Siege of Washington, D.C., written expressly for little people eBook

Siege of Washington, D.C., written expressly for little people

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites".

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers".

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Page 1

CHAPTER I.

Washington as A *remarkable city*.

You, my son, have heard, and perhaps read, how Rome was once saved by a goose. There were, as you know, my son, a great many geese abroad during the siege of Washington; but it was not through any act of theirs that the city was saved. As I love you dearly, my son, so is it my first desire to instruct you correctly on all subjects in which the good of our great country is concerned. Before concluding my history of this remarkable siege, I shall prove to your satisfaction that Washington was saved, and the fate of the nation determined, by a barrel of whisky.

Let me say to you, my son, that the siege of Washington, however much people abroad may laugh at it, was one of the most extraordinary events in the history of modern warfare. It took place in the year of our Lord, 1864; and there is no other event in the war of the great rebellion to compare with it. You will, therefore, my son, understand why it is that the history of an event of so much importance should be written only by an impartial historian—one who has courage enough to tell the truth, and no official friends to serve at the expense of honor. I must tell you, also, my son, that the great military problem of this siege has afforded a subject of deep study for our engineers, from General Delafield downward, who have puzzled their wits over it without finding a solution.

Should we be unfortunate enough to have another great war, and the nation again be compelled to give itself up to the profession of arms, the conduct of this siege would afford us an excellent example, as well as a profitable key to the art of war, as understood by our War Department in the said year of our Lord, 1864. This, then, is another reason why this great military event should be faithfully rendered. I will also add, my son, that though I may fail to instruct you after the manner and style of the most profound historian of our day, I will at least make my account of this great siege so plain and simple that you will comprehend it in all its multiplicity of parts.

But first let me tell you a few things about Washington, the capital city of this great nation. You, my son, may have seen one hundred other cities, and yet it will remind you of none of them. It is very elongated, and spreads over a great deal of ground, apparently for personal inconvenience. Indeed, my son, it has the appearance of having been dropped down late of a Saturday night by some eccentric gentleman who had a large quantity of architectural odds and ends on hand, and had no other use for them. It has been famous always for its acute angles and broad avenues. The former, I have heard more than one person say, were skillfully arranged by a very accommodating French engineer, for the special benefit of persons who went home late of nights and were liable to get confused on the way. The population

Page 2

is rather a curious one, and may be classified as the distinct and indistinct, the settled and unsettled. The census report, a remarkably unreliable account, has it that they number “some” sixty thousand. A large proportion of this settled and unsettled population is of such variety of color as to render it almost impossible to define the nice proportions of blood it is so strongly mixed with. On this point, my son, you must not be too particular, but accept it as your father does, as a proof that the races, whom we are told can never be got to live in harmony together, have, to say the least, gone very extensively into a system which gives strength to the belief that it could be done. The French call this the commingling system, and their philosophers argue from it, and with much force, that it is impossible to establish the question as to what kind of blood the best society is based upon. For myself, I feel that we can with safety accept these French philosophers as good authority in such matters. You will also find among the population of Washington natives of nearly every country on the face of the globe. These speak no end of tongues, follow all manner of professions and occupations, and what is most valuable, preserve that delightful diversity for which what is called the “old society” has always been famous. Picturesque hills encircle the city at a distance, and a beautiful river flows past on its way to the sea. The city has many fathers and few friends. These fathers, while in an ornamental mood, built a grand canal into the very bowels of the city, after the manner of Venice, that commerce might be encouraged, and such persons as had a passion for moonlight and gondolas could gratify it. But the people were not given to sailing in gondolas, so this famous canal was diverted from the object for which it was originally intended. It is now used as a tomb where deceased animals of a domestic nature are carefully deposited. The old inhabitants regard this tomb with a reverence I never could understand clearly, even though I had sought for a cause in their instinctive opposition to all and every manner of reform. Indeed, the fathers of the city regard this grand canal as performing a very humane part, inasmuch as it supplies an excellent and very convenient burial-place for their domestic animals, and increases the practice of a large number of doctors. The city fathers, I am informed, find some consolation in the fact that other canals have performed equally humane services.

And it came to pass, my son, that there was a great war in all the land; and greater than was ever known before in any other land. Thus Washington became the centre of our anxieties and our thoughts. The people of the North, and the people of the West, and the people of the South, who constituted the people of one great nation, had long held different opinions as to the right of making merchandise of men, of women, and of little children. Yes, my son, it was at

Page 3

last claimed to be in accordance with Christianity to doom these people to a life at once hopeless and miserable. As you grow up, my son, and begin to think and act for yourself, you will think it very strange that such a great national crime as this should have existed in a land so blessed with the fruits of a ripe civilization. And it will be a cause of wonder to you that a society based upon such an abomination did not sooner break down under the burden of its wrongs. And yet you must always bear in mind, my son, that men do not view great crimes alike, and that even good and great men differ as to what constitutes national rights and national wrongs. It is said that great nations have gone to decline because their people became blind with pride, and refused to think right. A nation is always safe while its people think right; but you must teach the children right before you can have the people think right. Education and association had much to do in training the thoughts of men in the South into wrong channels. Taking this view of the subject you may find much to forgive in a political system that seems wrong in your eyes and right in the eyes of its supporters. Indeed, my son, I would enjoin you to treat with a reasonable amount of deference the arguments advanced by those who differ with you on questions of public policy, and also to remember that right and reason are your strongest weapons. Never get angry with your opponent, never use language that will cause you a regret; and if you cannot convince by the moral force of your argument, abandon the undertaking. And whatever else you do to advance your material prosperity, never let it be said of you that you advocated a great political wrong merely because it was popular and brought you the applause of the unthinking. You cannot do so with a clear conscience; and what is life without it?

I have, unwittingly, my son, wandered away from my subject. The people of the South forgot all the great principles which govern humanity for humanity's good; they were betrayed into wrong doing by false friends, and made blind by their own prosperity. And they even forgot that God was their truest and best guardian, and to Him they must look for that care and protection which shall last forever. But, my son, I would enjoin you to bear these people no ill will, and remember how much better it is in the sight of God to deal with the erring in the spirit of forgiveness. They were a brave and a gallant people, who fought in the belief that they were right, and with a heroism worthy of a good cause. It is only the meanest nature that has no respect for the courage and gallantry of an enemy—that cannot find in it something to admire. It was the selfishness, my son, which slavery begat in these people, that perverted their natures, and caused them to forget God.

Page 4

Yes, my son, it was the curse of slavery that corrupted the hearts and turned the heads of these people; that found them requesting the race they had made suffer so long in bondage, to be thankful that their sufferings were no worse. I never could, my son, see why any human being, who had been made the victim of the greatest outrage against his rights, should be thankful. The Church might, and did, attempt to sanctify this greatest of crimes; but that did not change the character of the cruelty and injustice. It will, no doubt, seem strange to you that ministers of the Gospel should be found the defenders of crime. And yet slavery found its ablest defenders in the pulpit of the South. I am afraid it always will be so, for even now we see ministers of the Gospel more ready to hang out false lights to lead their people into darkness, than to give them that truth and instruction they so much need. But you must not let the thought of this lessen your respect for the Church. Examine with great care until you have found out in what true Christianity consists; and when you have, practice accordingly to the extent of your ability. Never forget that it was the preaching of popular errors that cost the nation so much blood and treasure, so much sorrow and distress. That bishops should put aside their lawn, and gird on the sword—that they should lead men to war and death, instead of the baptismal, and all to perpetuate the sorrows of an oppressed race, is, my son, only another proof that error may gain a victory over truth in the hearts and feelings of the best of us.

CHAPTER II.

We go to war to settle our differences.

Here let me present you, my son, with an exact portrait of the distinguished general who is commonly accepted as striking the first blow of this war. He was kindly educated at the expense of the nation, and was first among its enemies. For a time his fame ran high enough, and timid people were inclined to give him the character of a monster. But it turned out in time that he was a very peaceable gentleman, and not so much of a terrible warrior, after all.

But I want to tell you, my son, how it was that the people of this great nation took to swords and cannon, to settle their differences of opinion.

The people of the great North, and the people of the great West, were educated to a very different way of thinking on the question of slavery; and differed with the people of the South as to what constituted a national blessing. They were willing, for the sake of peace, to tolerate slavery, as a great evil it were dangerous to attempt to remove; but it was too much to ask them to accept it as a great national blessing. These people were energetic, thrifty, lovers of right and justice, and had grown rich and powerful by their own industry. They could not see why the whole people of so great a nation as ours

Page 5

should be required to bow down and worship what the rest of the civilized world had stigmatized as the greatest scourge of mankind. Seeing the power this great wrong was obtaining over the nation, as well as the danger it was causing us by corrupting the minds of the people, they consulted together and elected a President after their own way of thinking. And this so offended the people of the South, who were a brave people, and quick to anger, that they gathered together from all parts of their country, gave up their peaceful pursuits, and went to war for what they called their independence. But I always found, my son, that independence was an abused phrase, much on the tongues of these people. Indeed their idea of independence extended only to giving one class the full and exclusive right to enslave the other. The Southern idea of independence was so shaped as to contain the very worst features of a despotism. But you must look with forgiveness on these people, my son, and seek to forget many of those acts of vindictiveness which characterized them during the war.

At the same time, my son, you must not lose sight of the lesson which the result of this war teaches. Let it be a guide to your own actions that these people went to war to tear down what they could not build up, to destroy a Government the world had come to respect and admire, and under which they had found a safe refuge and a tolerance for their institution of slavery. But the edifice they sought to build up crumbled to the ground, and they are now left without even a safe refuge for their pride. Yes, my son, these people scorned the example of the Christian world, went to war in defense of a great crime, and ceased only when they had destroyed themselves.

I have been thus serious while instructing you as to how the war began, because I am aware that a very large number of writers will tell you that it began in a very different manner. If the account I may hereafter give of what took place at the siege may be less serious, you must charge it to my love for the truth of history. Indeed much that occurred during that remarkable military event, was not of so serious a nature as is generally conceded by an intelligent public. Unless, then, it be written down as it occurred, we shall not convey a faithful picture of it to the public.

Now that the war spirit was full to the brim, the people of the South gathered in great numbers on the plains of Manassas. They were earnest, serious, and even savage in their intentions; and they brought with them their powder and shot-guns, and a large quantity of whisky. They also brought with them a great number of negroes, who were to build the forts, and do all work it would not become a gentleman to do. And while this work was progressing, the “gentlemen” soldiers of the South were to talk very loudly and courageously, and invite all the Yankees round about to come out and get whipped. These people resolved

Page 6

themselves into a great and powerful army, with Peter Beauregard, the French gentleman of whom I have before spoken, for its commander. This gentleman was somewhat eccentric, and much given to saying things, the true meaning of which he did not understand. A waggish friend of mine once told me that this Mr. Beauregard was educated for an apothecary at West Point, a place where young gentlemen are instructed in the various ways of getting a living honestly. Being very skillful in the use of mortars, he was held by Mr. Davis as a most proper person to command a southern army, inasmuch as he could give the Yankees all the physic they wanted in the shortest time. And as it is always expected that a great general will say a great many things that are neither sensible nor wise, and which afford politicians an excellent opportunity of picking them to pieces, he is a wise general who issues his orders and keeps his lips sealed on politics. I say this, my son, because it is popularly understood that a general who knows his business bears the same relations to a politician that pepper does to the stomach.

And it came to pass that the people of the North and the people of the West became seriously alarmed at the capers Mr. Beauregard and his men were cutting at Manassas. Indeed, many false reports were circulated concerning the great power of this Mr. Beauregard; and our people began to give way to their fears, and to declare that he might enter the capital any dark night and capture or send the Government on a traveling expedition. The aged gentlemen at the head of our Government shook their heads discouragingly, and declared there was no safety in going to bed at night while Mr. Beauregard was so near a neighbor. The honest farmers in the country round about were also very much alarmed at the unruly conduct of Mr. Beauregard's men, who carried off their pigs and chickens, and eat up all their vegetables. They also made a great noise, and planted guns on all the adjacent hills, a proceeding the honest farmers did not fully comprehend. Then these unruly men became very defiant, felt like fighting the world, and, in the honest belief that they could do it, invited all the rest of the nation to come out and get whipped. Yes, my son, and to show what confidence they had in themselves, they said we might bring "five for one;" and for that matter, all Germany and all Ireland. It was considered wisdom with them to say nothing about England and France. Those two peaceably inclined nations might, at some future day, be disposed to step in and help them out—in a quiet way. It was not so much humanity as a matter of profitable trade with these two great nations, and if things should take a successful turn, they might see the confederacy in a strong light, and give it material as well as moral help, notwithstanding it had slavery for its foundation. In short, these Southern gentlemen acted on the wise axiom, that it will not do to make enemies in a direction where you may need friends and assistance.

Page 7

Now, my son, the eccentric French gentleman, of whom I have spoken as capable of administering physic enough to settle the question with the Yankees, soon became an object of great admiration with his noisy people. And this so pleased him, that he came in time to admire himself, and to firmly believe in his own mind that the world had no greater warrior. Self-confidence, my son, is one of the most necessary things in war. I have sometimes thought that this element of an army's strength was not fully understood. It was at least not understood by us when the war began. If it had been, a much less number of our people would have shared Mr. Beauregard's opinion of himself. As it was, our timid people so magnified his proportions as to see danger in his very shadow. But then, my son, we were very innocent of the practical part of war when the great rebellion began; and this innocence led us into the very grave error of giving our adversary more than his proper dimensions. It was this that led the Northern mind to over-measure Mr. Beauregard.

I have always had a good deal of sympathy for Mr. Beauregard, and never believed him anything but a pleasant, harmless gentleman, who got into bad company by mere accident. Nor do I believe he ever had any more serious design on the capital of the nation than to look at it longingly from a distance, and perhaps a desire now and then to enjoy the hospitality of some old friend. That he would have played the ruthless invader, if he had got into the city, no reflecting mind ever believed. But then there were people ready enough to believe anything in those days—even to believe that there was truth to be found in the stories told by Mr. Detective Baker.

It was natural enough that Mr. Beauregard should amuse his soldiers by telling them romantic stories of the pleasant days he had spent in Washington, as well as the great value of what it contained. It was necessary also that he should ascertain how far the Government at Washington could be frightened, and what were the best means to that end. You must know, my son, that a Frenchman regards it as one of the first principles in war to find out how far you can frighten your adversary before proceeding to fight him. This will account for a good deal that Mr. Beauregard said and did while at Manassas, and which, at the time, was somewhat unintelligible.

