

The Record of a Quaker Conscience, Cyrus Pringle's Diary eBook

The Record of a Quaker Conscience, Cyrus Pringle's Diary by Cyrus Pringle

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THE RECORD OF A QUAKER CONSCIENCE

CYRUS PRINGLE'S DIARY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY RUFUS M. JONES

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1918

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[Transcriber's Note:

Several unusual spellings have been kept as in the original, including: northermost ("Fairhope meeting-house is in the northermost country") and comformable ("yet probably in a manner comformable to").

In some cases, variant spellings of the same word are used, as in the case of "enrolment" and "enrollment", "therefor" and "therefore", "well meant" and "well-meant". These have been confirmed with the original.

In referring to God, there is also inconsistency in the use of "His" versus "his" and "Him" versus "him".]

INTRODUCTION

The body of this little book consists of the personal diary of a young Quaker named Cyrus Guernsey Pringle of Charlotte, Vermont. He was drafted for service in the Union Army, July 13th, 1863. Under the existing draft law a person who had religious scruples against engaging in war was given the privilege of paying a commutation fine of three hundred dollars. This commutation money Pringle's conscience would not allow him to pay. A prosperous uncle proposed to pay it surreptitiously for him, but the honest-minded youth discovered the plan and refused to accept the well meant kindness, since he believed, no doubt rightly, that this money would be used to pay for an army

substitute in his place. The Diary relates in simple, naive style the experiences which befell the narrator as he followed his hard path of duty, and incidentally it reveals a fine and sensitive type of character, not unlike that which comes so beautifully to light in the Journal of John Woolman.

This is plainly not the psychological moment to study the highly complex and delicate problem of conscience. The strain and tension of world issues disturb our judgment. We cannot if we would turn away from the events and movements that affect the destiny of nations to dwell calmly and securely upon our own inner, private actions. It is never easy, even when the world is most normal and peaceful, to mark off with sharp lines the area of individual freedom. No person ever lives unto himself or is sufficient to himself. He is inextricably woven into the tissue of the social group. His privileges, his responsibilities, his obligations are forever over-individual and come from beyond his narrow isolated life. If he is to be a rational being at all he must *relate* his life to others and share in some measure their triumphs and their tragedies.

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But at the same time the most precious thing in the universe is that mysterious thing we call individual liberty and which even God himself guards and respects. Up to some point, difficult certainly to delimit, a man must be captain of his soul. He cannot be a *person* if he does not have a sphere of power over his own act. To treat him as a puppet of external forces, or a mere cog in a vast social mechanism, is to wipe out the unique distinction between person and thing. Somewhere the free spirit must take its stand and claim its God-given distinction. If life is to be at all worth while there must be some boundary within which the soul holds its own august and ultimate tribunal. That Sanctuary domain within the soul the Quakers, ever since their origin in the period of the English Commonwealth, have always guarded as the most sacred possession a man can have.

No grave difficulty, at least in the modern world, is involved in this faith, until it suddenly comes into conflict with the urgent requirements of social efficiency. When the social group is fused with emotion and moves almost as an undivided unit toward some end, then the claim of a right, on the ground of conscience, for the individual to deviate from the group and to pursue another or an opposite course appears serious if not positively insufferable. The abstract principle of individual liberty all modern persons grant; the strain comes when some one proposes to insist upon a concrete instance of it which involves implications that may endanger the ends which the intensified group is pursuing. A situation of this type confronts the Quakers whenever their country engages in war, since as a people they feel that they cannot fight or take any part in military operations.

They do not find it an easy thing to give a completely rational ground for their opposition to war. Nor, as a matter of fact, is it any more easy for the militarist to rationalize his method of solving world difficulties. Both are evidently actuated by instinctive forces which lie far beneath the level of pure reason.

The roots of the Quakers' opposition to war go deep down into the soil of the past. They are the outgrowth and culmination of a long spiritual movement. They carry along, in their ideas, emotions, habits and attitudes, tendencies which have been unconsciously sucked in with their mother's milk, and which, therefore, cannot be held up and analysed. The mystics, the humanists, the anabaptists, the spiritual reformers, are forerunners of the Quaker. They are a necessary part of his pedigree,—and they were all profoundly opposed to war. This attitude has become an integral part of the vital stock of truth by which the Quaker lives his spiritual life, and to violate it is for him to stop living "the way of truth," as the early Quakers quaintly called their religious faith.

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But the Quakers have never been champions of the negative. They do not take kindly to the role of being “antis.” Their negations grow out of their insistent affirmations. If they are *against* an established institution or custom it is because they are *for* some other way of life which seems to them divinely right, and their first obligation is to incarnate that way of life. They cannot, therefore, stand apart in monastic seclusion and safely watch the swirl of forces which they silently disapprove. If in war-time they do not fight, they *do* something else. They accept and face the dangers incident to their way of life. They feel a compulsion to take up and in some measure to bear the burden of the world’s suffering. They endeavour to exhibit, humbly and modestly, the power of sacrificial love, freely, joyously given, and they venture all that the brave can venture to carry their faith into life and action. In the American civil war, in the Franco-Prussian, the South African, the Balkan, the Russo-Japanese, small bands of Quakers revealed the same spirit of service and the same obliviousness to danger which have marked the larger groups that have manned the ambulance units and the war-victims’ relief and reconstruction work of this world war. In this present crisis they have gone wherever they could go,—to Belgium, to France, to Russia, to Italy, to Serbia and Greece and Syria and Mesopotamia,—to carry into operation the forces of restoration and of reconstruction. They have not stood aloof as spectators of the world’s tragedy. They have entered into it and shared it, and they have counted neither money nor life dear to themselves in their desire to reveal the power of redeeming and transforming love.

Slowly the sincerity of the Quaker conviction about war has made itself felt and limited legislative provisions have been made, especially in England and America, to meet the claims of conscience. The problem which confronts the law-maker, even when he is sympathetic with the rights of conviction, is the grave difficulty of determining where to draw the line of special exception to general requirements and how to discover the sincerity of conscientious objection to war. The “slacker” is always a stern possibility. There must be no holes in the net for him to escape through. The makers of armies naturally want every man who can be spared from civilian life and can be utilized for military operations. It has consequently often seemed necessary for law-makers to be narrow and hard toward the obviously sincere for fear of being too easy and lenient with those suspected of having sham consciences.

