arrival was assigned to the cavalry corps of the Army of the Potomac."

Grant was right—he was always right—and Little Phil not only proved a thorough leader of the cavalry corps, but he demonstrated his ability to command an army in one of the most successful campaigns of the war.

"Where are our hosses?" demanded a Berkshire boy, who was one of the first to come up with the sergeant and two men left to guide us to the reserve, as stated in the last chapter.

"In the woods back up the turnpike about a mile."

"This is a nice way to treat American soldiers!" exclaimed a corporal, who had left both his boots in the mud in the plowed field. "I can't run through blackberry brush barefooted!"

"I'm going to camp here till they bring back my horse and something to eat. I didn't enlist to caper around on foot in such a place as this," said another.

I volunteered to take the sergeant's steed and go and see that the horses were sent to meet us, but at that moment there was heard the noise of the rebel cavalry coming in on our flank crashing through the bushes.

"You couldn't manage my horse—he's so fiery," said the sergeant. "I can't hold him when he takes it into his head to go where the other horses are."

Away went the sergeant and the two men who had been left with him, on a gallop up the road.

"Follow me!" shouted the sergeant, as he put spurs to his charger.

We followed.

As the sergeant and his two companions turned a bend in the road, rebel cavalymen, who had penetrated the jungle almost to the turnpike, opened fire on the three troopers. It was a race for life. The bullets whistled close to the ears of the Federals as they dashed by the Johnnies in ambush. Then the saddle girth of one of the privates gave way, and the terrified trooper was left sitting on his saddle in the middle of the road, his horse going on with the procession. He shouted, "Whoa!" The "rebel yell" went up as the Yankee went down. It stimulated him to the greatest effort of his life. Springing to his feet he held the saddle between his head and the Confederates to shield off their bullets, and darted into the bushes to the left of the turnpike. As he reached the thicket he threw the saddle back into the road and shouted defiantly at his would-be executioners:

"Take the old saddle, you infernal asses. I've got no use for it without a horse!"

Then he bounded away through the forest, keeping well to the left of the road. He was a pitiable sight when he rejoined the company that night. His clothes were literally torn off. He would not have been presentable at all if an artilleryman had not given him a spare shirt. It may be stated that several others reported to their company commander in about the same fix.

Some of us had taken such a deep interest in what was going on up the turnpike, that we almost forgot the rebels who were looking for us. I remember that I laughed, tired and concerned for my own safety though I was. The ludicrous figure cut by our comrade as he glanced around him when he landed in the road and yelled "Whoa!"—as if a runaway horse would stop under such circumstances—was too much for my risibility. But I did not have my laugh out. It was interrupted by one of our sergeants shouting:

"Streak it, boys—here they come!"

We made nearly as good time in getting away from that place as the mounted troopers had scored, and for the same reason. The butternut-clad cavalymen fired their carbines almost in our faces at the first round. We needed no further notice to take to the woods. It was entirely unnecessary for "our six-footer corporal" to urge us to "remember Lot's wife," as he led the retreat over the brow of the hill and bounded down the slope out of range.

As I halted after crossing the divide to catch my breath, a terrible racket broke out in the woods to the right. As near as I could judge, not having paid much attention to the points of the compass, there was trouble somewhere in the vicinity of the turnpike where we had parted with the Confederates. There was no mistaking the sounds. There was fighting out there in the woods, and the cheering of Federal cavalymen was heard above the yell of our late pursuers.

"We're licking 'em out o' their boots!" said my bunkey, who had kept neck and neck with me through the woods.

"That's what we're doing."

"I'd go back and take a hand if I had a horse."

"So would I."

Several of our boys ventured to the top of the hill, and then along the ridge toward the turnpike. They soon came to a rail fence, and on the other side of it was a squadron of Federal cavalry drawn up in line.

It did not take us long to introduce ourselves. We ascertained from the troopers who belonged to the Tenth New York that our regiment was on the other side of the road about a quarter of a mile north. By this time the firing on our front had dwindled down to irregular skirmishing.

As we were getting over the fence to go in the direction pointed out, Sheridan rode up. He came from the front, and was greeted with a hearty cheer that was echoed by cavalry posted away to the left, and also by those of us who had breath enough left to shout. "Little Phil" waved his hat, which he was holding in his hand.

"Our line is all right, boys," and he galloped up the turnpike to report to Grant, who was at Meade's headquarters.

Sheridan had inflicted severe punishment on the rebel cavalry that had come in on our flank. He was informed of the condition of affairs at the front, and at the time our battalion was ordered to fall back, a line had been formed further up the turnpike ready to receive the rebels. The road was left clear, and as



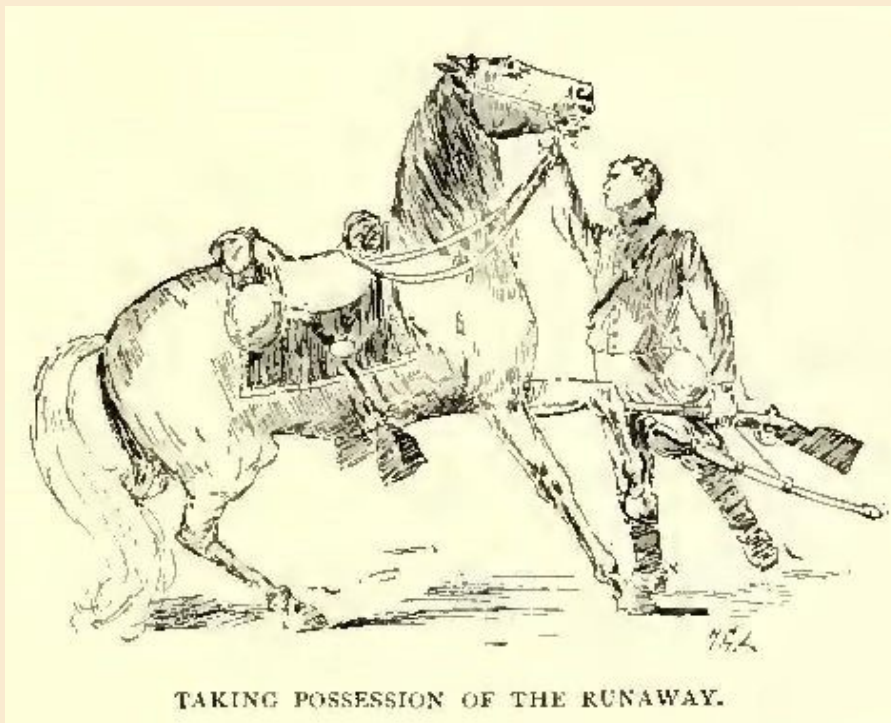
Hampton's "critter companies" followed the dismounted Union troopers, they fell into the trap. Then they went back faster than they had come. Sheridan's troopers charged, and the chagrined gray-coats were driven way beyond the ravine where our battalion had held the line of the rail fence before our ammunition failed.

As the memory of that day's events comes to me now, there is a sprinkling of regret that I was forced to "streak it" through the Wilderness. It completely destroyed my confidence in the ability of our regiment to put down the rebellion single-handed at one fell swoop. And, moreover, a good many of us were almost naked when we reached the horses after our run through the forest. Yet it was necessary that sacrifices should be made. Sheridan was fishing with live bait, and it was part of the programme that the bait should be kept moving.

When I reached my company, which was waiting orders near the turnpike leading to Todd's Tavern, I was informed that my horse had been killed by a shell while the animals were being led to the rear. I felt the loss of my horse keenly. And then my saddle-bags were gone, with the picture of my best girl and other memories of home.

Orders came for the regiment to move a little further to the left. An infantry brigade was forming on our right. There had been serious business on the other side of a strip of woods to the right of the line occupied by the cavalry. Wounded men were carried to the rear on stretchers. Several army surgeons had ventured to establish a field hospital well up to the front line. The Johnnies may have had a hankering for the medical stores in the hospital chests that were unpacked so temptingly near the enemy, for they made a dash for the wagons. But this time the Confederates made a mistake. The infantry holding the line in front of the "doctors' den" peppered the gray-coats until the would-be consumers of United States *spiritus fermaiti* were glad to turn and get back out of range as fast as their legs could carry them.

The narrow escape of the medical men showed that they had spread out their operating instruments too near the enemy, and the base of operations was removed over a hill to the rear. There was a stampede when the rebels charged to break the line in front of the field hospital, and a horse belonging to one of the surgeons dashed down the turnpike. The infantrymen made no effort to stop the animal—the average foot soldier was afraid of a horse—and it occurred to me that the horse was just about what I needed to complete my outfit. My heart beat a double tattoo as I attempted to spread myself across the road to intercept the runaway. He came on at full speed, but as he shied toward the fence to pass by me, I was fortunate enough to catch the bridle rein, and that horse was mine—till further orders.



### Original Size

I examined the saddle girths and found everything in good shape. After I had taken up the stirrup straps—the doctor's legs were considerably longer than mine—I mounted the prize, and once more felt there was a possibility that the Southern Confederacy might be conquered! Then I took an inventory of the contents of the doctor's saddle-bags. There was a bottle of hospital brandy in one of the bags. It was the "genuine stuff," as Sergeant Warren remarked that night when I allowed him to sample it. I investigated further and found a field glass, several boxes of pills, a few rolls of bandages and lint, with a small case of instruments. There were two six-shooters in the holsters on the pommel of the saddle, and a surgeon's regulation sword fastened on the left side. A canteen, and a haversack containing a couple of ham sandwiches, a piece of cheese and a can of condensed milk were included in the outfit. I whistled dinner call at once, and made an excellent meal on what the medical man had provided for his supper. Then I rejoined my company.

The Wilderness was full of terror when night came on and spread its mantle of darkness over the scenes of bloodshed. On every hand could be heard the groans of the wounded and dying. The gathering of the unfortunates went on all night, and the poor fellows were borne to the field hospitals. There was heavy firing at intervals. Here and there the bivouac fires lighted up the otherwise Egyptian darkness and served to make

the shadows all the darker, and to give the surroundings a weird and dismal aspect. It seemed as if daylight would never return. When it did break we hailed it joyfully, although we knew that the light of the newborn day would witness a renewal of the conflict.

We did not unsaddle our horses that night, but along about midnight we were given an opportunity to feed our chargers and make coffee for ourselves. Preceding the feed the company rolls were called by the first sergeants. In Company I not more than fifty per cent, of the number on the roll responded—I mean of the number that had charged down the turnpike Thursday morning. A majority of the boys who failed to show up at the first roll-call in the Wilderness put in an appearance later on.

It was the same with other regiments. In a battle like that of the Wilderness there was a good deal of the go-as-you-please, especially if there were charges and retreats and frequent changes in formations. Details would be made from companies for skirmishes and other duties, and the men so detailed when they returned were unable to find their companies, their regiments having been transferred to another part of the field. I recall an incident of the Battle of the Wilderness that was the cause of a whole town going into mourning: Company B of the One hundred and twenty-fifth New York Volunteers contained many Berlin boys. In one of the movements in the Wilderness that regiment marched past the First Massachusetts. I was on the watch for Company B. I think it was after the second day's battle. The One hundred and twenty-fifth had been fighting furiously somewhere near the Brock road, and the slaughter had been great. The ranks of the regiment were depleted, and when I spotted the Berlin boys I saw that B Company had suffered badly. There were only two or three faces that I recognized. Rube Fry was one, I think.

"Halloo, Company B!"

"Halloo!—there's Alex Allen's boy."

"Where's the rest of the company—the Berlin boys?"

"All killed but six."

"It will be sad news for Berlin."

"Yes; and it will be a wonder if any of us escape if we don't get out of the Wilderness pretty soon."

"It will indeed."

"Good-by."

"Good-by, Rube. I'll write home if I get a chance." I got the chance the day that we started on Sheridan's raid—May 8. I wrote the news just as I had received it. There was mourning all over the town when that letter reached Berlin. The news from the front was contradicted, however, soon after by letters from several of the boys who had been included in the list of casualties I had sent home. It seems that a part of the One hundred and twenty-fifth was sent on picket duty to the left, and a charge had been made by the men not included in the detail. Lieut.-Col. A. B. Myer and thirty-four men out of one hundred and four who made the charge were killed. Somehow the report had been started that all the rest of the regiment had been killed or wounded or taken prisoners. I was rejoiced to learn when I next met the One hundred and twenty-fifth, after Sheridan's raid, that the report of the casualties in Company B sent home in my letter after the Battle of the Wilderness was exaggerated.

I find in the roster of B Company as given in the history of the One hundred and twenty-fifth New York Volunteers by Chaplain Ezra D. Simons of that regiment, that none of B Company was killed in the Wilderness, and only five were wounded.

But B Company did not escape so luckily in the battle of Spottsylvania, following close on the heels of the Wilderness. Several were killed outright and a number wounded. The company lost twenty-four men, killed and died, during its service—a number far above the average of companies throughout the army. The One hundred and twenty-fifth made a splendid record.

I was always glad to run across the regiment at the front, and to compare notes with the Berlin boys in Company B.

## CHAPTER VIII.

*A Council of War—Observations at Daylight—The Second Day in the Wilderness—Not to Fall Back—The Rebel Yell—The Third Day—Custer at Work—An Ideal Cavalry Officer.*

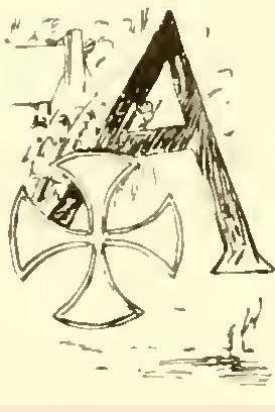
T daybreak we expected to renew the Battle of the Wilderness—if the rebels did not pitch into us again during the night. The enlisted men of our company held a council of war before any of them availed themselves of the privilege of turning in for a snooze.

"I wonder if the Johnnies will skedaddle before morning?" said one of the boys who had been back at Ely's ford and had not participated in the first day's fight.

"You had better take a sleep. We'll call you if the enemy shows up before reveille."

"All right, here goes. I can sleep one night more with a clear conscience, for my hands have not been stained with the blood of a single enemy."

Of course, these remarks were made jokingly. No matter how serious the situation might be, there was always a disposition among the soldiers to make light of it. After the "re-enforcement" had retired the council was continued.



"I don't think it's fair to ask the cavalry to fight on foot as we did yesterday."  
"But what else could we do when we come to that high fence?"  
"We might have stopped and waited for the Johnnies to charge us."  
"Well, I guess Phil Sheridan knows how to fight his men better'n we know ourselves."  
"We'll have another fight in the morning."  
"Certainly."  
"And there'll be more of us killed and wounded."  
"Yes."  
"I wonder whether we're whipped, or the rebels have got the worst of it?"  
"Can't tell till daylight, we're all mixed up so."  
"But Grant must know."  
"That's so—but where's Grant?"

[Original Size](#)

"He's with Meade back near that old quartz mill where we had dinner the day we crossed the Rapidan."

"The lieutenant told me that Grant's orders are for our side to make an attack at three o'clock."