As we were not sure, however, as to what the real intentions of Mr. Beauregard and his master were, it was concluded that we could better preserve our respect for them, as well as the peace of mind of our own people, by applying the proper means to keep them at a respectful distance outside. Indeed the capital contained a great many things which would be extremely useful to an ambitious gentleman resolved on setting up a government of his own, and with the machinery all working according to his own way of thinking. And as the honest intentions of these ambitious men (I refer to Mr. Beauregard and his master) were no more to be trusted than their loyalty, we set our engineers to work building a cordon of forts, such as the world had never seen before, and supposed to be strong enough to keep all our enemies out. And these forts were mounted with such reasoning powers as the largest cannon in the world were capable of.

Page 8

Among the things in Washington so very desirable to a gentleman about to set up a government of his own was the White House. Mr. Davis had long regarded this pleasant looking old mansion as a desirable residence for a gentleman born to rule over a people. Once comfortably seated in this pleasant mansion, a wonderful change would be worked in the political opinions of those whose minds were in doubt. Considered as master of the situation, his friends in the North would increase fourfold. And there was no knowing the turn respect for him abroad might take. A gentleman quietly settled down in the White House, if only for four years, is sure to have a large increase in the number of his friends, all ready either to accept his favors or sound his virtues. Even slavery, that had scourged mankind for so many generations, would have found a great increase of friends and admirers if Mr. Davis had made a home in the White House; so prone is weak human nature to bow to power. Indeed, I am not so sure that, with such a turn in our political affairs, those preachers who had been asserting the divine origin of slavery would not then have proclaimed that God himself was its great protector—a blasphemy the Christian Church will some day be ashamed of.

In addition to the White House being a desirable residence for Mr. Davis, there were those fine public buildings so much admired by strangers. They were just what Mr. Davis and his friends wanted in starting a new government, and would come in very handy. With Washington in his possession, and our worthy President and his Cabinet locked up in the arsenal, or sent on a traveling expedition into a colder climate for the benefit of their health, Mr. Davis's new enterprise would become a fixture in the history of nations. And there was a time when Mr. Davis could, with the means in his power, have accomplished all these things.

The arsenal, too, was full of gunpowder, of great guns, of valuable military stores and equipments. And these were just such things as a gentleman resolved to be a ruler and have a government according to his own way of thinking would stand most in need of. In short, the powder and big guns might be needed as a means of convincing those who differed with him that his opinions must be respected. This is a queer world, my son, and man is the strangest and most uncontrollable animal in it. Mr. Davis understood this as well as any gentleman within my knowledge. And if he had kept as keen an eye on his finances as he had on his political fortune, it would have been much better for him. He knew that if he could show to the world that his new government was sound financially, and likely to continue so, his prospects would be bright indeed. And with Washington, and what Washington contained, in his possession, he could set up his claim to the confidence of the financial world with more than ordinary pretensions.

Page 9

It was indeed said (but I think in a strain of slander) that Mr. Beauregard looked with an air of great condescension on our noble Treasury building, and promised his fighting followers a share of its contents as soon as it came into his master's possession. Indeed it was said that Mr. Beauregard promised his men that when they got Washington they should have luxuries for rations, and fight with their pockets filled with silver and gold. And with their expectations firmly fixed on a specie basis, who could doubt as to what the result would be? This was the golden prize Mr. Davis hoped to win with Washington. And with it he saw, or rather thought he saw, England extending to him the right hand of fellowship, and the Emperor of France making him one of his very best bows, and thanking him for the liberty he had taken with the freedom of a people.

These, then, my son, are some of the reasons why we concluded to close the gates of Washington against Mr. Davis and his rebellious people, and to keep them closed by raising a cordon of strong forts around the city.

CHAPTER III.

Concerning the distinguished officer who built the forts.

I *have* thought it no more than right, my son, to present you with a pleasant, but very exact picture of the distinguished officer of engineers, to whose skill we are indebted for the forts that more than once saved Washington. I do this out of respect to the truth of history, and from an apprehension that there are others, perhaps, higher in rank, who may lay claim to the honor, at some future day. I have also presented you with a more extended and complete portrait of him in the frontispiece of this work. He appears here in his usually calm, meditative mood, with his pipe and Professor Mahan's last great work on fortifications. He is, I must tell you, my son, a man of large brain, and generous nature, fond of his joke, and very fertile in the art of rearing earthworks. In figure he is Falstaffian, and when on his rounds among the fortifications wears immense canvas-legged boots, and a hat with a high crown and extremely broad brim. Indeed, his figure is what may be called formidable, and there would be no mistaking him were you to meet him on the road. And, notwithstanding his peaceable disposition, and his scrupulous regard for the rights of others, the farmers round about Washington regard him with fear and trembling. In short, my son, his approach near a farm house is sure to send all the children scampering with fear. And even the curs and other domestic animals, seem to have an instinctive knowledge that his visits portend no good to their master's domicil. It is curious to see those domestic animals how they bark and snap, and then shrink away at his approach, uttering signs of their dislike. In truth, my son, he has a bad reputation among these

Page 10

worthy farmers, whose farms he quietly takes possession of, and then indulges in his favorite amusement of building forts on them. In this way many an honest farmer has suddenly found himself dispossessed of his property, and his means of getting an honest living; thereby bringing great distress on his family. To remonstrate would be useless. He must submit to the fate of war, and look to Heaven for redress. Now it is by no means pleasant for a quietly-disposed farmer to have his home turned suddenly into a fortress, and his acres made a camping ground for soldiers, who are not the most desirable guests, even under the best of circumstances. But the farmer lays all his sorrows at the door of our distinguished engineer, forgetting that he is only carrying out the orders of his superiors. Thus it was that he got a bad reputation, just as General Gilmore got a bad reputation with the people of Charleston, and South Carolina generally, for throwing shells into their city.

While, then, our distinguished engineer progressed in his work of building forts, with a view to saving the city, the people of the North, and the people of the great West, seeing that war was upon us in all its stern reality, were much agitated as to what was best to be done. They were a peaceable, prospering people, and much attached to the Government that had conferred so many blessings on them. But the fire of their patriotism had already been kindled; and they went wisely to work adding fuel to it. The trumpet of war had sounded over the land, their gallant militiamen came together, boldly and earnestly. And these they sent to Washington, by regiments, to quiet the fears of the people, and save the nation.

Now these gallant militiamen were very full of courage, and their courage increased as their numbers multiplied in the capital, and they sent word to Mr. Beauregard and his men that they would be out there soon and thrash him out of Manassas. Some of these gallant men came for thirty days, others for ninety, our wise rulers being satisfied in their own mind that the latter number of days would be quite enough to finish up the small job of putting down the rebellion. These militiamen wore gay and many-colored uniforms, and had the fat of the land for rations. They were the nation's favored guests, and every man was set down for a gentleman and a hero, who would as soon shed his blood for his country as eat his breakfast. And these gallant militiamen were organized into a grand army, so full of pomp and circumstance, that we were sure the enemy would run away as soon as he saw it coming. But in order to make the thing safe beyond peradventure, we gave the command of this grand army to General McDowell, a man of solid parts, a gentleman, and a soldier. Our wise political rulers at that time held to the idea that a gentleman who had seen service must be a great general. Hence it was that General McDowell, being a gentleman and a scholar, and ready enough to square his political sentiments with the predominant ideas, was accepted as just the soldier who would lead our gallant militiamen to victory, and never think of running from the enemy. Indeed, according to our military politicians, we were to get no end of glory through

General McDowell's success. And Mr. Beauregard was to be driven back to his master, bag and baggage.

Page 11

CHAPTER IV.

The battle of bull-run, *and how it ended*.

I *consider* it of the greatest importance, my son, to present you with an exact portrait of the very distinguished general who led our gallant militiamen to battle at Bull-Run, and followed them home without gaining a victory. Greater battles than this of Bull-Run have been fought, as well in modern as in ancient times; but it is my honest opinion that it has never had its equal in the small number killed and wounded, as compared to the very large number that got frightened and ran away. But I shall speak of this more particularly hereafter.

When the bold McDowell had got the courage of our gallant militiamen well up, and was sure they would look the enemy right in the eye, and give him powder and shot to his heart's content, he led them forth with such pomp and pageantry as had never been seen before. Yes, my son, our gallant militiamen marched forth on the morning of the 21st of July, 1861, every man a hero, and every man intent on fighting the battle according to his own peculiar notions of how a great and glorious victory ought to be gained. There was great blowing of bugles, beating of drums, playing of bands, and fluttering of colors; all of which told Mr. Beauregard to put in his powder, that we were coming, and in earnest. The nation went into a very fever of joy. Several of our grave Congressmen got up their courage, put pistols in their pockets, and went forth with the army to set our brave boys a noble example by their presence on the field. Indeed, many otherwise reflecting persons looked forward to this great clash of arms as a grand entertainment, which was to wind up with a feast, to which the vanquished enemy was to be invited. And to that end they went amply provided with provisions and good wines. In truth, my son, there was a strong rear guard, made up of Congressmen, editors, and distinguished citizens, all going to see the battle, in wagons well-filled with luxuries. This was a new feature in the history of war, and quiet people along the road wondered at the sight.

The morning was hot and sultry, and the air was misty with dust clouds. Our brave boys, who were not up to long marches, had a hard time of it. But they were full of patriotism, and bore up under it with great fortitude. Meeting the enemy near Bull-Run, we gave him battle. That is, we pitched into him and he pitched into us, the fight becoming general and extending over a great deal of ground. Then the fighting became so mixed up and confused that it was difficult to tell on which side victory was smiling. Indeed, neither general could tell how things were going. For a long time both armies kept at a respectful distance, under the evident apprehension that somebody would get injured. In short, there was a great deal of good ammunition wasted, and a

Page 12

great deal of wild and harmless firing done. And just as we were about to proclaim a great victory over the enemy—for many far-sighted persons declared they could see Mr. Beauregard and his men with the toes of their boots turned towards Richmond—a strange chapter of accidents occurred and changed the whole scene. A number of our brave boys got killed, a greater number got hurt, and a still greater number got frightened and thought it high time to look to their own safety. A backward movement, not ordered by our gallant general, began, and this soon resolved itself into a grand race for Washington, where, it was thought, shelter and safety were to be found behind its forts. What caused this sudden backward movement still remains an undecided question. It was first noticed among a regiment of brave Pennsylvanians, who had been homesick for several days, and wanting to go home, started for that purpose. The example of these gallant fellows was soon followed by our Congressmen, editors, and citizens generally, each leaving his stock of luxuries, and, indeed, everything he had, as a peace-offering to the enemy, and resolved not to be outdone in the race, especially in a case where it was made so clear that discretion was the better part of valor. Indeed, these distinguished non-fighting gentlemen proved themselves remarkably fleet of foot, and not to be outdone in a race where personal safety was at stake. But the worst of it was that their example was at once imitated by a regiment of fierce Zouaves, from New York, who firmly believed, when they went out to meet the enemy, that they were more than a match for him. It is reported that these fierce Zouaves became very much alarmed, and did some of the very best running of the day, under the apprehension that they were followed by not less than a troop of savage horsemen, better known as the black-horse cavalrymen, whose sabres they had no taste for. But I have always been of opinion, my son, that these fierce Zouaves were so intent on making the best speed they were capable of, that they never looked behind them to see if these savage horsemen were men of buckram or real substances. I have also heard it intimated that the good speed made by these red-legged heroes was owing to the fact that they had left their courage at home, and were returning to get it. Another very plausible theory I have heard advanced by an Englishman, who had very profound ideas as to how war should be carried on and battles fought. He very gravely told me (adding that he had undoubted authority for his statement), that what set the gallant Zouaves to scampering was this: There were a large number among them who had a weakness for office-holding. Knowing this, a mischievous member started the report that there was a vacancy in the New York Custom-house. The fellow could not have done a more rash act, for it sent them all scampering off the battle-field, each in the hope of being first to gain the prize. Her Majesty's sagacious subject contended that this sufficiently accounted for the good speed made in retreat by that gallant regiment, and also for its leaving more firearms than dead men on the field.

Page 13

Indeed, my son, each man ran for his life, the excitement increasing at every step, until the race became general; and in this way it was kept up until our grand army of gallant militiamen reached the forts, when they breathed freer and felt safe. This was a dark day for Washington and the nation, which became bowed down with sorrow and disappointment. The brave general followed his army into Washington; and I have heard it intimated that he boasted of having the most fleet-footed divisions history had any account of.

You will see, my son, that forts have a moral as well as a material effect. The enemy might, had he known our forlorn condition, have followed up his victory and marched into Washington with flying colors. He was probably restrained by his fears of what we might have in store for him when he reached the forts. As to the provisions for the feast, we left them for the enemy to enjoy, which he did with many thanks to us for the bounty, his own fare being very scanty. And now, my son, I shall leave to my artist the task of giving you an exact picture of our army as it appeared on its way to Washington after the battle of Bull-Run.

CHAPTER V.

The wise men of Washington agreed that McDowell was not the general we took him for, so we sent for George B. McClellan, who had been whipping the rebels up in Northern Virginia. We felt sure that he was the man who would whip the rebels for us, and gain us victories; who would dispel the gloom hanging over the land, and bring us plenty of sunshine. Indeed, my son, the nation began to feel very happy in the possession of such a man; for, according to the newspapers, he had displayed remarkable military traits when only a boy, such as great attention to the study of maps, and the making of little dirt piles. It was also added that while yet a youth he was very obedient to his father, and affectionately fond of his mother. And these excellent traits of character, in one so young, it was held by our wise men, must, when improved and enlarged by manhood, make the man, who had given his mind to the study of arms a great general. So, my son, you see what an opportunity there is before you.

Well, George came to us flush from the field of his glories, and we proceeded at once to make him a hero before he had made us an army. The nation recovered from its disappointment, the sky brightened, the people began to send into the capital troops of a different sort, and the general we had put our faith in went to work making an army—-the grand old Army of the Potomac. Now, my son, it was no small job to make an army, and when you have made it to so improve its drill and discipline that it will stand firm and fight well. It is just as necessary, my son, to harden the constitution of a new army as it is to so sharpen its digestion that it will relish the coarsest of fare. And you can do neither of these things in a day. You must also cultivate

Page 14

and improve the courage of a new army. And this can only be done by experience in the field. General George taught his army to do all these things, and do them well. And the nation felt grateful to him for what he was doing, and sang songs in his praise. And the army respected and loved General George. And General George loved and was proud of his army. The sky of our hopes brightened then, and the nation rejoiced and felt strong again. We all felt that when spring came Mr. Beauregard and his men would be driven to the wall; that we should march on and take Richmond; and that General George was just the man to do it all for us.

