Harris, Lieut. William C., Prison-Life in the Tobacco Warehouse at Richmond. By a Ball's Bluff Prisoner. Philadelphia: George W. Childs, 1862.

PREFACE

THESE sketches were written to lessen the tedium of my lengthy imprisonment; and if they serve to recall to my prison-companions the scenes enacted in the old Warehouse, and enlist the interest and sympathies of the reader, they will have accomplished all that is desired by the publication of them.

With the exception of "Homeward Bound," they were all written within prison-walls, and brought to the North sewn securely in the lining of an overcoat.

I confidently trust to my brother-officers for their testimony as to the fidelity of description of our "domestic economy," and the accuracy of detail in the varied incidents of our prison-life in the Tobacco Warehouse.

W. C. H.

PHILADELPHIA, MARCH 25, 1862.

CONTENTS

PRISON-LIFE AT RICHMOND.

CHAPTER 1.

FROM BALL'S BLUFF TO RICHMOND.

ON the 21st of October, 1861, the battle of Ball's Bluff was fought. Sixteen hundred and ten Federal and five thousand Rebel troops were engaged. The former were defeated, two hundred and fifty-two killed, wounded, and drowned, and six hundred and seventy-eight taken prisoners. The defeat and heavy loss on the Federal side were owing to inefficient transportation, retarding the arrival of reinforcements, and preventing retreat from a vastly superior force of the enemy, the engagement occurring on: the Virginia bank of the Potomac River, within two hundred feet of the water's edge.

The history of the war will record no military blunder so fatal, nor futurity witness more heroic valor than was displayed by the Federal troops at the battle of Ball's Bluff.

The following Federal officers were taken prisoners by the Rebels: -

M. Cogswell,	Colonel	42d N. Y. Regt. and Captain 8th U. S. I.
W. Raymond Lee,	Colonel	20th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
P. J. Revere,	Major	20th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
Chas. L. Peirson,	Adjutant	20th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
E. H. R. Revere,	Asst. Surgeon	20th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
Geo. B. Perry,	1st Lieut.	20th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
John Markoe,	Captain	Col. Baker's California Regt.
Francis J. Keffer,	Captain	Col. Baker's California Regt.
William C. Harris,	1st Lieut.	Col. Baker's California Regt.
Chas. M. Hooper.	2d "	Col. Baker's California Regt.
George W. Kenny,	2d "	Col. Baker's California Regt.
Frank A. Parker,	2d "	Col. Baker's California Regt.
William H. Kerns,	2d "	Col. Baker's California Regt.
John M. Studley,	Captain	15th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
Henry Bowman,	Captain	15th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.

Clark S. Simonds,	Captain	15th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
George W. Rockwood,	Captain	15th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
John E. Greene,	1st Lieut.	15th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
J. Harris Hooper,	2d "	15th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
Bernard B. Vassall,	2d "	15th Regt. Mass. Volunteers.
Timothy O'Meara,	Captain	42d Regt. N. Y. Vol. (Tammany.)
Samuel Gibeson,	1st Lieut.	42d Regt. N. Y. Vol. (Tammany.)
Charles McPherson,	1st Lieut.	42d Regt. N. Y. Vol. (Tammany.)
Henry Van Voast,	2d "	42d Regt. N. Y. Vol. (Tammany.)

The majority of the officers were taken at dusk, and immediately marched under guard to Leesburg, a distance of three miles from the field of battle. Arriving there, the usual rejoicings of an elated and frantic town were performed around us, the town-people appearing perfectly maddened in their yells of ecstasy and derision, crowding and shouldering each other in herds to catch a glimpse of us. "We've got 'em this time!" "Oh, you infernal Yankees!" "Make way, Jim: I want to see a 'Yank'!" were cries that greeted us on every side; and it was not until we were marched into the presence of General Evans, the Rebel commandant of Leesburg, that the wild uproar of the furious multitude became comparatively silenced. Federal officers and privates were here separated, - the officers ushered into a room occupied by General Evans and his aids, and the privates confined in the courthouse.

We were here introduced separately to General Evans, a man of tall, brawny frame and unusual length of limb, (he is known throughout his command by the euphonious sobriquet of "Shanks.") His manners are courteous and dignified, being to a certain extent free from that peculiar mixture of supercilious pride and conceit which characterizes many of the officers in the Confederate army. He tendered us the following parole, stating that, although it gave the liberty of the town, it required us to report in person to General Beauregard at Centreville in a few days: -

"We, the undersigned, officers in the army of the United States, do hereby pledge our oaths and honor not to bear arms against the Southern Confederacy during the war, unless sooner exchanged."

We all declined a parole that conceded no privileges except one, - that of paying our own hotel-bills. We were then informed that in a few hours ambulances would be provided to convey us to Manassas.

A large wood fire burned briskly in the room, at which many of us dried our clothing, which had been thoroughly wet in attempts to swim the river. A supper consisting of coffee, bread, beefsteak, and preserves was provided, to which full justice was done, many of us having eaten nothing since early morning.

After midnight we were marched two miles from Leesburg, where we joined our men, drawn up under guard in a large open field. A wagon was here furnished the officers, and, by close packing, two-thirds of our number were accommodated. The march was now continued, the prisoners having been formed four abreast, and guarded on the front, rear, and sides of the line. The roads, from recent rains, had become ankle-deep with mud, rendering the march slow and doubly tiresome.

As the morning broke, the scene was a sad one to look upon. From our position in the front, we were enabled to overlook the entire line of prisoners, who, jaded and worn out, were making the strongest efforts to keep their position in line. Occasionally a poor fellow would stagger up to the commanding officer, piteously exclaiming, "I can go no farther!" Some were without shoes or stockings, having lost them in attempting to swim the Potomac. Others were without overcoats, - now doubly needed, as the rain commenced to fall. All were smeared with mud; and as they marched over the slippery road, requiring constant efforts to secure a foothold, the scene was dreary indeed.

Gradually the officers' wagon became filled with sick and weary privates, the officers trudging cheerfully through the mud to relieve them.