"Then we're not whipped."

"Not if we've got orders to open the ball in the morning. Let's get what rest we can."

"All right."

About three o'clock Friday morning—we were taking turns in sleeping—I called upon my bunkey to "get out of bed and let me get in."

"I haven't been asleep yet."

"That's your own fault; you've had time enough."

"I was just getting good and sleepy—but I'm not piggish. Take the bed."

I stretched myself on the piece of tent, and tried to go to sleep. But it was no easy thing to settle down. The events of the day—the attack on our picket line, charging down the turnpike, exciting experiences at the rail fence, fighting on foot, charging across the plowed field, holding the enemy in check, falling back when flanked by the rebels, Sheridan's punishment of our pursuers—all crowded themselves to the front, and it seemed a year since we broke camp at Warrenton. I had never been in a pitched battle before, and I tried to remember the events in their order that I might be able to write them down as a basis for a letter to friends at home. The more I tried to straighten things out the more I got mixed. I dropped to sleep, but just as I was describing the battle to a group of villagers at Berlin, I was brought suddenly back to the front by a sergeant who was poking me with his saber scabbard.

"Private Allen, turn out for picket."

"But I've only just turned in. There's my bunkey; can't you take him? he's already turned out after a good long nap—"

"No back talk, out with you!"

I was on my feet as soon as I awoke sufficiently to realize the situation.

"Mount your horse, and report to Sergeant Murphy out there in the road. Is your cartridge box full?"

"Yes, sir."

"Hundred rounds extra in your saddle-bags?"

"Yes, sir."

"Mount at will, and go ahead."

Sergeant Murphy took charge of a detail from several companies. We rode down the road a few rods, and a staff officer then assumed command of the detachment.

"We're to go out beyond the picket line and watch the movements of the rebels at daybreak," the lieutenant informed Sergeant Murphy.

In fifteen minutes we were at the last picket post out toward Todd's Tavern.

"Detail a man to ride ahead, Sergeant," the officer directed.

I had ridden close up to the officer to hear all I could about the prospects of a fight, and the sergeant detailed me.

"The object of keeping a man well to the front," the officer said to the sergeant, "is to draw the enemy's fire should we run into the rebel pickets, and thus prevent the detachment from falling into an ambush."

"Very proper, sir," assented the sergeant.

"You will ride down the road, keeping a hundred yards or so from the head of the column," the lieutenant said to me. "Load your carbine and keep it ready for use, but don't fire unless the enemy opens on you, for it is desired to secure a favorable position for watching the movements of the rebels as soon as it is light enough."

It was quite dark down there in the woods. I did not take kindly to the thought that I was to be used as a target for the rebel pickets. This riding to the front to draw the enemy's fire was a new experience to me. But I tried to comfort myself with the hope that we were so far out on the left that we would not encounter the Confederates.





DETAILED TO DRAW THE ENEMY'S FIRE.

### Original Size

The advance business was as new to the doctor's horse as it was to me. I had to use my spurs freely to induce him to go down the road ahead of the other horses. We got started after a while, and the still hunt for Lee's right and rear was begun.

It was lonesome work for man and beast. Suddenly, and without any intimation of what he intended to do, the horse began to neigh. It may have been in the animal's "ordinary tone of voice," but to me it seemed to be loud enough to be heard way back to the Rapi-dan. I expected the Johnnies would open fire at once. The staff officer rode up to me—after waiting long enough for me to draw the enemy's fire if they were close at hand—and said:

"What's the matter?"

"Morse 'whickered,' sir."

"What made him?"

"Can't tell, sir; he broke out without any notice."

"Ever do it before?"

"Don't know. I only got him yesterday afternoon. He belonged to an infantry doctor who was shot."

"That accounts for it; a doughboy horse don't know anything about this kind of work! Take your place at the rear of the detachment, and if that horse neighs again, break his head with your carbine."

"All right, sir."

Another man was sent to the front, and we moved on. We did not run into the rebel pickets, and the officer said we must be further to the left than the right of Lee's line. We halted on the top of a hill where the road turned westward and waited for daylight.

As soon as it became light enough for the officer to take observations with his field-glass, he rode to the highest point he could find and surveyed the broken country in our front. He could not see far in any direction, as the woods were thick and there was little cleared land.

"Come here, Sergeant," the lieutenant called to Murphy, after looking off to the west for a few seconds through his glass. "Look over there."

"Rebels, sir," said the sergeant.

"Yes; cavalry moving over this way. We will return at once."

We went back up the turnpike at a gallop.

"What's up?" inquired the officer in charge, of the outposts when we reached our pickets.

"The rebels are up and moving around to get on our left flank. Keep a good lookout and be ready to move at once. I will report to Gen. Sheridan, and there will soon be lively work."

Sheridan's cavalry was in the saddle and en route to Todd's Tavern within twenty minutes after our return from the reconnaissance in that direction. The cavalry was to connect with the left of the infantry commanded by Gen. Hancock. The staff officer's prediction that there would be lively work on our left was fulfilled. Sheridan was in time to intercept Stuart's advance along the Furnace road, a few miles northwest of Todd's Tavern. It was hot work.

There was desperate fighting as the troopers came together at the intersection of the Brock and the Furnace roads. Jeb Stuart's attempt to get around in our rear to make a dash on the wagon trains of the Army of the Potomac, and to smash things generally, was a complete failure. He was driven back from the Furnace road, and after a stubborn stand at Todd's Tavern the rebel cavalry leader was forced to call off his troops and fall back from Sheridan's immediate front.

In the afternoon, having been re-enforced, and after being ordered by Lee to turn Grant's left, Stuart again attacked the Federal troopers. He was assisted by infantry, but Little Phil refused to budge an inch from the position held at Todd's Tavern. The rebels were driven back with heavy loss. In the meantime the entire army was engaged, and the fighting was continued all day.



A rebel trooper of Fitzhugh Lee's division, taken prisoner the evening of May 6, inquired:

"Who's you all fightin' under this time?"

"Grant."

"I reckoned so; but who's overseer of the critter companies?"

"Sheridan."

"He's a doggoned good 'un. Fitz Lee knew what he was talkin' 'bout, when he told Wade Hampton that we all would be 'bliged to take care of our own flanks this trip."

"You're right, Johnny."

"Be you all headed for Richmond, sure 'nough?"

"That's where we're going."

"But what be you all to do with me?"

"We'll send you North, and let you live on the fat of the land till we gobble up the rest of the rebel army."

"Stranger, do you mean it?"

"Certainly."

"Hallelujah! I'm ready to be fatted. Where's you all's commissary department?"

He was sent to the rear with the other prisoners.

At the close of the second day's battle in the Wilderness, the report was current among the troopers of Sheridan's cavalry corps, that the Army of the Potomac would retire from the front of Lee's army in that Virginia jungle and fall back to Fredericksburg, which would be occupied as a new base of supplies pending the re-organization of the army to again move "On to Richmond!"

There is no denying the fact that the Army of the Potomac was seriously crippled. An order to fall back to the north bank of the Rapidan would have been accepted as a matter of course had the new commander directed such a movement. But if some of the soldiers had known Grant better, they would have spent less time that night in speculating whether the line of retreat would be by the Germania plank road or over the route to Ely's ford.

It turned out that Grant did not discover that the "Yankees were whipped in the Wilderness" until he read an account of the "rout of the Federal army" in a Richmond paper at Spottsylvania a few days later. Of course, it was then too late for the Union commander to use the information to any advantage. It may be remarked also, that Lee had not heard of Grant's defeat until he received the news via the rebel capital.

There was a disposition on the part of a few brigades on the Union right to get back across the Rapidan without waiting for orders Friday night. Gen. Gordon of Georgia made a desperate effort to demoralize the Federals by charging Grant's right, coming in on the flank. He gobbled up a brigade or two, and sent a good many blue-coats flying back toward the river. But the fugitives could not find their way out of the Wilderness, and they halted before going far, for fear they would get turned around and run into the enemy. The gallant Sedgwick again demonstrated his fighting qualities. He did not intend that the colors of the sixth corps—the banner with the Greek cross—should go down. Sedgwick brought order out of chaos. He drove back the Confederates and saved the day—or the night, as Gordon's charge was made after darkness had set in.

Every hour or so during the night, the Johnnies would give us the rebel yell. These outbreaks occasioned alarm on our side at first, but after the terrible din had died out several times without the appearance of the boys in butternut, we concluded that the enemy was shouting to keep up courage for a general attack in the morning.

We had no opportunity to sleep—I mean to go into camp and stretch our weary bodies at full length on the ground for a season. About the time we would begin to congratulate ourselves on the prospects of a nap we would be ordered into the saddle, ready to repel an attack. There were any number of false alarms. Old soldiers will remember how exasperating it was to be hustled out at the dead of night, marched here and there—"up and down and through the middle"—only to find that somebody had made a bull. We marched several times during the night, sometimes going a hundred yards. When daylight came Saturday morning we found ourselves within three hundred yards of the spot where we bivouacked Friday night. We had been moved around like men on a checker-board—one man trying to catch another in the double corner, so to speak; "hawing and geeing," as a Berkshire boy expressed it.

The Battle of the Wilderness ended Friday night, from an infantry standpoint, but Sheridan's cavalry had fighting enough Saturday to prevent them from getting-rusty. We were given to understand early in the morning that the army was to go on. While the infantry were cutting the pegs out of their shoes, and burying the dead Saturday, the troopers were feeling the enemy over on the left toward Spottsylvania. There was a good deal of trouble in locating Lee's line of battle. The rebels had not felt safe outside their breastworks after Gordon had failed to double up our right. When they were found by our pickets Saturday morning, they seemed to have lost their thirst for Yankee blood so far as coming outside to rebuke our curiosity was concerned. A reconnaissance by Gen. Warren of the Fifth Corps occasioned a suspicion that the infantry were at it again, as the firing was lively in Warren's front for a few minutes. Lee did not accept the challenge, and no general engagement was brought on.

There was a sharp set-to between Stuart's cavalry and the first brigade of the first division of Sheridan's corps, commanded by Gen. G. A. Custer, early Saturday morning. The rebels found Custer an ugly customer. They skedaddled to Todd's Tavern, after vainly trying to check the advance of the boys in blue.

Gen. Custer was an ideal cavalry officer. He was something like six feet in height, and sat his horse perfectly. He was one of the youngest generals in the army, having won the star of a brigadier before he was twenty-four years old. His pleasant blue eye seemed to fire up with the first intimation of battle. His appearance was all the more striking because of his long wavy hair and his dashing make-up, which included a large red necktie. His brigade adopted the red tie as a part of their uniform, and Custer's troops could be distinguished at long range. It was a common saying in the cavalry corps that the rebels preferred to have nothing to do with Custer's brigade except at "long range," and therein the Confederates exhibited excellent

judgment.

Custer was a favorite in the regular army after the war, and his death—in the Custer massacre in 1876—was mourned by soldiers and civilians throughout the United States.

## CHAPTER IX.

*Sheridans Raid—Turning Out Lively—Crossing the North Anna—Massa Linkum's Sojers—The Tables Turned—The Name of Mother—A Yankee's Benediction—Pushing On Front Beaver Dam—"The Kingdom Comin'"—The Grave of Massa Tom—Foraging on the Enemy—The Old Planter and the Vandal Horde—Yankees Without Horns.*



[Original Size](#)

URN out, men!"

"Turn out, lively!"

"Saddle up—mount at will!"

We turned out lively enough. The rebels were shelling our bivouac on the banks of the North Anna River. It was just at daylight. Our dreams of home were interrupted by the "pinging" of bullets, and the more distressing sounds of missiles of larger caliber.

"Look out there!"

"What's that?"

"Only a cannon ball, but it's too late to dodge now—it has gone by."

"Get into your saddles, boys—never mind your haversacks—be sure your ammunition is all right. As fast as you're saddled up, mount and ride over there where the major is forming the regiment."

The Johnnies had nearly cheated us out of our suppers Monday night, as they did not cease firing on our pickets till after ten o'clock. And now they evinced a disposition to spoil our breakfast. In this they succeeded, but some of them were severely punished. Soldiers are inclined to be ugly when attacked about meal time, and Fitzhugh Lee's cavalymen were given a red-hot reception when they pitched into our boys before breakfast.

One of our boys got his saddle on with the pommel to the rear—he must have stood on the off side of his horse to buckle the saddle girth. After he mounted his horse he could not get his feet into the stirrups as they were "hind side afore."

"Halloo, there! what are you facing the wrong way for?"

"I'm all right; it's a new wrinkle, don't you see? I can about face in the saddle and load and fire on the Johnnies while my horse keeps going on. I saddled up this way on purpose."

During the night Fitzhugh Lee had posted a battery so that he could make it hot for us when we came to cross the river. And very hot it was for an hour or so.

The shot and shell came tearing through the bushes skirting the bank. A regiment was deployed to the rear to hold the rebels in check while the Federal troopers were crossing. The Confederates were mad—fighting mad. They understood that if Sheridan kept pushing on without halting his main column to give battle to the rebels in the rear, the Union cavalry could ride straight into Richmond. This was what caused Stuart to draw off the larger part of his command from the line of the North Anna to get in between Sheridan and the rebel capital, first making a feint on the south bank as if to attack Merritt's division in the morning. We succeeded in getting over the river without great loss, as the first division covered our crossing, and our flying artillery did splendid work in silencing the rebel battery that gave us the most trouble, and then sending cannon balls among the Johnnies who were peppering us at close range.

When we reached Beaver Dam Station—or the ruins of what had been the station the day before—we found that Custer's brigade had demonstrated the ability of the Yankee troopers to smash things.

"Golly, massa!" exclaimed a plantation hand, who had witnessed the capture and destruction of the station, "dem sojers from Massa Linkum's army dun knock de bottum out'n de las fing roun heah—shuah's yo born. Whar's yo all gwine?"

"Richmond, Uncle."

"'Pears like yo' mean it, shuah nuff, dis time. Reckon yo'll get dar if all Massa Lee's sojers am as skeery ob de Yanks ah de crowd dat was heah when yo' all com' gallopin' cross de bridge las night. Whew! how dem rebels did run. Spec dey's close to Richmond by dis time, if dey not slack up some 'fore now."

The old darcy was right. Custer had knocked the bottom out of everything around the station, making a total wreck. The ruins were still burning, and our boys were particular that the destruction should be complete.

The mortification of the rebel prisoners was something ludicrous. Only a few hours before they had been guarding a detachment of Yankees captured in the Wilderness. They had reached Beaver Dam Station, where they had halted for the night. The prisoners had been assured that their chances of spending a year or so in Libby prison were of the best. But while the Confederates were boasting of their ability to whip Grant's army three to one, Custer's troopers dashed down on the station, and in a few minutes the fire-eating F. F. V.'s were ready to throw up both hands and surrender. Some of the Union boys who had been released buckled on

C. S. A. belts and cartridge boxes, and stood guard over the crest-fallen gray backs.

An infantry corporal of a Pennsylvania regiment, had been forced to give up all his personal effects to one of the rebel guards when leaving the Wilderness. The corporal had been "well fixed," as the boys called it when a comrade had money, a watch, etc. After the tables had been turned on the Johnnies the corporal, having taken into custody the man who had robbed him, at once singled him out, and imitating the voice of the Johnnie, said:

"That's a fine ring on your finger—think it would fit me? Hand it over."