Then an evil hour came. The nation got in an impatient mood. And while General George was hardening the constitution of his army on the banks of the Potomac, a great many restless, discontented, and evil-disposed persons sprang up, declared that he was no general at all, and that to command armies was the business of politicians, not soldiers. During war every nation has its mischievous men, who, to create notoriety for themselves, make war in their own way on the great soldiers who are struggling to preserve its honor. These men were our misfortune. They proceeded to make war on General George, to persecute him, and to destroy his usefulness with the army. These men affected to know a great deal about war; but I noticed, my son, that they were very unwilling to shoulder a musket and face the enemy. They wanted General George to move on in the middle of winter, drive Mr. Beauregard out of Manassas, and take Richmond. And all this while the mud was so deep that he could not drag his wagons through it. George very sensibly refused to destroy his army in this way. Indeed, he foresaw that to follow their advice would be to bring the nation to grief a second time. This increased the discontent and opposition of his enemies, who regarded it a great grievance that a general would not follow their advice.

But George was not to be driven into the mud by a set of meddlesome civilians, who knew nothing about war. And to show them that he was not, he kept his army quiet, on the banks of the Potomac, all winter. And in this position he contemplated Mr. Beauregard, and Mr. Beauregard contemplated him, separated by twenty miles of mud. We had not got our war eyes open then, my son. In truth, we had but a very imperfect idea of what an amount of resistance a resolute and determined foe, standing on the defensive, can offer.

When it was spring, and the birds had come back to us, and the prospect looked bright and cheering, and the hopes of the nation ran high, George mounted his horse, and, picking up his army, moved out in the direction of Richmond, taking the overland route. He sent word to Mr Beauregard to wait until he came and he would thrash him out of Manassas. But Mr. Beauregard was not inclined to accommodate George with a fight at that particular point, where his elbows were so exposed, and stepped quietly out by the back

Page 15

door before George got there. In short, all George saw of Mr. Beauregard and his men was the tails of their coats and the heels of their boots, away in the shadowy distance. People said Mr. Beauregard did not do the clean thing to slip away in such a manner. And there were those who scolded General George for letting him get off in this shabby way; but how he was to prevent it I never could see. Mr. Beauregard was kind enough to leave us an army of log houses, and his smouldering camp fires, around which a number of sooty negroes were grouped, shivering and forlorn. And these were all we had to be thankful to him for.

A great storm arose while we were at Manassas. Snow, rain, and hail fell, the wind blew cold and piercing, and the face of the country became melancholy. And the army became melancholy, and sick, for it was stuck in the mud, and was suffering for something to eat, though so near Washington. And the poor animals got sick, and began dying, for there was nothing for them to eat. There was no following Mr. Beauregard to Richmond over such a muddy road, which looked very long then, and very dangerous. George was put to his wits to know what to do next. There was no persuading Mr. Beauregard to stop long enough to let us strike him square in the stomach, so George hit upon a great plan, whereby wonders were to be worked in the art of strategy. He conceived the grand idea of taking his army to sea, avoiding the mud, and after enjoying a pleasant voyage, finding a shorter and better road to Richmond. We all know at what a disadvantage you can take a man when you get in his rear. George felt that if he could take advantage of this on an enlarged plan he could have Mr. Beauregard just where he wanted him. That is, if he could get in his rear before he got to Richmond, he would have him and his men hived, and could give them a good thrashing, and then step quietly in and take the city. But it is not so easy a matter to get in the rear of a gentleman who keeps his eyes open. Nor, my son, have I ever before heard that it was wise in a great general to perform a feat in grand circle sailing to gain an advantage over an adversary who occupied the same roads with him. But George made up his mind that he knew better than all of us, so he took his army to sea, became a great navigator as well as a general, and sailed for the Peninsula, where some good friend had told him there were finer weather and harder roads.

The greatest of generals, my son, are liable to disappointment. They may drive the enemy, and win victories; but they cannot control the elements. That was what bothered George. It was all very pleasant to give his army an airing at sea, but when he was safely landed on the Peninsula, he found himself further from Richmond than when he started. Instead of mud he found dangerous quicksands, into which his army plunged and sank almost out of sight. And there was no better weather on the Peninsula than at Manassas. His cavalrymen, when they had got their sea-legs off, and mounted, cut a sorry figure in the quicksand. And his artillery sunk above its boots. Indeed it was with the greatest difficulty his army could be kept on the surface. There was no getting a firm understanding.

Page 16

When George had got his army “all ashore,” he set out on his grand journey to Richmond. But when he had waded for twenty miles or so through quicksands, he halted before a little old town called Yorktown. Now the old women along the road told George that he had better have nothing to do with Yorktown, that Yorktown was not much account anyhow, and not worth spending much powder on. They told him also that although Mr. Beauregard had not been seen, there was one General Johnson, who had just come to town with a large army; and had made no end of sand heaps, and put mighty big guns on them. That he would not find it so easy to get into Yorktown while General Johnson sat smoking his pipe behind them big sand heaps. And so it proved.

CHAPTER VI.

Nobody home at Yorktown.

This, my son, is an exact portrait of the general who sat behind the great sand heaps at Yorktown, smoking his pipe, and gave our George so much trouble. George and he had been old friends and playmates at school, where they had played pitch and toss in a harmless way. So it is natural to suppose they knew each other’s game perfectly well. George took the hint given him by the old women along the road, and when he got to Yorktown he saw clear enough that his old friend Johnston was playing a game of brag with his big sand hills. And to show Mr. Johnston that he was not to be outdone in that line of art, George, when he had settled his army down in the soft ground, went to work satisfying the nation that he could build just as big sand heaps as any other general. In short, my son, George found himself in a worse predicament than he was in at Manassas, for his friend Johnston had a large army, and stronger works than Mr. Beauregard left behind him. So his army laid down its guns, and took up the spade, and went largely into the ditching and dyking business. He made sand heaps bigger than Mr. Johnston’s, and stretched them all the way across the Peninsula, so that there was no getting on either side of him. And when he had done this he mounted them with the biggest cannon, which he intended to fire when he got them all up; so as to make a magnificent display of substantial fire-works, and in that way frighten Mr. Johnston out of town. So careful was George not to do his old friend any bodily injury before he got all his guns mounted, that he would only exchange compliments with him at morning and evening, when few shells would be tossed backward and forward, just to preserve what was called the etiquette of war. I have sometimes thought these compliments were exchanged with the very best of motives, intended only to change the monotony of camp life with a little excitement.

Page 17

When George and his army had toiled hard for nearly a month, had thrown up a whole mountain of sand hills, and kept on crying for more soldiers, and had got almost all his guns mounted; and was just ready to bring Yorktown down about Mr. Johnston's ears, with a grand display of substantial fireworks, that general made up his mind not to be served in that way. Nor would he accommodate George by waiting to see his grand display of fireworks. No, my son, he was not the man to be caught at a disadvantage, or waste powder unnecessarily. Some kind friend informed him of George's intentions, so he packed up his baggage one night, and moved himself off, leaving Yorktown and his sand hills as a legacy to George, who was very much disappointed at being treated so shabbily by his old friend and playmate.

People said General Johnston was a cunning fox, and not to be caught in any trap our George could set. But George, like the Irishman, had a deal of pluck, and a big heart, and, above both, a great deal of chivalry. Now he was anxious that his old friend should not go away so shabbily, but come back, and either breakfast with him or accommodate him with a fight. So he sent his rough-riders after him, and they proceeded at a rapid pace, and came up with him on the outskirts of Williamsburg, where General Johnston prepared to fight rather than come to breakfast. There both armies came together, and a great battle was fought, which lasted two days. There was desperate fighting on both sides, and a great many were killed and wounded, and a great many more so badly frightened that they kept out of the fight, which they held to be a proof of their wisdom.

We gained a great victory over the rebels at Williamsburg, and made them feel so ashamed of themselves that they resumed their march backwards on the road to Richmond. And this battle and this victory attached our good Union soldiers more closely to General George. Indeed, my son, they loved him, and looked up to him as a dutiful child does to a kind father. They marched up the Peninsula singing his praises. And now, my son, let me enjoin you that whenever you hear the names of Generals Hancock and Kearney mentioned, respect and revere them, for never was American valor more beautifully illustrated than by those generals on the field at Williamsburg.

Then General George sent the right wing of his grand army, under General Franklin, by water, to West Point, where he fought a battle with General Johnston's rear-guard, and gained another victory. Then both armies moved leisurely along, up the Peninsula, in a manner not to make the marching uncomfortable. It rained a great deal, and the roads were bad, and the enemy resolved not to be hurried. And our Government, which was not so wise in war matters then as it got to be in time, was not disposed to do anything that might change General Johnston's resolution. In fine, our Government seemed to have quite as big a quarrel with General George as it had with the rebels,

Page 18

and the politicians held it of more importance to destroy our own general than the rebel army. The Government was just as fair as fair could be in making promises to General George. But then the Government seemed to have a short memory, and forgot its promises almost as soon as it had made them. It promised to send General McDowell, who was not far away, to help George fight the rebels and take Richmond. But the Government forgot to do so; and instead, kept that gallant officer looking from the hills of Fredericksburg, to see if the rebels were coming in that direction. To tell you the truth, my son, our Government was so afraid that the rebels would turn short around and take Washington, and make prisoners of its cabinet officers, that it made “look-out generals” of so many brave officers, who had troops under their command, that it had none to send General George to assist in taking Richmond. It may however, be a consolation to us to know that this would not have been the first time, in the history of the world, that fear had cost a great nation its fortunes and its glories.

General George marched leisurely along with his brave army until he came within four miles of Richmond, where there was a great swamp called the Chickahominy. The name of this swamp will be long remembered by our brave soldiers of the Army of the Potomac. The rain fell like a deluge, and flooded it; and it gave out deadly fevers, which brought death and tribulation on our army. And in this swamp our army fought the battle of Fair Oaks, and gained another grand victory over the enemy. But we had no means of following up this victory, and so its effect was lost to us. Then our army settled down into this deadly swamp, and wondered and waited for nearly a month, until our men got heart-sick and fever-stricken. We watched the enemy on the hills beyond; and the enemy watched us in the swamp. And we waited until the enemy had brought all his forces up into Richmond, and General Lee, his best general, had taken command. Things began to look desperate with our George, and he began thinking how he should get safely out of the swamp and change his base. How was he to fight Mr. Lee with all his strength, when the strength we ought to have sent him was kept at a safe distance looking on? George saw that the glories of Williamsburg, of West Point, of Hanover Court House, and of Fair Oaks would have to be thrown away because the wisdom of the nation would not send us aid.

This, my son, was the day of our tribulation. The people were strong, and the army represented the people. I wish, my son, that I could say also that the Government was strong. But the army, if it was sick, had not lost its courage, nor its love for the general who commanded it.

Page 19

General Lee then came out with his strong and powerful army and fought us at Gaines's Mill, where he beat us after a desperate battle. We might as well confess that we were beaten, and badly beaten, in that battle; and that we had to make the best we could of our defeat, and get across the Chickahominy Swamp as quick as we could, and turn our backs on it forever, for we had filled it with the graves of our brave soldiers. George was sanguine, had great confidence in the endurance of his army, and looked forward to the future with faith and hope. He did not want to acknowledge that he was beaten at Gaines's Mill; but the nation made up its mind that he was. Indeed, the nation could not comprehend the principle of generalship that claimed a victory, and at the same time made a change of base necessary in the face of an advancing enemy. But George got his army safe across the Chickahominy, though in some confusion, and instead of driving the enemy to the wall, as he had promised us he would do, the enemy began driving him to the James River.

Like the Irishman who had twice got his head broken, but was unwilling to say he was beaten, George continued to show General Lee that our army was still full of pluck.

So he turned round and thrashed the enemy right soundly at Savage's Station, at White Oak Swamp, and at Malvern Hill—just to show that he could do it. These are places, my son, you shall read of in history. And the glories of the battles fought at them shall become brighter and brighter as we contemplate them; and new lustre will shed on the names of the officers who fought them, and set such noble examples of courage to their men. It was George's misfortune that he fought these battles and gained these victories while his army was moving backward instead of forward—while seeking a place of safety instead of driving the enemy to seek one. This makes a great difference with the public, which does not generally study the rules of strategy, and does not like to see an army fall back after it has gained what its commander claims to be a great victory.

CHAPTER VII.

Pope did it.

Here, my son, you have an exact portrait of the great general who was brought to Washington to command all our armies, and to keep us from making any more military mistakes. He is presented to you just as he sat in his easy chair, confounding the rules of war and bringing confusion on the army. This great general, though he had never fought a battle, except on paper, brought with him from the West a new and much enlarged plan for taking Richmond.

Page 20

General George was on the banks of the James River, with his army, pointing with his sword toward Richmond, as the heart of the rebellion, and offering to take it for us if we would only send him twenty-five thousand fresh men, which very reasonable proposal we declined. Indeed the general we had placed in the easy chair at Washington, over George, declared it as his solemn conviction that Richmond was not to be taken in any such way. That an army so near Richmond could not take it with advantage. That objective points must be reached over the right road, not the wrong one. That General George, having taken his army to Richmond over the wrong road, must bring it back over the same wrong road, and then proceed on his travels over the right road. That Richmond, unless approached over the right road could not be taken in the right way. That General George had deceived us, inasmuch as his plan had too much strategy in it, and not enough straight lines. That Richmond, to be taken in the right way, must be taken by a new general, with a new army, and according to new ideas. That it was better to keep Washington from being taken than to take Richmond, though we had a large army knocking at its gates. This was the military logic of our new Commander-in-Chief. And this was the great Commander-in-Chief who was to conduct the war for us on enlarged principles and keep the nation safe against blunders.

This great general, then, when he had got comfortably settled in his easy chair, must needs show the people what faith he had in his new plan. So he ordered little George to pack up his baggage, stop knocking at the enemy's back door, and bring his army back to Washington on transports. Of course the rebels were very thankful to him for this act of kindness, as it evinced a disposition to conduct the war for their benefit. With General George and his army on their way to Washington by ship, Richmond was no longer besieged. And then the rebel army was at liberty to go where it pleased. And it very soon pleased General Lee to march it against Washington at a rapid pace, and over the shortest road. We had an army at sea, and a number of others we did not know just exactly where. So things military began to get so confused that the people did not understand them. They were requested to be patient, however, and patient they had to be.

Well, my son, we brought the scattered battalions we had on their front together at the forts, and soon formed a good fighting army. But where was the new general to lead it to victory for us? The government cast about it for a man, and at last fixed its eye on Pope. He was the shining star among generals, the man to take the buckrum out of the rebels for us. And it was said of this great general that he possessed uncommon virtues. His friends laid numerous feats of valor at his door, and the whole history of war was ransacked to find another such a hero. He had captured Islands, whipped rebel armies (I have forgotten how many), and bagged invisible prisoners enough to satisfy a Napoleon. This great general, too, was remarkable for his modesty; and he was also a man of strict veracity. Yes, my son, considering the times, he was a rare example of a man who never boasts of his achievements, nor claims a feather that belongs to another man's cap. Such were the virtues of this great general.

