

Andersonville — Volume 2 eBook

Andersonville — Volume 2

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CHAPTER XXIII.

A new lot of prisoners—the battle of Oolustee—men sacrificed to A general's incompetency—A hoodlum reinforcement—A queer crowd—mistreatment of an officer of A colored regiment—killing the Sergeant of A negro squad.

So far only old prisoners—those taken at Gettysburg, Chicamauga and Mine Run—had been brought in. The armies had been very quiet during the Winter, preparing for the death grapple in the Spring. There had been nothing done, save a few cavalry raids, such as our own, and Averill's attempt to gain and break up the Rebel salt works at Wytheville, and Saltville. Consequently none but a few cavalry prisoners were added to the number already in the hands of the Rebels.

The first lot of new ones came in about the middle of March. There were about seven hundred of them, who had been captured at the battle of Oolustee, Fla., on the 20th of February. About five hundred of them were white, and belonged to the Seventh Connecticut, the Seventh New Hampshire, Forty Seventh, Forty-Eighth and One Hundred and Fifteenth New York, and Sherman's regular battery. The rest were colored, and belonged to the Eighth United States, and Fifty-Fourth Massachusetts. The story they told of the battle was one which had many shameful reiterations during the war. It was the story told whenever Banks, Sturgis, Butler, or one of a host of similar smaller failures were trusted with commands. It was a senseless waste of the lives of private soldiers, and the property of the United States by pretentious blunderers, who, in some inscrutable manner, had attained to responsible commands. In this instance, a bungling Brigadier named Seymore had marched his forces across the State of Florida, to do he hardly knew what, and in the neighborhood of an enemy of whose numbers, disposition, location, and intentions he was profoundly ignorant. The Rebels, under General Finnegan, waited till he had strung his command along through swamps and cane brakes, scores of miles from his supports, and then fell unexpectedly upon his advance. The regiment was overpowered, and another regiment that hurried up to its support, suffered the same fate. The balance of the regiments were sent in in the same manner—each arriving on the field just after its predecessor had been thoroughly whipped by the concentrated force of the Rebels. The men fought gallantly, but the stupidity of a Commanding General is a thing that the gods themselves strive against in vain. We suffered a humiliating defeat, with a loss of two thousand men and a fine rifled battery, which was brought to Andersonville and placed in position to command the prison.

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The majority of the Seventh New Hampshire were an unwelcome addition to our numbers. They were N'Yaarkers—old time colleagues of those already in with us—veteran bounty jumpers, that had been drawn to New Hampshire by the size of the bounty offered there, and had been assigned to fill up the wasted ranks of the veteran Seventh regiment. They had tried to desert as soon as they received their bounty, but the Government clung to them literally with hooks of steel, sending many of them to the regiment in irons. Thus foiled, they deserted to the Rebels during the retreat from the battlefield. They were quite an accession to the force of our N'Yaarkers, and helped much to establish the hoodlum reign which was shortly inaugurated over the whole prison.

The Forty-Eighth New Yorkers who came in were a set of chaps so odd in every way as to be a source of never-failing interest. The name of their regiment was 'L'Enfants Perdu' (the Lost Children), which we anglicized into "The Lost Ducks." It was believed that every nation in Europe was represented in their ranks, and it used to be said jocularly, that no two of them spoke the same language. As near as I could find out they were all or nearly all South Europeans, Italians, Spaniards; Portuguese, Levantines, with a predominance of the French element. They wore a little cap with an upturned brim, and a strap resting on the chin, a coat with funny little tails about two inches long, and a brass chain across the breast; and for pantaloons they had a sort of a petticoat reaching to the knees, and sewed together down the middle. They were just as singular otherwise as in their looks, speech and uniform. On one occasion the whole mob of us went over in a mass to their squad to see them cook and eat a large water snake, which two of them had succeeded in capturing in the swamps, and carried off to their mess, jabbering in high glee over their treasure trove. Any of us were ready to eat a piece of dog, cat, horse or mule, if we could get it, but, it was generally agreed, as Dawson, of my company expressed it, that "Nobody but one of them darned queer Lost Ducks would eat a varmint like a water snake."

Major Albert Bogle, of the Eighth United States, (colored) had fallen into the hands of the rebels by reason of a severe wound in the leg, which left him helpless upon the field at Oolustee. The Rebels treated him with studied indignity. They utterly refused to recognize him as an officer, or even as a man. Instead of being sent to Macon or Columbia, where the other officers were, he was sent to Andersonville, the same as an enlisted man. No care was given his wound, no surgeon would examine it or dress it. He was thrown into a stock car, without a bed or blanket, and hauled over the rough, jolting road to Andersonville. Once a Rebel officer rode up and fired several shots at him, as he lay helpless on the car floor. Fortunately the Rebel's marksmanship was as bad as his intentions, and none



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of the shots took effect. He was placed in a squad near me, and compelled to get up and hobble into line when the rest were mustered for roll-call. No opportunity to insult, "the nigger officer," was neglected, and the N'Yaarkers vied with the Rebels in heaping abuse upon him. He was a fine, intelligent young man, and bore it all with dignified self-possession, until after a lapse of some weeks the Rebels changed their policy and took him from the prison to send to where the other officers were.

The negro soldiers were also treated as badly as possible. The wounded were turned into the Stockade without having their hurts attended to. One stalwart, soldierly Sergeant had received a bullet which had forced its way under the scalp for some distance, and partially imbedded itself in the skull, where it still remained. He suffered intense agony, and would pass the whole night walking up and down the street in front of our tent, moaning distressingly. The bullet could be felt plainly with the fingers, and we were sure that it would not be a minute's work, with a sharp knife, to remove it and give the man relief. But we could not prevail upon the Rebel Surgeons even to see the man. Finally inflammation set in and he died.

The negros were made into a squad by themselves, and taken out every day to work around the prison. A white Sergeant was placed over them, who was the object of the contumely of the guards and other Rebels. One day as he was standing near the gate, waiting his orders to come out, the gate guard, without any provocation whatever, dropped his gun until the muzzle rested against the Sergeant's stomach, and fired, killing him instantly.

The Sergeantry was then offered to me, but as I had no accident policy, I was constrained to decline the honor.

CHAPTER XXIV.

April—longing to get out—the death rate—the plague of lice —the so-called hospital.

April brought sunny skies and balmy weather. Existence became much more tolerable. With freedom it would have been enjoyable, even had we been no better fed, clothed and sheltered. But imprisonment had never seemed so hard to bear—even in the first few weeks—as now. It was easier to submit to confinement to a limited area, when cold and rain were aiding hunger to benumb the faculties and chill the energies than it was now, when Nature was rousing her slumbering forces to activity, and earth, and air and sky were filled with stimulus to man to imitate her example. The yearning to be up and doing something—to turn these golden hours to good account for self and country—pressed into heart and brain as the vivifying sap pressed into tree-duct and plant cell, awaking all vegetation to energetic life.



To be compelled, at such a time, to lie around in vacuous idleness —to spend days that should be crowded full of action in a monotonous, objectless routine of hunting lice, gathering at roll-call, and drawing and cooking our scanty rations, was torturing.



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But to many of our number the aspirations for freedom were not, as with us, the desire for a wider, manlier field of action, so much as an intense longing to get where care and comforts would arrest their swift progress to the shadowy hereafter. The cruel rains had sapped away their stamina, and they could not recover it with the meager and innutritious diet of coarse meal, and an occasional scrap of salt meat. Quick consumption, bronchitis, pneumonia, low fever and diarrhea seized upon these ready victims for their ravages, and bore them off at the rate of nearly a score a day.

It now became a part of, the day's regular routine to take a walk past the gates in the morning, inspect and count the dead, and see if any friends were among them. Clothes having by this time become a very important consideration with the prisoners, it was the custom of the mess in which a man died to remove from his person all garments that were of any account, and so many bodies were carried out nearly naked. The hands were crossed upon the breast, the big toes tied together with a bit of string, and a slip of paper containing the man's name, rank, company and regiment was pinned on the breast of his shirt.

The appearance of the dead was indescribably ghastly. The unclosed eyes shone with a stony glitter—

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high:
But, O, more terrible than that,
Is the curse in a dead man's eye.

The lips and nostrils were distorted with pain and hunger, the sallow, dirt-grimed skin drawn tensely over the facial bones, and the whole framed with the long, lank, matted hair and beard. Millions of lice swarmed over the wasted limbs and ridged ribs. These verminous pests had become so numerous—owing to our lack of changes of clothing, and of facilities for boiling what we had—that the most a healthy man could do was to keep the number feeding upon his person down to a reasonable limit—say a few tablespoonfuls. When a man became so sick as to be unable to help himself, the parasites speedily increased into millions, or, to speak more comprehensively, into pints and quarts. It did not even seem exaggeration when some one declared that he had seen a dead man with more than a gallon of lice on him.

There is no doubt that the irritation from the biting of these myriads materially the days of those who died.

Where a sick man had friends or comrades, of course part of their duty, in taking care of him, was to "louse" his clothing. One of the most effectual ways of doing this was to turn the garments wrong side out and hold the seams as close to the fire as possible, without burning the cloth. In a short time the lice would swell up and burst open, like pop-corn. This method was a favorite one for another reason than its efficacy: it gave

one a keener sense of revenge upon his rascally little tormentors than he could get in any other way.

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As the weather grew warmer and the number in the prison increased, the lice became more unendurable. They even filled the hot sand under our feet, and voracious troops would climb up on one like streams of ants swarming up a tree. We began to have a full comprehension of the third plague with which the Lord visited the Egyptians:

And the Lord said unto Moses, Say unto Aaron, Stretch out thy rod, and smite the dust of the land, that it may become lice through all the land of Egypt.

And they did so; for Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man and in beast; all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt.

The total number of deaths in April, according to the official report, was five hundred and seventy-six, or an average of over nineteen a day. There was an average of five thousand prisoner's in the pen during all but the last few days of the month, when the number was increased by the arrival of the captured garrison of Plymouth. This would make the loss over eleven per cent., and so worse than decimation. At that rate we should all have died in about eight months. We could have gone through a sharp campaign lasting those thirty days and not lost so great a proportion of our forces. The British had about as many men as were in the Stockade at the battle of New Orleans, yet their loss in killed fell much short of the deaths in the pen in April.

A makeshift of a hospital was established in the northeastern corner of the Stockade. A portion of the ground was divided from the rest of the prison by a railing, a few tent flies were stretched, and in these the long leaves of the pine were made into apologies for beds of about the goodness of the straw on which a Northern farmer beds his stock. The sick taken there were no better off than if they had staid with their comrades.

What they needed to bring about their recovery was clean clothing, nutritious food, shelter and freedom from the tortures of the lice. They obtained none of these. Save a few decoctions of roots, there were no medicines; the sick were fed the same coarse corn meal that brought about the malignant dysentery from which they all suffered; they wore and slept in the same vermin-infested clothes, and there could be but one result: the official records show that seventy-six per cent. of those taken to the hospitals died there.

The establishment of the hospital was specially unfortunate for my little squad. The ground required for it compelled a general reduction of the space we all occupied. We had to tear down our huts and move. By this time the materials had become so dry that we could not rebuild with them, as the pine tufts fell to pieces. This reduced the tent and bedding material of our party—now numbering five—to a cavalry overcoat and a blanket. We scooped



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a hole a foot deep in the sand and stuck our tent-poles around it. By day we spread our blanket over the poles for a tent. At night we lay down upon the overcoat and covered ourselves with the blanket. It required considerable stretching to make it go over five; the two out side fellows used to get very chilly, and squeeze the three inside ones until they felt no thicker than a wafer. But it had to do, and we took turns sleeping on the outside. In the course of a few weeks three of my chums died and left myself and B. B. Andrews (now Dr. Andrews, of Astoria, Ill.) sole heirs to and occupants of, the overcoat and blanket.

CHAPTER XXV.

The "Plymouth pilgrims"—Sad transition from comfortable barracks to Andersonville—A crazed Pennsylvanian—development of the Butler business.

We awoke one morning, in the last part of April, to find about two thousand freshly arrived prisoners lying asleep in the main streets running from the gates. They were attired in stylish new uniforms, with fancy hats and shoes; the Sergeants and Corporals wore patent leather or silk chevrons, and each man had a large, well-filled knapsack, of the kind new recruits usually carried on coming first to the front, and which the older soldiers spoke of humorously as "bureaus." They were the snuggest, nattiest lot of soldiers we had ever seen, outside of the "paper collar" fellows forming the headquarter guard of some General in a large City. As one of my companions surveyed them, he said:

"Hulloa! I'm blanked if the Johnnies haven't caught a regiment of Brigadier Generals, somewhere."

By-and-by the "fresh fish," as all new arrivals were termed, began to wake up, and then we learned that they belonged to a brigade consisting of the Eighty-Fifth New York, One Hundred and First and One Hundred and Third Pennsylvania, Sixteenth Connecticut, Twenty-Fourth New York Battery, two companies of Massachusetts heavy artillery, and a company of the Twelfth New York Cavalry.

They had been garrisoning Plymouth, N. C., an important seaport on the Roanoke River. Three small gunboats assisted them in their duty. The Rebels constructed a powerful iron clad called the "Albemarle," at a point further up the Roanoke, and on the afternoon of the 17th, with her and three brigades of infantry, made an attack upon the post. The "Albemarle" ran past the forts unharmed, sank one of the gunboats, and drove the others away. She then turned her attention to the garrison, which she took in the rear, while the infantry attacked in front. Our men held out until the 20th, when they



capitulated. They were allowed to retain their personal effects, of all kinds, and, as is the case with all men in garrison, these were considerable.

The One Hundred and First and One Hundred and Third Pennsylvania and Eighty-Fifth New York had just "veteranized," and received their first instalment of veteran bounty. Had they not been attacked they would have sailed for home in a day or two, on their veteran furlough, and this accounted for their fine raiment. They were made up of boys from good New York and Pennsylvania families, and were, as a rule, intelligent and fairly educated.



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Their horror at the appearance of their place of incarceration was beyond expression. At one moment they could not comprehend that we dirty and haggard tatterdemalions had once been clean, self-respecting, well-fed soldiers like themselves; at the next they would affirm that they knew they could not stand it a month, in here we had then endured it from four to nine months. They took it, in every way, the hardest of any prisoners that came in, except some of the 'Hundred-Days' men, who were brought in in August, from the Valley of Virginia. They had served nearly all their time in various garrisons along the seacoast—from Fortress Monroe to Beaufort—where they had had comparatively little of the actual hardships of soldiering in the field. They had nearly always had comfortable quarters, an abundance of food, few hard marches or other severe service. Consequently they were not so well hardened for Andersonville as the majority who came in. In other respects they were better prepared, as they had an abundance of clothing, blankets and cooking utensils, and each man had some of his veteran bounty still in possession.

It was painful to see how rapidly many of them sank under the miseries of the situation. They gave up the moment the gates were closed upon them, and began pining away. We older prisoners buoyed ourselves up continually with hopes of escape or exchange. We dug tunnels with the persistence of beavers, and we watched every possible opportunity to get outside the accursed walls of the pen. But we could not enlist the interest of these discouraged ones in any of our schemes, or talk. They resigned themselves to Death, and waited despondingly till he came.

A middle-aged One Hundred and First Pennsylvanian, who had taken up his quarters near me, was an object of peculiar interest. Reasonably intelligent and fairly read, I presume that he was a respectable mechanic before entering the Army. He was evidently a very domestic man, whose whole happiness centered in his family.

When he first came in he was thoroughly dazed by the greatness of his misfortune. He would sit for hours with his face in his hands and his elbows on his knees, gazing out upon the mass of men and huts, with vacant, lack-luster eyes. We could not interest him in anything. We tried to show him how to fix his blanket up to give him some shelter, but he went at the work in a disheartened way, and finally smiled feebly and stopped. He had some letters from his family and a melaineotype of a plain-faced woman—his wife—and her children, and spent much time in looking at them. At first he ate his rations when he drew them, but finally began to reject, them. In a few days he was delirious with hunger and homesick ness. He would sit on the sand for hours imagining that he was at his family table, dispensing his frugal hospitalities to his wife and children.

Making a motion, as if presenting a dish, he would say:



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“Janie, have another biscuit, do!”

Or,

“Eddie, son, won’t you have another piece of this nice steak?”

Or,

“Maggie, have some more potatoes,” and so on, through a whole family of six, or more. It was a relief to us when he died in about a month after he came in.

As stated above, the Plymouth men brought in a large amount of money —variously estimated at from ten thousand to one hundred thousand dollars. The presence of this quantity of circulating medium immediately started a lively commerce. All sorts of devices were resorted to by the other prisoners to get a little of this wealth. Rude chuck-a-luck boards were constructed out of such material as was attainable, and put in operation. Dice and cards were brought out by those skilled in such matters. As those of us already in the Stockade occupied all the ground, there was no disposition on the part of many to surrender a portion of their space without exacting a pecuniary compensation. Messes having ground in a good location would frequently demand and get ten dollars for permission for two or three to quarter with them. Then there was a great demand for poles to stretch blankets over to make tents; the Rebels, with their usual stupid cruelty, would not supply these, nor allow the prisoners to go out and get them themselves. Many of the older prisoners had poles to spare which they were saying up for fuel. They sold these to the Plymouth folks at the rate of ten dollars for three—enough to put up a blanket.

The most considerable trading was done through the gates. The Rebel guards were found quite as keen to barter as they had been in Richmond. Though the laws against their dealing in the money of the enemy were still as stringent as ever, their thirst for greenbacks was not abated one whit, and they were ready to sell anything they had for the coveted currency. The rate of exchange was seven or eight dollars in Confederate money for one dollar in greenbacks. Wood, tobacco, meat, flour, beans, molasses, onions and a villainous kind of whisky made from sorghum, were the staple articles of trade. A whole race of little traffickers in these articles sprang up, and finally Selden, the Rebel Quartermaster, established a sutler shop in the center of the North Side, which he put in charge of Ira Beverly, of the One Hundredth Ohio, and Charlie Huckleby, of the Eighth Tennessee. It was a fine illustration of the development of the commercial instinct in some men. No more unlikely place for making money could be imagined, yet starting in without a cent, they contrived to turn and twist and trade, until they had transferred to their pockets a portion of the funds which were in some one else’s. The Rebels, of course, got nine out of every ten dollars there was in the prison, but these middle men contrived to have a little of it stick to their fingers.

It was only the very few who were able to do this. Nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand were, like myself, either wholly destitute of money and unable to get it from anybody else, or they paid out what money they had to the middlemen, in exorbitant prices for articles of food.



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The N'Yaarkers had still another method for getting food, money, blankets and clothing. They formed little bands called "Raiders," under the leadership of a chief villain. One of these bands would select as their victim a man who had good blankets, clothes, a watch, or greenbacks. Frequently he would be one of the little traders, with a sack of beans, a piece of meat, or something of that kind. Pouncing upon him at night they would snatch away his possessions, knock down his friends who came to his assistance, and scurry away into the darkness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Longings for god's country—considerations of the methods of getting there—exchange and escape—digging tunnels, and the difficulties connected therewith—punishment of A traitor.

To our minds the world now contained but two grand divisions, as widely different from each other as happiness and misery. The first—that portion over which our flag floated was usually spoken of as "God's Country;" the other—that under the baneful shadow of the banner of rebellion—was designated by the most opprobrious epithets at the speaker's command.

To get from the latter to the former was to attain, at one bound, the highest good. Better to be a doorkeeper in the House of the Lord, under the Stars and Stripes, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness, under the hateful Southern Cross.

To take even the humblest and hardest of service in the field now would be a delightful change. We did not ask to go home—we would be content with anything, so long as it was in that blest place "within our lines." Only let us get back once, and there would be no more grumbling at rations or guard duty—we would willingly endure all the hardships and privations that soldier flesh is heir to.

There were two ways of getting back—escape and exchange. Exchange was like the ever receding mirage of the desert, that lures the thirsty traveler on over the parched sands, with illusions of refreshing springs, only to leave his bones at last to whiten by the side of those of his unremembered predecessors. Every day there came something to build up the hopes that exchange was near at hand—every day brought something to extinguish the hopes of the preceding one. We took these varying phases according to our several temperaments. The sanguine built themselves up on the encouraging reports; the desponding sank down and died under the discouraging ones.

Escape was a perpetual allurement. To the actively inclined among us it seemed always possible, and daring, busy brains were indefatigable in concocting schemes for it. The only bit of Rebel brain work that I ever saw for which I did not feel contempt was the perfect precautions taken to prevent our escape. This is shown by the fact that,

although, from first to last, there were nearly fifty thousand prisoners in Andersonville, and three out of every five of these were ever on the alert to take French leave of their captors, only three hundred and twenty-eight succeeded in getting so far away from Andersonville as to leave it to be presumed that they had reached our lines.

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The first, and almost superhuman difficulty was to get outside the Stockade. It was simply impossible to scale it. The guards were too close together to allow an instant's hope to the most sanguine, that he could even pass the Dead Line without being shot by some one of them. This same closeness prevented any hope of bribing them. To be successful half those on post would have to be bribed, as every part of the Stockade was clearly visible from every other part, and there was no night so dark as not to allow a plain view to a number of guards of the dark figure outlined against the light colored logs of any Yankee who should essay to clamber towards the top of the palisades.

The gates were so carefully guarded every time they were opened as to preclude hope of slipping out through them. They were only unclosed twice or thrice a day—once to admit, the men to call the roll, once to let them out again, once to let the wagons come in with rations, and once, perhaps, to admit, new prisoners. At all these times every precaution was taken to prevent any one getting out surreptitiously.

This narrowed down the possibilities of passing the limits of the pen alive, to tunneling. This was also surrounded by almost insuperable difficulties. First, it required not less than fifty feet of subterranean excavation to get out, which was an enormous work with our limited means. Then the logs forming the Stockade were set in the ground to a depth of five feet, and the tunnel had to go down beneath them. They had an unpleasant habit of dropping down into the burrow under them. It added much to the discouragements of tunneling to think of one of these massive timbers dropping upon a fellow as he worked his mole-like way under it, and either crushing him to death outright, or pinning him there to die of suffocation or hunger.

In one instance, in a tunnel near me, but in which I was not interested, the log slipped down after the digger had got out beyond it. He immediately began digging for the surface, for life, and was fortunately able to break through before he suffocated. He got his head above the ground, and then fainted. The guard outside saw him, pulled him out of the hole, and when he recovered sensibility hurried him back into the Stockade.

In another tunnel, also near us, a broad-shouldered German, of the Second Minnesota, went in to take his turn at digging. He was so much larger than any of his predecessors that he stuck fast in a narrow part, and despite all the efforts of himself and comrades, it was found impossible to move him one way or the other. The comrades were at last reduced to the humiliation of informing the Officer of the Guard of their tunnel and the condition of their friend, and of asking assistance to release him, which was given.

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The great tunneling tool was the indispensable half-canteen. The inventive genius of our people, stimulated by the war, produced nothing for the comfort and effectiveness of the soldier equal in usefulness to this humble and unrecognized utensil. It will be remembered that a canteen was composed of two pieces of tin struck up into the shape of saucers, and soldered together at the edges. After a soldier had been in the field a little while, and thrown away or lost the curious and complicated kitchen furniture he started out with, he found that by melting the halves of his canteen apart, he had a vessel much handier in every way than any he had parted with. It could be used for anything—to make soup or coffee in, bake bread, brown coffee, stew vegetables, *etc.*, *etc.* A sufficient handle was made with a split stick. When the cooking was done, the handle was thrown away, and the half canteen slipped out of the road into the haversack. There seemed to be no end of the uses to which this ever-ready disk of blackened sheet iron could be turned. Several instances are on record where infantry regiments, with no other tools than this, covered themselves on the field with quite respectable rifle pits.

The starting point of a tunnel was always some tent close to the Dead Line, and sufficiently well closed to screen the operations from the sight of the guards near by. The party engaged in the work organized by giving every man a number to secure the proper apportionment of the labor. Number One began digging with his half canteen. After he had worked until tired, he came out, and Number Two took his place, and so on. The tunnel was simply a round, rat-like burrow, a little larger than a man's body. The digger lay on his stomach, dug ahead of him, threw the dirt under him, and worked it back with his feet till the man behind him, also lying on his stomach, could catch it and work it back to the next. As the tunnel lengthened the number of men behind each other in this way had to be increased, so that in a tunnel seventy-five feet long there would be from eight to ten men lying one behind the other. When the dirt was pushed back to the mouth of the tunnel it was taken up in improvised bags, made by tying up the bottoms of pantaloon legs, carried to the Swamp, and emptied. The work in the tunnel was very exhausting, and the digger had to be relieved every half-hour.

The greatest trouble was to carry the tunnel forward in a straight line. As nearly everybody dug most of the time with the right hand, there was an almost irresistible tendency to make the course veer to the left. The first tunnel I was connected with was a ludicrous illustration of this. About twenty of us had devoted our nights for over a week to the prolongation of a burrow. We had not yet reached the Stockade, which astonished us, as measurement with a string showed that we had gone nearly twice the distance necessary for the purpose. The thing

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was inexplicable, and we ceased operations to consider the matter. The next day a man walking by a tent some little distance from the one in which the hole began, was badly startled by the ground giving way under his feet, and his sinking nearly to his waist in a hole. It was very singular, but after wondering over the matter for some hours, there came a glimmer of suspicion that it might be, in some way, connected with the missing end of our tunnel. One of us started through on an exploring expedition, and confirmed the suspicions by coming out where the man had broken through. Our tunnel was shaped like a horse shoe, and the beginning and end were not fifteen feet apart. After that we practised digging with our left hand, and made certain compensations for the tendency to the sinister side.

Another trouble connected with tunneling was the number of traitors and spies among us. There were many—principally among the N'Yaarker crowd who were always zealous to betray a tunnel, in order to curry favor with the Rebel officers. Then, again, the Rebels had numbers of their own men in the pen at night, as spies. It was hardly even necessary to dress these in our uniform, because a great many of our own men came into the prison in Rebel clothes, having been compelled to trade garments with their captors.

One day in May, quite an excitement was raised by the detection of one of these “tunnel traitors” in such a way as left no doubt of his guilt. At first everybody was in favor of killing him, and they actually started to beat him to death. This was arrested by a proposition to “have Captain Jack tattoo him,” and the suggestion was immediately acted upon.