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During the Civil War in America, President Lincoln, eager as he was to win the war, was always deeply in sympathy with the Quakers, and he stretched his administrative powers to their full limit to provide relief for conscientious convictions. In the early stages of the great conflict the President wrote the following kindly note in answer to a message from New England Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends: "Engaged as I am, in a great war, I fear it will be difficult for the world to understand how fully I appreciate the principles of peace inculcated in this letter [of yours] and every where by the Society of Friends." [1] Both he and Secretary Stanton made many positive efforts to find some way of providing for the tender consciences of Friends without being unfair to the rights of others. They even requested American Friends to call a conference to consider how to find a satisfactory solution of the problem. Such a conference was held in Baltimore, December 7th, 1863, and the Friends there assembled expressed great appreciation of "the kindness evinced at all times by the President and Secretary of War." A delegation from this conference visited Washington and, in co-operation with Secretary Stanton, succeeded in securing a clause in the enrolment bill, declaring Friends to be non-combatants, assigning all drafted Friends to hospital service or work among freedmen, and further providing for the entire exemption of Friends from military service on the payment of \$300 into a fund for the relief of sick and wounded. [2]

On several occasions Friends in larger or smaller groups went to Washington for times of prayer and spiritual communion with the great President. These times were deeply appreciated by the heavily burdened man. Tears ran down his cheeks, we are told, as he sat bowed in solemn silence or knelt as some moved Friend prayed for him to Almighty God. Writing of the visit of Isaac and Sarah Harvey of Clinton County, Ohio, in the autumn of 1862, Lincoln tenderly said: "May the Lord comfort them as they have sustained me." A letter written by the President in 1862 to Eliza P. Gurney, one of a small group of Friends who visited him and prayed with him in the autumn of that year, reveals forcibly how he regarded these occasions:

"I am glad of this interview, and glad to know that I have your sympathy and prayers. We are indeed going through a great trial—a fiery trial. In the very responsible position in which I happen to be placed, being a humble instrument in the hands of our Heavenly Father, as I am, and as we all are, to work out his great purposes, I have desired that all my works and acts may be according to his will, and that it might be so, I have sought his aid; but if, after endeavouring to do my best in the light which he affords me, I find my efforts fail, I must believe that for some purpose unknown to me, his will is otherwise. If I had had my way, this war would never have been commenced. If I had been allowed my way,

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this war would have been ended before this; but we find it still continues, and we must believe that he permits it for some wise purpose of his own, mysterious and unknown to us; and though with our limited understandings we may not be able to comprehend it, yet we cannot but believe that he who made the world still governs it.”

Somewhat later President Lincoln wrote again to Eliza P. Gurney requesting her to exercise her freedom to write to him as he felt the need of spiritual help and reinforcement. Her letter of reply so closely touched him and spoke to his condition that he carried it about with him and it was found in his coat pocket at the time of his death, twenty months after it was written. In the autumn of 1864, President Lincoln, still impressed by the message which he had received, wrote a memorable letter to Eliza P. Gurney. It was as follows:

“I have not forgotten—probably never shall forget—the very impressive occasion when yourself and friends visited me on a Sabbath forenoon two years ago. Nor has your kind letter, written nearly a year later, ever been forgotten. In all it has been your purpose to strengthen my reliance on God. I am much indebted to the good Christian people of the country for their constant prayers and consolations; and to no one of them more than to yourself. The purposes of the Almighty are perfect, and must prevail, though we erring mortals may fail to accurately perceive them in advance. We hoped for a happy termination of this terrible war long before this; but God knows best, and has ruled otherwise. We shall yet acknowledge his wisdom, and our own error therein. Meanwhile we must work earnestly in the best lights he gives us, trusting that so working still conduces to the great ends he ordains. Surely he intends some great good to follow this mighty convulsion, which no mortal could make, and no mortal could stay. Your people, the Friends, have had, and are having, a very great trial. On principle and faith opposed to both war and oppression, they can only practically oppose oppression by war. In this dilemma some have chosen one horn and some the other. For those appealing to me on conscientious grounds, I have done, and shall do, the best I could and can, in my own conscience, under my oath to the law. That you believe this I doubt not; and, believing it, I shall still receive for our country and myself your earnest prayers to our Father in heaven.”

It is, then, not surprising that President Lincoln was “moved with sympathy” when he heard the story of Pringle’s suffering for conscience, or that he quietly said to the Secretary of War, “It is my urgent wish that this Friend be released.”

Rufus M. Jones.

Haverford, Pa.,
December, 1917.

FOOTNOTES:

[1] Nicolay and Hay: "Abraham Lincoln," Vol. VI, p. 328.

[2] Secretary Stanton endeavoured to provide that this commutation money should be made into a fund for the care of freedmen. This suggestion was, however, not adopted by Congress.

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THE RECORD OF A QUAKER CONSCIENCE

At Burlington, Vt., on the 13th of the seventh month, 1863, I was drafted. Pleasant are my recollections of the 14th. Much of that rainy day I spent in my chamber, as yet unaware of my fate; in writing and reading and in reflecting to compose my mind for any event. The day and the exercise, by the blessing of the Father, brought me precious reconciliation to the will of Providence.

With ardent zeal for our Faith and the cause of our peaceable principles; and almost disgusted at the lukewarmness and unfaithfulness of very many who profess these; and considering how heavily slight crosses bore upon their shoulders, I felt to say, "Here am I, Father, for thy service. As thou wilt." May I trust it was He who called me and sent me forth with the consolation: "My grace is sufficient for thee." Deeply have I felt many times since that I am nothing without the companionship of the Spirit.

I was to report on the 27th. Then, loyal to our country, Wm. Lindley Dean and I appeared before the Provost Marshal with a statement of our cases. We were ordered for a hearing on the 29th. On the afternoon of that day W.L.D. was rejected upon examination of the Surgeon, but my case not coming up, he remained with me,—much to my strength and comfort. Sweet was his converse and long to be remembered, as we lay together that warm summer night on the straw of the barracks. By his encouragement much was my mind strengthened; my desires for a pure life, and my resolutions for good. In him and those of whom he spoke I saw the abstract beauty of Quakerism. On the next morning came Joshua M. Dean to support me and plead my case before the Board of Enrollment. On the day after, the 31st, I came before the Board. Respectfully those men listened to the exposition of our principles; and, on our representing that we looked for some relief from the President, the marshal released me for twenty days. Meanwhile appeared Lindley M. Macomber and was likewise, by the kindness of the marshal, though they had received instructions from the Provost Marshal General to show such claims no partiality, released to appear on the 20th day of the eighth month.

All these days we were urged by our acquaintances to pay our commutation money; by some through well-meant kindness and sympathy; by others through interest in the war; and by others still through a belief they entertained it was our duty. But we confess a higher duty than that to country; and, asking no military protection of our Government and grateful for none, deny any obligation to support so unlawful a system, as we hold a war to be even when waged in opposition to an evil and oppressive power and ostensibly in defence of liberty, virtue, and free institutions; and, though touched by the kind interest of friends, we could not relieve their distress by a means we held even more sinful than that of serving ourselves,

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as by supplying money to hire a substitute we would not only be responsible for the result, but be the agents in bringing others into evil. So looking to our Father alone for help, and remembering that “Whoso loseth his life for my sake shall find it; but whoso saveth it shall lose it,” we presented ourselves again before the Board, as we had promised to do when released. Being offered four days more of time, we accepted it as affording opportunity to visit our friends; and moreover as there would be more probability of meeting Peter Dakin at Rutland.

Sweet was the comfort and sympathy of our friends as we visited them. There was a deep comfort, as we left them, in the thought that so many pure and pious people follow us with their love and prayers. Appearing finally before the marshal on the 24th, suits and uniforms were selected for us, and we were called upon to give receipts for them. L.M.M. was on his guard, and, being first called upon, declared he could not do so, as that would imply acceptance. Failing to come to any agreement, the matter was postponed till next morning, when we certified to the fact that the articles were “with us.” Here I must make record of the kindness of the marshal, Rolla Gleason, who treated us with respect and kindness. He had spoken with respect of our Society; had given me furloughs to the amount of twenty-four days, when the marshal at Rutland considered himself restricted by his oath and duty to six days; and here appeared in person to prevent any harsh treatment of us by his sergeants; and though much against his inclinations, assisted in putting on the uniform with his own hands. We bade him farewell with grateful feelings and expressions of fear that we should not fall into as tender hands again; and amid the rain in the early morning, as the town clock tolled the hour of seven, we were driven amongst the flock that was going forth to the slaughter, down the street and into the cars for Brattleboro. Dark was the day with murk and cloud and rain; and, as we rolled down through the narrow vales of eastern Vermont, somewhat of the shadow crept into our hearts and filled them with dark apprehensions of evil fortune ahead; of long, hopeless trials; of abuse from inferior officers; of contempt from common soldiers; of patient endurance (or an attempt at this), unto an end seen only by the eye of a strong faith.