Page 21

Well, my son, we sent for him to come to Washington and take care of us, and he came.

CHAPTER VIII.

How the new general came to town.

My artist has drawn you an exact picture of the manner in which this great general entered the capital of the nation. The skies brightened, and the country felt safe again at the thought of having such a hero. Children laughed and gamboled, and said the rebels would get it now Pope had come to town. Dogs ran out, and barked, and snapped for joy. The crowd pressed forward to look at him, and policemen, for once, had enough to do. Fair women waived handkerchiefs and threw him kisses. And many were they who marvelled that so great a soldier had remained so long undiscovered. You see, my son, we are a people much given to excitement, and when we get to heaping honors on a man we do it without mercy. Hence it pleased us much when we saw Pope come to town amidst the beating of drums and the blowing of horns. That was the way he came.

I have spoken of this great general's modesty, my son. It will also be necessary for me to inform you that he introduced a new idea in war, one worthy of being added to the regulations, and that was that every general should be his own trumpeter, as well as keep a number of trumpeters in his employ.

Then Pope went out to see and have a talk with his army. He also published a grand order to his soldiers, which will stand as a great curiosity in our war literature, as long as the history of the rebellion, for its wisdom astonished the people. He told them the war had been carried on after a strange fashion, which he intended should be changed. He enjoined them, in a word, neither to look to the right nor the left, but to keep straight ahead, with their steel sharp and their powder dry. And when they got near enough to the enemy to see the color of his eye, then deliver their lead right square into his stomach. That was the way war must be carried on. Our army must look only to the front, keep its eye open, and forget that there was such a thing as its rear.

This was highly encouraging to those politicians who said our army must get to Richmond over the shortest road. After what I have said, my son, you will not fail to see what a great general this Pope was. Great generals were not generally generous enough to intrust the care of their rear to the enemy. But this was not all. He established his headquarters in the saddle, and told his soldiers they would always find him there. My opinion has always been, though I have never had much to do with war, that the general who establishes his headquarters in the saddle, was not always to be found when you wanted him. In short, the saddle is a very uncertain locality, and very difficult to find when you have information to convey, and orders to receive; both of

which may be necessary during a battle. I rode an hour once to find a general whose headquarters were in the saddle, and did n't find him after all.

Page 22

When, then, this great general had shown us how the rebels were to be whipped, he went out to take command of his army. And again there was great blowing of horns and beating of drums. And when he had got his headquarters firmly established in the saddle, he invited the enemy to come forward and get whipped. And the enemy came forward in all their strength,—fierce and earnest, and a great and bloody battle was fought on the plains of Manassas. And when they had fought for three days General Pope declared his new method of carrying on the war was a great success; that he had got the rebels just where he wanted them, and would have them all in his trap for us to-morrow. We all threw up our caps and felt so happy at this good news. But our hopes were dashed to the ground again, and it turned out that our Pope had made a slight mistake. It was the rebels who had got him just where they wanted. The saddle was not a good place from which to see what the enemy were doing. And as Pope had given no heed to his rear, General Lee very wisely took the responsibility of giving that important position his attention.

When, then, to-morrow came, our general, who was to give the rebels such a whipping for us, found them in his rear, on his flank, everywhere but where he wanted them. The very natural result of this was that his army resolved itself into a state of confusion, and in that manner came scampering back on Washington, leaving its commander to take care of himself, which he did, though with the loss of his wardrobe. It has been hinted that he returned to Washington a much wiser general than when he left it.

The nation was again brought to grief, and fear and disorder reigned in Washington. People were heard to say that Pope had made a prodigious failure, and was not the general we took him for, or he never would have let his army run away from him in this way. Others declared he had opened the gates of the city to the enemy, and invited him to walk in. And it was not with feelings of encouragement that they saw gunboats move up and take position where they could check the enemy's approach. Never did general lose his laurels so quickly. Indeed, my son, when he returned to Washington, with little else than his saddle, there was not a dog to bark him a welcome, nor a chambermaid to wave a napkin in his honor.

Timid people fancied every hour of the day that they could see the rebel army deploying over the hills of Arlington, and loud calls were made for a general who could save us. But we had something better than a mere general to save us. We had the grim and silent strength of the forts. And these the enemy dare not approach. Their effect on the enemy was manifest and he turned aside from them, and passed up into Maryland, victorious and defiant.

Page 23

I ought to tell you, my son, that while Pope was illustrating the beauties of his new plan at the front, and bringing confusion on our arms, General George arrived with his good old army of the Potomac, which still loved him, still worshipped him as its hero. And just when he was most needed, to save Pope from his disaster, the government relieved him of his command, as if to increase the confusion already prevailing. The army felt this as a slight offered to itself, and called loudly for the restoration of its favorite general. And then the general, whose portrait I have placed at the head of a previous chapter, and who sat in his easy chair in Washington, and brought our armies to grief, called loudly for General George to come and help him out of his trouble. This, you will see, my son, was first tying a man's hands, and then asking him to come and help whip a giant.

Yes, my son, there was toil and trouble enough in Washington just then; and the errors our wise men had committed were like witches rising up and haunting them. It is said that the little bell-ringer of the State Department had his traps packed up, and ready to move; and that fear had made the burly man in the War Department civil. Newly recruited volunteers, well fed, well clothed, and fresh looking, were marching into the city with colors flying and drums beating. The militia, which had come to Washington to do ornamental duty for thirty days, were marching home with colors flying and drums beating. Neither of these could give us relief in our trouble. The nation had only the good old army of the Potomac to lean upon in this its day of trouble. And how few of us, my son, think of this matter properly, or are willing to give the brave men, who composed that army, credit for what they had done. Like the English, we are an exacting people, and inclined to ask too much of those who fight our battles. Some of our public men were for forgetting what those sun-scorched, ragged, and fever-stricken heroes had done for us on the Peninsula, and even for wiping out their record of heroism.

I confess it was to me a sad and touching sight to see these soldiers, who had served their country so well, who had suffered in swamps, and fought and defeated the enemy, treated with what seemed to me criminal indifference in the very capital they had returned to save. They muttered their discontent at the loss of their favorite commander, but were ready again to go forth, struggle with the enemy, and fight for the life of the nation. But not a voice was raised by the government to thank them for what they had done, not a cheer to welcome their return. You must know, my son, that the government was dumb with fear. The ghost of its errors so haunted it that its lips were sealed. The people looked on and saw it, in its very feebleness, asking for stronger hands to come and help it out of its trouble.

Page 24

There was, my son, but one army and one general that could save the nation then. General George was that man, and the army was the good old Army of the Potomac. And the government, as if to confess its folly in the past, restored General George to his army. And there was great rejoicing over the land when this good news went forth to the people. And the army took more heart, and rejoiced also; and great was its rejoicing. The soldiers had confidence in him, and knew he could lead them to victory. Then he placed himself at their head and marched out in pursuit of the enemy, who was advancing triumphantly into the North. And who among us can tell what changes there would have been in our political and social condition had not the advance of this bold and triumphant enemy been checked by some strong hand? I have often thought, my son, that if the people of a republic were as ready to credit great men with the good they really do, as they are to search their characters for faults, we should have less pretenders and a better government.

CHAPTER VIII.

A *brighter prospect*.

You have here an exact picture of the brave Franklin, who commanded the gallant old Sixth Corps, which deserves a bright place in the history of the Army of the Potomac.

When Pope had finished his job for us, and shown us what a hero he was, the government, in the exercise of its wisdom, sent him into the far West to fight the Indians, where he could, with propriety, establish his headquarters in the saddle.

Franklin, who had been relieved of his command, for no one exactly knew what, was now restored to it, to the great joy of the old Sixth Corps. Soldiers fight better under a general they know and have confidence in; and they are the best judges as to who is the most competent to lead them. Franklin and his gallant corps fell in with the enemy, posted in a strong position on the South Mountain, at Crampton's Gap, and after a fierce fight, drove him from it and over into the valley, sometimes charging up the steeps with the bayonet. This was quite an important success, my son, since it checked the enemy's advance, and caused him to fall back on the plains of Antietam, and form his army in line of battle. Indeed, he so far mistook this movement as to believe it an attempt to get in his rear.

This gleam of success, gained by Franklin, inspired the nation with new hope. Yes, my son, and it cheered the hearts of our brave soldiers, restored their strength, and gave them new confidence. Then General George formed his army in line on the plains of Antietam, and a great and bloody battle was fought, and the rebel army beaten and put to flight. Pay no heed, my son, to what the prejudiced may say of this battle. It was one of the greatest battles fought during the war. All honor to the brave soldiers who fought it. Our troops, too, were

Page 25

handled with great skill, and the world never saw better generalship than our George displayed. Yes, my son, Antietam was our Waterloo, fought at a time when the nation needed a victory most; and the general who fought it ought never to be forgotten by his country. When, then, George had gained this victory for us, had beaten and driven the enemy from all his positions, and caused the nation to rejoice, he halted to give his brave soldiers rest and repair damages. His losses were great, and he had compassion on his soldiers, for many of them were without shoes and had little raiment. In truth, my son, these brave, abused, and war-worn soldiers had only the well-worn shoes and clothes they had made the campaign of the Peninsula in.

George pleaded the necessity of his soldiers as a reason for his delay, and very justly. But this pleased neither the government nor the politicians whose bitterest prejudices seemed to control it. These gentlemen urged that he follow the enemy at once and capture him, a piece of strategy not so easily accomplished as many think. In short, we were in no position to follow the enemy until we got shoes and raiment for our brave soldiers. Nor could we have added much to our success by following General Lee and his men, who had an open country before them, until we were well prepared to engage them in another battle. When, however, George got his army ready, he moved directly on the enemy, and his soldiers were in the best of spirits, for we had got General Lee and his men in a position where he would be compelled to fight another battle, with the advantages in our favor. Now I don't say, my son, that George would have won this battle, but by fighting it he would have exposed the enemy's real weakness, and placed him in a very bad position. But the government, as if more willing to promote the prejudices of politicians than to preserve the honor of our arms, resolved not to let George fight another battle. Yes, my son, it removed him from his command, and that, too, when he was close up with the enemy, and was expecting every day to engage him in battle. I do not remember that history records another instance where the commander of an army, that had just gained a great victory, was so disgraced by his own government.

The enemy could not have inflicted a more severe blow on our brave army than was done by this act of our own government. A feeling of disappointment and sorrow ran through the ranks, and the brave men who had fought under and loved their commander, wept at the injustice that took him away from them. It will, in time, be made clear, my son, that the government committed a great crime against our army by this act. It cannot be wisdom to remove a commander, so popular with his army as George B. McClellan was, especially when that army was on the eve of a battle. Such an act is sure to excite dissatisfaction, and dissatisfaction destroys discipline. Nor should such a commander

Page 26

be removed at so critical a time unless the government were prepared to fill his place with one of equal, if not superior capacity. A general, to hope for success, must have the confidence and respect of his troops. To remove one who has, and fill his place with one who has not, is a crime than which none can be greater. It is a crime against the brave men whose lives are at the risk of the capacity of their commander. Our government committed this crime when it gave the command of the army of the Potomac to General Burnside. That general was the best judge of what he could do, and freely confessed his incapacity for so high a command. But the government was not to be put off by this confession of weakness on the part of a general, preferring to reward him for his honesty, and make no account of his capacity. I accept this, my son, as the only reason why General Burnside was given so high a command. As for his capacity as a general, he gave us a proof of that when he let the rebels fall back, and get well fortified at Fredericksburg. To show, however, what a general could do by attempting impossibilities, he sent the brave army of the Potomac to be slaughtered by an enemy covered with stone walls. I tell you, my son, it was a dark day for the nation when that was done. It multiplied our misfortunes, gave a deeper wound to our grief and sorrow, and brought disgrace on our arms.

I will pass over these misfortunes as lightly, my son, as possible, hoping only that they will serve us as a warning in the future. Having buried Burnside deep under the misfortunes of his own incapacity, the question again came up, where shall we find a general to do up these rebels for us, and gain us a little victory? The great Grant was doing wonders for us in the West. He was bold, earnest, and brave. And this was the secret of his success. But in the East we were sorely troubled for some one who could do something.

General Hooker was brave and bold. But, my son, he had such a weakness for blowing his own trumpet. Yes, he could blow it as loud and as long as any trumpeter you ever listened to—Pope excepted. He had declared of himself that he was just the man to lead our army to victory, and give the enemy a sound thrashing. It was true, this general had been very insubordinate. He had said a number of things, neither wise nor polite, of his superiors. And he had set an example to his soldiers not inclined to improve their discipline. As, however, he had declared himself the man to lead our army to victory, and the government wanted just such a man, it took the general at his word, and gave him the command.

Page 27

There were some people, my son, unkind enough to say, and say boldly, that the government did this strange act more to show its appreciation of insubordination than out of respect to his capacity to discharge successfully the duties of his high position. When, however, the general had talked himself into the very best opinion of himself, he went to work nursing his grand army into good order. Yes, my son, the old army of the Potomac was a grand army, and General Hooker declared it was the finest on the face of the globe. And he nursed it into good order on the left bank of the Rappahannock, from December, 1862, to early April, 1863. The general could get up of a morning, and enjoy a look at his old friend Lee, quietly domiciled on the opposite bank. And General Lee could get up of a morning, and do the same. Both generals regarded this as a very harmless and pleasant way of spending the winter, while carrying on the war. They would, at times, it is true, exchange compliments of a belligerent nature. But this was only to give a lively turn to the state of affairs around Fredericksburg. They were, I can assure you, my son, not intended to harm any one.

CHAPTER IX.

Chancellorville, *and the curious fight we had there*.

I *am* sure my friends will all be anxious to see a portrait of the great general who fought the great battle of Chancellorville. And my artist has been particularly careful to present them with a good one.

Chancellorville was a strangely fought battle, my son; I have various good reasons for saying this, but, perhaps, it is best that as little as possible be said concerning them.

