

Andersonville — Volume 3 eBook

Andersonville — Volume 3

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

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

Andersonville — Volume 3 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	6
Page 1.....	7
Page 2.....	9
Page 3.....	10
Page 4.....	11
Page 5.....	12
Page 6.....	13
Page 7.....	14
Page 8.....	15
Page 9.....	18
Page 10.....	20
Page 11.....	21
Page 12.....	22
Page 13.....	24
Page 14.....	25
Page 15.....	26
Page 16.....	28
Page 17.....	29
Page 18.....	31
Page 19.....	32
Page 20.....	33
Page 21.....	34
Page 22.....	36

Page 23.....	37
Page 24.....	39
Page 25.....	40
Page 26.....	41
Page 27.....	43
Page 28.....	44
Page 29.....	46
Page 30.....	47
Page 31.....	48
Page 32.....	49
Page 33.....	50
Page 34.....	51
Page 35.....	52
Page 36.....	53
Page 37.....	54
Page 38.....	55
Page 39.....	56
Page 40.....	57
Page 41.....	58
Page 42.....	59
Page 43.....	61
Page 44.....	63
Page 45.....	65
Page 46.....	67
Page 47.....	69
Page 48.....	70

Page 49.....	71
Page 50.....	72
Page 51.....	73
Page 52.....	74
Page 53.....	75
Page 54.....	77
Page 55.....	79
Page 56.....	81
Page 57.....	83
Page 58.....	84
Page 59.....	86
Page 60.....	87
Page 61.....	88
Page 62.....	90
Page 63.....	92
Page 64.....	93
Page 65.....	94
Page 66.....	96
Page 67.....	97
Page 68.....	98
Page 69.....	99
Page 70.....	101
Page 71.....	102
Page 72.....	103
Page 73.....	105
Page 74.....	107

Page 75.....	108
Page 76.....	109
Page 77.....	111
Page 78.....	112
Page 79.....	113
Page 80.....	114
Page 81.....	115
Page 82.....	116
Page 83.....	117
Page 84.....	118
Page 85.....	120
Page 86.....	122
Page 87.....	124
Page 88.....	126

Table of Contents

Section	Table of Contents	Page
Start of eBook		1
CHAPTER XLIII.		1
CHAPTER XLIV.		4
CHAPTER XLV.		9
CHAPTER XLVI.		14
CHAPTER XLVII.		19
CHAPTER XLVIII.		25
CHAPTER XLIX.		30
CHAPTER L.		33
CHAPTER LI.		43
CHAPTER LII.		48
CHAPTER LIII.		52
CHAPTER LIV.		56
CHAPTER LV.		63
CHAPTER LVI.		66
CHAPTER LVII.		74
CHAPTER LVIII.		76
CHAPTER LIX.		78
CHAPTER LX.		81
CHAPTER LXI.		85

Page 1

CHAPTER XLIII.

Difficulty of exercising—EMBARRASMENTS of A morning walk—the Rialto of the prison—cursing the southern confederacy—the story of the battle of Spottsylvania Courthouse.

Certainly, in no other great community, that ever existed upon the face of the globe was there so little daily ebb and flow as in this. Dull as an ordinary Town or City may be; however monotonous, eventless, even stupid the lives of its citizens, there is yet, nevertheless, a flow every day of its life-blood—its population towards its heart, and an ebb of the same, every evening towards its extremities. These recurring tides mingle all classes together and promote the general healthfulness, as the constant motion hither and yon of the ocean's waters purify and sweeten them.

The lack of these helped vastly to make the living mass inside the Stockade a human Dead Sea—or rather a Dying Sea—a putrefying, stinking lake, resolving itself into phosphorescent corruption, like those rotting southern seas, whose seething filth burns in hideous reds, and ghastly greens and yellows.

Being little call for motion of any kind, and no room to exercise whatever wish there might be in that direction, very many succumbed unresistingly to the apathy which was so strongly favored by despondency and the weakness induced by continual hunger, and lying supinely on the hot sand, day in and day out, speedily brought themselves into such a condition as invited the attacks of disease.

It required both determination and effort to take a little walking exercise. The ground was so densely crowded with holes and other devices for shelter that it took one at least ten minutes to pick his way through the narrow and tortuous labyrinth which served as paths for communication between different parts of the Camp. Still further, there was nothing to see anywhere or to form sufficient inducement for any one to make so laborious a journey. One simply encountered at every new step the same unwelcome sights that he had just left; there was a monotony in the misery as in everything else, and consequently the temptation to sit or lie still in one's own quarters became very great.

I used to make it a point to go to some of the remoter parts of the Stockade once every day, simply for exercise. One can gain some idea of the crowd, and the difficulty of making one's way through it, when I say that no point in the prison could be more than fifteen hundred feet from where I staid, and, had the way been clear, I could have walked thither and back in at most a half an hour, yet it usually took me from two to three hours to make one of these journeys.



This daily trip, a few visits to the Creek to wash all over, a few games of chess, attendance upon roll call, drawing rations, cooking and eating the same, “lousing” my fragments of clothes, and doing some little duties for my sick and helpless comrades, constituted the daily routine for myself, as for most of the active youths in the prison.

Page 2

The Creek was the great meeting point for all inside the Stockade. All able to walk were certain to be there at least once during the day, and we made it a rendezvous, a place to exchange gossip, discuss the latest news, canvass the prospects of exchange, and, most of all, to curse the Rebels. Indeed no conversation ever progressed very far without both speaker and listener taking frequent rests to say bitter things as to the Rebels generally, and Wirz, Winder and Davis in particular.

A conversation between two boys—strangers to each other who came to the Creek to wash themselves or their clothes, or for some other purpose, would progress thus:

First Boy—"I belong to the Second Corps,—Hancock's, [the Army of the Potomac boys always mentioned what Corps they belonged to, where the Western boys stated their Regiment.] They got me at Spottsylvania, when they were butting their heads against our breast-works, trying to get even with us for gobbling up Johnson in the morning,"—He stops suddenly and changes tone to say: "I hope to God, that when our folks get Richmond, they will put old Ben Butler in command of it, with orders to limb, skin and jayhawk it worse than he did New Orleans."

Second Boy, (fervently :) "I wish to God he would, and that he'd catch old Jeff., and that grayheaded devil, Winder, and the old Dutch Captain, strip 'em just as we were, put 'em in this pen, with just the rations they are givin' us, and set a guard of plantation niggers over 'em, with orders to blow their whole infernal heads off, if they dared so much as to look at the dead line."

First Boy—(returning to the story of his capture.) "Old Hancock caught the Johnnies that morning the neatest you ever saw anything in your life. After the two armies had murdered each other for four or five days in the Wilderness, by fighting so close together that much of the time you could almost shake hands with the Graybacks, both hauled off a little, and lay and glowered at each other. Each side had lost about twenty thousand men in learning that if it attacked the other it would get mashed fine. So each built a line of works and lay behind them, and tried to nag the other into coming out and attacking. At Spottsylvania our lines and those of the Johnnies weren't twelve hundred yards apart. The ground was clear and clean between them, and any force that attempted to cross it to attack would be cut to pieces, as sure as anything. We laid there three or four days watching each other—just like boys at school, who shake fists and dare each other. At one place the Rebel line ran out towards us like the top of a great letter 'A.' The night of the 11th of May it rained very hard, and then came a fog so thick that you couldn't see the length of a company. Hancock thought he'd take advantage of this. We were all turned out very quietly about four o'clock in the morning. Not a bit of noise was allowed. We even had to take off our canteens and tin cups, that they might not rattle against our bayonets. The ground was so wet that our footsteps couldn't be heard. It was one of those deathly, still movements, when you think your heart is making as much noise as a bass drum.

Page 3

"The Johnnies didn't seem to have the faintest suspicion of what was coming, though they ought, because we would have expected such an attack from them if we hadn't made it ourselves. Their pickets were out just a little ways from their works, and we were almost on to them before they discovered us. They fired and ran back. At this we raised a yell and dashed forward at a charge. As we poured over the works, the Rebels came double-quicking up to defend them. We flanked Johnson's Division quicker'n you could say 'Jack Robinson,' and had four thousand of 'em in our grip just as nice as you please. We sent them to the rear under guard, and started for the next line of Rebel works about a half a mile away. But we had now waked up the whole of Lee's army, and they all came straight for us, like packs of mad wolves. Ewell struck us in the center; Longstreet let drive at our left flank, and Hill tackled our right. We fell back to the works we had taken, Warren and Wright came up to help us, and we had it hot and heavy for the rest of the day and part of the night. The Johnnies seemed so mad over what we'd done that they were half crazy. They charged us five times, coming up every time just as if they were going to lift us right out of the works with the bayonet. About midnight, after they'd lost over ten thousand men, they seemed to understand that we had pre-empted that piece of real estate, and didn't propose to allow anybody to jump our claim, so they fell back sullen like to their main works. When they came on the last charge, our Brigadier walked behind each of our regiments and said:

"Boys, we'll send 'em back this time for keeps. Give it to 'em by the acre, and when they begin to waver, we'll all jump over the works and go for them with the bayonet.'

"We did it just that way. We poured such a fire on them that the bullets knocked up the ground in front just like you have seen the deep dust in a road in the middle of Summer fly up when the first great big drops of a rain storm strike it. But they came on, yelling and swearing, officers in front waving swords, and shouting—all that business, you know. When they got to about one hundred yards from us, they did not seem to be coming so fast, and there was a good deal of confusion among them. The brigade bugle sounded

"Stop firing."

"We all ceased instantly. The rebels looked up in astonishment. Our General sang out:

"Fix bayonets!' but we knew what was coming, and were already executing the order. You can imagine the crash that ran down the line, as every fellow snatched his bayonet out and slapped it on the muzzle of his gun. Then the General's voice rang out like a bugle:

"Ready!—*Forward! Charge!*'

Page 4

"We cheered till everything seemed to split, and jumped over the works, almost every man at the same minute. The Johnnies seemed to have been puzzled at the stoppage of our fire. When we all came sailing over the works, with guns brought right, down where they meant business, they were so astonished for a minute that they stood stock still, not knowing whether to come for us, or run. We did not allow them long to debate, but went right towards them on the double quick, with the bayonets looking awful savage and hungry. It was too much for Mr. Johnny Reb's nerves. They all seemed to about face' at once, and they lit out of there as if they had been sent for in a hurry. We chased after 'em as fast as we could, and picked up just lots of 'em. Finally it began to be real funny. A Johnny's wind would begin to give out he'd fall behind his comrades; he'd hear us yell and think that we were right behind him, ready to sink a bayonet through him'; he'd turn around, throw up his hands, and sing out:

"I surrender, mister! I surrender!' and find that we were a hundred feet off, and would have to have a bayonet as long as one of McClellan's general orders to touch him.

"Well, my company was the left of our regiment, and our regiment was the left of the brigade, and we swung out ahead of all the rest of the boys. In our excitement of chasing the Johnnies, we didn't see that we had passed an angle of their works. About thirty of us had become separated from the company and were chasing a squad of about seventy-five or one hundred. We had got up so close to them that we hollered:

"Halt there, now, or we'll blow your heads off.'

"They turned round with, 'halt yourselves; you —— Yankee —— ——'

"We looked around at this, and saw that we were not one hundred feet away from the angle of the works, which were filled with Rebels waiting for our fellows to get to where they could have a good flank fire upon them. There was nothing to do but to throw down our guns and surrender, and we had hardly gone inside of the works, until the Johnnies opened on our brigade and drove it back. This ended the battle at Spottsylvania Court House."

Second Boy (irrelevantly.) "Some day the underpinning will fly out from under the South, and let it sink right into the middle kittle o' hell."

First Boy (savagely.) "I only wish the whole Southern Confederacy was hanging over hell by a single string, and I had a knife."

CHAPTER XLIV.

Rebel music—singular lack of the creative power among the southerners —contrast with similar people elsewhere—their favorite music, and where it was borrowed from—A fifer with one tune.

Page 5

I have before mentioned as among the things that grew upon one with increasing acquaintance with the Rebels on their native heath, was astonishment at their lack of mechanical skill and at their inability to grapple with numbers and the simpler processes of arithmetic. Another characteristic of the same nature was their wonderful lack of musical ability, or of any kind of tuneful creativeness.

Elsewhere, all over the world, people living under similar conditions to the Southerners are exceedingly musical, and we owe the great majority of the sweetest compositions which delight the ear and subdue the senses to unlettered song-makers of the Swiss mountains, the Tyrolese valleys, the Bavarian Highlands, and the minstrels of Scotland, Ireland and Wales.

The music of English-speaking people is very largely made up of these contributions from the folk-songs of dwellers in the wilder and more mountainous parts of the British Isles. One rarely goes far out of the way in attributing to this source any air that he may hear that captivates him with its seductive opulence of harmony. Exquisite melodies, limpid and unstrained as the carol of a bird in Spring-time, and as plaintive as the cooing of a turtle-dove seems as natural products of the Scottish Highlands as the gorse which blazons on their hillsides in August. Debarred from expressing their aspirations as people of broader culture do—in painting, in sculpture, in poetry and prose, these mountaineers make song the flexible and ready instrument for the communication of every emotion that sweeps across their souls.

Love, hatred, grief, revenge, anger, and especially war seems to tune their minds to harmony, and awake the voice of song in them hearts. The battles which the Scotch and Irish fought to replace the luckless Stuarts upon the British throne—the bloody rebellions of 1715 and 1745, left a rich legacy of sweet song, the outpouring of loving, passionate loyalty to a wretched cause; songs which are today esteemed and sung wherever the English language is spoken, by people who have long since forgotten what burning feelings gave birth to their favorite melodies.

For a century the bones of both the Pretenders have moldered in alien soil; the names of James Edward, and Charles Edward, which were once trumpet blasts to rouse armed men, mean as little to the multitude of today as those of the Saxon Ethelbert, and Danish Hardicanute, yet the world goes on singing—and will probably as long as the English language is spoken—"Wha'll be King but Charlie?" "When Jamie Come Hame," "Over the Water to Charlie," "Charlie is my Darling," "The Bonny Blue Bonnets are Over the Border," "Saddle Your Steeds and Awa," and a myriad others whose infinite tenderness and melody no modern composer can equal.

Yet these same Scotch and Irish, the same Jacobite English, transplanted on account of their chronic rebelliousness to the mountains of Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia, seem to have lost their tunefulness, as some fine singing birds do when carried from their native shores.

Page 6

The descendants of those who drew swords for James and Charles at Preston Pans and Culloden dwell to-day in the dales and valleys of the Alleganies, as their fathers did in the dales and valleys of the Grampians, but their voices are mute.

As a rule the Southerners are fond of music. They are fond of singing and listening to old-fashioned ballads, most of which have never been printed, but handed down from one generation to the other, like the 'Volklieder' of Germany. They sing these with the wild, fervid impressiveness characteristic of the ballad singing of unlettered people. Very many play tolerably on the violin and banjo, and occasionally one is found whose instrumentation may be called good. But above this height they never soar. The only musician produced by the South of whom the rest of the country has ever heard, is Blind Tom, the negro idiot. No composer, no song writer of any kind has appeared within the borders of Dixie.

It was a disappointment to me that even the stress of the war, the passion and fierceness with which the Rebels felt and fought, could not stimulate any adherent of the Stars and Bars into the production of a single lyric worthy in the remotest degree of the magnitude of the struggle, and the depth of the popular feeling. Where two million Scotch, fighting to restore the fallen fortunes of the worse than worthless Stuarts, filled the world with immortal music, eleven million of Southerners, fighting for what they claimed to be individual freedom and national life, did not produce any original verse, or a bar of music that the world could recognize as such. This is the fact; and an undeniable one. Its explanation I must leave to abler analysts than I am.

Searching for peculiar causes we find but two that make the South differ from the ancestral home of these people. These two were Climate and Slavery. Climatic effects will not account for the phenomenon, because we see that the peasantry of the mountains of Spain and the South of France as ignorant as these people, and dwellers in a still more enervating atmosphere-are very fertile in musical composition, and their songs are to the Romanic languages what the Scotch and Irish ballads are to the English.

Then it must be ascribed to the incubus of Slavery upon the intellect, which has repressed this as it has all other healthy growths in the South. Slavery seems to benumb all the faculties except the passions. The fact that the mountaineers had but few or no slaves, does not seem to be of importance in the case. They lived under the deadly shadow of the upas tree, and suffered the consequences of its stunting their development in all directions, as the ague-smitten inhabitant of the Roman Campana finds every sense and every muscle clogged by the filtering in of the insidious miasma. They did not compose songs and music, because they did not have the intellectual energy for that work.

Page 7

The negroes displayed all the musical creativeness of that section. Their wonderful prolificness in wild, rude songs, with strangely melodious airs that burned themselves into the memory, was one of the salient characteristics of that down-trodden race. Like the Russian serfs, and the bondmen of all ages and lands, the songs they made and sang all had an undertone of touching plaintiveness, born of ages of dumb suffering. The themes were exceedingly simple, and the range of subjects limited. The joys, and sorrows, hopes and despairs of love's gratification or disappointment, of struggles for freedom, contests with malign persons and influences, of rage, hatred, jealousy, revenge, such as form the motifs for the majority of the poetry of free and strong races, were wholly absent from their lyrics. Religion, hunger and toil were their main inspiration. They sang of the pleasures of idling in the genial sunshine; the delights of abundance of food; the eternal happiness that awaited them in the heavenly future, where the slave-driver ceased from troubling and the weary were at rest; where Time rolled around in endless cycles of days spent in basking, harp in hand, and silken clad, in golden streets, under the soft effulgence of cloudless skies, glowing with warmth and kindness emanating from the Creator himself. Had their masters condescended to borrow the music of the slaves, they would have found none whose sentiments were suitable for the ode of a people undergoing the pangs of what was hoped to be the birth of a new nation.

The three songs most popular at the South, and generally regarded as distinctively Southern, were "The Bonnie Blue Flag," "Maryland, My Maryland," and "Stonewall Jackson Crossing into Maryland." The first of these was the greatest favorite by long odds. Women sang, men whistled, and the so-called musicians played it wherever we went. While in the field before capture, it was the commonest of experiences to have Rebel women sing it at us tauntingly from the house that we passed or near which we stopped. If ever near enough a Rebel camp, we were sure to hear its wailing crescendo rising upon the air from the lips or instruments of some one more quartered there. At Richmond it rang upon us constantly from some source or another, and the same was true wherever else we went in the so-called Confederacy.

All familiar with Scotch songs will readily recognize the name and air as an old friend, and one of the fierce Jacobite melodies that for a long time disturbed the tranquility of the Brunswick family on the English throne. The new words supplied by the Rebels are the merest doggerel, and fit the music as poorly as the unchanged name of the song fitted to its new use. The flag of the Rebellion was not a bonnie blue one; but had quite as much red and white as azure. It did not have a single star, but thirteen.

Near in popularity was "Maryland, My Maryland." The versification of this was of a much higher Order, being fairly respectable. The air is old, and a familiar one to all college students, and belongs to one of the most common of German household songs:

Page 8

O, Tannenbaum! O, Tannenbaum, wie tru sind deine Blatter!
Da gruenst nicht nur zur Sommerseit,
Nein, auch in Winter, when es Schneit, *etc.*

which Longfellow has finely translated,

O, hemlock tree! O, hemlock tree! how faithful are thy branches!
Green not alone in Summer time,
But in the Winter's float and rime.
O, hemlock tree O, hemlock tree! how faithful are thy branches. *etc.*

The Rebel version ran:

Maryland.

The despot's heel is on thy shore,
Maryland!
His touch is at thy temple door,
Maryland!
Avenge the patriotic gore
That flecked the streets of Baltimore,
And be the battle queen of yore,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Hark to the wand'ring son's appeal,
Maryland!
My mother State, to thee I kneel,
Maryland!
For life and death, for woe and weal,
Thy peerless chivalry reveal,
And gird thy beauteous limbs with steel,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Thou wilt not cower in the duet,
Maryland!
Thy beaming sword shall never rust
Maryland!
Remember Carroll's sacred trust,
Remember Howard's warlike thrust—
And all thy slumberers with the just,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Come! 'tis the red dawn of the day,
Maryland!



Come! with thy panoplied array,
Maryland!
With Ringgold's spirit for the fray,
With Watson's blood at Monterey,
With fearless Lowe and dashing May,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Comet for thy shield is bright and strong,
Maryland!
Come! for thy dalliance does thee wrong,
Maryland!
Come! to thins own heroic throng,
That stalks with Liberty along,
And give a new Key to thy song,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Dear Mother! burst the tyrant's chain,
Maryland!
Virginia should not call in vain,
Maryland!
She meets her sisters on the plain—
'Sic semper' 'tis the proud refrain,
That baffles millions back amain,
Maryland!
Arise, in majesty again,
Maryland! My Maryland!

I see the blush upon thy cheek,
Maryland!
But thou wast ever bravely meek,
Maryland!
But lo! there surges forth a shriek
From hill to hill, from creek to creek—
Potomac calls to Chesapeake,
Maryland! My Maryland!

Thou wilt not yield the vandal toll.
Maryland!
Thou wilt not crook to his control,
Maryland!
Better the fire upon thee roll,
Better the blade, the shot, the bowl,
Than crucifixion of the soul,
Maryland! My Maryland!

I hear the distant Thunder hem,
Maryland!



The Old Line's bugle, fife, and drum.
Maryland!
She is not dead, nor deaf, nor dumb—
Hnzza! she spurns the Northern scum!
She breathes—she burns! she'll come! she'll come!
Maryland! My Maryland!

Page 9

“Stonewall Jackson Crossing into Maryland,” was another travesty, of about the same literary merit, or rather demerit, as “The Bonnie Blue Flag.” Its air was that of the well-known and popular negro minstrel song, “Billy Patterson.” For all that, it sounded very martial and stirring when played by a brass band.

We heard these songs with tiresome iteration, daily and nightly, during our stay in the Southern Confederacy. Some one of the guards seemed to be perpetually beguiling the weariness of his watch by singing in all keys, in every sort of a voice, and with the wildest latitude as to air and time. They became so terribly irritating to us, that to this day the remembrance of those soul-lacerating lyrics abides with me as one of the chief of the minor torments of our situation. They were, in fact, nearly as bad as the lice.

We revenged ourselves as best we could by constructing fearfully wicked, obscene and insulting parodies on these, and by singing them with irritating effusiveness in the hearing of the guards who were inflicting these nuisances upon us.

Of the same nature was the garrison music. One fife, played by an asthmatic old fellow whose breathings were nearly as audible as his notes, and one rheumatic drummer, constituted the entire band for the post. The fifer actually knew but one tune “The Bonnie Blue Flag” —and did not know that well. But it was all that he had, and he played it with wearisome monotony for every camp call—five or six times a day, and seven days in the week. He called us up in the morning with it for a reveille; he sounded the “roll call” and “drill call,” breakfast, dinner and supper with it, and finally sent us to bed, with the same dreary wail that had rung in our ears all day. I never hated any piece of music as I came to hate that threnody of treason. It would have been such a relief if the, old asthmatic who played it could have been induced to learn another tune to play on Sundays, and give us one day of rest. He did not, but desecrated the Lord’s Day by playing as vilely as on the rest of the week. The Rebels were fully conscious of their musical deficiencies, and made repeated but unsuccessful attempts to induce the musicians among the prisoners to come outside and form a band.

CHAPTER XLV.

August—needles stuck in pumpkin seeds—some phenomena of starvation —rioting in remembered luxuries.

“Illinoy,” said tall, gaunt Jack North, of the One Hundred and Fourteenth Illinois, to me, one day, as we sat contemplating our naked, and sadly attenuated underpinning; “what do our legs and feet most look most like?”

“Give it up, Jack,” said I.

“Why—darning needles stuck in pumpkin seeds, of course.” I never heard a better comparison for our wasted limbs.

Page 10

The effects of the great bodily emaciation were sometimes very startling. Boys of a fleshy habit would change so in a few weeks as to lose all resemblance to their former selves, and comrades who came into prison later would utterly fail to recognize them. Most fat men, as most large men, died in a little while after entering, though there were exceptions. One of these was a boy of my own company, named George Hillicks. George had shot up within a few years to over six feet in height, and then, as such boys occasionally do, had, after enlisting with us, taken on such a development of flesh that we nicknamed him the "Giant," and he became a pretty good load for even the strongest horse. George held his flesh through Belle Isle, and the earlier weeks in Andersonville, but June, July, and August "fetched him," as the boys said. He seemed to melt away like an icicle on a Spring day, and he grew so thin that his height seemed preternatural. We called him "Flagstaff," and cracked all sorts of jokes about putting an insulator on his head, and setting him up for a telegraph pole, braiding his legs and using him for a whip lash, letting his hair grow a little longer, and trading him off to the Rebels for a sponge and staff for the artillery, etc. We all expected him to die, and looked continually for the development of the fatal scurvy symptoms, which were to seal his doom. But he worried through, and came out at last in good shape, a happy result due as much as to anything else to his having in Chester Hayward, of Prairie City, Ill.,—one of the most devoted chums I ever knew. Chester nursed and looked out for George with wife-like fidelity, and had his reward in bringing him safe through our lines. There were thousands of instances of this generous devotion to each other by chums in Andersonville, and I know of nothing that reflects any more credit upon our boy soldiers.