Herded into a car by ourselves, we conscripts, substitutes, and the rest, through the greater part of the day, swept over the fertile meadows along the banks of the White River and the Connecticut, through pleasant scenes that had little of delight for us. At Woodstock we were joined by the conscripts from the 1st District,—altogether an inferior company from those before with us, who were honest yeomen from the northern and mountainous towns, while these were many of them substitutes from the cities.

At Brattleboro we were marched up to the camp; our knapsacks and persons searched; and any articles of citizen’s dress taken from us; and then shut up in a rough board building under a guard. Here the prospect was dreary, and I felt some lack of

confidence in our Father's arm, though but two days before I wrote to my dear friend,
E.M.H.,—

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I go tomorrow where the din
Of war is in the sulphurous air.
I go the Prince of Peace to serve,
His cross of suffering to bear.

Brattleboro, *26th, 8th* month, 1863.—Twenty-five or thirty caged lions roam lazily to and fro through this building hour after hour through the day. On every side without, sentries pace their slow beat, bearing loaded muskets. Men are ranging through the grounds or hanging in synods about the doors of the different buildings, apparently without a purpose. Aimless is military life, except betimes its aim is deadly. Idle life blends with violent death-struggles till the man is unmade a man; and henceforth there is little of manhood about him. Of a man he is made a soldier, which is a man-destroying machine in two senses,—a thing for the prosecuting or repelling an invasion like the block of stone in the fortress or the plate of iron on the side of the Monitor. They are alike. I have tried in vain to define a difference, and I see only this. The iron-clad with its gun is the bigger soldier: the more formidable in attack, the less liable to destruction in a given time; the block the most capable of resistance; both are equally obedient to officers. Or the more perfect is the soldier, the more nearly he approaches these in this respect.

Three times a day we are marched out to the mess houses for our rations. In our hands we carry a tin plate, whereon we bring back a piece of bread (sour and tough most likely), and a cup. Morning and noon a piece of meat, antique betimes, bears company with the bread. They who wish it receive in their cups two sorts of decoctions: in the morning burnt bread, or peas perhaps, steeped in water with some saccharine substance added (I dare not affirm it to be sugar). At night steeped tea extended by some other herbs probably and its pungency and acidity assuaged by the saccharine principle aforementioned. On this we have so far subsisted and, save some nauseating, comfortably. As we go out and return, on right and left and in front and rear go bayonets. Some substitutes heretofore have escaped and we are not to be neglected in our attendants. Hard beds are healthy, but I query cannot the result be defeated by the *degree*? Our mattresses are boards. Only the slight elasticity of our thin blankets breaks the fall of our flesh and bones thereon. Oh! now I praise the discipline I have received from uncarpeted floors through warm summer nights of my boyhood.

The building resounds with petty talk; jokes and laughter and swearing. Something more than that. Many of the caged lions are engaged with cards, and money changes hands freely. Some of the caged lions read, and some sleep, and so the weary day goes by.

L.M.M. and I addressed the following letter to Governor Holbrook and hired a corporal to forward it to him.

Brattleboro, Vt., 26th, 8th month, 1863.
FREDERICK HOLBROOK,
Governor of Vermont:—

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We, the undersigned members of the Society of Friends, beg leave to represent to thee, that we were lately drafted in the 3d Dist. of Vermont, have been forced into the army and reached the camp near this town yesterday.

That in the language of the elders of our New York Yearly Meeting, "We love our country and acknowledge with gratitude to our Heavenly Father the many blessings we have been favoured with under the government; and can feel no sympathy with any who seek its overthrow."

But that, true to well-known principles of our Society, we cannot violate our religious convictions either by complying with military requisitions or by the equivalents of this compliance,—the furnishing of a substitute or payment of commutation money. That, therefore, we are brought into suffering and exposed to insult and contempt from those who have us in charge, as well as to the penalties of insubordination, though liberty of conscience is granted us by the Constitution of Vermont as well as that of the United States.

Therefore, we beg of thee as Governor of our State any assistance thou may be able to render, should it be no more than the influence of thy position interceding in our behalf.

Truly Thy Friend,
CYRUS G. PRINGLE.

P.S.—We are informed we are to be sent to the vicinity of Boston tomorrow.

27th.—On board train to Boston. The long afternoon of yesterday passed slowly away. This morning passed by,—the time of our stay in Brattleboro, and we neither saw nor heard anything of our Governor. We suppose he could not or would not help us. So as we go down to our trial we have no arm to lean upon among all men; but why dost thou complain, oh, my Soul? Seek thou that faith that will prove a buckler to thy breast, and gain for thee the protection of an arm mightier than the arms of all men.

28th. CAMP VERMONT: LONG ISLAND, BOSTON HARBOUR.—In the early morning damp and cool we marched down off the heights of Brattleboro to take train for this place. Once in the car the dashing young cavalry officer, who had us in charge, gave notice he had placed men through the cars, with loaded revolvers, who had orders to shoot any person attempting to escape, or jump from the window, and that any one would be shot if he even put his head out of the window. Down the beautiful valley of the Connecticut, all through its broad intervalles, heavy with its crops of corn or tobacco, or shaven smooth by the summer harvest; over the hard and stony counties of northern Massachusetts, through its suburbs and under the shadow of Bunker Hill Monument we came into the City of Boston, "the Hub of the Universe." Out through street after street we were marched double guarded to the wharves, where we took a small steamer for the island some six miles out in the harbour. A circumstance connected with this march

is worth mentioning for its singularity: at the head of this company, like convicts (and feeling very much like such), through the City of Boston walked, with heavy hearts and down-cast eyes, two Quakers.

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Here on this dry and pleasant island in the midst of the beautiful Massachusetts Bay, we have the liberty of the camp, the privilege of air and sunshine and hay beds to sleep upon. So we went to bed last night with somewhat of gladness elevating our depressed spirits.

Here are many troops gathering daily from all the New England States except Connecticut and Rhode Island. Their white tents are dotting the green slopes and hilltops of the island and spreading wider and wider. This is the flow of military tide here just now. The ebb went out to sea in the shape of a great shipload just as we came in, and another load will be sent before many days. All is war here. We are surrounded by the pomp and circumstance of war, and enveloped in the cloud thereof. The cloud settles down over the minds and souls of all; they cannot see beyond, nor do they try; but with the clearer eye of Christian faith I try to look beyond all this error unto Truth and Holiness immaculate: and thanks to our Father, I am favoured with glimpses that are sweet consolation amid this darkness.

This is one gratification: the men with us give us their sympathy. They seem to look upon us tenderly and pitifully, and their expressions of kind wishes are warm. Although we are relieved from duty and from drill, and may lie in our tents during rain and at night, we have heard of no complaint. This is the more worthy of note as there are so few in our little (Vermont) camp. Each man comes on guard half the days. It would probably be otherwise were their hearts in the service; but I have yet to find the man in any of these camps or at any service who does not wish himself at home. Substitutes say if they knew all they know now before leaving home they would not have enlisted; and they have been but a week from their homes and have endured no hardships.