When spring came, and the roads were dry, and the robins had begun to sing in the trees, and the buds to put forth, General Hooker began to feel strong, and full of battle. He said to his officers that they must get their courage up, and be ready for a big fight, every one in his own way. And to his men he said, that they must have plenty of powder in their pouches, and not be afraid to use it. A general to be successful, my son, must have confidence in himself. General Hooker had confidence in himself, and felt that he could whip the rebels out of their boots any fine morning. Hence it was, that feeling in a fighting humor one morning in early April, he picked up his army, and, crossing the stream, went in pursuit of the enemy. He found the enemy posted in the woods near Chancellorville, where he engaged him in a fierce and desperate battle. But the general's plan, if he had any, soon got out of his head, and it became apparent that he was fighting the battle in so strange a manner that no one could understand it. In truth, the general set aside the established rules of war early in the battle, and went back to first principles. These give every man the right to fight in his own way,

Page 28

and is beautifully illustrated in an army fighting without orders. I am told, my son, on very good authority, that these “first principles,” as applied to fighting battles, never were better developed than at Chancellorville. I am afraid, my son, we shall never get a complete and accurate history of that extraordinary battle, for the reason that no historian will be found capable of describing it. It is certain that the battle had not raged long when our army was in a state of uncertainty and confusion. Sometimes the fight was between different brigades or divisions of our own troops, who were as often brought face to face. The enemy liked this, for it helped him to fight the battle without reinforcements, and saved him a deal of trouble and loss. When we had got a great many men killed in this way, and a great many more severely hurt, the great question arose as to who had won the battle, and who got whipped. There can be little doubt as to the impression made on General Lee’s mind on this point. General Hooker was sure he had gained a great victory, and yet he was not so sure. I say he was not so sure, since he found it necessary, before settling the question, to withdraw his army to his old quarters on the other side of the river. It is clear that the general’s reflections would be less disturbed in his old quarters, and, with a river separating him from the enemy, he could form a more correct judgment as to whether he had beaten the enemy, or the enemy had beaten him. Feeling, however, that it would not do to let it get out that the enemy had beaten him, he resolved that it must be true that he had beaten the enemy. This was about the most accommodating settlement he could arrive at. But, accepting this in good faith, I never could see the necessity for our haste to get back to our old quarters on the hills, notwithstanding the general’s friends said it looked like rain, and he was anxious to get his army over before the shower came on. I have noticed, also, that the rebel army, when beaten, generally fell back in the direction of Richmond. In this instance, however, he held his positions, beat his drums, blew his horns, fluttered his flags, and was altogether the most defiant of vanquished enemies. I noticed, also, that this vanquished enemy packed his knapsacks, put his ammunition in order, and marched off, not backwards, in the direction of Richmond, but forward, in the direction of the North.

Yes, my son, the enemy marched defiantly into Pennsylvania, and sent the peaceable Dutchmen in that remote part of the country into a state of great alarm. And this I accept as the best proof that the rebels were not beaten at Chancellorville. I am sure, also, that General Hooker had sufficient reason to share this opinion with me. He always had the rebels just where he wanted them, and yet I observed that he failed to bring them to a stand before they got on the free soil of Pennsylvania. Every honest Dutchman in the State was convinced in his own mind that General Hooker, if he had been the general he ought to be, should have driven the enemy into some remote corner of Virginia, and kept him there.

Page 29

The military atmosphere was still full of confusion and uncertainty. And things seemed getting worse every day. Strange as it may seem, the government continued making extensive efforts to further the object of the rebel general. Fortunately for the nation, our wise rulers waked up one morning fully convinced that General Lee was in earnest, that he was already on the free soil of a northern State, with a favorable prospect for making a settlement there. The government also suddenly discovered that General Hooker, although a brave soldier and all that, was not the man to command a great army. So the government relieved him and sent him into elegant retirement, a custom very common at that time.

Then the government appointed General Meade to the command of the grand old army of the Potomac. Of this general little had been known. Still, the nation felt relieved at the change. Now, General Meade was a polished gentleman, a brave and good soldier, who had fought on the Peninsula under McClellan and commanded the Pennsylvania Reserves. To place a new general in command of an army at a time when that army is in face of the enemy and expects every minute to engage him in battle, is one of the most dangerous experiments a government can indulge in. It is also one well calculated to test to their utmost the qualities of the general placed so suddenly in command.

It was the 1st of July, 1863, General Meade took command of the Army of the Potomac, and posted it in order of battle on the hills and plains around Gettysburg. There the two armies stood, the Union and the Rebel, than whom there was none braver, awaiting for the signal for the clash of arms. Then a great battle began and lasted three days. And there was desperate fighting and great valor displayed on both sides, and the field was strewn with the dead and wounded. And the battle of Gettysburg was a great battle, and the Union army of patriots gained a great and glorious victory over the rebels. Yes, my son, and what was more, we celebrated it on the 4th of July. And the people of the North were glad of heart, and rejoiced exceedingly, and sang praises to General Meade, for he had fought the battle well and won his country's gratitude.

Still, my son, we hesitated, and failed to take advantage of our success. In truth, we let the rebel army re-cross the Potomac at its leisure, although we might have given it serious trouble had we pressed it at once. Indeed, there were a great number of people who expected General Meade to either drive the rebel army into the Potomac or capture it. But military men know that capturing a large army, though it may have been beaten in battle, is not so easy a matter. And even a victorious army, after fighting so great a battle, needs rest and time to improve its shattered condition.

CHAPTER X.

Hanging in the balance.

Page 30

Here, my son, is an exact portrait of the general who fought the great battle of Gettysburg. When he had rested his army a sufficient time he began moving in pursuit of the enemy. The rebel general fell back into old Virginia, taking his time as he went along, and being in no temper to hasten his steps. In short, we followed him back timidly to Orange Court House, where he made a settlement for the winter. There was a good deal of small fighting done during the autumn and winter, but neither side seemed to gain any advantage. The fate of war hung in the balance. If we gained an advantage one day, the enemy would do something to offset it on the next. This state of things was a source of great grief to the nation. The people wanted something more positive for the great amount of life and treasure they were wasting. They called for more earnestness and more resolution on the part of our generals, and a better system of carrying on the war on the part of the authorities at Washington. So, my son, the people's impatience was at length heeded, and when spring came (I mean the spring of 1864), and the people were weary of the war, and demanded a change in the policy of conducting it, so that an end be put to it as speedily as possible, the government began to wake up to its duty. We had fought battles for two years and hung the nation in mourning, and still Washington was as often in danger as Richmond. Indeed, the fortune of war seemed in favor of Richmond. Then the government began to see that if we would gain victories our armies must be commanded by soldiers, not politicians.

Yes, my son, the people were excited to joy when the government changed its military policy, and the great General Grant was brought to Washington and placed in command of all our armies. The sun of our hopes brightened then, for the people had confidence in that general. He had whipped the rebels so well for us in the West, and he had gained for us so many glorious victories.

And now, my son, we come to this remarkable siege of Washington. I say remarkable, for it is destined to stand on the pages of military history without anything to compare with it. Not that it was as bloody, or that the city was as obstinately attacked and defended as heroically, as some other cities that have been besieged, in ancient as well as modern times. But you must know that sieges, like battles, derive their great importance and all that makes them remembered hereafter, not so much from the amount of blood that has been shed during them, not so much from the impetuosity of the attacks made or the heroic defences, as from the manner in which they affect the fate of nations. Some sieges are remarkable for one thing, some another. The siege of Washington was more remarkable for the manner in which the city was defended than the manner in which it was attacked. No fields were fertilized with carnage, nor banners bathed in blood.

You, remember, my son, the tale of storied Troy, with all its "pomp and circumstance of glorious war." But, my son, it has never seemed to me more interesting than the passage of Thermopyl□. Nor will Agamemnon live in history after Leonidas is forgotten. And yet these events in ancient war were small compared with the battles our

Grant fought. His deeds will brighten as you read of them in history, and become greater than them all.

Page 31

And now, my son, let us hie to the siege of Washington. Washington was besieged and Washington was saved; and the history of its salvation must not perish. Rome, you know, was saved by the cackling of a goose. And when I tell you that Washington, the capital city of this great nation was saved by the too free use of a barrel of whisky, you must not be surprised. When its great circle of fortifications, now bristling with cannon, and filled with busy soldiers, shall become so many grassy mounds, their history must still live to excite the patriotism of those who come after us.

Remember, my son, that had Washington fallen the nation had perished. To this remarkable siege, then, and its results, let all the succeeding glories of this great Republic be attributed.

As I have told you before, my son, after the first battle of Manassas, when our militia did such good running, there was nothing to prevent the rebels from entering and capturing it but the few hastily constructed forts, or t□tes de pont, on the Virginia side. Nor could these have offered any resistance worth naming. Our demoralized troops, however, never halted until they got safe inside of them. And but for these forts, weak as they were, the city would have fallen. When General McClellan assumed command, he saw at once the necessity of properly fortifying the city. And the nation ought never to forget him for his decision. Experienced engineers, with large gangs of laborers, were set to work throwing up these huge masses of earthwork. To this was added the labor of a large number of the troops of the Army of the Potomac, during its organization in the autumn and winter of 1861 and 1862. When, therefore, the army moved for the Peninsula in the spring of 1862, the city was so strongly fortified that it was considered safe by General McClellan and his corps commanders. That is, my son, if its forts were properly garrisoned, and there was a working force of forty thousand men. But nothing was safe against the fears of a timid administration.

But forts, my son, however strong, are only inert masses. They cannot fight themselves; and to give them strength and action they require to be properly and fully garrisoned. And the troops in them require to be properly instructed in all their duties. Now, my son, it was a question with the government, which was very timid at that time, whether General George had left, in and around Washington, a force sufficient to make the city perfectly safe when he started on his memorable campaign. It is the opinion of nearly all our best military men that he did. But the politicians got frightened, the government got frightened, and the political generals got frightened. And all the frightened people got their heads together; and they made the President and Secretary of War believe just as they believed—that Washington had been “unarmed,” and that Washington was in danger. Yes, my son, our good-hearted

Page 32

President, who was no coward, was sorely troubled about the safety of Washington. And his Secretary of War was also much troubled, as was common with him on the appearance of danger. And the “Chief of Staff” was also in trouble, and went to issuing orders, of a memorable kind, few of which were understood, much less obeyed. The result of all this was that there was great conflict of action. I have no better name to call it by, my son. Hence it was, my son, that our good President halted McDowell, and McDowell’s corps. And both looked on from a distance while General George was fighting desperate battles with the enemy. This was the way the War Department carried on the war at that time. Now, my son, it is my purpose to so instruct you that you will know the whole truth concerning the way the war was carried on.

The detention of General McDowell and his corps, while it illustrated the great anxiety of the President and Secretary of War for the safety of Washington, caused the failure of the campaign on the Peninsula. All the sophistry in the world, my son, cannot change that decision.

General George, with his army, was driven to the James River, and as the enemy, then at Richmond, was between him and General Pope, and might strike either at his pleasure, the government’s fears about Washington so increased that General George was finally recalled from the James, to save the capital. The result was, as I have told you before, that General Pope was driven back with the wreck of his army to the very gates of the capital, and General George arrived barely in time to save it. Yes, my son, General George, not only so saved the capital, but extricated the government and the Chief of Staff out of the difficulties they had brought on themselves.

When, then, the victorious rebel army turned aside from the fortifications of Washington, and marched triumphantly into Maryland, strong garrisons were left in the forts, and more troops were poured into the city to insure its safety. It was, indeed, resolved by the government, which began now to profit by experience, and by the fact that the capital of the nation had twice been placed in extreme peril, that for the future, come what might, it should at least be made secure. Experienced officers of rank were placed in command of the defenses, north as well as south of the Potomac. The troops were drilled constantly, and soon became good artillerists. They were also instructed in and soon became efficient in the art of defending forts. They studied well, and became familiar with the ground in their front; and, what was more than all, they knew their guns, and how to fight them. I have been very particular concerning these things, my son, because I desire to impress you with their future importance.

But alas for the instability of human resolutions! Washington was to be exposed, after all.

You will remember, my son, how everybody was seized with admiration at the ease with which the great General Grant picked up the Army of the Potomac, and moved off with it against the rebels. That was in the month of May, 1864. It was then that the army moved against Richmond for the last time: that is, not to return to us until it had captured that rebel stronghold.

Page 33

Grant had not gone far when he met a more stubborn resistance than he had expected, fought a number of desperate and bloody battles, and lost a great many men. Fight and move forward, was his motto, so he resolved not to turn his face towards Washington and his back towards Richmond, as others had done before him. The terrible waste of human life that followed his battles, found him in want of recruits. No reserves of any consequence had been organized, and the government were sorely troubled to find men to fill the thinned ranks of our heroic army. Where were these men to be got from in time to be of service?

Think of it, my son, we had 25,000 instructed artillerists in the forts around Washington. Here was a temptation hard to be resisted. These men could do good service in the field as infantry; and, in an evil hour, it was decided to send them to Grant's army for that purpose.

Then the great question arose, how were their places to be supplied? How were the forts to be defended, in case of attack, without them? It would not do to strip the defenses of all troops, and leave the forts without garrisons. If we did, the enemy would surely find it out, for Washington was full of his spies, and we should come to grief. The President, the cabinet, and all the generals, had resolved, from the first, that that this must never be done, under any contingency.

But what, at the time, was considered a happy thought, seized on the government. I have said a happy thought, my son, but it was a very unwise one. Let the future historian record it, for it is recorded in the dispatches, as well as in the acts of the government.

Yes, my son, it was resolved, first, that Richmond should fall in an hundred days, or at least during the summer; second, that to insure the fall of Richmond within that time, the experienced troops, then in the fortifications of Washington, should be sent to the Army of the Potomac; third, that to replace these and other garrisons, a call should be made on some of the States for 100,000 militiamen, to serve for one hundred days. To the end of developing this grand idea, all the old artillery regiments were sent away to Grant. And their places were filled by an equal number of "hundred days' men," nice and fresh, fresh and green, mostly from the State of Ohio.

I have no doubt, my son, that it will seem strange to you, as it will to all intelligent readers hereafter, that raw troops should have been called to defend the capital in the fourth year of a great war. But the War Department carried on the war according to this method then. The result is not just now very pleasant to contemplate; but it was what ordinary foresight might have predicted. Our error was the enemy's opportunity, and he quickly proceeded to take advantage of it. Washington was in danger, and Washington might have been captured with but little trouble had the enemy sent the right man to command his troops. How near it came being lost, and how accidentally it was saved, I shall record hereafter, for the benefit of the future historian.

Page 34

CHAPTER XI.

Alarming symptoms of the enemy's approach.

I *know* you will be anxious to see a portrait of the distinguished general who was first assigned to the defense of Washington during the siege. And here I have presented you with a very clever one. This general, McDowell McCook, chanced to be in the city, when the government, becoming alarmed, placed him in command, and sent him out to defend the capital. This was unfortunate for the poor gentleman, and he at once became alarmed at finding himself in such a position, and so near the War Department. The poor man knew nothing of the defenses, much less of the roads. And to make the matter worse he had no troops to command. What was a general to do under such circumstances? Although this distinguished general had seen some service, and served his country well in the West, he was in no way qualified to fill the position now assigned him. And I am inclined to accept this as a reason why the government selected him.