The prisoner surrendered the ring, saying:

"You've got the drop on me this time, Yank."

"Mighty fine watch you carry—you'll have no chance to keep it in prison where you're going. I'll take charge of it for you."

The watch was handed over.

"Just go down in your pocket and see how many greenbacks you can find—you can't spend them in prison."

A pocket-book with quite a sum of money was given up.

"Let me see! They won't allow you to smoke a meerschaum pipe in prison; so I'll save that for you till you get out. I'll guarantee it will be well colored."

The pipe was returned to its owner.

"Now, that half-pound plug of tobacco, please. You may bite off one more chew, as it will probably be the last you'll get right away."

The rebel obeyed orders.

"As you will have no tramping to do after you get to the prison, and I'm liable to be on the go most of the time, we'd better swap shoes, as mine are nearly worn out."

The exchange was made.

"That canteen!"

Handed over.

"Haversack!"

Surrendered.

"Fine tooth comb!"

"I shall miss that."

"Suspenders!"

Handed over.

"Jack-knife!"

"Here it is."

"Shirt—no, never mind the shirt. I haven't got yours to return in place of it, for it was so thick with graybacks when you took it off to put on mine, that it was run away with. I've no doubt my shirt that you've got on is in the same fix now, so keep it, Johnnie. I don't want to be too hard on a stranger. You may also keep my drawers and stockings, as I can get a supply from some of my friends in the cavalry. I see you've got a ring that you didn't take from me. Does it belong to one of our boys?"

"No, Yank; it's mine. It was my mother's. She's dead—it's all I have left that was hers. But it's yours now, as I'm your prisoner. Take it, Yank. It's hard to give it up."

"I know it is."

"Do you?"

"Yes; the ring you took from me was my mother's, Johnnie. She's dead—no, I can't take your mother's ring—keep it."

"I took yours, but you didn't tell me it was your mother's."

"No; for I didn't believe it would make any difference."

"It would have made a difference, Yank—sure's you're born, it would."

There was a grasp of hands as the tears ran down the faces of the corporal and his prisoner. A tender chord had been struck in the heart of each. They had been foes a few minutes before. They were brothers now.

Each had fought for a cause, and would go on fighting as before. They must continue to be enemies on the field of battle till the great questions at issue were settled by the sword. But all this was forgotten as they spoke of "mother."

The heart beneath the blue and the heart under the gray beat in unison. Each felt the blessed influence awakened by the utterance of that magic word "mother," which is so beautifully expressed by Fanny J. Crosby:

"The light, the spell-word of the heart,  
Our guiding star in weal or woe,  
Our talisman—our earthly chart—  
That sweetest name that earth can know.

"We breathed it first with lispings tongue  
When cradled in her arms we lay;  
Fond memories round that name are hung  
That will not, cannot pass away.

"We breathed it then, we breathe it still,

More dear than sister, friend or brother,  
The gentle power, the magic thrill  
Awakened at the name of Mother."

"Johnnie?"

"Yes, Yank."

"Take this pipe and tobacco. You'll need them."

"Thank you."

"Here's my pocket-book."

"But you'll need the money?"

"Not so much as you will. Take it, I say."

"All right, if you insist on it."

"And this fine tooth comb—you'll need that also."

"Yes, I need it now."

"Here's my jack-knife; it'll come handy."

"It will."

"Now take my canteen and haversack—no, don't refuse; I can get more. I'll see them filled before we part."

"Thank you, Yank—God bless you!"

"God bless you, Johnnie!"

And all who stood by said, "Amen."

So mote it be.

Leaving Beaver Dam Station in ruins, Sheridan's cavalry corps pushed on toward the rebel capital early on the morning of Tuesday, May 10.

Not far from Beaver Dam we rode by a Virginia farmhouse. It was a one-story building, with chimneys on the outside and an "entry" running through the center. Two or three plantation hands stood near the fence, grinning and shouting:

"Bress de Lawd!"

"Hyar cum 'Massa Linkum's sojers—bress de Lawd! O, Glory!"

"Are you glad to see us, Uncle?"

"Yes, massa, 'deed I is."

"Where's the 'massa'?"

"He run and gone. Must be de king-dom com-in'." The old darky had struck the keynote of one of the ditties that were immensely popular in the Union army. The boys took up the song. They made it ring as they rode along:

"Say, dar-keys, hab you seen de mas-sa,  
Wid de muff-stash on his face,  
Go long de road some time dis morn-in',  
Like he gwine to leab do place?

He seen a smoke, way up de rib-ber,  
Where de Link-um gum-boats lay;  
He took his hat, an' lef' berry sud-den,  
An' I 'spec he's run a-vvay!

*Chorus:* "De mas-sa run? ha! ha!  
De dar-keys stay? ho! ho!  
It mus' be now de king-dom com-in',  
An' de year ob Ju-bi lo!"

At another farmhouse we found a new-made grave in the dooryard. It was just inside the gate, and to the right of the walk leading up to the porch. The earth heaped over the grave was still moist, which showed that it had been filled in during the morning. A spade with the letters "C. S. A." burned in the handle, lay beside the mound. At one of the windows of the farmhouse we saw the faces of two or three young ladies. They had been weeping, but it seemed as if they were holding back their tears till the Yankees should get out of sight. We concluded that the grave in the yard was that of their brother. The eyes of many of Sheridan's raiders filled with tears as they came to understand the situation, and their minds went back to their own homes and the dear ones in the North. Mother, sister, sweetheart—in a few days they might be weeping over the news of the death of their soldier boy. Every voice was hushed. With uncovered heads the troopers rode by. Their hearts were moved with sympathy for the distressed household.

A staff officer inquired of an old negro who was drawing water for the soldiers at a well near the house:

"Whose grave is that, Uncle?"

"Young Massa Tom's, sah."

"And who was 'Massa Tom'?"

"He war missus's only son."

"And the brother of the young ladies at the window?"

"Yes; all de brudder dey had. Ole massa he war killed at Seben Pines. Den young Massa Tom cum home for



a time to look after de plantation. But when de news cum dat Massa Linkum's army" had cross de Rapid Ann, young massa buckle on he sode an' tell de young missuses and ole missus dat he obliged to go to de front. He only lef' home Thursday, five days ago. He war in de Wilderness and war sent wid Yankee prizners to de station which you all's sojers burn up las' night. He cum home to supper in de early ebenin, an' den went back to de station. He said dey spected to start for Richmond 'fore sun-up dis mornin'. But de Yankees sweep down on de camp, an' soon de news cum dat Massa Tom been kill. A party of Massa Lee's sojers brought young massa's body home, an' bright an' early dis mornin' we laid him away in de groun'. De sojers say: 'Better bury him 'fore de Yankees cum long,' and ole missus say: 'Yes; dey shall nebber glory ober my son's dead body.' So Massa Tom war laid away. It did seem so cruel like to jest 'rap a blanket roun' him an' put him in de groun'; but it won't make a heep ob diff'nce, I reckon, when de resurreckshun day shall cum, for de good Lawd will know his chil'ren.

"Poor Massa Tom—he's free. Ole missus say she 'spec I'll run off wid de Yankees now; but, massa, ole Ned's gwine to stay by an' help ole missus all he can, for de time'll soon cum when dis poor ole slave will be free! For whom de Lawd make free, he be free 'n deed."

As we rode away ole Uncle Ned was singing:

"Dar'll be no sor-row dar,  
Dar'll be no sor-row dar,  
In heb-un a-buv,  
Whar all is luv-  
Dar'll be no sor-row dar."

The enemy did not molest us during the march Tuesday. They had received severe punishment in the early morning, and when the three divisions of the cavalry corps had secured a position on the south bank of the North Anna, Stuart concluded that it was a waste of time—to say nothing of the danger—to attack Sheridan in the vicinity of Beaver Dam. At any rate, they left us to ourselves a good part of the day.

And what a picnic we enjoyed! Foraging parties were sent out in all directions, and they returned with an abundance of corn for our horses. The corn was in the ear, and we shelled it for our chargers. Now and then a trooper who had been out on the flank would come in with a supply of eggs and butter, with a chicken or two hanging on his saddle. All such provender was classed as "forage," and was confiscated by the raiders. It was delicate business, however, and I do not believe that one out of twenty of Sheridan's troopers took anything from the plantations along the route that was not needed by the soldiers.

I would not be understood as saying that the boys did not confiscate things that were not included in the Government ration. Not at all. They relished extra dishes—such as ham and eggs, butter for their flapjacks, and milk for their coffee, and wherever they found supplies of this kind they foraged them. But the Yankees showed a good deal of discrimination. When they found a dyed-in-the-wool rebel who had a goodly store of provisions, they confiscated what they needed, but in cases where the supply was scant and the farm was worked by the women and darkies, the boys admonished one another to go slow, and only a small percentage of the crop was taken into camp.

A foraging party went out to a plantation about a mile from the road on which our column was moving. We saw the planter's house on a gentle rise of ground, surrounded by magnificent shade trees. Everything about the place indicated that the proprietor belonged to the F. F. V.'s. As we rode up the broad avenue leading from the front gate to the residence, the sergeant in charge of the party said: "Boys, we've struck it rich. There must be something good to eat here." Seated in an armchair on the broad piazza was the "lord of the manor," his eyes fairly snapping with the hatred he could not conceal for the visitors. He was full threescore years and ten. His long white hair hung down upon his shoulders, and served to heighten the color in his cheeks—and the beet red of his nose. The planter arose at our approach, and demanded:

"To what am I indebted for this visit?"

"Firing on the old flag at Fort Sumter, primarily," replied the sergeant, who seemed to enjoy the old Virginian's hostile attitude.

"But, sir, I did not fire on Sumter!"

"No? Then you're a Union man, I take it?"

"No, sir! I'm a Virginian, loyal to my State and to the Confederacy. If I were able to bears arms I should be in Lee's army to-day, fighting the vandal horde that has invaded the sacred soil. Sir, we are enemies!"

"I am sorry to hear you say that. If you were a Union man you could get pay for the forage we were sent to secure. But as you are a sworn enemy of the United States of America we will be obliged to confiscate some of your corn and other supplies."

"I knew you were a band of robbers when you rode through my gate. The Northern mudsills make war on private citizens and rob them by force of arms."

"It's the fortunes of war."

"You may call it war. We of the South call it the unholy attempt to subjugate freemen—to destroy the sovereignty of the States. But Abe Lincoln with all his vandal horde will never conquer the South!"

"Well, stick to your State's rights, old man; but in the meantime we must have corn for our horses to brace them up so's we can ride into Richmond and hang old Jeff Davis——"

"Jeff Davis! He's a saint, sir, when compared with your negro-loving railsplitter in the White House!"

"All right; I don't propose to quarrel with you. Please show us where the corn can be found."

"Never, sir! If you will plunder my plantation I am powerless to defend myself; but I'll not help you to anything."

"Then we'll prospect on our own hook. Perhaps we can find what we want."

"I protest in the name of the sovereign rights of a Virginian."

"Uncle Sam's a bigger man than 'ole Virginny,'" replied the sergeant.

We had no difficulty in finding the corn crib and the old Virginian's commissary department. A young darky "let the cat out of the bag" on his master, and we soon had our horses loaded with forage. We had struck it rich, indeed, for the plantation yielded "corn, wine and oil" in abundance. There was food for man and beast. A large number of hams, cured on the plantation, sides and sides of bacon, and a goodly store of "groceries" were among the "forage" we confiscated. But we did not strip the planter of all his provisions; enough was left to run him for several months.

"I'll give you a receipt for this forage," said the sergeant, as we were about to leave.

"What would the receipt of a robber be good for?" exclaimed the old planter.

"You can present it to the Government when the war's over and get pay for the forage."

"Do you want to add further insult to the injury you have done me? I scorn you and your Government. You can never whip the South, sir, never, and under no consideration would I disgrace myself by taking pay for stores used by the enemies of the Confederacy. Leave my plantation. Go back to your general and tell him that my prayer is that he and his followers will get their just deserts—that they will all be hanged." The enraged planter walked back and forth on the piazza, and shot defiant glances at us as we rode away with our plunder. I have no doubt that he would have "bushwhacked" us if there had been an opportunity.

A couple of miles south of the big plantation we came to a farmhouse on a cross road. We stopped at the well to fill our canteens, and one of the boys explored the premises to see what he could find. He came back with the report that the house was occupied by a widow with a large family of children.

"There don't seem to be anything to eat on this farm," the trooper remarked.

"I'll see about it," said the sergeant, as he rode up to the porch. "Halloo, inside there!"

A middle-aged woman came out into the entry and advanced timidly toward the Yankee.

"We're out after forage," the sergeant said. "Have you any corn around here?"

"We have nothing but the crap that's gro'in'. We had some provisions until a few days ago a lot of soldiers came along and took all our corn and bacon. We've got a mighty little meal and a trifle of bacon left."

"I didn't know that any of our men had been through here lately."

"They were not Yankees; they were our own soldiers. They said they were hungry, and when they begun to eat it seemed like they would never quit. They fairly ate us most out of house and home. It's mighty sorry times with us. I don't know what we'll do to get along till harvest."

"Where's your husband?"

"Done killed in the wah."

"Have you no sons?"

"Yes, sir; two fighting under General Lee.

"And you're short of provisions?"

"Very short indeed."

"Boys, leave a couple of hams, a bag of meal and some bacon with this lady."

The boys gladly complied with the instructions, and they also went down in their haversacks and contributed quite a number of rations of coffee and sugar.

"Oh! that's real coffee," exclaimed the oldest of the children, a girl of about twelve years.

"I expected you would take what little we had to eat," said the head of the family, as the tears rolled down her face. "I never thought the Yankees would be so kind to the widow of a Confederate. The Richmond papers said if you all came this way you would destroy everything; they said heaps of black things about you."

"Do you all have hams on your saddles and sacks of corn to carry along all the time?" ventured the young miss who had listened to all that had been said.

"No, no; we confiscated these back at the big plantation yonder."

"Where 'bouts?" inquired the widow.

"At that fine house a couple of miles north."

"Was there an old gentleman there?"

"Yes; he gave us his benediction when we left, by expressing the wish that we would all come to the gallows."

"And these hams and other things came from his plantation?"

"Yes."

"I declare, 'vengeance is mine, saith the Lord.' Yesterday I called there and asked the colonel—they all call him colonel—to help me along by letting me have a little meal and bacon. I promised to pay him back when we gather our crap, by and by."

"He assisted you, of course?"

"No, indeed. He said he could not afford to distribute his provisions among other people who had no claims on him. He refused to let me have a pound of meat, or a quart of meal."

"He knows your husband was killed fighting for the Confederacy—and that you have two sons in Lee's army?"