Yesterday L.M.M. and I appeared before the Captain commanding this camp with a statement of our cases. He listened to us respectfully and promised to refer us to the General commanding here, General Devens; and in the meantime released us from duty. In a short time afterward he passed us in our tent, asking our names. We have not heard from him, but do not drill or stand guard; so, we suppose, his release was confirmed. At that interview a young lieutenant sneeringly told us he thought we had better throw away our scruples and fight in the service of the country; and as we told the Captain we could not accept pay, he laughed mockingly, and said he would not stay here for \$13.00 per month. He gets more than a hundred, I suppose.

How beautiful seems the world on this glorious morning here by the seaside! Eastward and toward the sun, fair green isles with outlines of pure beauty are scattered over the blue bay. Along the far line of the mainland white hamlets and towns glisten in the morning sun; countless tiny waves dance in the wind that comes off shore and sparkle sunward like myriads of gems. Up the fair vault, flecked by scarcely a cloud, rolls the sun in glory. Though fair be the earth, it has come to be tainted and marred by him who was meant to be its crowning glory. Behind me on this island are crowded vile and wicked men, the murmur of whose ribaldry riseth continually like the smoke and fumes

of a lower world. Oh! Father of Mercies, forgive the hard heartlessness and blindness and scarlet sins of my fellows, my brothers.

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PRISON EXPERIENCES FOR CONSCIENCE' SAKE— OUR PRISON

31st., 8th month, 1863. IN GUARD HOUSE.—Yesterday morning L.M.M. and I were called upon to do fatigue duty. The day before we were asked to do some cleaning about camp and to bring water. We wished to be obliging, to appear willing to bear a hand toward that which would promote our own and our fellows' health and convenience; but as we worked we did not feel easy. Suspecting we had been assigned to such work, the more we discussed in our minds the subject, the more clearly the right way seemed opened to us; and we separately came to the judgment that we must not conform to this requirement. So when the sergeant bade us "Police the streets," we asked him if he had received instructions with regard to us, and he replied we had been assigned to "Fatigue Duty." L.M.M. answered him that we could not obey. He left us immediately for the Major (Jarvis of Weathersfield, Vt.). He came back and ordered us to the Major's tent. The latter met us outside and inquired concerning the complaint he had heard of us. Upon our statement of our position, he apparently undertook to argue our whimsies, as he probably looked upon our principles, out of our heads. We replied to his points as we had ability; but he soon turned to bullying us rather than arguing with us, and would hardly let us proceed with a whole sentence. "I make some pretension to religion myself," he said; and quoted the Old Testament freely in support of war. Our terms were, submission or the guard-house. We replied we could not obey.

This island was formerly occupied by a company, who carried on the large farm it comprises and opened a great hotel as a summer resort.

The subjects of all misdemeanours, grave and small, are here confined. Those who have deserted or attempted it; those who have insulted officers and those guilty of theft, fighting, drunkenness, *etc.* In *most*, as in the camps, there are traces yet of manhood and of the Divine Spark, but some are abandoned, dissolute. There are many here among the substitutes who were actors in the late New York riots. They show unmistakably the characteristics and sentiments of those rioters, and, especially, hatred to the blacks drafted and about camp, and exhibit this in foul and profane jeers heaped upon these unoffending men at every opportunity. In justice to the blacks I must say they are superior to the whites in all their behaviour.

31st. P.M.—Several of us were a little time ago called out one by one to answer inquiries with regard to our offences. We replied we could not comply with military requisitions. P.D., being last, was asked if he would die first, and replied promptly but mildly, Yes.

Here we are in prison in our own land for no crimes, no offence to God nor man; nay, more: we are here for obeying the commands of the Son of God and the influences of

his Holy Spirit. I must look for patience in this dark day. I am troubled too much and excited and perplexed.

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1st., 9th month.—Oh, the horrors of the past night—I never before experienced such *sensations* and fears; and never did I feel so clearly that I had nothing but the hand of our Father to shield me from evil. Last night we three lay down together on the floor of a lower room of which we had taken possession. The others were above. We had but one blanket between us and the floor, and one over us. The other one we had lent to a wretched deserter who had skulked into our room for *relief*, being without anything of his own. We had during the day gained the respect of the fellows, and they seemed disposed to let us occupy our room in peace. I cannot say in quiet, for these caged beasts are restless, and the resonant boards of this old building speak of bedlam. The thin board partitions, the light door fastened only by a pine stick thrust into a wooden loop on the casing, seemed small protection in case of assault; but we lay down to sleep in quiet trust. But we had scarcely fallen asleep before we were awakened by the demoniac howlings and yellings of a man just brought into the next room, and allowed the liberty of the whole house. He was drunk, and further seemed to be labouring under delirium tremens. He crashed about furiously, and all the more after the guard tramped heavily in and bound him with handcuffs, and chain and ball. Again and again they left, only to return to quiet him by threats or by crushing him down to the floor and gagging him. In a couple of hours he became quiet and we got considerable sleep.

In the morning the fellow came into our room apologizing for the intrusion. He appeared a smart, fine-looking young man, restless and uneasy. P.D. has a way of disposing of intruders that is quite effectual. I have not entirely disposed of some misgivings with respect to the legitimacy of his use of the means, so he commenced reading aloud in the Bible. The fellow was impatient and noisy, but he soon settled down on the floor beside him. As he listened and talked with us the recollections of his father's house and his innocent childhood were awakened. He was the child of pious parents, taught in Sabbath School and under pure home influences till thirteen. Then he was drawn into bad company, soon after leaving home for the sea; and, since then, has served in the army and navy,—in the army in Wilson's and Hawkins's [brigades]. His was the old story of the total subjection of moral power and thralldom to evil habits and associates. He would get drunk, whenever it was in his power. It was wrong; but he could not help it. Though he was awakened and recollected his parents looking long and in vain for his return, he soon returned to camp, to his wallowing in the mire, and I fear to his path to certain perdition.

3d. [9th month.]—A Massachusetts major, the officer of the day, in his inspection of the guard-house came into our room today. We were lying on the floor engaged in reading and writing. He was apparently surprised at this and inquired the name of our books; and finding the Bible and Thomas a Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, observed that they were good books. I cannot say if he knew we were Friends, but he asked us why we were in here.

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Like all officers he proceeded to reason with us, and to advise us to serve, presenting no comfort if we still persisted in our course. He informed us of a young Friend, Edward W. Holway of Sandwich, Mass., having been yesterday under punishment in the camp by his orders, who was today doing service about camp. He said he was not going to put his Quaker in the guard-house, but was going to bring him to work by punishment. We were filled with deep sympathy for him and desired to cheer him by kind words as well as by the knowledge of our similar situation. We obtained permission of the Major to write to him a letter open to his inspection. "You may be sure," said E.W.H. to us at W., "the Major did not allow it to leave his hands."

This forenoon the Lieutenant of the Day came in and acted the same part, though he was not so cool, and left expressing the hope, if we would not serve our country like men, that God would curse us. Oh, the trials from these officers! One after another comes in to relieve himself upon us. Finding us firm and not lacking in words, they usually fly into a passion and end by bullying us. How can we reason with such men? They are utterly unable to comprehend the pure Christianity and spirituality of our principles. They have long stiffened their necks in their own strength. They have stopped their ears to the voice of the Spirit, and hardened their hearts to his influences. They see no duty higher than that to country. What shall we receive at their hands?