“Captain Jack” was a sailor who had been with us in the Pemberton building at Richmond. He was a very skilful tattoo artist, but, I am sure, could make the process nastier than any other that I ever saw attempt it. He chewed tobacco enormously. After pricking away for a few minutes at the design on the arm or some portion of the body, he would deluge it with a flood of tobacco spit, which, he claimed, acted as a kind of mordant. Piping this off with a filthy rag, he would study the effect for an instant, and then go ahead with another series of prickings and tobacco juice drenchings.

The tunnel-traitor was taken to Captain Jack. That worthy decided to brand him with a great “T,” the top part to extend across his forehead and the stem to run down his nose. Captain Jack got his tattooing kit ready, and the fellow was thrown upon the ground and held there. The Captain took his head between his legs, and began operations. After an instant's work with the needles, he opened his mouth, and filled the wretch's face and eyes full of the disgusting saliva. The crowd round about yelled with delight at this new process. For an hour, that was doubtless an eternity to the rascal undergoing branding, Captain Jack continued his alternate prickings and drenchings. At the end of that time the traitor's face was disfigured with a hideous mark that he would bear to his



grave. We learned afterwards that he was not one of our men, but a Rebel spy. This added much to our satisfaction with the manner of his treatment. He disappeared shortly after the operation was finished, being, I suppose, taken outside. I hardly think Captain Jack would be pleased to meet him again.



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CHAPTER XXVII.

The hounds, and the difficulties they put in the way of escape —the whole south patrolled by them.

Those who succeeded, one way or another, in passing the Stockade limits, found still more difficulties lying between them and freedom than would discourage ordinarily resolute men. The first was to get away from the immediate vicinity of the prison. All around were Rebel patrols, pickets and guards, watching every avenue of egress. Several packs of hounds formed efficient coadjutors of these, and were more dreaded by possible "escapes," than any other means at the command of our jailors. Guards and patrols could be evaded, or circumvented, but the hounds could not. Nearly every man brought back from a futile attempt at escape told the same story: he had been able to escape the human Rebels, but not their canine colleagues. Three of our detachment—members of the Twentieth Indiana—had an experience of this kind that will serve to illustrate hundreds of others. They had been taken outside to do some work upon the cook-house that was being built. A guard was sent with the three a little distance into the woods to get a piece of timber. The boys sauntered, along carelessly with the guard, and managed to get pretty near him. As soon as they were fairly out of sight of the rest, the strongest of them—Tom Williams—snatched the Rebel's gun away from him, and the other two springing upon him as swift as wild cats, throttled him, so that he could not give the alarm. Still keeping a hand on his throat, they led him off some distance, and tied him to a sapling with strings made by tearing up one of their blouses. He was also securely gagged, and the boys, bidding him a hasty, but not specially tender, farewell, struck out, as they fondly hoped, for freedom. It was not long until they were missed, and the parties sent in search found and released the guard, who gave all the information he possessed as to what had become of his charges. All the packs of hounds, the squads of cavalry, and the foot patrols were sent out to scour the adjacent country. The Yankees kept in the swamps and creeks, and no trace of them was found that afternoon or evening. By this time they were ten or fifteen miles away, and thought that they could safely leave the creeks for better walking on the solid ground. They had gone but a few miles, when the pack of hounds Captain Wirz was with took their trail, and came after them in full cry. The boys tried to ran, but, exhausted as they were, they could make no headway. Two of them were soon caught, but Tom Williams, who was so desperate that he preferred death to recapture, jumped into a mill-pond near by. When he came up, it was in a lot of saw logs and drift wood that hid him from being seen from the shore. The dogs

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stopped at the shore, and bayed after the disappearing prey. The Rebels with them, who had seen Tom spring in, came up and made a pretty thorough search for him. As they did not think to probe around the drift wood this was unsuccessful, and they came to the conclusion that Tom had been drowned. Wirz marched the other two back and, for a wonder, did not punish them, probably because he was so rejoiced at his success in capturing them. He was beaming with delight when he returned them to our squad, and said, with a chuckle:

“Brisoners, I bring you pack two of dem tam Yankees wat got away yesterday, unt I run de oder raskal into a mill-pont and trowntet him.”

What was our astonishment, about three weeks later, to see Tom, fat and healthy, and dressed in a full suit of butternut, come stalking into the pen. He had nearly reached the mountains, when a pack of hounds, patrolling for deserters or negros, took his trail, where he had crossed the road from one field to another, and speedily ran him down. He had been put in a little country jail, and well fed till an opportunity occurred to send him back. This patrolling for negros and deserters was another of the great obstacles to a successful passage through the country. The rebels had put, every able-bodied white man in the ranks, and were bending every energy to keep him there. The whole country was carefully policed by Provost Marshals to bring out those who were shirking military duty, or had deserted their colors, and to check any movement by the negros. One could not go anywhere without a pass, as every road was continually watched by men and hounds. It was the policy of our men, when escaping, to avoid roads as much as possible by traveling through the woods and fields.

From what I saw of the hounds, and what I could learn from others, I believe that each pack was made up of two bloodhounds and from twenty-five to fifty other dogs. The bloodhounds were debased descendants of the strong and fierce hounds imported from Cuba—many of them by the United States Government—for hunting Indians, during the Seminole war. The other dogs were the mongrels that are found in such plentifulness about every Southern house—increasing, as a rule, in numbers as the inhabitant of the house is lower down and poorer. They are like wolves, sneaking and cowardly when alone, fierce and bold when in packs. Each pack was managed by a well-armed man, who rode a mule; and carried, slung over his shoulders by a cord, a cow horn, scraped very thin, with which he controlled the band by signals.



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What always puzzled me much was why the hounds took only Yankee trails, in the vicinity of the prison. There was about the Stockade from six thousand to ten thousand Rebels and negros, including guards, officers, servants, workmen, *etc.* These were, of course, continually in motion and must have daily made trails leading in every direction. It was the custom of the Rebels to send a pack of hounds around the prison every morning, to examine if any Yankees had escaped during the night. It was believed that they rarely failed to find a prisoner's tracks, and still more rarely ran off upon a Rebel's. If those outside the Stockade had been confined to certain path and roads we could have understood this, but, as I understand, they were not. It was part of the interest of the day, for us, to watch the packs go yelping around the pen searching for tracks. We got information in this way whether any tunnel had been successfully opened during the night.

The use of hounds furnished us a crushing reply to the ever recurring Rebel question:

"Why are you-uns puttin' niggers in the field to fight we-uns for?"

The questioner was always silenced by the return interrogatory:

"Is that as bad as running white men down with blood hounds?"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

May—influx of new prisoners—disparity in numbers between the eastern and Western armies—terrible crowding—Slaughter of men at the creek.

In May the long gathering storm of war burst with angry violence all along the line held by the contending armies. The campaign began which was to terminate eleven months later in the obliteration of the Southern Confederacy. May 1, Sigel moved up the Shenandoah Valley with thirty thousand men; May 3, Butler began his blundering movement against Petersburg; May 3, the Army of the Potomac left Culpeper, and on the 5th began its deadly grapple with Lee, in the Wilderness; May 6, Sherman moved from Chattanooga, and engaged Joe Johnston at Rocky Face Ridge and Tunnel Hill.

Each of these columns lost heavily in prisoners. It could not be otherwise; it was a consequence of the aggressive movements. An army acting offensively usually suffers more from capture than one on the defensive. Our armies were penetrating the enemy's country in close proximity to a determined and vigilant foe. Every scout, every skirmish line, every picket, every foraging party ran the risk of falling into a Rebel trap. This was in addition to the risk of capture in action.

The bulk of the prisoners were taken from the Army of the Potomac. For this there were two reasons: First, that there were many more men in that Army than in any other; and second, that the entanglement in the dense thickets and shrubbery of the Wilderness

enabled both sides to capture great numbers of the other's men. Grant lost in prisoners from May 5 to May 31, seven thousand four hundred and fifty; he probably captured two-thirds of that number from the Johnnies.



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Wirz's headquarters were established in a large log house which had been built in the fort a little distant from the southeast corner of the prison. Every day—and sometimes twice or thrice a day—we would see great squads of prisoners marched up to these headquarters, where they would be searched, their names entered upon the prison records, by clerks (detailed prisoners; few Rebels had the requisite clerical skill) and then be marched into the prison. As they entered, the Rebel guards would stand to arms. The infantry would be in line of battle, the cavalry mounted, and the artillerymen standing by their guns, ready to open at the instant with grape and canister.

The disparity between the number coming in from the Army of the Potomac and Western armies was so great, that we Westerners began to take some advantage of it. If we saw a squad of one hundred and fifty or thereabouts at the headquarters, we felt pretty certain they were from Sherman, and gathered to meet them, and learn the news from our friends. If there were from five hundred to two thousand we knew they were from the Army of the Potomac, and there were none of our comrades among them. There were three exceptions to this rule while we were in Andersonville. The first was in June, when the drunken and incompetent Sturgis (now Colonel of the Seventh United States Cavalry) shamefully sacrificed a superb division at Guntown, Miss. The next was after Hood made his desperate attack on Sherman, on the 22d of July, and the third was when Stoneman was captured at Macon. At each of these times about two thousand prisoners were brought in.

By the end of May there were eighteen thousand four hundred and fifty-four prisoners in the Stockade. Before the reader dismisses this statement from his mind let him reflect how great a number this is. It is more active, able-bodied young men than there are in any of our leading Cities, save New York and Philadelphia. It is more than the average population of an Ohio County. It is four times as many troops as Taylor won the victory of Buena Vista with, and about twice as many as Scott went into battle with at any time in his march to the City of Mexico.

These eighteen thousand four hundred and fifty-four men were cooped up on less than thirteen acres of ground, making about fifteen hundred to the acre. No room could be given up for streets, or for the usual arrangements of a camp, and most kinds of exercise were wholly precluded. The men crowded together like pigs nesting in the woods on cold nights. The ground, despite all our efforts, became indescribably filthy, and this condition grew rapidly worse as the season advanced and the sun's rays gained fervency. As it is impossible to describe this adequately, I must again ask the reader to assist with a few comparisons. He has an idea of how much filth is produced, on an ordinary City lot, in a week, by its occupation by a family say of six persons. Now let him imagine what would be the result if that lot, instead of having upon it six persons, with every appliance for keeping themselves clean, and for removing and concealing filth, was the home of one hundred and eight men, with none of these appliances.

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That he may figure out these proportions for himself, I will repeat some of the elements of the problem: We will say that an average City lot is thirty feet front by one hundred deep. This is more front than most of them have, but we will be liberal. This gives us a surface of three thousand square feet. An acre contains forty-three thousand five hundred and sixty square feet. Upon thirteen of these acres, we had eighteen thousand four hundred and fifty-four men. After he has found the number of square feet that each man had for sleeping apartment, dining room, kitchen, exercise grounds and outhouses, and decided that nobody could live for any length of time in such contracted space, I will tell him that a few weeks later double that many men were crowded upon that space that over thirty-five thousand were packed upon those twelve and a-half or thirteen acres.

But I will not anticipate. With the warm weather the condition of the swamp in the center of the prison became simply horrible. We hear so much now-a-days of blood poisoning from the effluvia of sinks and sewers, that reading it, I wonder how a man inside the Stockade, and into whose nostrils came a breath of that noisomeness, escaped being carried off by a malignant typhus. In the slimy ooze were billions of white maggots. They would crawl out by thousands on the warm sand, and, lying there a few minutes, sprout a wing or a pair of them. With these they would essay a clumsy flight, ending by dropping down upon some exposed portion of a man's body, and stinging him like a gad-fly. Still worse, they would drop into what he was cooking, and the utmost care could not prevent a mess of food from being contaminated with them.

All the water that we had to use was that in the creek which flowed through this seething mass of corruption, and received its sewerage. How pure the water was when it came into the Stockade was a question. We always believed that it received the drainage from the camps of the guards, a half-a-mile away.

A road was made across the swamp, along the Dead Line at the west side, where the creek entered the pen. Those getting water would go to this spot, and reach as far up the stream as possible, to get the water that was least filthy. As they could reach nearly to the Dead Line this furnished an excuse to such of the guards as were murderously inclined to fire upon them. I think I hazard nothing in saying that for weeks at least one man a day was killed at this place. The murders became monotonous; there was a dreadful sameness to them. A gun would crack; looking up we would see, still smoking, the muzzle of the musket of one of the guards on either side of the creek. At the same instant would rise a piercing shriek from the man struck, now floundering in the creek in his death agony. Then thousands of throats would yell out curses and denunciations, and—

“O, give the Rebel ——— a furlough!”



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It was our belief that every guard who killed a Yankee was rewarded with a thirty-day furlough. Mr. Frederick Holliger, now of Toledo, formerly a member of the Seventy-Second Ohio, and captured at Guntown, tells me, as his introduction to Andersonville life, that a few hours after his entry he went to the brook to get a drink, reached out too far, and was fired upon by the guard, who missed him, but killed another man and wounded a second. The other prisoners standing near then attacked him, and beat him nearly to death, for having drawn the fire of the guard.

Nothing could be more inexcusable than these murders. Whatever defense there might be for firing on men who touched the Dead Line in other parts of the prison, there could be none here. The men had no intention of escaping; they had no designs upon the Stockade; they were not leading any party to assail it. They were in every instance killed in the act of reaching out with their cups to dip up a little water.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Some distinction between soldierly duty and murder—A plot to escape—it is revealed and frustrated.

Let the reader understand that in any strictures I make I do not complain of the necessary hardships of war. I understood fully and accepted the conditions of a soldier's career. My going into the field uniformed and armed implied an intention, at least, of killing, wounding, or capturing, some of the enemy. There was consequently no ground of complaint if I was, myself killed, wounded, or captured. If I did not want to take these chances I ought to stay at home. In the same way, I recognized the right of our captors or guards to take proper precautions to prevent our escape. I never questioned for an instant the right of a guard to fire upon those attempting to escape, and to kill them. Had I been posted over prisoners I should have had no compunction about shooting at those trying to get away, and consequently I could not blame the Rebels for doing the same thing. It was a matter of soldierly duty.

But not one of the men assassinated by the guards at Andersonville were trying to escape, nor could they have got away if not arrested by a bullet. In a majority of instances there was not even a transgression of a prison rule, and when there was such a transgression it was a mere harmless inadvertence. The slaying of every man there was a foul crime.

The most of this was done by very young boys; some of it by old men. The Twenty-Sixth Alabama and Fifty-Fifth Georgia, had guarded us since the opening of the prison, but now they were ordered to the field, and their places filled by the Georgia "Reserves," an organization of boys under, and men over the military age. As General Grant aptly-phrased it, "They had robbed the cradle and the grave," in forming these regiments. The boys, who had grown up from children since the war began, could not comprehend

that a Yankee was a human being, or that it was any more wrongful to shoot one than to kill a mad dog. Their young imaginations had been inflamed with stories of the total depravity of the Unionists until they believed it was a meritorious thing to seize every opportunity to exterminate them.



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Early one morning I overheard a conversation between two of these youthful guards:

“Say, Bill, I heerd that you shot a Yank last night?”

“Now, you just bet I did. God! you jest ought to’ve heerd him holler.”

Evidently the juvenile murderer had no more conception that he had committed crime than if he had killed a rattlesnake.

Among those who came in about the last of the month were two thousand men from Butler’s command, lost in the disastrous action of May 15, by which Butler was “bottled up” at Bermuda Hundreds. At that time the Rebel hatred for Butler verged on insanity, and they vented this upon these men who were so luckless—in every sense—as to be in his command. Every pains was taken to mistreat them. Stripped of every article of clothing, equipment, and cooking utensils—everything, except a shirt and a pair of pantaloons, they were turned bareheaded and barefooted into the prison, and the worst possible place in the pen hunted out to locate them upon. This was under the bank, at the edge of the Swamp and at the eastern side of the prison, where the sinks were, and all filth from the upper part of the camp flowed down to them. The sand upon which they lay was dry and burning as that of a tropical desert; they were without the slightest shelter of any kind, the maggot flies swarmed over them, and the stench was frightful. If one of them survived the germ theory of disease is a hallucination.

The increasing number of prisoners made it necessary for the Rebels to improve their means of guarding and holding us in check. They threw up a line of rifle pits around the Stockade for the infantry guards. At intervals along this were piles of hand grenades, which could be used with fearful effect in case of an outbreak. A strong star fort was thrown up at a little distance from the southwest corner. Eleven field pieces were mounted in this in such a way as to rake the Stockade diagonally. A smaller fort, mounting five guns, was built at the northwest corner, and at the northeast and southeast corners were small lunettes, with a couple of howitzers each. Packed as we were we had reason to dread a single round from any of these works, which could not fail to produce fearful havoc.

Still a plot was concocted for a break, and it seemed to the sanguine portions of us that it must prove successful. First a secret society was organized, bound by the most stringent oaths that could be devised. The members of this were divided into companies of fifty men each; under officers regularly elected. The secrecy was assumed in order to shut out Rebel spies and the traitors from a knowledge of the contemplated outbreak. A man named Baker—belonging, I think, to some New York regiment—was the grand organizer of the scheme. We were careful in each of our companies to admit none to membership except such as long acquaintance gave us entire confidence in.



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The plan was to dig large tunnels to the Stockade at various places, and then hollow out the ground at the foot of the timbers, so that a half dozen or so could be pushed over with a little effort, and make a gap ten or twelve feet wide. All these were to be thrown down at a preconcerted signal, the companies were to rush out and seize the eleven guns of the headquarters fort. The Plymouth Brigade was then to man these and turn them on the camp of the Reserves who, it was imagined, would drop their arms and take to their heels after receiving a round or so of shell. We would gather what arms we could, and place them in the hands of the most active and determined. This would give us from eight to ten thousand fairly armed, resolute men, with which we thought we could march to Appalachicola Bay, or to Sherman.

We worked energetically at our tunnels, which soon began to assume such shape as to give assurance that they would answer our expectations in opening the prison walls.

Then came the usual blight to all such enterprises: a spy or a traitor revealed everything to Wirz. One day a guard came in, seized Baker and took him out. What was done with him I know not; we never heard of him after he passed the inner gate.

Immediately afterward all the Sergeants of detachments were summoned outside. There they met Wirz, who made a speech informing them that he knew all the details of the plot, and had made sufficient preparations to defeat it. The guard had been strongly reinforced, and disposed in such a manner as to protect the guns from capture. The Stockade had been secured to prevent its falling, even if undermined. He said, in addition, that Sherman had been badly defeated by Johnston, and driven back across the river, so that any hopes of co-operation by him would be ill-founded.

When the Sergeants returned, he caused the following notice to be posted on the gates:

Notice.

Not wishing to shed the blood of hundreds, not connected with those who concocted a mad plan to force the Stockade, and make in this way their escape, I hereby warn the leaders and those who formed themselves into a band to carry out this, that I am in possession of all the facts, and have made my dispositions accordingly, so as to frustrate it. No choice would be left me but to open with grape and canister on the Stockade, and what effect this would have, in this densely crowded place, need not be told.

May 25, 1864.

H. Wirz.

The next day a line of tall poles, bearing white flags, were put up at some little distance from the Dead Line, and a notice was read to us at roll call that if, except at roll call, any



gathering exceeding one hundred was observed, closer the Stockade than these poles, the guns would open with grape and canister without warning.

The number of deaths in the Stockade in May was seven hundred and eight, about as many as had been killed in Sherman's army during the same time.



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CHAPTER XXX.

June—possibilities of A murderous cannonade—what was proposed to be done in that event—A false alarm—deterioration of the rations —fearful increase of mortality.

After Wirz's threat of grape and canister upon the slightest provocation, we lived in daily apprehension of some pretext being found for opening the guns upon us for a general massacre. Bitter experience had long since taught us that the Rebels rarely threatened in vain. Wirz, especially, was much more likely to kill without warning, than to warn without killing. This was because of the essential weakness of his nature. He knew no art of government, no method of discipline save "kill them!" His petty little mind's scope reached no further. He could conceive of no other way of managing men than the punishment of every offense, or seeming offense, with death. Men who have any talent for governing find little occasion for the death penalty. The stronger they are in themselves—the more fitted for controlling others—the less their need of enforcing their authority by harsh measures.

There was a general expression of determination among the prisoners to answer any cannonade with a desperate attempt to force the Stockade. It was agreed that anything was better than dying like rats in a pit or wild animals in a battue. It was believed that if anything would occur which would rouse half those in the pen to make a headlong effort in concert, the palisade could be scaled, and the gates carried, and, though it would be at a fearful loss of life, the majority of those making the attempt would get out. If the Rebels would discharge grape and canister, or throw a shell into the prison, it would lash everybody to such a pitch that they would see that the sole forlorn hope of safety lay in wresting the arms away from our tormentors. The great element in our favor was the shortness of the distance between us and the cannon. We could hope to traverse this before the guns could be reloaded more than once.

Whether it would have been possible to succeed I am unable to say. It would have depended wholly upon the spirit and unanimity with which the effort was made. Had ten thousand rushed forward at once, each with a determination to do or die, I think it would have been successful without a loss of a tenth of the number. But the insuperable trouble—in our disorganized state—was want of concert of action. I am quite sure, however, that the attempt would have been made had the guns opened.

One day, while the agitation of this matter was feverish, I was cooking my dinner—that is, boiling my pitiful little ration of unsalted meal, in my fruit can, with the aid of a handful of splinters that I had been able to pick up by a half day's diligent search. Suddenly the long rifle in the headquarters fort rang out angrily. A fuse shell shrieked across the prison—close to the tops of the logs, and burst in the woods beyond. It was answered with a yell of defiance from ten thousand throats.



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I sprang up—my heart in my mouth. The long dreaded time had arrived; the Rebels had opened the massacre in which they must exterminate us, or we them.

I looked across to the opposite bank, on which were standing twelve thousand men—erect, excited, defiant. I was sure that at the next shot they would surge straight against the Stockade like a mighty human billow, and then a carnage would begin the like of which modern times had never seen.

The excitement and suspense were terrible. We waited for what seemed ages for the next gun. It was not fired. Old Winder was merely showing the prisoners how he could rally the guards to oppose an outbreak. Though the gun had a shell in it, it was merely a signal, and the guards came double-quickening up by regiments, going into position in the rifle pits and the hand-grenade piles.

As we realized what the whole affair meant, we relieved our surcharged feelings with a few general yells of execration upon Rebels generally, and upon those around us particularly, and resumed our occupation of cooking rations, killing lice, and discussing the prospects of exchange and escape.

The rations, like everything else about us, had steadily grown worse. A bakery was built outside of the Stockade in May and our meal was baked there into loaves about the size of brick. Each of us got a half of one of these for a day's ration. This, and occasionally a small slice of salt pork, was all that I received. I wish the reader would prepare himself an object lesson as to how little life can be supported on for any length of time, by procuring a piece of corn bread the size of an ordinary brickbat, and a thin slice of pork, and then imagine how he would fare, with that as his sole daily ration, for long hungry weeks and months. Dio Lewis satisfied himself that he could sustain life on sixty cents, a week. I am sure that the food furnished us by the Rebels would not, at present prices cost one-third that. They pretended to give us one-third of pound of bacon and one and one-fourth pounds of corn meal. A week's rations then would be two and one-third pounds of bacon—worth ten cents, and eight and three-fourths pounds of meal, worth, say, ten cents more. As a matter of fact, I do not presume that at any time we got this full ration. It would surprise me to learn that we averaged two-thirds of it.

The meal was ground very coarse and produced great irritation in the bowels. We used to have the most frightful cramps that men ever suffered from. Those who were predisposed intestinal affections were speedily carried off by incurable diarrhea and dysentery. Of the twelve thousand and twelve men who died, four thousand died of chronic diarrhea; eight hundred and seventeen died of acute diarrhea, and one thousand three hundred and eighty-four died of dysentery, making total of six thousand two hundred and one victims to enteric disorders.



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Let the reader reflect a moment upon this number, till comprehends fully how many six thousand two hundred and men are, and how much force, energy, training, and rich possibilities for the good of the community and country died with those six thousand two hundred and one young, active men. It may help his perception of the magnitude of this number to remember that the total loss of the British, during the Crimean war, by death in all shapes, was four thousand five hundred and ninety-five, or one thousand seven hundred and six less than the deaths in Andersonville from dysenteric diseases alone.

The loathsome maggot flies swarmed about the bakery, and dropped into the trough where the dough was being mixed, so that it was rare to get a ration of bread not contaminated with a few of them.

It was not long until the bakery became inadequate to supply bread for all the prisoners. Then great iron kettles were set, and mush was issued to a number of detachments, instead of bread. There was not so much cleanliness and care in preparing this as a farmer shows in cooking food for stock. A deep wagon-bed would be shoveled full of the smoking paste, which was then haled inside and issued out to the detachments, the latter receiving it on blankets, pieces of shelter tents, or, lacking even these, upon the bare sand.

As still more prisoners came in, neither bread nor mush could be furnished them, and a part of the detachments received their rations in meal. Earnest solicitation at length resulted in having occasional scanty issues of wood to cook this with. My detachment was allowed to choose which it would take—bread, mush or meal. It took the latter.

Cooking the meal was the topic of daily interest. There were three ways of doing it: Bread, mush and “dumplings.” In the latter the meal was dampened until it would hold together, and was rolled into little balls, the size of marbles, which were then boiled. The bread was the most satisfactory and nourishing; the mush the bulkiest—it made a bigger show, but did not stay with one so long. The dumplings held an intermediate position—the water in which they were boiled becoming a sort of a broth that helped to stay the stomach. We received no salt, as a rule. No one knows the intense longing for this, when one goes without it for a while. When, after a privation of weeks we would get a teaspoonful of salt apiece, it seemed as if every muscle in our bodies was invigorated. We traded buttons to the guards for red peppers, and made our mush, or bread, or dumplings, hot with the fiery-pods, in hopes that this would make up for the lack of salt, but it was a failure. One pinch of salt was worth all the pepper pods in the Southern Confederacy. My little squad—now diminished by death from five to three—cooked our rations together to economize wood and waste of meal, and quarreled among, ourselves daily as to whether the joint stock should be converted into bread, mush or dumplings. The decision depended upon the state of the stomach. If very hungry, we made mush; if less famished, dumplings; if disposed to weigh matters, bread.