"To be sure he does; he urged them to go into the army, to hurl back the invaders; but he now says I must look to the Government at Richmond for help. I'm thankful for what you all have done for us. It's a right smart help. But I believe the colonel would come down here and take the provisions away from us, if he knew you all had left them here."

"Let's go back and take what's left at his plantation and burn him out," exclaimed one of the troopers.

"No; not this time," said the sergeant. "But we shall probably come this way again, and then we can pay our compliments to the old skinflint."

"Do you think the wah's coming to an end soon?" the woman asked as we were about to move forward.

"I hope so," replied the sergeant. "I think this campaign will wind it up."

"Who's going to whip?"

"We are."

"You'll be obliged to do some powerful hard fighting, I reckon, for our side won't give up so long's there's anything to eat in the Confederacy. But if we're to be overcome, sure enough, I hope it will be soon—before my sons are killed. Our boys'll die game, sure's you're born."

"I hope your sons will be spared."

"I trust they will. They believe they are fighting for a just cause. They are Virginians, and they have great faith in Gen. Lee. They will follow him to the end. But it's a cruel wah. Somebody must be wrong; both sides cannot be right. I don't understand it thoroughly, but I feel that somebody has made a terrible mistake."

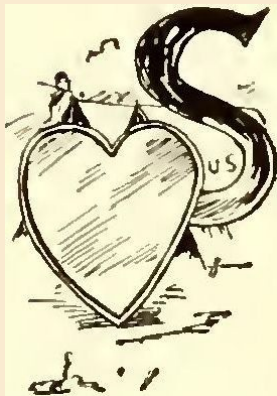
"Ma, the Yankees hasn't got horns, has they, ma?" exclaimed one of the children, a girl about five years old, and who was gnawing at a hard-tack one of the troopers had given her.

"No, my darling."

And the Confederate soldier's widow joined in the laugh that followed this juvenile outbreak. Good-bys were said, and the foraging party hastened to rejoin the column.

## CHAPTER X.

*Butler's Advance on the South Side—How the Massachusetts Major-General Escaped Hanging—Returning to Grant's Army—The Fight at Hawes's Shop—A Dying Confederate's Last Request—Holding Cold Harbor at all Hazards—Filling the Canteens—Running into the Enemy.*



[Original Size](#)

HERIDAN'S weary troopers appreciated the three-days' rest given them at Haxall's phrase, but it expresses the character of the flotilla. Nearly every class of vessel, from the latest improved ironclad down to the slow-going canal boat, ascended the James to Bermuda Hundred, from which base Butler moved his troops in his attack on the rebel fortifications at Drewry's Bluff.

While we were recuperating in camp, the army of the James was operating against Richmond. A courier came in from Gen. Kautz's cavalry, then smashing things out beyond Petersburg, bringing encouraging news. Butler had sailed up the river with a fleet of mixed vessels—that may not be a strictly nautical Landing. An opportunity was afforded the recruits who had never been on a raid before to doctor their saddle boils, and rub horse liniment on the contusions they had sustained while being banged around on the march from the Wilderness to the James.

We did not know, at the time, what Butler was trying to accomplish, except the general statement that Grant had ordered him to co-operate with the Army of the Potomac in the advance on Richmond. The intricate details of the plan were altogether too perplexing for worn-out troopers to puzzle their brains with. An outline of what had taken place on the south bank of the river was given out, and as I remember it, the day that we started on our return to Grant's army, it was generally understood that Butler had been driven back from Drewry's Bluff into his breastworks at Bermuda Hundred, although we did not hear that he had been "bottled up" till several weeks later.

I did not know at that time that Butler had been declared an outlaw by Jeff Davis, but I suppose the commanding general of the army of the James was aware of the fact. Whether the same had any influence on Butler's retreat down the river when worsted by Beauregard, I am not prepared to assert. It would be a serious breach of discipline for one of the few surviving privates of the great rebellion to intimate that the Bay State's favorite major-general turned his back on Richmond, and sought the security of breastworks, with gunboat supports, to escape falling into the hands of the Confederates. And yet I have since discovered that had Butler been captured, he would have been hanged by the neck until he was dead, dead, dead.

Butler, as is well known, had given the Confederacy no end of trouble at New Orleans, when in command down there. He had caused the rebels to understand that the assassination of Union soldiers must be atoned for by the punishment of the assassins.

In "The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government," by Jeff Davis, an account is published of what the rebel president declared to have been the "murder" of William B. Mumford, a "non-combative" citizen of New Orleans, by Butler's order. Gen. Lee had written to Gen. Halleck about it, as instructed by Davis, and Halleck refused to receive the letters, because, as he expressed it, they were of an insulting character. Davis continues:

*"It appeared that the silence of the Government of the United States, and its maintenance of Butler in high office under its authority, afforded evidence too conclusive that it sanctioned his conduct, and was determined that he should remain unpunished for these crimes. I therefore pronounced and declared the said Butler a felon, deserving capital punishment, and ordered that he be no longer considered and treated as a public enemy of the Confederate States, but as an outlaw and common enemy of mankind; and that, in the event of his capture, the officer in command should cause him to be immediately executed by hanging."*

According to Gen. G. T. Beauregard, who commanded the rebels at Drewry's Bluff, Gen. Butler's salvation from summary execution was due to the failure of the Confederate Gen. Whiting, to carry out the instructions given him by Beauregard, for the latter, in an article in "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," says:

"Nothing would have prevented Whiting from capturing the entire force of Gen. Butler, had he followed my instructions. We could and should have captured Butler's entire army."

I do not know but Beauregard's expectations included the capture of Sheridan's cavalry at Haxall's, and, possibly, Grant's army, too; but the modest Confederate is silent on this point.

I beg pardon for going outside the lines a little in speaking of Butler's operations. Whatever may have been that general's failings—if he had any failings—as a military commander, one thing the survivors of Sheridan's cavalry corps will never forget: he fed them when they were hungry, and filled their haversacks for the march to rejoin the Army of the Potomac.

We started on the return trip Tuesday evening, May 17. I would have volunteered to be transferred to the navy, had there been a chance to do so. My saddle boils were all ripe, and a few hours' riding brought matters to a crisis. But I became hardened to it later on, and never again suffered affliction of that character.

Scouting parties were pushed to the front to feel the way, the exact location of Grant's army being unknown to us. Our horses had recovered from the effects of the fatiguing march, and the troopers were in good spirits. The "new hands" began to feel confidence in themselves, and as they had not shown the white feather thus far, the old veterans were considerate enough to admit that the four new companies had the "makings of a good battalion."

We crossed the Chickahominy at Jones's Bridge, and camped in the vicinity of Baltimore crossroads Thursday night. From this place our division and Wilson's were sent to explore the roads around Cold Harbor. Our movements were not opposed by the Confederates, and we rested our horses on what proved to be, a few days later, one of the bloodiest battlefields of the campaign.

At the old tavern at Cold Harbor we filled our canteens with water, the tavern being dry so far as liquor was concerned. We were only twelve miles from Richmond, yet the rebels were willing to give us full swing so long as we would keep away from their capital.

While the second and third divisions were scouting around Cold Harbor, Custer took his brigade to Hanover, destroyed Confederate stores at that station, and burned several bridges.

In the meantime, Merritt's men had repaired the railroad bridge over the Pamunkey, and upon our return from Cold Harbor, everything was in readiness for continuing the march to rejoin the Army of the Potomac. Custer's men reported that Lee's army was intrenched along the North Anna, and that meant that Grant's troops were on the opposite side, facing Lee.

Tuesday, May 24, just a week from the day we left the James, we joined the Army of the Potomac near Chesterfield. We had been absent sixteen days. Grant and Meade highly commended Little Phil upon the success of his daring raid, and the doughboys admitted that the cavalry, with Sheridan in command, was able to take care of itself, and could make a march in the enemy's country without a column of infantry to keep off the rebels. The cavalry corps lost six hundred and twenty-five men and half as many horses on the raid.

The first and second divisions of Sheridan's cavalry corps led the advance from the line of the North Anna, when the Army of the Potomac executed another left-flank movement, crossing to the south bank of the river the day after our return from the raid around Richmond. The third division, commanded by Wilson, was detached from the corps, and sent to look after the right flank of Grant's army. Sheridan accompanied the advance, and he was instructed to put out and feel the enemy.

Gregg's division engaged in a lively brush with the rebels at a place called Hawes's Shop, May 27. The enemy had us at a great disadvantage, being posted behind breastworks. An infantry brigade with long toms kept the minie balls pinging around our ears, while the sharp reports of carbines, the cheers of our boys as they pushed forward, the rebel yell and the booming of field pieces gave warning to the troops in our rear that the cavalry was at it again.

We ran into the rebels rather unexpectedly, although we knew that they were close at hand. Our advance guard was fired on as the detachment approached a belt of timber skirting the road. In a few minutes our whole division was under fire, and the Johnnies stubbornly contested every inch of ground which they occupied.

While we were closing in on the rebel intrenchments, a young trooper on my right asked me if I had any water. I reached him my canteen. Just as he raised it to his lips a bullet from a rebel musket struck it, knocking it out of the trooper's hand.

"That's blasted mean!" he exclaimed.

"Pick up the canteen, maybe the water hasn't all run out," I shouted.

"It's all gone," he said. The ball had passed through, tearing a big hole in the tin.

"Take a drink from my canteen," said another trooper, who had witnessed the incident.

"Thank you." And holding the canteen up above his head, the thirsty soldier shouted: "Now, you miserable gray backs, shoot away; spoil this canteen, will you?"

Whiz! thug! And the second canteen was struck by a musket-ball and ruined.

"I guess I'm not as thirsty as I thought I was," remarked the young cavalryman, as he declined the offer of another canteen.

A sergeant of a Pennsylvania regiment in the second brigade, was severely wounded in the leg. Two comrades attempted to assist him back behind a tree to the left of the road. The wounded non-commissioned officer was carried on a piece of board, which the troopers held between them, and supported himself by holding on to their shoulders.

Just as they were passing our position in line, a shell struck the board, and stove it into splinters. The sergeant was thrown on one side of the road, and his two comrades on the other. I thought they were dead, but in a few seconds the sergeant raised up on his elbow and called out:



"Jackson, are you killed?"

"No, sir; but I'm unconscious."

"Where's Corbet?"

"Here, sir; but I'm unconscious, too. There's no breath left in me body."

Then the two troopers lifted their heads and looked cautiously around. They had escaped serious injury, but the sergeant's other leg was badly shattered. They picked him up and bore him to the rear.

Gen. Gregg fought his division well, and the survivors of the engagement at Hawes's Shop will bear testimony that the rebels held their ground bravely.

We pressed forward to the breastworks, but were unable to carry the line. The Confederates poured volley after volley into our ranks. Still the troopers, with averted faces, worked their way to the front, securing a position and holding it within pistol range of the enemy. Boys in blue and boys in butternut went down.

The regiment on our right made a sudden dash, and swept back the Confederate line. But our boys were unable to hold the advance position. The Johnnies fired upon them from both flanks, and back they came, slowly and with their faces to the foe, loading and firing as they retreated. They brought in a score or more of prisoners.

"Halloo, Reb! What are you fellows blocking our road for?" shouted a blue-clad trooper to a Confederate sergeant, as the prisoners were hustled to the rear.

"Who's a-blocking the road, Yank? I'm done. You all gobbled me in a squar fight."

"Where do you hail from?"

"Ole South Carliney, and if you'll give me my parole, I'll go down thar and stay till the wah's over."

We were having a lively exchange of leaden compliments, when the boys in charge of our horses—we were fighting on foot—began to cheer, and we knew that help was at hand. In a few minutes we saw Gen. Custer, at the head of his Michigan brigade, coming up the road.

Sheridan had sent Custer to Gregg's assistance at the request of the latter, who had informed Sheridan that he could drive the rebels from their breastworks with the help of a few more men. Of the closing up of the battle Gen. Gregg says: "Soon Custer reported with his brigade. This he dismounted and formed on a road leading to the front and through the center of my line. In column of platoons, with band playing, he advanced. As arranged, when the head of his column reached my line, all went forward with a tremendous yell, and the contest was of short duration. We went right over the rebels, who resisted with courage and desperation unsurpassed. Our success cost the Second Division two hundred and fifty-six men and officers, killed and wounded. This fight has always been regarded by the Second Division as one of its severest."

The Confederates left us in possession of the field and the dead and wounded. Inside the earthworks, a little to the left of the road, a young rebel lay dying. A bullet had struck him in the breast, and his life's blood was flowing from the wound and from his mouth. He was not more than seventeen years old. The dead and dying were thick around the boy, showing that he had fallen where the fight was the hottest.

"I can't do anything for you, my son," said a grayhaired Federal surgeon, who had examined his wound.

"Am I dying, Doctor?"

"Yes, my son; the wound is fatal."

"Can my head be raised?"

"Certainly. Here, boys! bring an overcoat or a blanket."

The old doctor's voice was tremulous and his eyes were moist with tears. A dozen blue overcoats were offered, but only one was needed. This the surgeon folded so as to make a pillow for the wounded Confederate. Tenderly the doctor raised the boy's head and placed it on the overcoat. As he did so the blood flowed afresh from the wound in the breast.

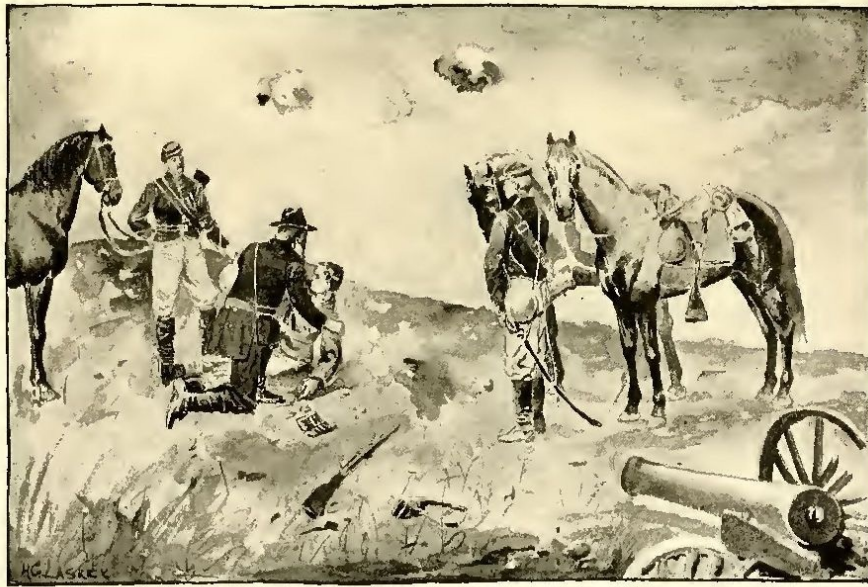
"Doctor—picture—mother—pocket—let me see it."

"Yes, my son."

The surgeon took from the boy's butternut jacket a picture of a sweet-faced woman, and held it before the dying soldier's eyes.

"Closer, Doctor."