At a cross-road ten miles from Leesburg, we were met by a cavalcade of rather a grotesque character, which excited much laughter, even amidst our distress of body and dejection of mind.

On a very small mule an immense raw-boned negro sat, whose broad grin and great glaring eyes actually illumined the inanimate countenance of his master, by whose side he rode. The master possessed a gray homespun suit) large slouch hat, great iron spurs, rope bridle, and a gigantic white horse, the liliputian form of whose rider appeared to fade into air, he sat perched upon the immense animal. A lady rode by his side, on a small horse, with sleek limbs and stylish though gentle gait. The lady herself presented a strange contrast with the beast, as her figure was large, her raiment gaudy, and her general appearance coarse and masculine. On meeting the front of our line, they halted: the negro's eyes popped, the master's face freshened slightly, and the lady burst forth, in a stentorian voice, " Is them the Yanks?" Without waiting for a reply, she continued, her loud voice reaching the entire length of the line: - "Oh, if I had my way, I'd kill you, you bloodthirsty villains you! You come down here to murder us, did you? What are you doing in that wagon, you sneaking Yankees ? Can't you walk? I'd make you walk!" And so she continued until we had moved beyond the reach of her voice. We were subjected three times during the day to insulting and abusive language, - on two occasions from old women, and once from an elderly gentleman, when a request was made by the officer in charge of us for the loan of a wagon to convey the sick and wounded privates. The old fellow not only refused, but showered a tirade of abuse on the officer for making the request, winding up by thundering out, "Let them walk and die!"

Onward we marched until four o'clock in the afternoon, when, having reached a large mill near Bull Run, we were halted: the privates were placed in the mill, and the officers accommodated in the miller's dwelling. Here we expected rest and food, having marched without halting (except for a moment or two to enable the line to be closed up) for sixteen hours, during which time we had not received a morsel of food.

We were disappointed, as in a few moments orders came from General Beauregard, and we were again formed, and marched three miles nearer Manassas, to an old stone house on the battlefield of July 21. This house will always be an object of interest, as it was here our wounded were brought, and on a large field directly in front of the house the main struggle of the day was made. It now bears the marks of cannon and rifle balls. On the west end a rifled-cannon ball has gone entirely through the building. At the stone house we halted, the privates bivouacking in the open air, the officers in the open house. At eleven o'clock at night, we were furnished with rations of fat pork and corn bread. We had been for forty-eight hours without sleep, twenty-four hours without food, and had marched seventeen hours without halting to rest, - the march being immediately preceded by the fatigues and struggle of the battle of Ball's Bluff, lasting from early morning until dark. At daybreak on the 23d October, our march was continued to Manassas, a distance of seven miles, where we arrived at ten o'clock A.M.

It is impossible to convey any idea of the appearance or strength of Manassas from the occasional glimpses we had of successive earthworks, camps, straggling soldiers, and field-artillery. Arriving there, we were halted at the head-quarters of the provost marshal, where the names, rank, and regiments of the officers were registered, - during which process we were surrounded by a dense mass of soldiers, civilians, and a few ladies. Although no abusive language was used towards us, a peculiar smile of delight, mingled with contempt, was on every lip. That smile to us has since become a Southern institution; for when we find a man without it as he looks upon the "Yankees," we at once conclude that he is a "Union" man.

From the provost marshal's we were marched into an old barn, where we found a few prisoners arrested by the Rebels "under suspicion" of Union sentiments. Here we were visited by scores of Confederate officers and civilians, none of whom were in the barn a moment before they commenced discussing the political causes of the war. Conversing with that effervescing temperament so peculiar to the Southern-born, their manner soon became disagreeable and quarrelsome, and we found it necessary to abstain from all conversation. A few ladies came to the barn-door, stood and gazed upon us, smiled their smile of contempt, and then went tripping away to tell their friends "how dirty and nasty the Yankees looked."

At seven P. M. we were placed under guard and escorted to the cars for Richmond, where we arrived, without incident, at nine A.M. on the 24th of October. We found the depot and adjacent streets thronged with a dense mass of people. Men, women, and children were huddled together, each individual straining every nerve to obtain a sight of us. Looking from the car-windows, we beheld a tumultuous herd swaying to and fro, every eye fixed upon the cars, and, as one of us leaned forward to catch a glimpse of the scene, a hundred fingers would be pointed, and voices heard yelling, "There is one! See! there's a Yank!"

After a short delay, we were marched out of the cars into the open street, eight abreast, into a hollow square formed by the guard.

As far as the eye could reach, the populace were thronging. In the street, pressing on the guard, on the side-walk, in the trees, on the balconies, on the house-tops, were crowded the eager people. Occasionally a triumphant yell would be raised, and taunting voices heard: - "I say, Yanks, how do you feel?"

From the depot, - through the main thoroughfares, we were paraded, guarded by soldiers, escorted by the mob, until we arrived at our future prison, - a tobacco warehouse on Main Street.

As we halted, under guard, on the pavement of the warehouse, every window was crowded by Federal prisoners, eager for a sight of their brother unfortunates. Our names being called, we were ordered into the building. What a scene of sympathy and welcome! Hands grasped hands, brother met brother in misfortune, welcome in every eye and heart, and voices greeting, until the room re-echoed with the hospitable shouts.

As the warm gush of welcome mellowed down, loud voices were heard exclaiming, "*What did you come down here for*?" The question was taken up, repeated and repeated, until the warehouse rang with the merry cry. In a few moments we were seated at the various "mess" - tables, eating heartily of the warehouse bill of fare. They brought forth their choicest viands (butter and molasses) and set before us. Warm hearts were around, and the "fatted calf" was killed, each with the other contending for the pleasure of feeding us.

Our meal ended, little groups of earnest questioners and the now-comers might be seen dispersed over the room. Information was given and received, errors corrected in Secesh reports of the fight at Ball's Bluff, with sundry details of affairs on the Potomac, which were gladly absorbed by the lonely exiles.