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This may seem a trifling matter, but it was far from it. We all remember the man who was very fond of white beans, but after having fifty or sixty meals of them in succession, began to find a suspicion of monotony in the provender. We had now six months of unvarying diet of corn meal and water, and even so slight a change as a variation in the way of combining the two was an agreeable novelty.

At the end of June there were twenty-six thousand three hundred and sixty-seven prisoners in the Stockade, and one thousand two hundred—just forty per day—had died during the month.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Dying by inches—Seitz, the slow, and his death—Stiggall and Emerson —ravages on the scurvy.

May and June made sad havoc in the already thin ranks of our battalion. Nearly a score died in my company—L—and the other companies suffered proportionately. Among the first to die of my company comrades, was a genial little Corporal, “Billy” Phillips—who was a favorite with us all. Everything was done for him that kindness could suggest, but it was of little avail. Then “Bruno” Weeks—a young boy, the son of a preacher, who had run away from his home in Fulton County, Ohio, to join us, succumbed to hardship and privation.

The next to go was good-natured, harmless Victor Seitz, a Detroit cigar maker, a German, and one of the slowest of created mortals. How he ever came to go into the cavalry was beyond the wildest surmises of his comrades. Why his supernatural slowness and clumsiness did not result in his being killed at least once a day, while in the service, was even still farther beyond the power of conjecture. No accident ever happened in the company that Seitz did not have some share in. Did a horse fall on a slippery road, it was almost sure to be Seitz’s, and that imported son of the Fatherland was equally sure to be caught under him. Did somebody tumble over a bank of a dark night, it was Seitz that we soon heard making his way back, swearing in deep German gutturals, with frequent allusion to ‘tausend teuflin.’ Did a shanty blow down, we ran over and pulled Seitz out of the debris, when he would exclaim:

“Zo! dot vos pretty vunny now, ain’t it?”

And as he surveyed the scene of his trouble with true German phlegm, he would fish a brier-wood pipe from the recesses of his pockets, fill it with tobacco, and go plodding off in a cloud of smoke in search of some fresh way to narrowly escape destruction. He did not know enough about horses to put a snaffle-bit in one’s mouth, and yet he would draw the friskiest, most mettlesome animal in the corral, upon whose back he was scarcely more at home than he would be upon a slack rope. It was no uncommon thing



to see a horse break out of ranks, and go past the battalion like the wind, with poor Seitz clinging to his mane like the traditional grim Death to a deceased African. We then knew that Seitz had thoughtlessly sunk the keen spurs he would persist in wearing; deep into the flanks of his high-mettled animal.

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These accidents became so much a matter-of-course that when anything unusual occurred in the company our first impulse was to go and help Seitz out.

When the bugle sounded “boots and saddles,” the rest of us would pack up, mount, “count off by fours from the right,” and be ready to move out before the last notes of the call had fairly died away. Just then we would notice an unsaddled horse still tied to the hitching place. It was Seitz’s, and that worthy would be seen approaching, pipe in mouth, and bridle in hand, with calm, equable steps, as if any time before the expiration of his enlistment would be soon enough to accomplish the saddling of his steed. A chorus of impatient and derisive remarks would go up from his impatient comrades:

“For heaven’s sake, Seitz, hurry up!”

“Seitz! you are like a cow’s tail—always behind!”

“Seitz, you are slower than the second coming of the Savior!”

“Christmas is a railroad train alongside of you, Seitz!”

“If you ain’t on that horse in half a second, Seitz, we’ll go off and leave you, and the Johnnies will skin you alive!” *etc., etc.*

Not a ripple of emotion would roll over Seitz’s placid features under the sharpest of these objurgations. At last, losing all patience, two or three boys would dismount, run to Seitz’s horse, pack, saddle and bridle him, as if he were struck with a whirlwind. Then Seitz would mount, and we would move ’off.

For all this, we liked him. His good nature was boundless, and his disposition to oblige equal to the severest test. He did not lack a grain of his full share of the calm, steadfast courage of his race, and would stay where he was put, though Erebus yawned and bade him fly. He was very useful, despite his unfitness for many of the duties of a cavalryman. He was a good guard, and always ready to take charge of prisoners, or be sentry around wagons or a forage pile—duties that most of the boys cordially hated.

But he came into the last trouble at Andersonville. He stood up pretty well under the hardships of Belle Isle, but lost his cheerfulness—his unrepining calmness—after a few weeks in the Stockade. One day we remembered that none of us had seen him for several days, and we started in search of him. We found him in a distant part of the camp, lying near the Dead Line. His long fair hair was matted together, his blue eyes had the flush of fever. Every part of his clothing was gray with the lice that were hastening his death with their torments. He uttered the first complaint I ever heard him make, as I came up to him:

“My Gott, M ——, dis is worse dun a dog’s det!”



In a few days we gave him all the funeral in our power; tied his big toes together, folded his hands across his breast, pinned to his shirt a slip of paper, upon which was written:

Victor E. Seitz,
Co. L, Sixteenth Illinois Cavalry.

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And laid his body at the South Gate, beside some scores of others that were awaiting the arrival of the six-mule wagon that hauled them to the Potter's Field, which was to be their last resting-place.

John Emerson and John Stiggall, of my company, were two Norwegian boys, and fine specimens of their race—intelligent, faithful, and always ready for duty. They had an affection for each other that reminded one of the stories told of the sworn attachment and the unflinching devotion that were common between two Gothic warrior youths. Coming into Andersonville some little time after the rest of us, they found all the desirable ground taken up, and they established their quarters at the base of the hill, near the Swamp. There they dug a little hole to lie in, and put in a layer of pine leaves. Between them they had an overcoat and a blanket. At night they lay upon the coat and covered themselves with the blanket. By day the blanket served as a tent. The hardships and annoyances that we endured made everybody else cross and irritable. At times it seemed impossible to say or listen to pleasant words, and nobody was ever allowed to go any length of time spoiling for a fight. He could usually be accommodated upon the spot to any extent he desired, by simply making his wishes known. Even the best of chums would have sharp quarrels and brisk fights, and this disposition increased as disease made greater inroads upon them. I saw in one instance two brothers—both of whom died the next day of scurvy—and who were so helpless as to be unable to rise, pull themselves up on their knees by clenching the poles of their tents—in order to strike each other with clubs, and they kept striking until the bystanders interfered and took their weapons away from them.

But Stiggall and Emerson never quarreled with each other. Their tenderness and affection were remarkable to witness. They began to go the way that so many were going; diarrhea and scurvy set in; they wasted away till their muscles and tissues almost disappeared, leaving the skin lying flat upon the bones; but their principal solicitude was for each other, and each seemed actually jealous of any person else doing anything for the other. I met Emerson one day, with one leg drawn clear out of shape, and rendered almost useless by the scurvy. He was very weak, but was hobbling down towards the Creek with a bucket made from a boot leg. I said:

“Johnny, just give me your bucket. I’ll fill it for you, and bring it up to your tent.”

“No; much obliged, M ——” he wheezed out; “my pardner wants a cool drink, and I guess I’d better get it for him.”



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Stiggall died in June. He was one of the first victims of scurvy, which, in the succeeding few weeks, carried off so many. All of us who had read sea-stories had read much of this disease and its horrors, but we had little conception of the dreadful reality. It usually manifested itself first in the mouth. The breath became unbearably fetid; the gums swelled until they protruded, livid and disgusting, beyond the lips. The teeth became so loose that they frequently fell out, and the sufferer would pick them up and set them back in their sockets. In attempting to bite the hard corn bread furnished by the bakery the teeth often stuck fast and were pulled out. The gums had a fashion of breaking away, in large chunks, which would be swallowed or spit out. All the time one was eating his mouth would be filled with blood, fragments of gums and loosened teeth.

Frightful, malignant ulcers appeared in other parts of the body; the ever-present maggot flies laid eggs in these, and soon worms swarmed therein. The sufferer looked and felt as if, though he yet lived and moved, his body was anticipating the rotting it would undergo a little later in the grave.

The last change was ushered in by the lower parts of the legs swelling. When this appeared, we considered the man doomed. We all had scurvy, more or less, but as long as it kept out of our legs we were hopeful. First, the ankle joints swelled, then the foot became useless. The swelling increased until the knees became stiff, and the skin from these down was distended until it looked pale, colorless and transparent as a tightly blown bladder. The leg was so much larger at the bottom than at the thigh, that the sufferers used to make grim jokes about being modeled like a churn, "with the biggest end down." The man then became utterly helpless and usually died in a short time.

The official report puts down the number of deaths from scurvy at three thousand five hundred and seventy-four, but Dr. Jones, the Rebel surgeon, reported to the Rebel Government his belief that nine-tenths of the great mortality of the prison was due, either directly or indirectly, to this cause.

The only effort made by the Rebel doctors to check its ravages was occasionally to give a handful of sumach berries to some particularly bad case.

When Stiggall died we thought Emerson would certainly follow him in a day or two, but, to our surprise, he lingered along until August before dying.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"Ole boo," And "Ole Sol, the Haymaker"—A fetid, burning desert—noisome water, and the effects of drinking it—stealing soft soap.



The gradually lengthening Summer days were insufferably long and wearisome. Each was hotter, longer and more tedious than its predecessors. In my company was a none-too-bright fellow, named Dawson. During the chilly rains or the nipping, winds of our first days in prison, Dawson would, as he rose in, the morning, survey the forbidding skies with lack-luster eyes and remark, oracularly:



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“Well, Ole Boo gits us agin, to-day.”

He was so unvarying in this salutation to the morn that his designation of disagreeable weather as “Ole Boo” became generally adopted by us. When the hot weather came on, Dawson’s remark, upon rising and seeing excellent prospects for a scorcher, changed to: “Well, Ole Sol, the Haymaker, is going to git in his work on us agin to-day.”

As long as he lived and was able to talk, this was Dawson’s invariable observation at the break of day.

He was quite right. The Ole Haymaker would do some famous work before he descended in the West, sending his level rays through the wide interstices between the somber pines.

By nine o’clock in the morning his beams would begin to fairly singe everything in the crowded pen. The hot sand would glow as one sees it in the center of the unshaded highway some scorching noon in August. The high walls of the prison prevented the circulation inside of any breeze that might be in motion, while the foul stench rising from the putrid Swamp and the rotting ground seemed to reach the skies.

One can readily comprehend the horrors of death on the burning sands of a desert. But the desert sand is at least clean; there is nothing worse about it than heat and intense dryness. It is not, as that was at Andersonville, poisoned with the excretions of thousands of sick and dying men, filled with disgusting vermin, and loading the air with the germs of death. The difference is as that between a brick-kiln and a sewer. Should the fates ever decide that I shall be flung out upon sands to perish, I beg that the hottest place in the Sahara may be selected, rather than such a spot as the interior of the Andersonville Stockade.

It may be said that we had an abundance of water, which made a decided improvement on a desert. Doubtless—had that water been pure. But every mouthful of it was a blood poison, and helped promote disease and death. Even before reaching the Stockade it was so polluted by the drainage of the Rebel camps as to be utterly unfit for human use. In our part of the prison we sank several wells—some as deep as forty feet—to procure water. We had no other tools for this than our ever-faithful half canteens, and nothing wherewith to wall the wells. But a firm clay was reached a few feet below the surface, which afforded tolerable strong sides for the lower part, ana furnished material to make adobe bricks for curbs to keep out the sand of the upper part. The sides were continually giving away, however, and fellows were perpetually falling down the holes, to the great damage of their legs and arms. The water, which was drawn up in little cans, or boot leg buckets, by strings made of strips of cloth, was much better than that of the creek, but was still far from pure, as it contained the seepage from the filthy ground.



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The intense heat led men to drink great quantities of water, and this superinduced malignant dropsical complaints, which, next to diarrhea, scurvy and gangrene, were the ailments most active in carrying men off. Those affected in this way swelled up frightfully from day to day. Their clothes speedily became too small for them, and were ripped off, leaving them entirely naked, and they suffered intensely until death at last came to their relief. Among those of my squad who died in this way, was a young man named Baxter, of the Fifth Indiana Cavalry, taken at Chicamauga. He was very fine looking—tall, slender, with regular features and intensely black hair and eyes; he sang nicely, and was generally liked. A more pitiable object than he, when last I saw him, just before his death, can not be imagined. His body had swollen until it seemed marvelous that the human skin could bear so much distention without disruption, All the old look of bright intelligence had been driven from his face by the distortion of his features. His swarthy hair and beard, grown long and ragged, had that peculiar repulsive look which the black hair of the sick is prone to assume.

I attributed much of my freedom from the diseases to which others succumbed to abstention from water drinking. Long before I entered the army, I had constructed a theory—on premises that were doubtless as insufficient as those that boyish theories are usually based upon—that drinking water was a habit, and a pernicious one, which sapped away the energy. I took some trouble to curb my appetite for water, and soon found that I got along very comfortably without drinking anything beyond that which was contained in my food. I followed this up after entering the army, drinking nothing at any time but a little coffee, and finding no need, even on the dustiest marches, for anything more. I do not presume that in a year I drank a quart of cold water. Experience seemed to confirm my views, for I noticed that the first to sink under a fatigue, or to yield to sickness, were those who were always on the lookout for drinking water, springing from their horses and struggling around every well or spring on the line of march for an opportunity to fill their canteens.

I made liberal use of the Creek for bathing purposes, however, visiting it four or five times a day during the hot days, to wash myself all over. This did not cool one off much, for the shallow stream was nearly as hot as the sand, but it seemed to do some good, and it helped pass away the tedious hours. The stream was nearly all the time filled as full of bathers as they could stand, and the water could do little towards cleansing so many. The occasional rain storms that swept across the prison were welcomed, not only because they cooled the air temporarily, but because they gave us a shower-bath. As they came up, nearly every one stripped naked and got out where he could enjoy the full benefit of the falling water. Fancy, if possible, the spectacle of twenty-five thousand or thirty thousand men without a stitch of clothing upon them. The like has not been seen, I imagine, since the naked followers of Boadicea gathered in force to do battle to the Roman invaders.

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It was impossible to get really clean. Our bodies seemed covered with a varnish-like, gummy matter that defied removal by water alone. I imagined that it came from the rosin or turpentine, arising from the little pitch pine fires over which we hovered when cooking our rations. It would yield to nothing except strong soap—and soap, as I have before stated—was nearly as scarce in the Southern Confederacy as salt. We in prison saw even less of it, or rather, none at all. The scarcity of it, and our desire for it, recalls a bit of personal experience.

I had steadfastly refused all offers of positions outside the prison on parole, as, like the great majority of the prisoners, my hatred of the Rebels grew more bitter, day by day; I felt as if I would rather die than accept the smallest favor at their hands, and I shared the common contempt for those who did. But, when the movement for a grand attack on the Stockade—mentioned in a previous chapter—was apparently rapidly coming to a head, I was offered a temporary detail outside to, assist in making up some rolls. I resolved to accept; first because I thought I might get some information that would be of use in our enterprise; and, next, because I foresaw that the rush through the gaps in the Stockade would be bloody business, and by going out in advance I would avoid that much of the danger, and still be able to give effective assistance.

I was taken up to Wirz's office. He was writing at a desk at one end of a large room when the Sergeant brought me in. He turned around, told the Sergeant to leave me, and ordered me to sit down upon a box at the other end of the room.

Turning his back and resuming his writing, in a few minutes he had forgotten me. I sat quietly, taking in the details for a half-hour, and then, having exhausted everything else in the room, I began wondering what was in the box I was sitting upon. The lid was loose; I hitched it forward a little without attracting Wirz's attention, and slipped my left hand down of a voyage of discovery. It seemed very likely that there was something there that a loyal Yankee deserved better than a Rebel. I found that it was a fine article of soft soap. A handful was scooped up and speedily shoved into my left pantaloon pocket. Expecting every instant that Wirz would turn around and order me to come to the desk to show my handwriting, hastily and furtively wiped my hand on the back of my shirt and watched Wirz with as innocent an expression as a school boy assumes when he has just flipped a chewed paper wad across the room. Wirz was still engrossed in his writing, and did not look around. I was emboldened to reach down for another handful. This was also successfully transferred, the hand wiped off on the back of the shirt, and the face wore its expression of infantile ingenuousness. Still Wirz did not look up. I kept dipping up handful after handful, until I had gotten about a quart in the left hand pocket. After each handful I rubbed my hand off on the back of my shirt and waited an instant for a summons to the desk. Then the process was repeated with the other hand, and a quart of the saponaceous mush was packed in the right hand pocket.



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Shortly after Wirz rose and ordered a guard to take me away and keep me, until he decided what to do with me. The day was intensely hot, and soon the soap in my pockets and on the back of my shirt began burning like double strength Spanish fly blisters. There was nothing to do but grin and bear it. I set my teeth, squatted down under the shade of the parapet of the fort, and stood it silently and sullenly. For the first time in my life I thoroughly appreciated the story of the Spartan boy, who stole the fox and suffered the animal to tear his bowels out rather than give a sign which would lead to the exposure of his theft.

Between four and five o'clock—after I had endured the thing for five or six hours, a guard came with orders from Wirz that I should be returned to the Stockade. Upon hastily removing my clothes, after coming inside, I found I had a blister on each thigh, and one down my back, that would have delighted an old practitioner of the heroic school. But I also had a half gallon of excellent soft soap. My chums and I took a magnificent wash, and gave our clothes the same, and we still had soap enough left to barter for some onions that we had long coveted, and which tasted as sweet to us as manna to the Israelites.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“Pour Passer Le TEMPS”—A set of chessmen procured under difficulties —religious services—the devoted priest—war Song.

The time moved with leaden feet. Do the best we could, there were very many tiresome hours for which no occupation whatever could be found. All that was necessary to be done during the day—attending roll call, drawing and cooking rations, killing lice and washing—could be disposed of in an hour's time, and we were left with fifteen or sixteen waking hours, for which there was absolutely no employment. Very many tried to escape both the heat and ennui by sleeping as much as possible through the day, but I noticed that those who did this soon died, and consequently I did not do it. Card playing had sufficed to pass away the hours at first, but our cards soon wore out, and deprived us of this resource. My chum, Andrews, and I constructed a set of chessmen with an infinite deal of trouble. We found a soft, white root in the swamp which answered our purpose. A boy near us had a tolerably sharp pocket-knife, for the use of which a couple of hours each day, we gave a few spoonfuls of meal. The knife was the only one among a large number of prisoners, as the Rebel guards had an affection for that style of cutlery, which led them to search incoming prisoners, very closely. The fortunate owner of this derived quite a little income of meal by shrewdly loaning it to his knifeless comrades. The shapes that we made for pieces and pawns were necessarily very rude, but they were sufficiently distinct for identification. We blackened one set with pitch pine soot, found a piece of plank that would answer for a board and purchased it from its possessor for part of a ration of meal, and so were fitted out with what served until our release to distract our attention from much of the surrounding misery.

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Every one else procured such amusement as they could. Newcomers, who still had money and cards, gambled as long as their means lasted. Those who had books read them until the leaves fell apart. Those who had paper and pen and ink tried to write descriptions and keep journals, but this was usually given up after being in prison a few weeks. I was fortunate enough to know a boy who had brought a copy of "Gray's Anatomy" into prison with him. I was not specially interested in the subject, but it was Hobson's choice; I could read anatomy or nothing, and so I tackled it with such good will that before my friend became sick and was taken outside, and his book with him, I had obtained a very fair knowledge of the rudiments of physiology.

There was a little band of devoted Christian workers, among whom were Orderly Sergeant Thomas J. Sheppard, Ninety-Seventh O. Y. L, now a leading Baptist minister in Eastern Ohio; Boston Corbett, who afterward slew John Wilkes Booth, and Frank Smith, now at the head of the Railroad Bethel work at Toledo. They were indefatigable in trying to evangelize the prison. A few of them would take their station in some part of the Stockade (a different one every time), and begin singing some old familiar hymn like:

"Come, Thou fount of every blessing,"

and in a few minutes they would have an attentive audience of as many thousand as could get within hearing. The singing would be followed by regular services, during which Sheppard, Smith, Corbett, and some others would make short, spirited, practical addresses, which no doubt did much good to all who heard them, though the grains of leaven were entirely too small to leaven such an immense measure of meal. They conducted several funerals, as nearly like the way it was done at home as possible. Their ministrations were not confined to mere lip service, but they labored assiduously in caring for the sick, and made many a poor fellow's way to the grave much smoother for him.

This was about all the religious services that we were favored with. The Rebel preachers did not make that effort to save our misguided souls which one would have imagined they would having us where we could not choose but hear they might have taken advantage of our situation to rake us fore and aft with their theological artillery. They only attempted it in one instance. While in Richmond a preacher came into our room and announced in an authoritative way that he would address us on religious subjects. We uncovered respectfully, and gathered around him. He was a loud-tongued, brawling Boanerges, who addressed the Lord as if drilling a brigade.

He spoke but a few moments before making apparent his belief that the worst of crimes was that of being a Yankee, and that a man must not only be saved through Christ's blood, but also serve in the Rebel army before he could attain to heaven.

Of course we raised such a yell of derision that the sermon was brought to an abrupt conclusion.

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The only minister who came into the Stockade was a Catholic priest, middle-aged, tall, slender, and unmistakably devout. He was unwearied in his attention to the sick, and the whole day could be seen moving around through the prison, attending to those who needed spiritual consolation. It was interesting to see him administer the extreme unction to a dying man. Placing a long purple scarf about his own neck and a small brazen crucifix in the hands of the dying one, he would kneel by the latter's side and anoint him upon the eyes, ears, nostrils; lips, hands, feet and breast, with sacred oil; from a little brass vessel, repeating the while, in an impressive voice, the solemn offices of the Church.

His unwearying devotion gained the admiration of all, no matter how little inclined one might be to view priestliness generally with favor. He was evidently of such stuff as Christian heroes have ever been made of, and would have faced stake and fagot, at the call of duty, with unquailing eye. His name was Father Hamilton, and he was stationed at Macon. The world should know more of a man whose services were so creditable to humanity and his Church:

The good father had the wisdom of the serpent, with the harmlessness of the dove. Though full of commiseration for the unhappy lot of the prisoners, nothing could betray him into the slightest expression of opinion regarding the war or those who were the authors of all this misery. In our impatience at our treatment, and hunger for news, we forgot his sacerdotal character, and importuned him for tidings of the exchange. His invariable reply was that he lived apart from these things and kept himself ignorant of them.

"But, father," said I one day, with an impatience that I could not wholly repress, "you must certainly hear or read something of this, while you are outside among the Rebel officers." Like many other people, I supposed that the whole world was excited over that in which I felt a deep interest.

"No, my son," replied he, in his usual calm, measured tones. "I go not among them, nor do I hear anything from them. When I leave the prison in the evening, full of sorrow at what I have seen here, I find that the best use I can make of my time is in studying the Word of God, and especially the Psalms of David."

We were not any longer good company for each other. We had heard over and over again all each other's stories and jokes, and each knew as much about the other's previous history as we chose to communicate. The story of every individual's past life, relations, friends, regiment, and soldier experience had been told again and again, until the repetition was wearisome. The cool nights following the hot days were favorable to little gossiping seances like the yarn-spinning watches of sailors on pleasant nights. Our squad, though its stock of stories was worn threadbare, was fortunate enough to have a sweet singer in Israel "Nosey" Payne—of whose tunefulness we never tired. He had a large repertoire of patriotic songs, which he sang with feeling and correctness,

and which helped much to make the calm Summer nights pass agreeably. Among the best of these was "Brave Boys are They," which I always thought was the finest ballad, both in poetry and music, produced by the War.



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CHAPTER XXXIV.

Maggots, lice and raiders—practices of these human vermin—plundering the sick and dying—night attacks, and battles by day—hard times for the small traders.

With each long, hot Summer hour the lice, the maggot-flies and the N'Yaarkers increased in numbers and venomous activity. They were ever-present annoyances and troubles; no time was free from them. The lice worried us by day and tormented us by night; the maggot-flies fouled our food, and laid in sores and wounds larvae that speedily became masses of wriggling worms. The N'Yaarkers were human vermin that preyed upon and harried us unceasingly.

They formed themselves into bands numbering from five to twenty-five, each led by a bold, unscrupulous, energetic scoundrel. We now called them "Raiders," and the most prominent and best known of the bands were called by the names of their ruffian leaders, as "Mosby's Raiders," "Curtis's Raiders," "Delaney's Raiders," "Sarsfield's Raiders," "Collins's Raiders," etc.

As long as we old prisoners formed the bulk of those inside the Stockade, the Raiders had slender picking. They would occasionally snatch a blanket from the tent poles, or knock a boy down at the Creek and take his silver watch from him; but this was all. Abundant opportunities for securing richer swag came to them with the advent of the Plymouth Pilgrims. As had been before stated, these boys brought in with them a large portion of their first instalment of veteran bounty—aggregating in amount, according to varying estimates, between twenty-five thousand and one hundred thousand dollars. The Pilgrims were likewise well clothed, had an abundance of blankets and camp equipage, and a plentiful supply of personal trinkets, that could be readily traded off to the Rebels. An average one of them—even if his money were all gone—was a bonanza to any band which could succeed in plundering him. His watch and chain, shoes, knife, ring, handkerchief, combs and similar trifles, would net several hundred dollars in Confederate money. The blockade, which cut off the Rebel communication with the outer world, made these in great demand. Many of the prisoners that came in from the Army of the Potomac repaid robbing equally well. As a rule those from that Army were not searched so closely as those from the West, and not unfrequently they came in with all their belongings untouched, where Sherman's men, arriving the same day, would be stripped nearly to the buff.



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The methods of the Raiders were various, ranging all the way from sneak thievery to highway robbery. All the arts learned in the prisons and purlieu of New York were put into exercise. Decoys, “bunko-steerers” at home, would be on the look-out for promising subjects as each crowd of fresh prisoners entered the gate, and by kindly offers to find them a sleeping place, lure them to where they could be easily despoiled during the night. If the victim resisted there was always sufficient force at hand to conquer him, and not seldom his life paid the penalty of his contumacy. I have known as many as three of these to be killed in a night, and their bodies—with throats cut, or skulls crushed in—be found in the morning among the dead at the gates.