This Major tells us we will not be tried here. Then we are to be sent into the field, and there who will deliver us but God? Ah, I have nursed in my heart a hope that I may be spared to return home. Must I cast it out and have no desire, but to do the will of my Master. It were better, even so. O, Lord, Thy will be done. Grant I may make it my chief delight and render true submission thereto.

Yesterday a little service was required of our dear L.M.M., but he insisted he could not comply. A sergeant and two privates were engaged. They coaxed and threatened him by turns, and with a determination not to be baffled took him out to perform it. Though guns were loaded he still stood firm and was soon brought back. We are happy here in guard-house,—too happy, too much at ease. We should see more of the Comforter,—feel more strength,—if the trial were fiercer; but this is well. This is a trial of strength of patience.

6th. [9th month.]—Yesterday we had officers again for visitors. Major J.B. Gould, 13th Massachusetts, came in with the determination of persuading us to consent to be transferred to the hospital here, he being the Provost Marshal of the island and having the power to make the transfer. He is different in being and bearing from those who have been here before. His motives were apparently those of pure kindness, and his demeanour was that of a gentleman. Though he talked with us more

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than an hour, he lost no part of his self-control or good humour. So by his eloquence and kindness he made more impression upon us than any before. As Congregationalist he well knew the courts of the temple, but the Holy of Holies he had never seen, and knew nothing of its secrets. He understood expediency; but is not the man to “lay down his life for my sake.” He is sincere and seems to think what Major Gould believes cannot be far from right. After his attempt we remained as firm as ever. We must expect all means will be tried upon us, and no less persuasion than threats.

AT THE HOSPITAL, *7th*. [*9th month*.]—Yesterday morning came to us Major Gould again, informing us that he had come to take us out of that dirty place, as he could not see such respectable men lying there, and was going to take us up to the hospital. We assured him we could not serve there, and asked him if he would not bring us back when we had there declared our purpose. He would not reply directly; but brought us here and left us. When the surgeon knew our determination, he was for haling us back at once; what he wanted, he said, was willing men. We sat on the sward without the hospital tents till nearly noon, for some one to take us back; when we were ordered to move into the tents and quarters assigned us in the mess-room. The Major must have interposed, demonstrating his kindness by his resolution that we should occupy and enjoy the pleasanter quarters of the hospital, certainly if serving; but none the less so if we declined. Later in the day L.M.M. and P.D. were sitting without, when he passed them and, laughing heartily, declared they were the strangest prisoners of war he ever saw. He stopped some time to talk with them and when they came in they declared him a kind and honest man.

If we interpret aright his conduct, this dangerous trial is over, and we have escaped the perplexities that his kindness and determination threw about us.

13th.—Last night we received a letter from Henry Dickinson, stating that the President, though sympathizing with those in our situation, felt bound by the Conscription Act, and felt liberty, in view of his oath to execute the laws, to do no more than detail us from active service to hospital duty, or to the charge of the coloured refugees. For more than a week have we lain here, refusing to engage in hospital service; shall we retrace the steps of the past week? Or shall we go South as overseers of the blacks on the confiscated estates of the rebels, to act under military commanders and to report to such? What would become of our testimony and our determination to preserve ourselves clear of the guilt of this war?

P.S. We have written back to Henry Dickinson that we cannot purchase life at cost of peace of soul.

14th.—We have been exceeding sorrowful since receiving advice—as we must call it—from H.D. to enter the hospital service or some similar situation. We did not look for that

from him. It is not what our Friends sent us out for; nor is it what we came for. We shall feel desolate and dreary in our position, unless supported and cheered by the words of those who have at heart our best interests more than regard for our personal welfare. We walk as we feel guided by Best Wisdom. Oh, may we run and not err in the high path of Holiness.

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16th.—Yesterday a son-in-law of N.B. of Lynn came to see us. He was going to get passes for one or two of the Lynn Friends, that they might come over to see us today. He informed us that the sentiment of the Friends hereabouts was that we might enter the hospital without compromising our principles; and he produced a letter from W.W. to S.B. to the same effect. W.W. expressed his opinion that we might do so without doing it in lieu of other service. How can we evade a fact? Does not the government both demand and accept it as in lieu of other service? Oh, the cruelest blow of all comes from our friends.

17th.—Although this trial was brought upon us by our friends, their intentions were well meant. Their regard for our personal welfare and safety too much absorbs the zeal they should possess for the maintenance of the principle of the peaceableness of our Master's kingdom. An unfaithfulness to this through meekness and timidity seems manifest,—too great a desire to avoid suffering at some sacrifice of principle, perhaps, —too little of placing of Faith and confidence upon the Rock of Eternal Truth.

Our friends at home, with W.D. at their head, support us; and yesterday, at the opportune moment, just as we were most distressed by the solicitations of our visitors, kind and cheering words of Truth were sent us through dear C.M.P., whose love rushes out to us warm and living and just from an overflowing fountain.

I must record another work of kind attention shown us by Major Gould. Before we embarked, he came to us for a friendly visit. As we passed him on our way to the wharf he bade us Farewell and expressed a hope we should not have so hard a time as we feared. And after we were aboard the steamer, as the result of his interference on our behalf, we must believe, we were singled out from the midst of the prisoners, among whom we had been placed previous to coming aboard, and allowed the liberty of the vessel. By this are we saved much suffering, as the other prisoners were kept under close guard in a corner on the outside of the boat.

FOREST CITY UP THE POTOMAC. 22nd. [9th month.]—It was near noon, yesterday, when we turned in from sea between Cape Charles and Henry; and, running thence down across the mouth of Chesapeake Bay, alongside Old Point Comfort, dropped anchor off Fortress Monroe. The scene around us was one of beauty, though many of its adornments were the results and means of wrong. The sunshine was brighter, the verdure greener to our eyes weary of the sea, and the calm was milder and more grateful that we had so long tossed in the storm.

The anchor was soon drawn up again and the *Forest City* steamed up the James River toward Newport News, and turning to the left between the low, pine-grown banks, passed Norfolk to leave the New Hampshire detachment at Portsmouth.

Coming back to Fortress Monroe, some freight was landed; and in the calm clear light of the moon, we swung away from shore and dropping down the mouth of the river,

rounded Old Point, and, going up the Chesapeake, entered the Potomac in the night-time.

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OFF SHORE, ALEXANDRIA. *23d.*—Here we anchored last night after the main detachment was landed, and the Vermont and Massachusetts men remained on board another night. We hear we are to go right to the field, where active operations are going on. This seems hard. We have not till now given up the hope that we were not to go out into Virginia with the rest of the men, but were to be kept here at Washington. Fierce, indeed, are our trials. I am not discouraged entirely; but I am weak from want of food which I can eat, and from sickness. I do not know how I am going to live in such way, or get to the front.

P.S. We have just landed; and I had the liberty to buy a pie of a woman hawking such things, that has strengthened me wonderfully.

CAMP NEAR CULPEPER. *25th.*—My distress is too great for words; but I must overcome my disinclination to write, or this record will remain unfinished. So, with aching head and heart, I proceed.