The day was passed in social communion and friendly interchange of thoughts, feelings, and opinions. The question prominent on every lip was, "Will McClellan advance?" We could not satisfy the earnest questioners, but heartily blended our hopes and wishes that he would speedily do so.

As the evening closed, and we lay upon the floor, - a few upon straw mattresses, - we but faintly realized that henceforth we were prisoners of war.

CHAPTER II

OUR PRISON.

THE Tobacco Warehouse, where the officers and two hundred and fifty privates are confined, is situated in the lower portion of the city, on the southwest corner of Twenty-Fifth and Main Streets, and was occupied, previous to being used as a military prison, by Messrs. Liggon & Co. for manufacturing and storing tobacco.

It is a large, three-story brick building, built in a substantial manner, and peculiarly adapted for prison and hospital purposes. The main (or first) floor is allotted to the officers, fifty of whom are its present (December 1, 1861) occupants. The second and third floors contain each one hundred and twenty-five privates. In the centre of the officers' floor is placed the machinery for pressing and preparing tobacco, dividing it into two equal sections, - the western being used for eating and writing purposes, the eastern for promenading and sleeping. Ten mess-tables, made of rough pine boards, and a number of wooden benches and stools, occupy the main portion of the western division; and the floor is well covered in the eastern by bedsteads and cots of Southern and prison manufacture. The latter are primitive yet unique in style, being of the simplest structure that rough boards and a few nails can accomplish.

The length of the officers' room is sixty-five feet nine inches, width forty-five feet, height twelve feet three inches; one-half of which space is occupied by the machinery in the centre and northern portion of the floor. The room is lighted by five windows on the west or lower side, and three on the east or city side. Those on the east are level with the street, and well protected by iron bars; the west windows are without bars, but double-guarded by sentinels placed in the yard. The sills of those in the west are used as pantries by the stewards, and a curious assortment of stores is often displayed, - tin cups, plates, knives and forks, a cup of butter, saucer of salt, paper of pepper, loaf of bread, cold beef, comb and brush, - whisk broom, towels, a wet shirt drying, shaving-apparatus, bottle of vinegars &c. The room is lighted by gas, the use of which is either kindly or unwittingly given at all hours of the day: we use it for cooking as well as illuminating purposes, and the odor of hot coffee and occasional stews may be scented daily throughout the room. At nine o'clock we have breakfast, consisting of fresh beef, - occasionally liver, - with five ounces of bread; at one o'clock dinner, - boiled or roast beef, with five ounces of bread; at six o'clock supper, - five ounces of bread. The Confederate government furnishes the rations of bread and beef, with salt and brown soap. All other articles of food are provided by the prisoners, at the following prices: - Tea, $4 per pound; coffee, $1 per pound; brown sugar, 20 cents; butter, 60 cents; potatoes, $2 per bushel; molasses, $1.25 per gallon. The cost of extra rations, which are confined to the fore-going articles, averages $2.50 per week for each officer.

The cook-house of the officers is located in the prison-yard, and is separate from that of the privates. The attendants have been selected from a number of negroes who have been captured while acting as officers' servants.

John Wesley Rhoads, of Bailey's Cross-Roads, Virginia, an elderly colored gentleman, acts as chief cook. He is an honor to his profession, compiling with scientific skill the intricate dishes comprising our bill of fare. The officers have ten messes, each independent of the other, yet drawing their respective rations of bread and meat from the Confederate government. To each mess is assigned a steward, - generally a non-commissioned officer or private who is held as a prisoner of war.

The duty of the steward is to receive the allotment of cooked food for each mess, prepare tile table for meals, and attend to such duties as may be assigned him by the Sanitary Committee.

This committee consists of three members, appointed from time to time by the Association, and has control over all matters relating to the comfort and cleanliness of the rooms. When an officer is brought a prisoner to our warehouse, he is presented with a tin plate and pint cup: to complete his crockery, he is allowed to purchase a knife, fork, and spoon at blockade-prices: he is also furnished with a cotton coverlet, and five yards of brown cotton muslin, from which to prepare a bed-tick. When finished, be is permitted to go into the yard, where, from a large pile of straw, he fills the tick. Then, shouldering the unwieldy mattress, he staggers into the room and seeks a vacant spot, which hereafter shall be sacred to himself.

At eight o'clock each morning, the clerk of the prison, accompanied by the officer of the day, calls the roll. When an officer's name is called, be is required to pass by the clerk, remaining on his left until the roll is completed. Occasionally the officer in charge becomes negligent, and days pass without the attendance of the roll-sergeant. When daily required, it becomes one of the many petty annoyances of our prison-life.

At nine P. M. the officer of the day commands, "Lights out!" and we are expected to prepare for bed.

The strictness of this order varies with the disposition of the officers in charge. By some, the gas is immediately turned off, with the remark, in one instance, "We don't mind the gas, but you must go to bed at nine o'clock." Others allow one burner for any length of time we desire; yet occasionally we neglect to extinguish the remaining light, premising that our accommodating officer is on duty, - in which case one of the guard is ordered in to turn off the gas. If, as often happens, the soldier is from the backwoods, and ignorant of the nature of gas-fixtures, he awkwardly fumbles at them, turning on those burning dimly, and reversing things generally. So, if they do leave us in total darkness, we go to bed under the influence of a jolly good laugh, - the only exercise unrestricted by our prison-walls.

Amid the hearty roars of laughter and general burly-burly tumult of preparing our beds in the dark, a voice will be heard exclaiming, "Keep quiet, gentlemen, do, if you please: you might wake up the guard."

When an officer is desirous of visiting his men, confined in the adjacent warehouse, he makes his request known to the officer of the day, who asks permission of the commandant of the post. After repeated importunities, it will sometimes be granted a week subsequent to the first request.

The same delay often occurs in visiting sick or dying men in the hospital, as the following incident will illustrate: —

On the 17th of December, the writer was informed of the serious illness of a private in his company, - Robert McMennamin, of Philadelphia, - then in the hospital. Desirous of visiting him, application was made to the roll-sergeant of the prison, and through him to the officer of the day, who presented the request to the commandant of the post. In a few hours the reply came that the request could not be granted.