There was little chance for any one to accumulate flesh on the rations we were receiving. I say it in all soberness that I do not believe that a healthy hen could have grown fat upon them. I am sure that any good-sized "shanghai" eats more every day than the meager half loaf that we had to maintain life upon. Scanty as this was, and hungry as all were, very many could not eat it. Their stomachs revolted against the trash; it became so nauseous to them that they could not force it down, even when famishing, and they died of starvation with the chunks of the so-called bread under their head. I found myself rapidly approaching this condition. I had been blessed with a good digestion and a talent for sleeping under the most discouraging circumstances. These, I have no doubt, were of the greatest assistance to me in my struggle for existence. But now the rations became fearfully obnoxious to me, and it was only with the greatest effort—pulling the bread into little pieces and swallowing each, of these as one would a pill—that I succeeded in worrying the stuff down. I had not as yet fallen away very much, but as I had never, up, to that time, weighed so much as one hundred and twenty-five pounds, there was no great amount of adipose to lose. It was evident that unless some change occurred my time was near at hand.

Page 11

There was not only hunger for more food, but longing with an intensity beyond expression for alteration of some kind in the rations. The changeless monotony of the miserable saltless bread, or worse mush, for days, weeks and months, became unbearable. If those wretched mule teams had only once a month hauled in something different—if they had come in loaded with sweet potatoes, green corn or wheat flour, there would be thousands of men still living who now slumber beneath those melancholy pines. It would have given something to look forward to, and remember when past. But to know each day that the gates would open to admit the same distasteful apologies for food took away the appetite and raised one's gorge, even while famishing for something to eat.

We could for a while forget the stench, the lice, the heat, the maggots, the dead and dying around us, the insulting malignance of our jailors; but it was, very hard work to banish thoughts and longings for food from our minds. Hundreds became actually insane from brooding over it. Crazy men could be found in all parts of the camp. Numbers of them wandered around entirely naked. Their babblings and maunderings about something to eat were painful to hear. I have before mentioned the case of the Plymouth Pilgrim near me, whose insanity took the form of imagining that he was sitting at the table with his family, and who would go through the show of helping them to imaginary viands and delicacies. The cravings for green food of those afflicted with the scurvy were, agonizing. Large numbers of watermelons were brought to the prison, and sold to those who had the money to pay for them at from one to five dollars, greenbacks, apiece. A boy who had means to buy a piece of these would be followed about while eating it by a crowd of perhaps twenty-five or thirty livid-gummed scorbutics, each imploring him for the rind when he was through with it.

We thought of food all day, and were visited with torturing dreams of it at night. One of the pleasant recollections of my pre-military life was a banquet at the "Planter's House," St. Louis, at which I was a boyish guest. It was, doubtless, an ordinary affair, as banquets go, but to me then, with all the keen appreciation of youth and first experience, it was a feast worthy of Lucullus. But now this delightful reminiscence became a torment. Hundreds of times I dreamed I was again at the "Planter's." I saw the wide corridors, with their mosaic pavement; I entered the grand dining-room, keeping timidly near the friend to whose kindness I owed this wonderful favor; I saw again the mirror-lined walls, the evergreen decked ceilings, the festoons and mottos, the tables gleaming with cutglass and silver, the buffets with wines and fruits, the brigade of sleek, black, white-aproned waiters, headed by one who had presence enough for a major General. Again I reveled in all the dainties and dishes on the bill-of-fare; calling for everything

Page 12

that I dared to, just to see what each was like, and to be able to say afterwards that I had partaken of it; all these bewildering delights of the first realization of what a boy has read and wondered much over, and longed for, would dance their rout and reel through my somnolent brain. Then I would awake to find myself a half-naked, half-starved, vermin-eaten wretch, crouching in a hole in the ground, waiting for my keepers to fling me a chunk of corn bread.

Naturally the boys—and especially the country boys and new prisoners —talked much of victuals—what they had had, and what they would have again, when they got out. Take this as a sample of the conversation which might be heard in any group of boys, sitting together on the sand, killin lice and talking of exchange:

Tom—“Well, Bill, when we get back to God’s country, you and Jim and John must all come to my house and take dinner with me. I want to give you a square meal. I want to show you just what good livin’ is. You know my mother is just the best cook in all that section. When she lays herself out to get up a meal all the other women in the neighborhood just stand back and admire!”

Bill—“O, that’s all right; but I’ll bet she can’t hold a candle to my mother, when it comes to good cooking.”

Jim—“No, nor to mine.”

John—(with patronizing contempt.) “O, shucks! None of you fellers were ever at our house, even when we had one of our common weekday dinners.”

Tom—(unheeding of the counter claims.) I hev teen studyin’ up the dinner I’d like, and the bill-of-fare I’d set out for you fellers when you come over to see me. First, of course, we’ll lay the foundation like with a nice, juicy loin roast, and some mashed potatos.

Bill—(interrupting.) “Now, do you like mashed potatos with beef? The way may mother does is to pare the potatos, and lay them in the pan along with the beef. Then, you know, they come out just as nice and crisp, and brown; they have soaked up all the beef gravy, and they crinkle between your teeth—”

Jim—“Now, I tell you, mashed Neshannocks with butter on ’em is plenty good enough for me.”

John—“If you’d et some of the new kind of peachblows that we raised in the old pasture lot the year before I enlisted, you’d never say another word about your Neshannocks.”



Tom—(taking breath and starting in fresh.) “Then we’ll hev some fried Spring chickens, of our dominick breed. Them dominicks of ours have the nicest, tenderest meat, better’n quail, a darned sight, and the way my mother can fry Spring chickens——”

Bill—(aside to Jim.) “Every durned woman in the country thinks she can ‘sprit ching frickens;’ but my mother——”

Page 13

John—"You fellers all know that there's nobody knows half as much about chicken doin's as these 'tinerant Methodis' preachers. They give 'em chicken wherever they go, and folks do say that out in the new settlements they can't get no preachin', no gospel, nor nothin', until the chickens become so plenty that a preacher is reasonably sure of havin' one for his dinner wherever he may go. Now, there's old Peter Cartwright, who has traveled over Illinoy and Indianny since the Year One, and preached more good sermons than any other man who ever set on saddle-bags, and has et more chickens than there are birds in a big pigeon roost. Well, he took dinner at our house when he came up to dedicate the big, white church at Simpkin's Corners, and when he passed up his plate the third time for more chicken, he sez, sez he:—I've et at a great many hundred tables in the fifty years I have labored in the vineyard of the Redeemer, but I must say, Mrs. Kiggins, that your way of frying chickens is a leetle the nicest that I ever knew. I only wish that the sisters generally would get your reseet.' Yes, that's what he said,—'a leetle the nicest.'"

Tom—"An' then, we'll hev biscuits an' butter. I'll just bet five hundred dollars to a cent, and give back the cent if I win, that we have the best butter at our house that there is in Central Illinoy. You can't never hev good butter onless you have a spring house; there's no use of talkin'—all the patent churns that lazy men ever invented—all the fancy milk pans an' coolers, can't make up for a spring house. Locations for a spring house are scarcer than hen's teeth in Illinoy, but we hev one, and there ain't a better one in Orange County, New York. Then you'll see dome of the biscuits my mother makes."

Bill—"Well, now, my mother's a boss biscuit-maker, too."

Jim—"You kin just gamble that mine is."

John—"O, that's the way you fellers ought to think an' talk, but my mother——"

Tom—(coming in again with fresh vigor) "They're jest as light an' fluffy as a dandelion puff, and they melt in your month like a ripe Bartlett pear. You just pull 'em open—Now you know that I think there's nothin' that shows a person's raisin' so well as to see him eat biscuits an' butter. If he's been raised mostly on corn bread, an' common doins,' an' don't know much about good things to eat, he'll most likely cut his biscuit open with a case knife, an' make it fall as flat as one o' yesterday's pancakes. But if he is used to biscuits, has had 'em often at his house, he'll—just pull 'em open, slow an' easy like, then he'll lay a little slice of butter inside, and drop a few drops of clear honey on this, an' stick the two halves back, together again, an—"

"Oh, for God Almighty's sake, stop talking that infernal nonsense," roar out a half dozen of the surrounding crowd, whose mouths have been watering over this unctuous recital of the good things of the table. "You blamed fools, do you want to drive yourselves and everybody else crazy with such stuff as that. Dry up and try to think of something else."

Page 14

CHAPTER XLVI.

Surly Briton—the stolid courage that makes the English flag A Banner of triumph—our company bugler, his characteristics and his death—urgent demand for mechanics—none want to go—treatment of A Rebel shoemaker—enlargement of the stockade—it is broken by A storm—the wonderful spring.

Early in August, F. Marriott, our Company Bugler, died. Previous to coming to America he had been for many years an English soldier, and I accepted him as a type of that stolid, doggedly brave class, which forms the bulk of the English armies, and has for centuries carried the British flag with dauntless courage into every land under the sun. Rough, surly and unsocial, he did his duty with the unemotional steadiness of a machine. He knew nothing but to obey orders, and obeyed them under all circumstances promptly, but with stony impassiveness. With the command to move forward into action, he moved forward without a word, and with face as blank as a side of sole leather. He went as far as ordered, halted at the word, and retired at command as phlegmatically as he advanced. If he cared a straw whether he advanced or retreated, if it mattered to the extent of a pinch of salt whether we whipped the Rebels or they defeated us, he kept that feeling so deeply hidden in the recesses of his sturdy bosom that no one ever suspected it. In the excitement of action the rest of the boys shouted, and swore, and expressed their tense feelings in various ways, but Marriott might as well have been a graven image, for all the expression that he suffered to escape. Doubtless, if the Captain had ordered him to shoot one of the company through the heart, he would have executed the command according to the manual of arms, brought his carbine to a “recover,” and at the word marched back to his quarters without an inquiry as to the cause of the proceedings. He made no friends, and though his surliness repelled us, he made few enemies. Indeed, he was rather a favorite, since he was a genuine character; his gruffness had no taint of selfish greed in it; he minded his own business strictly, and wanted others to do the same. When he first came into the company, it is true, he gained the enmity of nearly everybody in it, but an incident occurred which turned the tide in his favor. Some annoying little depredations had been practiced on the boys, and it needed but a word of suspicion to inflame all their minds against the surly Englishman as the unknown perpetrator. The feeling intensified, until about half of the company were in a mood to kill the Bugler outright. As we were returning from stable duty one evening, some little occurrence fanned the smoldering anger into a fierce blaze; a couple of the smaller boys began an attack upon him; others hastened to their assistance, and soon half the company were engaged in the assault.

Page 15

He succeeded in disengaging himself from his assailants, and, squaring himself off, said, defiantly:

“Dom yer cowardly heyes; jest come hat me one hat a time, hand hI’ll wollop the ’ole gang uv ye’s.”

One of our Sergeants styled himself proudly “a Chicago rough,” and was as vain of his pugilistic abilities as a small boy is of a father who plays in the band. We all hated him cordially—even more than we did Marriott.

He thought this was a good time to show off, and forcing his way through the crowd, he said, vauntingly:

“Just fall back and form a ring, boys, and see me polish off the——fool.”

The ring was formed, with the Bugler and the Sergeant in the center. Though the latter was the younger and stronger the first round showed him that it would have profited him much more to have let Marriott’s challenge pass unheeded. As a rule, it is as well to ignore all invitations of this kind from Englishmen, and especially from those who, like Marriott, have served a term in the army, for they are likely to be so handy with their fists as to make the consequences of an acceptance more lively than desirable.

So the Sergeant found. “Marriott,” as one of the spectators expressed it, “went around him like a cooper around a barrel.” He planted his blows just where he wished, to the intense delight of the boys, who yelled enthusiastically whenever he got in “a hot one,” and their delight at seeing the Sergeant drubbed so thoroughly and artistically, worked an entire revolution in his favor.

Thenceforward we viewed his eccentricities with lenient eyes, and became rather proud of his bull-dog stolidity and surliness. The whole battalion soon came to share this feeling, and everybody enjoyed hearing his deep-toned growl, which mischievous boys would incite by some petty annoyances deliberately designed for that purpose. I will mention incidentally, that after his encounter with the Sergeant no one ever again volunteered to “polish” him off.

Andersonville did not improve either his temper or his communicativeness. He seemed to want to get as far away from the rest of us as possible, and took up his quarters in a remote corner of the Stockade, among utter strangers. Those of us who wandered up in his neighborhood occasionally, to see how he was getting along, were received with such scant courtesy, that we did not hasten to repeat the visit. At length, after none of us had seen him for weeks, we thought that comradeship demanded another visit. We found him in the last stages of scurvy and diarrhea. Chunks of uneaten corn bread lay by his head. They were at least a week old. The rations since then had evidently been stolen from the helpless man by those around him. The place where he lay was

indescribably filthy, and his body was swarming with vermin. Some good Samaritan had filled his little black oyster can with water, and placed it within

Page 16

his reach. For a week, at least, he had not been able to rise from the ground; he could barely reach for the water near him. He gave us such a glare of recognition as I remembered to have seen light up the fast-darkening eyes of a savage old mastiff, that I and my boyish companions once found dying in the woods of disease and hurts. Had he been able he would have driven us away, or at least assailed us with biting English epithets. Thus he had doubtless driven away all those who had attempted to help him. We did what little we could, and staid with him until the next afternoon, when he died. We prepared his body, in the customary way: folded the hands across his breast, tied the toes together, and carried it outside, not forgetting each of us, to bring back a load of wood.

The scarcity of mechanics of all kinds in the Confederacy, and the urgent needs of the people for many things which the war and the blockade prevented their obtaining, led to continual inducements being offered to the artizans among us to go outside and work at their trade. Shoemakers seemed most in demand; next to these blacksmiths, machinists, molders and metal workers generally. Not a week passed during my imprisonment that I did not see a Rebel emissary of some kind about the prison seeking to engage skilled workmen for some purpose or another. While in Richmond the managers of the Tredegar Iron Works were brazen and persistent in their efforts to seduce what are termed “malleable iron workers,” to enter their employ. A boy who was master of any one of the commoner trades had but to make his wishes known, and he would be allowed to go out on parole to work. I was a printer, and I think that at least a dozen times I was approached by Rebel publishers with offers of a parole, and work at good prices. One from Columbia, S. C., offered me two dollars and a half a “thousand” for composition. As the highest price for such work that I had received before enlisting was thirty cents a thousand, this seemed a chance to accumulate untold wealth. Since a man working in day time can set from thirty-five to fifty “thousand” a week, this would make weekly wages run from eighty-seven dollars and fifty cents to one hundred and twenty-five dollars—but it was in Confederate money, then worth from ten to twenty cents on the dollar.

Still better offers were made to iron workers of all kinds, to shoemakers, tanners, weavers, tailors, hatters, engineers, machinists, millers, railroad men, and similar tradesmen. Any of these could have made a handsome thing by accepting the offers made them almost weekly. As nearly all in the prison had useful trades, it would have been of immense benefit to the Confederacy if they could have been induced to work at them. There is no measuring the benefit it would have been to the Southern cause if all the hundreds of tanners and shoemakers in the Stockade could have, been persuaded to go outside and labor in providing leather and shoes for the almost shoeless

Page 17

people and soldiery. The machinists alone could have done more good to the Southern Confederacy than one of our brigades was doing harm, by consenting to go to the railroad shops at Griswoldville and ply their handicraft. The lack of material resources in the South was one of the strongest allies our arms had. This lack of resources was primarily caused by a lack of skilled labor to develop those resources, and nowhere could there be found a finer collection of skilled laborers than in the thirty-three thousand prisoners incarcerated in Andersonville.

All solicitations to accept a parole and go outside to work at one's trade were treated with the scorn they deserved. If any mechanic yielded to them, the fact did not come under my notice. The usual reply to invitations of this kind was:

"No, Sir! By God, I'll stay in here till I rot, and the maggots carry me out through the cracks in the Stockade, before I'll so much as raise my little finger to help the infernal Confederacy, or Rebels, in any shape or form."

In August a Macon shoemaker came in to get some of his trade to go back with him to work in the Confederate shoe factory. He prosecuted his search for these until he reached the center of the camp on the North Side, when some of the shoemakers who had gathered around him, apparently considering his propositions, seized him and threw him into a well. He was kept there a whole day, and only released when Wirz cut off the rations of the prison for that day, and announced that no more would be issued until the man was returned safe and sound to the gate.

The terrible crowding was somewhat ameliorated by the opening in July of an addition—six hundred feet long—to the North Side of the Stockade. This increased the room inside to twenty acres, giving about an acre to every one thousand seven hundred men,—a preposterously contracted area still. The new ground was not a hotbed of virulent poison like the olds however, and those who moved on to it had that much in their favor.

The palisades between the new and the old portions of the pen were left standing when the new portion was opened. We were still suffering a great deal of inconvenience from lack of wood. That night the standing timbers were attacked by thousands of prisoners armed with every species of a tool to cut wood, from a case-knife to an ax. They worked the live-long night with such energy that by morning not only every inch of the logs above ground had disappeared, but that below had been dug up, and there was not enough left of the eight hundred foot wall of twenty-five-foot logs to make a box of matches.

One afternoon—early in August—one of the violent rain storms common to that section sprung up, and in a little while the water was falling in torrents. The little creek running through the camp swelled up immensely, and swept out large gaps in the Stockade,

both in the west and east sides. The Rebels noticed the breaches as soon as the prisoners. Two guns were fired from the Star Tort, and all the guards rushed out, and formed so as to prevent any egress, if one was attempted. Taken by surprise, we were not in a condition to profit by the opportunity until it was too late.

Page 18

The storm did one good thing: it swept away a great deal of filth, and left the camp much more wholesome. The foul stench rising from the camp made an excellent electrical conductor, and the lightning struck several times within one hundred feet of the prison.

Toward the end of August there happened what the religiously inclined termed a Providential Dispensation. The water in the Creek was indescribably bad. No amount of familiarity with it, no increase of intimacy with our offensive surroundings, could lessen the disgust at the polluted water. As I have said previously, before the stream entered the Stockade, it was rendered too filthy for any use by the contaminations from the camps of the guards, situated about a half-mile above. Immediately on entering the Stockade the contamination became terrible. The oozy seep at the bottom of the hillsides drained directly into it all the mass of filth from a population of thirty-three thousand. Imagine the condition of an open sewer, passing through the heart of a city of that many people, and receiving all the offensive product of so dense a gathering into a shallow, sluggish stream, a yard wide and five inches deep, and heated by the burning rays of the sun in the thirty-second degree of latitude. Imagine, if one can, without becoming sick at the stomach, all of these people having to wash in and drink of this foul flow.

There is not a scintilla of exaggeration in this statement. That it is within the exact truth is demonstrable by the testimony of any man—Rebel or Union—who ever saw the inside of the Stockade at Andersonville. I am quite content to have its truth—as well as that of any other statement made in this book—be determined by the evidence of any one, no matter how bitter his hatred of the Union, who had any personal knowledge of the condition of affairs at Andersonville. No one can successfully deny that there were at least thirty-three thousand prisoners in the Stockade, and that the one shallow, narrow creek, which passed through the prison, was at once their main sewer and their source of supply of water for bathing, drinking and washing. With these main facts admitted, the reader's common sense of natural consequences will furnish the rest of the details.

It is true that some of the more fortunate of us had wells; thanks to our own energy in overcoming extraordinary obstacles; no thanks to our gaolers for making the slightest effort to provide these necessities of life. We dug the wells with case and pocket knives, and half canteens to a depth of from twenty to thirty feet, pulling up the dirt in pantaloons legs, and running continual risk of being smothered to death by the caving in of the unwallied sides. Not only did the Rebels refuse to give us boards with which to wall the wells, and buckets for drawing the water, but they did all in their power to prevent us from digging the wells, and made continual forays to capture the digging tools, because the wells were frequently used as the starting places for tunnels. Professor Jones lays special stress on this tunnel feature in his testimony, which I have introduced in a previous chapter.

Page 19

The great majority of the prisoners who went to the Creek for water, went as near as possible to the Dead Line on the West Side, where the Creek entered the Stockade, that they might get water with as little filth in it as possible. In the crowds struggling there for their turn to take a dip, some one nearly every day got so close to the Dead Line as to arouse a suspicion in the guard's mind that he was touching it. The suspicion was the unfortunate one's death warrant, and also its execution. As the sluggish brain of the guard conceived it he leveled his gun; the distance to his victim was not over one hundred feet; he never failed his aim; the first warning the wretched prisoner got that he was suspected of transgressing a prison-rule was the charge of "ball-and-buck" that tore through his body. It was lucky if he was, the only one of the group killed. More wicked and unjustifiable murders never were committed than these almost daily assassinations at the Creek.

One morning the camp was astonished beyond measure to discover that during the night a large, bold spring had burst out on the North Side, about midway between the Swamp and the summit of the hill. It poured out its grateful flood of pure, sweet water in an apparently exhaustless quantity. To the many who looked in wonder upon it, it seemed as truly a heaven-wrought miracle as when Moses's enchanted rod smote the parched rock in Sinai's desert waste, and the living waters gushed forth.

The police took charge of the spring, and every one was compelled to take his regular turn in filling his vessel. This was kept up during our whole stay in Andersonville, and every morning, shortly after daybreak, a thousand men could be seen standing in line, waiting their turns to fill their cans and cups with the precious liquid.

I am told by comrades who have revisited the Stockade of recent years, that the spring is yet running as when we left, and is held in most pious veneration by the negroes of that vicinity, who still preserve the tradition of its miraculous origin, and ascribe to its water wonderful grace giving and healing properties, similar to those which pious Catholics believe exist in the holy water of the fountain at Lourdes.

I must confess that I do not think they are so very far from right. If I could believe that any water was sacred and thaumaturgic, it would be of that fountain which appeared so opportunely for the benefit of the perishing thousands of Andersonville. And when I hear of people bringing water for baptismal purposes from the Jordan, I say in my heart, "How much more would I value for myself and friends the administration of the chrismal sacrament with the diviner flow from that low sand-hill in Western Georgia."

CHAPTER XLVII.

Page 20

“Sick call,” And the scenes that accompanied it—mustering the lame, halt and diseased at the south gate—an unusually bad case—going out to the hospital—accommodation and treatment of the patients there—the horrible suffering in the gangrene ward—bungling amputations by blundering practitioners—affection between A sailor and his ward—death of my comrade.

Every morning after roll-call, thousands of sick gathered at the South Gate, where the doctors made some pretense of affording medical relief. The scene there reminded me of the illustrations in my Sunday-School lessons of that time when “great multitudes came unto Him,” by the shores of the Sea of Galilee, “having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others.” Had the crowds worn the flouting robes of the East, the picture would have lacked nothing but the presence of the Son of Man to make it complete. Here were the burning sands and parching sun; hither came scores of groups of three or four comrades, laboriously staggering under the weight of a blanket in which they had carried a disabled and dying friend from some distant part of the Stockade. Beside them hobbled the scorbutics with swollen and distorted limbs, each more loathsome and nearer death than the lepers whom Christ’s divine touch made whole. Dozens, unable to walk, and having no comrades to carry them, crawled painfully along, with frequent stops, on their hands and knees. Every, form of intense physical suffering that it is possible for disease to induce in the human frame was visible at these daily parades of the sick of the prison. As over three thousand (three thousand and seventy-six) died in August, there were probably twelve thousand dangerously sick at any given time daring the month; and a large part of these collected at the South Gate every morning.

Measurably-calloused as we had become by the daily sights of horror around us, we encountered spectacles in these gatherings which no amount of visible misery could accustom us to. I remember one especially that burned itself deeply into my memory. It was of a young man not over twenty-five, who a few weeks ago—his clothes looked comparatively new—had evidently been the picture of manly beauty and youthful vigor. He had had a well-knit, lithe form; dark curling hair fell over a forehead which had once been fair, and his eyes still showed that they had gleamed with a bold, adventurous spirit. The red clover leaf on his cap showed that he belonged to the First Division of the Second Corps, the three chevrons on his arm that he was a

Page 21

Sergeant, and the stripe at his cuff that he was a veteran. Some kind-hearted boys had found him in a miserable condition on the North Side, and carried him over in a blanket to where the doctors could see him. He had but little clothing on, save his blouse and cap. Ulcers of some kind had formed in his abdomen, and these were now masses of squirming worms. It was so much worse than the usual forms of suffering, that quite a little crowd of compassionate spectators gathered around and expressed their pity. The sufferer turned to one who lay beside him with:

“Comrade: If we were only under the old Stars and Stripes, we wouldn’t care a G-d d—n for a few worms, would we?”

This was not profane. It was an utterance from the depths of a brave man’s heart, couched in the strongest language at his command. It seemed terrible that so gallant a soul should depart from earth in this miserable fashion. Some of us, much moved by the sight, went to the doctors and put the case as strongly as possible, begging them to do something to alleviate his suffering. They declined to see the case, but got rid of us by giving us a bottle of turpentine, with directions to pour it upon the ulcers to kill the maggots. We did so. It must have been cruel torture, and as absurd remedially as cruel, but our hero set his teeth and endured, without a groan. He was then carried out to the hospital to die.