Yesterday morning we were roused early for breakfast and for preparation for starting. After marching out of the barracks, we were first taken to the armory, where each man received a gun and its equipments and a piece of tent. We stood in line, waiting for our turn with apprehensions of coming trouble. Though we had felt free to keep with those among whom we had been placed, we could not consent to carry a gun, even though we did not intend to use it; and, from our previous experience, we knew it would go harder with us, if we took the first step in the wrong direction, though it might seem an unimportant one, and an easy and not very wrong way to avoid difficulty. So we felt decided we must decline receiving the guns. In the hurry and bustle of equipping a detachment of soldiers, one attempting to explain a position and the grounds therefor so peculiar as ours to junior, petty officers, possessing liberally the characteristics of these: pride, vanity, conceit, and an arbitrary spirit, impatience, profanity, and contempt for holy things, must needs find the opportunity a very unfavourable one.

We succeeded in giving these young officers a slight idea of what we were; and endeavoured to answer their questions of why we did not pay our commutation, and avail ourselves of that provision made expressly for such; of why we had come as far as that place, *etc.* We realized then the unpleasant results of that practice, that had been employed with us by the successive officers into whose hands we had fallen,—of shirking any responsibility, and of passing us on to the next officer above.

A council was soon holden to decide what to do with us. One proposed to place us under arrest, a sentiment we rather hoped might prevail, as it might prevent our being sent on to the front; but another, in some spite and impatience, insisted, as it was their duty to supply a gun to every man and forward him, that the guns should be put upon us, and we be made to carry them. Accordingly the equipment

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was buckled about us, and the straps of the guns being loosened, they were thrust over our heads and hung upon our shoulders. In this way we were urged forward through the streets of Alexandria; and, having been put upon a long train of dirt cars, were started for Culpeper. We came over a long stretch of desolated and deserted country, through battlefields of previous summers, and through many camps now lively with the work of this present campaign. Seeing, for the first time, a country made dreary by the war-blight, a country once adorned with groves and green pastures and meadows and fields of waving grain, and happy with a thousand homes, now laid with the ground, one realizes as he can in no other way something of the ruin that lies in the trail of a war. But upon these fields of Virginia, once so fair, there rests a two-fold blight, first that of slavery, now that of war. When one contrasts the face of this country with the smiling hillsides and vales of New England, he sees stamped upon it in characters so marked, none but a blind man can fail to read, the great irrefutable arguments against slavery and against war, too; and must be filled with loathing for these twin relics of barbarism, so awful in the potency of their consequences that they can change even the face of the country.

Through the heat of this long ride, we felt our total lack of water and the meagreness of our supply of food. Our thirst became so oppressive as we were marched here from Culpeper, some four miles with scarcely a halt to rest, under our heavy loads, and through the heat and deep dust of the road, that we drank water and dipped in the brooks we passed, though it was discoloured with the soap the soldiers had used in washing. The guns interfered with our walking, and, slipping down, dragged with painful weight upon our shoulders. Poor P.D. fell out from exhaustion and did not come in till we had been some little time at the camp. We were taken to the 4th Vermont regiment and soon apportioned to companies. Though we waited upon the officer commanding the company in which we were placed, and endeavoured to explain our situation, we were required immediately after to be present at inspection of arms. We declined, but an attempt was made to force us to obedience, first, by the officers of the company, then, by those of the regiment; but, failing to exact obedience of us, we were ordered by the colonel to be tied, and, if we made outcry, to be gagged also, and to be kept so till he gave orders for our release. After two or three hours we were relieved and left under guard; lying down on the ground in the open air, and covering ourselves with our blankets, we soon fell asleep from exhaustion, and the fatigue of the day.

This morning the officers told us we must yield. We must obey and serve. We were threatened great severities and even death. We seem perfectly at the mercy of the military power, and, more, in the hands of the inferior officers, who, from their being far removed from Washington, feel less restraint from those Regulations of the Army, which are for the protection of privates from personal abuse.

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26th. [9th month.]—Yesterday my mind was much agitated: doubts and fears and forebodings seized me. I was alone, seeking a resting-place and finding none. It seemed as if God had forsaken me in this dark hour; and the Tempter whispered, that after all I might be only the victim of a delusion. My prayers for faith and strength seemed all in vain.

But this morning I enjoy peace, and feel as though I could face anything. Though I am as a lamb in the shambles, yet do I cry, "Thy will be done," and can indeed say,—

Passive to His holy will
Trust I in my Master still
Even though he slay me.

I mind me of the anxiety of our dear friends about home, and of their prayers for us.

Oh, praise be to the Lord for the peace and love and resignation that has filled my soul today! Oh, the passing beauty of holiness! There is a holy life that is above fear; it is a close communion with Christ. I pray for this continually but am not free from the shadow and the tempter. There is ever present with us the thought that perhaps we shall serve the Lord the most effectually by our death, and desire, if that be the service He requires of us, that we may be ready and resigned.

REGIMENTAL HOSPITAL, 4th Vermont. *29th. [9th month.]*—On the evening of the 26th the Colonel came to us apologizing for the roughness with which he treated us at first, which was, as he insisted, through ignorance of our real character and position. He told us if we persisted in our course, death would probably follow; though at another time he confessed to P.D. that this would only be the extreme sentence of court-martial.

He urged us to go into the hospital, stating that this course was advised by Friends about New York. We were too well aware of such a fact to make any denial, though it was a subject of surprise to us that he should be informed of it. He pleaded with us long and earnestly, urging us with many promises of indulgence and favour and attentions we found afterwards to be untrue. He gave us till the next morning to consider the question and report our decision. In our discussion of the subject among ourselves, we were very much perplexed. If all his statements concerning the ground taken by our Society were true, we seemed to be liable, if we persisted in the course which alone seemed to us to be in accordance with Truth, to be exposed to the charge of over-zeal and fanaticism even among our own brethren. Regarding the work to be done in hospital as one of mercy and benevolence, we asked if we had any right to refuse its performance; and questioned whether we could do more good by endeavouring to bear to the end a clear testimony against war, than by labouring by word and deed among the needy in the hospitals and camps. We saw around us a rich field for usefulness in which there were scarce any labourers, and toward whose work our hands had often started involuntarily and unbidden. At last we consented to a trial, at least till we could

make inquiries concerning the Colonel's allegations, and ask the counsel of our friends, reserving the privilege of returning to our former position.

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At first a great load seemed rolled away from us; we rejoiced in the prospect of life again. But soon there prevailed a feeling of condemnation, as though we had sold our Master. And that first day was one of the bitterest I ever experienced. It was a time of stern conflict of soul. The voice that seemed to say, "Follow me," as I sought guidance the night before, kept pleading with me, convincing of sin, till I knew of a truth my feet had strayed from His path. The Scriptures, which the day before I could scarcely open without finding words of strength and comfort, seemed closed against me, till after a severe struggle alone in the wood to which I had retired, I consented to give up and retrace my steps in faith. But it was too late. L.M.M. wishing to make a fair, honest trial, we were brought here—P.D. being already here unwell. We feel we are erring; but scarce anything is required of us and we wait to hear from Friends.

Of these days of going down into sin, I wish to make little mention. I would that my record of such degradation be brief. We wish to come to an understanding with our friends and the Society before we move, but it does not seem that we can repress the upheavings of Truth in our hearts. We are bruised by sin.