All men having money or valuables were under continual espionage, and when found in places convenient for attack, a rush was made for them. They were knocked down and their persons rifled with such swift dexterity that it was done before they realized what had happened.

At first these depredations were only perpetrated at night. The quarry was selected during the day, and arrangements made for a descent. After the victim was asleep the band dashed down upon him, and sheared him of his goods with incredible swiftness. Those near would raise the cry of “Raiders!” and attack the robbers. If the latter had secured their booty they retreated with all possible speed, and were soon lost in the crowd. If not, they would offer battle, and signal for assistance from the other bands. Severe engagements of this kind were of continual occurrence, in which men were so badly beaten as to die from the effects. The weapons used were fists, clubs, axes, tent-poles, *etc.* The Raiders were plentifully provided with the usual weapons of their class—slung-shots and brass-knuckles. Several of them had succeeded in smuggling bowie-knives into prison.

They had the great advantage in these rows of being well acquainted with each other, while, except the Plymouth Pilgrims, the rest of the prisoners were made up of small squads of men from each regiment in the service, and total strangers to all outside of their own little band. The Raiders could concentrate, if necessary, four hundred or five hundred men upon any point of attack, and each member of the gangs had become so familiarized with all the rest by long association in New York, and elsewhere, that he never dealt a blow amiss, while their opponents were nearly as likely to attack friends as enemies.

By the middle of June the continual success of the Raiders emboldened them so that they no longer confined their depredations to the night, but made their forays in broad daylight, and there was hardly an hour in the twenty-four that the cry of “Raiders! Raiders!” did, not go up from some part of the pen, and on looking in the direction of the cry, one would see a surging commotion, men struggling, and clubs being plied vigorously. This was even more common than the guards shooting men at the Creek crossing.



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One day I saw “Dick Allen’s Raiders,” eleven in number, attack a man wearing the uniform of Ellett’s Marine Brigade. He was a recent comer, and alone, but he was brave. He had come into possession of a spade, by some means or another, and he used this with delightful vigor and effect. Two or three times he struck one of his assailants so fairly on the head and with such good will that I congratulated myself that he had killed him. Finally, Dick Allen managed to slip around behind him unnoticed, and striking him on the head with a slung-shot, knocked him down, when the whole crowd pounced upon him to kill him, but were driven off by others rallying to his assistance.

The proceeds of these forays enabled the Raiders to wax fat and lusty, while others were dying from starvation. They all had good tents, constructed of stolen blankets, and their headquarters was a large, roomy tent, with a circular top, situated on the street leading to the South Gate, and capable of accommodating from seventy-five to one hundred men. All the material for this had been wrested away from others. While hundreds were dying of scurvy and diarrhea, from the miserable, insufficient food, and lack of vegetables, these fellows had flour, fresh meat, onions, potatoes, green beans, and other things, the very looks of which were a torture to hungry, scorbutic, dysenteric men. They were on the best possible terms with the Rebels, whom they fawned upon and groveled before, and were in return allowed many favors, in the way of trading, going out upon detail, and making purchases.

Among their special objects of attack were the small traders in the prison. We had quite a number of these whose genius for barter was so strong that it took root and flourished even in that unpropitious soil, and during the time when new prisoners were constantly coming in with money, they managed to accumulate small sums—from ten dollars upward, by trading between the guards and the prisoners. In the period immediately following a prisoner’s entrance he was likely to spend all his money and trade off all his possessions for food, trusting to fortune to get him out of there when these were gone. Then was when he was profitable to these go-betweens, who managed to make him pay handsomely for what he got. The Raiders kept watch of these traders, and plundered them whenever occasion served. It reminded one of the habits of the fishing eagle, which hovers around until some other bird catches a fish, and then takes it away.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A community without government—formation of the regulators—raiders attack Key but are bluffed off—assault of the regulators on the raiders —desperate battle—overthrow of the raiders.



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To fully appreciate the condition of affairs let it be remembered that we were a community of twenty-five thousand boys and young men—none too regardful of control at best—and now wholly destitute of government. The Rebels never made the slightest attempt to maintain order in the prison. Their whole energies were concentrated in preventing our escape. So long as we staid inside the Stockade, they cared as little what we did there as for the performances of savages in the interior of Africa. I doubt if they would have interfered had one-half of us killed and eaten the other half. They rather took a delight in such atrocities as came to their notice. It was an ocular demonstration of the total depravity of the Yankees.

Among ourselves there was no one in position to lay down law and enforce it. Being all enlisted men we were on a dead level as far as rank was concerned—the highest being only Sergeants, whose stripes carried no weight of authority. The time of our stay was—it was hoped—too transient to make it worth while bothering about organizing any form of government. The great bulk of the boys were recent comers, who hoped that in another week or so they would be out again. There were no fat salaries to tempt any one to take upon himself the duty of ruling the masses, and all were left to their own devices, to do good or evil, according to their several bents, and as fear of consequences swayed them. Each little squad of men was a law unto themselves, and made and enforced their own regulations on their own territory. The administration of justice was reduced to its simplest terms. If a fellow did wrong he was pounded—if there was anybody capable of doing it. If not he went free.

The almost unvarying success of the Raiders in—their forays gave the general impression that they were invincible—that is, that not enough men could be concentrated against them to whip them. Our ill-success in the attack we made on them in April helped us to the same belief. If we could not beat them then, we could not now, after we had been enfeebled by months of starvation and disease. It seemed to us that the Plymouth Pilgrims, whose organization was yet very strong, should undertake the task; but, as is usually the case in this world, where we think somebody else ought to undertake the performance of a disagreeable public duty, they did not see it in the light that we wished them to. They established guards around their squads, and helped beat off the Raiders when their own territory was invaded, but this was all they would do. The rest of us formed similar guards. In the southwest corner of the Stockade—where I was—we formed ourselves into a company of fifty active boys—mostly belonging to my own battalion and to other Illinois regiments—of which I was elected Captain. My First Lieutenant was a tall, taciturn, long-armed member of the One Hundred and Eleventh Illinois, whom we called “Egypt,”



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as he came from that section of the State. He was wonderfully handy with his fists. I think he could knock a fellow down so that he would fall-harder, and lie longer than any person I ever saw. We made a tacit division of duties: I did the talking, and "Egypt" went through the manual labor of knocking our opponents down. In the numerous little encounters in which our company was engaged, "Egypt" would stand by my side, silent, grim and patient, while I pursued the dialogue with the leader of the other crowd. As soon as he thought the conversation had reached the proper point, his long left arm stretched out like a flash, and the other fellow dropped as if he had suddenly come in range of a mule that was feeling well. That unexpected left-hander never failed. It would have made Charles Reade's heart leap for joy to see it.

In spite of our company and our watchfulness, the Raiders beat us badly on one occasion. Marion Friend, of Company I of our battalion, was one of the small traders, and had accumulated forty dollars by his bartering. One evening at dusk Delaney's Raiders, about twenty-five strong, took advantage of the absence of most of us drawing rations, to make a rush for Marion. They knocked him down, cut him across the wrist and neck with a razor, and robbed him of his forty dollars. By the time we could rally Delaney and his attendant scoundrels were safe from pursuit in the midst of their friends.

This state of things had become unendurable. Sergeant Leroy L. Key, of Company M, our battalion, resolved to make an effort to crush the Raiders. He was a printer, from Bloomington, Illinois, tall, dark, intelligent and strong-willed, and one of the bravest men I ever knew. He was ably seconded by "Limber Jim," of the Sixty-Seventh Illinois, whose lithe, sinewy form, and striking features reminded one of a young Sioux brave. He had all of Key's desperate courage, but not his brains or his talent for leadership. Though fearfully reduced in numbers, our battalion had still about one hundred well men in it, and these formed the nucleus for Key's band of "Regulators," as they were styled. Among them were several who had no equals in physical strength and courage in any of the Raider chiefs. Our best man was Ned Carrigan, Corporal of Company I, from Chicago—who was so confessedly the best man in the whole prison that he was never called upon to demonstrate it. He was a big-hearted, genial Irish boy, who was never known to get into trouble on his own account, but only used his fists when some of his comrades were imposed upon. He had fought in the ring, and on one occasion had killed a man with a single blow of his fist, in a prize fight near St. Louis. We were all very proud of him, and it was as good as an entertainment to us to see the noisiest roughs subside into deferential silence as Ned would come among them, like some grand mastiff in the midst of a pack of yelping curs. Ned entered into the regulating scheme heartily. Other stalwart specimens of physical manhood in our battalion were Sergeant Goody, Ned Johnson, Tom Larkin, and others, who, while not approaching Carrigan's perfect manhood, were still more than a match for the best of the Raiders.



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Key proceeded with the greatest secrecy in the organization of his forces. He accepted none but Western men, and preferred Illinoisans, Iowans, Kansans, Indianians and Ohioans. The boys from those States seemed to naturally go together, and be moved by the same motives. He informed Wirz what he proposed doing, so that any unusual commotion within the prison might not be mistaken for an attempt upon the Stockade, and made the excuse for opening with the artillery. Wirz, who happened to be in a complaisant humor, approved of the design, and allowed him the use of the enclosure of the North Gate to confine his prisoners in.

In spite of Key's efforts at secrecy, information as to his scheme reached the Raiders. It was debated at their headquarters, and decided there that Key must be killed. Three men were selected to do this work. They called on Key, a dusk, on the evening of the 2d of July. In response to their inquiries, he came out of the blanket-covered hole on the hillside that he called his tent. They told him what they had heard, and asked if it was true. He said it was. One of them then drew a knife, and the other two, "billies" to attack him. But, anticipating trouble, Key had procured a revolver which one of the Pilgrims had brought in in his knapsack and drawing this he drove them off, but without firing a shot.

The occurrence caused the greatest excitement. To us of the Regulators it showed that the Raiders had penetrated our designs, and were prepared for them. To the great majority of the prisoners it was the first intimation that such a thing was contemplated; the news spread from squad to squad with the greatest rapidity, and soon everybody was discussing the chances of the movement. For awhile men ceased their interminable discussion of escape and exchange—let those over worked words and themes have a rare spell of repose—and debated whether the Raiders would whip the regulators, or the Regulators conquer the Raiders. The reasons which I have previously enumerated, induced a general disbelief in the probability of our success. The Raiders were in good health well fed, used to operating together, and had the confidence begotten by a long series of successes. The Regulators lacked in all these respects.

Whether Key had originally fixed on the next day for making the attack, or whether this affair precipitated the crisis, I know not, but later in the evening he sent us all order: to be on our guard all night, and ready for action the next morning.

There was very little sleep anywhere that night. The Rebels learned through their spies that something unusual was going on inside, and as their only interpretation of anything unusual there was a design upon the Stockade, they strengthened the guards, took additional precautions in every way, and spent the hours in anxious anticipation.

We, fearing that the Raiders might attempt to frustrate the scheme by an attack in overpowering force on Key's squad, which would be accompanied by the assassination of him and Limber Jim, held ourselves in readiness to offer any assistance that might be needed.



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The Raiders, though confident of success, were no less exercised. They threw out pickets to all the approaches to their headquarters, and provided otherwise against surprise. They had smuggled in some canteens of a cheap, vile whisky made from sorghum—and they grew quite hilarious in their Big Tent over their potatoes. Two songs had long ago been accepted by us as peculiarly the Raiders' own—as some one in their crowd sang them nearly every evening, and we never heard them anywhere else. The first began:

In Athol lived a man named Jerry Lanagan;
He battered away till he hadn't a pound.
His father he died, and he made him a man agin;
Left him a farm of ten acres of ground.

The other related the exploits of an Irish highwayman named Brennan, whose chief virtue was that

What he rob-bed from the rich he gave unto the poor.

And this was the villainous chorus in which they all joined, and sang in such a way as suggested highway robbery, murder, mayhem and arson:

Brennan on the moor!
Brennan on the moor!
Proud and undaunted stood
John Brennan on the moor.

They howled these two nearly the live-long night. They became eventually quite monotonous to us, who were waiting and watching. It would have been quite a relief if they had thrown in a new one every hour or so, by way of variety.

Morning at last came. Our companies mustered on their grounds, and then marched to the space on the South Side where the rations were issued. Each man was armed with a small club, secured to his wrist by a string.

The Rebels—with their chronic fear of an outbreak animating them—had all the infantry in line of battle with loaded guns. The cannon in the works were shotted, the fuses thrust into the touch-holes and the men stood with lanyards in hand ready to mow down everybody, at any instant.

The sun rose rapidly through the clear sky, which soon glowed down on us like a brazen oven. The whole camp gathered where it could best view the encounter. This was upon the North Side. As I have before explained the two sides sloped toward each other like those of a great trough. The Raiders' headquarters stood upon the center of



the southern slope, and consequently those standing on the northern slope saw everything as if upon the stage of a theater.

While standing in ranks waiting the orders to move, one of my comrades touched me on the arm, and said:

“My God! just look over there!”

I turned from watching the Rebel artillerists, whose intentions gave me more uneasiness than anything else, and looked in the direction indicated by the speaker. The sight was the strangest one my eyes ever encountered. There were at least fifteen thousand perhaps twenty thousand—men packed together on the bank, and every eye was turned on us. The slope was such that each man’s face showed over the shoulders of the one in front of him, making acres on acres of faces. It was as if the whole broad hillside was paved or thatched with human countenances.



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When all was ready we moved down upon the Big Tent, in as good order as we could preserve while passing through the narrow tortuous paths between the tents. Key, Limber Jim, Ned Carigan, Goody, Tom Larkin, and Ned Johnson led the advance with their companies. The prison was as silent as a graveyard. As we approached, the Raiders massed themselves in a strong, heavy line, with the center, against which our advance was moving, held by the most redoubtable of their leaders. How many there were of them could not be told, as it was impossible to say where their line ended and the mass of spectators began. They could not themselves tell, as the attitude of a large portion of the spectators would be determined by which way the battle went.

Not a blow was struck until the lines came close together. Then the Raider center launched itself forward against ours, and grappled savagely with the leading Regulators. For an instant—it seemed an hour—the struggle was desperate.

Strong, fierce men clenched and strove to throttle each other; great muscles strained almost to bursting, and blows with fist and club—dealt with all the energy of mortal hate—fell like hail. One—perhaps two—endless minutes the lines surged—throbbed—backward and forward a step or two, and then, as if by a concentration of mighty effort, our men flung the Raider line back from it—broken—shattered. The next instant our leaders were striding through the mass like raging lions. Carrigan, Limber Jim, Larkin, Johnson and Goody each smote down a swath of men before them, as they moved resistlessly forward.

We light weights had been sent around on the flanks to separate the spectators from the combatants, strike the Raiders 'en revers,' and, as far as possible, keep the crowd from reinforcing them.

In five minutes after the first blow—was struck the overthrow of the Raiders was complete. Resistance ceased, and they sought safety in flight.

As the result became apparent to the—watchers on the opposite hillside, they vented their pent-up excitement in a yell that made the very ground tremble, and we answered them with a shout that expressed not only our exultation over our victory, but our great relief from the intense strain we had long borne.

We picked up a few prisoners on the battle field, and retired without making any special effort to get any more then, as we knew, that they could not escape us.

We were very tired, and very hungry. The time for drawing rations had arrived. Wagons containing bread and mush had driven to the gates, but Wirz would not allow these to be opened, lest in the excited condition of the men an attempt might be made to carry them. Key ordered operations to cease, that Wirz might be re-assured and let the rations enter. It was in vain. Wirz was thoroughly scared. The wagons stood out in the hot sun until the mush fermented and soured, and had to be thrown away, while we

event rationless to bed, and rose the next day with more than usually empty stomachs to goad us on to our work.



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CHAPTER XXXVI.

Why the regulators were not assisted by the entire camp—peculiarities of boys from different sections—hunting the raiders down—exploits of my left-handed lieutenant—running the gauntlet.

I may not have made it wholly clear to the reader why we did not have the active assistance of the whole prison in the struggle with the Raiders. There were many reasons for this. First, the great bulk of the prisoners were new comers, having been, at the farthest, but three or four weeks in the Stockade. They did not comprehend the situation of affairs as we older prisoners did. They did not understand that all the outrages—or very nearly all—were the work of—a relatively small crowd of graduates from the metropolitan school of vice. The activity and audacity of the Raiders gave them the impression that at least half the able-bodied men in the Stockade were engaged in these depredations. This is always the case. A half dozen burglars or other active criminals in a town will produce the impression that a large portion of the population are law breakers. We never estimated that the raiding N'Yaarkers, with their spies and other accomplices, exceeded five hundred, but it would have been difficult to convince a new prisoner that there were not thousands of them. Secondly, the prisoners were made up of small squads from every regiment at the front along the whole line from the Mississippi to the Atlantic. These were strangers to and distrustful of all out side their own little circles. The Eastern men were especially so. The Pennsylvanians and New Yorkers each formed groups, and did not fraternize readily with those outside their State lines. The New Jerseyans held aloof from all the rest, while the Massachusetts soldiers had very little in Common with anybody—even their fellow New Englanders. The Michigan men were modified New Englanders. They had the same tricks of speech; they said "I be" for "I am," and "haag" for "hog;" "Let me look at your knife half a second," or "Give me just a sup of that water," where we said simply "Lend me your knife," or "hand me a drink." They were less reserved than the true Yankees, more disposed to be social, and, with all their eccentricities, were as manly, honorable a set of fellows as it was my fortune to meet with in the army. I could ask no better comrades than the boys of the Third Michigan Infantry, who belonged to the same "Ninety" with me. The boys from Minnesota and Wisconsin were very much like those from Michigan. Those from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and Kansas all seemed cut off the same piece. To all intents and purposes they might have come from the same County. They spoke the same dialect, read the same newspapers,

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had studied McGuffey's Readers, Mitchell's Geography, and Ray's Arithmetics at school, admired the same great men, and held generally the same opinions on any given subject. It was never difficult to get them to act in unison—they did it spontaneously; while it required an effort to bring about harmony of action with those from other sections. Had the Western boys in prison been thoroughly advised of the nature of our enterprise, we could, doubtless, have commanded their cordial assistance, but they were not, and there was no way in which it could be done readily, until after the decisive blow was struck.

The work of arresting the leading Raiders went on actively all day on the Fourth of July. They made occasional shows of fierce resistance, but the events of the day before had destroyed their prestige, broken their confidence, and driven away from their support very many who followed their lead when they were considered all-powerful. They scattered from their former haunts, and mingled with the crowds in other parts of the prison, but were recognized, and reported to Key, who sent parties to arrest them. Several times they managed to collect enough adherents to drive off the squads sent after them, but this only gave them a short respite, for the squad would return reinforced, and make short work of them. Besides, the prisoners generally were beginning to understand and approve of the Regulators' movement, and were disposed to give all the assistance needed.

Myself and "Egypt," my taciturn Lieutenant of the sinewy left arm, were sent with our company to arrest Pete Donnelly, a notorious character, and leader of a bad crowd. He was more "knocker" than Raider, however. He was an old Pemberton building acquaintance, and as we marched up to where he was standing at the head of his gathering clan, he recognized me and said:

"Hello, Illinoy," (the name by which I was generally known in prison) "what do you want here?"

I replied, "Pete, Key has sent me for you. I want you to go to headquarters."

"What the —— does Key want with me?"

"I don't know, I'm sure; he only said to bring you."

"But I haven't had anything to do with them other snoozers you have been a-having trouble with."

"I don't know anything about that; you can talk to Key as to that. I only know that we are sent for you."



“Well, you don’t think you can take me unless I choose to go? You haint got anybody in that crowd big enough to make it worth while for him to waste his time trying it.”

I replied diffidently that one never knew what—he could do till he tried; that while none of us were very big, we were as willing a lot of little fellows as he ever saw, and if it were all the same to him, we would undertake to waste a little time getting him to headquarters.

The conversation seemed unnecessarily long to “Egypt,” who stood by my side; about a half step in advance. Pete was becoming angrier and more defiant every minute. His followers were crowding up to us, club in hand. Finally Pete thrust his fist in my face, and roared out:



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"By —, I ain't a going with ye, and ye can't take me, you — — — "

This was "Egypt's" cue. His long left arm uncoupled like the loosening of the weight of a pile-driver. It caught Mr. Donnelly under the chin, fairly lifted him from his feet, and dropped him on his back among his followers. It seemed to me that the predominating expression in his face as he went, over was that of profound wonder as to where that blow could have come from, and why he did not see it in time to dodge or ward it off.

As Pete dropped, the rest of us stepped forward with our clubs, to engage his followers, while "Egypt" and one or two others tied his hands and otherwise secured him. But his henchmen made no effort to rescue him, and we carried him over to headquarters without molestation.

The work of arresting increased in interest and excitement until it developed into the furore of a hunt, with thousands eagerly engaged in it. The Raiders' tents were torn down and pillaged. Blankets, tent poles, and cooking utensils were carried off as spoils, and the ground was dug over for secreted property. A large quantity of watches, chains, knives, rings, gold pens, *etc., etc.*—the booty of many a raid—was found, and helped to give impetus to the hunt. Even the Rebel Quartermaster, with the characteristic keen scent of the Rebels for spoils, smelled from the outside the opportunity for gaining plunder, and came in with a squad of Rebels equipped with spades, to dig for buried treasures. How successful he was I know not, as I took no part in any of the operations of that nature.

It was claimed that several skeletons of victims of the Raiders were found buried beneath the tent. I cannot speak with any certainty as to this, though my impression is that at least one was found.

By evening Key had perhaps one hundred and twenty-five of the most noted Raiders in his hands. Wirz had allowed him the use of the small stockade forming the entrance to the North Gate to confine them in.

The next thing was the judgment and punishment of the arrested ones. For this purpose Key organized a court martial composed of thirteen Sergeants, chosen from the, latest arrivals of prisoners, that they might have no prejudice against the Raiders. I believe that a man named Dick McCullough, belonging to the Third Missouri Cavalry, was the President of the Court. The trial was carefully conducted, with all the formality of a legal procedure that the Court and those managing the matter could remember as applicable to the crimes with which the accused were charged. Each of these confronted by the witnesses who testified against him, and allowed to cross-examine them to any extent he desired. The defense was managed by one of their crowd, the foul-tongued Tombs shyster, Pete Bradley, of whom I have before spoken. Such was the fear of the vengeance of the Raiders and their friends that many who had been badly abused dared not testify against them, dreading midnight assassination if they

did. Others would not go before the Court except at night. But for all this there was no lack of evidence; there were thousands who had been robbed and maltreated, or who had seen these outrages committed on others, and the boldness of the leaders in their bight of power rendered their identification a matter of no difficulty whatever.



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The trial lasted several days, and concluded with sentencing quite a large number to run the gauntlet, a smaller number to wear balls and chains, and the following six to be hanged:

John Sarsfield, One Hundred and Forty-Fourth New York.
William Collins, alias "Mosby," Company D, Eighty-Eighth Pennsylvania,
Charles Curtis, Company A, Fifth Rhode Island Artillery.
Patrick Delaney, Company E, Eighty-Third Pennsylvania.
A. Muir, United States Navy.
Terence Sullivan, Seventy-Second New York.

These names and regiments are of little consequence, however, as I believe all the rascals were professional bounty-jumpers, and did not belong to any regiment longer than they could find an opportunity to desert and join another.

Those sentenced to ball-and-chain were brought in immediately, and had the irons fitted to them that had been worn by some of our men as a punishment for trying to escape.

It was not yet determined how punishment should be meted out to the remainder, but circumstances themselves decided the matter. Wirz became tired of guarding so large a number as Key had arrested, and he informed Key that he should turn them back into the Stockade immediately. Key begged for little farther time to consider the disposition of the cases, but Wirz refused it, and ordered the Officer of the Guard to return all arrested, save those sentenced to death, to the Stockade. In the meantime the news had spread through the prison that the Raiders were to be sent in again unpunished, and an angry mob, numbering some thousands, and mostly composed of men who had suffered injuries at the hands of the marauders, gathered at the South Gate, clubs in hand, to get such satisfaction as they could out of the rascals. They formed in two long, parallel lines, facing inward, and grimly awaited the incoming of the objects of their vengeance.

The Officer of the Guard opened the wicket in the gate, and began forcing the Raiders through it—one at a time—at the point of the bayonet, and each as he entered was told what he already realized well—that he must run for his life. They did this with all the energy that they possessed, and as they ran blows rained on their heads, arms and backs. If they could succeed in breaking through the line at any place they were generally let go without any further punishment. Three of the number were beaten to death. I saw one of these killed. I had no liking for the gauntlet performance, and refused to have anything to do with it, as did most, if not all, of my crowd. While the gauntlet was in operation, I was standing by my tent at the head of a little street, about two hundred feet from the line, watching what was being done. A sailor was let in. He had a large bowie knife concealed about his person somewhere, which he drew, and struck savagely with at his tormentors on either side. They fell back from before him, but closed in behind



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and pounded him terribly. He broke through the line, and ran up the street towards me. About midway of the distance stood a boy who had helped carry a dead man out during the day, and while out had secured a large pine rail which he had brought in with him. He was holding this straight up in the air, as if at a “present arms.” He seemed to have known from the first that the Raider would run that way. Just as he came squarely under it, the boy dropped the rail like the bar of a toll gate. It struck the Raider across the head, felled him as if by a shot, and his pursuers then beat him to death.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The execution—building the scaffold—doubts of the camp-Captain Wirz thinks it is probably A Ruse to force the stockade—his preparations against such an attempt—entrance of the doomed ones—they realize their fate—one makes A desperate attempt to escape—his recapture—intense excitement—Wirz orders the guns to open—fortunately they do not—the six are hanged—one Breaks his rope—scene when the raiders are cut down.

It began to be pretty generally understood through the prison that six men had been sentenced to be hanged, though no authoritative announcement of the fact had been made. There was much canvassing as to where they should be executed, and whether an attempt to hang them inside of the Stockade would not rouse their friends to make a desperate effort to rescue them, which would precipitate a general engagement of even larger proportions than that of the 3d. Despite the result of the affairs of that and the succeeding days, the camp was not yet convinced that the Raiders were really conquered, and the Regulators themselves were not thoroughly at ease on that score. Some five thousand or six thousand new prisoners had come in since the first of the month, and it was claimed that the Raiders had received large reinforcements from those,—a claim rendered probable by most of the new-comers being from the Army of the Potomac.