The boy had attempted to take the picture in his hand, but his strength was gone—he could not use his arms. The doctor held the picture against the lips of the youth. It was stained with blood when taken away, but there was a smile on the face of the boy.



THE FEDERAL SURGEON AIDS A DYING CONFEDERATE.

### Original Size

"Doctor," he said faintly, "tell mother I died like a soldier—will you write to her?"

"Yes."

The old doctor's tears were flowing freely now. And so were the tears of fifteen or twenty Union troopers who had gathered around the dying boy.

"Yes, I'll write—what's the address, my son?"

"Mother's name is——"

The voice sank to a whisper, and the Federal surgeon placed his ear close to the lad's mouth.

"Is what?"

"Mother—O, Doctor!—meet—heaven—good-by!"

He was dead.

"He was so much like my boy who was killed at Antietam," said the surgeon, as he folded the dead Confederate's hands over the mother's picture.

Search was made for a letter or writing that would identify the boy or reveal his mother's address. Only one letter was found in his pocket. There was no envelope; no postmark. It began, "My darling soldier boy," and breathed the mother's anxiety for the welfare of her son, and the prayer that he would be spared to return and make glad that mother's heart. And the signature—"Your fond and affectionate mother." Nothing more. There was no time for ceremony; barely time to bury the dead. The boy's body was wrapped in a U. S. blanket and put in a trench hastily dug and hastily filled.

The advance on Cold Harbor was led by the First and Second Divisions of the cavalry corps under Sheridan. The Third Division under Wilson had been sent out on the right flank to tear up the Virginia Central railroad. That duty was performed, and at the same time Wilson's division engaged the Georgia cavalry under Gen. P. B. M. Young, at Hanover Court House. The Confederates were driven out. In the meantime we were having our hands full at Cold Harbor, toward which place we marched all night, after the fight at Hawes's Shop. Sheridan had pushed forward Torbert's division, and a severe fight was had with the enemy, resulting in the occupancy of Cold Harbor and the important cross-roads by the First Division. While Torbert's men were fighting at Cold Harbor, our division guarded the road near Old Church. An order came from Sheridan for Gregg to send re-enforcements, to Torbert, and Davies's brigade was ordered to the front. We arrived too late to help the First Division drive out the rebels, but we were in time to assist in holding Cold Harbor the next day till the infantry came to our relief.

Sheridan had concluded that he could not hold Cold Harbor without infantry support, and the doughboys were eight or ten miles away. Orders were given to fall back to Old Church during the night of May 31. The withdrawal was made in good order, and we were congratulating ourselves on escaping from the trap the rebel infantry was preparing to spring upon us at daybreak, when we received orders to face about and hold Cold Harbor "at all hazards." Back we went, and preparations were made for resisting the attack of the enemy, which we felt sure would be made at daylight. If the rebels had discovered that we had moved out of the breastworks in their front, and had advanced and occupied the line, they could have held Cold Harbor against our four brigades, as the Confederate cavalry was supported by Hoke's and Kershaw's infantry.

Our position at Cold Harbor was anything but satisfactory, as we "turned doughboys" and began to dig for our lives, the necessity of entrenching our line being well understood, as we were to fight on foot. Sheridan says in his Memoirs, speaking of the return to Cold Harbor: "We now found that the temporary breastworks of rails and logs which the Confederates had built were of incalculable benefit to us in furnishing material with which to establish a line of defense, they being made available by simply reversing them at some points, or at others wholly reconstructing them to suit the circumstances of the ground. The troops, without reserves, were then placed behind our cover, dismounted, boxes of ammunition distributed along the line, and the order passed along that the place must be held. All this was done in the darkness, and while we were working away at our cover, the enemy could be distinctly heard from our skirmish line giving commands and making preparations to attack."

Thursday morning, June 1, the rebels attacked Sheridan at Cold Harbor. The troopers were not directed to withhold their fire till they could "see the whites of the eyes" of the foe, but they permitted the Johnnies to come within short range before opening on them. The Confederate infantry charged the breastworks, the rebel yell being heard above the terrible din of battle. Sheridan's men demonstrated to their commander and to the world that they could fight afoot or on horseback. The rebels did not get near enough to stick any of our boys with their bayonets, which had been fixed for that sort of butchery. Before they came within bayonet distance they were so badly demoralized by the raking fire of the Federal cavalymen armed with breach-loading carbines, that they took to their heels and skedaddled back to the woods from which they had started on their charge. Their flight was accelerated by the terrible fire poured into their ranks by our flying artillery, which had opened on the rebels as they came forward to the attack.

Again the Johnnies came, after they had recovered somewhat from their first repulse. But the Yankees gave the enemy another red-hot reception, and the rebels were forced to take to the woods. Before the second charge our regiment was mounted and sent out on the flank to support a battery that had been ordered to shell the Confederates out of a piece of woods.

It was a very trying situation. The artillerymen ran their guns out to the skirmish line, unlimbered and opened on the woods. The rebels replied with artillery and infantry, and the enemy's gunners got our range in a short time. The shells were bursting all around and over us for fifteen or twenty minutes. We sat on our horses ready to charge the rebels should they dash out of the woods and attempt to capture our artillery. It was far more trying on the nerves to sit bolt upright in the saddle as a target for rebel cannons and infantry, than it would have been to charge the enemy's lines and engage in hand-to-hand conflict.

A solid shot cut Corporal Goddard's haversack from his saddle without injuring the corporal or his horse. Corporal Jack Hazelet was on the left of the squadron. The corporal was given to stammering, and so was the captain and brevet major in command of the next squadron on our left. As a shell went shrieking through the air just over our heads, the boys naturally began to dodge. Then the captain shouted:

"Wha-wha-what you, you, you dod-dod-dod-dodging at, Cor-cor-corporal?"

"Who-who-who's a dod-dod-dod-dodgmg, Ma-ma-major?"

"You-you're dod-dod-dodging, Cor-cor-corporal!"

A shell burst in front of the captain, and he was seen to duck his head as a piece of the shell went whizzing close to his ear.

"Wha-wha-what you, you, you dod-dod-dodging at, Ma-ma-major?"

"Who-who-who's a dod-dod-dod-dodging, Cor-cor-corporal?"

"You-you-you're dod-dod-dod-dodging, Ma-ma-major!"

Of course everybody dodged—it was natural that they should under such circumstances.

I was detailed with another trooper to go down in a ravine to the right of our position, to fill the canteens of the company. I jumped at the chance, as I thought it would take me out of the direct range of the rebel artillery for a little while. We kept well to the rear of the regiment till we reached a row of trees and underbrush skirting the ravine. Then we faced to the front and followed a fence about half a mile. We found water and dismounted to fill our canteens. Pieces of shell began to drop all around us and into the water. We sprang up to ascertain the cause of this new departure, and discovered that the rebel artillery was shelling the woods. It was subsequently learned from a rebel prisoner that the Johnnies thought a column of Federal infantry was advancing upon their position under cover of the trees.

"We can't stay here," exclaimed my companion.

"I should say not."

"Let's go back to the company."

"All right; go ahead."

We sprang into our saddles and hastened to get out of the woods.

As we came into the open field near where we had left our company, we saw a column of infantry moving into position. The doughboys were rushing forward at a dog trot, with their long toms at right shoulder. It was a division of the Sixth corps, and was commanded, I think, by General David A. Russell, who was wounded that day or the next while gallantly leading his division against the enemy's lines. He was subsequently killed at the battle of Opequan, while serving under Sheridan in the valley. The cavalymen were rejoiced at the arrival of the infantry, and at once mounted and pushed out toward the Chickahominy to cover the left flank of Grant's army.

Our regiment and the battery had been withdrawn as soon as the infantry had arrived, and had moved to the left with the rest of Davies's brigade. When the two water-carriers, who had been shelled out of the woods, reached the position where we had left our company, the regiment was nowhere to be seen.

"Which way did the cavalry go?" I asked an infantry colonel.

"They pushed on to the front," he replied.

"Into the woods?"

"Yes."

We put spurs to our horses and dashed down the road in that direction.

We reached the edge of the woods and pushed on, jumping our horses over temporary rifle pits and rail barricades which had been occupied by the Confederates, and from which they had been ousted by the fire of our battery. We saw dead rebels in the rifle pits and in the road. We galloped on, and as we were beginning to wonder what had become of our regiment, we came against a column of rebel infantry marching toward the rifle pits we had passed a few minutes before.

"Whew!"

"Where's our cavalry?" I stammered, scarcely knowing what I was doing.

"What cavalry?" asked a rebel sergeant, who was in charge of the advance guard of the column.

"Hampton's?"

"Off to the right."

"We must get there at once—important dispatches."

Our advent was so sudden that the meeting was as much of a surprise to the rebels as it was to us, and as it was not uncommon for rebel cavalymen to don blue jackets when they could get them by stripping prisoners, the Confederates did not seem to grasp the situation till we had turned about and were galloping back over the road toward the Federal lines.

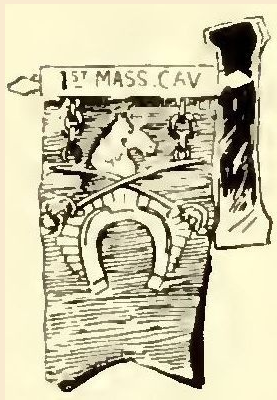
"Halt!"

"Halt, you infernal Yankees!"

The order was backed up by a volley from the rebel advance guard. The bullets whistled about our ears, but we bent low in our saddles and never looked behind us until we had placed the Sixth corps between us and the Confederates. Then we drew rein and took an inventory. Several canteens were missing, but otherwise we were "all present or accounted for," and we rode out to the left and rejoined our company.

## CHAPTER XI.

*Sent to the Hospital—The Convalescent's Vision—The Name on the Head-board—Killed July 28, 1864—Hom Taylor Died—Shot with his Harness On.*



[Original Size](#)

HAD stood the fatigues of the campaign thus far without once answering sick call, but in the latter part of July I began to feel "de misery in de bowels," as the contrabands described the disease that attacked the soldiers when in camp, and sent so many of them to the cemeteries. I fought against it as long as I could, but I was finally compelled to give in, and allow the first sergeant to put my name on the sick book. I was very weak, and Taylor assisted me over to the surgeon's tent. The doctor marked me "sick in quarters" the first day, and I swallowed medicine every two hours all night. The next morning I was unable to get out of the dog tent Taylor had arranged for me.

Along in the middle of the day I fell asleep. Taylor had insisted that I should "take a nap between drinks," as he called it.

"I'll wake you up in time for your toddy," he said.

I was awakened by the sounding of "boots and saddles" all through the camps.

"What's up?" I asked Taylor.

"Got to move right away; guess the Johnnies have broke in on us somewhere. But I'll ask the major to let me stay and take care of you."

And my faithful nurse ran over to the commanding officer's tent and made the request.

"We ran away and enlisted together, Major, and the doctor says the chances are against him unless he's tended with great care. I don't want to shirk duty, but I'd like to stay and see my towny through."

"I'll speak to the doctor about it," replied the officer. "Tell the doctor to come here."

When the surgeon appeared, he stated that the sick were to be sent to the hospital, and so it was decided that Taylor could not be spared to remain with me, as the movement was to be a reconnaissance in force on the north bank of the James, and every man would be needed. Taylor had to hustle to pack his traps and saddle up. After he had "buckled on his harness," as he called it, he came back to me, and assisted the hospital steward and the driver in lifting me into an ambulance. I had just strength enough to raise my head and thank my comrade, who stood with a canteen of fresh water he had brought for me, beside a trooper who had been wounded in the arm while on picket, and who was to go with me in the ambulance.

"Thank you, Giles. Write and tell my folks about me the first chance you get."

"I'm sorry to leave you, but I'll come over to City Point and see you in a few days. Keep up your courage; you'll pull through all right. But the company's leading out. I must go. Good-by."

"Good-by, Giles."

I did not have strength enough to sit up in the ambulance and see the boys as they rode by, but Taylor had told them I was in the vehicle, and I could hear them say, "Good-by, Allen," as they passed along.

Then I was "all shook up" as the ambulance driver cracked his whip and shouted to his mules to "git out o' hyar!" I do not remember how long we were on the road. I did not know then, for I was unconscious part of the time. Now and then we struck a long stretch of corduroy road. Oh! how it tortured me. Only old soldiers who "have been there" have any idea of the agony experienced in a ride over a corduroy road in an ambulance, particularly when the passenger is so weak that he cannot help himself at all.

"Drive around to the third tent there!"

"Yes, sir."

"How many men have you?"

"One wounded, and one sick or dead boy, I don't know which. He's been fainting like, all the afternoon." The above is what I heard upon regaining consciousness. We had arrived at the cavalry corps hospital on the



bank of the Appomattox, just above City Point. I was taken from the ambulance and placed on a cot in one of the tents. Then I became unconscious again, but restoratives were given me, and I was able, when the attendants came around with supper, to swallow one spoonful of tea, after which I was given an anodyne which put me to sleep.

The cavalry corps hospital was separate from the general hospital of the Army of the Potomac at City Point, and was used exclusively for sick and wounded troopers. The best possible care was taken of the patients, and delicacies in the shape of corn starch, farina, beef tea, canned fruit, jellies and other articles not included in the regular rations were supplied. It was several days after my arrival before I was considered to have one chance in twenty of pulling through, but I had a strong constitution, and nature and the surgeon's prescriptions won after a hard struggle.

What a luxury I found the cot with its mattress, clean sheets and a pillow—just think of it!

After I had passed the critical point, hovering between life and death for several days, and began to mend, I took as deep an interest in my surroundings as was possible under the circumstances. Part of the time I was in a sort of semi-unconscious state, the quinine and other drugs causing my brain to be fired up so that the incidents from the campaign of the Wilderness to the crossing of the James were all jumbled together with recollections of home and the events of my boyhood.

My cot was near the open fly of the tent, and one day, early in August, I was bolstered up so that I could get a view of the grounds sloping away toward the Appomattox. The tents were on a little knoll, and the ground fell away toward the river for a short distance, and then there was quite a stretch of open land sloping upward to a ridge, on the other side of which was the Appomattox.

The intervening space, beginning at the foot of the slope and extending nearly to the rising ground toward the river, had been converted into a cemetery. Here were buried the troopers of Sheridan's command, whose bodies had been brought from the battlefields, and also those who had died in hospital. I soon tired of looking at the rows of head-boards, and asked to be laid back on my cot. Just as the attendant was removing the bolster which had supported me in a sitting posture, I fancied I saw the name "Taylor" on one of the slabs out there in the field.

As the nurse laid me back on my cot I was so fatigued that I could not collect my thoughts for some time. Then I began to think about the regiment. Why had not Taylor been to the hospital to see me? Was the cavalry on the north bank of the James? Had there been another raid? Was Giles sick? I went to sleep, and my dreams were of the kind that causes one to wake with his mind more confused than when he goes to sleep. The real and the unreal were so linked together that it was difficult to separate them.

The next day I was permitted to sit up in bed again. Then I began to search for that head-board that had made such an impression on me the day before.