It is with pleasure I record we have just waited upon the Colonel with an explanation of our distress of mind, requesting him to proceed with court-martial. We were kindly and tenderly received. "If you want a trial I can give it to you," he answered. The brigade has just marched out to join with the division for inspection. After that we are to have attention to our case.

P.M. There is particular cause for congratulation in the consideration that we took this step this morning, when now we receive a letter from H.D. charging us to faithfulness.

When lately I have seen dear L.M.M. in the thoroughness and patience of his trial to perform service in hospital, his uneasiness and the intensity of his struggle as manifested by his silence and disposition to avoid the company of his friends, and seen him fail and declare to us, "I cannot stay here," I have received a new proof, and to me a strong one, because it is from the experimental knowledge of an honest man, that no Friend, who is really such, desiring to keep himself clear of complicity with this system of war and to bear a perfect testimony against it, can lawfully perform service in the hospitals of the Army in lieu of bearing arms.

10th mo., 3d.—Today dawned fair and our Camp is dry again. I was asked to clean the gun I brought, and declining, was tied some two hours upon the ground.

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6th. AT WASHINGTON.—At first, after being informed of our declining to serve in his hospital, Colonel Foster did not appear altered in his kind regard for us. But his spleen soon became evident. At the time we asked for a trial by court-martial, and it was his duty to place us under arrest and proceed with the preferring of his charges against us. For a while he seemed to hesitate and consult his inferior officers, and among them his Chaplain. The result of the conference was our being ordered into our companies, that, separated, and with the force of the officers of a company bearing upon us, we might the more likely be subdued. Yet the Colonel assured L.M.M., interceding in my behalf, when the lieutenant commanding my company threatened force upon me, that he should not allow any personal injury. When we marched next day I was compelled to bear a gun and equipments. My associates were more fortunate, for, being asked if they would carry their guns, declined and saw no more trouble from them. The captain of the company in which P.D. was placed told him he did not believe he was ugly about it, and that he could only put him under arrest and prefer charges against him. He accordingly was taken under guard, where he lay till we left for here.

The next morning the men were busy in burnishing their arms. When I looked toward the one I had borne, yellow with rust, I trembled in the weakness of the flesh at the trial I felt impending over me. Before the Colonel was up I knocked at his tent, but was told he was asleep, though, through the opening, I saw him lying gazing at me. Although I felt I should gain no relief from him, I applied again soon after. He admitted me and, lying on his bed, inquired with cold heartlessness what I wanted. I stated to him, that I could never consent to serve, and, being under the war-power, was resigned to suffer instead all the just penalties of the law. I begged of him release from the attempts by violence to compel my obedience and service, and a trial, though likely to be made by those having no sympathy with me, yet probably in a manner comfortable to law.

He replied that he had shown us all the favour he should; that he had, now, turned us over to the military power and was going to let that take its course; that is, henceforth we were to be at the mercy of the inferior officers, without appeal to law, justice, or mercy. He said he had placed us in a pleasant position, against which we could have no reasonable objection, and that we had failed to perform our agreement. He wished to deny that our consent was only temporary and conditional. He declared, furthermore, his belief, that a man who would not fight for his country did not deserve to live. I was glad to withdraw from his presence as soon as I could.

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I went back to my tent and lay down for a season of retirement, endeavouring to gain resignation to any event. I dreaded torture and desired strength of flesh and spirit. My trial soon came. The lieutenant called me out, and pointing to the gun that lay near by, asked if I was going to clean it. I replied to him, that I could not comply with military requisitions, and felt resigned to the consequences. "I do not ask about your feelings; I want to know if you are going to clean that gun?" "I cannot do it," was my answer. He went away, saying, "Very well," and I crawled into the tent again. Two sergeants soon called for me, and taking me a little aside, bid me lie down on my back, and stretching my limbs apart tied cords to my wrists and ankles and these to four stakes driven in the ground somewhat in the form of an X.

I was very quiet in my mind as I lay there on the ground [soaked] with the rain of the previous day, exposed to the heat of the sun, and suffering keenly from the cords binding my wrists and straining my muscles. And, if I dared the presumption, I should say that I caught a glimpse of heavenly pity. I wept, not so much from my own suffering as from sorrow that such things should be in our own country, where Justice and Freedom and Liberty of Conscience have been the annual boast of Fourth-of-July orators so many years. It seemed that our forefathers in the faith had wrought and suffered in vain, when the privileges they so dearly bought were so soon set aside. And I was sad, that one endeavouring to follow our dear Master should be so generally regarded as a despicable and stubborn culprit.

After something like an hour had passed, the lieutenant came with his orderly to ask me if I was ready to clean the gun. I replied to the orderly asking the question, that it could but give me pain to be asked or required to do anything I believed wrong. He repeated it to the lieutenant just behind him, who advanced and addressed me. I was favoured to improve the opportunity to say to him a few things I wished. He said little; and, when I had finished, he withdrew with the others who had gathered around. About the end of another hour his orderly came and released me.

I arose and sat on the ground. I did not rise to go away. I had not where to go, nothing to do. As I sat there my heart swelled with joy from above. The consolation and sweet fruit of tribulation patiently endured. But I also grieved, that the world was so far gone astray, so cruel and blind. It seemed as if the gospel of Christ had never been preached upon earth, and the beautiful example of his life had been utterly lost sight of.

Some of the men came about me, advising me to yield, and among them one of those who had tied me down, telling me what I had already suffered was nothing to what I must yet suffer unless I yielded; that human flesh could not endure what they would put upon me. I wondered if it could be that they could force me to obedience by torture, and examined myself closely to see if they had advanced as yet one step toward the accomplishment of their purposes. Though weaker in body, I believed I found myself, through divine strength, as firm in my resolution to maintain my allegiance to my Master.

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The relaxation of my nerves and muscles after having been so tensely strained left me that afternoon so weak that I could hardly walk or perform any mental exertion.

I had not yet eaten the mean and scanty breakfast I had prepared, when I was ordered to pack up my things and report myself at the lieutenant's tent. I was accustomed to such orders and complied, little moved.

The lieutenant received me politely with, "Good-morning, Mr. Pringle," and desiring me to be seated, proceeded with the writing with which he was engaged. I sat down in some wonderment and sought to be quiet and prepared for any event.

"You are ordered to report to Washington," said he; "I do not know what it is for." I assured him that neither did I know. We were gathered before the Major's tent for preparation for departure. The regimental officers were there manifesting surprise and chagrin; for they could not but show both as they looked upon us, whom the day before they were threatening to crush into submission, and attempting also to execute their threats that morning, standing out of their power and under orders from one superior to their Major Commanding E.M. As the bird uncaged, so were our hearts that morning. Short and uncertain at first were the flights of Hope. As the slave many times before us, leaving his yoke behind him, turned from the plantations of Virginia and set his face toward the far North, so we from out a grasp as close and as abundant in suffering and severity, and from without the line of bayonets that had so many weeks surrounded us, turned our backs upon the camp of the 4th Vermont and took our way over the turnpike that ran through the tented fields of Culpeper.

At the War Office we were soon admitted to an audience with the Adjutant General, Colonel Townsend, whom we found to be a very fine man, mild and kind. He referred our cases to the Secretary of War, Stanton, by whom we were ordered to report for service to Surgeon General Hammond. Here we met Isaac Newton, Commissioner of Agriculture, waiting for our arrival, and James Austin of Nantucket, expecting his son, Charles L. Austin, and Edward W. Holway of Sandwich, Mass., conscripted Friends like ourselves, and ordered here from the 22nd Massachusetts.