Key and those immediately about him kept their own counsel in the matter, and suffered no secret of their intentions to leak out, until on the morning of the 11th, when it became generally known that the sentences were too be carried into effect that day, and inside the prison.



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My first direct information as to this was by a messenger from Key with an order to assemble my company and stand guard over the carpenters who were to erect the scaffold. He informed me that all the Regulators would be held in readiness to come to our relief if we were attacked in force. I had hoped that if the men were to be hanged I would be spared the unpleasant duty of assisting, for, though I believed they richly deserved that punishment, I had much rather some one else administered it upon them. There was no way out of it, however, that I could see, and so "Egypt" and I got the boys together, and marched down to the designated place, which was an open space near the end of the street running from the South Gate, and kept vacant for the purpose of issuing rations. It was quite near the spot where the Raiders' Big Tent had stood, and afforded as good a view to the rest of the camp as could be found.

Key had secured the loan of a few beams and rough planks, sufficient to build a rude scaffold with. Our first duty was to care for these as they came in, for such was the need of wood, and plank for tent purposes, that they would scarcely have fallen to the ground before they were spirited away, had we not stood over them all the time with clubs.

The carpenters sent by Key came over and set to work. The N'Yaarkers gathered around in considerable numbers, sullen and abusive. They cursed us with all their rich vocabulary of foul epithets, vowed that we should never carry out the execution, and swore that they had marked each one for vengeance. We returned the compliments in kind, and occasionally it seemed as if a general collision was imminent; but we succeeded in avoiding this, and by noon the scaffold was finished. It was a very simple affair. A stout beam was fastened on the top of two posts, about fifteen feet high. At about the height of a man's head a couple of boards stretched across the space between the posts, and met in the center. The ends at the posts laid on cleats; the ends in the center rested upon a couple of boards, standing upright, and each having a piece of rope fastened through a hole in it in such a manner, that a man could snatch it from under the planks serving as the floor of the scaffold, and let the whole thing drop. A rude ladder to ascend by completed the preparations.

As the arrangements neared completion the excitement in and around the prison grew intense. Key came over with the balance of the Regulators, and we formed a hollow square around the scaffold, our company marking the line on the East Side. There were now thirty thousand in the prison. Of these about one-third packed themselves as tightly about our square as they could stand. The remaining twenty thousand were wedged together in a solid mass on the North Side. Again I contemplated the wonderful, startling, spectacle of a mosaic pavement of human faces covering the whole broad hillside.



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Outside, the Rebel, infantry was standing in the rifle pits, the artillerymen were in place about their loaded and trained pieces, the No. 4 of each gun holding the lanyard cord in his hand, ready to fire the piece at the instant of command. The small squad of cavalry was drawn up on the hill near the Star Fort, and near it were the masters of the hounds, with their yelping packs.

All the hangers-on of the Rebel camp—clerks, teamsters, employer, negros, hundreds of white and colored women, in all forming a motley crowd of between one and two thousand, were gathered together in a group between the end of the rifle pits and the Star Fort. They had a good view from there, but a still better one could be had, a little farther to the right, and in front of the guns. They kept edging up in that direction, as crowds will, though they knew the danger they would incur if the artillery opened.

The day was broiling hot. The sun shot his perpendicular rays down with blistering fierceness, and the densely packed, motionless crowds made the heat almost insupportable.

Key took up his position inside the square to direct matters. With him were Limber Jim, Dick McCullough, and one or two others. Also, Ned Johnson, Tom Larkin, Sergeant Goody, and three others who were to act as hangmen. Each of these six was provided with a white sack, such as the Rebels brought in meal in. Two Corporals of my company—"Stag" Harris and Wat Payne—were appointed to pull the stays from under the platform at the signal.

A little after noon the South Gate opened, and Wirz rode in, dressed in a suit of white duck, and mounted on his white horse—a conjunction which had gained for him the appellation of "Death on a Pale Horse." Behind him walked the faithful old priest, wearing his Church's purple insignia of the deepest sorrow, and reading the service for the condemned. The six doomed men followed, walking between double ranks of Rebel guards.

All came inside the hollow square and halted. Wirz then said:

"Brizners, I return to you dose men so Boot as I got dem. You haf tried dem yourselves, and found dem guilty—I haf had notting to do wit it. I vash my hands of eferyting connected wit dem. Do wit dem as you like, and may Gott haf mercy on you and on dem. Garts, about face! Voryvarts, march!"

With this he marched out and left us.

For a moment the condemned looked stunned. They seemed to comprehend for the first time that it was really the determination of the Regulators to hang them. Before that they had evidently thought that the talk of hanging was merely bluff. One of them gasped out:



“My God, men, you don’t really mean to hang us up there!”

Key answered grimly and laconically:

“That seems to be about the size of it.”

At this they burst out in a passionate storm of intercessions and imprecations, which lasted for a minute or so, when it was stopped by one of them saying imperatively:



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“All of you stop now, and let the priest talk for us.”

At this the priest closed the book upon which he had kept his eyes bent since his entrance, and facing the multitude on the North Side began a plea for mercy.

The condemned faced in the, same direction, to read their fate in the countenances of those whom he was addressing. This movement brought Curtis—a low-statured, massively built man—on the right of their line, and about ten or fifteen steps from my company.

The whole camp had been as still as death since Wirz’s exit. The silence seemed to become even more profound as the priest began his appeal. For a minute every ear was strained to catch what he said. Then, as the nearest of the thousands comprehended what he was saying they raised a shout of “No! no!! No!!” “Hang them! hang them!” “Don’t let them go! Never!”

“Hang the rascals! hang the villains!”

“Hang, ’em! hang ’em! hang ’em!”

This was taken up all over the prison, and tens of thousands throats yelled it in a fearful chorus.

Curtis turned from the crowd with desperation convulsing his features. Tearing off the broad-brimmed hat which he wore, he flung it on the ground with the exclamation!

“By God, I’ll die this way first!” and, drawing his head down and folding his arms about it, he dashed forward for the center of my company, like a great stone hurled from a catapult.

“Egypt” and I saw where he was going to strike, and ran down the line to help stop him. As he came up we rained blows on his head with our clubs, but so many of us struck at him at once that we broke each other’s clubs to pieces, and only knocked him on his knees. He rose with an almost superhuman effort, and plunged into the mass beyond.

The excitement almost became delirium. For an instant I feared that everything was gone to ruin. “Egypt” and I strained every energy to restore our lines, before the break could be taken advantage of by the others. Our boys behaved splendidly, standing firm, and in a few seconds the line was restored.

As Curtis broke through, Delaney, a brawny Irishman standing next to him, started to follow. He took one step. At the same instant Limber Jim’s long legs took three great strides, and placed him directly in front of Delaney. Jim’s right hand held an enormous bowie-knife, and as he raised it above Delaney he hissed out:



“If you dare move another step, you open you ———, I’ll open you from one end to the other.

Delaney stopped. This checked the others till our lines reformed.

When Wirz saw the commotion he was panic-stricken with fear that the long-dreaded assault on the Stockade had begun. He ran down from the headquarter steps to the Captain of the battery, shrieking:

“Fire! fire! fire!”

The Captain, not being a fool, could see that the rush was not towards the Stockade, but away from it, and he refrained from giving the order.



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But the spectators who had gotten before the guns, heard Wirz's excited yell, and remembering the consequences to themselves should the artillery be discharged, became frenzied with fear, and screamed, and fell down over and trampled upon each other in endeavoring to get away. The guards on that side of the Stockade ran down in a panic, and the ten thousand prisoners immediately around us, expecting no less than that the next instant we would be swept with grape and canister, stampeded tumultuously. There were quite a number of wells right around us, and all of these were filled full of men that fell into them as the crowd rushed away. Many had legs and arms broken, and I have no doubt that several were killed.

It was the stormiest five minutes that I ever saw.

While this was going on two of my company, belonging to the Fifth Iowa Cavalry, were in hot pursuit of Curtis. I had seen them start and shouted to them to come back, as I feared they would be set upon by the Raiders and murdered. But the din was so overpowering that they could not hear me, and doubtless would not have come back if they had heard.

Curtis ran diagonally down the hill, jumping over the tents and knocking down the men who happened in his way. Arriving at the swamp he plunged in, sinking nearly to his hips in the fetid, filthy ooze. He forged his way through with terrible effort. His pursuers followed his example, and caught up to him just as he emerged on the other side. They struck him on the back of the head with their clubs, and knocked him down.

By this time order had been restored about us. The guns remained silent, and the crowd massed around us again. From where we were we could see the successful end of the chase after Curtis, and could see his captors start back with him. Their success was announced with a roar of applause from the North Side. Both captors and captured were greatly exhausted, and they were coming back very slowly. Key ordered the balance up on to the scaffold. They obeyed promptly. The priest resumed his reading of the service for the condemned. The excitement seemed to make the doomed ones exceedingly thirsty. I never saw men drink such inordinate quantities of water. They called for it continually, gulped down a quart or more at a time, and kept two men going nearly all the time carrying it to them.

When Curtis finally arrived, he sat on the ground for a minute or so, to rest, and then, reeking with filth, slowly and painfully climbed the steps. Delaney seemed to think he was suffering as much from fright as anything else, and said to him:

“Come on up, now, show yourself a man, and die game.”

Again the priest resumed his reading, but it had no interest to Delaney, who kept calling out directions to Pete Donnelly, who was standing in the crowd, as to dispositions to be



made of certain bits of stolen property: to give a watch to this one, a ring to another, and so on. Once the priest stopped and said:



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“My son, let the things of this earth go, and turn your attention toward those of heaven.”

Delaney paid no attention to this admonition. The whole six then began delivering farewell messages to those in the crowd. Key pulled a watch from his pocket and said:

“Two minutes more to talk.”

Delaney said cheerfully:

“Well, good by, b'ys; if I've hurted any of y ez, I hope ye'll forgive me. Shpake up, now, any of yez that I've hurted, and say yell forgive me.”

We called upon Marion Friend, whose throat Delaney had tried to cut three weeks before while robbing him of forty dollars, to come forward, but Friend was not in a forgiving mood, and refused with an oath.

Key said:

“Time's up!” put the watch back in his pocket and raised his hand like an officer commanding a gun. Harris and Payne laid hold of the ropes to the supports of the planks. Each of the six hangmen tied a condemned man's hands, pulled a meal sack down over his head, placed the noose around his neck, drew it up tolerably close, and sprang to the ground. The priest began praying aloud.

Key dropped his hand. Payne and Harris snatched the supports out with a single jerk. The planks fell with a clatter. Five of the bodies swung around dizzily in the air. The sixth that of “Mosby,” a large, powerful, raw-boned man, one of the worst in the lot, and who, among other crimes, had killed Limber Jim's brother-broke the rope, and fell with a thud to the ground. Some of the men ran forward, examined the body, and decided that he still lived. The rope was cut off his neck, the meal sack removed, and water thrown in his face until consciousness returned. At the first instant he thought he was in eternity. He gasped out:

“Where am I? Am I in the other world?”

Limber Jim muttered that they would soon show him where he was, and went on grimly fixing up the scaffold anew. “Mosby” soon realized what had happened, and the unrelenting purpose of the Regulator Chiefs. Then he began to beg piteously for his life, saying:

“O for God's sake, do not put me up there again! God has spared my life once. He meant that you should be merciful to me.”

Limber Jim deigned him no reply. When the scaffold was rearranged, and a stout rope had replaced the broken one, he pulled the meal sack once more over “Mosby's” head,



who never ceased his pleadings. Then picking up the large man as if he were a baby, he carried him to the scaffold and handed him up to Tom Larkin, who fitted the noose around his neck and sprang down. The supports had not been set with the same delicacy as at first, and Limber Jim had to set his heel and wrench desperately at them before he could force them out. Then "Mosby" passed away without a struggle.

After hanging till life was extinct, the bodies were cut down, the meal-sacks pulled off their faces, and the Regulators formed two parallel lines, through which all the prisoners passed and took a look at the bodies. Pete Donnelly and Dick Allen knelt down and wiped the froth off Delaney's lips, and swore vengeance against those who had done him to death.



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CHAPTER XXXVIII.

After the execution—formation of A police force—its first chief —“Spanking” An offender.

After the executions Key, knowing that he, and all those prominently connected with the hanging, would be in hourly danger of assassination if they remained inside, secured details as nurses and ward-masters in the hospital, and went outside. In this crowd were Key, Ned Carrigan, Limber Jim, Dick McCullough, the six hangmen, the two Corporals who pulled the props from under the scaffold, and perhaps some others whom I do not now remember.

In the meanwhile provision had been made for the future maintenance of order in the prison by the organization of a regular police force, which in time came to number twelve hundred men. These were divided into companies, under appropriate officers. Guards were detailed for certain locations, patrols passed through the camp in all directions continually, and signals with whistles could summon sufficient assistance to suppress any disturbance, or carry out any orders from the chief.

The chieftainship was first held by Key, but when he went outside he appointed Sergeant A. R. Hill, of the One Hundredth O. V. I.—now a resident of Wauseon, Ohio,—his successor. Hill was one of the notabilities of that immense throng. A great, broad-shouldered, giant, in the prime of his manhood—the beginning of his thirtieth year—he was as good-natured as big, and as mild-mannered as brave. He spoke slowly, softly, and with a slightly rustic twang, that was very tempting to a certain class of sharps to take him up for a “luberly greeny.” The man who did so usually repented his error in sack-cloth and ashes.

Hill first came into prominence as the victor in the most stubbornly contested fight in the prison history of Belle Isle. When the squad of the One Hundredth Ohio—captured at Limestone Station, East Tennessee, in September, 1863—arrived on Belle Isle, a certain Jack Oliver, of the Nineteenth Indiana, was the undisputed fistic monarch of the Island. He did not bear his blushing honors modestly; few of a right arm that indefinite locality known as “the middle of next week,” is something that the possessor can as little resist showing as can a girl her first solitaire ring. To know that one can certainly strike a disagreeable fellow out of time is pretty sure to breed a desire to do that thing whenever occasion serves. Jack Oliver was one who did not let his biceps rust in inaction, but thrashed everybody on the Island whom he thought needed it, and his ideas as to those who should be included in this class widened daily, until it began to appear that he would soon feel it his duty to let no unwhipped man escape, but pound everybody on the Island.

One day his evil genius led him to abuse a rather elderly man belonging to Hill’s mess. As he fired off his tirade of contumely, Hill said with more than his usual “soft” rusticity:



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“Mister—I—don’t—&
shy;think—it—just—right—for—a—young—man—to—call —an—old—one—such—bad
names.”

Jack Oliver turned on him savagely.

“Well! may be you want to take it up?”

The grin on Hill’s face looked still more verdant, as he answered with gentle deliberation:

“Well—mister—I—don
't—go—around—a—hunting—things—but—I —ginerally—take—care—
of—all—that’s—sent—me!”

Jack foamed, but his fiercest bluster could not drive that infantile smile from Hill’s face, nor provoke a change in the calm slowness of his speech.

It was evident that nothing would do but a battle-royal, and Jack had sense enough to see that the imperturbable rustic was likely to give him a job of some difficulty. He went off and came back with his clan, while Hill’s comrades of the One Hundredth gathered around to insure him fair play. Jack pulled off his coat and vest, rolled up his sleeves, and made other elaborate preparations for the affray. Hill, without removing a garment, said, as he surveyed him with a mocking smile:

“Mister—you—seem—t
o—be—one—of—them—partick-e-ler—fellers.”

Jack roared out,

“By —, I’ll make you partickeler before I get through with you. Now, how shall we settle this? Regular stand-up-and knock-down, or rough and tumble?”

If anything Hill’s face was more vacantly serene, and his tones blander than ever, as he answered:

“Strike—any—gait—that—suits—you,—Mister;—I guess—I—will—be —able—to—keep
—up—with—you.”

They closed. Hill fainted with his left, and as Jack uncovered to guard, he caught him fairly on the lower left ribs, by a blow from his mighty right fist, that sounded—as one of the by-standers expressed it—“like striking a hollow log with a maul.”

The color in Jack’s face paled. He did not seem to understand how he had laid himself open to such a pass, and made the same mistake, receiving again a sounding blow in



the short ribs. This taught him nothing, either, for again he opened his guard in response to a feint, and again caught a blow on his luckless left, ribs, that drove the blood from his face and the breath from his body. He reeled back among his supporters for an instant to breathe. Recovering his wind, he dashed at Hill feinted strongly with his right, but delivered a terrible kick against the lower part of the latter's abdomen. Both closed and fought savagely at half-arm's length for an instant; during which Hill struck Jack so fairly in the mouth as to break out three front teeth, which the latter swallowed. Then they clenched and struggled to throw each other. Hill's superior strength and skill crushed his opponent to the ground, and he fell upon him. As they grappled there, one of Jack's followers sought to aid his leader by catching Hill by the hair, intending to kick him in the face. In an instant he was knocked down by a stalwart member of the One Hundredth, and then literally lifted out of the ring by kicks.



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Jack was soon so badly beaten as to be unable to cry “enough!” One of his friends did that service for him, the fight ceased, and thenceforth Mr. Oliver resigned his pugilistic crown, and retired to the shades of private life. He died of scurvy and diarrhea, some months afterward, in Andersonville.

The almost hourly scenes of violence and crime that marked the days and nights before the Regulators began operations were now succeeded by the greatest order. The prison was freer from crime than the best governed City. There were frequent squabbles and fights, of course, and many petty larcenies. Rations of bread and of wood, articles of clothing, and the wretched little cans and half canteens that formed our cooking utensils, were still stolen, but all these were in a sneak-thief way. There was an entire absence of the audacious open-day robbery and murder—the “raiding” of the previous few weeks. The summary punishment inflicted on the condemned was sufficient to cow even bolder men than the Raiders, and they were frightened into at least quiescence.

Sergeant Hill’s administration was vigorous, and secured the best results. He became a judge of all infractions of morals and law, and sat at the door of his tent to dispense justice to all comers, like the Cadi of a Mahometan Village. His judicial methods and punishments also reminded one strongly of the primitive judicature of Oriental lands. The wronged one came before him and told his tale: he had his blouse, or his quart cup, or his shoes, or his watch, or his money stolen during the night. The suspected one was also summoned, confronted with his accuser, and sharply interrogated. Hill would revolve the stories in his mind, decide the innocence or guilt of the accused, and if he thought the accusation sustained, order the culprit to punishment. He did not imitate his Mussulman prototypes to the extent of bowstringing or decapitating the condemned, nor did he cut any thief’s hands off, nor yet nail his ears to a doorpost, but he introduced a modification of the bastinado that made those who were punished by it even wish they were dead. The instrument used was what is called in the South a “shake”—a split shingle, a yard or more long, and with one end whittled down to form a handle. The culprit was made to bend down until he could catch around his ankles with his hands. The part of the body thus brought into most prominence was denuded of clothing and “spanked” from one to twenty times, as Hill ordered, by the “shake” in same strong and willing hand. It was very amusing—to the bystanders. The “spankee” never seemed to enter very heartily into the mirth of the occasion. As a rule he slept on his face for a week or so after, and took his meals standing.

The fear of the spanking, and Hill’s skill in detecting the guilty ones, had a very salutary effect upon the smaller criminals.

The Raiders who had been put into irons were very restive under the infliction, and begged Hill daily to release them. They professed the greatest penitence, and promised the most exemplary behavior for the future. Hill refused to release them, declaring that they should wear the irons until delivered up to our Government.



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One of the Raiders—named Heffron—had, shortly after his arrest, turned State's evidence, and given testimony that assisted materially in the conviction of his companions. One morning, a week or so after the hanging, his body was found lying among the other dead at the South Gate. The impression made by the fingers of the hand that had strangled him, were still plainly visible about the throat. There was no doubt as to why he had been killed, or that the Raiders were his murderers, but the actual perpetrators were never discovered.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

July—the prison becomes more crowded, the weather hotter, nations poorer, and mortality greater—some of the phenomena of suffering and death.

All during July the prisoners came streaming in by hundreds and thousands from every portion of the long line of battle, stretching from the Eastern bank of the Mississippi to the shores of the Atlantic. Over one thousand squandered by Sturgis at Guntown came in; two thousand of those captured in the desperate blow dealt by Hood against the Army of the Tennessee on the 22d of the month before Atlanta; hundreds from Hunter's luckless column in the Shenandoah Valley, thousands from Grant's lines in front of Petersburg. In all, seven thousand one hundred and twenty-eight were, during the month, turned into that seething mass of corrupting humanity to be polluted and tainted by it, and to assist in turn to make it fouler and deadlier. Over seventy hecatombs of chosen victims —of fair youths in the first flush of hopeful manhood, at the threshold of a life of honor to themselves and of usefulness to the community; beardless boys, rich in the priceless affections of homes, fathers, mothers, sisters and sweethearts, with minds thrilling with high aspirations for the bright future, were sent in as the monthly sacrifice to this Minotaur of the Rebellion, who, couched in his foul lair, slew them, not with the merciful delivery of speedy death, as his Cretan prototype did the annual tribute of Athenian youths and maidens, but, gloating over his prey, doomed them to lingering destruction. He rotted their flesh with the scurvy, racked their minds with intolerable suspense, burned their bodies with the slow fire of famine, and delighted in each separate pang, until they sank beneath the fearful accumulation. Theseus [Sherman. D.W.]—the deliverer—was coming. His terrible sword could be seen gleaming as it rose and fell on the banks of the James, and in the mountains beyond Atlanta, where he was hewing his way towards them and the heart of the Southern Confederacy. But he came too late to save them. Strike as swiftly and as heavily as he would, he could not strike so hard nor so sure at his foes with saber blow and musket shot, as they could at the hapless youths with the dreadful armament of starvation and disease.



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Though the deaths were one thousand eight hundred and seventeen more than were killed at the battle of Shiloh—this left the number in the prison at the end of the month thirty-one thousand six hundred and seventy-eight. Let me assist the reader's comprehension of the magnitude of this number by giving the population of a few important Cities, according to the census of 1870:

Cambridge, Mass 89,639
Charleston, S. C. 48,958
Columbus, O. 31,274
Dayton, O. 30,473
Fall River, Mass 26,766
Kansas City, Mo 32,260

The number of prisoners exceeded the whole number of men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five in several of the States and Territories in the Union. Here, for instance, are the returns for 1870, of men of military age in some portions of the country:

Arizona 5,157
Colorado 15,166
Dakota 5,301
Idaho 9,431
Montana 12,418
Nebraska 35,677
Nevada 24,762
New Hampshire 60,684
Oregon 23,959
Rhode Island 44,377
Vermont 62,450
West Virginia 6,832

It was more soldiers than could be raised to-day, under strong pressure, in either Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Dakota, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Utah, Vermont or West Virginia.

These thirty-one thousand six hundred and seventy-eight active young men, who were likely to find the confines of a State too narrow for them, were cooped up on thirteen acres of ground—less than a farmer gives for play-ground for a half dozen colts or a small flock of sheep. There was hardly room for all to lie down at night, and to walk a few hundred feet in any direction would require an hour's patient threading of the mass of men and tents.



The weather became hotter and hotter; at midday the sand would burn the hand. The thin skins of fair and auburn-haired men blistered under the sun's rays, and swelled up in great watery puffs, which soon became the breeding grounds of the hideous maggots, or the still more deadly gangrene. The loathsome swamp grew in rank offensiveness with every burning hour. The pestilence literally stalked at noon-day, and struck his victims down on every hand. One could not look a rod in any direction without seeing at least a dozen men in the last frightful stages of rotting Death.



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Let me describe the scene immediately around my own tent during the last two weeks of July, as a sample of the condition of the whole prison: I will take a space not larger than a good sized parlor or sitting room. On this were at least fifty of us. Directly in front of me lay two brothers—named Sherwood—belonging to Company I, of my battalion, who came originally from Missouri. They were now in the last stages of scurvy and diarrhea. Every particle of muscle and fat about their limbs and bodies had apparently wasted away, leaving the skin clinging close to the bone of the face, arms, hands, ribs and thighs—everywhere except the feet and legs, where it was swollen tense and transparent, distended with gallons of purulent matter. Their livid gums, from which most of their teeth had already fallen, protruded far beyond their lips. To their left lay a Sergeant and two others of their company, all three slowly dying from diarrhea, and beyond was a fair-haired German, young and intelligent looking, whose life was ebbing tediously away. To my right was a handsome young Sergeant of an Illinois Infantry Regiment, captured at Kenesaw. His left arm had been amputated between the shoulder and elbow, and he was turned into the Stockade with the stump all undressed, save the ligating of the arteries. Of course, he had not been inside an hour until the maggot flies had laid eggs in the open wound, and before the day was gone the worms were hatched out, and rioting amid the inflamed and super-sensitive nerves, where their every motion was agony. Accustomed as we were to misery, we found a still lower depth in his misfortune, and I would be happier could I forget his pale, drawn face, as he wandered uncomplainingly to and fro, holding his maimed limb with his right hand, occasionally stopping to squeeze it, as one does a boil, and press from it a stream of maggots and pus. I do not think he ate or slept for a week before he died. Next to him staid an Irish Sergeant of a New York Regiment, a fine soldierly man, who, with pardonable pride, wore, conspicuously on his left breast, a medal gained by gallantry while a British soldier in the Crimea. He was wasting away with diarrhea, and died before the month was out.

This was what one could see on every square rod of the prison. Where I was was not only no worse than the rest of the prison, but was probably much better and healthier, as it was the highest ground inside, farthest from the Swamp, and having the dead line on two sides, had a ventilation that those nearer the center could not possibly have. Yet, with all these conditions in our favor, the mortality was as I have described.

Near us an exasperating idiot, who played the flute, had established himself. Like all poor players, he affected the low, mournful notes, as plaintive as the distant cooing of the dove in lowering, weather. He played or rather tooted away in his "blues"-inducing strain hour after hour, despite our energetic protests, and occasionally flinging a club at him. There was no more stop to him than to a man with a hand-organ, and to this day the low, sad notes of a flute are the swiftest reminder to me of those sorrowful, death-laden days.