I said the doctors made a pretense of affording medical relief. It was hardly that, since about all the prescription for those inside the Stockade consisted in giving a handful of sumach berries to each of those complaining of scurvy. The berries might have done some good, had there been enough of them, and had their action been assisted by proper food. As it was, they were probably nearly, if not wholly, useless. Nothing was given to arrest the ravages of dysentery.

A limited number of the worst cases were admitted to the Hospital each day. As this only had capacity for about one-quarter of the sick in the Stockade, new patients could only be admitted as others died. It seemed, anyway, like signing a man’s death warrant to send him to the Hospital, as three out of every four who went out there died. The following from the official report of the Hospital shows this:

Total number admitted	12,900
Died	8,663
Exchanged	828
Took the oath of allegiance	25
Sent elsewhere	2,889
Total	1

2,400

Average deaths, 76 per cent.

Early in August I made a successful effort to get out to the Hospital. I had several reasons for this: First, one of my chums, W. W. Watts, of my own company, had been sent out a little while before very sick with scurvy and pneumonia, and I wanted to see if I could do anything for him, if he still lived: I have mentioned before that for awhile after our entrance into Andersonville five of us slept on one overcoat and covered ourselves with one blanket. Two of these had already died, leaving as possessors of the blanket and overcoat, W. W. Watts, B. B. Andrews, and myself.

Page 22

Next, I wanted to go out to see if there was any prospect of escape. I had long since given up hopes of escaping from the Stockade. All our attempts at tunneling had resulted in dead failures, and now, to make us wholly despair of success in that direction, another Stockade was built clear around the prison, at a distance of one hundred and twenty feet from the first palisades. It was manifest that though we might succeed in tunneling past one Stockade, we could not go beyond the second one.

I had the scurvy rather badly, and being naturally slight in frame, I presented a very sick appearance to the physicians, and was passed out to the Hospital.

While this was a wretched affair, it was still a vast improvement on the Stockade. About five acres of ground, a little southeast of the Stockade, and bordering on a creek, were enclosed by a board fence, around which the guard walked, trees shaded the ground tolerably well. There were tents and flies to shelter part of the sick, and in these were beds made of pine leaves. There were regular streets and alleys running through the grounds, and as the management was in the hands of our own men, the place was kept reasonably clean and orderly for Andersonville.

There was also some improvement in the food. Rice in some degree replaced the nauseous and innutritious corn bread, and if served in sufficient quantities, would doubtless have promoted the recovery of many men dying from dysenteric diseases. We also received small quantities of "okra," a plant peculiar to the South, whose pods contained a mucilaginous matter that made a soup very grateful to those suffering from scurvy.

But all these ameliorations of condition were too slight to even arrest the progress of the disease of the thousands of dying men brought out from the Stockade. These still wore the same lice-infested garments as in prison; no baths or even ordinary applications of soap and water cleaned their dirt-grimed skins, to give their pores an opportunity to assist in restoring them to health; even their long, lank and matted hair, swarming with vermin, was not trimmed. The most ordinary and obvious measures for their comfort and care were neglected. If a man recovered he did it almost in spite of fate. The medicines given were scanty and crude. The principal remedial agent—as far as my observation extended—was a rank, fetid species of unrectified spirits, which, I was told, was made from sorgum seed. It had a light-green tinge, and was about as inviting to the taste as spirits of turpentine. It was given to the sick in small quantities mixed with water. I had had some experience with Kentucky "apple-jack," which, it was popularly believed among the boys, would dissolve a piece of the fattest pork thrown into it, but that seemed balmy and oily alongside of this. After tasting some, I ceased to wonder at the atrocities of Wirz and his associates. Nothing would seem too bad to a man who made that his habitual tippie.

Page 23

[For a more particular description of the Hospital I must refer my reader to the testimony of Professor Jones, in a previous chapter.]

Certainly this continent has never seen—and I fervently trust it will never again see—such a gigantic concentration of misery as that Hospital displayed daily. The official statistics tell the story of this with terrible brevity: There were three thousand seven hundred and nine in the Hospital in August; one thousand four hundred and eighty-nine—nearly every other man died. The rate afterwards became much higher than this.

The most conspicuous suffering was in the gangrene wards. Horrible sores spreading almost visibly from hour to hour, devoured men's limbs and bodies. I remember one ward in which the alterations appeared to be altogether in the back, where they ate out the tissue between the skin and the ribs. The attendants seemed trying to arrest the progress of the sloughing by drenching the sores with a solution of blue vitriol. This was exquisitely painful, and in the morning, when the drenching was going on, the whole hospital rang with the most agonizing screams.

But the gangrene mostly attacked the legs and arms, and the led more than the arms. Sometimes it killed men inside of a week; sometimes they lingered on indefinitely. I remember one man in the Stockade who cut his hand with the sharp corner of a card of corn bread he was lifting from the ration wagon; gangrene set in immediately, and he died four days after.

One form that was quit prevalent was a cancer of the lower one corner of the mouth, and it finally ate the whole side of the face out. Of course the sufferer had the greatest trouble in eating and drinking. For the latter it was customary to whittle out a little wooden tube, and fasten it in a tin cup, through which he could suck up the water. As this mouth cancer seemed contagious, none of us would allow any one afflicted with it to use any of our cooking utensils. The Rebel doctors at the hospital resorted to wholesale amputations to check the progress of the gangrene.

They had a two hours session of limb-lopping every morning, each of which resulted in quite a pile of severed members. I presume more bungling operations are rarely seen outside of Russian or Turkish hospitals. Their unskilfulness was apparent even to non-scientific observers like myself. The standard of medical education in the South—as indeed of every other form of education—was quite low. The Chief Surgeon of the prison, Dr. Isaiah White, and perhaps two or three others, seemed to be gentlemen of fair abilities and attainments. The remainder were of that class of illiterate and unlearning quacks who physic and blister the poor whites and negros in the country districts of the South; who believe they can stop bleeding of the nose by repeating a verse from the Bible; who think that if in gathering their favorite remedy of boneset they cut the stem upwards it will purge their patients, and if downward it will vomit them, and who hold that there is nothing so good for “fits” as a black cat, killed in the dark of the

moon, cut open, and bound while yet warm, upon the naked chest of the victim of the convulsions.

Page 24

They had a case of instruments captured from some of our field hospitals, which were dull and fearfully out of order. With poor instruments and unskilled hands the operations became mangling.

In the Hospital I saw an admirable illustration of the affection which a sailor will lavish on a ship's boy, whom he takes a fancy to, and makes his "chicken," as the phrase is. The United States sloop "Water Witch" had recently been captured in Ossabaw Sound, and her crew brought into prison. One of her boys—a bright, handsome little fellow of about fifteen—had lost one of his arms in the fight. He was brought into the Hospital, and the old fellow whose "chicken" he was, was allowed to accompany and nurse him. This "old barnacle-back" was as surly a growler as ever went aloft, but to his "chicken" he was as tender and thoughtful as a woman. They found a shady nook in one corner, and any moment one looked in that direction he could see the old tar hard at work at something for the comfort and pleasure of his pet. Now he was dressing the wound as deftly and gently as a mother caring for a new-born babe; now he was trying to concoct some relish out of the slender materials he could beg or steal from the Quartermaster; now trying to arrange the shade of the bed of pine leaves in a more comfortable manner; now repairing or washing his clothes, and so on.

All the sailors were particularly favored by being allowed to bring their bags in untouched by the guards. This "chicken" had a wonderful supply of clothes, the handiwork of his protector who, like most good sailors, was very skillful with the needle. He had suits of fine white duck, embroidered with blue in a way that would ravish the heart of a fine lady, and blue suits similarly embroidered with white. No belle ever kept her clothes in better order than these were. When the duck came up from the old sailor's patient washing it was as spotless as new-fallen snow.

I found my chum in a very bad condition. His appetite was entirely gone, but he had an inordinate craving for tobacco—for strong, black plug—which he smoked in a pipe. He had already traded off all his brass buttons to the guards for this. I had accumulated a few buttons to bribe the guard to take me out for wood, and I gave these also for tobacco for him. When I awoke one morning the man who laid next to me on the right was dead, having died sometime during the night. I searched his pockets and took what was in them. These were a silk pocket handkerchief, a gutta percha finger-ring, a comb, a pencil, and a leather pocket-book, making in all quite a nice little "find." I hied over to the guard, and succeeded in trading the personal estate which I had inherited from the intestate deceased, for a handful of peaches, a handful of hardly ripe figs, and a long plug of tobacco. I hastened back to Watts, expecting that the figs and peaches would do him a world of good. At first I did not show him the tobacco, as I was strongly opposed to his using it, thinking that it was making him much worse. But he looked at the tempting peaches and figs with lack-luster eyes; he was too far gone to care for them. He pushed them back to me, saying faintly:

Page 25

"No, you take 'em, Mc; I don't want 'em; I can't eat 'em!"

I then produced the tobacco, and his face lighted up. Concluding that this was all the comfort that he could have, and that I might as well gratify him, I cut up some of the weed, filled his pipe and lighted it. He smoked calmly and almost happily all the afternoon, hardly speaking a word to me. As it grew dark he asked me to bring him a drink. I did so, and as I raised him up he said:

"Mc, this thing's ended. Tell my father that I stood it as long as I could, and——"

The death rattle sounded in his throat, and when I laid him back it was all over. Straightening out his limbs, folding his hands across his breast, and composing his features as best I could, I lay, down beside the body and slept till morning, when I did what little else I could toward preparing for the grave all that was left of my long-suffering little friend.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

Determination to escape—different plans and their merits—I prefer the Appalachicola route—preparations for departure—A hot day—the fence passed successfully pursued by the hounds—caught—returned to the stockade.

After Watt's death, I set earnestly about seeing what could be done in the way of escape. Frank Harvey, of the First West Virginia Cavalry, a boy of about my own age and disposition, joined with me in the scheme. I was still possessed with my original plan of making my way down the creeks to the Flint River, down the Flint River to where it emptied into the Appalachicola River, and down that stream to its debauchure into the bay that connected with the Gulf of Mexico. I was sure of finding my way by this route, because, if nothing else offered, I could get astride of a log and float down the current. The way to Sherman, in the other direction, was long, torturous and difficult, with a fearful gauntlet of blood-hounds, patrols and the scouts of Hood's Army to be run. I had but little difficulty in persuading Harvey into an acceptance of my views, and we began arranging for a solution of the first great problem—how to get outside of the Hospital guards. As I have explained before, the Hospital was surrounded by a board fence, with guards walking their beats on the ground outside. A small creek flowed through the southern end of the grounds, and at its lower end was used as a sink. The boards of the fence came down to the surface of the water, where the Creek passed out, but we found, by careful prodding with a stick, that the hole between the boards and the bottom of the Creek was sufficiently large to allow the passage of our bodies, and there had been no stakes driven or other precautions used

Page 26

to prevent egress by this channel. A guard was posted there, and probably ordered to stand at the edge of the stream, but it smelled so vilely in those scorching days that he had consulted his feelings and probably his health, by retiring to the top of the bank, a rod or more distant. We watched night after night, and at last were gratified to find that none went nearer the Creak than the top of this bank.

Then we waited for the moon to come right, so that the first part of the night should be dark. This took several days, but at last we knew that the next night she would not rise until between 9 and 10 o'clock, which would give us nearly two hours of the dense darkness of a moonless Summer night in the South. We had first thought of saving up some rations for the trip, but then reflected that these would be ruined by the filthy water into which we must sink to go under the fence. It was not difficult to abandon the food idea, since it was very hard to force ourselves to lay by even the smallest portion of our scanty rations.

As the next day wore on, our minds were wrought up into exalted tension by the rapid approach of the supreme moment, with all its chances and consequences. The experience of the past few months was not such as to mentally fit us for such a hazard. It prepared us for sullen, uncomplaining endurance, for calmly contemplating the worst that could come; but it did not strengthen that fiber of mind that leads to venturesome activity and daring exploits. Doubtless the weakness of our bodies reacted upon our spirits. We contemplated all the perils that confronted us; perils that, now looming up with impending nearness, took a clearer and more threatening shape than they had ever done before.

We considered the desperate chances of passing the guard unseen; or, if noticed, of escaping his fire without death or severe wounds. But supposing him fortunately evaded, then came the gauntlet of the hounds and the patrols hunting deserters. After this, a long, weary journey, with bare feet and almost naked bodies, through an unknown country abounding with enemies; the dangers of assassination by the embittered populace; the risks of dying with hunger and fatigue in the gloomy depths of a swamp; the scanty hopes that, if we reached the seashore, we could get to our vessels.

Not one of all these contingencies failed to expand itself to all its alarming proportions, and unite with its fellows to form a dreadful vista, like the valleys filled with demons and genii, dragons and malign enchantments, which confront the heroes of the "Arabian Nights," when they set out to perform their exploits.

But behind us lay more miseries and horrors than a riotous imagination could conceive; before us could certainly be nothing worse. We would put life and freedom to the hazard of a touch, and win or lose it all.

The day had been intolerably hot. The sun's rays seemed to sear the earth, like heated irons, and the air that lay on the burning sand was broken by wavy lines, such as one sees indicate the radiation from a hot stove.

Page 27

Except the wretched chain-gang plodding torturously back and forward on the hillside, not a soul nor an animal could be seen in motion outside the Stockade. The hounds were panting in their kennel; the Rebel officers, half or wholly drunken with villainous sorgum whisky, were stretched at full length in the shade at headquarters; the half-caked gunners crouched under the shadow of the embankments of the forts, the guards hung limply over the Stockade in front of their little perches; the thirty thousand boys inside the Stockade, prone or supine upon the glowing sand, gasped for breath—for one draft of sweet, cool, wholesome air that did not bear on its wings the subtle seeds of rank corruption and death. Everywhere was the prostration of discomfort—the inertia of sluggishness.

Only the sick moved; only the pain-racked cried out; only the dying struggled; only the agonies of dissolution could make life assert itself against the exhaustion of the heat.

Harvey and I, lying in the scanty shade of the trunk of a tall pine, and with hearts filled with solicitude as to the outcome of what the evening would bring us, looked out over the scene as we had done daily for long months, and remained silent for hours, until the sun, as if weary with torturing and slaying, began going down in the blazing West. The groans of the thousands of sick around us, the shrieks of the rotting ones in the gangrene wards rang incessantly in our ears.

As the sun disappeared, and the heat abated, the suspended activity was restored. The Master of the Hounds came out with his yelping pack, and started on his rounds; the Rebel officers aroused themselves from their siesta and went lazily about their duties; the fifer produced his cracked fife and piped forth his unvarying “Bonnie Blue Flag,” as a signal for dress parade, and drums beaten by unskilled hands in the camps of the different regiments, repeated the signal. In time Stockade the mass of humanity became full of motion as an ant hill, and resembled it very much from our point of view, with the boys threading their way among the burrows, tents and holes.

It was becoming dark quite rapidly. The moments seemed galloping onward toward the time when we must make the decisive step. We drew from the dirty rag in which it was wrapped the little piece of corn bread that we had saved for our supper, carefully divided it into two equal parts, and each took one and ate it in silence. This done, we held a final consultation as to our plans, and went over each detail carefully, that we might fully understand each other under all possible circumstances, and act in concert. One point we laboriously impressed upon each other, and that was; that under no circumstances were we to allow ourselves to be tempted to leave the Creek until we reached its junction with the Flint River. I then picked up two pine leaves, broke them off to unequal lengths, rolled them in my hands behind my back for a second, and presenting them to Harney with their ends sticking out of my closed hand, said:

Page 28

"The one that gets the longest one goes first."

Harvey reached forth and drew the longer one.

We made a tour of reconnaissance. Everything seemed as usual, and wonderfully calm compared with the tumult in our minds. The Hospital guards were pacing their beats lazily; those on the Stockade were drawling listlessly the first "call around" of the evening:

"Post numbah foah! Half-past seven o'clock! and a-I-I's we-I-III!"

Inside the Stockade was a Babel of sounds, above all of which rose the melody of religious and patriotic songs, sung in various parts of the camp. From the headquarters came the shouts and laughter of the Rebel officers having a little "frolic" in the cool of the evening. The groans of the sick around us were gradually hushing, as the abatement of the terrible heat let all but the worst cases sink into a brief slumber, from which they awoke before midnight to renew their outcries. But those in the Gangrene wards seemed to be denied even this scanty blessing. Apparently they never slept, for their shrieks never ceased. A multitude of whip-poor-wills in the woods around us began their usual dismal cry, which had never seemed so unearthly and full of dreadful presages as now.

It was, now quite dark, and we stole noiselessly down to the Creek and reconnoitered. We listened. The guard was not pacing his beat, as we could not hear his footsteps. A large, ill-shapen lump against the trunk of one of the trees on the bank showed that he was leaning there resting himself. We watched him for several minutes, but he did not move, and the thought shot into our minds that he might be asleep; but it seemed impossible: it was too early in the evening.

Now, if ever, was the opportunity. Harney squeezed my hand, stepped noiselessly into the Creek, laid himself gently down into the filthy water, and while my heart was beating so that I was certain it could be heard some distance from me, began making toward the fence. He passed under easily, and I raised my eyes toward the guard, while on my strained ear fell the soft plashing made by Harvey as he pulled himself cautiously forward. It seemed as if the sentinel must hear this; he could not help it, and every second I expected to see the black lump address itself to motion, and the musket flash out fiendishly. But he did not; the lump remained motionless; the musket silent.

When I thought that Harvey had gained a sufficient distance I followed. It seemed as if the disgusting water would smother me as I laid myself down into it, and such was my agitation that it appeared almost impossible that I should escape making such a noise as would attract the guard's notice. Catching hold of the roots and limbs at the side of the stream, I pulled myself slowly along, and as noiselessly as possible.

I passed under the fence without difficulty, and was outside, and within fifteen feet of the guard. I had lain down into the creek upon my right side, that my face might be toward the guard, and I could watch him closely all the time.

Page 29

As I came under the fence he was still leaning motionless against the tree, but to my heated imagination he appeared to have turned and be watching me. I hardly breathed; the filthy water rippling past me seemed to roar to attract the guard's attention; I reached my hand out cautiously to grasp a root to pull myself along by, and caught instead a dry branch, which broke with a loud crack. My heart absolutely stood still. The guard evidently heard the noise. The black lump separated itself from the tree, and a straight line which I knew to be his musket separated itself from the lump. In a brief instant I lived a year of mortal apprehension. So certain was I that he had discovered me, and was leveling his piece to fire, that I could scarcely restrain myself from springing up and dashing away to avoid the shot. Then I heard him take a step, and to my unutterable surprise and relief, he walked off farther from the Creek, evidently to speak to the man whose beat joined his.

I pulled away more swiftly, but still with the greatest caution, until after half-an-hour's painful effort I had gotten fully one hundred and fifty yards away from the Hospital fence, and found Harney crouched on a cypress knee, close to the water's edge, watching for me.

We waited there a few minutes, until I could rest, and calm my perturbed nerves down to something nearer their normal equilibrium, and then started on. We hoped that if we were as lucky in our next step as in the first one we would reach the Flint River by daylight, and have a good long start before the morning roll-call revealed our absence. We could hear the hounds still baying in the distance, but this sound was too customary to give us any uneasiness.

But our progress was terribly slow. Every step hurt fearfully. The Creek bed was full of roots and snags, and briers, and vines trailed across it. These caught and tore our bare feet and legs, rendered abnormally tender by the scurvy. It seemed as if every step was marked with blood. The vines tripped us, and we frequently fell headlong. We struggled on determinedly for nearly an hour, and were perhaps a mile from the Hospital.

The moon came up, and its light showed that the creek continued its course through a dense jungle like that we had been traversing, while on the high ground to our left were the open pine woods I have previously described.

We stopped and debated for a few minutes. We recalled our promise to keep in the Creek, the experience of other boys who had tried to escape and been caught by the hounds. If we staid in the Creek we were sure the hounds would not find our trail, but it was equally certain that at this rate we would be exhausted and starved before we got out of sight of the prison. It seemed that we had gone far enough to be out of reach of the packs patrolling immediately around the Stockade, and there could be but little risk in trying a short walk on the dry ground. We concluded to take the chances, and, ascending the bank, we walked and ran as fast as we could for about two miles further.



Page 30

All at once it struck me that with all our progress the hounds sounded as near as when we started. I shivered at the thought, and though nearly ready to drop with fatigue, urged myself and Harney on.

An instant later their baying rang out on the still night air right behind us, and with fearful distinctness. There was no mistake now; they had found our trail, and were running us down. The change from fearful apprehension to the crushing reality stopped us stock-still in our tracks.

At the next breath the hounds came bursting through the woods in plain sight, and in full cry. We obeyed our first impulse; rushed back into the swamp, forced our way for a few yards through the flesh-tearing impediments, until we gained a large cypress, upon whose great knees we climbed—thoroughly exhausted—just as the yelping pack reached the edge of the water, and stopped there and bayed at us. It was a physical impossibility for us to go another step.

In a moment the low-browed villain who had charge of the hounds came galloping up on his mule, tooting signals to his dogs as he came, on the cow-horn slung from his shoulders.

He immediately discovered us, covered us with his revolver, and yelled out:

“Come ashore, there, quick: you—— —— —— ——s!”

There was no help for it. We climbed down off the knees and started towards the land. As we neared it, the hounds became almost frantic, and it seemed as if we would be torn to pieces the moment they could reach us. But the master dismounted and drove them back. He was surly—even savage—to us, but seemed in too much hurry to get back to waste any time annoying us with the dogs. He ordered us to get around in front of the mule, and start back to camp. We moved as rapidly as our fatigue and our lacerated feet would allow us, and before midnight were again in the hospital, fatigued, filthy, torn, bruised and wretched beyond description or conception.

The next morning we were turned back into the Stockade as punishment.

CHAPTER XLIX.

August—good luck in not meeting Captain Wirz—that WORTHY’S treatment of recaptured prisoners—secret societies in prison—singular meeting and its result—discovery and removal of the officers among the enlisted men.

Harney and I were specially fortunate in being turned back into the Stockade without being brought before Captain Wirz.

Page 31

We subsequently learned that we owed this good luck to Wirz's absence on sick leave—his place being supplied by Lieutenant Davis, a moderate brained Baltimorean, and one of that horde of Marylanders in the Rebel Army, whose principal service to the Confederacy consisted in working themselves into "bomb-proof" places, and forcing those whom they displaced into the field. Winder was the illustrious head of this crowd of bomb-proof Rebels from "Maryland, My Maryland!" whose enthusiasm for the Southern cause and consistency in serving it only in such places as were out of range of the Yankee artillery, was the subject of many bitter jibes by the Rebels—especially by those whose secure berths they possessed themselves of.

Lieutenant Davis went into the war with great brashness. He was one of the mob which attacked the Sixth Massachusetts in its passage through Baltimore, but, like all of that class of roughs, he got his stomach full of war as soon as the real business of fighting began, and he retired to where the chances of attaining a ripe old age were better than in front of the Army of the Potomac's muskets. We shall hear of Davis again.

Encountering Captain Wirz was one of the terrors of an abortive attempt to escape. When recaptured prisoners were brought before him he would frequently give way to paroxysms of screaming rage, so violent as to closely verge on insanity. Brandishing the fearful and wonderful revolver—of which I have spoken in such a manner as to threaten the luckless captives with instant death, he would shriek out imprecations, curses; and foul epithets in French, German and English, until he fairly frothed at the mouth. There were plenty of stories current in camp of his having several times given away to his rage so far as to actually shoot men down in these interviews, and still more of his knocking boys down and jumping upon them, until he inflicted injuries that soon resulted in death. How true these rumors were I am unable to say of my own personal knowledge, since I never saw him kill any one, nor have I talked with any one who did. There were a number of cases of this kind testified to upon his trial, but they all happened among "paroles" outside the Stockade, or among the prisoners inside after we left, so I knew nothing of them.

One of the Old Switzer's favorite ways of ending these seances was to inform the boys that he would have them shot in an hour or so, and bid them prepare for death. After keeping them in fearful suspense for hours he would order them to be punished with the stocks, the ball-and-chain, the chain-gang, or—if his fierce mood had burned itself entirely out—as was quite likely with a man of his shallop' brain and vacillating temper—to be simply returned to the stockade.

Page 32

Nothing, I am sure, since the days of the Inquisition—or still later, since the terrible punishments visited upon the insurgents of 1848 by the Austrian aristocrats—has been so diabolical as the stocks and chain-gangs, as used by Wirz. At one time seven men, sitting in the stocks near the Star Fort—in plain view of the camp—became objects of interest to everybody inside. They were never relieved from their painful position, but were kept there until all of them died. I think it was nearly two weeks before the last one succumbed. What they endured in that time even imagination cannot conceive—I do not think that an Indian tribe ever devised keener torture for its captives.

The chain-gang consisted of a number of men—varying from twelve to twenty-five, all chained to one sixty-four pound ball. They were also stationed near the Star Fort, standing out in the hot sun, without a particle of shade over them. When one moved they all had to move. They were scourged with the dysentery, and the necessities of some one of their number kept them constantly in motion. I can see them distinctly yet, tramping laboriously and painfully back and forward over that burning hillside, every moment of the long, weary Summer days.