We understand it is through the influence of Isaac Newton that Friends have been able to approach the heads of Government in our behalf and to prevail with them to so great an extent. He explained to us the circumstance in which we are placed. That the Secretary of War and President sympathized with Friends in their present suffering, and would grant them full release, but that they felt themselves bound by their oaths that they would execute the laws, to carry out to its full extent the Conscription Act. That there appeared but one door of relief open,—that was to parole us and allow us to go home, but subject to their call again ostensibly, though this they neither wished nor proposed to do. That the fact of Friends

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in the Army and refusing service had attracted public attention so that it was not expedient to parole us at present. That, therefore, we were to be sent to one of the hospitals for a short time, where it was hoped and expressly requested that we would consent to remain quiet and acquiesce, if possible, in whatever might be required of us. That our work there would be quite free from objection, being for the direct relief of the sick; and that there we would release none for active service in the field, as the nurses were hired civilians.

These requirements being so much less objectionable than we had feared, we felt relief, and consented to them. I.N. went with us himself to the Surgeon General's office, where he procured peculiar favours for us: that we should be sent to a hospital in the city, where he could see us often; and that orders should be given that nothing should interfere with our comfort, or our enjoyment of our consciences.

Thence we were sent to Medical Purveyor Abbot, who assigned us to the best hospital in the city, the Douglas Hospital.

The next day after our coming here Isaac Newton and James Austin came to add to our number E.W.H. and C.L.A., so now there are five of us instead of three. We are pleasantly situated in a room by ourselves in the upper or fourth story, and are enjoying our advantages of good quarters and tolerable food as no one can except he has been deprived of them.

[10th month] 8th.—Today we have a pass to go out to see the city.

9th.—We all went, thinking to do the whole city in a day, but before the time of our passes expired, we were glad to drag ourselves back to the rest and quiet of D.H. During the day we called upon our friend I.N. in the Patent Office. When he came to see us on the 7th, he stated he had called upon the President that afternoon to request him to release us and let us go home to our friends. The President promised to consider it over-night. Accordingly yesterday morning, as I.N. told us, he waited upon him again. He found there a woman in the greatest distress. Her son, only a boy of fifteen years and four months, having been enticed into the Army, had deserted and been sentenced to be shot the next day. As the clerks were telling her, the President was in the War Office and could not be seen, nor did they think he could attend to her case that day. I.N. found her almost wild with grief. "Do not despair, my good woman," said he, "I guess the President can be seen after a bit." He soon presented her case to the President, who exclaimed at once, "That must not be, I must look into that case, before they shoot that boy"; and telegraphed at once to have the order suspended.

I.N. judged it was not a fit time to urge our case. We feel we can afford to wait, that a life may be saved. But we long for release. We do not feel easy to remain here.



11th.—Today we attended meeting held in the house of a Friend, Asa Arnold, living near here. There were but four persons beside ourselves. E.W.H. and C.L.A. showed their copy of the charges about to have been preferred against them in court-martial before they left their regiment, to a lawyer who attended the meeting. He laughed at the Specification of Mutiny, declaring such a charge could not have been lawfully sustained against them.

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The experiences of our new friends were similar to ours, except they fell among officers who usually showed them favour and rejoiced with them in their release.

13th.—L.M.M. had quite an adventure yesterday. He being fireman with another was in the furnace room among three or four others, when the officer of the day, one of the surgeons, passed around on inspection. "Stand up," he ordered them, wishing to be saluted. The others arose; but by no means L. The order was repeated for his benefit, but he sat with his cap on, telling the surgeon he had supposed he was excused from such things as he was one of the Friends. Thereat the officer flew at him, exclaiming, he would take the Quaker out of him. He snatched off his cap and seizing him by the collar tried to raise him to his feet; but finding his strength insufficient and that L. was not to be frightened, he changed his purpose in his wrath and calling for the corporal of the guard had him taken to the guard-house. This was about eleven A.M. and he lay there till about six P.M., when the surgeon in charge, arriving home and hearing of it, ordered the officer of the day to go and take him out, telling him never to put another man into the guard-house while he was in charge here without consulting him. The manner of his release was very satisfactory to us, and we waited for this rather than effect it by our own efforts. We are all getting uneasy about remaining here, and if our release do not come soon, we feel we must intercede with the authorities, even if the alternative be imprisonment.

The privations I have endured since leaving home, the great tax upon my nervous strength, and my mind as well, since I have had charge of our extensive correspondence, are beginning to tell upon my health and I long for rest.

20th. We begin to feel we shall have to decline service as heretofore, unless our position is changed. I shall not say but we submit too much in not declining at once, but it has seemed most prudent at least to make suit with Government rather than provoke the hostility of their subalterns. We were ordered here with little understanding of the true state of things as they really exist here; and were advised by Friends to come and make no objections, being assured it was but for a very brief time and only a matter of form. It might not have been wrong; but as we find we do too much fill the places of soldiers (L.M.M.'s fellow fireman has just left for the field, and I am to take his place, for instance), and are clearly doing military service, we are continually oppressed by a sense of guilt, that makes our struggles earnest.

21st.—I.N. has not called yet; our situation is becoming almost intolerable. I query if patience is justified under the circumstances. My distress of mind may be enhanced by my feeble condition of health, for today I am confined to my bed, almost too weak to get downstairs. This is owing to exposure after being heated over the furnaces.

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26th.—Though a week has gone by, and my cold has left me, I find I am no better, and that I am reduced very low in strength and flesh by the sickness and pain I am experiencing. Yet I still persist in going below once a day. The food I am able to get is not such as is proper.

11th mo., 5th.—I spend most of my time on my bed, much of it alone. And very precious to me is the nearness unto the Master I am favoured to attain to. Notwithstanding my situation and state, I am happy in the enjoyment of His consolations. Lately my confidence has been strong, and I think I begin to feel that our patience is soon to be rewarded with relief; insomuch that a little while ago, when dear P.D. was almost overcome with sorrow, I felt bold to comfort him with the assurance of my belief, that it would not be long so. My mind is too weak to allow of my reading much; and, though I enjoy the company of my companions a part of the time, especially in the evening, I am much alone; which affords me abundant time for meditation and waiting upon God. The fruits of this are sweet, and a recompense for affliction.

6th.—Last evening E.W.H. saw I.N. particularly on my behalf, I suppose. He left at once for the President. This morning he called to inform us of his interview at the White House. The President was moved to sympathy in my behalf, when I.N. gave him a letter from one of our Friends in New York. After its perusal he exclaimed to our friend, “I want you to go and tell Stanton that it is my wish all those young men be sent home at once.” He was on his way to the Secretary this morning as he called.

Later. I.N. has just called again informing us in joy that we are free. At the War Office he was urging the Secretary to consent to our paroles, when the President entered. “It is my urgent wish,” said he. The Secretary yielded; the order was given, and we were released. What we had waited for so many weeks was accomplished in a few moments by a Providential ordering of circumstances.

7th.—I.N. came again last evening bringing our paroles. The preliminary arrangements are being made, and we are to start this afternoon for New York.

Note. Rising from my sick-bed to undertake this journey, which lasted through the night, its fatigues overcame me, and upon my arrival in New York I was seized with delirium from which I only recovered after many weeks, through the mercy and favour of Him, who in all this trial had been our guide and strength and comfort.

THE END

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