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I had an illustration one morning of how far decomposition would progress in a man's body before he died. My chum and I found a treasure-trove in the streets, in the shape of the body of a man who died during the night. The value of this "find" was that if we took it to the gate, we would be allowed to carry it outside to the deadhouse, and on our way back have an opportunity to pick up a chunk of wood, to use in cooking. While discussing our good luck another party came up and claimed the body. A verbal dispute led to one of blows, in which we came off victorious, and I hastily caught hold of the arm near the elbow to help bear the body away. The skin gave way under my hand, and slipped with it down to the wrist, like a torn sleeve. It was sickening, but I clung to my prize, and secured a very good chunk of wood while outside with it. The wood was very much needed by my mess, as our squad had then had none for more than a week.

CHAPTER XL.

The battle of the 22D of July—the arms of the Tennessee assaulted front and rear—death of general MCPHERSON—Assumption of command by general Logan—result of the battle.

Naturally, we had a consuming hunger for news of what was being accomplished by our armies toward crushing the Rebellion. Now, more than ever, had we reason to ardently wish for the destruction of the Rebel power. Before capture we had love of country and a natural desire for the triumph of her flag to animate us. Now we had a hatred of the Rebels that passed expression, and a fierce longing to see those who daily tortured and insulted us trampled down in the dust of humiliation.

The daily arrival of prisoners kept us tolerably well informed as to the general progress of the campaign, and we added to the information thus obtained by getting—almost daily—in some manner or another—a copy of a Rebel paper. Most frequently these were Atlanta papers, or an issue of the "Memphis-Corinth-Jackson-Grenada-Chattanooga-Resacca-Marietta-Atlanta Appeal," as they used to facetiously term a Memphis paper that left that City when it was taken in 1862, and for two years fell back from place to place, as Sherman's Army advanced, until at last it gave up the struggle in September, 1864, in a little Town south of Atlanta, after about two thousand miles of weary retreat from an indefatigable pursuer. The papers were brought in by "fresh fish," purchased from the guards at from fifty cents to one dollar apiece, or occasionally thrown in to us when they had some specially disagreeable intelligence, like the defeat of Banks, or Sturgis, or Bunter, to exult over. I was particularly fortunate in getting hold of these. Becoming installed as general reader for a neighborhood of several thousand men, everything of this kind was immediately brought to me, to be read aloud for the benefit of everybody. All the older prisoners knew me by the nick-name of "Illinoy" —a designation arising from my wearing on my cap, when I entered prison, a neat little white metal badge of "Ills." When any reading matter was brought into our neighborhood, there would be a general cry of:

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“Take it up to ‘Illinoy,’” and then hundreds would mass around my quarters to bear the news read.

The Rebel papers usually had very meager reports of the operations of the armies, and these were greatly distorted, but they were still very interesting, and as we always started in to read with the expectation that the whole statement was a mass of perversions and lies, where truth was an infrequent accident, we were not likely to be much impressed with it.

There was a marled difference in the tone of the reports brought in from the different armies. Sherman’s men were always sanguine. They had no doubt that they were pushing the enemy straight to the wall, and that every day brought the Southern Confederacy much nearer its downfall. Those from the Army of the Potomac were never so hopeful. They would admit that Grant was pounding Lee terribly, but the shadow of the frequent defeats of the Army of the Potomac seemed to hang depressingly over them.

There came a day, however, when our sanguine hopes as to Sherman were checked by a possibility that he had failed; that his long campaign towards Atlanta had culminated in such a reverse under the very walls of the City as would compel an abandonment of the enterprise, and possibly a humiliating retreat. We knew that Jeff. Davis and his Government were strongly dissatisfied with the Fabian policy of Joe Johnston. The papers had told us of the Rebel President’s visit to Atlanta, of his bitter comments on Johnston’s tactics; of his going so far as to sneer about the necessity of providing pontoons at Key West, so that Johnston might continue his retreat even to Cuba. Then came the news of Johnston’s Supersession by Hood, and the papers were full of the exulting predictions of what would now be accomplished “when that gallant young soldier is once fairly in the saddle.”

All this meant one supreme effort to arrest the onward course of Sherman. It indicated a resolve to stake the fate of Atlanta, and the fortunes of the Confederacy in the West, upon the hazard of one desperate fight. We watched the summoning up of every Rebel energy for the blow with apprehension. We dreaded another Chickamauga.

The blow fell on the 22d of July. It was well planned. The Army of the Tennessee, the left of Sherman’s forces, was the part struck. On the night of the 21st Hood marched a heavy force around its left flank and gained its rear. On the 22d this force fell on the rear with the impetuous violence of a cyclone, while the Rebels in the works immediately around Atlanta attacked furiously in front.



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It was an ordeal that no other army ever passed through successfully. The steadiest troops in Europe would think it foolhardiness to attempt to withstand an assault in force in front and rear at the same time. The finest legions that follow any flag to-day must almost inevitably succumb to such a mode of attack. But the seasoned veterans of the Army of the Tennessee encountered the shock with an obstinacy which showed that the finest material for soldiery this planet holds was that in which undaunted hearts beat beneath blue blouses. Springing over the front of their breastworks, they drove back with a withering fire the force assailing them in the rear. This beaten off, they jumped back to their proper places, and repulsed the assault in front. This was the way the battle was waged until night compelled a cessation of operations. Our boys were alternately behind the breastworks firing at Rebels advancing upon the front, and in front of the works firing upon those coming up in the rear. Sometimes part of our line would be on one side of the works, and part on the other.

In the prison we were greatly excited over the result of the engagement, of which we were uncertain for many days. A host of new prisoners perhaps two thousand—was brought in from there, but as they were captured during the progress of the fight, they could not speak definitely as to its issue. The Rebel papers exulted without stint over what they termed “a glorious victory.” They were particularly jubilant over the death of McPherson, who, they claimed, was the brain and guiding hand of Sherman’s army. One paper likened him to the pilot-fish, which guides the shark to his prey. Now that he was gone, said the paper, Sherman’s army becomes a great lumbering hulk, with no one in it capable of directing it, and it must soon fall to utter ruin under the skilfully delivered strokes of the gallant Hood.

We also knew that great numbers of wounded had been brought to the prison hospital, and this seemed to confirm the Rebel claim of a victory, as it showed they retained possession of the battle field.

About the 1st of August a large squad of Sherman’s men, captured in one of the engagements subsequent to the 22d, came in. We gathered around them eagerly. Among them I noticed a bright, curly-haired, blue-eyed infantryman—or boy, rather, as he was yet beardless. His cap was marked “68th O. Y. Y. L.,” his sleeves were garnished with re-enlistment stripes, and on the breast of his blouse was a silver arrow. To the eye of the soldier this said that he was a veteran member of the Sixty-Eighth Regiment of Ohio Infantry (that is, having already served three years, he had re-enlisted for the war), and that he belonged to the Third Division of the Seventeenth Army Corps. He was so young and fresh looking that one could hardly believe him to be a veteran, but if his stripes had not said this, the soldierly arrangement of clothing and accouterments,



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and the graceful, self-possessed pose of limbs and body would have told the observer that he was one of those "Old Reliables" with whom Sherman and Grant had already subdued a third of the Confederacy. His blanket, which, for a wonder, the Rebels had neglected to take from him, was tightly rolled, its ends tied together, and thrown over his shoulder scarf-fashion. His pantaloons were tucked inside his stocking tops, that were pulled up as far as possible, and tied tightly around his ankle with a string. A none-too-clean haversack, containing the inevitable sooty quart cup, and even blacker half-canteen, waft slung easily from the shoulder opposite to that on which the blanket rested. Hand him his faithful Springfield rifle, put three days' rations in his haversack, and forty rounds in his cartridge bog, and he would be ready, without an instant's demur or question, to march to the ends of the earth, and fight anything that crossed his path. He was a type of the honest, honorable, self respecting American boy, who, as a soldier, the world has not equaled in the sixty centuries that war has been a profession. I suggested to him that he was rather a youngster to be wearing veteran chevrons. "Yes," said he, "I am not so old as some of the rest of the boys, but I have seen about as much service and been in the business about as long as any of them. They call me 'Old Dad,' I suppose because I was the youngest boy in the Regiment, when we first entered the service, though our whole Company, officers and all, were only a lot of boys, and the Regiment to day, what's left of 'em, are about as young a lot of officers and men as there are in the service. Why, our old Colonel ain't only twenty-four years old now, and he has been in command ever since we went into Vicksburg. I have heard it said by our boys that since we veteranized the whole Regiment, officers, and men, average less than twenty-four years old. But they are gray-hounds to march and stayers in a fight, you bet. Why, the rest of the troops over in West Tennessee used to call our Brigade 'Leggett's Cavalry,' for they always had us chasing Old Forrest, and we kept him skedaddling, too, pretty lively. But I tell you we did get into a red hot scrimmage on the 22d. It just laid over Champion Hills, or any of the big fights around Vicksburg, and they were lively enough to amuse any one."

"So you were in the affair on the 22d, were you! We are awful anxious to hear all about it. Come over here to my quarters and tell us all you know. All we know is that there has been a big fight, with McPherson killed, and a heavy loss of life besides, and the Rebels claim a great victory."

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“O, they be ----. It was the sickest victory they ever got. About one more victory of that kind would make their infernal old Confederacy ready for a coroner’s inquest. Well, I can tell you pretty much all about that fight, for I reckon if the truth was known, our regiment fired about the first and last shot that opened and closed the fighting on that day. Well, you see the whole Army got across the river, and were closing in around the City of Atlanta. Our Corps, the Seventeenth, was the extreme left of the army, and were moving up toward the City from the East. The Fifteenth (Logan’s) Corps joined us on the right, then the Army of the Cumberland further to the right. We run onto the Rebs about sundown the 21st. They had some breastworks on a ridge in front of us, and we had a pretty sharp fight before we drove them off. We went right to work, and kept at it all night in changing and strengthening the old Rebel barricades, fronting them towards Atlanta, and by morning had some good solid works along our whole line. During the night we fancied we could hear wagons or artillery moving away in front of us, apparently going South, or towards our left. About three or four o’clock in the morning, while I was shoveling dirt like a beaver out on the works, the Lieutenant came to me and said the Colonel wanted to see me, pointing to a large tree in the rear, where I could find him. I reported and found him with General Leggett, who commanded our Division, talking mighty serious, and Bob Wheeler, of F Company, standing there with his Springfield at a parade rest. As soon as I came up, the Colonel says:

“Boys, the General wants two level-headed chaps to go out beyond the pickets to the front and toward the left. I have selected you for the duty. Go as quietly as possible and as fast as you can; keep your eyes and ears open; don’t fire a shot if you can help it, and come back and tell us exactly what you have seen and heard, and not what you imagine or suspect. I have selected you for the duty.’

“He gave us the countersign, and off we started over the breastworks and through the thick woods. We soon came to our skirmish or pickets, only a few rods in front of our works, and cautioned them not to fire on us in going or returning. We went out as much as half a mile or more, until we could plainly hear the sound of wagons and artillery. We then cautiously crept forward until we could see the main road leading south from the City filled with marching men, artillery and teams. We could hear the commands of the officers and see the flags and banners of regiment after regiment as they passed us. We got back quietly and quickly, passed through our picket line all right, and found the General and our Colonel sitting on a log where we had left them, waiting for us. We reported what we had seen and heard, and gave it as our opinion that the Johnnies

were evacuating Atlanta. The General shook his head, and the Colonel says: 'You may re turn to your company.' Bob says to me:



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“The old General shakes his head as though he thought them d—d Rebs ain’t evacuating Atlanta so mighty sudden, but are up to some devilment again. I ain’t sure but he’s right. They ain’t going to keep falling back and falling back to all eternity, but are just agoin’ to give us a rip-roaring great big fight one o’ these days—when they get a good ready. You hear me!”

“Saying which we both went to our companies, and laid down to get a little sleep. It was about daylight then, and I must have snoozed away until near noon, when I heard the order ‘fall in!’ and found the regiment getting into line, and the boys all tallying about going right into Atlanta; that the Rebels had evacuated the City during the night, and that we were going to have a race with the Fifteenth Corps as to which would get into the City first. We could look away out across a large field in front of our works, and see the skirmish line advancing steadily towards the main works around the City. Not a shot was being, fired on either side.

“To our surprise, instead of marching to the front and toward the City, we filed off into a small road cut through the woods and marched rapidly to the rear. We could not understand what it meant. We marched at quick time, feeling pretty mad that we had to go to the rear, when the rest of our Division were going into Atlanta.

“We passed the Sixteenth Corps lying on their arms, back in some open fields, and the wagon trains of our Corps all comfortably corralled, and finally found ourselves out by the Seventeenth Corps headquarters. Two or three companies were sent out to picket several roads that seemed to cross at that point, as it was reported ‘Rebel Cavalry’ had been seen on these roads but a short time before, and this accounted for our being rushed out in such a great hurry.

“We had just stacked arms and were going to take a little rest after our rapid march, when several Rebel prisoners were brought in by some of the boys who had straggled a little. They found the Rebels on the road we had just marched out on. Up to this time not a shot had been fired. All was quiet back at the main works we had just left, when suddenly we saw several staff officers come tearing up to the Colonel, who ordered us to ‘fall in!’ ‘Take aims!’ ‘about, face!’ The Lieutenant Colonel dashed down one of the roads where one of the companies had gone out on picket. The Major and Adjutant galloped down the others. We did not wait for them to come back, though, but moved right back on the road we had just come out, in line of battle, our colors in the road, and our flanks in open timber. We soon reached a fence enclosing a large field, and there could see a line of Rebels moving by the flank, and forming, facing toward Atlanta, but to the left and in the rear of the position occupied by our Corps. As soon as we reached the fence we fired a round or two into the backs of these gray coats, who broke into confusion.



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“Just then the other companies joined us, and we moved off on ‘double quick by the right flank,’ for you see we were completely cut off from the troops up at the front, and we had to get well over to the right to get around the flank of the Rebels. Just about the time we fired on the rebels the Sixteenth Corps opened up a hot fire of musketry and artillery on them, some of their shot coming over mighty close to where we were. We marched pretty fast, and finally turned in through some open fields to the left, and came out just in the rear of the Sixteenth Corps, who were fighting like devils along their whole line.

“Just as we came out into the open field we saw General R. K. Scott, who used to be our Colonel, and who commanded our brigade, come tearing toward us with one or two aids or orderlies. He was on his big clay-bank horse, ‘Old Hatchie,’ as we called him, as we captured him on the battlefield at the battle of ‘Matamora,’ or ‘Hell on the Hatchie,’ as our boys always called it. He rode up to the Colonel, said something hastily, when all at once we heard the all-firedest crash of musketry and artillery way up at the front where we had built the works the night before and left the rest of our brigade and Division getting ready to prance into Atlanta when we were sent off to the rear. Scott put spurs to his old horse, who was one of the fastest runners in our Division, and away he went back towards the position where his brigade and the troops immediately to their left were now hotly engaged. He rode right along in rear of the Sixteenth Corps, paying no attention apparently to the shot and shell and bullets that were tearing up the earth and exploding and striking all around him. His aids and orderlies vainly tried to keep up with him. We could plainly see the Rebel lines as they came out of the woods into the open grounds to attack the Sixteenth Corps, which had hastily formed in the open field, without any signs of works, and were standing up like men, having a hand-to-hand fight. We were just far enough in the rear so that every blasted shot or shell that was fired too high to hit the ranks of the Sixteenth Corps came rattling over amongst us. All this time we were marching fast, following in the direction General Scott had taken, who evidently had ordered the Colonel to join his brigade up at the front. We were down under the crest of a little hill, following along the bank of a little creek, keeping under cover of the bank as much as possible to protect us from the shots of the enemy. We suddenly saw General Logan and one or two of his staff upon the right bank of the ravine riding rapidly toward us. As he neared the head of the regiment he shouted:

“Halt! What regiment is that, and where are you going?” The Colonel, in a loud voice, that all could hear, told him: “The Sixty-Eighth Ohio; going to join our brigade of the Third Division—your old Division, General, of the Seventeenth Corps.”



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“Logan says, ‘you had better go right in here on the left of Dodge. The Third Division have hardly ground enough left now to bury their dead. God knows they need you. But try it on, if you think you can get to them.’

“Just at this moment a staff officer came riding up on the opposite side of the ravine from where Logan was and interrupted Logan, who was about telling the Colonel not to try to go to the position held by the Third Division by the road cut through the woods whence we had come out, but to keep off to the right towards the Fifteenth Corps, as the woods referred to were full of Rebels. The officer saluted Logan, and shouted across:

“General Sherman directs me to inform you of the death of General McPherson, and orders you to take command of the Army of the Tennessee; have Dodge close well up to the Seventeenth Corps, and Sherman will reinforce you to the extent of the whole army.’

“Logan, standing in his stirrups, on his beautiful black horse, formed a picture against the blue sky as we looked up the ravine at him, his black eyes fairly blazing and his long black hair waving in the wind. He replied in a ringing, clear tone that we all could hear:

“Say to General Sherman I have heard of McPherson’s death, and have assumed the command of the Army of the Tennessee, and have already anticipated his orders in regard to closing the gap between Dodge and the Seventeenth Corps.’

“This, of course, all happened in one quarter of the time I have been telling you. Logan put spurs to his horse and rode in one direction, the staff officer of General Sherman in another, and we started on a rapid step toward the front. This was the first we had heard of McPherson’s death, and it made us feel very bad. Some of the officers and men cried as though they had lost a brother; others pressed their lips, gritted their teeth, and swore to avenge his death. He was a great favorite with all his Army, particularly of our Corps, which he commanded for a long while. Our company, especially, knew him well, and loved him dearly, for we had been his Headquarters Guard for over a year. As we marched along, toward the front, we could see brigades, and regiments, and batteries of artillery; coming over from the right of the Army, and taking position in new lines in rear of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Corps. Major Generals and their staffs, Brigadier Generals and their staffs, were mighty thick along the banks of the little ravine we were following; stragglers and wounded men by the hundred were pouring in to the safe shelter formed by the broken ground along which we were rapidly marching; stories were heard of divisions, brigades and regiments that these wounded or stragglers belonged, having been all cut to pieces; officers all killed; and the speaker, the only one of his command not killed, wounded or captured. But you boys have heard and seen the same cowardly sneaks, probably, in fights that you were in. The battle raged furiously all this time; part of the time the Sixteenth Corps seemed to be in the worst; then it would let up on them and the Seventeenth Corps would be hotly engaged along their whole front.



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“We had probably marched half an hour since leaving Logan, and were getting pretty near back to our main line of works, when the Colonel ordered a halt and knapsacks to be unslung and piled up. I tell you it was a relief to get them off, for it was a fearful hot day, and we had been marching almost double quick. We knew that this meant business though, and that we were stripping for the fight, which we would soon be in. Just at this moment we saw an ambulance, with the horses on a dead run, followed by two or three mounted officers and men, coming right towards us out of the very woods Logan had cautioned the Colonel to avoid. When the ambulance got to where we were it halted. It was pretty well out of danger from the bullets and shell of the enemy. They stopped, and we recognized Major Strong, of McPherson’s Staff, whom the all knew, as he was the Chief Inspector of our Corps, and in the ambulance he had the body of General McPherson. Major Strong, it appears, during a slight lull in the fighting at that part of the line, having taken an ambulance and driven into the very jaws of death to recover the remains of his loved commander. It seems he found the body right by the side of the little road that we had gone out on when we went to the rear. He was dead when he found him, having been shot off his horse, the bullet striking him in the back, just below his heart, probably killing him instantly. There was a young fellow with him who was wounded also, when Strong found them. He belonged to our First Division, and recognized General McPherson, and stood by him until Major Strong came up. He was in the ambulance with the body of McPherson when they stopped by us.

“It seems that when the fight opened away back in the rear where we had been, and at the left of the Sixteenth Corps which was almost directly in the rear of the Seventeenth Corps, McPherson sent his staff and orderlies with various orders to different parts of the line, and started himself to ride over from the Seventeenth Corps to the Sixteenth Corps, taking exactly the same course our Regiment had, perhaps an hour before, but the Rebels had discovered there was a gap between the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Corps, and meeting no opposition to their advances in this strip of woods, where they were hidden from view, they had marched right along down in the rear, and with their line at right angles with the line of works occupied by the left of the Seventeenth Corps; they were thus parallel and close to the little road McPherson had taken, and probably he rode right into them and was killed before he realized the true situation.

“Having piled our knapsacks, and left a couple of our older men, who were played out with the heat and most ready to drop with sunstroke, to guard them, we started on again. The ambulance with the corpse of Gen. McPherson moved off towards the right of the Army, which was the last we ever saw of that brave and handsome soldier.



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“We bore off a little to the right of a large open field on top of a high hill where one of our batteries was pounding away at a tremendous rate. We came up to the main line of works just about at the left of the Fifteenth Corps. They seemed to be having an easy time of it just then —no fighting going on in their front, except occasional shots from some heavy guns on the main line of Rebel works around the City. We crossed right over the Fifteenth Corps’ works and filed to the left, keeping along on the outside of our works. We had not gone far before the Rebel gunners in the main works around the City discovered us; and the way they did tear loose at us was a caution. Their aim was rather bad, however, and most of their shots went over us. We saw one of them—I think it was a shell—strike an artillery caisson belonging to one of our-batteries. It exploded as it struck, and then the caisson, which was full of ammunition, exploded with an awful noise, throwing pieces of wood and iron and its own load of shot and shell high into the air, scattering death and destruction to the men and horses attached to it. We thought we saw arms and legs and parts of bodies of men flying in every direction; but we were glad to learn afterwards that it was the contents of the knapsacks of the Battery boys, who had strapped them on the caissons for transportation.

“Just after passing the hill where our battery was making things so lively, they stopped firing to let us pass. We saw General Leggett, our Division Commander, come riding toward us. He was outside of our line of works, too. You know how we build breastworks—sort of zigzag like, you know, so they cannot be enfiladed. Well, that’s just the way the works were along there, and you never saw such a curious shape as we formed our Division in. Why, part of them were on one side of the works, and go along a little further and here was a regiment, or part of a regiment on the other side, both sets firing in opposite directions.

“No sir’ee, they were not demoralized or in confusion, they were cool and as steady as on parade. But the old Division had, you know, never been driven from any position they had once taken, in all their long service, and they did not propose to leave that ridge until they got orders from some one beside the Rebs.

“There were times when a fellow did not know which side of the works was the safest, for the Johnnies were in front of us and in rear of us. You see, our Fourth Division, which had been to the left of us, had been forced to quit their works, when the Rebs got into the works in their rear, so that our Division was now at the point where our line turned sharply to the left, and rear—in the direction of the Sixteenth Corps.

“We got into business before we had been there over three minutes. A line of the Rebs tried to charge across the open fields in front of us, but by the help of the old twenty-four pounders (which proved to be part of Cooper’s Illinois Battery, that we had been alongside of in many a hard fight before), we drove them back a-flying, only to have to jump over on the outside of our works the next minute to tackle a heavy force that came for our rear through that blasted strip of woods. We soon drove them off, and the firing on both sides seemed to have pretty much stopped.



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“Our Brigade,’ which we discovered, was now commanded by ‘Old Whiskers’ (Colonel Piles, of the Seventy-Eighth Ohio. I’ll bet he’s got the longest whiskers of any man in the Army.) You see General Scott had not been seen or heard of since he had started to the rear after our regiment when the fighting first commenced. We all believed that he was either killed or captured, or he would have been with his command. He was a splendid soldier, and a bull-dog of a fighter. His absence was a great loss, but we had not much time to think of such things, for our brigade was then ordered to leave the works and to move to the right about twenty or thirty rods across a large ravine, where we were placed in position in an open corn-field, forming a new line at quite an angle from the line of works we had just left, extending to the left, and getting us back nearer onto a line with the Sixteenth Corps. The battery of howitzers, now reinforced by a part of the Third Ohio heavy guns, still occupied the old works on the highest part of the hill, just to the right of our new line. We took our position just on the brow of a hill, and were ordered to lie down, and the rear rank to go for rails, which we discovered a few rods behind us in the shape of a good ten-rail fence. Every rear-rank chap came back with all the rails he could lug, and we barely had time to lay them down in front of us, forming a little barricade of six to eight or ten inches high, when we heard the most unearthly Rebel yell directly in front of us. It grew louder and came nearer and nearer, until we could see a solid line of the gray coats coming out of the woods and down the opposite slope, their battle flags flying, officers in front with drawn swords, arms at right shoulder, and every one of them yelling like so many Sioux Indians. The line seemed to be massed six or eight ranks deep, followed closely by the second line, and that by the third, each, if possible, yelling louder and appearing more desperately reckless than the one ahead. At their first appearance we opened on them, and so did the bully old twenty-four-pounders, with canister.

“On they came; the first line staggered and wavered back on to the second, which was coming on the double quick. Such a raking as we did give them. Oh, Lordy, how we did wish that we had the breech loading Spencers or Winchesters. But we had the old reliable Springfields, and we poured it in hot and heavy. By the time the charging column got down the opposite slope, and were struggling through the thicket of undergrowth in the ravine, they were one confused mass of officers and men, the three lines now forming one solid column, which made several desperate efforts to rush up to the top of the hill where we were punishing them so. One of their first surges came mighty near going right over the left of our Regiment, as they were lying down behind their little rail piles. But the boys clubbed their guns and the officers used their revolvers and swords and drove them back down the hill.



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“The Seventy-Eighth and Twentieth Ohio, our right and left bowers, who had been brigaded with us ever since ‘Shiloh,’ were into it as hot and heavy as we had been, and had lost numbers of their officers and men, but were hanging on to their little rail piles when the fight was over. At one time the Rebs were right in on top of the Seventy-Eighth. One big Reb grabbed their colors, and tried to pull them out of the hands of the color-bearer. But old Captain Orr, a little, short, dried-up fellow, about sixty years old, struck him with his sword across the back of the neck, and killed him deader than a mackerel, right in his tracks.