Later in the day, information was received that the poor fellow was very low, and could not possibly live through the night.

Resolved to see him, and ignoring prison-rules and persons, the writer watched the street and hailed the commandant through the bars: be came, listened, and granted the urgent demand. Placed in charge of the guard, we entered the hospital, and found McMennamin on the third floor, lying upon a cot, in the last stages of typhoid fever. As the writer bent over him and received his dying words, - "Lieutenant, see to my mother and little children," - and looked upon his haggard and wasted features, his shadow-like frame, sunken yet burning eye, he realized the unutterable horror of war.

That man dying in this lonely hospital, without a mother's gentle nursing or wife's thrilling tenderness to mellow the agony of death, - ah! it was a scene to touch the strong heart. No bolder spirit than his ever braved the bullet and bayonet, no truer heart beat round our camp-fires, no gayer voice rang with the wild notes of the bivouac-song. Loved, honored, the boast and pride of his companions, he died far from home and friends, and we know not where "he sleeps his last sleep."

Visitors occasionally arrive at the prison, requesting of the officer permission to see a prisoner known to them. They are referred to General Winder, to visit whom and procure his written authority often occupies half the day. In the mean time the young officer of the day has piloted through the room several strings of his personal friends, who gaze at us as if we were Hottentots or cannibals. When a Federal officer is visited, the officer of the day announces, in a loud tone, that "A gentleman wishes to see him:" upon his return from the prison-office he is immediately congratulated upon being released; and. it is only after repeated efforts that be convinces our little band that lie is still part of our confederacy.

Thirty minutes are allowed to visitors for conversation with a prisoner, which is generally held in the presence of several officers connected with the post.

Letters, after undergoing supervision in Norfolk, are sent to General Winder, where much delay occurs be-fore they are assorted and delivered. When asked for, the reply has been made, - "The postmaster has not bad time to arrange them." Occasionally they are brought to the prison-office, and subjected again to delay; and often it requires repeated and urgent requests for the privilege of assorting and delivering them.

At one time, the penny-post brought them direct from the post-office and delivered them personally to the prisoners, with which arrangement we were much pleased; but, owing to a personal difficulty between the commandant of the post and the letter-carrier, he discontinued bringing them. The privates suffer still more, as an increased interval-occurs with their letters between receipt and delivery.

It is amusing to observe the strictness and severity of our martinet officers of the day, when the details of the system upon which they act are so loosely connected together. The officers attached to the post are, one commandant, and four lieutenants, acting officers of the day, - one of whom inaugurates a system today, another tomorrow, and a third on the next has none: hence it is usual with us, when we wish to visit our men or present other requests, first to inquire who is officer of the day.

"Is Yankee-Killer?" "No." "Is the tall, accommodating officer?" "No." "Is the little fellow who drinks so much whiskey?" "Yes." Then we are safe in asking any thing, for he is both kind and drunk all the time.

In the early part of January, a chance occurred in the administration of our prison, caused by the departure of Captain Gibbs, the commandant of the post, to Salisbury, North Carolina, to assume charge of the Feder4, prisoners confined there, Captain A. C. Godwin, of the C. S. Army, being placed in command at Richmond.

On the day the change occurred, Brigadier-General Winder was seen to visit the prison-office; and it soon became known in the officers' room that our new commandant would inaugurate a fresh system of regulations, - which caused much amusement, as experience had taught us that prison-systems at our warehouse were ephemeral, and apt to vaporize upon the assumption of duty by each succeeding officer of the day.

We were informed that our errand-boy would cease his duties from that day; that hereafter no communication would be allowed with the "outer world;" that our luxuries must be in future procured through the corporal of the guard, who was instructed to carry every article purchased into the office for inspection. He obeyed his orders strictly in one instance, to the personal knowledge of the writer, by carrying to the officer of the day the basket containing the half-peck of potatoes required by "our mess." Previous to the advent of the new commandant, we habitually slumbered in the morning until eight or nine o'clock, as a resource to shorten the drear tediousness of the day; but, alas! on the 22d of January our realm of slumber was invaded, and we were aroused shortly after daybreak, and summoned to attend roll-call by the officer of the day surnamed "Yankee-Killer," accompanied by a file of Confederate soldiers. The astonishment with which the dreamy, half-recumbent sleepers received the call, the husky, inquiring voices, the reluctant, drowsy lassitude evinced by all, gave evidence of the unwelcome nature of the order.

With slow and intentionally lazy movements we prepared to obey: each garment was handled with a studied yet demure awkwardness; boots were put on the wrong foot, legs were reversed in pantaloons, and coats manœuvred to change front to rear. In the mean time, "Yankee-Killer," erect, attentive to the scene, with anger-clouds marring the effeminate delicacy of his features,

and feverish fingers restlessly fondling his sword-hilt, stood watching the sluggish preparations around him.

The Secesh guard looked upon the scene with astonished eyes. They could not realize that Yankee prisoners had courage sufficient to loiter in obeying an order from the stern yet truly harmless "Yankee-Killer." Thirty minutes elapsed before our clothing was adjusted properly for the ceremony of roll-call. Upon its completion, twenty voices were mingled in whistling the stirring, rollicking notes of "Yankee Doodle," and our friend marched out of the warehouse with his soldiers, probably anathematizing the unquenched spirit of "the eternal Yankee." With no other officer would these scenes have been enacted: lie alone appears to gratify his personal bitterness by drawing roughly the prison-shackles around us.

The regulations of our new commandant remained in force a few days, to annoy us and circumscribe our privileges, and then faded away like their predecessors.