But before I proceed further, my son, I must instruct you as to what happened in the Shenandoah Valley just about this time, and which, of right, should constitute a part of the siege of Washington. The troops in the valley had been commanded by no less than four unfortunate generals. Patterson, Banks, Milroy, and Siegel, the last from Germany. Of the many misfortunes of these generals, the historian who comes after me will give you a more enlarged account than I have time or space to do at present. Heaven knows, they were manifold.

When, then, Grant moved against the enemy with the Army of the Potomac, General Franz Siegel was put at the head of a column at Winchester, and marched up the valley with a great flourish of trumpets. This German general was in high feather then, and declared he would drive the rebels before him, like so many chickens, and never stop until he got them all cooped up in Richmond. But the rebels were not inclined to submit to this cooping process. Indeed, they soon discovered that this General Franz Siegel was not so much of a general after all, and that he had an eccentric way of moving his troops. So when he had driven them, as he supposed, to Newmarket, they turned upon him in a very angry manner, gave him battle, defeated him, and forced him back in disorder. This was unfortunate for Siegel, and more unfortunate for his German admirers, who declared him to be the greatest general of modern times. But he had fought this battle so badly that the government for once made up its mind that it would be wisdom not to let him try his hand at another.

Page 35

Major-General David Hunter was fixed upon as the right man to reform Siegel's disordered army and correct his mistakes. Hunter had patriotism enough, and no man doubted his courage. He was earnest in the defense of right, even zealous in the cause of his country, and quick in the punishment of traitors, with whom he was not in very high favor. The general took command of this disordered army, and so managed as to get a little discipline and some degree of order into it. Now, it has always seemed to me, my son, that you could put a general to no more severe trial than to place him at the head of an army demoralized by the inefficiency of his predecessor and expect him to fight battles and gain victories. And yet General Hunter did this and to the satisfaction of the country. Had he been less active with the torch, his reward in history would have been much higher.

Well, my son, the general marched with his army, and reorganized it as he marched. And he met the enemy, and he fought him, and fought him well, and whipped him well, and drove him back up the valley, to the very gates of Lynchburg. But there, my son, he stopped. His supplies had given out, and the enemy had detached a large force, and sent it to reinforce the rebel army at Lynchburg. Our great Chief of Staff at Washington had promised that this should not be done, without timely notice being sent to Hunter. But it was done, and done without any notice being sent by the Chief of Staff, whose spies were found wanting when most needed. General Sheridan, too, was detached from the Army of the Potomac with two brigades of cavalry, and sent to form a junction with and succor Hunter. But the Chief of Staff failed to send Hunter any information concerning this movement, and hence Hunter was kept in ignorance of its design. Sheridan was driven back before superior numbers, and failed to carry out the plan of his instructions. Had Hunter received information of this movement, he would not only have saved Sheridan from defeat, but, having formed a junction with him near Charlottesville, could leave beaten the enemy and gone where he pleased. So much for what the Chief of Staff ought to have done but did not do.

Of course the gates of Lynchburg were swung wide open, and there was nothing for the famous Early, who commanded the rebel hosts, to do, but to come out and brush Hunter away from before them. And he did this, and more than this. He cut Hunter's communications, and sent him flying over a different road, to the Ohio River, in search of supplies.

And it was now, my son, that the veritable Jubal, known to his old classmates at West Point as the late Mr. Early, saw the road open, and the great prize before him. Scorning, as it were, to pursue Hunter, he marched directly for Washington by the most direct road.

Page 36

It was early in July, then, when General Early, at the head of his rebel hosts, reached and crossed the Potomac. And this movement sent the people of Washington into a state of great alarm. The southern sympathizers at the capital were in high feather at the prospect of Washington being captured by their friends, the rebels. Magnificent stories were set afloat, the government got into a state of great confusion, and timid people went about shaking their heads, and wondering what the War Department was doing. Everybody wanted to do something, and yet nobody knew what to do. The Chief of Staff sat in his easy chair, and issued orders by the dozen. The Secretary of War ran about excited, and issued orders that conflicted with everybody else's orders. The President, not to be behind either of them, issued orders that agreed with none of them. The great wonder is, that some one of these high officials, so much given to issuing war orders, did not issue a proclamation, warning Mr. Early that it would not be comfortable for him to bring his rebels this way.

I am not prepared to say what effect such a notice would have had on Mr. Early, who turned his column in this direction, and, marching with great rapidity, was in a few days on the banks of the Monocacy. And, as if to increase our alarm, he sent that festive young trooper, Harry Gilmore, galloping down into Maryland, where his old friends received him with open arms, and entertained him sumptuously. Never was hero so entertained by his friends. And when this bold trooper had enjoyed the trip, and shared the hospitality of his friends as much as pleased him, he went to work disturbing our military arrangements. Yes, my son, he captured one of our railroad trains on its way to New York, and all the passengers in it. And, what was worse than all, there was one of our most distinguished major-generals in it, and he was made a prisoner of war by this bold trooper. Thus he cut our communication with the North. He did all this, and walked away leisurely and unmolested. Although his Maryland friends set him up for a great hero, I confess, as there was no one to oppose him, not to see in what his heroism consisted.

As you may naturally suppose, my son, these little affairs increased our alarm greatly. Our authorities, generally, went into a state of perspiration; and would have sent for General Grant and his army to come back and protect us, but for the fear that that general would not read the order correctly. In short, they had already become convinced that Grant was not the man to turn back when there was anything to be made by going ahead. Then our high officials called on the North for help, but called in vain. The North was not inclined to share the fears of our high officials, and had been too often sent for to come and take care of Washington.

It was common with us, then, to keep a lot of third-rate troops scattered around Baltimore; and over Maryland. These were hastily got together, and placed under the command of that famous warrior Lew Wallace. The administration was sure, now, that Mr. Early would get whipped, and that the capital would be saved. There were, however, a few unbelieving people who shook their heads, and were heard to say that General Wallace was not the soldier to drive Mr. Early and his men into the Potomac.

Page 37

I must do the general the credit, however, to say, that he marched out boldly enough, and engaged Early and his men in battle as soon as he met him. And although he had pluck enough, he was no match for the rebel, who brushed him away before him, and sent his scattered columns flying back into Baltimore, in great distress. Perhaps the only sensible man surprised at this state of things was General Wallace himself.

When those who come after us, my son, shall read of this, it will seem very strange that the fate of Washington, the capital of this great and powerful nation, should have depended on a battle between General Lew Wallace, and his undisciplined troops, on the one side, and Jubal Early and his stonewall troops on the other. And all this in the fourth year of the war.

Now this battle, if it can be dignified with the name, was fought on Saturday, the 9th of July. General Early took no further notice of General Wallace, but started at once for the defenses of Washington. And there was nothing to oppose him until he reached them; and nothing then but some cannon, and some men who did not know how to fire them.

When it got rumored round that the late General Early was not only aiming to besiege Washington, but was not far away from the defenses, there was considerable of a stir made in official circles. Timid people tried to keep their courage up in various ways. Heroes, who had never been out of Washington, now talked like very heroes; and it was intimated that the Treasury Guard would come out, and take the field. Those who had no taste for fighting, and they were many, found it very uncomfortable, because there was no way of getting out of the city.

During the war, my son, I frequently noticed that when a battle was going on at the front there was sure to be a large number of heroes in uniform doing promenade duty on the Avenue. Their number seemed to have increased prodigiously just at this time. It was noticed also that they walked at a more rapid pace than usual, did an uncommon amount of eating and drinking, and had a large number of friends they were always ready to discuss the last battle with. I suppose this was all for the purpose of showing the amount of courage they had.

They were ready enough to go to the front to-day if somebody would only show them the way.

It was now the morning of the 10th of July; and a bright breezy morning it was. The symptoms of the siege now took a positive form and became really alarming. These symptoms were manifested in a singular manner at two prominent points of the defenses. A dilapidated and very much distressed mule, his ears erect and his tail askance, galloped down the road into Tenallytown, making a noise so hideous that the quiet inhabitants ran out in a state of great alarm. They then went to packing up their household goods, their tubs, tables, chairs, and crockery, and getting them ready for

removal to a place of safety. In addition to this, the unruly animal sent terror into the very hearts of a number of cavalrymen who were out picketing the distant hills. These gallant troopers put spurs to their horses and never stopped until they got safely into Georgetown, where they circulated numerous stories concerning Mr. Early and his men, who, they declared, had driven them in.

Page 38

The other remarkable manifestation took place at Brightwood, a sleepy little town composed of four houses and a lamp-post, and situated not far from the city, on the Fourteenth-street road. A distressed cow came bellowing into this town just at daylight, with her head and tail erect, and driving the pickets before her. The antics of this otherwise kindly animal caused a great scattering among the gallant defenders of Fort Stevens. Indeed, I have good authority for saying that they evacuated that stronghold more suddenly than had ever been done before, scampering down the Fourteenth-street road at a rapid pace.

In short, my son, they mistook this wayward animal for Early's advance guard, and came to the very wise conclusion that a fort was not a pleasant place to stay in when an enemy outside was throwing shells into it.

The good people of Brightwood betook themselves to packing up their traps, and pondering over the question as to whether they had been disloyal enough during the war to claim Mr. Early as a friend when he arrived. It was a trying time with the good people of Brightwood.

When, however, the gallant defenders of the defenses found that it was only a cow that had so disturbed them, they went boldly back to their guns, and were as full of courage as could be for the rest of the day.

As the morning wore on, the evidences of trouble outside increased. Scattering contrabands, some with bundles on their backs, some with chairs, buckets and wash-tubs on their heads, others with the family table on their heads. There was an interesting group of three—two male and one female member of the African family. One of the former had brought his banjo, the other his fiddle. The female had a tub well down on her head. These poor frightened people came trotting into the city over the Tenallytown and Brightwood roads, seeking a place of safety inside of the forts.

Then the roads became blocked with all manner of rickety vehicles, many of them of the most primitive description, filled with the families and furniture of peaceable farmers, who had left their homes in fear of the approaching rebels. A more grotesque picture than was presented by this anxious train it is impossible to conceive.

CHAPTER XII.

The government gets agitated, *and the great commander-in-chief takes the field*.

This, my son, is a portrait of General Auger, a dashing, handsome officer, and a courteous gentleman. He commanded the department of Washington during the memorable siege I am describing.

Page 39

As I have said before, my son, as soon as it was known that General Wallace had been driven back on Baltimore in search of rations, and General Early was close upon Washington, the government waked up to the fact that the capital was in danger, and began to take measures for its defense. Our good President, believing, in the honesty of his heart, that his presence at the front would do good, took the field. And the Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff went to issuing orders that no one seemed to obey. Indeed, their orders only increased the confusion that had already taken possession of everything military. The regular officers in command of the troops in the fortifications, and who knew the location and details of the forts as well as the roads leading to them, were superseded by strangers, ignorant of all these things, and even of what their commands consisted.

Why this was, my son, I cannot explain. Perhaps the Secretary of War will, when he gets his historian, at $2,500 a year, to write a national history of the war. Some malicious people said the Secretary of War had two reasons for this: the first, to show his contempt for military science; the second, because he wanted to show what fools some of these strange generals were. I have also heard it intimated that the reason why some of these strange generals were assigned to such important posts at such a moment of peril to the nation, was because they were of sufficient consequence to be made victims. And as it was always necessary to have a victim to cover up and excuse the blundering of high officials, these men would come in handy enough. But I never considered this a good excuse for thus superseding the officers, the only officers who really knew how to defend the city.

It was not surprising, however, that, with such an opportunity for gaining distinction as the defense of the capital of the nation, major and brigadier-generals should spring up as by magic. Their number was truly marvelous. Nor was it strange that they should all want to be heroes. It was a little queer, however, that they should all be in the city just at this time, and seemingly without employment. Each, on application, was assigned to an important command, though but few of them knew the road to the forts, and fewer still what they were going to command when they got there.

The alarm and confusion continued to increase as General Early and his rebel hosts approached. And now the great question arose as to who was to be regarded as responsible for the safety of the city? Was it the President, the Secretary of War, or the great Chief of Staff? people inquired. No, it could be neither of these, for the President, though frequently seen at the front, seemed only a pleasant observer, and gave no orders to the troops. The Secretary of War and Chief of Staff were issuing orders, as I have before described, and assigning strange generals to commands. It could not be General Auger, for

Page 40

the War Department seemed to have forgotten him, and he remained quietly in command of the department. The Military Governor was discharging the active duties of his office, and so it could not be him. Some persons said General Haskins was the man. He had been in charge of the defenses north of the Potomac, and knew them well. But it could not be him, for he had been superseded by General Hardin; and General McDowell McCook ranked both of them; and, as I have before informed you, was placed in command and sent out to see to General Early.

This, my son, was very hard on General McCook, who found himself in a predicament he would willingly have escaped from. It is no more than right, my son, that I should give you an account of how this general went to the field, and what he found when he got there.

Provided with a pocket full of orders, the general mounted his horse late on Saturday afternoon and set out for the front, over the Fourteenth-street road. The corpulent engineer I have described in the early part of this history was assigned to General McCook for duty; and this officer, and two sorry-looking orderlies, were all that bore him company. The corpulent engineer alone knew the military roads, and the location of the forts, which was very fortunate. As they advanced over the road beyond Meridian Hill, they overtook several straggling generals, each proceeding to the front with a pocket full of orders, and generally accompanied by a single orderly. Two or three of these generals seemed quite at a loss as to where they were going, or what they were to command. I have thus explained this matter to you, my son, to show you what a nice way our war authorities had of producing confusion.

When the general and his staff, which I have described above, were well nigh Brightwood, he halted to inquire, of the alarmed negroes and straggling citizens who were wending their way into the city, what news they had of the enemy outside. But no trustworthy information could he get from any of them. They all knew that General Early was coming; and that they had left just before he had got to where they lived. This sort of information was not exactly the kind a general would consider it safe to base his plan of operations on. Nor was the general any more fortunate in getting information concerning the enemy from a number of squads of cavalry, whose business it seemed to be to ride excitedly to the front and then ride excitedly back again. Indeed, the whole business of these doughty troopers, it seemed to me, was to increase the alarm and confusion.

It was nearly sundown, the weather was hot and oppressive, and the general was full of troubles. The worst of these was that he could not find the troops he was sent to command. Nor could he get any tidings concerning General Early and his rebels. Hence it was that he concluded, and very naturally, that the enemy would not be within

sight of the defenses until morning, and that the city would at least be safe until that time without any more of his generalship.

Page 41

He therefore went into camp for the night, pitching his headquarters in a clump of wood near Rock Creek, and not far from Crystal Spring. And here let me record that the general had not even a camp guard. To make the matter worse, there was no forage for the horses, and nothing for supper. Never was general so much to be pitied. The two orderlies, however, were willing fellows, and soon had a fire lighted. They then proceeded to a neighboring house, and got refreshments for the general, without which he must have gone hungry to bed.