A comrade writes to remind me of the beneficent work of the Masonic Order. I mention it most gladly, as it was the sole recognition on the part of any of our foes of our claims to human kinship. The churches of all denominations—except the solitary Catholic priest, Father Hamilton, —ignored us as wholly as if we were dumb beasts. Lay humanitarians were equally indifferent, and the only interest manifested by any Rebel in the welfare of any prisoner was by the Masonic brotherhood. The Rebel Masons interested themselves in securing details outside the Stockade in the cookhouse, the commissary, and elsewhere, for the brethren among the prisoners who would accept such favors. Such as did not feel inclined to go outside on parole received frequent presents in the way of food, and especially of vegetables, which were literally beyond price. Materials were sent inside to build tents for the Masons, and I think such as made themselves known before death, received burial according to the rites of the Order. Doctor White, and perhaps other Surgeons, belonged to the fraternity, and the wearing of a Masonic emblem by a new prisoner was pretty sure to catch their eyes, and be the means of securing for the wearer the tender of their good offices, such as a detail into the Hospital as nurse, ward-master, *etc.*

I was not fortunate enough to be one of the mystic brethren, and so missed all share in any of these benefits, as well as in any others, and I take special pride in one thing: that during my whole imprisonment I was not beholden to a Rebel for a single favor of any kind. The Rebel does not live who can say that he ever gave me so much as a handful of meal, a spoonful of salt, an inch of thread, or a stick of wood. From first to last I received nothing but my rations, except occasional trifles that I succeeded in stealing from the stupid officers charged with issuing rations. I owe no man in the Southern Confederacy gratitude for anything—not even for a kind word.

Page 33

Speaking of secret society pins recalls a noteworthy story which has been told me since the war, of boys whom I knew. At the breaking out of hostilities there existed in Toledo a festive little secret society, such as lurking boys frequently organize, with no other object than fun and the usual adolescent love of mystery. There were a dozen or so members in it who called themselves "The Royal Reubens," and were headed by a bookbinder named Ned Hopkins. Some one started a branch of the Order in Napoleon, O., and among the members was Charles E. Reynolds, of that town. The badge of the society was a peculiarly shaped gold pin. Reynolds and Hopkins never met, and had no acquaintance with each other. When the war broke out, Hopkins enlisted in Battery H, First Ohio Artillery, and was sent to the Army of the Potomac, where he was captured, in the Fall of 1863, while scouting, in the neighborhood of Richmond. Reynolds entered the Sixty-Eighth Ohio Volunteer Infantry, and was taken in the neighborhood of Jackson, Miss.,—two thousand miles from the place of Hopkins's capture. At Andersonville Hopkins became one of the officers in charge of the Hospital. One day a Rebel Sergeant, who called the roll in the Stockade, after studying Hopkins's pin a minute, said:

"I seed a Yank in the Stockade to-day a-wearing a pin egzackly like that ere."

This aroused Hopkins's interest, and he went inside in search of the other "feller." Having his squad and detachment there was little difficulty in finding him. He recognized the pin, spoke to its wearer, gave him the "grand hailing sign" of the "Royal Reubens," and it was duly responded to. The upshot of the matter was that he took Reynolds out with him as clerk, and saved his life, as the latter was going down hill very rapidly. Reynolds, in turn, secured the detail of a comrade of the Sixty-Eighth who was failing fast, and succeeded in saving his life—all of which happy results were directly attributable to that insignificant boyish society, and its equally unimportant badge of membership.

Along in the last of August the Rebels learned that there were between two and three hundred Captains and Lieutenants in the Stockade, passing themselves off as enlisted men. The motive of these officers was two-fold: first, a chivalrous wish to share the fortunes and fate of their boys, and second, disinclination to gratify the Rebels by the knowledge of the rank of their captives. The secret was so well kept that none of us suspected it until the fact was announced by the Rebels themselves. They were taken out immediately, and sent to Macon, where the commissioned officers' prison was. It would not do to trust such possible leaders with us another day.

CHAPTER L.

Food—the meagerness, inferior quality, and terrible sameness —Rebel testimony on the subject—futility of successful explanation.

Page 34

I have in other places dwelt upon the insufficiency and the nauseousness of the food. No words that I can use, no insistence upon this theme, can give the reader any idea of its mortal importance to us.

Let the reader consider for a moment the quantity, quality, and variety of food that he now holds to be necessary for the maintenance of life and health. I trust that every one who peruses this book—that every one in fact over whom the Stars and Stripes wave—has his cup of coffee, his biscuits and his beefsteak for breakfast—a substantial dinner of roast or boiled—and a lighter, but still sufficient meal in the evening. In all, certainly not less than fifty different articles are set before him during the day, for his choice as elements of nourishment. Let him scan this extended bill-of-fare, which long custom has made so common-place as to be uninteresting—perhaps even wearisome to think about—and see what he could omit from it, if necessity compelled him. After a reluctant farewell to fish, butter, eggs, milk, sugar, green and preserved fruits, *etc.*, he thinks that perhaps under extraordinary circumstances he might be able to merely sustain life for a limited period on a diet of bread and meat three times a day, washed down with creamless, unsweetened coffee, and varied occasionally with additions of potatoes, onions, beans, *etc.* It would astonish the Innocent to have one of our veterans inform him that this was not even the first stage of destitution; that a soldier who had these was expected to be on the summit level of contentment. Any of the boys who followed Grant to Appomattox Court House, Sherman to the Sea, or “Pap” Thomas till his glorious career culminated with the annihilation of Hood, will tell him of many weeks when a slice of fat pork on a piece of “hard tack” had to do duty for the breakfast of beefsteak and biscuits; when another slice of fat pork and another cracker served for the dinner of roast beef and vegetables, and a third cracker and slice of pork was a substitute for the supper of toast and chops.

I say to these veterans in turn that they did not arrive at the first stages of destitution compared with the depths to which we were dragged. The restriction for a few weeks to a diet of crackers and fat pork was certainly a hardship, but the crackers alone, chemists tell us, contain all the elements necessary to support life, and in our Army they were always well made and very palatable. I believe I risk nothing in saying that one of the ordinary square crackers of our Commissary Department contained much more real nutriment than the whole of our average ration.

I have before compared the size, shape and appearance of the daily half loaf of corn bread issued to us to a half-brick, and I do not yet know of a more fitting comparison. At first we got a small piece of rusty bacon along with this; but the size of this diminished steadily until at last it faded away entirely, and during the last six months of our imprisonment I do not believe that we received rations of meat above a half-dozen times.

Page 35

To this smallness was added ineffable badness. The meal was ground very coarsely, by dull, weakly propelled stones, that imperfectly crushed the grains, and left the tough, hard coating of the kernels in large, sharp, mica-like scales, which cut and inflamed the stomach and intestines, like handfuls of pounded glass. The alimentary canals of all compelled to eat it were kept in a continual state of irritation that usually terminated in incurable dysentery.

That I have not over-stated this evil can be seen by reference to the testimony of so competent a scientific observer as Professor Jones, and I add to that unimpeachable testimony the following extract from the statement made in an attempted defense of Andersonville by Doctor R. Randolph Stevenson, who styles himself, formerly Surgeon in the Army of the Confederate States of America, Chief Surgeon of the Confederate States Military Prison Hospitals, Andersonville, Ga.:

V. From the sameness of the food, and from 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 fibrinous element was deficient. In cases of ulceration of the mucous membrane of the intestinal canal, the fibrinous element of the blood appeared to be increased; while in simple diarrhea, uncomplicated with ulceration, and dependent upon the character of the food and the existence of scurvy, it was either diminished or remained stationary. Heart-clots were very common, if not universally present, in the 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 fibrinous concretions were almost universally absent. From the watery condition of the blood there resulted various serous effusions into the pericardium, into the ventricles of the brain, and into the abdominal cavity.

In almost all cases which I examined after death, even in 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 firm coagula were universally present. The presence of these clots in the cases of hospital gangrene, whilst they were absent in the cases in which there were no inflammatory symptoms, appears to sustain the conclusion that hospital gangrene is a species of inflammation (imperfect and irregular though it may be in its progress), in which the fibrinous element and coagulability 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 fibrinous constituent.

Page 36

VI. The impoverished condition of the blood, which led to serous effusions within the ventricles of the brain, and around the brain and spinal cord, and into the pericardial and abdominal cavities, was gradually induced by the action of several causes, but chiefly by the character of the food.

The Federal prisoners, as a general rule, had been reared upon wheat bread and Irish potatos; and the Indian corn so extensively used at the South, was almost unknown to them as an article of diet previous to their capture. Owing to the impossibility of obtaining the necessary sieves in the Confederacy for the separation of the husk from the corn-meal, the rations of the Confederate soldiers, as well as of the Federal prisoners, consisted of unbolted corn-flour, and meal and grist; this circumstance rendered the corn-bread still more disagreeable and distasteful to the Federal prisoners. While Indian meal, even when prepared with the husk, is one of the most wholesome and nutritious forms of food, as has been already shown by the health and rapid increase of the Southern population, and especially of the negros, previous to the present war, and by the strength, endurance and activity of the Confederate soldiers, who were throughout the war confined to a great extent to unbolted corn-meal; it is nevertheless true that those who have not been reared upon corn-meal, or who have not accustomed themselves to its use gradually, become excessively tired of this kind of diet when suddenly confined to it without a due proportion of wheat bread. Large numbers of the Federal prisoners appeared to be utterly disgusted with Indian corn, and immense piles of corn-bread could be seen in the Stockade and Hospital inclosures. Those who were so disgusted with this form of food that they had no appetite to partake of it, except in quantities insufficient to supply the waste of the tissues, were, of course, in the condition of men slowly starving, notwithstanding that the only farinaceous form of food which the Confederate States produced in sufficient abundance for the maintenance of armies was not withheld from them. In such cases, an urgent feeling of hunger was not a prominent symptom; and even when it existed at first, it soon disappeared, and was succeeded by an actual loathing of food. In this state the muscular strength was rapidly diminished, the tissues wasted, and the thin, skeleton-like forms moved about with the appearance of utter exhaustion and dejection. The mental condition connected with long confinement, with the most miserable surroundings, and with no hope for the future, also depressed all the nervous and vital actions, and was especially active in destroying the appetite. The effects of mental depression, and of defective nutrition, were manifested not only in the slow, feeble motions of the wasted, skeleton-like forms, but also in such lethargy, listlessness, and torpor of the mental faculties as rendered these unfortunate men oblivious and indifferent

Page 37

to their afflicted condition. In many cases, even of the greatest apparent suffering and distress, instead of showing any anxiety to communicate the causes of their distress, or to relate their privations, and their longings for their homes and their friends and relatives, they lay in a listless, lethargic, uncomplaining state, taking no notice either of their own distressed condition, or of the gigantic mass of human misery by which they were surrounded. Nothing appalled and depressed me so much as this silent, uncomplaining misery. It is a fact of great interest, that notwithstanding this defective nutrition in men subjected to crowding and filth, contagious fevers were rare; and typhus fever, which is supposed to be generated in just such a state of things as existed at Andersonville, was unknown. These facts, established by my investigations, stand in striking contrast with such a statement as the following by a recent English writer:

“A deficiency of food, especially of the nitrogenous part, quickly leads to the breaking up of the animal frame. Plague, pestilence and famine are associated with each other in the public mind, and the records of every country show how closely they are related. The medical history of Ireland is remarkable for the illustrations of how much mischief may be occasioned by a general deficiency of food. Always the habitat of fever, it every now and then becomes the very hot-bed of its propagation and development. Let there be but a small failure in the usual imperfect supply of food, and the lurking seeds of pestilence are ready to burst into frightful activity. The famine of the present century is but too forcible and illustrative of this. It fostered epidemics which have not been witnessed in this generation, and gave rise to scenes of devastation and misery which are not surpassed by the most appalling epidemics of the Middle Ages. The principal form of the scourge was known as the contagious famine fever (typhus), and it spread, not merely from end to end of the country in which it had originated, but, breaking through all boundaries, it crossed the broad ocean, and made itself painfully manifest in localities where it was previously unknown. Thousands fell under the virulence of its action, for wherever it came it struck down a seventh of the people, and of those whom it attacked, one out of nine perished. Even those who escaped the fatal influence of it, were left the miserable victims of scurvy and low fever.”

While we readily admit that famine induces that state of the system which is the most susceptible to the action of fever poisons, and thus induces the state of the entire population which is most favorable for the rapid and destructive spread of all contagious fevers, at the same time we are forced by the facts established by the present war, as well as by a host of others, both old and new, to admit that we are still ignorant of the causes necessary for the origin of

Page 38

typhus fever. Added to the imperfect nature of the rations issued to the Federal prisoners, the difficulties of their situation were at times greatly increased by the sudden and desolating Federal raids in Virginia, Georgia, and other States, which necessitated the sudden transportation from Richmond and other points threatened of large bodies of prisoners, without the possibility of much previous preparation; and not only did these men suffer in transition upon the dilapidated and overburdened line of railroad communication, but after arriving at Andersonville, the rations were frequently insufficient to supply the sudden addition of several thousand men. And as the Confederacy became more and more pressed, and when powerful hostile armies were plunging through her bosom, the Federal prisoners of Andersonville suffered incredibly during the hasty removal to Millen, Savannah, Charleston, and other points, supposed at the time to be secure from the enemy. Each one of these causes must be weighed when an attempt is made to estimate the unusual mortality among these prisoners of war.

VII. Scurvy, arising from sameness of food and imperfect nutrition, caused, either directly or indirectly, nine-tenths of the deaths among the Federal prisoners at Andersonville.

Not only were the deaths referred to unknown causes, to apoplexy, to anasarca, and to debility, traceable to scurvy and its effects; and not only was the mortality in small-pox, pneumonia, and typhoid fever, and in all acute diseases, more than doubled by the scorbutic taint, but even those all but universal and deadly bowel affections arose from the same causes, and derived their fatal character from the same conditions which produced the scurvy. In truth, these men at Andersonville were in the condition of a crew at sea, confined in a foul ship upon salt meat and unvarying food, and without fresh vegetables. Not only so, but these unfortunate prisoners were men forcibly confined and crowded upon a ship tossed about on a stormy ocean, without a rudder, without a compass, without a guiding-star, and without any apparent boundary or to their voyage; and they reflected in their steadily increasing miseries the distressed condition and waning fortunes of devastated and bleeding country, which was compelled, in justice to her own unfortunate sons, to hold these men in the most distressing captivity.

I saw nothing in the scurvy which prevailed so universally at Andersonville, at all different from this disease as described by various standard writers. The mortality was no greater than that which has afflicted a hundred ships upon long voyages, and it did not exceed the mortality which has, upon me than one occasion, and in a much shorter period of time, annihilated large armies and desolated beleaguered cities. The general results of my investigations upon the chronic diarrhea and dysentery of the Federal prisoners of Andersonville were similar to those of the English surgeons during the war against Russia.

Page 39

IX. Drugs exercised but little influence over the progress and fatal termination of chronic diarrhea and dysentery in the Military Prison and Hospital at Andersonville, chiefly because the proper form of nourishment (milk, rice, vegetables, anti-scorbutics, and nourishing animal and vegetable soups) was not issued, and could not be procured in sufficient quantities for the sick prisoners.

Opium allayed pain and checked the bowels temporarily, but the frail dam was soon swept away, and the patient appears to be but little better, if not the worse, for this merely palliative treatment. The root of the difficulty could not be reached by drugs; nothing short of the wanting elements of nutrition would have tended in any manner to restore the tone of the digestive system, and of all the wasted and degenerated organs and tissues. My opinion to this effect was expressed most decidedly to the medical officers in charge of these unfortunate men. The correctness of this view was sustained by the healthy and robust condition of the paroled prisoners, who received an extra ration, and who were able to make considerable sums by trading, and who supplied themselves with a liberal and varied diet.

X. 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 gangrene among these prisoners appeared clearly to depend in great measure upon the state of the general system, induced by diet, exposure, neglect of personal cleanliness; and by 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 this form of gangrene, 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 Prison Hospital; and in the depressed, depraved condition of the system of these Federal prisoners, death ensued very rapidly after the gangrenous state of the intestines was established.

XI. A scorbutic condition of the system appeared to favor the origin of foul ulcers, which frequently took on true hospital gangrene.

Page 40

Scurvy and 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. . . Scurvy consists not only in an alteration in the constitution of the blood, which leads to passive hemorrhages from the bowels, and the effusion into the various tissues of a deeply-colored fibrinous exudation; but, as we have conclusively shown by postmortem examination, this state is attended with consistence of the muscles of the heart, and the mucous membrane of the alimentary canal, and of solid parts generally. We have, according to the extent of the deficiency of certain articles of food, every degree of scorbutic derangement, from the most fearful depravation of the blood and the perversion of every function subserved by the blood to those slight derangements which are scarcely distinguishable from a state of health. We are as yet ignorant of the true nature of the changes of the blood and tissues in scurvy, and wide field for investigation is open for the determination the characteristic changes—physical, chemical, and physiological—of the blood and tissues, and of the secretions and excretions of scurvy. Such inquiries would be of great value in their bearing upon the origin of hospital gangrene. Up to the present war, the results of chemical investigations upon the pathology of the blood in scurvy were not only contradictory, but meager, and wanting in that careful detail of the cases from which the blood was abstracted which would enable us to explain the cause of the apparent discrepancies in different analyses. Thus it is not yet settled whether the fibrin is increased or diminished in this disease; and the differences which exist in the statements of different writers appear to be referable to the neglect of a critical examination and record of all the symptoms of the cases from which the blood was abstracted. The true nature of the changes of the blood in scurvy can be established only by numerous analyses during different stages of the disease, and followed up by carefully performed and recorded postmortem examinations. With such data we could settle such important questions as whether the increase of fibrin in scurvy was invariably dependent upon some local inflammation.

XII. Gangrenous spots, followed by rapid destruction of tissue, appeared in some cases in which there had been no previous or existing wound or abrasion; and without such well established facts, it might be assumed that the disease was propagated from one patient to another in every case, either by exhalations from the gangrenous surface or by direct contact.

Page 41

In such a filthy and crowded hospital as that of the Confederate, States Military Prison of Camp Sumter, 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 description; the filthy, imperfectly washed, and scanty rags; the limited number of sponges and wash-bowls (the same wash-bowl and sponge serving for a score or more of patients), were one and all sources of such constant circulation of the gangrenous matter, that the disease might rapidly be propagated from a single gangrenous wound. While the fact already considered, 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 hospital gangrene upon the surface, demonstrates the dependence of the disease upon the state of the constitution, and proves in a clear manner that neither the contact of the poisonous matter of gangrene, nor the direct action of the poisoned atmosphere upon the ulcerated surface, is necessary to the development of the disease; on the other hand, it is equally well-established that the disease may be communicated by the various ways just mentioned. It is impossible to determine the length of time which rags and clothing saturated with gangrenous matter will retain the power of reproducing the disease when applied to healthy wounds. Professor Brugmans, as quoted by Guthrie in his commentaries on the surgery of the war in Portugal, Spain, France, and the Netherlands, says that in 1797, in Holland, 'charpie,' composed of linen threads cut of different lengths, which, on inquiry, it was found had been already used in the great hospitals in France, and had been subsequently washed and bleached, caused every ulcer to which it was applied to be affected by hospital gangrene. Guthrie affirms in the same work, that the fact that this disease was readily communicated by the application of instruments, lint, or bandages which had been in contact with infected parts, was too firmly established by the experience of every one in Portugal and Spain to be a matter of doubt. There are facts to show that flies may be the means of communicating malignant pustules. Dr. Wagner, who has related several cases of malignant pustule produced in man and beasts, both by contact and by eating the flesh of diseased animals, which happened in the village of Striessa in Saxony, in 1834, gives two very remarkable cases which occurred eight days after any beast had been affected with the disease. Both were women, one of twenty-six and the other of fifty years, and in them the pustules were well marked, and the general symptoms similar to the other cases. The latter patient said she had been bitten by a fly upon the back and the neck, at which part the carbuncle appeared; and the former, that she had also been bitten upon the right upper arm by a gnat. Upon inquiry, Wagner found that the skin of one of the infected beasts had been hung on a neighboring wall, and thought it very possible that the insects might have been attracted to them by the smell, and had thence conveyed the poison.

Page 42

[End of Dr. Stevenson's Statement]

.....

The old adage says that "Hunger is the best sauce for poor food," but hunger failed to render this detestable stuff palatable, and it became so loathsome that very many actually starved to death because unable to force their organs of deglutition to receive the nauseous dose and pass it to the stomach. I was always much healthier than the average of the boys, and my appetite consequently much better, yet for the last month that I was in Andersonville, it required all my determination to crowd the bread down my throat, and, as I have stated before, I could only do this by breaking off small bits at a time, and forcing each down as I would a pill.

A large part of this repulsiveness was due to the coarseness and foulness of the meal, the wretched cooking, and the lack of salt, but there was a still more potent reason than all these. Nature does not intend that man shall live by bread alone, nor by any one kind of food. She indicates this by the varying tastes and longings that she gives him. If his body needs one kind of constituents, his tastes lead him to desire the food that is richest in those constituents. When he has taken as much as his system requires, the sense of satiety supervenes, and he "becomes tired" of that particular food. If tastes are not perverted, but allowed a free but temperate exercise, they are the surest indicators of the way to preserve health and strength by a judicious selection of alimentation.

In this case Nature was protesting by a rebellion of the tastes against any further use of that species of food. She was saying, as plainly as she ever spoke, that death could only be averted by a change of diet, which would supply our bodies with the constituents they so sadly needed, and which could not be supplied by corn meal.

How needless was this confinement of our rations to corn meal, and especially to such wretchedly prepared meal, is conclusively shown by the Rebel testimony heretofore given. It would have been very little extra trouble to the Rebels to have had our meal sifted; we would gladly have done it ourselves if allowed the utensils and opportunity. It would have been as little trouble to have varied our rations with green corn and sweet potatoes, of which the country was then full.

A few wagon loads of roasting ears and sweet potatoes would have banished every trace of scurvy from the camp, healed up the wasting dysentery, and saved thousands of lives. Any day that the Rebels had chosen they could have gotten a thousand volunteers who would have given their solemn parole not to escape, and gone any distance into the country, to gather the potatoes and corn, and such other vegetables as were readily obtainable, and bring, them into the camp.

Whatever else may be said in defense of the Southern management of military prisons, the permitting seven thousand men to die of the scurvy in the Summer time, in the midst of an agricultural region, filled with all manner of green vegetation, must forever remain impossible of explanation.

Page 43

CHAPTER LI.

Solicitude as to the fate of Atlanta and Sherman's army—paucity of news—how we heard that Atlanta had fallen—announcement of A general exchange—we leave Andersonville.

We again began to be exceedingly solicitous over the fate of Atlanta and Sherman's Army: we had heard but little directly from that front for several weeks. Few prisoners had come in since those captured in the bloody engagements of the 20th, 22d, and 28th of July. In spite of their confident tones, and our own sanguine hopes, the outlook admitted of very grave doubts. The battles of the last week of July had been looked at it in the best light possible—indecisive. Our men had held their own, it is true, but an invading army can not afford to simply hold its own. Anything short of an absolute success is to it disguised defeat. Then we knew that the cavalry column sent out under Stoneman had been so badly handled by that inefficient commander that it had failed ridiculously in its object, being beaten in detail, and suffering the loss of its commander and a considerable portion of its numbers. This had been followed by a defeat of our infantry at Etowah Creek, and then came a long interval in which we received no news save what the Rebel papers contained, and they pretended no doubt that Sherman's failure was already demonstrated. Next came well-authenticated news that Sherman had raised the siege and fallen back to the Chattahoochee, and we felt something of the bitterness of despair. For days thereafter we heard nothing, though the hot, close Summer air seemed surcharged with the premonitions of a war storm about to burst, even as nature heralds in the same way a concentration of the mighty force of the elements for the grand crash of the thunderstorm. We waited in tense expectancy for the decision of the fates whether final victory or defeat should end the long and arduous campaign.

At night the guards in the perches around the Stockade called out every half hour, so as to show the officers that they were awake and attending to their duty. The formula for this ran thus:

"Post numbah 1; half-past eight o'clock, and a-I-I 's w-e-I-I!"

Post No. 2 repeated this cry, and so it went around.

One evening when our anxiety as to Atlanta was wrought to the highest pitch, one of the guards sang out:

"Post numbah foah—half past eight o'clock—and Atlanta's—gone—t-o —hell"

The heart of every man within hearing leaped to his mouth. We looked toward each other, almost speechless with glad surprise, and then gasped out:

“Did ‘you hear *that*?”

The next instant such a ringing cheer burst out as wells spontaneously from the throats and hearts of men, in the first ecstatic moments of victory—a cheer to which our saddened hearts and enfeebled lungs had long been strangers. It was the genuine, honest, manly Northern cheer, as different from the shrill Rebel yell as the honest mastiff’s deep-voiced welcome is from the howl of the prowling wolf.