To assist them in carrying on the commissary and hospital departments of the prisons, the Confederate authorities select the many assistants needed from the prisoners of war; and it must be acknowledged that they show great discrimination of character, - for they have chosen the most intelligent and serviceable. With the exception of the commissioned officers and attendant surgeons, the entire organization is composed of Federal assistants, who serve because they in a measure add to the comfort and welfare of their fellow-prisoners. The following remark made by a Confederate officer will show the estimate placed upon them: -

"There is more ingenuity and industry in the Yankee prisoners of Richmond than in the whole Southern Confederacy." Each floor containing privates is placed under the charge of one of their number, who is called the "sergeant of the floor," and often possesses an authority with the Secesh guards not usually exercised by prisoners over jailers. A few of them have the parole of the city, and often aid the officers in prison by making purchases, and bringing welcome intelligence of Secession reverses, - news considered contraband by the officer in charge.

At the time of the writer's advent in the warehouse, (October 24,) there had been considerable amelioration of the treatment and condition of the officers.

The Federal officers captured at Manassas were conveyed in the cars to Richmond, and thrust, with six hundred privates, into a warehouse, - where, sweltering with the heat of midsummer, with closed windows, and not room sufficient for them all to lie wedge-packed upon the floor, they remained, suffering and without food, for nearly twenty-four hours. They were then removed to their present quarters, yet were permitted to occupy only half the space subsequently allotted them, - the eastern section of the room being filled with the prison-guard and sentinels on post upon the same floor, with orders to bayonet all who approached within three feet of them.

For weeks they slept upon the floor, without blankets or overcoats, with blocks of wood - and not enough even of those - for pillows. It was not until three months had elapsed that the Confederate authorities furnished straw and cotton coverlets. Without servants, mess-tables, benches, or even knives and forks, they ate their meals cross-legged upon the floor, and off the

window-sills, in a primitive, yet (owing to the quantity furnished) ravenous, style. Without water-facilities, except a well in the yard, which was used not only by the officers, but also by five hundred men confined in the upper stories of the warehouse, one of whom only was allowed to use it at a time, hours would pass each morning before an officer was able to wash.

Visitors of all grades were allowed to enter the building, and often subjected them, in the presence of Confederate officers of the prison, to the vilest abuse. Outside of the warehouse, the square was for weeks packed with Rebels, who, whenever they caught a glimpse of a Federal officer, hooted at and insulted him. Richmond had, apparently, given up her rabble and filth to centre around the "Yankee" prisons, - as men, women, and even little children scarcely old enough to walk, united in heaping scurrilous abuse upon them.

Although in October the treatment of the officers has improved, that of the privates remains the same. Two thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight have been confined in Richmond since the commencement of hostilities; and their condition in the upper stories of the warehouse is harrowing to the sternest heart. With the floor for a bed, without straw, many without pantaloons, all with scant raiment, but few with blankets, whilst the keen air of mid-winter pierces through the ill-protected building, - receiving half the ration of food allowed in the Federal army, covered with vermin, starved and shivering, - they are crowded together in herds. Regardless of life, dead to the dictates of humanity, their jailers see them die daily, - apparently without sympathy, evidently without attempting to prevent mortality.

At ten o'clock they are furnished with breakfast, consisting of a small piece of cold beef and five ounces of bread; at seven P. M. they receive about a-half-pint of soup and five ounces of bread, with rice occasionally in lieu of meat. They receive but two meals per day, and those of the poorest quality. The rice is often wormy; the meat is cooked two days before consumed and lies exposed in a trough in the yard, becoming covered with dust and ashes, and the juice being extracted by making soup for one meal before the meat is served, dry and hard, for the next.

For two weeks the men have not been able to pro-cure water or brooms with which to scrub the floor, and the dirt and bones are swept into one corner: it cannot be thrown from the window, the sentinel having orders to shoot any one who approaches it.

Seven Federal prisoners have been shot dead by the sentinels for inadvertently leaning from the windows.

They have been known to hunt for a bone from the pile of filth, and gnaw eagerly upon it. There being but one hydrant in the yard, for the use of five hundred and fifty men, they are kept waiting for hours in line before being able to reach it; and the same buckets used for distributing meat and soup are furnished them for washing their bodies and clothes. One small stove is put into a room eighty feet long by fifty wide; and the men are forced to walk half the night to keep from freezing during the other half. Every day, from early morning until late at night, emaciated soldiers may be seen waiting longingly for the surplus bread and meat from the officers' table. It is a scene of piteous sadness when a steward brings forth a pan of food to distribute among them. As he appears, every soldier's eye glares with a hungry look, arms are reached forth beyond the

sentry's musket and each man jostles with his neighbor for a crust of bread, and crunches his share with eager, ravenous haste.

The hospitals for the prisoners of war are locate on Alain Street, adjacent to the prison-warehouse. The buildings are similar to the latter in every respect, consisting of three stories, each floor of which is subject to the following sanitary regulations: —

Four rows of camp-cots, containing eighty beds, occupy the room.

Twelve nurses are in attendance, - eight during the day, four at night; two sergeants, alternating day and night in their duties, who alone give the medicines to the sick; and one steward, having charge of the commissary and culinary departments.

For a long period previous to the release of the Federal sick and wounded prisoners, one hundred and sixty in number, they were attended by one physician only. Drs. Fletcher and Revere, Federal surgeons, were for a short time permitted to attend the hospitals, subject to a parole which confined them to the immediate vicinity of the prison: they were of incalculable benefit to the prisoners, who suffered much for the want of proper medical attendance.

When the sick were released and sent North, the Federal surgeons were abruptly informed that their parole had expired, and we welcomed them once more to our "pent-up Utica."

The food furnished in the hospital is of good quality and well cooked, consisting of beef, beef-soup, potatoes, coffee and tea, with molasses and milk occasionally.

The building is kept in excellent order, the attendants being prisoners of war; yet, owing to the sick being removed from the crowded prison direct to the hospital-wards, they transfer with them myriads of body-vermin; and often men have lain for days in a typhus condition, infested with vermin, nauseating to sight, yet incapable of being cleansed, owing to the nature of the disease. When a private becomes unwell, no medicine is furnished until he is sufficiently ill to be removed to the hospital. This fact, with the natural aversion they have to being removed thither, adds to the mortality.