After a time I located the one which had "Taylor" on it. But I was so weak that my eyes gave out before I could make out the rest of the inscription.

"Taylor?" said I to myself, "Taylor? Why, there are hundreds of Taylors in the army. This Taylor could be nothing to me.

"But where is my Taylor? Why hasn't he been to see me? Of course if anything had happened to Giles the boys would have sent me word."

The ward master came along, and as he seemed to be a good-natured fellow, I said to him:

"Will you do me a favor?"

"Certainly, my boy, if I can. What is it?"

"Tell me what the inscription is on that head-board out there—the one with 'Taylor' on it?"

"Taylor is all I can make out from here, as the board is a little obliqued from this point; but if it'll be any accommodation to you, I'll go down there and see what it is."

"I would be so thankful if you would."

The ward master went down the slope and to the grave in which I had come to be so deeply interested. I was confident, or thought I was, that nothing could have happened to Giles, but at the same time I could not rest until I found out the full name of the trooper who slumbered in that particular grave. In a few minutes the ward master returned.

"It's Taylor," he said.

"Yes; but what's the other name?"

"Giles Taylor."

"What regiment?"

"First Massachusetts Cavalry."

"What company?"

"Company I."

"What else?"

"Killed, July 28, 1864."

"Where?"

"Near Malvern Hill."

"Lay me down, please."

"All right, my boy; did you know the trooper buried out there?"

"Yes; we ran away together to enlist. He nursed me in camp when I was stricken, and helped put me in the ambulance when I was sent to the hospital; he was my bunkey, and the best friend I had in the company."

"It's too bad; but war is a terrible thing."

The day that I started for the hospital Sheridan crossed to the north bank of the James, to support a movement intended to cause Lee to withdraw the bulk of his army from the works in front of Petersburg.

There was some lively fighting out near Malvern Hill, and during one of the attacks of the enemy Taylor was shot. The bullet entered his groin, severing the main arteries.

Daniel Booth, a bugler who was near Taylor when the latter was struck, assisted in getting the wounded man back out of range. Booth told me that Giles did not flinch—he was in the front rank when he was shot. He did not fall from his horse, but fired one or two shots after he was struck. Then he said to Booth:

"I'm hit—the blood's running into my boot; guess I'm hurt bad."

Booth hastened to Taylor's assistance. The latter was growing weak from loss of blood. Just then Gen. Davies's headquarters ambulance came along, and the general who was near at hand and had seen Booth and another soldier supporting Taylor in the saddle, directed them to put him in the ambulance.

"No; don't let them put me in the ambulance, it'll kill me if they lay me down. Let me stay in the saddle, boys."

Booth remained with Taylor till they reached the landing where the wounded men were being loaded on boats to be taken to City Point. A surgeon examined Taylor's wound.

"It's fatal," the doctor whispered to Booth. "But he can't stay here; help him on board the boat."

The boy bugler and others raised the dying trooper and bore him tenderly on board the steamer. They laid him down on a blanket among other wounded soldiers. Then the whistle blew, and the command was given, "All ashore that's going!" Taylor was sinking fast, but he pressed Booth's hand and said:

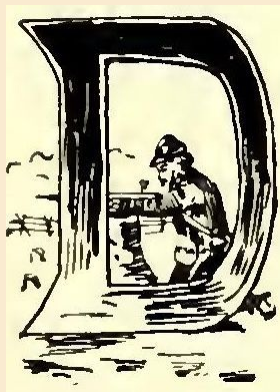
"Good-by, Booth; I'm dying. Send word to my folks at home—tell them I faced the music, and was shot with my harness on. Remember me to the boys."

"Good-by, Giles."

Booth jumped ashore as the gang plank was being pulled on board, and hastened back to the regiment. Poor Taylor was a corpse before the boat reached City Point. His body was taken to the cavalry corps hospital, and buried in the grave the head-board of which attracted my attention.

## CHAPTER XII.

*Doleful Tales by Deserters from Lee's Army—President Lincoln's Visit to the Front—A Memorable Meeting—The Fort Steadman Assault—Lincoln on Horseback—At the Head of the Column—Wanted to Get Off and Pull Down his Pants.*



[Original Size](#)

DESERTERS from the Confederate army at Petersburg came into the Federal lines with doleful tales of hunger and hardships. The "bull pen" near Meade's headquarters was filled with Johnnies who had run away from Lee's army. They had seen the handwriting on the wall, and were convinced that they had been fighting for a lost cause; the hopelessness of the struggle had struck home to their hearts—and stomachs. In March, 1865, before Grant began the movement on the left of Petersburg, a number of rebels came through the lines and surrendered.

"We can't stand another campaign," said a rebel deserter at the bull pen. "We can't march and fight on quarter rations of meal and only a smell of meat."

"Do you think the Confederacy is gone up?"

"Shuah's yo born, but Bobby Lee's game. He'll fight till the last ounce of powder is used up."

"What's the use?"

"No use, except to show his fidelity to the cause."

"He has shown that already."

"So he has, and he's in a mighty bad way."

In the latter part of March the signs began to indicate that a general break-up was at hand. Dispatch bearers were seen on all sides, dashing away with messages from army headquarters to corps commanders in the lines in front of Petersburg. Horses were being shod, army wagons overhauled—the thousand and one things betokening a move were noticed in the camps.

At Meade's headquarters it was understood that Grant intended to begin hammering again on or about the first of April, and the boys were satisfied that there would be no April fool business about it.

President Lincoln visited Grant's headquarters, and was present when the Federal army moved "on to Richmond" for the last time. The President arrived about March 22, and he did not return to Washington till after the fall of Richmond, which city he entered the day after Jeff Davis fled. Lincoln was at City Point when Sheridan arrived after he had whipped Early out of the Valley. And here, too, came Sherman, the hero of the March to the Sea.

Tuesday, March 28, Gen. Meade rode down to the point and conferred with the general-in-chief. It was the day before that fixed for the movement. An informal council was held between Lincoln, Grant, Sheridan, Sherman and Meade. It was the first and last time that these five great men were ever together. In Richardson's Personal History of Grant, the following pen-picture of the group is given:

"Lincoln, tall, round-shouldered, loose-jointed, large-featured, deep-eyed, with a smile upon his face, is

dressed in black, and wears a fashionable silk hat. Grant is at Lincoln's right, shorter, stouter, more compact wears a military hat with a stiff broad brim, has his hands in his pantaloons pockets, and is puffing away at a cigar while listening to Sherman. Sherman, tall, with high, commanding forehead, is almost as loosely built as Lincoln; has sandy whiskers, closely-cropped, and sharp, twinkling eyes, slouched hat, his pantaloons tucked into his boots. He is talking hurriedly, gesticulating to Lincoln, now to Grant, his eyes wandering everywhere. Meade, also tall, with thin, sharp features, a gray beard and spectacles, is a little stooping in his gait. Sheridan, the shortest of all, quick and energetic in all his movements, with a face bronzed by sun and wind, is courteous, affable and a thorough soldier."

Lincoln visited Meade also. I was one of the detachment sent to the railroad station to receive the President and escort him to headquarters. Orders had been issued for a grand review in honor of the chief magistrate, but before Lincoln had reached the station the troops were more seriously engaged. Gen. Lee had discovered that his situation was becoming more critical each hour that he remained in Richmond, and he determined to make a break for the Union works near the Appomattox, on the Petersburg line. If he could capture and hold Fort Steadman and the ridge in rear of it, he could seriously cripple Grant's army and perhaps seize City Point.

General John B. Gordon was the commander selected by Lee to undertake the capture of the works. The assault was successful so far as getting into and taking possession of Fort Steadman was concerned, but the Federals rallied and recaptured the fort, the guns of which had been turned on our works to the right and left. The rebels had plunged into the Union lines in the darkness. The pickets were scarcely one hundred and fifty feet apart in front of Fort Steadman, and the main earthworks were separated by about as many yards. It is said that Gordon had the utmost confidence in the success of the expedition. He had been assured that the assault would be supported by troops from A. P. Hill and Longstreet's corps. It was a bold attack, but the gallant boys in blue, though driven from the fort and some of the works in the immediate vicinity at the outset, returned to the front, and the rebel general found that he had no time to spare in getting back behind the Confederate breastworks. The Johnnies were routed with great loss, and nearly two thousand prisoners were captured by the Federals.

The attack on Fort Steadman woke up the whole army. Meade concluded to give the Johnnies all the fighting they wanted, and he ordered the Second and Sixth corps—occupying the line to the left of the Ninth corps in the front of which the rebel assault was made—to push out and see what was going on in their front.

The boys went forward with a cheer, and the Confederate pickets were driven back into the main fortifications, the rifle pits and the strongly intrenched picket line being taken by the assaulting forces. Nearly nine hundred Johnnies were captured.

Several counter charges were made by the rebels to drive our boys out of the works, but they satisfied themselves that the Yankees had come to stay. It was a cold day for the Confederates all along the line.

President Lincoln witnessed the battle in front of the Second and Sixth corps. He was on a ridge near the signal tower of the Second corps. Several ladies—I think Mrs. Grant, and I don't know but Mrs. Lincoln was in the party—were there. They had been driven out from the railroad in an ambulance to see the review, but the President came to the front mounted.

As a horseman Lincoln was not a success. As I remember it, he rode Grant's best horse. Several staff officers were at the station with a detachment of cavalry to look after the President. The latter's clothes seemed to fit him when he got into the saddle, but before he dismounted at the signal tower he presented a sorry spectacle indeed. The cavalry escort reached the station a few minutes before the train from the Point came puffing along. The President stood on the platform of the only passenger coach. The escort presented sabers and Lincoln acknowledged the salute by raising his hat.

Then he came down from the cab and shook hands with the staff officers, who seemed to feel highly complimented to be recognized by the commander-in-chief. But when the President extended his hand to a high private of the rear rank who stood holding the horse His Excellency was to ride, and insisted on shaking hands with each soldier of the escort, the wearers of shoulder straps appeared to be dazed at such familiarity. The honored head of the greatest nation on earth recognizing in the wearer of the plain blue blouse of a humble private a fellow citizen! Military red tape could not comprehend it, but it made no difference with "Father Abraham"; he had a way of doing just as he pleased on such occasions. As the President advanced to mount, the orderly in charge of the horse, with a sly glance at Lincoln's legs, said:

"You ride a longer stirrup than the general, sir. I'll fix them in a jiffy."

"No, no, my man; never mind. The stirrups are all right. I don't like to stand on my toes in the saddle."

Then the President threw his right leg over the horse's back and smiled at the orderly's surprise at such an unmilitary exhibition as Lincoln made of himself in getting into the saddle.

"Thank you," said the great emancipator, as the orderly relinquished his hold of the bridle, and the horse with his distinguished rider began to dance around ready for the word "Forward."

The staff officers sprang into their saddles, the escort broke into columns of fours, and the party started for the front. The President had jammed his hat well down over the back of his head to keep it from falling off. He leaned forward in the saddle so that his chin almost touched the horse's mane. His coat was unbuttoned and soon worked itself up around his arms and flapped out behind. His vest seceded from his pantaloons and went up toward his neck, so that his white shirt showed between the vest and trousers like a sash. And it did not take long for the pantaloons to creep up the long legs of the distinguished visitor. Up to the knees they went—and higher. The President discovered that he was not cutting a very fine figure, but he had no time to fix things. His horse required all his attention, and more, too. The animal knew he was entitled to the head of the column, and he kept there.

Some of the staff officers, fearing perhaps that the horse would run away with the President, essayed to ride alongside and seize the bridle. The attempt proved a dismal failure. On went the fiery steed, bearing his honored rider out the road toward the breastworks. Lincoln held on. Now his feet were in the stirrups with his knees bobbing up nearly to his chin; anon his feet were out of the stirrups and his long legs dangled down almost to the ground. As we approached the line of battle of the Second corps, it was understood that the

horse had "taken the bit in his mouth." Would he stop when he reached the group of officers up on the knoll, or would he go on and carry the President into the battle over there between the forts? Whatever apprehensions may have been felt by the chief magistrate or any of those in the escort on this score, were quieted as we drew near to the signal tower. The horse slackened his speed and gave the President an opportunity to shake himself a little, so that his coat and pantaloons were to some extent brought back where they belonged.

The President seemed to regain his wonted good nature at once upon halting, and when some of the general officers who came to greet him asked him how he had enjoyed his ride, he exclaimed, with a merry twinkle in his eye: "It was splendid. I don't know but I rode a little too fast for the gentlemen who followed, but I was anxious to get here—or somewhere—where I could have a good view of the fight and get off and pull down my pants."

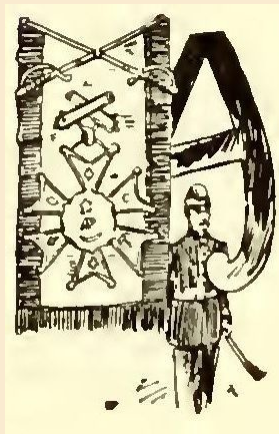
And Father Abraham laughed heartily as he joined the group near the signal tower. Did the President relate an anecdote or two called up by the incidents of the trip? No; for the booming of the cannon, the roaring of the musketry and the cheers of the troops as they marched by and took up the double quick to join in the assault on the enemy's outer works in front of Petersburg, called the attention of all to the serious events transpiring so close at hand.

How the soldiers cheered when informed of Lincoln's presence! They waved their caps and held their muskets over their heads as they pushed on, many of them to die in a few minutes in that desperate struggle for the rebel pits and breastworks.

Meade succeeded in capturing and holding several important points in front of Petersburg, and the poor Johnnies were more discouraged than ever before. The President and his party returned to City Point that night, and he remained at Grant's headquarters till after the lieutenant-general moved out to the left and until the fall of Richmond.

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Grant's Spring Opening—By the Left Flank Again—Sheridan at Five Forks—The Fall of Richmond and Petersburg—A Dangerous Ride—How Jeff Davis faced the Yankees—Chasing Lee up the Appomattox—Breaking the Backbone of the Southern Confederacy—The Surrender—Confiscating a Confederate Goose—A Colored Boy to the Rescue.*



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ND now came the orders for what Grant intended should be the last grand campaign of the gallant Army of the Potomac. Sheridan, as usual, was to lead off and push out around the right flank of the rebel forces cooped up in Petersburg and Richmond. The bulk of the army was to follow, and it was evident that unless the Southern Confederacy got out of the way "right smart," somebody would get hurt. Everybody was on the move, or ready to move, even the troops who were to remain in the fortifications having their knapsacks packed.

The feeling was general among the rank and file that a decisive battle was to be fought, and all felt that the Union cause would triumph. There were no spread-eagle proclamations promulgated through general orders. Grant was never given to that. His instructions to his lieutenants gave them to understand just what they were expected to do—they were to move against the rebels and go in to win.