Page 44

The shout was taken up all over the prison. Even those who had not heard the guard understood that it meant that “Atlanta was ours and fairly won,” and they took up the acclamation with as much enthusiasm as we had begun it. All thoughts of sleep were put to flight: we would have a season of rejoicing. Little knots gathered together, debated the news, and indulged in the most sanguine hopes as to the effect upon the Rebels. In some parts of the Stockade stump speeches were made. I believe that Boston Corbett and his party organized a prayer and praise meeting. In our corner we stirred up our tuneful friend “Nosey,” who sang again the grand old patriotic hymns that set our thin blood to bounding, and made us remember that we were still Union soldiers, with higher hopes than that of starving and dying in Andersonville. He sang the ever-glorious Star Spangled Banner, as he used to sing it around the camp fire in happier days, when we were in the field. He sang the rousing “Rally Round the Flag,” with its wealth of patriotic fire and martial vigor, and we, with throats hoarse from shouting; joined in the chorus until the welkin rang again.

The Rebels became excited, lest our exaltation of spirits would lead to an assault upon the Stockade. They got under arms, and remained so until the enthusiasm became less demonstrative.

A few days later—on the evening of the 6th of September—the Rebel Sergeants who called the roll entered the Stockade, and each assembling his squads, addressed them as follows:

“Prisoners: I am instructed by General Winder to inform you that a general exchange has been agreed upon. Twenty thousand men will be exchanged immediately at Savannah, where your vessels are now waiting for you. Detachments from One to Ten will prepare to leave early to-morrow morning.”

The excitement that this news produced was simply indescribable. I have seen men in every possible exigency that can confront men, and a large proportion viewed that which impended over them with at least outward composure. The boys around me had endured all that we suffered with stoical firmness. Groans from pain-racked bodies could not be repressed, and bitter curses and maledictions against the Rebels leaped unbidden to the lips at the slightest occasion, but there was no murmuring or whining. There was not a day—hardly an hour—in which one did not see such exhibitions of manly fortitude as made him proud of belonging to a race of which every individual was a hero.

But the emotion which pain and suffering and danger could not develop, joy could, and boys sang, and shouted and cried, and danced as if in a delirium. “God’s country,” fairer than the sweet promised land of Canaan appeared to the rapt vision of the Hebrew poet prophet, spread out in glad vista before the mind’s eye of every one. It had come—at last it had come that which we had so longed for, wished for, prayed for, dreamed of; schemed, planned, toiled for, and for which went up the last earnest, dying wish of the

thousands of our comrades who would now know no exchange save into that eternal
“God’s country” where

Page 45

Sickness and sorrow, pain and death
Are felt and feared no more.

Our “preparations,” for leaving were few and simple. When the morning came, and shortly after the order to move, Andrews and I picked our well-worn blanket, our tattered overcoat, our rude chessmen, and no less rude board, our little black can, and the spoon made of hoop-iron, and bade farewell to the hole-in-the-ground that had been our home for nearly seven long months.

My feet were still in miserable condition from the lacerations received in the attempt to escape, but I took one of our tent poles as a staff and hobbled away. We re-passed the gates which we had entered on that February night, ages since, it seemed, and crawled slowly over to the depot.

I had come to regard the Rebels around us as such measureless liars that my first impulse was to believe the reverse of anything they said to us; and even now, while I hoped for the best, my old habit of mind was so strongly upon me that I had some doubts of our going to be exchanged, simply because it was a Rebel who had said so. But in the crowd of Rebels who stood close to the road upon which we were walking was a young Second Lieutenant, who said to a Colonel as I passed:

“Weil, those fellows can sing ‘Homeward Bound,’ can’t they?”

This set my last misgiving at rest. Now I was certain that we were going to be exchanged, and my spirits soared to the skies.

Entering the cars we thumped and pounded toilsomely along, after the manner of Southern railroads, at the rate of six or eight miles an hour. Savannah was two hundred and forty miles away, and to our impatient minds it seemed as if we would never get there. The route lay the whole distance through the cheerless pine barrens which cover the greater part of Georgia. The only considerable town on the way was Macon, which had then a population of five thousand or thereabouts. For scores of miles there would not be a sign of a human habitation, and in the one hundred and eighty miles between Macon and Savannah there were only three insignificant villages. There was a station every ten miles, at which the only building was an open shed, to shelter from sun and rain a casual passenger, or a bit of goods.

The occasional specimens of the poor white “cracker” population that we saw, seemed indigenous products of the starved soil. They suited their poverty-stricken surroundings as well as the gnarled and scrubby vegetation suited the sterile sand. Thin-chested, round-shouldered, scraggy-bearded, dull-eyed and open-mouthed, they all looked alike—all looked as ignorant, as stupid, and as lazy as they were poor and weak. They were “low-downers” in every respect, and made our rough and simple minded East Tennesseans look like models of elegant and cultured gentlemen in contrast.

We looked on the poverty-stricken land with good-natured contempt, for we thought we were leaving it forever, and would soon be in one which, compared to it, was as the fatness at Egypt to the leanness of the desert of Sinai.

Page 46

The second day after leaving Andersonville our train struggled across the swamps into Savannah, and rolled slowly down the live oak shaded streets into the center of the City. It seemed like another Deserted Village, so vacant and noiseless the streets, and the buildings everywhere so overgrown with luxuriant vegetation: The limbs of the shade trees crashed along and broke, upon the tops of our cars, as if no train had passed that way for years. Through the interstices between the trees and clumps of foliage could be seen the gleaming white marble of the monuments erected to Greene and Pulaski, looking like giant tombstones in a City of the Dead. The unbroken stillness—so different from what we expected on entering the metropolis of Georgia, and a City that was an important port in Revolutionary days—became absolutely oppressive. We could not understand it, but our thoughts were more intent upon the coming transfer to our flag than upon any speculation as to the cause of the remarkable somnolence of Savannah.

Finally some little boys straggled out to where our car was standing, and we opened up a conversation with them:

“Say, boys, are our vessels down in the harbor yet?”

The reply came in that piercing treble shriek in which a boy of ten or twelve makes even his most confidential communications:

“I don’t know.”

“Well,” (with our confidence in exchange somewhat dashed,) “they intend to exchange us here, don’t they?”

Another falsetto scream, “I don’t know.”

“Well,” (with something of a quaver in the questioner’s voice,) “what are they going to do, with us, any way?”

“O,” (the treble shriek became almost demoniac) “they are fixing up a place over by the old jail for you.”

What a sinking of hearts was there then! Andrews and I would not give up hope so speedily as some others did, and resolved to believe, for awhile at least, that we were going to be exchanged.

Ordered out of the cars, we were marched along the street. A crowd of small boys, full of the curiosity of the animal, gathered around us as we marched. Suddenly a door in a rather nice house opened; an angry-faced woman appeared on the steps and shouted out:

“Boys! *Boys!* What are you doin’ there! Come up on the steps immejitely! Come away from them n-a-s-t-y things!”

I will admit that we were not prepossessing in appearance; nor were we as cleanly as young gentlemen should habitually be; in fact, I may as well confess that I would not now, if I could help it, allow a tramp, as dilapidated in raiment, as unwashed, unshorn, uncombed, and populous with insects as we were, to come within several rods of me. Nevertheless, it was not pleasant to hear so accurate a description of our personal appearance sent forth on the wings of the wind by a shrill-voiced Rebel female.

A short march brought us to the place “they were fixing for us by the old jail.” It was another pen, with high walls of thick pine plank, which told us only too plainly how vain were our expectations of exchange.

Page 47

When we were turned inside, and I realized that the gates of another prison had closed upon me, hope forsook me. I flung our odious little possessions—our can, chess-board, overcoat, and blanket—upon the ground, and, sitting down beside them, gave way to the bitterest despair. I wanted to die, O, so badly. Never in all my life had I desired anything in the world so much as I did now to get out of it. Had I had pistol, knife, rope, or poison, I would have ended my prison life then and there, and departed with the unceremoniousness of a French leave. I remembered that I could get a quietus from a guard with very little trouble, but I would not give one of the bitterly hated Rebels the triumph of shooting me. I longed to be another Samson, with the whole Southern Confederacy gathered in another Temple of Dagon, that I might pull down the supporting pillars, and die happy in slaying thousands of my enemies.

While I was thus sinking deeper and deeper in the Slough of Despond, the firing of a musket, and the shriek of the man who was struck, attracted my attention. Looking towards the opposite end of the pen I saw a guard bringing his still smoking musket to a “recover arms,” and, not fifteen feet from him, a prisoner lying on the ground in the agonies of death. The latter had a pipe in his mouth when he was shot, and his teeth still clenched its stem. His legs and arms were drawn up convulsively, and he was rocking backward and forward on his back. The charge had struck him just above the hip-bone.

The Rebel officer in command of the guard was sitting on his horse inside the pen at the time, and rode forward to see what the matter was. Lieutenant Davis, who had come with us from Andersonville, was also sitting on a horse inside the prison, and he called out in his usual harsh, disagreeable voice:

“That’s all right, Cunnel; the man’s done just as I awdahed him to.”

I found that lying around inside were a number of bits of plank—each about five feet long, which had been sawed off by the carpenters engaged in building the prison. The ground being a bare common, was destitute of all shelter, and the pieces looked as if they would be quite useful in building a tent. There may have been an order issued forbidding the prisoners to touch them, but if so, I had not heard it, and I imagine the first intimation to the prisoner just killed that the boards were not to be taken was the bullet which penetrated his vitals. Twenty-five cents would be a liberal appraisal of the value of the lumber for which the boy lost his life.

Half an hour afterward we thought we saw all the guards march out of the front gate. There was still another pile of these same kind of pieces of board lying at the further side of the prison. The crowd around me noticed it, and we all made a rush for it. In spite of my lame feet I outstripped the rest, and was just in the act of stooping down to pick the boards up when a loud yell from those

Page 48

behind startled me. Glancing to my left I saw a guard cocking his gun and bringing it up to shoot me. With one frightened spring, as quick as a flash, and before he could cover me, I landed fully a rod back in the crowd, and mixed with it. The fellow tried hard to draw a bead on me, but I was too quick for him, and he finally lowered his gun with an oath expressive of disappointment in not being able to kill a Yankee.

Walking back to my place the full ludicrousness of the thing dawned upon me so forcibly that I forgot all about my excitement and scare, and laughed aloud. Here, not an hour ago I was murmuring because I could find no way to die; I sighed for death as a bridegroom for the coming of his bride, and yet, when a Rebel had pointed his gun at me, it had nearly scared me out of a year's growth, and made me jump farther than I could possibly do when my feet were well, and I was in good condition otherwise.

CHAPTER LII.

Savannah—devices to obtain materials for A tent—their ultimate success—resumption of tunneling—escaping by wholesale and being recaptured en Masse—the obstacles that lay between us and our lines.

Andrews and I did not let the fate of the boy who was killed, nor my own narrow escape from losing the top of my head, deter us from farther efforts to secure possession of those coveted boards. My readers remember the story of the boy who, digging vigorously at a hole, replied to the remark of a passing traveler that there was probably no ground-hog there, and, even if there was, "ground-hog was mighty poor eatin', any way," with:

"Mister, there's got to be a ground-hog there; our family's out o' meat!"

That was what actuated us: we were out of material for a tent. Our solitary blanket had rotted and worn full of holes by its long double duty, as bed-clothes and tent at Andersonville, and there was an imperative call for a substitute.

Andrews and I flattered ourselves that when we matched our collective or individual wits against those of a Johnny his defeat was pretty certain, and with this cheerful estimate of our own powers to animate us, we set to work to steal the boards from under the guard's nose. The Johnny had malice in his heart and buck-and-ball in his musket, but his eyes were not sufficiently numerous to adequately discharge all the duties laid upon him. He had too many different things to watch at the same time. I would approach a gap in the fence not yet closed as if I intended making a dash through it for liberty, and when the Johnny had concentrated all his attention on letting me have the contents of his gun just as soon as he could have a reasonable excuse for doing

Page 49

so, Andrews would pick u a couple of boards and slip away with them. Then I would fall back in pretended (and some real) alarm, and—Andrew would come up and draw his attention by a similar feint, while I made off with a couple more pieces. After a few hours c this strategy, we found ourselves the possessors of some dozen planks, with which we made a lean-to, that formed a tolerable shelter for our heads and the upper portion of our bodies. As the boards were not over five feet long, and the slope reduce the sheltered space to about four-and-one-half feet, it left the lower part of our naked feet and legs to project out-of-doors. Andrews used to lament very touchingly the sunburning his toe-nails were receiving. He knew that his complexion was being ruined for life, and all the Balm of a Thousand Flowers in the world would not restore his comely ankles to that condition of pristine loveliness which would admit of their introduction into good society again. Another defect was that, like the fun in a practical joke, it was all on one side; there was not enough of it to go clear round. It was very unpleasant, when a storm came up in a direction different from that we had calculated upon, to be compelled to get out in the midst of it, and build our house over to face the other way.

Still we had a tent, and were that much better off than three-fourths of our comrades who had no shelter at all. We were owners of a brown stone front on Fifth Avenue compared to the other fellows.

Our tent erected, we began a general survey of our new abiding place. The ground was a sandy common in the outskirts of Savannah. The sand was covered with a light sod. The Rebels, who knew nothing of our burrowing propensities, had neglected to make the plank forming the walls of the Prison project any distance below the surface of the ground, and had put up no Dead Line around the inside; so that it looked as if everything was arranged expressly to invite us to tunnel out. We were not the boys to neglect such an invitation. By night about three thousand had been received from Andersonville, and placed inside. When morning came it looked as if a colony of gigantic rats had been at work. There was a tunnel every ten or fifteen feet, and at least twelve hundred of us had gone out through them during the night. I never understood why all in the pen did not follow our example, and leave the guards watching a forsaken Prison. There was nothing to prevent it. An hour's industrious work with a half-canteen would take any one outside, or if a boy was too lazy to dig his own tunnel, he could have the use of one of the hundred others that had been dug.

Page 50

But escaping was only begun when the Stockade was passed. The site of Savannah is virtually an island. On the north is the Savannah River; to the east, southeast and south, are the two Ogeechee rivers, and a chain of sounds and lagoons connecting with the Atlantic Ocean. To the west is a canal connecting the Savannah and Big Ogeechee Rivers. We found ourselves headed off by water whichever way we went. All the bridges were guarded, and all the boats destroyed. Early in the morning the Rebels discovered our absence, and the whole garrison of Savannah was sent out on patrol after us. They picked up the boys in squads of from ten to thirty, lurking around the shores of the streams waiting for night to come, to get across, or engaged in building rafts for transportation. By evening the whole mob of us were back in the pen again. As nobody was punished for running away, we treated the whole affair as a lark, and those brought back first stood around the gate and yelled derisively as the others came in.

That night big fires were built all around the Stockade, and a line of guards placed on the ground inside of these. In spite of this precaution, quite a number escaped. The next day a Dead Line was put up inside of the Prison, twenty feet from the Stockade. This only increased the labor of burrowing, by making us go farther. Instead of being able to tunnel out in an hour, it now took three or four hours. That night several hundred of us, rested from our previous performance, and hopeful of better luck, brought our faithful half canteens—now scoured very bright by constant use—into requisition again, and before the morning dawned we had gained the high reeds of the swamps, where we lay concealed until night.

In this way we managed to evade the recapture that came to most of those who went out, but it was a fearful experience. Having been raised in a country where venomous snakes abounded, I had that fear and horror of them that inhabitants of those districts feel, and of which people living in sections free from such a scourge know little. I fancied that the Southern swamps were filled with all forms of loathsome and poisonous reptiles, and it required all my courage to venture into them barefooted. Besides, the snags and roots hurt our feet fearfully. Our hope was to find a boat somewhere, in which we could float out to sea, and trust to being picked up by some of the blockading fleet. But no boat could we find, with all our painful and diligent search. We learned afterward that the Rebels made a practice of breaking up all the boats along the shore to prevent negroes and their own deserters from escaping to the blockading fleet. We thought of making a raft of logs, but had we had the strength to do this, we would doubtless have thought it too risky, since we dreaded missing the vessels, and being carried out to sea to perish of hunger. During the night we came to the railroad bridge across the Ogeechee.

Page 51

We had some slender hope that, if we could reach this we might perhaps get across the river, and find better opportunities for escape. But these last expectations were blasted by the discovery that it was guarded. There was a post and a fire on the shore next us, and a single guard with a lantern was stationed on one of the middle spans. Almost famished with hunger, and so weary and footsore that we could scarcely move another step, we went back to a cleared place on the high ground, and laid down to sleep, entirely reckless as to what became of us. Late in the morning we were awakened by the Rebel patrol and taken back to the prison. Lieutenant Davis, disgusted with the perpetual attempts to escape, moved the Dead Line out forty feet from the Stockade; but this restricted our room greatly, since the number of prisoners in the pen had now risen to about six thousand, and, besides, it offered little additional protection against tunneling.

It was not much more difficult to dig fifty feet than it had been to dig thirty feet. Davis soon realized this, and put the Dead Line back to twenty feet. His next device was a much more sensible one. A crowd of one hundred and fifty negroes dug a trench twenty feet wide and five feet deep around the whole prison on the outside, and this ditch was filled with water from the City Water Works. No one could cross this without attracting the attention of the guards.

Still we were not discouraged, and Andrews and I joined a crowd that was constructing a large tunnel from near our quarters on the east side of the pen. We finished the burrow to within a few inches of the edge of the ditch, and then ceased operations, to await some stormy night, when we could hope to get across the ditch unnoticed.

Orders were issued to guards to fire without warning on men who were observed to be digging or carrying out dirt after nightfall. They occasionally did so, but the risk did not keep anyone from tunneling. Our tunnel ran directly under a sentry box. When carrying dirt away the bearer of the bucket had to turn his back on the guard and walk directly down the street in front of him, two hundred or three hundred feet, to the center of the camp, where he scattered the sand around—so as to give no indication of where it came from. Though we always waited till the moon went down, it seemed as if, unless the guard were a fool, both by nature and training, he could not help taking notice of what was going on under his eyes. I do not recall any more nervous promenades in my life, than those when, taking my turn, I received my bucket of sand at the mouth of the tunnel, and walked slowly away with it. The most disagreeable part was in turning my back to the guard. Could I have faced him, I had sufficient confidence in my quickness of perception, and talents as a dodger, to imagine that I could make it difficult for him to hit me. But in walling with my back to him I was wholly at his mercy. Fortune, however, favored us, and we were allowed to go on with our work—night after night—without a shot.

Page 52

In the meanwhile another happy thought slowly gestated in Davis's alleged intellect. How he came to give birth to two ideas with no more than a week between them, puzzled all who knew him, and still more that he survived this extraordinary strain upon the gray matter of the cerebrum. His new idea was to have driven a heavily-laden mule cart around the inside of the Dead Line at least once a day. The wheels or the mule's feet broke through the thin sod covering the tunnels and exposed them. Our tunnel went with the rest, and those of our crowd who wore shoes had humiliation added to sorrow by being compelled to go in and spade the hole full of dirt. This put an end to subterranean engineering.

One day one of the boys watched his opportunity, got under the ration wagon, and clinging close to the coupling pole with hands and feet, was carried outside. He was detected, however, as he came from under the wagon, and brought back.

CHAPTER LIII.

Frank REVERSTOCK'S attempt at escape—passing off as Rebel boy he reaches Griswoldville by Rail, and then strikes across the country for Sherman, but is caught within twenty miles of our lines.

One of the shrewdest and nearest successful attempts to escape that came under my notice was that of my friend Sergeant Frank Reverstock, of the Third West Virginia Cavalry, of whom I have before spoken. Frank, who was quite small, with a smooth boyish face, had converted to his own use a citizen's coat, belonging to a young boy, a Sutler's assistant, who had died in Andersonville. He had made himself a pair of bag pantaloons and a shirt from pieces of meal sacks which he had appropriated from day to day. He had also the Sutler's assistant's shoes, and, to crown all, he wore on his head one of those hideous looking hats of quilted calico which the Rebels had taken to wearing in the lack of felt hats, which they could neither make nor buy. Altogether Frank looked enough like a Rebel to be dangerous to trust near a country store or a stable full of horses. When we first arrived in the prison quite a crowd of the Savannahians rushed in to inspect us. The guards had some difficulty in keeping them and us separate. While perplexed with this annoyance, one of them saw Frank standing in our crowd, and, touching him with his bayonet, said, with some sharpness:

"See heah; you must stand back; you musn't crowd on them prisoners so."

Page 53

Frank stood back. He did it promptly but calmly, and then, as if his curiosity as to Yankees was fully satisfied, he walked slowly away up the street, deliberating as he went on a plan for getting out of the City. He hit upon an excellent one. Going to the engineer of a freight train making ready to start back to Macon, he told him that his father was working in the Confederate machine shops at Griswoldville, near Macon; that he himself was also one of the machinists employed there, and desired to go thither but lacked the necessary means to pay his passage. If the engineer would let him ride up on the engine he would do work enough to pay the fare. Frank told the story ingeniously, the engineer and firemen were won over, and gave their consent.

No more zealous assistant ever climbed upon a tender than Frank proved to be. He loaded wood with a nervous industry, that stood him in place of great strength. He kept the tender in perfect order, and anticipated, as far as possible, every want of the engineer and his assistant. They were delighted with him, and treated him with the greatest kindness, dividing their food with him, and insisting that he should share their bed when they "laid by" for the night. Frank would have gladly declined this latter kindness with thanks, as he was conscious that the quantity of "graybacks" his clothing contained did not make him a very desirable sleeping companion for any one, but his friends were so pressing that he was compelled to accede.

His greatest trouble was a fear of recognition by some one of the prisoners that were continually passing by the train load, on their way from Andersonville to other prisons. He was one of the best known of the prisoners in Andersonville; bright, active, always cheerful, and forever in motion during waking hours,—every one in the Prison speedily became familiar with him, and all addressed him as "Sergeant Frankie." If any one on the passing trains had caught a glimpse of him, that glimpse would have been followed almost inevitably with a shout of:

"Hello, Sergeant Frankie! What are you doing there?"

Then the whole game would have been up. Frank escaped this by persistent watchfulness, and by busying himself on the opposite side of the engine, with his back turned to the other trains.

At last when nearing Griswoldville, Frank, pointing to a large white house at some distance across the fields, said:

"Now, right over there is where my uncle lives, and I believe I'll just run over and see him, and then walk into Griswoldville."

He thanked his friends fervently for their kindness, promised to call and see them frequently, bade them good by, and jumped off the train.

He walked towards the white house as long as he thought he could be seen, and then entered a large corn field and concealed himself in a thicket in the center of it until dark, when he made his way to the neighboring woods, and began journeying northward as fast as his legs could carry him. When morning broke he had made good progress, but was terribly tired. It was not prudent to travel by daylight, so he gathered himself some ears of corn and some berries, of which he made his breakfast, and finding a suitable thicket he crawled into it, fell asleep, and did not wake up until late in the afternoon.

Page 54

After another meal of raw corn and berries he resumed his journey, and that night made still better progress.

He repeated this for several days and nights—lying in the woods in the day time, traveling by night through woods, fields, and by-paths avoiding all the fords, bridges and main roads, and living on what he could glean from the fields, that he might not take even so much risk as was involved in going to the negro cabins for food.

But there are always flaws in every man's armor of caution—even in so perfect a one as Frank's. His complete success so far had the natural effect of inducing a growing carelessness, which wrought his ruin. One evening he started off briskly, after a refreshing rest and sleep. He knew that he must be very near Sherman's lines, and hope cheered him up with the belief that his freedom would soon be won.

Descending from the hill, in whose dense brushwood he had made his bed all day, he entered a large field full of standing corn, and made his way between the rows until he reached, on the other side, the fence that separated it from the main road, across which was another corn-field, that Frank intended entering.

But he neglected his usual precautions on approaching a road, and instead of coming up cautiously and carefully reconnoitering in all directions before he left cover, he sprang boldly over the fence and strode out for the other side. As he reached the middle of the road, his ears were assailed with the sharp click of a musket being cocked, and the harsh command:

"Halt! halt, dah, I say!"

Turning with a start to his left he saw not ten feet from him, a mounted patrol, the sound of whose approach had been masked by the deep dust of the road, into which his horse's hoofs sank noiselessly.

Frank, of course, yielded without a word, and when sent to the officer in command he told the old story about his being an employee of the Griswoldville shops, off on a leave of absence to make a visit to sick relatives. But, unfortunately, his captors belonged to that section themselves, and speedily caught him in a maze of cross-questioning from which he could not extricate himself. It also became apparent from his language that he was a Yankee, and it was not far from this to the conclusion that he was a spy—a conclusion to which the proximity of Sherman's lines, then less than twenty miles distant—greatly assisted.

By the next morning this belief had become so firmly fixed in the minds of the Rebels that Frank saw a halter dangling alarmingly near, and he concluded the wisest plan was to confess who he really was.

It was not the smallest of his griefs to realize by how slight a chance he had failed. Had he looked down the road before he climbed the fence, or had he been ten minutes earlier or later, the patrol would not have been there, he could have gained the next field unperceived, and two more nights of successful progress would have taken him into Sherman's lines at Sand Mountain. The patrol which caught him was on the look-out for deserters and shirking conscripts, who had become unusually numerous since the fall of Atlanta.