We have been informed that upon the arrival of the Federal wounded prisoners from Manassas, the entire stock of lint and bandages in the hospital was furnished by the Unionists of Richmond. The papers at that time reeked with the foulest abuse of their government for devoting even a small portion of its resources of medical aid to the U.S. wounded, when their own were thronging the city, making it one vast charnel-house.

Looking from the west windows of our room, we see daily from one to three corpses brought from the hospital to the yard, and deposited in pine coffins. These are from the hospital exclusively used for prisoners. In the morning a hearse arrives, receives the coffins, and drives away, none knowing where or how the poor fellows are buried.

The disease most prevalent is typhoid fever; and the great mortality arises in part from patients being discharged from the hospital during the early stages of convalescence. A relapse occurs, and death generally ensues.

John Riley, sergeant of Company H, California Regiment, a man forty years of age, upright, brave, and a veteran soldier, became sick, and was taken to the hospital. In a few days he was brought, staggering from weakness, yet tinder guard, to his quarters. As lie passed across the officers' floor to the stairs, the writer said to him, in astonishment, "John, you are not able to come out. Why did you leave the hospital?"

"Ah, lieutenant," was the answer, - "I ate a little breakfast this morning; and when they found I could eat, they told me I must go back and make room for others sicker than I am."

During the suffering and destitution the men daily experienced, - suffering calculated to deaden every energy of life, and render turbid the natural buoyant impulses of man's nature, - the Federal privates had resources within themselves to soften the rigor of their confinement.

Often did we hear their fine glee-club blending voices in the notes of our national songs, whilst "Home, Sweet Home" would come trilling to our ears through the plank ceiling above us.

Theatrical amusements and working in bone and wood served to lessen the tedium of imprisonment.

Specimens of their skill in producing from bone trinkets of beautiful workmanship were bought with avidity by the Confederate and their own officers. Finger-rings of exquisite and unique chasing, Maltese crosses of elaborate finish, and curious national emblems of quaint design, portraying the skill whilst suggesting the patriotism of the carver, cut from bone and carved with the rudest tools, - a jack-knife and file, - were the results of the constant employment of the men.

At one period General Winder issued an order making files contraband of war within prison-walls; but the men laughed at the prohibition, and the order was never enforced.

Not in manual labor alone do they commemorate their sufferings and imprisonment: an association exists among them to perpetuate the records of their confinement, and to serve as a nucleus round which they may gather in brotherhood when the period of their incarceration is ended. It is called the "Union Prisoners' Association," and is governed by the following officers, all of whom belong to the rank and file of Colonel Baker's California Regiment: -

A. J. M'Cleary, President.
Alonzo M. Barnes, Vice-President.
Alva L. Morris, Recording Secretary.
William H. Sloanaker, Corresponding Secretary.
Harry A. Harding, Treasurer.
Executive Committee, William Scott, Charles B. Street, G. C. Snyder, A. J. Spellbrink, George Heston.

As donations of clothing arrived from the North, and detachments of the prisoners were sent home and to the South by the Confederates, the condition of those remaining in Richmond became improved.

Change of quarters in some instances enabled the men to cleanse themselves, and the liberal gifts of clothing from Northern friends prevented, in a measure, the further accumulation of body-vermin; and more space and increased water-facilities being furnished, all were able to keep their bodies clean and partially invigorate them by exercise, though restricted to their in-door quarters.

January 13 and 14 were gala-days within prison-walls. Appeals had been made by the imprisoned officers of Colonel Baker's California Regiment to the citizens of Philadelphia for the relief of the suffering privates in the Richmond warehouses. A warm response and welcome contributions quickly followed, - the packages arriving at the warehouse and being opened for distribution on the above days.

The officers' floor had the appearance of a bazaar rather than of a prison, as the different articles, consisting of coats, pants, vests, boots, shirts, drawers, stockings, towels, sponge, soap, combs, toothbrushes, sewing-bags, and even dressing-gowns, were strewn promiscuously around, - presenting to our shabby guards a picture of tempting comfort towards which in vain they "cast a wishful eye." The Governor of Massachusetts had forwarded in the latter part of December three hundred and fifty complete suits of clothing, - thus maintaining the reputation of that noble old State for generosity and liberal attention to the wants of her volunteer soldiers. The clothing for the California Regiment was contributed solely by private persons, residents of the city of Philadelphia, to whom a more fitting evidence of our gratitude could not be rendered than to depict the earnest, expectant eagerness with which the articles were received.

As name after name was called, and the poor fellows filed into the room in destitution and in rags, and were sent back with armfuls of the good things from our Northern homes, their features glowing with thankfulness and honest pride of their generous and time-honored birthplace, full well the scene would have repaid the donors for their liberal contributions. Kind friends at home, do you not see destitute men, after months of suffering, gathering the treasures you have sent them, in some selected corner of the old warehouse sacred to themselves, counting, handling, ay, gloating over the rare comforts of this pitiless winter?

They who sent this warm blanket, this heavy woollen shirt, knew not, perhaps, bow much of disease and death hung around these prison-walls, of the filth and destitution within them, now cleansed and alleviated by the responsive sympathy of their generous hearts.

The Hon. Mr. Faulkner, released by the United States government in exchange for the Hon. Mr. Ely, M.C., of Rochester, N.Y., visited us on the 21st day of December, 1861. We were solicitous of his unprejudiced opinion regarding the comparative treatment of Federal and Confederate prisoners of war, and were gratified at the tenor and courteous sincerity of his conversation.

He passed through the officers' floor, greeting us with much cordiality and evident sympathy. His recent arrival from France, brief residence in "Secessia," with his "wheelbarrow experience" in Fort Warren, had, no doubt, mellowed the bitterness of his Southern heart, - as we were thoroughly impressed with his kindness of manner and the interest be evinced in the details of our imprisonment and treatment.

After examination of our quarters, he said, "But little difference existed between them and those of the Confederate prisoners at Fort Warren, excepting in out-door exercise, which was imperatively needed, and, he hoped, would soon be allowed us."