Little Phil opened the ball at Five Forks on the last day of March. The army had moved March 29, but the infantry had been unable to make much progress, being stuck in the mud, for the rain set in during the evening of the twenty-ninth and continued all night and the next day and night. The rebels pressed Sheridan hard. Yet the hero of Winchester held on like grim death. The next day with the aid of the infantry sent to his support, he pitched in and routed the rebels, capturing more than five thousand prisoners and putting to flight fifteen thousand or more, who skedaddled in such a hurry that they left behind all their cannon and supply wagons. The battle was anything but an April-fool joke.

Meade, Ord and Parke made a general assault on the works in front of Petersburg, April 2. It was Sunday morning. The roar of battle could be heard from away over on the Appomattox above City Point, all along the line. It was a magnificent sight to see the infantry going in. As the charge was being made, Gen. Meade sent Major Emory of his staff with a dispatch to Gen. Wright commanding the Sixth corps. I was directed to accompany the major. Gen. Wright was said to be hotly engaged in capturing intrenchments off to the left of Petersburg, and to reach him it would be necessary to make a wide circuit to the left and rear, or ride directly across the field where the battle was raging. Major Emory decided upon the latter course, and away we went.

The Johnnies, realizing that their time had come, were making a desperate defense of the works, and the shot and shell screeched over and under and around us on all sides as we rode the line of battle. One shell exploded directly under the major's horse, throwing up a cloud of dirt and smoke, and for a moment I felt sure Gen. Meade had lost one of his aids. Then I heard the major shout:

"Come on. I'm all right."

It was dangerous work. The infantry soldiers were falling on all sides. But we came out alive and reached Gen. Wright, who had broken through the outer lines and was pushing toward Petersburg.



The fall of Richmond! All Sunday night the rebels were getting out of Richmond and Petersburg. The backbone of the Confederacy was broken indeed. The news seemed too good to be true. We rode into Petersburg Monday morning, bright and early, and without dismounting, we kept on and immediately took up the line of march in pursuit of Lee's army, which was now retreating up the Appomattox.

It was a hot chase—a sort of go-as-you-please. Of course when Richmond was evacuated, the boys in blue felt that the end was at hand. When the Confederate commander telegraphed to Jeff Davis that the “enemy” had broken the line in front of Petersburg, it was a cold day for C. S. A.

It is recorded that Jeff Davis was attending church when he received Lee's dispatch, and that he quietly stole away without waiting for the doxology or the benediction. It was a clear case of “every man for himself.” The “president” didn't whisper even to the brother in the next pew that it was time to flee from the wrath to come. No. Perhaps he had heard the echo of that familiar Yankee hymn:

“We'll hang Jeff Davis to a sour apple-tree,  
As we go marching on.”

The “president” made better time in getting away from the seat of government than was made by the braves in butternut. He did not draw a long breath till he had distanced the retreating Confederates and reached Danville. To stimulate his soldiers to deeds of daring—and to induce them to beat back the Union army if possible till he could make good his escape—Davis declared in a proclamation, issued on the wing at Danville, April 5, 1865, that “Virginia, with the help of the people, and by the blessings of Providence, shall be held and defended.”

“Let us,” he continued, “meet the foe with fresh defiance, and with unconquered and unconquerable hearts.”

Before his signature to the document was dry, Jeff was making a bee-line for Georgia. He was willing to meet the foe face to face on paper. “You hold Grant in check till I can get far enough South to establish a rallying-point,” was the burden of his messages to the rebel general when read between the lines. At all events, the president of the Southern Confederacy took to the woods, and was next heard of at Irwinsville, Georgia, May 11, 1865. Wilson's troopers took the fugitive into camp on that day.

The circumstances of the capture of Jeff Davis have been the subject of heated controversy—in magazine articles and newspaper publications. Whatever may be the fact in respect of his wearing apparel at the time the Yankee cavalymen overhauled the rebel president—whether he had on his wife's petticoats or was clad in masculine attire—certain it is that in abandoning the “lost cause,” and leaving Lee and his followers to “meet the foe with fresh defiance,” while he skedaddled, the “rebel hero”—still idolized and worshiped by the solid South—made a sorry exhibition of himself.

On the chase up the Appomattox our boys were kept busy—in the saddle night and day—carrying dispatches to and from Meade's headquarters. It was a very interesting period. Sheridan was neck-and-neck with Lee, while the grand old Army of the Potomac was hot on the rebel commander's trail.

Gen. Meade was seriously ill for several days preceding the negotiations that led to the surrender. But he kept in the saddle most of the time, in spite of the request of the headquarters' medical men, that he should “avoid all excitement!” It was strange advice to give under such circumstances. The hero of Gettysburg realized that the boys were knocking the bottom out of the Southern Confederacy, and he was determined to be in at the death.

Whenever there was heavy firing at the front, Meade would get out of the ambulance, in which he rode when compelled to leave the saddle, and call for his favorite horse “Baldy.” Then he would ask his son George, one of his aids, or Major Jay or Major Emory, to assist him into the saddle. Once mounted, the general seemed to have a way of shaking off his sickness. He would press on to the head of the column and make a personal reconnaissance. As soon as the rearguard of the rebels—left to check the Union advance while the Confederate wagon trains and artillery were hurried to the west—was brushed out of the way, and the line of march resumed, the general would return to his ambulance, at times completely exhausted.

April 4, 1865, was one of the hardest days of the chase. It was a forced march with only an occasional breathing spell when the advance was feeling its way along the roads leading toward Appomattox. That night we unsaddled with what we considered fair prospects of rest. But before we had settled down for sleep, a trooper dashed up to Meade's headquarters. The general was so ill that he could scarcely hold up his head, but when told that Sheridan had intercepted the Confederates, and predicted the capture of Lee's army if the Army of the Potomac would push to the front near Jetersville, Meade got out of bed and gave orders for the march to be resumed at two o'clock in the morning.

The boys were waiting for the wagons to come up with the hard tack and coffee, and the prospect of pushing on without grub was anything but transporting. Still when the time came to “fall in,” the men obeyed with a cheerfulness characteristic of the veterans of the gallant army that for four years had fought Lee's soldiers with varied success.

The next morning Sheridan's men—a scouting party under Gen. Davies, our brigade commander—played havoc with a Confederate wagon train that was “sifting west.” Nearly two hundred wagons were destroyed. It was hard for the Johnnies to witness the destruction of their supply train. Poor fellows, they needed all the grub they could get, and more, too. They fought desperately, but the battle was against them. The Federal column moved on, and the surrounding of Lee's army was pushed on all sides. The boys in blue were hungry, but they kept in good spirits. “We can stand it if the rebs can,” was remarked now and then as the boys were ordered to move on just before the supply train would get up.

On the battlefield of Sailor's Creek I picked up Gen. Lee's order book. The last order copied into the book was dated Saturday, April 1, 1865, and, as I remember it, the order referred to the sending of reinforcements from the works in front of Petersburg to oppose Sheridan's advance on the Union left. The ground was strewn with the debris of the rebel headquarters' train. Army wagons with spokes cut out of the

wheels were overturned on both sides of the road.

"In the last ditch;"

"The C. S. A. is gone up;"

"We all can't whip you all without something to eat,"

and other humorous inscriptions appeared on the canvas covers of the wagons. I wish I had held on to Lee's order book. It would have been valuable to-day. But it was heavy, and I threw it aside.

April 9, 1865, while Sheridan was square across the road preventing Lee's further advance without cutting his way through, and the Army of the Potomac was on the flank and rear, came the news that white flags were displayed along the rebel lines and that Grant and Lee were negotiating for the surrender of the Confederate army of Northern Virginia. Meade's headquarters contingent was bivouacked just off the road leading to Appomattox Court House from Farmville.

"Lee's going to surrender!"

The boys could scarcely credit the report that the Confederate commander had asked terms, for, somehow or other, after a week's hard chase the Yankees had begun to fear that Lee would effect a junction with Johnston in North Carolina. But when an orderly from Grant's headquarters dashed up and handed Meade a letter from the lieutenant-general confirming the report that Lee had accepted Grant's terms, there was the greatest joy at headquarters.

The news spread like wildfire, and in a few minutes the tired soldiers were dancing with joy. I was broiling a confiscated chicken in the angle of a rail fence when the orderly rode up. When I was told of the tidings he had brought I threw the chicken as high as I could, kicked the fire in every direction, and shouted till my throat was sore.

Gen. Meade, with a few members of the escort of which I was one, rode into the Confederate lines and to Lee's camp. The Southern commander had only a wall tent fly for headquarters. Longstreet was there and several others whom Meade had known in the old army. Meade and Lee conversed for a few minutes alone. In the meantime a sergeant of Meade's escort and a sergeant of Lee's headquarters guard entered into such a heated argument that the interference of several officers of both sides was necessary to prevent them from fighting to a finish.

As we were riding down the slope from Lee's bivouac, a weather-stained Confederate, wearing an old slouch hat, a short butternut jacket, and with a dilapidated blanket wrapped about his shoulders, shouted to Meade. The commander of the Army of the Potomac did not recognize the man who hailed him and who held out his hand, until the rebel said:

"Don't you know me, General? I'm Gen. Wise of Virginia."

Then there was another handshake. Wise was the sorriest looking general I saw at the surrender. Lee and Longstreet and some of the others were clad in bright new uniforms, but Wise looked as though he had been rolled in the mud all the way from Petersburg.

After calling on Lee, Meade rode over to the Court House and congratulated Grant and Sheridan on the result. The Union generals seemed to enjoy the "love feast."

There was joy and gladness on all sides. A majority of the rebels who surrendered at Appomattox accepted the inevitable with better grace than could have been expected of them after the desperate resistance they had made. But when you put food into a starving man's mouth the chances favor his smothering his hatred if he has such feeling toward you.

"Dog gone it, that's splendid coffee," said a butternut clad veteran who shared my supper the night of the surrender. "You all overpowered us; we couldn't hold out on wind any longer. I like this meat; I tell you, it's good. I didn't know I was so hungry; I must have got beyond the hunger point."

Then came the order for the return. It was not "on to Richmond" this time, but "on to Washington." We all knew that the war was over—that Sherman would make short work of the Confederate Army in the Carolinas under Johnston.

When we mounted our horses and rode back toward Burkesville station, leaving the provost marshal and a small force at Appomattox to parole the prisoners, it was conceded by both Yankee and rebel that the Army of the Potomac and the army of Northern Virginia would never again meet as enemies on the battlefield. The boys in blue felt that they had fought a good fight, won a glorious victory, and could now return to their homes proud to have been permitted to suffer and do battle under the flag of the Union.

It was a happy army that faced about at Appomattox and took up the march for Washington. The bands played, and the victorious Federals sang. The bivouacs at night were camp meetings on a large scale. Somehow the boys did not need as much sleep as was required when in winter quarters. Discipline was relaxed, and colonels and corporals, captains and privates talked over the results of the last campaign without any "red tape nonsense," as the boys were wont to call a strict observance of military discipline when there was no fighting to do.

The song that was sung with the most expression on that homeward march, was a parody on "Dear Mother, I've come home to die," the last word being changed to "eat." Then there was that lively air:

"When Johnny comes marching home again,  
Hurrah, hurrah!  
When Johnny comes marching home again,  
Hurrah, says I;  
The lads and lassies, so they say,  
With roses they will strew the way,  
And we'll all feel gay  
When Johnny comes marching home."

On the road between Farmville and Burkesville station I dismounted at a farmhouse and asked a little negro boy who stood near the fence with mouth and eyes wide open, for a drink of water. The lad seemed to be frightened, and ran away around the house.

"You, Julius, come here!" shouted a middle-aged lady who stepped out on the piazza. She had overheard my request for water. The young darky returned at the lady's command.

"I'se 'fraid dese Yankees," he said.

"I don't think they'll molest you, Julius. Bring the gentleman a drink of water."

I was invited to a seat on the piazza pending Julius's expedition to the spring house, a rod or two back of the dwelling. He returned with a large gourd dipper filled with deliciously cool water. In the meantime three young ladies, daughters of the middle-aged lady, appeared on the piazza and were presented by their mother to the Yankee. Then Julius went to the spring to fill my canteen.

"I'm sorry we have nothing but water to offer you," said the mother.

The young ladies also ventured to speak.

"The two armies, ours and yours, just took everything in the shape of provisions on the place."

"Yes; and the soldiers found where we had stored a few hams and a sack of flour down in the woods."

"And they made out they came across the place accidentally like. I believe Jeb, a brother of Julius, told the Yankees where we had buried the box with the hams and flour, for he hasn't been seen on the plantation since."

"I am really sorry for you, ladies. I will speak to Gen. Meade, and I am sure he will direct the commissary to supply you with something to eat."

"I think we can hold out for another day," said the mother. "My husband was in Longstreet's corps, and he said when he galloped by here the other day that the Confederacy was played out, and that if something providential did not turn up on the side of Lee's army they would all be gobbled up inside of ten days. His last words were: 'If you can save me a dish of meat of some kind till I get home, do it; it may save my life.'"

"And we're doing our best for papa."

"Yes, we are. When the last Yankees marched by on the way to the surrender, we found we had one goose left—"

"Yes; and we've got the goose yet, down in the cellar—"

"Now, Miss Emma, you have told a Yankee about the goose, and papa's chances for dinner when he comes home are mighty slim."

"Dear sir, you will spare us?"

"Mr. Yankee, let us keep our goose?"

"I know you didn't mean to rob us!"

"The goose is safe, ladies. Cook your goose for the family reunion, for I assure you that there isn't a man in the Federal army mean enough to steal a goose under such circumstances, especially now that the war is over."

"I feel relieved."

"Oh! so much."

"How kind you are."

"The Yankees are not so black as our papers have painted them. I'm so rejoiced to know that we can save the goose."

Just then Julius came bounding around the corner of the house. His hair fairly stood on end, and his eyes seemed starting from their sockets.

"Miss Julia! Miss Julia! Miss Julia!"

"What is it, Julius?"

"O, Miss Julia! Miss Julia!"

"Speak, you idiot!"

"De goose, Miss Julia, de goose! See dar, see dar! Look, dat Yankee gwine ober de fence yonder wid de goose you's a-keepin' for Massa Colonel Bob!" Sure enough, Julius was right. While the ladies had been entertaining me on the piazza a stragglng cavalryman had entered the yard. He had filled his canteen at the spring house. Then he interviewed Julius. Next he slipped into the cellar and raised a tub that was bottom-side up on the cellar bottom.

Under the tub he found the goose, which he seized by the neck. In a few seconds he had jumped over the fence to where his horse was standing, and without paying any attention to my shouts for him to "stop or drop that goose," the blue-coated robber put spurs to his steed and disappeared down the road.

The goose was gone. Col. Bob's dinner was spoiled so far as that goose was concerned.

"Ladies—"

"Don't speak to me."

"Nor me."

"Nor me."

"Nor me."

"But I assure you—"

"Yes, you assured us a few minutes ago."

"I had misgivings all the time that Miss Emma would tell about the goose."

"But, mother dear, don't cry; I thought we could trust a gentleman."

"So we could, but we should have known better than to trust a Yankee."