Page 55

He was sent back to us at Savannah. As he came into the prison gate Lieutenant Davis was standing near. He looked sternly at Frank and his Rebel garments, and muttering,

“By God, I’ll stop this!” caught the coat by the tails, tore it to the collar, and took it and his hat away from Frank.

There was a strange sequel to this episode. A few weeks afterward a special exchange for ten thousand was made, and Frank succeeded in being included in this. He was given the usual furlough from the paroled camp at Annapolis, and went to his home in a little town near Mansfield, O.

One day while on the cars going—I think to Newark, O., he saw Lieutenant Davis on the train, in citizens’ clothes. He had been sent by the Rebel Government to Canada with dispatches relating to some of the raids then harassing our Northern borders. Davis was the last man in the world to successfully disguise himself. He had a large, coarse mouth, that made him remembered by all who had ever seen him. Frank recognized him instantly and said:

“You are Lieutenant Davis?”

Davis replied:

“You are totally mistaken, sah, I am -----”

Frank insisted that he was right. Davis fumed and blustered, but though Frank was small, he was as game as a bantam rooster, and he gave Davis to understand that there had been a vast change in their relative positions; that the one, while still the same insolent swaggerer, had not regiments of infantry or batteries of artillery to emphasize his insolence, and the other was no longer embarrassed in the discussion by the immense odds in favor of his jailor opponent.

After a stormy scene Frank called in the assistance of some other soldiers in the car, arrested Davis, and took him to Camp Chase—near Columbus, O.,—where he was fully identified by a number of paroled prisoners. He was searched, and documents showing the nature of his mission beyond a doubt, were found upon his person.

A court martial was immediately convened for his trial.

This found him guilty, and sentenced him to be hanged as a spy.

At the conclusion of the trial Frank stepped up to the prisoner and said:

“Mr. Davis, I believe we’re even on that coat, now.”

Davis was sent to Johnson's Island for execution, but influences were immediately set at work to secure Executive clemency. What they were I know not, but I am informed by the Rev. Robert McCune, who was then Chaplain of the One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Ohio Infantry and the Post of Johnson's Island and who was the spiritual adviser appointed to prepare Davis for execution, that the sentence was hardly pronounced before Davis was visited by an emissary, who told him to dismiss his fears, that he should not suffer the punishment.

It is likely that leading Baltimore Unionists were enlisted in his behalf through family connections, and as the Border State Unionists were then potent at Washington, they readily secured a commutation of his sentence to imprisonment during the war.

Page 56

It seems that the justice of this world is very unevenly dispensed when so much solicitude is shown for the life of such a man, and none at all for the much better men whom he assisted to destroy.

The official notice of the commutation of the sentence was not published until the day set for the execution, but the certain knowledge that it would be forthcoming enabled Davis to display a great deal of bravado on approaching what was supposed to be his end. As the reader can readily imagine, from what I have heretofore said of him, Davis was the man to improve to the utmost every opportunity to strut his little hour, and he did it in this instance. He posed, attitudinized and vaped, so that the camp and the country were filled with stories of the wonderful coolness with which he contemplated his approaching fate.

Among other things he said to his guard, as he washed himself elaborately the night before the day announced for the execution:

“Well, you can be sure of one thing; to-morrow night there will certainly be one clean corpse on this Island.”

Unfortunately for his braggadocio, he let it leak out in some way that he had been well aware all the time that he would not be executed.

He was taken to Fort Delaware for confinement, and died there some time after.

Frank Beverstock went back to his regiment, and served with it until the close of the war. He then returned home, and, after awhile became a banker at Bowling Green, O. He was a fine business man and became very prosperous. But though naturally healthy and vigorous, his system carried in it the seeds of death, sown there by the hardships of captivity. He had been one of the victims of the Rebels' vaccination; the virus injected into his blood had caused a large part of his right temple to slough off, and when it healed it left a ghastly cicatrix.

Two years ago he was taken suddenly ill, and died before his friends had any idea that his condition was serious.

CHAPTER LIV.

Savannah proves to be A change for the better—escape from the brats of guards—comparison between Wirz and Davis—A brief interval of good rations—Winder, the man with the evil eye—the disloyal work of A shyster.

After all Savannah was a wonderful improvement on Andersonville. We got away from the pestilential Swamp and that poisonous ground. Every mouthful of air was not laden

with disease germs, nor every cup of water polluted with the seeds of death. The earth did not breed gangrene, nor the atmosphere promote fever. As only the more vigorous had come away, we were freed from the depressing spectacle

Page 57

of every third man dying. The keen disappointment prostrated very many who had been of average health, and I imagine, several hundred died, but there were hospital arrangements of some kind, and the sick were taken away from among us. Those of us who tunneled out had an opportunity of stretching our legs, which we had not had for months in the overcrowded Stockade we had left. The attempts to escape did all engaged in them good, even though they failed, since they aroused new ideas and hopes, set the blood into more rapid circulation, and toned up the mind and system both. I had come away from Andersonville with considerable scurvy manifesting itself in my gums and feet. Soon these signs almost wholly disappeared.

We also got away from those murderous little brats of Reserves, who guarded us at Andersonville, and shot men down as they would stone apples out of a tree. Our guards now were mostly, sailors, from the Rebel fleet in the harbor—Irishmen, Englishmen and Scandinavians, as free hearted and kindly as sailors always are. I do not think they ever fired a shot at one of us. The only trouble we had was with that portion of the guard drawn from the infantry of the garrison. They had the same rattlesnake venom of the Home Guard crowd wherever we met it, and shot us down at the least provocation. Fortunately they only formed a small part of the sentinels.

Best of all, we escaped for a while from the upas-like shadow of Winder and Wirz, in whose presence strong men sickened and died, as when near some malign genii of an Eastern story. The peasantry of Italy believed firmly in the evil eye. Did they ever know any such men as Winder and his satellite, I could comprehend how much foundation they could have for such a belief.

Lieutenant Davis had many faults, but there was no comparison between him and the Andersonville commandant. He was a typical young Southern man; ignorant and bumptious as to the most common matters of school-boy knowledge, inordinately vain of himself and his family, coarse in tastes and thoughts, violent in his prejudices, but after all with some streaks of honor and generosity that made the widest possible difference between him and Wirz, who never had any. As one of my chums said to me:

“Wirz is the most even-tempered man I ever knew; he’s always foaming mad.”

This was nearly the truth. I never saw Wirz when he was not angry; if not violently abusive, he was cynical and sardonic. Never, in my little experience with him did I detect a glint of kindly, generous humanity; if he ever was moved by any sight of suffering its exhibition in his face escaped my eye. If he ever had even a wish to mitigate the pain or hardship of any man the expression of such wish never fell on my ear. How a man could move daily through such misery as he encountered, and never be moved by it except to scorn and mocking is beyond my limited understanding.

Page 58

Davis vaped a great deal, swearing big round oaths in the broadest of Southern patois; he was perpetually threatening to:

“Open on ye wid de ahtillery,” but the only death that I knew him to directly cause or sanction was that I have described in the previous chapter. He would not put himself out of the way to annoy and oppress prisoners, as Wirz would, but frequently showed even a disposition to humor them in some little thing, when it could be done without danger or trouble to himself.

By-and-by, however, he got an idea that there was some money to be made out of the prisoners, and he set his wits to work in this direction. One day, standing at the gate, he gave one of his peculiar yells that he used to attract the attention of the camp with:

“Wh-ah-ye!!”

We all came to “attention,” and he announced:

“Yesterday, while I wuz in the camps (a Rebel always says camps,) some of you prisoners picked my pockets of seventy-five dollars in greenbacks. Now, I give you notice that I’ll not send in any moah rations till the money’s returned to me.”

This was a very stupid method of extortion, since no one believed that he had lost the money, and at all events he had no business to have the greenbacks, as the Rebel laws imposed severe penalties upon any citizen, and still more upon any soldier dealing with, or having in his possession any of “the money of the enemy.” We did without rations until night, when they were sent in. There was a story that some of the boys in the prison had contributed to make up part of the sum, and Davis took it and was satisfied. I do not know how true the story was. At another time some of the boys stole the bridle and halter off an old horse that was driven in with a cart. The things were worth, at a liberal estimate, one dollar. Davis cut off the rations of the whole six thousand of us for one day for this. We always imagined that the proceeds went into his pocket.

A special exchange was arranged between our Navy Department and that of the Rebels, by which all seamen and marines among us were exchanged. Lists of these were sent to the different prisons and the men called for. About three-fourths of them were dead, but many soldiers divining, the situation of affairs, answered to the dead men’s names, went away with the squad and were exchanged. Much of this was through the connivance of the Rebel officers, who favored those who had ingratiated themselves with them. In many instances money was paid to secure this privilege, and I have been informed on good authority that Jack Huckleby, of the Eighth Tennessee, and Ira Beverly, of the One Hundredth Ohio, who kept the big sutler shop on the North Side at Andersonville, paid Davis five hundred dollars each to be allowed to go with the sailors. As for Andrews and me, we had no friends among the Rebels, nor money to bribe with, so we stood no show.

The rations issued to us for some time after our arrival seemed riotous luxury to what we had been getting at Andersonville. Each of us received daily a half-dozen rude and coarse imitations of our fondly-remembered hard tack, and with these a small piece of meat or a few spoonfuls of molasses, and a quart or so of vinegar, and several plugs of tobacco for each “hundred.” How exquisite was the taste of the crackers and molasses!

Page 59

It was the first wheat bread I had eaten since my entry into Richmond —nine months before—and molasses had been a stranger to me for years. After the corn bread we had so long lived upon, this was manna. It seems that the Commissary at Savannah labored under the delusion that he must issue to us the same rations as were served out to the Rebel soldiers and sailors. It was some little time before the fearful mistake came to the knowledge of Winder. I fancy that the news almost threw him into an apoplectic fit. Nothing, save his being ordered to the front, could have caused him such poignant sorrow as the information that so much good food had been worse than wasted in undoing his work by building up the bodies of his hated enemies.

Without being told, we knew that he had been heard from when the tobacco, vinegar and molasses failed to come in, and the crackers gave way to corn meal. Still this was a vast improvement on Andersonville, as the meal was fine and sweet, and we each had a spoonful of salt issued to us regularly.

I am quite sure that I cannot make the reader who has not had an experience similar to ours comprehend the wonderful importance to us of that spoonful of salt. Whether or not the appetite for salt be, as some scientists claim, a purely artificial want, one thing is certain, and that is, that either the habit of countless generations or some other cause, has so deeply ingrained it into our common nature, that it has come to be nearly as essential as food itself, and no amount of deprivation can accustom us to its absence. Rather, it seemed that the longer we did without it the more overpowering became our craving. I could get along to-day and to-morrow, perhaps the whole week, without salt in my food, since the lack would be supplied from the excess I had already swallowed, but at the end of that time Nature would begin to demand that I renew the supply of saline constituent of my tissues, and she would become more clamorous with every day that I neglected her bidding, and finally summon Nausea to aid Longing.

The light artillery of the garrison of Savannah—four batteries, twenty-four pieces—was stationed around three sides of the prison, the guns unlimbered, planted at convenient distance, and trained upon us, ready for instant use. We could see all the grinning mouths through the cracks in the fence. There were enough of them to send us as high as the traditional kite flown by Gilderoy. The having at his beck this array of frowning metal lent Lieutenant Davis such an importance in his own eyes that his demeanor swelled to the grandiose. It became very amusing to see him puff up and vaunt over it, as he did on every possible occasion. For instance, finding a crowd of several hundred lounging around the gate, he would throw open the wicket, stalk in with the air of a Jove threatening a rebellious world with the dread thunders of heaven, and shout:

“W-h-a-a y-e-e! Prisoners, I give you jist two minutes to cleah away from this gate, aw I’ll open on ye wid de ahtillery!”

Page 60

One of the buglers of the artillery was a superb musician—evidently some old “regular” whom the Confederacy had seduced into its service, and his instrument was so sweet toned that we imagined that it was made of silver. The calls he played were nearly the same as we used in the cavalry, and for the first few days we became bitterly homesick every time he sent ringing out the old familiar signals, that to us were so closely associated with what now seemed the bright and happy days when we were in the field with our battalion. If we were only back in the valleys of Tennessee with what alacrity we would respond to that “assembly,” no Orderly’s patience would be worn out in getting laggards and lazy ones to “fall in for roll-call;” how eagerly we would attend to “stable duty;” how gladly mount our faithful horses and ride away to “water,” and what bareback races ride, going and coming. We would be even glad to hear “guard” and “drill” sounded; and there would be music in the disconsolate “surgeon’s call.”

“Come-get-your-q-n-i-n-i-n-e; come, get your quinine; It’ll make you sad: It’ll make you sick. Come, come.”

O, if we were only back, what admirable soldiers we would be! One morning, about three or four o’clock, we were awakened by the ground shaking and a series of heavy, dull thumps sounding oft seaward. Our silver-voiced bugler seemed to be awakened, too. He set the echoes ringing with a vigorously played “reveille;” a minute later came an equally earnest “assembly,” and when “boots and saddles” followed, we knew that all was not well in Denmark; the thumping and shaking now had a significance. It meant heavy Yankee guns somewhere near. We heard the gunners hitching up; the bugle signal “forward,” the wheels roll off, and for a half hour afterwards we caught the receding sound of the bugle commanding “right turn,” “left turn,” etc., as the batteries marched away. Of course, we became considerably wrought up over the matter, as we fancied that, knowing we were in Savannah, our vessels were trying to pass up to the City and take it. The thumping and shaking continued until late in the afternoon.

We subsequently learned that some of our blockaders, finding time banging heavy upon their hands, had essayed a little diversion by knocking Forts Jackson and Bledsoe—two small forts defending the passage of the Savannah—about their defenders’ ears. After capturing the forts our folks desisted and came no farther.

Quite a number of the old Raider crowd had come with us from Andersonville. Among these was the shyster, Peter Bradley. They kept up their old tactics of hanging around the gates, and currying favor with the Rebels in every possible way, in hopes to get paroles outside or other favors. The great mass of the prisoners were so bitter against the Rebels as to feel that they would rather die than ask or accept a favor from their hands, and they had little else

Page 61

than contempt for these trucklers. The raider crowd's favorite theme of conversation with the Rebels was the strong discontent of the boys with the manner of their treatment by our Government. The assertion that there was any such widespread feeling was utterly false. We all had confidence—as we continue to have to this day—that our Government would do everything for us possible, consistent with its honor, and the success of military operations, and outside of the little squad of which I speak, not an admission could be extracted from anybody that blame could be attached to any one, except the Rebels. It was regarded as unmanly and unsoldier-like to the last degree, as well as senseless, to revile our Government for the crimes committed by its foes.

But the Rebels were led to believe that we were ripe for revolt against our flag, and to side with them. Imagine, if possible, the stupidity that would mistake our bitter hatred of those who were our deadly enemies, for any feeling that would lead us to join hands with those enemies. One day we were surprised to see the carpenters erect a rude stand in the center of the camp. When it was finished, Bradley appeared upon it, in company with some Rebel officers and guards. We gathered around in curiosity, and Bradley began making a speech.

He said that it had now become apparent to all of us that our Government had abandoned us; that it cared little or nothing for us, since it could hire as many more quite readily, by offering a bounty equal to the pay which would be due us now; that it cost only a few hundred dollars to bring over a shipload of Irish, "Dutch," and French, who were only too glad to agree to fight or do anything else to get to this country. [The peculiar impudence of this consisted in Bradley himself being a foreigner, and one who had only come out under one of the later calls, and the influence of a big bounty.]

Continuing in this strain he repeated and dwelt upon the old lie, always in the mouths of his crowd, that Secretary Stanton and General Halleck had positively refused to enter upon negotiations for exchange, because those in prison were "only a miserable lot of 'coffee-boilers' and 'blackberry pickers,' whom the Army was better off without."

The terms "coffee-boiler," and "blackberry-pickers" were considered the worst terms of opprobrium we had in prison. They were applied to that class of stragglers and skulkers, who were only too ready to give themselves up to the enemy, and who, on coming in, told some gauzy story about "just having stopped to boil a cup of coffee," or to do something else which they should not have done, when they were gobbled up. It is not risking much to affirm the probability of Bradley and most of his crowd having belonged to this dishonorable class.

The assertion that either the great Chief-of-Staff or the still greater War-Secretary were even capable of applying such epithets to the mass of prisoners is too preposterous to

need refutation, or even denial. No person outside the raider crowd ever gave the silly lie a moment's toleration.

Page 62

Bradley concluded his speech in some such language as this:

“And now, fellow prisoners, I propose to you this: that we unite in informing our Government that unless we are exchanged in thirty days, we will be forced by self-preservation to join the Confederate army.”

For an instant his hearers seemed stunned at the fellow’s audacity, and then there went up such a roar of denunciation and execration that the air trembled. The Rebels thought that the whole camp was going to rush on Bradley and tear him to pieces, and they drew revolvers and leveled muskets to defend him. The uproar only ceased when Bradley was hurried out of the prisons but for hours everybody was savage and sullen, and full of threatenings against him, when opportunity served. We never saw him afterward.

Angry as I was, I could not help being amused at the tempestuous rage of a tall, fine-looking and well educated Irish Sergeant of an Illinois regiment. He poured forth denunciations of the traitor and the Rebels, with the vivid fluency of his Hibernian nature, vowed he’d “give a year of me life, be J—s, to have the handling of the dirty spalpeen for ten minutes; be G-d,” and finally in his rage, tore off his own shirt and threw it on the ground and trampled on it.

Imagine my astonishment, some time after getting out of prison, to find the Southern papers publishing as a defense against the charges in regard to Andersonville, the following document, which they claimed to have been adopted by “a mass meeting of the prisoners:”

“At a mass meeting held September 28th, 1864, by the Federal prisoners confined at Savannah, Ga., it was unanimously agreed that the following resolutions be sent to the President of the United States, in the hope that he might thereby take such steps as in his wisdom he may think necessary for our speedy exchange or parole:

“Resolved, That while we would declare our unbounded love for the Union, for the home of our fathers, and for the graves of those we venerate, we would beg most respectfully that our situation as prisoners be diligently inquired into, and every obstacle consistent with the honor and dignity of the Government at once removed.

“Resolved, That while allowing the Confederate authorities all due praise for the attention paid to prisoners, numbers of our men are daily consigned to early graves, in the prime of manhood, far from home and kindred, and this is not caused intentionally by the Confederate Government, but by force of circumstances; the prisoners are forced to go without shelter, and, in a great portion of cases, without medicine.

“Resolved, That, whereas, ten thousand of our brave comrades have descended into an untimely grave within the last six months, and as we believe their death was caused by

the difference of climate, the peculiar kind and insufficiency of food, and lack of proper medical treatment; and, whereas, those difficulties still remain, we would declare as our firm belief, that unless we are speedily exchanged, we have no alternative but to share the lamentable fate of our comrades. Must this thing still go on! Is there no hope?

Page 63

“Resolved, That, whereas, the cold and inclement season of the year is fast approaching, we hold it to be our duty as soldiers and citizens of the United States, to inform our Government that the majority of our prisoners ate without proper clothing, in some cases being almost naked, and are without blankets to protect us from the scorching sun by day or the heavy dews by night, and we would most respectfully request the Government to make some arrangement whereby we can be supplied with these, to us, necessary articles.

“Resolved, That, whereas, the term of service of many of our comrades having expired, they, having served truly and faithfully for the term of their several enlistments, would most respectfully ask their Government, are they to be forgotten? Are past services to be ignored? Not having seen their wives and little ones for over three years, they would most respectfully, but firmly, request the Government to make some arrangements whereby they can be exchanged or paroled.

“Resolved, That, whereas, in the fortune of war, it was our lot to become prisoners, we have suffered patiently, and are still willing to suffer, if by so doing we can benefit the country; but we must most respectfully beg to say, that we are not willing to suffer to further the ends of any party or clique to the detriment of our honor, our families, and our country, and we beg that this affair be explained to us, that we may continue to hold the Government in that respect which is necessary to make a good citizen and soldier.

“P. Bradley,
“Chairman of Committee in behalf of Prisoners.”

In regard to the above I will simply say this, that while I cannot pretend to know or even much that went on around me, I do not think it was possible for a mass meeting of prisoners to have been held without my knowing it, and its essential features. Still less was it possible for a mass meeting to have been held which would have adopted any such a document as the above, or anything else that a Rebel would have found the least pleasure in republishing. The whole thing is a brazen falsehood.

CHAPTER LV.

Why we were hurried out of Andersonville—the of the fall of Atlanta—our longing to hear the news—arrival of some fresh fish—how we knew they were Western boys—difference in the appearance of the soldiers of the two armies.

Page 64

The reason of our being hurried out of Andersonville under the false pretext of exchange dawned on us before we had been in Savannah long. If the reader will consult the map of Georgia he will understand this, too. Let him remember that several of the railroads which now appear were not built then. The road upon which Andersonville is situated was about one hundred and twenty miles long, reaching from Macon to Americus, Andersonville being about midway between these two. It had no connections anywhere except at Macon, and it was hundreds of miles across the country from Andersonville to any other road. When Atlanta fell it brought our folks to within sixty miles of Macon, and any day they were liable to make a forward movement, which would capture that place, and have us where we could be retaken with ease.

There was nothing left undone to rouse the apprehensions of the Rebels in that direction. The humiliating surrender of General Stoneman at Macon in July, showed them what our folks were thinking of, and awakened their minds to the disastrous consequences of such a movement when executed by a bolder and abler commander. Two days of one of Kilpatrick's swift, silent marches would carry his hard-riding troopers around Hood's right flank, and into the streets of Macon, where a half hour's work with the torch on the bridges across the Ocmulgee and the creeks that enter it at that point, would have cut all of the Confederate Army of the Tennessee's communications. Another day and night of easy marching would bring his guidons fluttering through the woods about the Stockade at Andersonville, and give him a reinforcement of twelve or fifteen thousand able-bodied soldiers, with whom he could have held the whole Valley of the Chattahoochie, and become the nether millstone, against which Sherman could have ground Hood's army to powder.

Such a thing was not only possible, but very probable, and doubtless would have occurred had we remained in Andersonville another week.

Hence the haste to get us away, and hence the lie about exchange, for, had it not been for this, one-quarter at least of those taken on the cars would have succeeded in getting off and attempted to have reached Sherman's lines.

The removal went on with such rapidity that by the end of September only eight thousand two hundred and eighteen remained at Andersonville, and these were mostly too sick to be moved; two thousand seven hundred died in September, fifteen hundred and sixty in October, and four hundred and eighty-five in November, so that at the beginning of December there were only thirteen hundred and fifty-nine remaining. The larger part of those taken out were sent on to Charleston, and subsequently to Florence and Salisbury. About six or seven thousand of us, as near as I remember, were brought to Savannah.

.....

Page 65

We were all exceedingly anxious to know how the Atlanta campaign had ended. So far our information only comprised the facts that a sharp battle had been fought, and the result was the complete possession of our great objective point. The manner of accomplishing this glorious end, the magnitude of the engagement, the regiments, brigades and corps participating, the loss on both sides, the completeness of the victories, *etc.*, were all matters that we knew nothing of, and thirsted to learn.

The Rebel papers said as little as possible about the capture, and the facts in that little were so largely diluted with fiction as to convey no real information. But few new, prisoners were coming in, and none of these were from Sherman. However, toward the last of September, a handful of “fresh fish” were turned inside, whom our experienced eyes instantly told us were Western boys.

There was never any difficulty in telling, as far as he could be seen, whether a boy belonged to the East or the west. First, no one from the Army of the Potomac was ever without his corps badge worn conspicuously; it was rare to see such a thing on one of Sherman’s men. Then there was a dressy air about the Army of the Potomac that was wholly wanting in the soldiers serving west of the Alleghanies.

The Army, of the Potomac was always near to its base of supplies, always had its stores accessible, and the care of the clothing and equipments of the men was an essential part of its discipline. A ragged or shabbily dressed man was a rarity. Dress coats, paper collars, fresh woolen shirts, neat-fitting pantaloons, good comfortable shoes, and trim caps or hats, with all the blazing brass of company letters an inch long, regimental number, bugle and eagle, according to the Regulations, were as common to Eastern boys as they were rare among the Westerners.

The latter usually wore blouses, instead of dress coats, and as a rule their clothing had not been renewed since the opening, of the campaign —and it showed this. Those who wore good boots or shoes generally had to submit to forcible exchanges by their, captors, and the same was true of head gear. The Rebels were badly off in regard to hats. They did not have skill and ingenuity enough to make these out of felt or straw, and the make-shifts they contrived of quilted calico and long-leaved pine, were ugly enough to frighten horned cattle.

I never blamed them much for wanting to get rid of these, even if they did have to commit a sort of highway robbery upon defenseless prisoners to do so. To be a traitor in arms was bad certainly, but one never appreciated the entire magnitude of the crime until he saw a Rebel wearing a calico or a pine-leaf hat. Then one felt as if it would be a great mistake to ever show such a man mercy.

The Army of Northern Virginia seemed to have supplied themselves with head-gear of Yankee manufacture of previous years, and they then quit taking the hats of their

prisoners. Johnston's Army did not have such good luck, and had to keep plundering to the end of the war.