He expressed his opinion that a general exchange would speedily occur; by which remark be added a new chapter to our already voluminous text-book, "Hart on Exchange."

After conversing socially for a short time, be was passing from the building when an officer suggested that probably he was desirous of visiting the quarters of the privates. He remarked that he had just passed through them. Upon being informed of his error, - that those he was now in belonged to the officers, - he appeared much astonished and desired to be shown those of the privates.

He was led into the tipper stories, and evinced surprise and pity at the condition and treatment of our soldiers.

During his visit to our warehouse, he expressed the following opinions: -

"That United States officers in Richmond received treatment similar to I that of the Confederate privates in the North.

"That United States privates were treated much worse than Confederate privates were in the North.

"That the privateers North received every comfort possible under the circumstances.

"That the Federal hostages in Richmond jail, were treated far worse than the privateers were in the North."

Mr. Faulkner has placed himself under the ban of Secession displeasure by maintaining a "masterly inactivity" on the subject of the Rebellion, since his return from the North. The Richmond press coarsely abuse him for a want of patriotism, intimating that he is at heart a "Unionist;" and Confederate officers have declared in our prison that a shrewd "Yankee" trick had been played upon them in exchanging Mr. Faulkner for Mr. Ely, - that it inaugurated a new system of exchange, "a Yankee for a Yankee."

Union men - or, more properly, prisoners under suspicion of Union sentiments - are confined in an adjacent warehouse. The condition of our own soldiers is harrowing to the heart; but sympathy, pity, and impulsive horror are called forth by the contemplation of the treatment received by the Union men.

Taken from the backwoods, often whilst in the field at the plough, and conveyed to Richmond, without change of clothing, they are huddled together, two hundred and eighty-nine in number, in the lower room of the warehouse occupied by the Federal privates. Young boys, scarcely old enough to know what Union means, old men, ragged, unshaven, filthy, trembling with age, - in one instance totally blind, - a few so helpless that they were led about the room, - covered with vermin to such an extent that even the vermin-afflicted soldiers shun contact with them, - the ignorant and educated, the filthy and refined, are mingled in one mass of misery and stench. Nearly all are afflicted with incipient consumption, brought on by want of proper raiment and by the cold, biting draughts through the building. Two have died in their plank bunks on the prison-floor, from lack of attention and medical assistance; ten per cent. have died in the hospitals; whilst two-thirds of those taken there die in consequence of the fatal progress the disease has made previous to their removal from the prison. Many have an idiotic appearance; whilst all are ignorant of the charges against them, but presume in every case that it is from suspicion of "Union sentiments."

A few voted the Union ticket; but many know nothing of the political causes of the war. Nearly all are entirely destitute of money, and a few so utterly dead to shame that no employment is too repulsive or degrading for them. Instances have been known where they would beg permission to hunt vermin upon a soldier's shirt for a pittance of money wherewith to buy bread.

A permanent commission was appointed by the Confederate government, to whom were referred all cases of men "under suspicion." Yet day after day passed, and they still lay in prison, without trial and without knowledge of the charges against them. By the merciful ordination of Providence, the commissioner was removed by death, and the Confederate government appointed a man who has shown that regard for humanity which, when blended with justice, constitutes the purely upright judicial.

At the present time (February 1,1862) few Union prisoners remain in the Richmond warehouses. When brought to trial, few refused to take the oath of allegiance, and on taking the oath they were sent to their homes, - perhaps to find them in desolation and ruins.

Through all time will the foul stigma of inhumanity cling to this great rebellion, when the sad history of the Union prisoners is told by the future historian.

Union prisoners of a different character and standing are occasionally incarcerated in the prison ware-house occupied by the officers, but generally for a very short period, as the association would yield pleasure to Unionists, and welcome intelligence would be given to the prisoners.

During the early part of January, a wealthy and influential citizen of Richmond became an inmate of the officers' room for a few hours. His name will not be given, as he is still a resident of Richmond, and we do not wish to compromise his, interests, and perhaps injure the cause he so nobly yet discreetly represents amidst the rebellious herd around him.

He is a relative of a distinguished physician of Philadelphia, and has been from the commencement of our political troubles a staunch Union man.

During his temporary absence from Richmond, his son, against the father's express desire and command, accepted a commission in the Confederate army, and previous to his confinement among us the father had been visiting his son at Manassas. Whilst there, the usual holidays of the season opened, and he bad sub-scribed liberally in behalf of his son to an entertainment given by the officers to commemorate the *auspicious* opening of the New year.

Whilst at the social board, unconscious of the evil gathering around him, he was placed under arrest, and conveyed to Richmond, where we had the pleasure of greeting him, openly and without danger to his person, at our rough yet social mess-table. The few hours he passed in our midst impressed us with the earnest sincerity of his Union sentiments, whilst the courteous and refined urbanity of his manners rendered his society pleasing and grateful during our hours of seclusion from the "outer world."

His early removal from the warehouse caused general regret. During his brief stay, he informed us that whilst at Manassas he was convinced that treachery was rife in high quarters of the United States Army, - that daily information passed from the Federal lines to those of the Confederates at Manassas. - So convinced was he of this fact, and so thoroughly had he identified persons concerned in this treacherous villany, that measures were at once taken by a prominent officer among us to furnish the United States government with the information, which was done within ten days from the date of the Unionist's arrival in the warehouse.

He assured us of the immense amount of dissatisfaction in the rank and file of the Confederate Army; that, were it in their power, two-thirds of the Rebel army would go home: that they would do so upon the expiration of the twelve months' service, he had not the slightest doubt.

These facts, with many others relative to the Union sentiment in Richmond, were gladly received by us; for we bad almost desponded of ever catching a ray of hope through the bars.

Our friend had no fears of a lengthy confinement, as he had many influential friends, among whom might be classed a few of the bitterest Rebels of Richmond. He anticipated being released in the morning; yet his hopes were realized sooner than he had expected, although in a ludicrous and singular manner. At twilight of the day he arrived, a private carriage was observed to stop at the prison-door. A lady of fashionable and refined appearance alighted, approached the sentinel, and demanded imperatively to see our Union friend. The sentinel refused her admittance. The lady insisted in a louder tone, and a little crowd gathered round the door, whilst the prisoners collected at the windows at the unusual sight.