“It was now getting dark, and the Johnnies concluded they had taken a bigger contract in trying to drive us off that hill in one day than they had counted on, so they quit charging on us, but drew back under cover of the woods and along the old line of works that we had left, and kept up a pecking away and sharp-shooting at us all night long. They opened fire on us from a number of pieces of artillery from the front, from the left, and from some heavy guns away over to the right of us, in the main works around Atlanta.

“We did not fool away much time that night, either. We got our shovels and picks, and while part of us were sharpshooting and trying to keep the Rebels from working up too close to us, the rest of the boys were putting up some good solid earthworks right where our rail piles had been, and by morning we were in splendid shape to have received our friends, no matter which way they had come at us, for they kept up such an all-fired shelling of us from so many different directions; that the boys had built traverses and bomb-proofs at all sorts of angles and in all directions.

“There was one point off to our right, a few rods up along our old line of works where there was a crowd of Rebel sharpshooters that annoyed us more than all the rest, by their constant firing at us through the night. They killed one of Company H’s boys, and wounded several others. Finally Captain Williams, of D Company, came along and said he wanted a couple of good shots out of our company to go with him, so I went for one. He took about ten of us, and we crawled down into the ravine in front of where we were building the works, and got behind a large fallen tree, and we laid there and could just fire right up into the rear of those fellows as they lay behind a traverse extending back from our old line of works. It was so dark we could only see where to fire by the flash of guns, but every time they would shoot, some of us would let them have one. They staid there until almost daylight, when they, concluded as things looked, since we were going to stay, they had better be going.



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“It was an awful night. Down in the ravine below us lay hundreds of killed and wounded Rebels, groaning and crying aloud for water and for help. We did do what we could for those right around us—but it was so dark, and so many shell bursting and bullets flying around that a fellow could not get about much. I tell you it was pretty tough next morning to go along to the different companies of our regiment and hear who were among the killed and wounded, and to see the long row of graves that were being dug to bury our comrades and our officers. There was the Captain of Company E, Nelson Skeeles, of Fulton County, O., one of—the bravest and best officers in the regiment. By his side lay First Sergeant Lesnit, and next were the two great, powerful Shepherds—cousins but more like brothers. One, it seems, was killed while supporting the head of the other, who had just received a death wound, thus dying in each other’s arms.

“But I can’t begin to think or tell you the names of all the poor boys that we laid away to rest in their last, long sleep on that gloomy day. Our Major was severely wounded, and several other officers had been hit more or less badly.

“It was a frightful sight, though, to go over the field in front of our works on that morning. The Rebel dead and badly wounded laid where they had fallen. The bottom and opposite side of the ravine showed how destructive our fire and that of the canister from the howitzers had been. The underbrush was cut, slashed, and torn into shreds, and the larger trees were scarred, bruised and broken by the thousands of bullets and other missiles that had been poured into them from almost every conceivable direction during the day before.

“A lot of us boys went way over to the left into Fuller’s Division of the Sixteenth Corps, to see how some of our boys over there had got through the scrimmage, for they had about as nasty a fight as any part of the Army, and if it had not been for their being just where they were, I am not sure but what the old Seventeenth Corps would have had a different story to tell now. We found our friends had been way out by Decatur, where their brigade had got into a pretty lively fight on their own hook.

“We got back to camp, and the first thing I knew I was detailed for picket duty, and we were posted over a few rods across the ravine in our front. We had not been out but a short time when we saw a flag of truce, borne by an officer, coming towards us. We halted him, and made him wait until a report was sent back to Corps headquarters. The Rebel officer was quite chatty and talkative with our picket officer, while waiting. He said he was on General Cleburne’s staff, and that the troops that charged us so fiercely the evening before was Cleburne’s whole Division, and that after their last repulse, knowing the hill where we were posted was the most important position along our line, he felt that if they would keep close to us during



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the night, and keep up a show of fight, that we would pull out and abandon the hill before morning. He said that he, with about fifty of their best men, had volunteered to keep up the demonstration, and it was his party that had occupied the traverse in our old works the night before and had annoyed us and the Battery men by their constant sharpshooting, which we fellows behind the old tree had finally tired out. He said they staid until almost daylight, and that he lost more than half his men before he left. He also told us that General Scott was captured by their Division, at about the time and almost the same spot as where General McPherson was killed, and that he was not hurt or wounded, and was now a prisoner in their hands.

“Quite a lot of our, staff officers soon came out, and as near as we could learn the Rebels wanted a truce to bury their dead. Our folks tried to get up an exchange of prisoners that had been taken by both sides the day before, but for some reason they could not bring it about. But the truce for burying the dead was agreed to. Along about dusk some of the boys on my post got to telling about a lot of silver and brass instruments that belonged to one of the bands of the Fourth Division, which had been hung up in some small trees a little way over in front of where we were when the fight was going on the day before, and that when, a bullet would strike one of the horns they could hear it go ‘pin-g’ and in a few minutes ‘pan-g’ would go another bullet through one of them.

“A new picket was just coming’ on, and I had picked up my blanket and haversack, and was about ready to start back to camp, when, thinks I, ‘I’ll just go out there and see about them horns.’ I told the boys what I was going to do. They all seemed to think it was safe enough, so out I started. I had not gone more than a hundred yards, I should think, when here I found the horns all hanging around on the trees just as the boys had described. Some of them had lots of bullet holes in them. But I saw a beautiful, nice looking silver bugle hanging off to one side a little. ‘I Thinks,’ says I, ‘I’ll just take that little toot horn in out of the wet, and take it back to camp.’ I was just reaching up after it when I heard some one say,

“‘Halt!’ and I’ll be dog-Boned if there wasn’t two of the meanest looking Rebels, standing not ten feet from me, with their guns cocked and pointed at me, and, of course, I knew I was a goner; they walked me back about one hundred and fifty yards, where their picket line was. From there I was kept going for an hour or two until we got over to a place on the railroad called East Point. There I got in with a big crowd of our prisoners, who were taken the day before, and we have been fooling along in a lot of old cattle cars getting down here ever since.

“So this is ‘Andersonville,’ is it a Well, by —!”

CHAPTER XLI.

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Clothing: Its rapid deterioration, and devices to replenish it—desperate efforts to cover nakedness—“Little red cap” And his letter.

Clothing had now become an object of real solicitude to us older prisoners. The veterans of our crowd—the surviving remnant of those captured at Gettysburg—had been prisoners over a year. The next in seniority—the Chickamauga boys—had been in ten months. The Mine Run fellows were eight months old, and my battalion had had seven months’ incarceration. None of us were models of well-dressed gentlemen when captured. Our garments told the whole story of the hard campaigning we had undergone. Now, with months of the wear and tear of prison life, sleeping on the sand, working in tunnels, digging wells, *etc.*, we were tattered and torn to an extent that a second-class tramp would have considered disgraceful.

This is no reflection upon the quality of the clothes furnished by the Government. We simply reached the limit of the wear of textile fabrics. I am particular to say this, because I want to contribute my little mite towards doing justice to a badly abused part of our Army organization—the Quartermaster’s Department. It is fashionable to speak of “shoddy,” and utter some stereotyped sneers about “brown paper shoes,” and “musketo-netting overcoats,” when any discussion of the Quartermaster service is the subject of conversation, but I have no hesitation in asking the indorsement of my comrades to the statement that we have never found anywhere else as durable garments as those furnished us by the Government during our service in the Army. The clothes were not as fine in texture, nor so stylish in cut as those we wore before or since, but when it came to wear they could be relied on to the last thread. It was always marvelous to me that they lasted so well, with the rough usage a soldier in the field must necessarily give them.

But to return to my subject. I can best illustrate the way our clothes dropped off us, piece by piece, like the petals from the last rose of Summer, by taking my own case as an example: When I entered prison I was clad in the ordinary garb of an enlisted man of the cavalry—stout, comfortable boots, woolen pocks, drawers, pantaloons, with a “reenforcement,” or “ready-made patches,” as the infantry called them; vest, warm, snug-fitting jacket, under and over shirts, heavy overcoat, and a forage-cap. First my boots fell into cureless ruin, but this was no special hardship, as the weather had become quite warm, and it was more pleasant than otherwise to go barefooted. Then part of the underclothing retired from service. The jacket and vest followed, their end being hastened by having their best portions taken to patch up the pantaloons, which kept giving out at the most embarrassing places. Then the cape



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of the overcoat was called upon to assist in repairing these continually-recurring breaches in the nether garments. The same insatiate demand finally consumed the whole coat, in a vain attempt to prevent an exposure of person greater than consistent with the usages of society. The pantaloons—or what, by courtesy, I called such, were a monument of careful and ingenious, but hopeless, patching, that should have called forth the admiration of a Florentine artist in mosaic. I have been shown—in later years—many table tops, ornamented in marquetry, inlaid with thousands of little bits of wood, cunningly arranged, and patiently joined together. I always look at them with interest, for I know the work spent upon them: I remember my Andersonville pantaloons.

The clothing upon the upper part of my body had been reduced to the remains of a knit undershirt. It had fallen into so many holes that it looked like the coarse “riddles” through which ashes and gravel are sifted. Wherever these holes were the sun had burned my back, breast and shoulders deeply black. The parts covered by the threads and fragments forming the boundaries of the holes, were still white. When I pulled my alleged shirt off, to wash or to free it from some of its teeming population, my skin showed a fine lace pattern in black and white, that was very interesting to my comrades, and the subject of countless jokes by them.

They used to descant loudly on the chaste elegance of the design, the richness of the tracing, *etc.*, and beg me to furnish them with a copy of it when I got home, for their sisters to work window curtains or tidies by. They were sure that so striking a novelty in patterns would be very acceptable. I would reply to their witticisms in the language of Portia’s Prince of Morocco:

Mislike me not for my complexion—
The shadowed livery of the burning sun.

One of the stories told me in my childhood by an old negro nurse, was of a poverty stricken little girl “who slept on the floor and was covered with the door,” and she once asked—

“Mamma how do poor folks get along who haven’t any door?”

In the same spirit I used to wonder how poor fellows got along who hadn’t any shirt.

One common way of keeping up one’s clothing was by stealing mealsacks. The meal furnished as rations was brought in in white cotton sacks. Sergeants of detachments were required to return these when the rations were issued the next day. I have before alluded to the general incapacity of the Rebels to deal accurately with even simple numbers. It was never very difficult for a shrewd Sergeant to make nine sacks count as ten. After awhile the Rebels began to see through this sleight of hand manipulation, and



to check it. Then the Sergeants resorted to the device of tearing the sacks in two, and turning each half in as a whole one. The cotton cloth gained in this way was used for patching, or, if a boy could succeed in beating the Rebels out of enough of it, he would fabricate himself a shirt or a pair of pantaloons. We obtained all our thread in the same way. A half of a sack, carefully raveled out, would furnish a couple of handfuls of thread. Had it not been for this resource all our sewing and mending would have come to a standstill.

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Most of our needles were manufactured by ourselves from bones. A piece of bone, split as near as possible to the required size, was carefully rubbed down upon a brick, and then had an eye laboriously worked through it with a bit of wire or something else available for the purpose. The needles were about the size of ordinary darning needles, and answered the purpose very well.

These devices gave one some conception of the way savages provide for the wants of their lives. Time was with them, as with us, of little importance. It was no loss of time to them, nor to us, to spend a large portion of the waking hours of a week in fabricating a needle out of a bone, where a civilized man could purchase a much better one with the product of three minutes' labor. I do not think any red Indian of the plains exceeded us in the patience with which we worked away at these minutia of life's needs.

Of course the most common source of clothing was the dead, and no body was carried out with any clothing on it that could be of service to the survivors. The Plymouth Pilgrims, who were so well clothed on coming in, and were now dying off very rapidly, furnished many good suits to cover the nakedness of older, prisoners. Most of the prisoners from the Army of the Potomac were well dressed, and as very many died within a month or six weeks after their entrance, they left their clothes in pretty good condition for those who constituted themselves their heirs, administrators and assigns.

For my own part, I had the greatest aversion to wearing dead men's clothes, and could only bring myself to it after I had been a year in prison, and it became a question between doing that and freezing to death.

Every new batch of prisoners was besieged with anxious inquiries on the subject which lay closest to all our hearts:

"What are they doing about exchange!"

Nothing in human experience—save the anxious expectancy of a sail by castaways on a desert island—could equal the intense eagerness with which this question was asked, and the answer awaited. To thousands now hanging on the verge of eternity it meant life or death. Between the first day of July and the first of November over twelve thousand men died, who would doubtless have lived had they been able to reach our lines—"get to God's country," as we expressed it.

The new comers brought little reliable news of contemplated exchange. There was none to bring in the first place, and in the next, soldiers in active service in the field had other things to busy themselves with than reading up the details of the negotiations between the Commissioners of Exchange. They had all heard rumors, however, and by the time they reached Andersonville, they had crystallized these into actual statements of fact. A half hour after they entered the Stockade, a report like this would spread like wildfire:



“An Army of the Potomac man has just come in, who was captured in front of Petersburg. He says that he read in the New York Herald, the day before he was taken, that an exchange had been agreed upon, and that our ships had already started for Savannah to take us home.”



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Then our hopes would soar up like balloons. We fed ourselves on such stuff from day to day, and doubtless many lives were greatly prolonged by the continual encouragement. There was hardly a day when I did not say to myself that I would much rather die than endure imprisonment another month, and had I believed that another month would see me still there, I am pretty certain that I should have ended the matter by crossing the Dead Line. I was firmly resolved not to die the disgusting, agonizing death that so many around me were dying.

One of our best purveyors of information was a bright, blue-eyed, fair-haired little drummer boy, as handsome as a girl, well-bred as a lady, and evidently the darling of some refined loving mother. He belonged, I think, to some loyal Virginia regiment, was captured in one of the actions in the Shenandoa Valley, and had been with us in Richmond. We called him "Red Cap," from his wearing a jaunty, gold-laced, crimson cap. Ordinarily, the smaller a drummer boy is the harder he is, but no amount of attrition with rough men could coarse the ingrained refinement of Red Cap's manners. He was between thirteen and fourteen, and it seemed utterly shameful that men, calling themselves soldier should make war on such a tender boy and drag him off to prison.

But no six-footer had a more soldierly heart than little Red Cap, and none were more loyal to the cause. It was a pleasure to hear him tell the story of the fights and movements his regiment had been engaged in. He was a good observer and told his tale with boyish fervor. Shortly after Wirz assumed command he took Red Cap into his office as an Orderly. His bright face and winning manner; fascinated the women visitors at headquarters, and numbers of them tried to adopt him, but with poor success. Like the rest of us, he could see few charms in an existence under the Rebel flag, and turned a deaf ear to their blandishments. He kept his ears open to the conversation of the Rebel officers around him, and frequently secured permission to visit the interior of the Stockade, when he would communicate to us all that he has heard. He received a flattering reception every time he came in, and no orator ever secured a more attentive audience than would gather around him to listen to what he had to say. He was, beyond a doubt, the best known and most popular person in the prison, and I know all the survivors of his old admirer; share my great interest in him, and my curiosity as to whether he yet lives, and whether his subsequent career has justified the sanguine hopes we all had as to his future. I hope that if he sees this, or any one who knows anything about him, he will communicate with me. There are thousands who will be glad to hear from him.

A most remarkable coincidence occurred in regard to this comrade. Several days after the above had been written, and "set up," but before it had yet appeared in the paper, I received the following letter:



Yours truly,
Ransom T. Powell



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CHAPTER XLII.

Some features of the mortality—percentage of deaths to those living—an average mean only stands the misery three months—description of the prison and the condition of the men therein, by A leading scientific man of the south.

Speaking of the manner in which the Plymouth Pilgrims were now dying, I am reminded of my theory that the ordinary man's endurance of this prison life did not average over three months. The Plymouth boys arrived in May; the bulk of those who died passed away in July and August. The great increase of prisoners from all sources was in May, June and July. The greatest mortality among these was in August, September and October.

Many came in who had been in good health during their service in the field, but who seemed utterly overwhelmed by the appalling misery they saw on every hand, and giving way to despondency, died in a few days or weeks. I do not mean to include them in the above class, as their sickness was more mental than physical. My idea is that, taking one hundred ordinarily healthful young soldiers from a regiment in active service, and putting them into Andersonville, by the end of the third month at least thirty-three of those weakest and most vulnerable to disease would have succumbed to the exposure, the pollution of ground and air, and the insufficiency of the ration of coarse corn meal. After this the mortality would be somewhat less, say at the end of six months fifty of them would be dead. The remainder would hang on still more tenaciously, and at the end of a year there would be fifteen or twenty still alive. There were sixty-three of my company taken; thirteen lived through. I believe this was about the usual proportion for those who were in as long as we. In all there were forty-five thousand six hundred and thirteen prisoners brought into Andersonville. Of these twelve thousand nine hundred and twelve died there, to say nothing of thousands that died in other prisons in Georgia and the Carolinas, immediately after their removal from Andersonville. One of every three and a-half men upon whom the gates of the Stockade closed never repassed them alive. Twenty-nine per cent. of the boys who so much as set foot in Andersonville died there. Let it be kept in mind all the time, that the average stay of a prisoner there was not four months. The great majority came in after the 1st of May, and left before the middle of September. May 1, 1864, there were ten thousand four hundred and twenty-seven in the Stockade. August 8 there were thirty-three thousand one hundred and fourteen; September 30 all these were dead or gone, except eight thousand two hundred and eighteen, of whom four thousand five hundred and ninety died inside of the next thirty days. The records of the world can show no parallel to this astounding mortality.



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Since the above matter was first published in the *Blade*, a friend has sent me a transcript of the evidence at the Wirz trial, of Professor Joseph Jones, a Surgeon of high rank in the Rebel Army, and who stood at the head of the medical profession in Georgia. He visited Andersonville at the instance of the Surgeon-General of the Confederate States' Army, to make a study, for the benefit of science, of the phenomena of disease occurring there. His capacity and opportunities for observation, and for clearly estimating the value of the facts coming under his notice were, of course, vastly superior to mine, and as he states the case stronger than I dare to, for fear of being accused of exaggeration and downright untruth, I reproduce the major part of his testimony—embodying also his official report to medical headquarters at Richmond—that my readers may know how the prison appeared to the eyes of one who, though a bitter Rebel, was still a humane man and a conscientious observer, striving to learn the truth:

Medical testimony.

[Transcript from the printed testimony at the Wirz Trial, pages 618 to 639, inclusive.]

October 7, 1885.

Dr. Joseph Jones, for the prosecution:

By the Judge Advocate:

Question. Where do you reside

Answer. In Augusta, Georgia.

Q. Are you a graduate of any medical college?

A. Of the University of Pennsylvania.

Q. How long have you been engaged in the practice of medicine?

A. Eight years.

Q. Has your experience been as a practitioner, or rather as an investigator of medicine as a science?

A. Both.

Q. What position do you hold now?

A. That of Medical Chemist in the Medical College of Georgia, at Augusta.



Q. How long have you held your position in that college?

A. Since 1858.

Q. How were you employed during the Rebellion?

A. I served six months in the early part of it as a private in the ranks, and the rest of the time in the medical department.

Q. Under the direction of whom?

A. Under the direction of Dr. Moore, Surgeon General.

Q. Did you, while acting under his direction, visit Andersonville, professionally?

A. Yes, Sir.

Q. For the purpose of making investigations there?

A. For the purpose of prosecuting investigations ordered by the Surgeon General.

Q. You went there in obedience to a letter of instructions?

A. In obedience to orders which I received.

Q. Did you reduce the results of your investigations to the shape of a report?

A. I was engaged at that work when General Johnston surrendered his army.

(A document being handed to witness.)

Q. Have you examined this extract from your report and compared it with the original?



examinations into the causes and symptoms of the various diseases, but especially in the arduous labors of post mortem examinations.

The medical officers will assist in the performance of such post-mortems as Surgeon Jones may indicate, in order that this great field for pathological investigation may be explored for the benefit of the Medical Department of the Confederate Army.

S. P. Moore, Surgeon General.

Surgeon *Isaiah H. White*,



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In charge of Hospital for Federal prisoners, Andersonville, Ga.

In compliance with this letter of the Surgeon General, Isaiah H. White, Chief Surgeon of the post, and R. R. Stevenson, Surgeon in charge of the Prison Hospital, afforded the necessary facilities for the prosecution of my investigations among the sick outside of the Stockade. After the completion of my labors in the military prison hospital, the following communication was addressed to Brigadier General John H. Winder, in consequence of the refusal on the part of the commandant of the interior of the Confederate States Military Prison to admit me within the Stockade upon the order of the Surgeon General:

*Camp Sumter, Andersonville Ga.,
September 16, 1864.*

General:—I respectfully request the commandant of the post of Andersonville to grant me permission and to furnish the necessary pass to visit the sick and medical officers within the Stockade of the Confederate States Prison. I desire to institute certain inquiries ordered by the Surgeon General. Surgeon Isaiah H. White, Chief Surgeon of the post, and Surgeon R. R. Stevenson, in charge of the Prison Hospital, have afforded me every facility for the prosecution of my labors among the sick outside of the Stockade.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,
Joseph Jones, Surgeon P. A. C. S.

Brigadier General *John H. Winder*,
Commandant, Post Andersonville.

In the absence of General Winder from the post, Captain Winder furnished the following order:

*Camp Sumter, Andersonville;
September 17, 1864.*

Captain:—You will permit Surgeon Joseph Jones, who has orders from the Surgeon General, to visit the sick within the Stockade that are under medical treatment. Surgeon Jones is ordered to make certain investigations which may prove useful to his profession. By direction of General Winder.

Very respectfully,
W. S. Winder, A. A. G.

Captain H. *Wirz*, Commanding Prison.

Description of the Confederate States Military Prison Hospital at Andersonville. Number of prisoners, physical condition, food, clothing, habits, moral condition, diseases.

The Confederate Military Prison at Andersonville, Ga., consists of a strong Stockade, twenty feet in height, enclosing twenty-seven acres. The Stockade is formed of strong pine logs, firmly planted in the ground. The main Stockade is surrounded by two other similar rows of pine logs, the middle Stockade being sixteen feet high, and the outer twelve feet. These are intended for offense and defense. If



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the inner Stockade should at any time be forced by the prisoners, the second forms another line of defense; while in case of an attempt to deliver the prisoners by a force operating upon the exterior, the outer line forms an admirable protection to the Confederate troops, and a most formidable obstacle to cavalry or infantry. The four angles of the outer line are strengthened by earthworks upon commanding eminences, from which the cannon, in case of an outbreak among the prisoners, may sweep the entire enclosure; and it was designed to connect these works by a line of rifle pits, running zig-zag, around the outer Stockade; those rifle pits have never been completed. The ground enclosed by the innermost Stockade lies in the form of a parallelogram, the larger diameter running almost due north and south. This space includes the northern and southern opposing sides of two hills, between which a stream of water runs from west to east. The surface soil of these hills is composed chiefly of sand with varying admixtures of clay and oxide of iron. The clay is sufficiently tenacious to give a considerable degree of consistency to the soil. The internal structure of the hills, as revealed by the deep wells, is similar to that already described. The alternate layers of clay and sand, as well as the oxide of iron, which forms in its various combinations a cement to the sand, allow of extensive tunneling. The prisoners not only constructed numerous dirt huts with balls of clay and sand, taken from the wells which they have excavated all over those hills, but they have also, in some cases, tunneled extensively from these wells. The lower portions of these hills, bordering on the stream, are wet and boggy from the constant oozing of water. The Stockade was built originally to accommodate only ten thousand prisoners, and included at first seventeen acres. Near the close of the month of June the area was enlarged by the addition of ten acres. The ground added was situated on the northern slope of the largest hill.

The average number of square feet of ground to each prisoner in August 1864: 35.7

Within the circumscribed area of the Stockade the Federal prisoners were compelled to perform all the offices of life—cooking, washing, the calls of nature, exercise, and sleeping. During the month of March the prison was less crowded than at any subsequent time, and then the average space of ground to each prisoner was only 98.7 feet, or less than seven square yards. The Federal prisoners were gathered from all parts of the Confederate States east of the Mississippi, and crowded into the confined space, until in the month of June the average number of square feet of ground to each prisoner was only 33.2 or less than four square yards. These figures represent the condition of the Stockade in a better light even than it really was; for a considerable breadth of land along the stream, flowing from west to east between the hills, was low and boggy, and

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was covered with the excrement of the men, and thus rendered wholly uninhabitable, and in fact useless for every purpose except that of defecation. The pines and other small trees and shrubs, which originally were scattered sparsely over these hills, were in a short time cut down and consumed by the prisoners for firewood, and no shade tree was left in the entire enclosure of the stockade. With their characteristic industry and ingenuity, the Federals constructed for themselves small huts and caves, and attempted to shield themselves from the rain and sun and night damps and dew. But few tents were distributed to the prisoners, and those were in most cases torn and rotten. In the location and arrangement of these tents and huts no order appears to have been followed; in fact, regular streets appear to be out of the question in so crowded an area; especially too, as large bodies of prisoners were from time to time added suddenly without any previous preparations. The irregular arrangement of the huts and imperfect shelters was very unfavorable for the maintenance of a proper system of police.

The police and internal economy of the prison was left almost entirely in the hands of the prisoners themselves; the duties of the Confederate soldiers acting as guards being limited to the occupation of the boxes or lookouts ranged around the stockade at regular intervals, and to the manning of the batteries at the angles of the prison. Even judicial matters pertaining to themselves, as the detection and punishment of such crimes as theft and murder appear to have been in a great measure abandoned to the prisoners. A striking instance of this occurred in the month of July, when the Federal prisoners within the Stockade tried, condemned, and hanged six (6) of their own number, who had been convicted of stealing and of robbing and murdering their fellow-prisoners. They were all hung upon the same day, and thousands of the prisoners gathered around to witness the execution. The Confederate authorities are said not to have interfered with these proceedings. In this collection of men from all parts of the world, every phase of human character was represented; the stronger preyed upon the weaker, and even the sick who were unable to defend themselves were robbed of their scanty supplies of food and clothing. Dark stories were afloat, of men, both sick and well, who were murdered at night, strangled to death by their comrades for scant supplies of clothing or money. I heard a sick and wounded Federal prisoner accuse his nurse, a fellow-prisoner of the United States Army, of having stealthily, during his sleep inoculated his wounded arm with gangrene, that he might destroy his life and fall heir to his clothing.