Page 66

Another thing about the Army of the Potomac was the variety of the uniforms. There were members of Zouave regiments, wearing baggy breeches of various hues, gaiters, crimson fezes, and profusely braided jackets. I have before mentioned the queer garb of the "Lost Ducks." (Les Enfants Perdu, Forty-eighth New York.)

One of the most striking uniforms was that of the "Fourteenth Brooklyn." They wore scarlet pantaloons, a blue jacket handsomely braided, and a red fez, with a white cloth wrapped around the head, turban-fashion. As a large number of them were captured, they formed quite a picturesque feature of every crowd. They were generally good fellows and gallant soldiers.

Another uniform that attracted much, though not so favorable, attention was that of the Third New Jersey Cavalry, or First New Jersey Hussars, as they preferred to call themselves. The designer of the uniform must have had an interest in a curcuma plantation, or else he was a fanatical Orangeman. Each uniform would furnish occasion enough for a dozen New York riots on the 12th of July. Never was such an eruption of the yellows seen outside of the jaundiced livery of some Eastern potentate. Down each leg of the pantaloons ran a stripe of yellow braid one and one-half inches wide. The jacket had enormous gilt buttons, and was embellished with yellow braid until it was difficult to tell whether it was blue cloth trimmed with yellow, or yellow adorned with blue. From the shoulders swung a little, false hussar jacket, lined with the same flaring yellow. The vizor-less cap was similarly warmed up with the hue of the perfected sunflower. Their saffron magnificence was like the gorgeous gold of the lilies of the field, and Solomon in all his glory could not have beau arrayed like one of them. I hope he was not. I want to retain my respect for him. We dubbed these daffodil cavaliers "Butterflies," and the name stuck to them like a poor relation.

Still another distinction that was always noticeable between the two armies was in the bodily bearing of the men. The Army of the Potomac was drilled more rigidly than the Western men, and had comparatively few long marches. Its members had something of the stiffness and precision of English and German soldiery, while the Western boys had the long, "reachy" stride, and easy swing that made forty miles a day a rather commonplace march for an infantry regiment.

This was why we knew the new prisoners to be Sherman's boys as soon as they came inside, and we started for them to hear the news. Inviting them over to our lean-to, we told them our anxiety for the story of the decisive blow that gave us the Central Gate of the Confederacy, and asked them to give it to us.

CHAPTER LVI.

Page 67

What caused the fall of Atlanta—A dissertation upon an important psychological problem—the battle of Jonesboro—why it was fought—how Sherman deceived Hood—A desperate bayonet charge, and the only successful one in the Atlanta campaign—A gallant Colonel and how he died—the heroism of some enlisted men—going calmly into certain death.

An intelligent, quick-eyed, sunburned boy, without an ounce of surplus flesh on face or limbs, which had been reduced to gray-hound condition by the labors and anxieties of the months of battling between Chattanooga and Atlanta, seemed to be the accepted talker of the crowd, since all the rest looked at him, as if expecting him to answer for them. He did so:

“You want to know about how we got Atlanta at last, do you? Well, if you don’t know, I should think you would want to. If I didn’t, I’d want somebody to tell me all about it just as soon as he could get to me, for it was one of the neatest little bits of work that ‘old Billy’ and his boys ever did, and it got away with Hood so bad that he hardly knew what hurt him.

“Well, first, I’ll tell you that we belong to the old Fourteenth Ohio Volunteers, which, if you know anything about the Army of the Cumberland, you’ll remember has just about as good a record as any that trains around old Pap Thomas—and he don’t ’low no slouches of any kind near him, either—you can bet \$500 to a cent on that, and offer to give back the cent if you win. Ours is Jim Steedman’s old regiment—you’ve all heard of old Chickamauga Jim, who slashed his division of 7,000 fresh men into the Rebel flank on the second day at Chickamauga, in a way that made Longstreet wish he’d staid on the Rappahannock, and never tried to get up any little sociable with the Westerners. If I do say it myself, I believe we’ve got as good a crowd of square, stand-up, trust’em-every-minute-in-your-life boys, as ever thawed hard-tack and sowbelly. We got all the grunTERS and weak sisters fanned out the first year, and since then we’ve been on a business basis, all the time. We’re in a mighty good brigade, too. Most of the regiments have been with us since we formed the first brigade Pap Thomas ever commanded, and waded with him through the mud of Kentucky, from Wild Cat to Mill Springs, where he gave Zollicoffer just a little the awfulest thrashing that a Rebel General ever got. That, you know, was in January, 1862, and was the first victory gained by the Western Army, and our people felt so rejoiced over it that—”

“Yes, yes; we’ve read all about that,” we broke in, “and we’d like to hear it again, some other time; but tell us now about Atlanta.”

Page 68

"All right. Let's see: where was I? O, yes, talking about our brigade. It is the Third Brigade, of the Third Division, of the Fourteenth Corps, and is made up of the Fourteenth Ohio, Thirty-eighth Ohio, Tenth Kentucky, and Seventy-fourth Indiana. Our old Colonel—George P. Este —commands it. We never liked him very well in camp, but I tell you he's a whole team in a fight, and he'd do so well there that all would take to him again, and he'd be real popular for a while."

"Now, isn't that strange," broke in Andrews, who was given to fits of speculation of psychological phenomena: "None of us yearn to die, but the surest way to gain the affection of the boys is to show zeal in leading them into scrapes where the chances of getting shot are the best. Courage in action, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. I have known it to make the most unpopular man in the battalion, the most popular inside of half an hour. Now, M.(addressing himself to me,) you remember Lieutenant H., of our battalion. You know he was a very fancy young fellow; wore as snipish' clothes as the tailor could make, had gold lace on his jacket wherever the regulations would allow it, decorated his shoulders with the stunningest pair of shoulder knots I ever saw, and so on. Well, he did not stay with us long after we went to the front. He went back on a detail for a court martial, and staid a good while. When he rejoined us, he was not in good odor, at all, and the boys weren't at all careful in saying unpleasant things when he could hear them, A little while after he came back we made that reconnaissance up on the Virginia Road. We stirred up the Johnnies with our skirmish line, and while the firing was going on in front we sat on our horses in line, waiting for the order to move forward and engage. You know how solemn such moments are. I looked down the line and saw Lieutenant H. at the right of Company —, in command of it. I had not seen him since he came back, and I sung out:

"Hello, Lieutenant, how do you feel?"

"The reply came back, promptly, and with boyish cheerfulness:

"Bully, by —; I'm going to lead seventy men of Company into action today!"

"How his boys did cheer him. When the bugle sounded—'forward, trot,' his company sailed in as if they meant it, and swept the Johnnies off in short meter. You never heard anybody say anything against Lieutenant after that."

"You know how it was with Captain G., of our regiment," said one of the Fourteenth to another. "He was promoted from Orderly Sergeant to a Second Lieutenant, and assigned to Company D. All the members of Company D went to headquarters in a body, and protested against his being put in their company, and he was not. Well, he behaved so well at Chickamauga that the boys saw that they had done him a great injustice, and all those that still lived went again to headquarters, and asked to take all back that they had said, and to have him put into the company."

Page 69

“Well, that was doing the manly thing, sure; but go on about Atlanta.”

“I was telling about our brigade,” resumed the narrator. “Of course, we think our regiment’s the best by long odds in the army—every fellow thinks that of his regiment—but next to it come the other regiments of our brigade. There’s not a cent of discount on any of them.

“Sherman had stretched out his right away to the south and west of Atlanta. About the middle of August our corps, commanded by Jefferson C. Davis, was lying in works at Utoy Creek, a couple of miles from Atlanta. We could see the tall steeples and the high buildings of the City quite plainly. Things had gone on dull and quiet like for about ten days. This was longer by a good deal than we had been at rest since we left Resaca in the Spring. We knew that something was brewing, and that it must come to a head soon.

“I belong to Company C. Our little mess—now reduced to three by the loss of two of our best soldiers and cooks, Disbrow and Sulier, killed behind head-logs in front of Atlanta, by sharpshooters—had one fellow that we called ‘Observer,’ because he had such a faculty of picking up news in his prowling around headquarters. He brought us in so much of this, and it was generally so reliable that we frequently made up his absence from duty by taking his place. He was never away from a fight, though. On the night of the 25th of August, ‘Observer’ came in with the news that something was in the wind. Sherman was getting awful restless, and we had found out that this always meant lots of trouble to our friends on the other side.

“Sure enough, orders came to get ready to move, and the next night we all moved to the right and rear, out of sight of the Johnnies. Our well built works were left in charge of Garrard’s Cavalry, who concealed their horses in the rear, and came up and took our places. The whole army except the Twentieth Corps moved quietly off, and did it so nicely that we were gone some time before the enemy suspected it. Then the Twentieth Corps pulled out towards the North, and fell back to the Chattahoochie, making quite a shove of retreat. The Rebels snapped up the bait greedily. They thought the siege was being raised, and they poured over their works to hurry the Twentieth boys off. The Twentieth fellows let them know that there was lots of sting in them yet, and the Johnnies were not long in discovering that it would have been money in their pockets if they had let that ‘moon-and-star’ (that’s the Twentieth’s badge, you know) crowd alone.

“But the Rebs thought the rest of us were gone for good and that Atlanta was saved. Naturally they felt mighty happy over it; and resolved to have a big celebration—a ball, a meeting of jubilee, etc. Extra trains were run in, with girls and women from the surrounding country, and they just had a high old time.

“In the meantime we were going through so many different kinds of tactics that it looked as if Sherman was really crazy this time, sure. Finally we made a grand left wheel, and

then went forward a long way in line of battle. It puzzled us a good deal, but we knew that Sherman couldn't get us into any scrape that Pap Thomas couldn't get us out of, and so it was all right.

Page 70

“Along on the evening of the 31st our right wing seemed to have run against a hornet’s nest, and we could hear the musketry and cannon speak out real spiteful, but nothing came down our way. We had struck the railroad leading south from Atlanta to Macon, and began tearing it up. The jollity at Atlanta was stopped right in the middle by the appalling news that the Yankees hadn’t retreated worth a cent, but had broken out in a new and much worse spot than ever. Then there was no end of trouble all around, and Hood started part of his army back after us.

“Part of Hardee’s and Pat Cleburne’s command went into position in front of us. We left them alone till Stanley could come up on our left, and swing around, so as to cut off their retreat, when we would bag every one of them. But Stanley was as slow as he always was, and did not come up until it was too late, and the game was gone.

“The sun was just going down on the evening of the 1st of September, when we began to see we were in for it, sure. The Fourteenth Corps wheeled into position near the railroad, and the sound of musketry and artillery became very loud and clear on our front and left. We turned a little and marched straight toward the racket, becoming more excited every minute. We saw the Carlin’s brigade of regulars, who were some distance ahead of us, pile knapsacks, form in line, fix bayonets, and dash off with arousing cheer.

“The Rebel fire beat upon them like a Summer rain-storm, the ground shook with the noise, and just as we reached the edge of the cotton field, we saw the remnant of the brigade come flying back out of the awful, blasting shower of bullets. The whole slope was covered with dead and wounded.”

“Yes,” interrupts one of the Fourteenth; “and they made that charge right gamely, too, I can tell you. They were good soldiers, and well led. When we went over the works, I remember seeing the body of a little Major of one of the regiments lying right on the top. If he hadn’t been killed he’d been inside in a half-a-dozen steps more. There’s no mistake about it; those regulars will fight.”

“When we saw this,” resumed the narrator, “it set our fellows fairly wild; they became just crying mad; I never saw them so before. The order came to strip for the charge, and our knapsacks were piled in half a minute. A Lieutenant of our company, who was then on the staff of Gen. Baird, our division commander, rode slowly down the line and gave us our instructions to load our guns, fix bayonets, and hold fire until we were on top of the Rebel works. Then Colonel Este sang out clear and steady as a bugle signal:

“‘Brigade, forward! Guide center! *March!!*’

Page 71

“And we started. Heavens, how they did let into us, as we came up into range. They had ten pieces of artillery, and more men behind the breastworks than we had in line, and the fire they poured on us was simply withering. We walked across the hundreds of dead and dying of the regular brigade, and at every step our own men fell down among them. General Baud’s horse was shot down, and the General thrown far over his head, but he jumped up and ran alongside of us. Major Wilson, our regimental commander, fell mortally wounded; Lieutenant Kirk was killed, and also Captain Stopford, Adjutant General of the brigade. Lieutenants Cobb and Mitchell dropped with wounds that proved fatal in a few days. Captain Ugan lost an arm, one-third of the enlisted men fell, but we went straight ahead, the grape and the musketry becoming worse every step, until we gained the edge of the hill, where we were checked a minute by the brush, which the Rebels had fixed up in the shape of abattis. Just then a terrible fire from a new direction, our left, swept down the whole length of our line. The Colonel of the Seventeenth New York—as gallant a man as ever lived saw the new trouble, took his regiment in on the run, and relieved us of this, but he was himself mortally wounded. If our boys were half-crazy before, they were frantic now, and as we got out of the entanglement of the brush, we raised a fearful yell and ran at the works. We climbed the sides, fired right down into the defenders, and then began with the bayonet and sword. For a few minutes it was simply awful. On both sides men acted like infuriated devils. They dashed each other’s brains out with clubbed muskets; bayonets were driven into men’s bodies up to the muzzle of the gun; officers ran their swords through their opponents, and revolvers, after being emptied into the faces of the Rebels, were thrown with desperate force into the ranks. In our regiment was a stout German butcher named Frank Fleck. He became so excited that he threw down his sword, and rushed among the Rebels with his bare fists, knocking down a swath of them. He yelled to the first Rebel he met:

“Py Gott, I’ve no patience mit you,” and knocked him sprawling. He caught hold of the commander of the Rebel Brigade, and snatched him back over the works by main strength. Wonderful to say, he escaped unhurt, but the boys will probably not soon let him hear the last of

“Py Gott, I’ve no patience mit you.”

“The Tenth Kentucky, by the queerest luck in the world, was matched against the Rebel Ninth Kentucky. The commanders of the two regiments were brothers-in-law, and the men relatives, friends, acquaintances and schoolmates. They hated each other accordingly, and the fight between them was more bitter, if possible, than anywhere else on the line. The Thirty-Eighth Ohio and Seventy-fourth Indiana put in some work that was just magnificent. We hadn’t time to look at it then, but the dead and wounded piled up after the fight told the story.

Page 72

"We gradually forced our way over the works, but the Rebels were game to the last, and we had to make them surrender almost one at a time. The artillerymen tried to fire on us when we were so close we could lay our hands on the guns.

"Finally nearly all in the works surrendered, and were disarmed and marched back. Just then an aid came dashing up with the information that we must turn the works, and get ready to receive Hardee, who was advancing to retake the position. We snatched up some shovels lying near, and began work. We had no time to remove the dead and dying Rebels on the works, and the dirt we threw covered them up. It proved a false alarm. Hardee had as much as he could do to save his own hide, and the affair ended about dark.

"When we came to count up what we had gained, we found that we had actually taken more prisoners from behind breastworks than there were in our brigade when we started the charge. We had made the only really successful bayonet charge of the campaign. Every other time since we left Chattanooga the party standing on the defensive had been successful. Here we had taken strong double lines, with ten guns, seven battle flags, and over two thousand prisoners. We had lost terribly—not less than one-third of the brigade, and many of our best men. Our regiment went into the battle with fifteen officers; nine of these were killed or wounded, and seven of the nine lost either their limbs or lives. The Thirty-Eighth Ohio, and the other regiments of the brigade lost equally heavy. We thought Chickamauga awful, but Jonesboro discounted it."

"Do you know," said another of the Fourteenth, "I heard our Surgeon telling about how that Colonel Grower, of the Seventeenth New York, who came in so splendidly on our left, died? They say he was a Wall Street broker, before the war. He was hit shortly after he led his regiment in, and after the fight, was carried back to the hospital. While our Surgeon was going the rounds Colonel Grower called him, and said quietly, 'When you get through with the men, come and see me, please.'

"The Doctor would have attended to him then, but Grower wouldn't let him. After he got through he went back to Grower, examined his wound, and told him that he could only live a few hours. Grower received the news tranquilly, had the Doctor write a letter to his wife, and gave him his things to send her, and then grasping the Doctor's hand, he said:

"Doctor, I've just one more favor to ask; will you grant it?"

"The Doctor said, 'Certainly; what is it?'

"You say I can't live but a few hours?"

"Yes; that is true.'

“And that I will likely be in great pain!”

“I am sorry to say so.”

“Well, then, do give me morphia enough to put me to sleep, so that I will wake up only in another world.”

“The Doctor did so; Colonel Grower thanked him; wrung his hand, bade him good-by, and went to sleep to wake no more.”

Page 73

"Do you believe in presentiments and superstitions?" said another of the Fourteenth. There was Fisher Pray, Orderly Sergeant of Company I. He came from Waterville, O., where his folks are now living. The day before we started out he had a presentiment that we were going into a fight, and that he would be killed. He couldn't shake it off. He told the Lieutenant, and some of the boys about it, and they tried to ridicule him out of it, but it was no good. When the sharp firing broke out in front some of the boys said, 'Fisher, I do believe you are right,' and he nodded his head mournfully. When we were piling knapsacks for the charge, the Lieutenant, who was a great friend of Fisher's, said:

"Fisher, you stay here and guard the knapsacks.'

"Fisher's face blazed in an instant.

"No, sir,' said he; I never shirked a fight yet, and I won't begin now.'

"So he went into the fight, and was killed, as he knew he would be. Now, that's what I call nerve."

"The same thing was true of Sergeant Arthur Tarbox, of Company A," said the narrator; "he had a presentiment, too; he knew he was going to be killed, if he went in, and he was offered an honorable chance to stay out, but he would not take it, and went in and was killed."

"Well, we staid there the next day, buried our dead, took care of our wounded, and gathered up the plunder we had taken from the Johnnies. The rest of the army went off, 'hot blocks,' after Hardee and the rest of Hood's army, which it was hoped would be caught outside of entrenchments. But Hood had too much the start, and got into the works at Lovejoy, ahead of our fellows. The night before we heard several very loud explosions up to the north. We guessed what that meant, and so did the Twentieth Corps, who were lying back at the Chattahoochee, and the next morning the General commanding—Slocum—sent out a reconnaissance. It was met by the Mayor of Atlanta, who said that the Rebels had blown up their stores and retreated. The Twentieth Corps then came in and took 'possession of the City, and the next day—the 3d—Sherman came in, and issued an order declaring the campaign at an end, and that we would rest awhile and refit.

"We laid around Atlanta a good while, and things quieted down so that it seemed almost like peace, after the four months of continual fighting we had gone through. We had been under a strain so long that now we boys went in the other direction, and became too careless, and that's how we got picked up. We went out about five miles one night after a lot of nice smoked hams that a nigger told us were stored in an old cotton press, and which we knew would be enough sight better eating for Company C, than the commissary pork we had lived on so long. We found the cotton press, and the hams,

just as the nigger told us, and we hitched up a team to take them into camp. As we hadn't seen any Johnny signs anywhere, we set our guns down to help load the meat, and just as we all came stringing out to the wagon with as much meat as we could carry, a company of Ferguson's Cavalry popped out of the woods about one hundred yards in front of us and were on top of us before we could say I scat. You see they'd heard of the meat, too."

Page 74

CHAPTER LVII.

A fair sacrifice—the story of one boy who willingly gave his young life for his country.

Charley Barbour was one of the truest-hearted and best-liked of my school-boy chums and friends. For several terms we sat together on the same uncompromisingly uncomfortable bench, worried over the same boy-maddening problems in “Ray’s Arithmetic-Part III.,” learned the same jargon of meaningless rules from “Greene’s Grammar,” pondered over “Mitchell’s Geography and Atlas,” and tried in vain to understand why Providence made the surface of one State obtrusively pink and another ultramarine blue; trod slowly and painfully over the rugged road “Bullion” points out for beginners in Latin, and began to believe we should hate ourselves and everybody else, if we were gotten up after the manner shown by “Cutter’s Physiology.” We were caught together in the same long series of school-boy scrapes—and were usually ferruled together by the same strong-armed teacher. We shared nearly everything —our fun and work; enjoyment and annoyance—all were generally meted out to us together. We read from the same books the story of the wonderful world we were going to see in that bright future “when we were men;” we spent our Saturdays and vacations in the miniature explorations of the rocky hills and caves, and dark cedar woods around our homes, to gather ocular helps to a better comprehension of that magical land which we were convinced began just beyond our horizon, and had in it, visible to the eye of him who traveled through its enchanted breadth, all that “Gulliver’s Fables,” the “Arabian Nights,” and a hundred books of travel and adventure told of.

We imagined that the only dull and commonplace spot on earth was that where we lived. Everywhere else life was a grand spectacular drama, full of thrilling effects.

Brave and handsome young men were rescuing distressed damsels, beautiful as they were wealthy; bloody pirates and swarthy murderers were being foiled by quaint spoken backwoodsmen, who carried unerring rifles; gallant but blundering Irishmen, speaking the most delightful brogue, and making the funniest mistakes, were daily thwarting cool and determined villains; bold tars were encountering fearful sea perils; lionhearted adventurers were cowing and quelling whole tribes of barbarians; magicians were casting spells, misers hoarding gold, scientists making astonishing discoveries, poor and unknown boys achieving wealth and fame at a single bound, hidden mysteries coming to light, and so the world was going on, making reams of history with each diurnal revolution, and furnishing boundless material for the most delightful books.

Page 75

At the age of thirteen a perusal of the lives of Benjamin Franklin and Horace Greeley precipitated my determination to no longer hesitate in launching my small bark upon the great ocean. I ran away from home in a truly romantic way, and placed my foot on what I expected to be the first round of the ladder of fame, by becoming “devil boy” in a printing office in a distant large City. Charley’s attachment to his mother and his home was too strong to permit him to take this step, and we parted in sorrow, mitigated on my side by roseate dreams of the future.

Six years passed. One hot August morning I met an old acquaintance at the Creek, in Andersonville. He told me to come there the next morning, after roll-call, and he would take me to see some person who was very anxious to meet me. I was prompt at the rendezvous, and was soon joined by the other party. He threaded his way slowly for over half an hour through the closely-jumbled mass of tents and burrows, and at length stopped in front of a blanket-tent in the northwestern corner. The occupant rose and took my hand. For an instant I was puzzled; then the clear, blue eyes, and well-remembered smile recalled to me my old-time comrade, Charley Barbour. His story was soon told. He was a Sergeant in a Western Virginia cavalry regiment—the Fourth, I think. At the time Hunter was making his retreat from the Valley of Virginia, it was decided to mislead the enemy by sending out a courier with false dispatches to be captured. There was a call for a volunteer for this service. Charley was the first to offer, with that spirit of generous self-sacrifice that was one of his pleasantest traits when a boy. He knew what he had to expect. Capture meant imprisonment at Andersonville; our men had now a pretty clear understanding of what this was. Charley took the dispatches and rode into the enemy’s lines. He was taken, and the false information produced the desired effect. On his way to Andersonville he was stripped of all his clothing but his shirt and pantaloons, and turned into the Stockade in this condition. When I saw him he had been in a week or more. He told his story quietly—almost diffidently—not seeming aware that he had done more than his simple duty. I left him with the promise and expectation of returning the next day, but when I attempted to find him again, I was lost in the maze of tents and burrows. I had forgotten to ask the number of his detachment, and after spending several days in hunting for him, I was forced to give the search up. He knew as little of my whereabouts, and though we were all the time within seventeen hundred feet of each other, neither we nor our common acquaintance could ever manage to meet again. This will give the reader an idea of the throng compressed within the narrow limits of the Stockade. After leaving Andersonville, however, I met this man once more, and learned from him that Charley had sickened and died within a month after his entrance to prison.

Page 76

So ended his day-dream of a career in the busy world.

CHAPTER LVIII.

*We leave Savannah—more hopes of exchange—scenes at departure —“Flankers”—
On the back track toward Andersonville—alarm thereat —at the parting of two ways—
we finally bring up at camp Lawton.*

On the evening of the 11th of October there came an order for one thousand prisoners to fall in and march out, for transfer to some other point.

Of course, Andrews and I “flanked” into this crowd. That was our usual way of doing. Holding that the chances were strongly in favor of every movement of prisoners being to our lines, we never failed to be numbered in the first squad of prisoners that were sent out. The seductive mirage of “exchange” was always luring us on. It must come some time, certainly, and it would be most likely to come to those who were most earnestly searching for it. At all events, we should leave no means untried to avail ourselves of whatever seeming chances there might be. There could be no other motive for this move, we argued, than exchange. The Confederacy was not likely to be at the trouble and expense of hauling us about the country without some good reason—something better than a wish to make us acquainted with Southern scenery and topography. It would hardly take us away from Savannah so soon after bringing us there for any other purpose than delivery to our people.

The Rebels encouraged this belief with direct assertions of its truth. They framed a plausible lie about there having arisen some difficulty concerning the admission of our vessels past the harbor defenses of Savannah, which made it necessary to take us elsewhere—probably to Charleston—for delivery to our men.

Wishes are always the most powerful allies of belief. There is little difficulty in convincing a man of that of which he wants to be convinced. We forgot the lie told us when we were taken from Andersonville, and believed the one which was told us now.