I believe that I would have shot the bummer who confiscated that goose had he been within range of my revolver while I was under fire on that piazza. I never felt quite so mean in the presence of ladies before.

"Go and join your partner," said the mother.

"Leave us, sir!" chorused the daughters.

What a predicament for a youthful soldier. There I stood, despised and hated by four ladies with whom I had been apparently on good terms a few moments before. Had a band of bushwhackers opened fire on me at that moment I should have been happy again.

The bushwhackers did not come, but Julius did. I shall never forget Julius.

"Miss Julia, dis yere Yankee doan' know nuffin 'bout stealin' dat goose."

"How do you know, nigger?"

"Cos' what dat oder Yankee say."

"What did he say?"

"He tole me 'fi made de leas bit of holler so dat Yankee sittin' on de porch wid you all see he, he would don' cut my brack hed off wid he's s'od. Deed he did, Miss Julia."

"How did he know about the goose?"

"Spec I'se de nigger to blame. He axed me whar missus kept her pervisions, an' fo' I know'd what I do'n, I say, 'Nuffin left but one ole goose, Massa.' Den he say, 'Whar dat goose?' an' what wor a poor nigger to do, Miss Julia?"

"We have done you an injustice, sir," said the mother, again turning to me.

"Pardon us, sir," said the younger ladies.

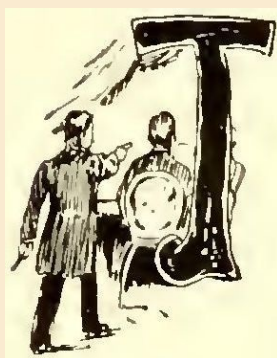
"Don't mention it, ladies. I am so glad that I am relieved from the suspicion of complicity in the stealing of that goose, that I would stay and help cook a dinner to celebrate Col. Bob's return were it not for the fact that I must go on and report to Gen. Meade."

We parted very good friends. A goodly store of flour, meat, coffee and sugar was sent to the ladies from the Union commissary department, and no doubt Col. Bob reached home in time to share the rations with his charming family.

Although twenty-six years have come and gone since my experience on the piazza of that Virginia farmhouse, I cannot repress a feeling whenever I recall the circumstances, that I would be pleased to meet that "other Yankee" who did steal that goose and choke him till he cried "*peccavi!*"

## CHAPTER XIV.

*Assassination of Lincoln—The Return March—A Homeless Confederate—Not Destroyed by the Yankees—The Goddess of Liberty—The Grand Review—Grant's Final Order.*



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HE news of the assassination of Lincoln reached us at Burkesville Junction—the crossing of the Richmond and Danville and the Southside railroads—April 15, 1865. The terrible intelligence came over the military telegraph wire about midnight of the fourteenth, I think, but it was not promulgated to the troops until after reveille in the morning. Secretary Seward had been dangerously wounded by one of the assassins, and the Head of the Nation had been murdered by J. Wilkes Booth, who as he was escaping from the theater at Washington where the President was shot, brandished a dagger on the stage and shouted, "*Sic semper tyrannis!*" and "the South is avenged!"

As the details of the dastardly plot were made known, the army was informed that the assassin intended to take the life of Gen. Grant. Battle-scarred and stern-faced veterans who had fought from the first Bull Run to Appomattox turned pale and set their teeth as the dispatches were read to the men drawn up in line. It was difficult to believe at first that Abraham Lincoln, the great and noble and tender-hearted President whom we had seen only a few days before near Petersburg, was dead. Yet the sad news was confirmed as later dispatches came to hand.

The Union soldiers again began to look after their cartridge boxes. They knew not what to expect next. This was a new phase of warfare. But in spite of the declaration of the assassin that the South was avenged, a majority of the rank and file of Grant's army as they recovered from the first shock of the dreadful calamity, were ready to exonerate the men who had laid down their arms at Appomattox from any complicity in the plot that struck down the noble Lincoln at the very moment that the glorious sun of peace was rising above the dark clouds that had hung like a pall over the nation for four long years.

Lincoln was murdered on the fourth anniversary of the capture of Fort Sumter by the rebels. The traitors who directed the firing on the flag waving over that fortress four years before, and who had set on foot and carried forward the wickedest rebellion ever inaugurated, were responsible for the death of the martyr Lincoln and the thousands who fell on both sides of that sanguinary conflict.

A few days after the assassination we continued our march to Richmond, camping for a day or two in Manchester on the opposite side of the James. The ruin and havoc made by the rebels when evacuating their capital, subjected the inhabitants to great hardships. A large portion of the city was burned.



I witnessed the return of a veteran in butternut to his home in Richmond. He came down the hill from the State House and turned into a street leading toward the river. His right arm was in a sling. He had been wounded early in the morning of the day that Lee surrendered. The disbanded Confederate was literally in rags and the uppers of his shoes had seceded from the soles. Yet his face was beaming with joyful anticipation, for he was nearing his home.

But as he reached what had been the corner of another street and turned to the right, his serviceable hand was raised and his knees trembled as he looked in vain for the dwelling he had left when last he bade his little family good-by and hastened away to help build the breastworks in front of Petersburg. The dwellings that had stood in that neighborhood were now a mass of blackened ruins. The poor fellow sank down in the street and a colored man hastened to his assistance.

"I declar, it's Massa John," exclaimed the negro as he raised the head of the soldier. "Doan' you know me, Massa?"

"Is it Pomp?"

"Deed an' 'tis Pomp, Massa."

"Where is your mistress and the children?"

"Dey's ober on the odder side de bridge, Massa; how glad dey'll be to see you. We all 'spected de Yankees dun kill you, shuah nuff."

Just then a woman came hurriedly from around the corner and stopped for a moment as she surveyed the scene before her.

"Who is it, Pomp?" she eagerly inquired, as she advanced toward the party in the street.

"Bress de Lawd, it's Massa John."

In another moment husband and wife were in each other's arms, their tears flowing freely.

"And the children, Mary?"

"Safe and well, praise God."

"Amen. Praise God you are all alive."

"But you are wounded?"

"Yes, dear; I'll be unable to use my right arm for a few months; but when it gets well we will rebuild the home which the Yankees have destroyed for us."

"But, my dear, our home was not destroyed by the Yankees. The city was fired by our own men as they left us. The fire was raging terribly when the Yankees came in and did all they could to prevent the spread of the flames."

"Is that so? Then I have fought for years, lost the use of my right arm and returned to find my home destroyed by order of one of our own generals. Surely, wife, the hand of God has been against the Confederacy. We were taught to believe that we were fighting for liberty, but we were mistaken. I love the stars and bars. I have fought and bled for our flag, yet I begin to feel that secession was not right. Our leaders were wrong, and it follows that we must suffer for it."

"What shall we do, John?"

"Do? Well, the outlook is not bright, I'll admit. But we'll not get discouraged. I have a brother in Boston who has money, you know, and I believe he'll help us out. He told me not to go into the Confederate army. He said we would get whipped, but I didn't believe it then. Brother was right, and I'll send him a letter next mail."

Then the wounded Confederate and his better half started off to meet their children at the house of a friend. I gave him the contents of my haversack and several other troopers who were with me also gave our late foe what they had with them.

"Thank you, boys; I'm glad it's over," he said, as he handed the provisions to Pomp, who "toted" it to their friend's residence over the bridge.

From Richmond we marched to Washington, enjoying the trip greatly. On the way we passed over many of the Virginia battlefields. Here and there farmers were plowing and preparing to put in grain where the opposing armies had recently been in camp. The column was in the best of spirits. The war was over. Our side had gained the victory and we were homeward bound. As we came to the brow of Arlington Heights and caught our first glance of the Capitol in the distance, cheer after cheer was given. The bands played martial tunes and the rejoicing was general.

"The Goddess has been put on top of the dome," said one of the boys of Company I.

"Yes; but poor Taylor isn't with us to see the grand sight," remarked another.

We went into camp on Arlington Heights, and the bulk of the Army of the Potomac soon arrived. It was a grand reunion. The soldiers visited through the bivouacs and in Washington. Relatives and friends from home came down to see the boys and to congratulate the victorious army.

Then came the gallant army that had marched from Atlanta to the sea commanded by Gen. Sherman. The two armies fraternized for the first time. And it was a glorious meeting. Volumes could be written of interesting incidents of those last days of army life around Washington.

Before the troops were disbanded they participated in a general review in Washington; the Army of the Potomac, May 23, and Sherman's army, May 24, 1865. It was the grandest military display ever seen. Orders



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for the review were promulgated several days in advance, and so thoroughly disciplined were the troops, that in all that vast aggregation of military organizations there was no break during the two days of parading. Everything moved with clocklike regularity.

The first day—Army of the Potomac day—found Companies C and D, First Massachusetts cavalry, in line before reveille. The boys had been all night polishing their sabers and other equipments. No one could sleep on such an occasion. We were to ride before the President, governors of loyal States and other dignitaries, and we were anxious to do honor to the event—the event of a lifetime.

I had the honor to be one of three soldiers of the escort to ride next to Gen. Meade on the grand review. The general was the first military man to ride by the reviewing stand at the White House.

The headquarters flag of the Army of the Potomac was carried by a sergeant of our company. On the right of the sergeant, who was a few paces in the rear of Gen. Meade, rode a trooper of Company D, and I rode on the sergeant's left; we were three abreast. It was a position of honor, and we felt it, although we did not appropriate to ourselves all the homage paid to the head of the column. We were willing to admit that some of the cheering was intended for the grand old hero of Gettysburg, George Gordon Meade.

As the escort and staff of the Army of the Potomac arrived at the Capitol building, thousands of schoolgirls dressed in white appeared. The bands played "Hail to the Chief," and one of the prettiest of the larger girls came forward to present Gen. Meade an evergreen wreath, beautifully festooned with roses, and neatly tied with satin ribbon. The general's horse "flaxed around" so that he could not reach the wreath, and he called me to receive it, which I did, and passed it over my shoulder, wearing it like a sash on the review. The bands played again, and we took up the line of march on Pennsylvania Avenue. On to the turn at the Treasury Building; another turn, this time to the left, and we were in front of the White House.

On either side the avenue was packed, and we looked into a great sea of faces all the way. And how the people did cheer and shout. Never was such another scene presented.

All the buildings along the line of march were decorated. Flags, banners and bunting waved from every edifice. Across the south face of the Capitol an inscription standing out in large letters declared:

"The Only National Debt We Can Never Pay is the Debt We Owe To the Victorious Union Soldiers." Gen. Meade after passing the reviewing stand rode into the gate in front of the White House, dismounted and joined Grant and other distinguished people on the platform. The color sergeant, the D Company orderly and myself remained mounted near the gate inside the yard, and witnessed the review of the gallant Army of the Potomac, sixty-five thousand strong, marching by, company front.

It was a magnificent spectacle. There we sat for six hours and more, as the proud Union soldiers marched triumphantly before the representatives of the Government. So well planned was the movement of the troops, that some of the brigades, after passing the reviewing stand, marched to camp, were dismissed, and the soldiers returned to the city and joined the thousands of citizens witnessing the parade. And while the leading divisions were marching in review, some of those which came into column later in the day, were back in their bivouacs, cooking coffee for a lunch before falling into line.

The second day, May 24, Sherman's splendid army was reviewed. Gen. Meade occupied a seat on the reviewing stand, and his two orderlies sat on their horses near the gate in the White House yard, as they had done the day before.

Sherman's "bummers" came in for a good share of the applause as they marched behind the regiments to which they belonged, and here and there a Georgia contraband also attracted attention. The review ended, we returned to our camp on the south side of the Potomac, on Arlington Heights.

June 2, 1865, came Grant's final order to the Union soldiers. It was read to the troops, and concluded as follows:

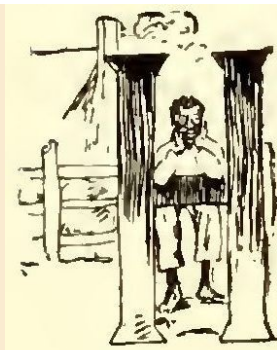
"In obedience to your country's call, you left your homes and families, and volunteered in its defense. Victory has crowned your valor, and secured the purpose of your patriotic hearts, and with the gratitude of your countrymen and the highest honors a great and free nation can accord, you will soon be permitted to return to your homes and families, conscious of having discharged the highest duties of American citizens.

"To achieve the glorious triumphs, and secure to yourselves, your fellow-countrymen and posterity the blessings of free institutions, tens of thousands of your gallant comrades have fallen, and sealed the priceless legacy with their lives. The graves of these a grateful nation bedews with tears, honors their memories, and will ever cherish and support their stricken families."

## CHAPTER XV.

*Mustered Out at Arlington Heights—Back to the Old Bay State—Discharged From the Service—Startling News in a Quiet Village—Home, Sweet Home.*

ERE at Arlington Heights the squadron of the First Massachusetts Cavalry, Companies C and D, commanded by Capt. E. A. Flint, and on duty at headquarters Army of the Potomac, was mustered out June 29, 1865, by Capt. J. C. Bates, of the Eleventh United States infantry, chief commissary of musters, in compliance with special orders No. 24 headquarters cavalry corps, June 18, 1865. A few days later we were en route to the Old Bay State to receive our discharges at Camp Meigs, Readville. Many of the boys were so anxious to get home that they could not wait to have their papers made out, but left requests to have them



sent on to them by mail.

I reached home a day or two after the Fourth of July. And what a reunion we had! All the family and many of the neighbors assembled to welcome the soldier boy. Of course I was a hero in the estimation of the good folks at home. I had yet seven months to live to reach my seventeenth birthday, but I had returned with a discharge which declared that "No objection to his being re-enlisted is known to exist."

In a marginal note it was stated that "This sentence will be erased should there be anything in the conduct or physical condition of the soldier rendering him unfit for the army."

Irving Waterman did not reach Berlin until two days after my arrival. He had remained at Boston to visit with one of the boys. My little sister Eva, when she saw me coming down the road without Irving, only waited to greet me with a kiss, and then started on a run for the home of Waterman's parents.

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"My brother's come home!" she exclaimed.

"Praise the Lord!" shouted Mrs. Waterman.

"But your son didn't come."

"Didn't he—what's the matter?"

"He's dead."

"Dead? Irving dead—no, no! that can't be."

"But he didn't come, and he must be dead."

Mrs. Waterman headed a procession—a dozen or more—of men, women and children, who came up the street on a run. The news that Waterman was dead spread like wildfire, and soon a large number of villager's were at our house to hear all about it. Their alarm was changed to rejoicing when I assured them that Waterman was alive and well.

My little sister when she heard mother inquiring about Irving, and my reply that he had not returned with me, took it for granted that he was dead, and so hastened to inform Mrs. Waterman.

Late that night when the family separated to "catch a little sleep before chore time," as father put it, and I sank down into mother's best feather bed, and tried to remember the thrilling events in which I had participated since Waterman, Taylor and I started for that "shooting match," I felt that, after all,—

"Be it ever so humble,  
There's no place like home."



*Original Size*

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK A BOY TROOPER WITH SHERIDAN \*\*\*

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