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The large number of men confined within the Stockade soon, under a defective system of police, and with imperfect arrangements, covered the surface of the low grounds with excrements. The sinks over the lower portions of the stream were imperfect in their plan and structure, and the excrements were in large measure deposited so near the borders of the stream as not to be washed away, or else accumulated upon the low boggy ground. The volume of water was not sufficient to wash away the feces, and they accumulated in such quantities in the lower portion of the stream as to form a mass of liquid excrement heavy rains caused the water of the stream to rise, and as the arrangements for the passage of the increased amounts of water out of the Stockade were insufficient, the liquid feces overflowed the low grounds and covered them several inches, after the subsidence of the waters. The action of the sun upon this putrefying mass of excrements and fragments of bread and meat and bones excited most rapid fermentation and developed a horrible stench. Improvements were projected for the removal of the filth and for the prevention of its accumulation, but they were only partially and imperfectly carried out. As the forces of the prisoners were reduced by confinement, want of exercise, improper diet, and by scurvy, diarrhea, and dysentery, they were unable to evacuate their bowels within the stream or along its banks, and the excrements were deposited at the very doors of their tents. The vast majority appeared to lose all repulsion to filth, and both sick and well disregarded all the laws of hygiene and personal cleanliness. The accommodations for the sick were imperfect and insufficient. From the organization of the prison, February 24, 1864, to May 22, the sick were treated within the Stockade. In the crowded condition of the Stockade, and with the tents and huts clustered thickly around the hospital, it was impossible to secure proper ventilation or to maintain the necessary police. The Federal prisoners also made frequent forays upon the hospital stores and carried off the food and clothing of the sick. The hospital was, on the 22d of May, removed to its present site without the Stockade, and five acres of ground covered with oaks and pines appropriated to the use of the sick.

The supply of medical officers has been insufficient from the foundation of the prison.

The nurses and attendants upon the sick have been most generally Federal prisoners, who in too many cases appear to have been devoid of moral principle, and who not only neglected their duties, but were also engaged in extensive robbing of the sick.

From the want of proper police and hygienic regulations alone it is not wonderful that from February 24 to September 21, 1864, nine thousand four hundred and seventy-nine deaths, nearly one-third the entire number of prisoners, should have been recorded. I found the Stockade and hospital in the following condition during my pathological investigations, instituted in the month of September, 1864:



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Stockade, Confederate states military prison.

At the time of my visit to Andersonville a large number of Federal prisoners had been removed to Millen, Savannah; Charleston, and other parts of, the Confederacy, in anticipation of an advance of General Sherman's forces from Atlanta, with the design of liberating their captive brethren; however, about fifteen thousand prisoners remained confined within the limits of the Stockade and Confederate States Military Prison Hospital.

In the Stockade, with the exception of the damp lowlands bordering the small stream, the surface was covered with huts, and small ragged tents and parts of blankets and fragments of oil-cloth, coats, and blankets stretched upon stacks. The tents and huts were not arranged according to any order, and there was in most parts of the enclosure scarcely room for two men to walk abreast between the tents and huts.

If one might judge from the large pieces of corn-bread scattered about in every direction on the ground the prisoners were either very lavishly supplied with this article of diet, or else this kind of food was not relished by them.

Each day the dead from the Stockade were carried out by their fellow-prisoners and deposited upon the ground under a bush arbor, just outside of the Southwestern Gate. From thence they were carried in carts to the burying ground, one-quarter of a mile northwest, of the Prison. The dead were buried without coffins, side by side, in trenches four feet deep.

The low grounds bordering the stream were covered with human excrements and filth of all kinds, which in many places appeared to be alive with working maggots. An indescribable sickening stench arose from these fermenting masses of human filth.

There were near five thousand seriously ill Federals in the Stockade and Confederate States Military Prison Hospital, and the deaths exceeded one hundred per day, and large numbers of the prisoners who were walking about, and who had not been entered upon the sick reports, were suffering from severe and incurable diarrhea, dysentery, and scurvy. The sick were attended almost entirely by their fellow-prisoners, appointed as nurses, and as they received but little attention, they were compelled to exert themselves at all times to attend to the calls of nature, and hence they retained the power of moving about to within a comparatively short period of the close of life. Owing to the slow progress of the diseases most prevalent, diarrhea, and chronic dysentery, the corpses were as a general rule emaciated.

I visited two thousand sick within the Stockade, lying under some long sheds which had been built at the northern portion for themselves. At this time only one medical officer was in attendance, whereas at least twenty medical officers should have been employed.



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Died in the Stockade from its organization, February 24, 1861 to
 September 213,254
 Died in Hospital during same time6,225
 Total deaths in Hospital and Stockade9,479

Scurvy, diarrhea, dysentery, and hospital gangrene were the prevailing diseases. I was surprised to find but few cases of malarial fever, and no well-marked cases either of typhus or typhoid fever. The absence of the different forms of malarial fever may be accounted for in the supposition that the artificial atmosphere of the Stockade, crowded densely with human beings and loaded with animal exhalations, was unfavorable to the existence and action of the malarial poison. The absence of typhoid and typhus fevers amongst all the causes which are supposed to generate these diseases, appeared to be due to the fact that the great majority of these prisoners had been in captivity in Virginia, at Belle Island, and in other parts of the Confederacy for months, and even as long as two years, and during this time they had been subjected to the same bad influences, and those who had not had these fevers before either had them during their confinement in Confederate prisons or else their systems, from long exposure, were proof against their action.

The effects of scurvy were manifested on every hand, and in all its various stages, from the muddy, pale complexion, pale gums, feeble, languid muscular motions, lowness of spirits, and fetid breath, to the dusky, dirty, leaden complexion, swollen features, spongy, purple, livid, fungoid, bleeding gums, loose teeth, oedematous limbs, covered with livid vibices, and petechiae spasmodically flexed, painful and hardened extremities, spontaneous hemorrhages from mucous canals, and large, ill-conditioned, spreading ulcers covered with a dark purplish fungus growth. I observed that in some of the cases of scurvy the parotid glands were greatly swollen, and in some instances to such an extent as to preclude entirely the power to articulate. In several cases of dropsy of the abdomen and lower extremities supervening upon scurvy, the patients affirmed that previously to the appearance of the dropsy they had suffered with profuse and obstinate diarrhea, and that when this was checked by a change of diet, from Indian corn-bread baked with the husk, to boiled rice, the dropsy appeared. The severe pains and livid patches were frequently associated with swellings in various parts, and especially in the lower extremities, accompanied with stiffness and contractions of the knee joints and ankles, and often with a brawny feel of the parts, as if lymph had been effused between the integuments and aponeuroses, preventing the motion of the skin over the swollen parts. Many of the prisoners believed that the scurvy was contagious, and I saw men guarding their wells and springs, fearing lest some man suffering with the scurvy might use the water and thus poison them.



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I observed also numerous cases of hospital gangrene, and of spreading scorbutic ulcers, which had supervened upon slight injuries. The scorbutic ulcers presented a dark, purple fungoid, elevated surface, with livid swollen edges, and exuded a thin, fetid, sanious fluid, instead of pus. Many ulcers which originated from the scorbutic condition of the system appeared to become truly gangrenous, assuming all the characteristics of hospital gangrene. From the crowded condition, filthy habits, bad diet, and dejected, depressed condition of the prisoners, their systems had become so disordered that the smallest abrasion of the skin, from the rubbing of a shoe, or from the effects of the sun, or from the prick of a splinter, or from scratching, or a musketo bite, in some cases, took on rapid and frightful ulceration and gangrene. The long use of salt meat, oftentimes imperfectly cured, as well as the most total deprivation of vegetables and fruit, appeared to be the chief causes of the scurvy. I carefully examined the bakery and the bread furnished the prisoners, and found that they were supplied almost entirely with corn-bread from which the husk had not been separated. This husk acted as an irritant to the alimentary canal, without adding any nutriment to the bread. As far as my examination extended no fault could be found with the mode in which the bread was baked; the difficulty lay in the failure to separate the husk from the corn-meal. I strongly urged the preparation of large quantities of soup made from the cow and calves' heads with the brains and tongues, to which a liberal supply of sweet potatoes and vegetables might have been advantageously added. The material existed in abundance for the preparation of such soup in large quantities with but little additional expense. Such aliment would have been not only highly nutritious, but it would also have acted as an efficient remedial agent for the removal of the scorbutic condition. The sick within the Stockade lay under several long sheds which were originally built for barracks. These sheds covered two floors which were open on all sides. The sick lay upon the bare boards, or upon such ragged blankets as they possessed, without, as far as I observed, any bedding or even straw.

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The haggard, distressed countenances of these miserable, complaining, dejected, living skeletons, crying for medical aid and food, and cursing their Government for its refusal to exchange prisoners, and the ghastly corpses, with their glazed eye balls staring up into vacant space, with the flies swarming down their open and grinning mouths, and over their ragged clothes, infested with numerous lice, as they lay amongst the sick and dying, formed a picture of helpless, hopeless misery which it would be impossible to portray by words or by the brush. A feeling of disappointment and even resentment on account of the United States Government upon the subject of the exchange of prisoners,

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appeared to be widespread, and the apparent hopeless nature of the negotiations for some general exchange of prisoners appeared to be a cause of universal regret and deep and injurious despondency. I heard some of the prisoners go so far as to exonerate the Confederate Government from any charge of intentionally subjecting them to a protracted confinement, with its necessary and unavoidable sufferings, in a country cut off from all intercourse with foreign nations, and sorely pressed on all sides, whilst on the other hand they charged their prolonged captivity upon their own Government, which was attempting to make the negro equal to the white man. Some hundred or more of the prisoners had been released from confinement in the Stockade on parole, and filled various offices as clerks, druggists, and carpenters, *etc.*, in the various departments. These men were well clothed, and presented a stout and healthy appearance, and as a general rule they presented a much more robust and healthy appearance than the Confederate troops guarding the prisoners.

The entire grounds are surrounded by a frail board fence, and are strictly guarded by Confederate soldiers, and no prisoner except the paroled attendants is allowed to leave the grounds except by a special permit from the Commandant of the Interior of the Prison.

The patients and attendants, near two thousand in number, are crowded into this confined space and are but poorly supplied with old and ragged tents. Large numbers of them were without any bunks in the tents, and lay upon the ground, oft-times without even a blanket. No beds or straw appeared to have been furnished. The tents extend to within a few yards of the small stream, the eastern portion of which, as we have before said, is used as a privy and is loaded with excrements; and I observed a large pile of corn-bread, bones, and filth of all kinds, thirty feet in diameter and several feet in high, swarming with myriads of flies, in a vacant space near the pots used for cooking. Millions of flies swarmed over everything, and covered the faces of the sleeping patients, and crawled down their open mouths, and deposited their maggots in the gangrenous wounds of the living, and in the mouths of the dead. Musketos in great numbers also infested the tents, and many of the patients were so stung by these pestiferous insects, that they resembled those suffering from a slight attack of the measles.

The police and hygiene of the hospital were defective in the extreme; the attendants, who appeared in almost every instance to have been selected from the prisoners, seemed to have in many cases but little interest in the welfare of their fellow-captives. The accusation was made that the nurses in many cases robbed the sick of their clothing, money, and rations, and carried on a clandestine trade with the paroled prisoners and Confederate guards without the hospital enclosure, in the clothing, effects of the sick, dying, and dead

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Federals. They certainly appeared to neglect the comfort and cleanliness of the sick intrusted to their care in a most shameful manner, even after making due allowances for the difficulties of the situation. Many of the sick were literally encrusted with dirt and filth and covered with vermin. When a gangrenous wound needed washing, the limb was thrust out a little from the blanket, or board, or rags upon which the patient was lying, and water poured over it, and all the putrescent matter allowed to soak into the ground floor of the tent. The supply of rags for dressing wounds was said to be very scant, and I saw the most filthy rags which had been applied several times, and imperfectly washed, used in dressing wounds. Where hospital gangrene was prevailing, it was impossible for any wound to escape contagion under these circumstances. The results of the treatment of wounds in the hospital were of the most unsatisfactory character, from this neglect of cleanliness, in the dressings and wounds themselves, as well as from various other causes which will be more fully considered. I saw several gangrenous wounds filled with maggots. I have frequently seen neglected wounds amongst the Confederate soldiers similarly affected; and as far as my experience extends, these worms destroy only the dead tissues and do not injure specially the well parts. I have even heard surgeons affirm that a gangrenous wound which had been thoroughly cleansed by maggots, healed more rapidly than if it had been left to itself. This want of cleanliness on the part of the nurses appeared to be the result of carelessness and inattention, rather than of malignant design, and the whole trouble can be traced to the want of the proper police and sanitary regulations, and to the absence of intelligent organization and division of labor. The abuses were in a large measure due to the almost total absence of system, government, and rigid, but wholesome sanitary regulations. In extenuation of these abuses it was alleged by the medical officers that the Confederate troops were barely sufficient to guard the prisoners, and that it was impossible to obtain any number of experienced nurses from the Confederate forces. In fact the guard appeared to be too small, even for the regulation of the internal hygiene and police of the hospital.

The manner of disposing of the dead was also calculated to depress the already desponding spirits of these men, many of whom have been confined for months, and even for nearly two years in Richmond and other places, and whose strength had been wasted by bad air, bad food, and neglect of personal cleanliness. The dead-house is merely a frame covered with old tent cloth and a few bushes, situated in the southwestern corner of the hospital grounds. When a patient dies, he is simply laid in the narrow street in front of his tent, until he is removed by Federal negroes detailed to carry off the dead; if a patient dies during the night, he lies there until the morning, and during the day even the dead were frequently allowed to remain for hours in these walks. In the dead-house the corpses lie upon the bare ground, and were in most cases covered with filth and vermin.

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The cooking arrangements are of the most defective character. Five large iron pots similar to those used for boiling sugar cane, appeared to be the only cooking utensils furnished by the hospital for the cooking of nearly two thousand men; and the patients were dependent in great measure upon their own miserable utensils. They were allowed to cook in the tent doors and in the lanes, and this was another source of filth, and another favorable condition for the generation and multiplication of flies and other vermin.

The air of the tents was foul and disagreeable in the extreme, and in fact the entire grounds emitted a most nauseous and disgusting smell. I entered nearly all the tents and carefully examined the cases of interest, and especially the cases of gangrene, upon numerous occasions, during the prosecution of my pathological inquiries at Andersonville, and therefore enjoyed every opportunity to judge correctly of the hygiene and police of the hospital.

There appeared to be almost absolute indifference and neglect on the part of the patients of personal cleanliness; their persons and clothing in most instances, and especially of those suffering with gangrene and scorbutic ulcers, were filthy in the extreme and covered with vermin. It was too often the case that patients were received from the Stockade in a most deplorable condition. I have seen men brought in from the Stockade in a dying condition, begrimed from head to foot with their own excrements, and so black from smoke and filth that they, resembled negroes rather than white men. That this description of the Stockade and hospital has not been overdrawn, will appear from the reports of the surgeons in charge, appended to this report.

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We will examine first the consolidated report of the sick and wounded Federal prisoners. During six months, from the 1st of March to the 31st of August, forty-two thousand six hundred and eighty-six cases of diseases and wounds were reported. No classified record of the sick in the Stockade was kept after the establishment of the hospital without the Prison. This fact, in conjunction with those already presented relating to the insufficiency of medical officers and the extreme illness and even death of many prisoners in the tents in the Stockade, without any medical attention or record beyond the bare number of the dead, demonstrate that these figures, large as they, appear to be, are far below the truth.



As the number of prisoners varied greatly at different periods, the relations between those reported sick and well, as far as those statistics extend, can best be determined by a comparison of the statistics of each month.

During this period of six months no less than five hundred and sixty-five deaths are recorded under the head of 'morbi vanie.' In other words, those men died without having received sufficient medical attention for the determination of even the name of the disease causing death.



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During the month of August fifty-three cases and fifty-three deaths are recorded as due to marasmus. Surely this large number of deaths must have been due to some other morbid state than slow wasting. If they were due to improper and insufficient food, they should have been classed accordingly, and if to diarrhea or dysentery or scurvy, the classification should in like manner have been explicit.

We observe a progressive increase of the rate of mortality, from 3.11 per cent. in March to 9.09 per cent. of mean strength, sick and well, in August. The ratio of mortality continued to increase during September, for notwithstanding the removal of one-half of the entire number of prisoners during the early portion of the month, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-seven (1,767) deaths are registered from September 1 to 21, and the largest number of deaths upon any one day occurred during this month, on the 16th, viz. one hundred and nineteen.

The entire number of Federal prisoners confined at Andersonville was about forty thousand six hundred and eleven; and during the period of near seven months, from February 24 to September 21, nine thousand four hundred and seventy-nine (9,479) deaths were recorded; that is, during this period near one-fourth, or more, exactly one in 4.2, or 13.3 per cent., terminated fatally. This increase of mortality was due in great measure to the accumulation of the sources of disease, as the increase of excrements and filth of all kinds, and the concentration of noxious effluvia, and also to the progressive effects of salt diet, crowding, and the hot climate.

Conclusions.

1st. The great mortality among the Federal prisoners confined in the military prison at Andersonville was not referable to climatic causes, or to the nature of the soil and waters.

2d. The chief causes of death were scurvy and its results and bowel affections-chronic and acute diarrhea and dysentery. The bowel affections appear to have been due to the diet, the habits of the patients, the depressed, dejected state of the nervous system and moral and intellectual powers, and to the effluvia arising from the decomposing animal and vegetable filth. The effects of salt meat, and an unvarying diet of cornmeal, with but few vegetables, and imperfect supplies of vinegar and syrup, were manifested in the great prevalence of scurvy. This disease, without doubt, was also influenced to an important extent in its origin and course by the foul animal emanations.

3d. From the sameness of the food and form, the action of the poisonous gases in the densely crowded and filthy Stockade and hospital, the blood was altered in its constitution, even before the manifestation of actual disease. In both the well and the sick the red corpuscles were diminished; and in all diseases uncomplicated with inflammation, the fibrous element was deficient. In cases of ulceration of the mucous membrane of the intestinal canal, the



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fibrous element of the blood was increased; while in simple diarrhea, uncomplicated with ulceration, it was either diminished or else remained stationary. Heart clots were very common, if not universally present, in cases of ulceration of the intestinal mucous membrane, while in the uncomplicated cases of diarrhea and scurvy, the blood was fluid and did not coagulate readily, and the heart clots and fibrous concretions were almost universally absent. From the watery condition of the blood, there resulted various serous effusions into the pericardium, ventricles of the brain, and into the abdomen. In almost all the cases which I examined after death, even the most emaciated, there was more or less serous effusion into the abdominal cavity. In cases of hospital gangrene of the extremities, and in cases of gangrene of the intestines, heart clots and fibrous coagula were universally present. The presence of those clots in the cases of hospital gangrene, while they were absent in the cases in which there was no inflammatory symptoms, sustains the conclusion that hospital gangrene is a species of inflammation, imperfect and irregular though it may be in its progress, in which the fibrous element and coagulation of the blood are increased, even in those who are suffering from such a condition of the blood, and from such diseases as are naturally accompanied with a decrease in the fibrous constituent.

4th. The fact that hospital Gangrene appeared in the Stockade first, and originated spontaneously without any previous contagion, and occurred sporadically all over the Stockade and prison hospital, was proof positive that this disease will arise whenever the conditions of crowding, filth, foul air, and bad diet are present. The exhalations from the hospital and Stockade appeared to exert their effects to a considerable distance outside of these localities. The origin of hospital gangrene among these prisoners appeared clearly to depend in great measure upon the state of the general system induced by diet, and various external noxious influences. The rapidity of the appearance and action of the gangrene depended upon the powers and state of the constitution, as well as upon the intensity of the poison in the atmosphere, or upon the direct application of poisonous matter to the wounded surface. This was further illustrated by the important fact that hospital gangrene, or a disease resembling it in all essential respects, attacked the intestinal canal of patients laboring under ulceration of the bowels, although there were no local manifestations of gangrene upon the surface of the body. This mode of termination in cases of dysentery was quite common in the foul atmosphere of the Confederate States Military Hospital, in the depressed, deprived condition of the system of these Federal prisoners.

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5th. A scorbutic condition of the system appeared to favor the origin of foul ulcers, which frequently took on true hospital gangrene. Scurvy and hospital gangrene frequently existed in the same individual. In such cases, vegetable diet, with vegetable acids, would remove the scorbutic condition without curing the hospital gangrene. From the results of the existing war for the establishment of the independence of the Confederate States, as well as from the published observations of Dr. Trotter, Sir Gilbert Blane, and others of the English navy and army, it is evident that the scorbutic condition of the system, especially in crowded ships and camps, is most favorable to the origin and spread of foul ulcers and hospital gangrene. As in the present case of Andersonville, so also in past times when medical hygiene was almost entirely neglected, those two diseases were almost universally associated in crowded ships. In many cases it was very difficult to decide at first whether the ulcer was a simple result of scurvy or of the action of the prison or hospital gangrene, for there was great similarity in the appearance of the ulcers in the two diseases. So commonly have those two diseases been combined in their origin and action, that the description of scorbutic ulcers, by many authors, evidently includes also many of the prominent characteristics of hospital gangrene. This will be rendered evident by an examination of the observations of Dr. Lind and Sir Gilbert Blane upon scorbutic ulcers.

6th. Gangrenous spots followed by rapid destruction of tissue appeared in some cases where there had been no known wound. Without such well-established facts, it might be assumed that the disease was propagated from one patient to another. In such a filthy and crowded hospital as that of the Confederate States Military Prison at Andersonville, it was impossible to isolate the wounded from the sources of actual contact of the gangrenous matter. The flies swarming over the wounds and over filth of every kind, the filthy, imperfectly washed and scanty supplies of rags, and the limited supply of washing utensils, the same wash-bowl serving for scores of patients, were sources of such constant circulation of the gangrenous matter that the disease might rapidly spread from a single gangrenous wound. The fact already stated, that a form of moist gangrene, resembling hospital gangrene, was quite common in this foul atmosphere, in cases of dysentery, both with and without the existence of the disease upon the entire surface, not only demonstrates the dependence of the disease upon the state of the constitution, but proves in the clearest manner that neither the contact of the poisonous matter of gangrene, nor the direct action of the poisonous atmosphere upon the ulcerated surfaces is necessary to the development of the disease.



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7th. In this foul atmosphere amputation did not arrest hospital gangrene; the disease almost invariably returned. Almost every amputation was followed finally by death, either from the effects of gangrene or from the prevailing diarrhea and dysentery. Nitric acid and escharotics generally in this crowded atmosphere, loaded with noxious effluvia, exerted only temporary effects; after their application to the diseased surfaces, the gangrene would frequently return with redoubled energy; and even after the gangrene had been completely removed by local and constitutional treatment, it would frequently return and destroy the patient. As far as my observation extended, very few of the cases of amputation for gangrene recovered. The progress of these cases was frequently very deceptive. I have observed after death the most extensive disorganization of the structures of the stump, when during life there was but little swelling of the part, and the patient was apparently doing well. I endeavored to impress upon the medical officers the view that in this disease treatment was almost useless, without an abundant supply of pure, fresh air, nutritious food, and tonics and stimulants. Such changes, however, as would allow of the isolation of the cases of hospital gangrene appeared to be out of the power of the medical officers.

8th. The gangrenous mass was without true pus, and consisted chiefly of broken-down, disorganized structures. The reaction of the gangrenous matter in certain stages was alkaline.

9th. The best, and in truth the only means of protecting large armies and navies, as well as prisoners, from the ravages of hospital gangrene, is to furnish liberal supplies of well-cured meat, together with fresh beef and vegetables, and to enforce a rigid system of hygiene.

10th. Finally, this gigantic mass of human misery calls loudly for relief, not only for the sake of suffering humanity, but also on account of our own brave soldiers now captives in the hands of the Federal Government. Strict justice to the gallant men of the Confederate Armies, who have been or who may be, so unfortunate as to be compelled to surrender in battle, demands that the Confederate Government should adopt that course which will best secure their health and comfort in captivity; or at least leave their enemies without a shadow of an excuse for any violation of the rules of civilized warfare in the treatment of prisoners.

[End of the Witness's Testimony.]

The variation—from month to month—of the proportion of deaths to the whole number living is singular and interesting. It supports the theory I have advanced above, as the following facts, taken from the official report, will show:

In April one in every sixteen died.

In May one in every twenty-six died.

In June one in every twenty-two died.



In July one in every eighteen died.
In August one in every eleven died.
In September one in every three died.
In October one in every two died.
In November one in every three died.

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Does the reader fully understand that in September one-third of those in the pen died, that in October one-half of the remainder perished, and in November one-third of those who still survived, died? Let him pause for a moment and read this over carefully again; because its startling magnitude will hardly dawn upon him at first reading. It is true that the fearfully disproportionate mortality of those months was largely due to the fact that it was mostly the sick that remained behind, but even this diminishes but little the frightfulness of the showing. Did any one ever hear of an epidemic so fatal that one-third of those attacked by it in one month died; one-half of the remnant the next month, and one-third of the feeble remainder the next month? If he did, his reading has been much more extensive than mine.

The greatest number of deaths in one day is reported to have occurred on the 23d of August, when one hundred and twenty-seven died, or one man every eleven minutes.

The greatest number of prisoners in the Stockade is stated to have been August 8, when there were thirty-three thousand one hundred and fourteen.

I have always imagined both these statements to be short of the truth, because my remembrance is that one day in August I counted over two hundred dead lying in a row. As for the greatest number of prisoners, I remember quite distinctly standing by the ration wagon during the whole time of the delivery of rations, to see how many prisoners there really were inside. That day the One Hundred and Thirty-Third Detachment was called, and its Sergeant came up and drew rations for a full detachment. All the other detachments were habitually kept full by replacing those who died with new comers. As each detachment consisted of two hundred and seventy men, one hundred and thirty-three detachments would make thirty-five thousand nine hundred and ten, exclusive of those in the hospital, and those detailed outside as cooks, clerks, hospital attendants and various other employments—say from one to two thousand more.