Andrews and I hastily snatched our worldly possessions—our overcoat, blanket, can, spoon, chessboard and men, yelled to some of our neighbors that they could have our hitherto much-treasured house, and running down to the gate, forced ourselves well up to the front of the crowd that was being assembled to go out.

The usual scenes accompanying the departure of first squads were being acted tumultuously. Every one in the camp wanted to be one of the supposed-to-be-favored few, and if not selected at first, tried to “flank in”—that is, slip into the place of some one else who had had better luck. This one naturally resisted displacement, ‘vi et armis,’

and the fights would become so general as to cause a resemblance to the famed Fair of Donnybrook. The cry would go up:

Page 77

"Look out for flankers!"

The lines of the selected would dress up compactly, and outsiders trying to force themselves in would get mercilessly pounded.

We finally got out of the pen, and into the cars, which soon rolled away to the westward. We were packed in too densely to be able to lie down. We could hardly sit down. Andrews and I took up our position in one corner, piled our little treasures under us, and trying to lean against each other in such a way as to afford mutual support and rest, dozed fitfully through a long, weary night.

When morning came we found ourselves running northwest through a poor, pine-barren country that strongly resembled that we had traversed in coming to Savannah. The more we looked at it the more familiar it became, and soon there was no doubt we were going back to Andersonville.

By noon we had reached Millen—eighty miles from Savannah, and fifty-three from Augusta. It was the junction of the road leading to Macon and that running to Augusta. We halted a little while at the "Y," and to us the minutes were full of anxiety. If we turned off to the left we were going back to Andersonville. If we took the right hand road we were on the way to Charleston or Richmond, with the chances in favor of exchange.

At length we started, and, to our joy, our engine took the right hand track. We stopped again, after a run of five miles, in the midst of one of the open, scattering forests of long leaved pine that I have before described. We were ordered out of the cars, and marching a few rods, came in sight of another of those hateful Stockades, which seemed to be as natural products of the Sterile sand of that dreary land as its desolate woods and its breed of boy murderers and gray-headed assassins.

Again our hearts sank, and death seemed more welcome than incarceration in those gloomy wooden walls. We marched despondently up to the gates of the Prison, and halted while a party of Rebel clerks made a list of our names, rank, companies, and regiments. As they were Rebels it was slow work. Reading and writing never came by nature, as Dogberry would say, to any man fighting for Secession. As a rule, he took to them as reluctantly as if, he thought them cunning inventions of the Northern Abolitionist to perplex and demoralize him. What a half-dozen boys taken out of our own ranks would have done with ease in an hour or so, these Rebels worried over all of the afternoon, and then their register of us was so imperfect, badly written and misspelled, that the Yankee clerks afterwards detailed for the purpose, never could succeed in reducing it to intelligibility.

We learned that the place at which we had arrived was Camp Lawton, but we almost always spoke of it as "Millen," the same as Camp Sumter is universally known as Andersonville.

Page 78

Shortly after dark we were turned inside the Stockade. Being the first that had entered, there was quite a quantity of wood—the offal from the timber used in constructing the Stockade—lying on the ground. The night was chilly one we soon had a number of fires blazing. Green pitch pine, when burned, gives off a peculiar, pungent odor, which is never forgotten by one who has once smelled it. I first became acquainted with it on entering Andersonville, and to this day it is the most powerful remembrance I can have of the opening of that dreadful Iliad of woes. On my journey to Washington of late years the locomotives are invariably fed with pitch pine as we near the Capital, and as the well-remembered smell reaches me, I grow sick at heart with the flood of saddening recollections indissolubly associated with it.

As our fires blazed up the clinging, penetrating fumes diffused themselves everywhere. The night was as cool as the one when we arrived at Andersonville, the earth, meagerly sodded with sparse, hard, wiry grass, was the same; the same piney breezes blew in from the surrounding trees, the same dismal owls hooted at us; the same mournful whip-poor-will lamented, God knows what, in the gathering twilight. What we both felt in the gloomy recesses of downcast hearts Andrews expressed as he turned to me with:

“My God, Mc, this looks like Andersonville all over again.”

A cupful of corn meal was issued to each of us. I hunted up some water. Andrews made a stiff dough, and spread it about half an inch thick on the back of our chessboard. He propped this up before the fire, and when the surface was neatly browned over, slipped it off the board and turned it over to brown the other side similarly. This done, we divided it carefully between us, swallowed it in silence, spread our old overcoat on the ground, tucked chess-board, can, and spoon under far enough to be out of the reach of thieves, adjusted the thin blanket so as to get the most possible warmth out of it, crawled in close together, and went to sleep. This, thank Heaven, we could do; we could still sleep, and Nature had some opportunity to repair the waste of the day. We slept, and forgot where we were.

CHAPTER LIX.

Our new quarters at camp Lawton—building A hut—an exceptional commandant—he is a good man, but will take bribes—rations.

In the morning we took a survey of our new quarters, and found that we were in a Stockade resembling very much in construction and dimensions that at Andersonville. The principal difference was that the upright logs were in their rough state, whereas they were hewed at Andersonville, and the brook running through the camp was not bordered by a swamp, but had clean, firm banks.

Page 79

Our next move was to make the best of the situation. We were divided into hundreds, each commanded by a Sergeant. Ten hundreds constituted a division, the head of which was also a Sergeant. I was elected by my comrades to the Sergeantry of the Second Hundred of the First Division. As soon as we were assigned to our ground, we began constructing shelter. For the first and only time in my prison experience, we found a full supply of material for this purpose, and the use we made of it showed how infinitely better we would have fared if in each prison the Rebels had done even so slight a thing as to bring in a few logs from the surrounding woods and distribute them to us. A hundred or so of these would probably have saved thousands of lives at Andersonville and Florence.

A large tree lay on the ground assigned to our hundred. Andrews and I took possession of one side of the ten feet nearest the butt. Other boys occupied the rest in a similar manner. One of our boys had succeeded in smuggling an ax in with him, and we kept it in constant use day and night, each group borrowing it for an hour or so at a time. It was as dull as a hoe, and we were very weak, so that it was slow work “niggering off”—(as the boys termed it) a cut of the log. It seemed as if beavers could have gnawed it off easier and more quickly. We only cut an inch or so at a time, and then passed the ax to the next users. Making little wedges with a dull knife, we drove them into the log with clubs, and split off long, thin strips, like the weatherboards of a house, and by the time we had split off our share of the log in this slow and laborious way, we had a fine lot of these strips. We were lucky enough to find four forked sticks, of which we made the corners of our dwelling, and roofed it carefully with our strips, held in place by sods torn up from the edge of the creek bank. The sides and ends were enclosed; we gathered enough pine tops to cover the ground to a depth of several inches; we banked up the outside, and ditched around it, and then had the most comfortable abode we had during our prison career. It was truly a house builded with our own hands, for we had no tools whatever save the occasional use of the aforementioned dull axe and equally dull knife.

The rude little hut represented as much actual hard, manual labor as would be required to build a comfortable little cottage in the North, but we gladly performed it, as we would have done any other work to better our condition.

For a while wood was quite plentiful, and we had the luxury daily of warm fires, which the increasing coolness of the weather made important accessories to our comfort.

Other prisoners kept coming in. Those we left behind at Savannah followed us, and the prison there was broken up. Quite a number also came in from—Andersonville, so that in a little while we had between six and seven thousand in the Stockade. The last comers found all the material for tents and all the fuel used up, and consequently did not fare so well as the earlier arrivals.

Page 80

The commandant of the prison—one Captain Bowes—was the best of his class it was my fortune to meet. Compared with the senseless brutality of Wirz, the reckless devilry of Davis, or the stupid malignance of Barrett, at Florence, his administration was mildness and wisdom itself.

He enforced discipline better than any of those named, but has what they all lacked—executive ability—and he secured results that they could not possibly attain, and without anything, like the friction that attended their efforts. I do not remember that any one was shot during our six weeks' stay at Millen—a circumstance simply remarkable, since I do not recall a single week passed anywhere else without at least one murder by the guards.

One instance will illustrate the difference of his administration from that of other prison commandants. He came upon the grounds of our division one morning, accompanied by a pleasant-faced, intelligent-appearing lad of about fifteen or sixteen. He said to us:

“Gentlemen: (The only instance during our imprisonment when we received so polite a designation.) This is my son, who will hereafter call your roll. He will treat you as gentlemen, and I know you will do the same to him.”

This understanding was observed to the letter on both sides. Young Bowes invariably spoke civilly to us, and we obeyed his orders with a prompt cheerfulness that left him nothing to complain of.

The only charge I have to make against Bowes is made more in detail in another chapter, and that is, that he took money from well prisoners for giving them the first chance to go through on the Sick Exchange. How culpable this was I must leave each reader to decide for himself. I thought it very wrong at the time, but possibly my views might have been colored highly by my not having any money wherewith to procure my own inclusion in the happy lot of the exchanged.

Of one thing I am certain: that his acceptance of money to bias his official action was not singular on his part. I am convinced that every commandant we had over us—except Wirz—was habitually in the receipt of bribes from prisoners. I never heard that any one succeeded in bribing Wirz, and this is the sole good thing I can say of that fellow. Against this it may be said, however, that he plundered the boys so effectually on entering the prison as to leave them little of the wherewithal to bribe anybody.

Davis was probably the most unscrupulous bribe-taker of the lot. He actually received money for permitting prisoners to escape to our lines, and got down to as low a figure as one hundred dollars for this sort of service. I never heard that any of the other commandants went this far.

Page 81

The rations issued to us were somewhat better than those of Andersonville, as the meal was finer and better, though it was absurdly insufficient in quantity, and we received no salt. On several occasions fresh beef was dealt out to us, and each time the excitement created among those who had not tasted fresh meat for weeks and months was wonderful. On the first occasion the meat was simply the heads of the cattle killed for the use of the guards. Several wagon loads of these were brought in and distributed. We broke them up so that every man got a piece of the bone, which was boiled and reboiled, as long as a single bubble of grease would rise to the surface of the water; every vestige of meat was gnawed and scraped from the surface and then the bone was charred until it crumbled, when it was eaten. No one who has not experienced it can imagine the inordinate hunger for animal food of those who had eaten little else than corn bread for so long. Our exhausted bodies were perishing for lack of proper sustenance. Nature indicated fresh beef as the best medium to repair the great damage already done, and our longing for it became beyond description.

CHAPTER LX.

The raiders reappear on the scene—the attempt to assassinate those who were concerned in the execution—A couple of lively fights, in which the raiders are defeated—Holding an election.

Our old antagonists—the Raiders—were present in strong force in Millen. Like ourselves, they had imagined the departure from Andersonville was for exchange, and their relations to the Rebels were such that they were all given a chance to go with the first squads. A number had been allowed to go with the sailors on the Special Naval Exchange from Savannah, in the place of sailors and marines who had died. On the way to Charleston a fight had taken place between them and the real sailors, during which one of their number—a curly-headed Irishman named Dailey, who was in such high favor with the Rebels that he was given the place of driving the ration wagon that came in the North Side at Andersonville—was killed, and thrown under the wheels of the moving train, which passed over him.

After things began to settle into shape at Millen, they seemed to believe that they were in such ascendancy as to numbers and organization that they could put into execution their schemes of vengeance against those of us who had been active participants in the execution of their confederates at Andersonville.

After some little preliminaries they settled upon Corporal “Wat” Payne, of my company, as their first victim. The reader will remember Payne as one of the two Corporals who pulled the trigger to the scaffold at the time of the execution.

Page 82

Payne was a very good man physically, and was yet in fair condition. The Raiders came up one day with their best man—Pete Donnelly—and provoked a fight, intending, in the course of it, to kill Payne. We, who knew Payee, felt reasonably confident of his ability to handle even so redoubtable a pugilist as Donnelly, and we gathered together a little squad of our friends to see fair play.

The fight began after the usual amount of bad talk on both sides, and we were pleased to see our man slowly get the better of the New York plug-ugly. After several sharp rounds they closed, and still Payne was ahead, but in an evil moment he spied a pine knot at his feet, which he thought he could reach, and end the fight by cracking Donnelly's head with it. Donnelly took instant advantage of the movement to get it, threw Payne heavily, and fell upon him. His crowd rushed in to finish our man by clubbing him over the head. We sailed in to prevent this, and after a rattling exchange of blows all around, succeeded in getting Payne away.

The issue of the fight seemed rather against us, however, and the Raiders were much emboldened. Payne kept close to his crowd after that, and as we had shown such an entire willingness to stand by him, the Raiders—with their accustomed prudence when real fighting was involved—did not attempt to molest him farther, though they talked very savagely.

A few days after this Sergeant Goody and Corporal Ned Carrigan, both of our battalion, came in. I must ask the reader to again recall the fact that Sergeant Goody was one of the six hangmen who put the meal-sacks over the heads, and the ropes around the necks of the condemned. Corporal Carrigan was the gigantic prize fighter, who was universally acknowledged to be the best man physically among the whole thirty-four thousand in Andersonville. The Raiders knew that Goody had come in before we of his own battalion did. They resolved to kill him then and there, and in broad daylight. He had secured in some way a shelter tent, and was inside of it fixing it up. The Raider crowd, headed by Pete Donnelly, and Dick Allen, went up to his tent and one of them called to him:

“Sergeant, come out; I want to see you.”

Goody, supposing it was one of us, came crawling out on his hands and knees. As he did so their heavy clubs crashed down upon his head. He was neither killed nor stunned, as they had reason to expect. He succeeded in rising to his feet, and breaking through the crowd of assassins. He dashed down the side of the hill, hotly pursued by them. Coming to the Creek, he leaped it in his excitement, but his pursuers could not, and were checked. One of our battalion boys, who saw and comprehended the whole affair, ran over to us, shouting:

“Turn out! turn out, for God's sake! the Raiders are killing Goody!”

Page 83

We snatched up our clubs and started after the Raiders, but before we could reach them, Ned Carrigan, who also comprehended what the trouble was, had run to the side of Goody, armed with a terrible looking club. The sight of Ned, and the demonstration that he was thoroughly aroused, was enough for the Raider crew, and they abandoned the field hastily. We did not feel ourselves strong enough to follow them on to their own dung hill, and try conclusions with them, but we determined to report the matter to the Rebel Commandant, from whom we had reason to believe we could expect assistance. We were right. He sent in a squad of guards, arrested Dick Allen, Pete Donnelly, and several other ringleaders, took them out and put them in the stocks in such a manner that they were compelled to lie upon their stomachs. A shallow tin vessel containing water was placed under their faces to furnish them drink.

They staid there a day and night, and when released, joined the Rebel Army, entering the artillery company that manned the guns in the fort covering the prison. I used to imagine with what zeal they would send us over; a round of shell or grape if they could get anything like an excuse.

This gave us good riddance—of our dangerous enemies, and we had little further trouble with any of them.

The depression in the temperature made me very sensible of the deficiencies in my wardrobe. Unshod feet, a shirt like a fishing net, and pantaloons as well ventilated as a paling fence might do very well for the broiling sun at Andersonville and Savannah, but now, with the thermometer nightly dipping a little nearer the frost line, it became unpleasantly evident that as garments their office was purely perfunctory; one might say ornamental simply, if he wanted to be very sarcastic. They were worn solely to afford convenient quarters for multitudes of lice, and in deference to the prejudice which has existed since the Fall of Man against our mingling with our fellow creatures in the attire provided us by Nature. Had I read Darwin then I should have expected that my long exposure to the weather would start a fine suit of fur, in the effort of Nature to adapt, me to my, environment. But no more indications of this appeared than if I had been a hairless dog of Mexico, suddenly transplanted to more northern latitudes. Providence did not seem to be in the tempering-the-wind-to-the-shorn-lamb business, as far as I was concerned. I still retained an almost unconquerable prejudice against stripping the dead to secure clothes, and so unless exchange or death came speedily, I was in a bad fix.

Page 84

One morning about day break, Andrews, who had started to go to another part of the camp, came slipping back in a state of gleeful excitement. At first I thought he either had found a tunnel or had heard some good news about exchange. It was neither. He opened his jacket and handed me an infantry man's blouse, which he had found in the main street, where it had dropped out of some fellow's bundle. We did not make any extra exertion to find the owner. Andrews was in sore need of clothes himself, but my necessities were so much greater that the generous fellow thought of my wants first. We examined the garment with as much interest as ever a belle bestowed on a new dress from Worth's. It was in fair preservation, but the owner had cut the buttons off to trade to the guard, doubtless for a few sticks of wood, or a spoonful of salt. We supplied the place of these with little wooden pins, and I donned the garment as a shirt and coat and vest, too, for that matter. The best suit I ever put on never gave me a hundredth part the satisfaction that this did. Shortly after, I managed to subdue my aversion so far as to take a good shoe which a one-legged dead man had no farther use for, and a little later a comrade gave me for the other foot a boot bottom from which he had cut the top to make a bucket.

.....

The day of the Presidential election of 1864 approached. The Rebels were naturally very much interested in the result, as they believed that the election of McClellan meant compromise and cessation of hostilities, while the re-election of Lincoln meant prosecution of the War to the bitter end. The toadying Raiders, who were perpetually hanging around the gate to get a chance to insinuate themselves into the favor of the Rebel officers, persuaded them that we were all so bitterly hostile to our Government for not exchanging us that if we were allowed to vote we would cast an overwhelming majority in favor of McClellan.

The Rebels thought that this might perhaps be used to advantage as political capital for their friends in the North. They gave orders that we might, if we chose, hold an election on the same day of the Presidential election. They sent in some ballot boxes, and we elected Judges of the Election.

About noon of that day Captain Bowes, and a crowd of tightbooted, broad-hatted Rebel officers, strutted in with the peculiar "Ef-yer-don't-b'lieve—I'm-a-butcher-jest-smell-o'-mebutes" swagger characteristic of the class. They had come in to see us all voting for McClellan. Instead, they found the polls surrounded with ticket pedlers shouting:

"Walk right up here now, and get your Unconditional-Union-Abraham-Lincoln -tickets!"

"Here's your straight-haired prosecution-of-the-war ticket."

“Vote the Lincoln ticket; vote to whip the Rebels, and make peace with them when they’ve laid down their arms.”

“Don’t vote a McClellan ticket and gratify Rebels, everywhere,” *etc.*

Page 85

The Rebel officers did not find the scene what their fancy painted it, and turning around they strutted out.

When the votes came to be counted out there were over seven thousand for Lincoln, and not half that many hundred for McClellan. The latter got very few votes outside the Raider crowd. The same day a similar election was held in Florence, with like result. Of course this did not indicate that there was any such a preponderance of Republicans among us. It meant simply that the Democratic boys, little as they might have liked Lincoln, would have voted for him a hundred times rather than do anything to please the Rebels.

I never heard that the Rebels sent the result North.

CHAPTER LXI.

The rebels formally propose to us to desert to them—contumelious treatment of the proposition—their rage—an exciting time—an outbreak threatened—difficulties attending desertion to the rebels.

One day in November, some little time after the occurrences narrated in the last chapter, orders came in to make out rolls of all those who were born outside of the United States, and whose terms of service had expired.

We held a little council among ourselves as to the meaning of this, and concluded that some partial exchange had been agreed on, and the Rebels were going to send back the class of boys whom they thought would be of least value to the Government. Acting on this conclusion the great majority of us enrolled ourselves as foreigners, and as having served out our terms. I made out the roll of my hundred, and managed to give every man a foreign nativity. Those whose names would bear it were assigned to England, Ireland, Scotland France and Germany, and the balance were distributed through Canada and the West Indies. After finishing the roll and sending it out, I did not wonder that the Rebels believed the battles for the Union were fought by foreign mercenaries. The other rolls were made out in the same way, and I do not suppose that they showed five hundred native Americans in the Stockade.

The next day after sending out the rolls, there came an order that all those whose names appeared thereon should fall in. We did so, promptly, and as nearly every man in camp was included, we fell in as for other purposes, by hundreds and thousands. We were then marched outside, and massed around a stump on which stood a Rebel officer, evidently waiting to make us a speech. We awaited his remarks with the greatest impatience, but He did not begin until the last division had marched out and came to a parade rest close to the stump.



It was the same old story:

Page 86

“Prisoners, you can no longer have any doubt that your Government has cruelly abandoned you; it makes no efforts to release you, and refuses all our offers of exchange. We are anxious to get our men back, and have made every effort to do so, but it refuses to meet us on any reasonable grounds. Your Secretary of War has said that the Government can get along very well without you, and General Halleck has said that you were nothing but a set of blackberry pickers and coffee boilers anyhow.

“You’ve already endured much more than it could expect of you; you served it faithfully during the term you enlisted for, and now, when it is through with you, it throws you aside to starve and die. You also can have no doubt that the Southern Confederacy is certain to succeed in securing its independence. It will do this in a few months. It now offers you an opportunity to join its service, and if you serve it faithfully to the end, you will receive the same rewards as the rest of its soldiers. You will be taken out of here, be well clothed and fed, given a good bounty, and, at the conclusion of the War receive a land warrant for a nice farm. If you”—

But we had heard enough. The Sergeant of our division—a man with a stentorian voice sprang out and shouted:

“Attention, first Division!”

We Sergeants of hundreds repeated the command down the line. Shouted he:

“First Division, about—”

Said we:

“First Hundred, about—”

“Second Hundred, about—”

“Third Hundred, about—”

“Fourth Hundred, about—” *etc., etc.*

Said he:—

“*Face!!*”

Ten Sergeants repeated “Face!” one after the other, and each man in the hundreds turned on his heel. Then our leader commanded—

“First Division, forward! *March!*” and we strode back into the Stockade, followed immediately by all the other divisions, leaving the orator still standing on the stump.

The Rebels were furious at this curt way of replying. We had scarcely reached our quarters when they came in with several companies, with loaded guns and fixed bayonets. They drove us out of our tents and huts, into one corner, under the pretense of hunting axes and spades, but in reality to steal our blankets, and whatever else they could find that they wanted, and to break down and injure our huts, many of which, costing us days of patient labor, they destroyed in pure wantonness.

We were burning with the bitterest indignation. A tall, slender man named Lloyd, a member of the Sixty-First Ohio—a rough, uneducated fellow, but brim full of patriotism and manly common sense, jumped up on a stump and poured out his soul in rude but fiery eloquence: “Comrades,” he said, “do not let the blowing of these Rebel whelps discourage you; pay no attention to the lies they have told you to-day; you know well that our

Page 87

Government is too honorable and just to desert any one who serves it; it has not deserted us; their hell-born Confederacy is not going to succeed. I tell you that as sure as there is a God who reigns and judges in Israel, before the Spring breezes stir the tops of these blasted old pines their Confederacy and all the lousy graybacks who support it will be so deep in hell that nothing but a search warrant from the throne of God Almighty can ever find it again. And the glorious old Stars and Stripes—”

Here we began cheering tremendously. A Rebel Captain came running up, said to the guard, who was leaning on his gun, gazing curiously at Lloyd:

“What in —— are you standing gaping there for? Why don’t you shoot the ---- Yankee son---- - - - ----?” and snatching the gun away from him, cocked and leveled it at Lloyd, but the boys near jerked the speaker down from the stump and saved his life.

We became fearfully, wrought up. Some of the more excitable shouted out to charge on the line of guards, snatch they guns away from them, and force our way through the gate. The shouts were taken up by others, and, as if in obedience to the suggestion, we instinctively formed in line-of-battle facing the guards. A glance down the line showed me an array of desperate, tensely drawn faces, such as one sees who looks a men when they are summoning up all their resolution for some deed of great peril. The Rebel officers hastily retreated behind the line of guards, whose faces blanched, but they leveled the muskets and prepared to receive us.

Captain Bowes, who was overlooking the prison from an elevation outside, had, however, divined the trouble at the outset, and was preparing to meet it. The gunners, who had shotted the pieces and trained them upon us when we came out to listen t the speech, had again covered us with them, and were ready to sweep the prison with grape and canister at the instant of command. The long roll was summoning the infantry regiments back into line, and some of the cooler-headed among us pointed these facts out and succeeded in getting the line to dissolve again into groups of muttering, sullen-faced men. When this was done, the guards marched out, by a cautious indirect maneuver, so as not to turn their backs to us.

It was believed that we had some among us who would like to avail themselves of the offer of the Rebels, and that they would try to inform the Rebels of their desires by going to the gate during the night and speaking to the Officer-of-the-Guard. A squad armed themselves with clubs and laid in wait for these. They succeeded in catching several —snatching some of them back even after they had told the guard their wishes in a tone so loud that all near could hear distinctly. The Officer-of-the-Guard rushed in two or

three times in a vain attempt to save the would be deserter from the cruel hands that clutched him and bore him away to where he had a lesson in loyalty impressed upon the fleshiest part of his person by a long, flexible strip of pine wielded by very willing hands.

Page 88

After this was kept up for several nights different ideas began to prevail. It was felt that if a man wanted to join the Rebels, the best way was to let him go and get rid of him. He was of no benefit to the Government, and would be of none to the Rebels. After this no restriction was put upon any one who desired to go outside and take the oath. But very few did so, however, and these were wholly confined to the Raider crowd.