As the night advanced, the discomforts of the situation increased. In short, it may as well be confessed, the general's headquarters were besieged long before midnight, and that sleep was a thing not to be enjoyed. You may have made up your mind that the besiegers were an advance guard of the rebels; but they were not. They were nothing less than an army of fierce musquitoes, who made such a persistent attack on the general and his staff as to make his position almost untenable. In truth, they so harassed the corpulent engineer, in rear and flank, that he mounted his horse and returned to the city, where he spent a comfortable night at Willard's Hotel, and went back in the morning refreshed. My authority for this is the distinguished engineer himself.

A little after midnight, the two orderlies became seriously alarmed (I ought to mention that one was recently from Cork, and the other from Kerry), and reported to the general that a conversation was being carried on in an unknown language by two persons in the woods beyond, and whom they verily believed to be spies of the enemy. The general was not a little perplexed at this intelligence, for the better informed orderly declared, that while one shouted in very bad Irish, the other seemed to answer him in Dutch. The general listened attentively for a minute or more, when the noise was again heard. It turned out, however, that the intruders were only a pair of owls, who had perched in some trees near by, and were exchanging hootings for their own entertainment.

CHAPTER XIII.

The kind of reinforcements we had to defend the city.

This is an exact portrait of General Jubal A. Early, who was sent to capture Washington, but arrived a little too late.

There was great excitement in the city during Sunday, the 10th of July, and strange stories were set afloat concerning the arrival of General Early, and his rebel army. There was also great excitement in and around the forts north of the city. The hundred-day men did not feel themselves safe in the forts, and those outside were making a desperate effort to keep their courage up.

We had heroes enough in the city, but the great question was, how we were to get them organized, provisioned, armed, and sent to the front in time to be of service. The District militia, which we have all heard so much of and seen so little, was not enrolled, and, of course, could not be made available. It was said there would be some desperate fighting done if the Treasury Guard only got to the front. This valuable body of distinguished heroes was composed of nice young men, who wore fine linen and patent leather boots, and in appearance were unexceptionable.

Page 42

It was a trying time for the nation, my son, and the young men of this Treasury Guard felt that they had a duty to perform in defending the capital, and must perform it with courage. There was one little drawback, however, to their conduct as soldiers; and that was, that each man wanted to go to the front encumbered with a carpet bag, filled with sandwiches and clean shirts. Aside from this, let me say, the guard was got in order for marching, and their gallant commander, Colonel Floyd A. Willett, made a speech, in which he declared there was not a chicken-hearted man in his ranks. And when it marched for the front, which it did with drums beating, its gallant colonel at its head, and Corporal Spinner, of Company B, bringing up the rear, there was many a tear shed and handkerchief waved by the pretty female clerks of the Department. Many of these damsels had more than a friendly interest in these young heroes, who they averred would never come back, but whiten the battle-field with their bones.

As the War Department has not yet condescended to give us a report in detail of the defense of Washington, I cannot inform you, my son, of the heroic part performed by this distinguished body of nice young men. There was a rumor that they returned to the city, after the siege, in a very hungry condition; but had been so saving of their powder and lead as not to waste a single round.

Now, our quartermaster-general was not to be beaten by any of them when there was a chance for glory. Seeing the Treasury Guard march off with so much courage and determination, the general mounted his war horse, and assembled a whole brigade of his employees, as gallant fellows as ever took the field, notwithstanding little could be said of their discipline or soldierly appearance. This gallant brigade was called the Bushwhackers, in contradistinction to the Beef-eaters of the War Department. There was no mistaking this brigade, for it was armed with muskets and bill-hooks. As it moved off for the front, as it did with no very regular step, there was a sight seldom seen. How else could it be, with our gallant quartermaster-general at its head, and General Rucker bringing up the rear! After a rapid march of four miles, the brigade reached the front; and as no enemy was in sight, and there was no use for their powder, the men went energetically to work, and did good service in clearing away the bushes in front of the forts, so that our gallant defenders could have an unobstructed view of the rebels as soon as they made their appearance. This was a very happy thought; one for which the quartermaster-general deserved the brevet he afterwards got.

You will see by this, my son, that we were fast getting our gallant defenders to the front. And now all that was needed to afford them an opportunity to show themselves heroes was General Early and his army of rebels.

I must also inform you that Provost-Marshal Todd, Captain and A. D. C., had got a company of his men to the front, lying in ambush for the rebels.

Page 43

There was still another, and equally important force to be added to our defenders. This was a brigade of what was called Ancient Mariners, got together by that solid old salt, Admiral Goldsborough. The admiral was brim-full of pluck, and his name had become famous for not fighting the rebels afloat. Here was an opportunity to give them a broadside or two ashore, and the admiral was not the man to let it slip through his fingers. Indeed, he sounded his war trumpet as quick as any of them, and when he had piped his Ancient Mariners to arms, he told them that God and their country demanded them to do their duty.

“Aye, aye!” responded the Ancient Mariners; “we will do it, we will.”

When the gallant admiral had got his “Ancient Mariners” ready to march, armed with cutlass and various other well-known weapons, he placed himself at their head and moved out to meet the enemy. His manner of doing this, however, was somewhat novel, and deserves to be described here. You must know, my son, that the admiral was of a very rotund figure, and, although well enough at home on the quarter-deck, was not accustomed to the saddle. His weight was, indeed, such as to preclude the idea of his being a skilled horseman. It was, therefore, necessary that he go to the field in some more comfortable as well as becoming manner. Thereupon a carriage and four was provided, and in this stately manner the gallant admiral proceeded to the front, at the head of his strange command. I may add also, my son, that the movement of this force afforded no little amusement to the numerous urchins that followed it. On reaching the front, it took up a strong position, and made ready to give the enemy a broadside whenever he made his appearance. Some mischievous person reported that it was the intention of these “Ancient Mariners” to support the cavalry, in the event of its being attacked. Having brought them to the front, however, we must leave them there, the quartermaster with his spy-glass keeping a sharp look out for any stray craft that might appear in the offing.

I have been thus minute in describing these forces, in order that you may form a just estimate of what General McDowell McCook had to command.

Sunday passed away, and there was no appearance of General Early and his army. Still the excitement in the city had not abated. Our good President, I must tell you, was out along the lines nearly all day, with the apparent purpose of encouraging the feeble garrisons in the forts.

Early on Monday morning (the 11th of July, 1864), the smoke and dust of the rebel column rose in the distance, and was clearly seen from the defenses. News of this soon spread about, and our cavalry got more and more excited, and went galloping out and then came galloping in at an increased rate of speed.

Page 44

Then the enemy's long, thin line of skirmishers debouched into the fields, like specter figures in a panorama. Next his artillery was seen moving to the right and left, and apparently taking up positions on the distant hills. These were followed by his hungry troopers, very dirty and forlorn, and looking like shadowy figures just issuing from a desert of dust. The movements of these rebels in the distance gave new features to the face of the siege. General McDowell McCook was seen to ride rapidly over the field, followed by his two orderlies. Generals Meigs and Rucker urged on their Bushwhackers, who went to work with renewed energy clearing up the forest. The "Ancient Mariners" whetted their cutlasses, and continued to exhaust their ordnance, a large stock of which they had brought to the field in the shape of tobacco. And the Treasury Guard stopped eating sandwiches and looked to their ammunition. In fine, our gallant defenders went to getting their courage up in various ways. Our good President (may his memory never die!) took up a position near Fort Stevens, as if to encourage the hundred-day men to stand by their guns and keep their pluck warm.

A little after noon there was a material change in the situation. The enemy's advance skirmishers made their appearance within range of Fort Stevens and began a miscellaneous firing. Then our own cannon opened, and their echoes over the hills first sounded the alarm and awakened the people of the city from their dream of security. There were as yet no really efficient troops to send to defend the point of attack. The people knew that between them and the enemy there were strong and heavily armed forts; and in these they placed their trust. They did not, however, reflect that these forts, without proper garrisons, were only so many inert masses, incapable of resisting for one hour the vigorous assault of an enemy. But it was very different with the military authorities. As the rattle of small arms and the booming of cannon increased during Monday evening and night, they knew that the city was in peril, and their anxiety for its safety increased. They knew that the forts were not properly garrisoned. They knew that communication with the North was cut off, that no reinforcements from that quarter could be relied on. Further, that although reinforcements from General Grant's army had been ordered up from the James River, they had not had time to arrive.

Such was our situation on that memorable Monday night. Yes, my son, such was the feeble condition of the defenses when General Early and his rebel army came in sight of the dome of the Capitol. We all looked confidently for an attack in force on Tuesday morning. Had it been made by a column of ten thousand men, led by a bold and determined commander, capable of infusing his own impulse into their movements, they might, feebly garrisoned as the forts were at that moment (with no support between or behind them), have treated our defenses with contempt, and marched into the city.

Page 45

Yes, my son, they could have marched almost unmolested between any two of the forts, entered the city, seized the Arsenal, the Capitol, the Treasury, and other public buildings, and enjoyed a bounteous breakfast at the expense of our citizens. And when they had done this, they might have enforced a legitimate surrender of the city, together with the defenses on both sides of the river.

But General Jubal A. Early was not the man for such an enterprise. Washington was at his mercy, but fortunately for us he did not know it, and let the opportunity slip. Even had he known it, I am of opinion that he lacked the nerve to grasp the advantages of the opportunity. On that Tuesday morning, Early was at Silver Springs, enjoying the luxuries of a spacious headquarters, and within sight of the grand old dome of the Capitol. What strange emotions the sight of this dome must have excited in his bosom, what reminiscences of happier days passed under its shadow must have seared his thoughts as they passed in review, he alone can describe. Perhaps it was the contemplation of those happier days that stayed his hand and made him hesitate to grasp the prize at his feet.

No, my son, Jubal A. Early was of too phlegmatic a temperament for such an undertaking. He was slow in every thing but name. And, as I have informed you before, so notoriously cautious and slow was he to act, even when a youth at West Point, that he gained the sobriquet of “The Late Early,” by which he is known at this day by his intimate friends.

How sad it is for us, to-day, to contemplate that the safety of Washington, the capital of this great country, should have depended on the temperament of a general. Let the future historian do this subject justice and elaborate it as it deserves. And let him portray, if he can, the consequences of the rebel flag greeting the rays of the rising sun on that morning victoriously from the dome of the Capitol.

CHAPTER XIV.

How the rebel generals deported themselves.

This history would not be complete, my son, without a portrait of General John C. Breckinridge. This general accompanied General Early, in command of a division, and was extremely useful as a subordinate, since he knew Washington and all its surroundings, and had many friends in the city, whose respect and hospitality he had enjoyed. What curious emotions must have excited his breast when he saw the dome of that building where he had sat as a Senator, and by his talents and deportment secured the respect and confidence of the nation, I will leave the reader to imagine. Who but himself can describe his thoughts when he recurred to that scene in the Senate Chamber, when he raised the voice of prophecy and foreshadowed the traitor’s

reward? Was there a pang in the thought that he was himself reaping the bitterest fruit of that reward?

Page 46

Never forget, my son, how terrible is the penalty that attaches to treason. But now I must ask you to reaccompany me to another part of the field, that we may see what is going on there. The attack made on our defenses by the rebels was of the feeblest kind. Why this was, some of our officers could not understand. It was evidently made in doubt of the result, and indicated forcibly enough that something was wrong at the rebel headquarters. We want now to see what that was.

While the booming of cannon and the rattle of small arms was going on in the vicinity of Fort Stevens, without any very serious damage to either side (for I may mention here that the rebels kept at a respectful distance from the forts), Generals Early, Ewell, and Breckinridge were enjoying themselves on the sumptuous fare found at Silver Springs and other neighboring plantations. In short, it is asserted that these generals had been short of rations for some days, and were very hungry when they reached the outskirts of Washington. It is also asserted that they took themselves to feasting and making merry with their friends; so much so that they had all the cellars and larders of the houses round about examined for bounties to supply their table. And to such an extent was this feasting and merrymaking carried, that General Early quite forgot that he was sent to capture Washington, and indeed set such a bad example to his subordinates as to destroy all discipline.

There were two great events in this remarkable siege, my son, and I must tell you what they were. If I do not, you will not get a clear idea of how the siege was carried on by the rebels. The generals (rebel) had not tasted fresh beef for several days, and had a sharp appetite which their commissaries were inclined to gratify. Now, there was on the plantation of Mr. George Riggs, near where these generals had their headquarters, a celebrated Alderney bull, much valued by its owner. Here was a temptation not to be resisted by these commissaries, who had the animal led to slaughter and served up for their masters. Yes, my son, these generals and their staffs banqueted on Mr. Riggs's bull, and were honest enough to confess that they had rarely fared so sumptuously. This is one of the great events. Now to the other. A number of general officers (choice spirits), imitating the example set by their bold superiors, went out on a forage of their own, and coming to the house of the Hon. Montgomery Blair, put it under a close examination, especially the cellar and larder, which was supposed to be well stored with the choicest. They were disappointed, however, to find that the cellar contained little wine, and were about setting the honorable owner down for a disciple of temperance, when they came upon a barrel of rare old Bourbon whisky.

Page 47

This discovery caused great rejoicing, the news of it spread far and wide among the officers, and not an order was obeyed for the rest of the day. So you will see, my son, that while the superior generals and their staffs were banqueting on Mr. Riggs's bull, the field officers were besieging their brains with Mr. Blair's choice whisky. The city was perfectly safe while this state of revelry existed. And I feel, my son, that you will agree with me that Mr. Blair deserves well of his country for supplying his cellar with this remarkable weapon of defense. Let the future historian bear in mind that the War Department can claim no credit for the safety of Washington. The credit of saving Washington belongs exclusively to Mr. Riggs's bull and Mr. Montgomery Blair's barrel of whisky. They furnished the feast that stole away the brains of General Early's officers, and caused the delay that saved the city.

In fine, my son, I have good military authority for saying that these rebel officers, after their wisdom had been carried away by the whisky, put on ladies' dresses and so conducted themselves that General Early, in order to get them out, and put a stop to the riotous proceedings, was compelled to apply the torch to the house of Mr. Blair. Let this sad result be a warning to all generals, sent to either threaten or capture the capital of a nation.

Have I not satisfied you, my son, that Mr. Davis sent the wrong man to take Washington? A more sanguine general, knowing that he had been sent from Richmond to threaten and, if possible, capture Washington, and having come so far and routed all the troops sent to oppose him, and arrived within sight of the coveted prize, at a time when he must have known the weakness of the defenses, would have risked an attack in force and would have succeeded. I say he would have succeeded; for, by all the rules of war, the capital ought to have fallen. Let it be remembered also, that during that memorable Tuesday, when the rattle of small arms and the booming of cannon from Fort Stevens were calling patriotic citizens to the front to do their duty, the engineer-in-chief and other of the high officials of the War Department were busy packing up the records of their offices, preparatory to their removal to the gunboats.

The attack, which had been so confidently expected on Tuesday morning, did not take place. General Early and his officers still continued their riotous proceedings near Silver Springs, while his advance line kept our gallant defenders in a state of intense excitement and activity. As hour after hour wore away, however, the anxiety of our people increased, in fear of what might happen.

Then late in the afternoon news came that the brave old Sixth Corps—a terror to rebels everywhere—had arrived. This sent a thrill of joy into many a heart, and shout after shout went up along the line as its cross came in sight. Yes, the old Sixth Corps, with General Wright, had come once more. It was a proud sight to see these men deploy into line of battle, in front of Fort Stevens, their war-worn colors fluttering in the breeze, with that cross so well known to the rebel hosts.

Page 48

The siege was raised. The rebels recognized that cross, and, knowing what it betokened, fell back rapidly before it, and prepared for a hasty retreat. Confidence was restored to the people. The President thanked the troops and went home in the very best humor. The Secretary of War and the Chief of Staff stopped issuing orders; and the quartermaster's bushwhackers hung up their bill-hooks. The major and brigadier-generals went to congratulating each other on the part they had taken in the defense. At two o'clock on Wednesday morning, an advance was ordered with the two divisions of the Sixth Corps; but when the skirmish line took possession of Silver Springs, there was not a rebel in arms to be seen. General Early had made good speed during the night, and was making the best of his way across the Potomac, and home to his master.

Thus ended the most remarkable siege history has any account of.

And now, my son, I cannot close this history without a few words on the character and conduct of Mr. Jefferson Davis, to whose ambition this siege of our capital was due. It has been said by several of his friends, who have access to the newspapers, that he went into this war not only very reluctantly, but with green spectacles on. Willing as I am to deal generously with him, and to forgive him each and every one of his sins, and to send him out into the world to seek atonement for them, I cannot share this opinion. And for the reason that I happened to know Mr. Davis in the summer of 1850, when he was the moving spirit of a convention of "Fire-Eaters," that assembled together at Nashville, Tenn. And I have a slight recollection of a speech he made on that occasion, in which separation by arms was urged, and no love for the Union advanced. I remember also that that speech was rewarded with hisses, notwithstanding the strong dis-union element of the convention. His dislike of the Union and plan for separating the nation, it is well known, had been the besetting sin of his brain for twenty years. How, then, he could have engaged in this gigantic rebellion with green spectacles on, I cannot just exactly see. It was the ignorant, unreasoning masses of the South who were led into the rebellion with green spectacles on, not men like Mr. Davis. But, my son, never strike a man when he is down; that is the work of cowards. Let us give Mr. Davis credit for such virtues as he had, and for the manner in which he exerted them in keeping life and strength in the government he attempted to set up. In connection with the rebellion, we had to deal with Mr. Davis more in his character as a soldier than a statesman. Mr. Davis was undoubtedly an able soldier. He was the head and front, the very life and soul of the men in the South. Born to those qualities of pride, self-esteem, and self-will, all of which produce confidence in the possessor, he grew up feeling himself superior, as he was, to the ordinary men of his age. He inherited at the same time great fixedness of purpose and determination; and so prominent were these traits of his character, that they impressed every one who came in contact with him.

Page 49

These, my son, were the attributes that gave wings to the man's ambition and found him aspiring to one of the high places in the temple of fame. The nation gave him a thorough military education at West Point, and he afterwards learned the practical duties of a soldier in the Black Hawk war. On the return of peace, he resigned and sought distinction in political life. He had succeeded in reaching the House of Representatives when the war with Mexico broke out, and he resigned and again went to the field. And, notwithstanding what has been said to the contrary, he won great distinction in this war. Military men everywhere did him justice. The "Mississippi Rifles" will be remembered as long as the battle of Buena Vista.

At the close of the war he again relinquished the sword, and was sent to the United States Senate, where he was made chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs. His highest ambition was to shine as a statesman. He afterwards served four years as Secretary of War, and then returned to the Senate, where the rebellion found him elevated to the chairmanship of the Committee of Military Affairs. His education, his services in the army, his position as Secretary of War, and in the Senate, enabled him to become thoroughly acquainted with our army, with its customs, its laws, its material, its wants, and, above all, the character of its officers. He was, perhaps, better acquainted with these things than any other man in the United States. Nor was he deficient in knowledge of the character of leading, public men at the North and West. What he had not studied well, however, was the character and the patriotism of the people of those sections of our country.

It was the ripe fruit of this knowledge, then, that Mr. Davis applied in each department of the rebel government; and it was this that made him of such incalculable value to the rebellion. We have seen and even admired the power with which he wielded the scanty resources of the South. And we have seen the wisdom which he displayed from the very first in the section of his generals. With rare exceptions, he put the right man in the right place. He knew the importance of placing soldiers in command, when soldiers' duty was to be performed. It would have been fortunate for us if we had exercised similar wisdom. When the rebellion began, there was no man in the South to have taken the place of Mr. Davis. It is not too much to say that had he remained loyal to his country, and been elevated to the command of our armies when the war began, he would have quickly crushed out the rebellion. With his grasp of mind, and his iron will, he would have so wielded the great resources of the North and West, that the rebellion would have been crushed in a year from its birth. And this was the man our authorities at Washington supposed would not, or could not, attack the capital after it had been stripped of its proper garrison. Let the truth be told: Davis was not the man to let such a blunder go unnoticed. The Project Gutenberg Etext of Siege of Washington, D.C. by F. Colburn Adams ******This file should be named sgedc10.txt or sgedc10.zip******

Page 50

Corrected *editions* of our etexts get a new *number*, sgedc11.txt *versions* based on separate sources get new *letter*, sgedc10a.txt

This etext was created by Charles Aldarondo (Aldarondo@yahoo.com).

***

More information about this book is at the top of this file.

We are now trying to release all our eBooks one year in advance of the official release dates, leaving time for better editing. Please be encouraged to tell us about any error or corrections, even years after the official publication date.

Please note neither this listing nor its contents are final til midnight of the last day of the month of any such announcement. The official release date of all Project Gutenberg eBooks is at Midnight, Central Time, of the last day of the stated month. A preliminary version may often be posted for suggestion, comment and editing by those who wish to do so.

Most people start at our Web sites at: http://gutenberg.net or http://promo.net/pg

These Web sites include award-winning information about Project Gutenberg, including how to donate, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter (free!).

Those of you who want to download any eBook before announcement can get to them as follows, and just download by date. This is also a good way to get them instantly upon announcement, as the indexes our cataloguers produce obviously take a while after an announcement goes out in the Project Gutenberg Newsletter.

http://www.ibiblio.org/gutenberg/eBook03 or ftp://ftp.ibi
blio.org/pub/docs/books/gutenberg/eBook03

Or *eBook02, 01, 00, 99, 98, 97, 96, 95, 94, 93, 92, 92, 91 or 90*

Just search by the first five letters of the filename you want, as it appears in our Newsletters.

Information about Project Gutenberg (one page)

We produce about two million dollars for each hour we work. The time it takes us, a rather conservative estimate, is fifty hours to get any eBook selected, entered, proofread, edited, copyright searched and analyzed, the copyright letters written, *etc*. Our projected audience is one hundred million readers. If the value per text is nominally

estimated at one dollar then we produce $2 million dollars per hour in 2002 as we release over 100 new text files per month: 1240 more eBooks in 2001 for a total of 4000+ We are already on our way to trying for 2000 more eBooks in 2002 If they reach just 1-2% of the world's population then the total will reach over half a trillion eBooks given away by year's end.

The Goal of Project Gutenberg is to Give Away 1 Trillion eBooks! This is ten thousand titles each to one hundred million readers, which is only about 4% of the present number of computer users.

Here is the briefest record of our progress (* means estimated):

Page 51

eBooks Year Month

    1 1971 July
   10 1991 January
  100 1994 January
 1000 1997 August
 1500 1998 October
 2000 1999 December
 2500 2000 December
 3000 2001 November
 4000 2001 October/November
 6000 2002 December*
 9000 2003 November*
10000 2004 January*

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation has been created to secure a future for Project Gutenberg into the next millennium.

We need your donations more than ever!

As of February, 2002, contributions are being solicited from people and organizations in: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

We have filed in all 50 states now, but these are the only ones that have responded.

As the requirements for other states are met, additions to this list will be made and fund raising will begin in the additional states. Please feel free to ask to check the status of your state.

In answer to various questions we have received on this:

We are constantly working on finishing the paperwork to legally request donations in all 50 states. If your state is not listed and you would like to know if we have added it since the list you have, just ask.

While we cannot solicit donations from people in states where we are not yet registered, we know of no prohibition against accepting donations from donors in these states who approach us with an offer to donate.

International donations are accepted, but we don't know *anything* about how to make them tax-deductible, or even if they *can* be made deductible, and don't have the staff to handle it even if there are ways.

The most recent list of states, along with all methods for donations (including credit card donations and international donations), may be found online at http://www.gutenberg.net/donation.html

Donations by check or money order may be sent to:

Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation
PMB 113
1739 University Ave.
Oxford, *Ms* 38655-4109

Contact us if you want to arrange for a wire transfer or payment method other than by check or money order.

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation has been approved by the *us* Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization with *ein* [Employee Identification Number] 64-622154. Donations are tax-deductible to the maximum extent permitted by law. As fund-raising requirements for other states are met, additions to this list will be made and fund-raising will begin in the additional states.

Page 52

We need your donations more than ever!

You can get up to date donation information at:

http://www.gutenberg.net/donation.html

***

If you can't reach Project Gutenberg,
you can always email directly to:

Michael S. Hart *hart@pobox.com*

Prof. Hart will answer or forward your message.

We would prefer to send you information by email.

The Legal Small Print

(Three Pages)

****Start**the small print*!**For public domain* EBOOKS***start**** Why is this "Small Print!" statement here? You know: lawyers. They tell us you might sue us if there is something wrong with your copy of this eBook, even if you got it for free from someone other than us, and even if what's wrong is not our fault. So, among other things, this "Small Print!" statement disclaims most of our liability to you. It also tells you how you may distribute copies of this eBook if you want to.

BEFORE! You use or read this EBOOK By using or reading any part of this *project gutenberg*-tm eBook, you indicate that you understand, agree to and accept this "Small Print!" statement. If you do not, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for this eBook by sending a request within 30 days of receiving it to the person you got it from. If you received this eBook on a physical medium (such as a disk), you must return it with your request.

About project gutenberg-tm EBOOKS This *project gutenberg*-tm eBook, like most *project gutenberg*-tm eBooks, is a "public domain" work distributed by Professor Michael S. Hart through the Project Gutenberg Association (the "Project"). Among other things, this means that no one owns a United States copyright on or for this work, so the Project (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth below, apply if you wish to copy and distribute this eBook under the "*Project gutenberg*" trademark.

Please do not use the "*Project gutenberg*" trademark to market any commercial products without permission.

To create these eBooks, the Project expends considerable efforts to identify, transcribe and proofread public domain works. Despite these efforts, the Project's eBooks and any medium they may be on may contain "Defects". Among other things, Defects may take the form of incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other eBook medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

Page 53

Limited warranty; *disclaimer of damages* But for the “Right of Replacement or Refund” described below, [1] Michael Hart and the Foundation (and any other party you may receive this eBook from as a *project gutenberg*-tm eBook) disclaims all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees, and [2] *you have no Remedies for negligence or under strict liability*, *or for Breach of warranty or contract*, *including but not limited to indirect*, *consequential*, *punitive or incidental damages*, *even if you give notice of the possibility of such damages*.

If you discover a Defect in this eBook within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending an explanatory note within that time to the person you received it from. If you received it on a physical medium, you must return it with your note, and such person may choose to alternatively give you a replacement copy. If you received it electronically, such person may choose to alternatively give you a second opportunity to receive it electronically.

This EBOOK *is otherwise provided to you* “*As-is*”. *No other warranties of any kind*, *express or implied*, *are made to you as to the* EBOOK *or any medium it may be on*, *including but not limited to warranties of merchantability or fitness for* A *particular purpose*.

Some states do not allow disclaimers of implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of consequential damages, so the above disclaimers and exclusions may not apply to you, and you may have other legal rights.

Indemnity You will indemnify and hold Michael Hart, the Foundation, and its trustees and agents, and any volunteers associated with the production and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm texts harmless, from all liability, cost and expense, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following that you do or cause: [1] distribution of this eBook, [2] alteration, modification, or addition to the eBook, or [3] any Defect.

Distribution under “*Project gutenberg*-tm” You may distribute copies of this eBook electronically, or by disk, book or any other medium if you either delete this “Small Print!” and all other references to Project Gutenberg, or:

Page 54

[1] Only give exact copies of it. Among other things, this requires that you do not remove, alter or modify the eBook or this “small print!” statement. You may however, if you wish, distribute this eBook in machine readable binary, compressed, mark-up, or proprietary form, including any form resulting from conversion by word processing or hypertext software, but only so long as *EITHER*:

[*] The eBook, when displayed, is clearly readable, and does *not* contain characters other than those intended by the author of the work, although tilde (~), asterisk (*) and underline (_) characters may be used to convey punctuation intended by the author, and additional characters may be used to indicate hypertext links; *or*

[*] The eBook may be readily converted by the reader at no expense into plain ASCII, EBCDIC or equivalent form by the program that displays the eBook (as is the case, for instance, with most word processors); *or*

[*] You provide, or agree to also provide on request at no additional cost, fee or expense, a copy of the eBook in its original plain ASCII form (or in EBCDIC or other equivalent proprietary form).

[2] Honor the eBook refund and replacement provisions of this “Small Print!” statement.

[3] Pay a trademark license fee to the Foundation of 20% of the gross profits you derive calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. If you don’t derive profits, no royalty is due. Royalties are payable to “Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation” the 60 days following each date you prepare (or were legally required to prepare) your annual (or equivalent periodic) tax return. Please contact us beforehand to let us know your plans and to work out the details.

What if you WANT to send money even if you don’t have to? Project Gutenberg is dedicated to increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form.

The Project gratefully accepts contributions of money, time,
public domain materials, or royalty free copyright licenses.
Money should be paid to the:
“Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation.”

If you are interested in contributing scanning equipment or software or other items,
please contact Michael Hart at: hart@pobox.com

Page 55

*END THE SMALL PRINT! FOR PUBLIC DOMAIN EBOOKS*Ver.02/11/02**End**