Louder and louder grew the lady's voice, sterner the sentinel's, until the commandant of the post appeared.

He was immediately accosted by the lady, who demanded admission, at the same time informing him that "she was as good a Rebel as any in the States." Upon his refusal, she again approached the sentinel, and persisted in passing. Our worthy jailer, taking her by the arm, led her to the carriage, at the same time speaking a few words in a low tone. She entered, and, in an excited voice, ordered the negro to drive home.

Turning to the sentinel, the commandant sternly ordered him to bayonet any who approached, without authority, within three feet of the door, without regard to sex, age, or position, concluding with the words, "Remember, I order you." He then quickly paced the pavement to and fro for some time, in deep thought. Finally he entered the building, and inquired for our Union friend, who passed into the office with him. In a few moments he returned for his carpet-bag, ignorant of his destination, yet surmising that he would be paroled.

We have not seen him since that moment; yet many of us judge him to be another political inmate of Richmond jail.

The prisoners are guarded according to the following regulations, copied from those posted on the walls of the prison-office: -

1st. The roll-call of prisoners will commence at seven o'clock A.M., and the officer of the day will superintend the roll-call in person.

2d. Either the officer of the day, or of the guard, must be at the guard-room at all hours; and the guards off post are required to remain always at their quarters, ready for service.

3d. Prisoners have not permission, nor will they be allowed, to pass from floor to floor, or house to house, or be absent from the building to which they are assigned, except with the permission of the commanding officer, or officer of the day.

4th. No prisoner, whatever be his rank, will be allowed to leave the prison to which he is assigned, under any pretext whatever, without permission of the commanding officer; nor shall any prisoner be fired at by a sentinel or other person, except in case of revolt or attempted escape.*

5th. The guard, whether on post or otherwise, will have no conversation with citizens or prisoners, nor will they permit it between citizens or others and prisoners.

6th. They will not permit letters, packages, or parcels of any kind, to be sent into or out of the prisons or hospitals, without permission from the officer commanding, the surgeon, the officer of the day, or officer of the guard.

7th. They will not, under any circumstances, pass persons into or out of the prisons, except by permission of the officer commanding or officer of the day; and any person presenting a pass or permit will be directed to the commanding officer's office.

8th. Except in cases of special permit, the interview between visitors and prisoners must be had at office of commanding officer.

9th. All lights, except hospital's, must be extinguished at nine o'clock P.m.

10th. All prison-gates to be closed at six P.M.

11th. No visitors will be permitted to enter the prison, or have any conversation whatever with the prisoners, except by special permit of General Winder.

12th. A number of the guard will be detailed between the hours of ten A.M. and twelve o'clock M., daily, to make purchases for the prisoners. At no other time will they be permitted to leave the post.

13th. The first duty of the guard, daily, will be that of policing each floor, and the entire premises of each prison; and the officer of the day will see that this duty is rigidly performed.

14th. The firing of a single gun at night, or in the daytime, will be the signal for the immediate assembling, under arms, of the guard, excepting the sentinels on post, and, when so assembled, the officer of the guard will keep them at attention for orders.

15th. The officer of the guard is required, by frequent inspection, to see that the arms of the guard, particularly at night, are in condition for constant use.

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*The sentinels have killed seven and wounded three Federal prisoners for looking out of the windows.

CHAPTER IV.

A DAY IN THE PRIVATES' PRISON.

(From the Diary, of Sergeant A. P. SCHURTZ, Col. Baker's Cal. Reg.)

November 10, 1861. - Having no bed but the hard floor, and no covering but our wearing-apparel, the cold air this morning was all-sufficient to arouse us early and cause an extra promenade of the floor to warm up the blood. Taking an early start, I deemed it possible to get down to the yard and wash before roll-call, and had so far succeeded as to be within two of getting out. At this critical moment (to me) the Rebel officers came in, and, in no very respectful manner, ordered all hands up-stairs. Nothing but an unreasoning obedience is permitted with these gentlemen, and, with any thing but pleasant feelings, I returned.

This diurnal duty of roll-call being accomplished, another rush was made for the steps, and, although going at "double-quick," I came in line some twenty-five to the rear. Only two being allowed out at a time, and they staying as long as possible, nearly an hour had elapsed ere I had completed my morning ablutions. The authorities here not being remarkable for their sagacity, or else being careless of any convenience afforded, seem to think *one pump* sufficient for the uses of five hundred men. We endure it, but not good-humoredly.

After our wash, instead of having nice linen towels, we appropriate our coat-tails and shirt-sleeves, - which I judge improved but little our appearance in the way of cleanliness.

By this time it was eight A. M., and our room was all astir. It were folly for us to think of a meal we once knew by the name of breakfast, for it seemed as though the *fast* would never *break*; and the next important question that presented itself was, how to pass the time.

In one corner of the room, a member of Colonel Baker's California Regiment had a morning paper, and crowded around him were perhaps fifty, endeavoring to hear the news. I certainly was among the number, and discovered that the destination of the "Yankee fleet" and abuse of the "Hessians" generally constituted the burden of the song chimed by the "Richmond Dispatch." The news being devoured, and the prospects of being set to work on Rebel entrenchments, or of being hung, having received a full discussion by groups assembled here and there, an hour was spent in dreamy idleness, when suddenly a cry of "Bread on the first floor!" rang through the room. Delightful intelligence to men who had eaten nothing for sixteen and a half hours, and then only half as much as they wanted! In a few minutes the bread arrived upon the floor, and, being divided into our respective squads, the half-loaf - weighing perhaps five ounces - was distributed to each.

The avidity with which each man gnawed his crust was ample evidence of his hunger. But a few moments elapsed before we received our allowance of boiled beef without salt; yet the bread by this time, in many cases, was all devoured. Breakfast being over, a sporting crowd, composed of members of the 1st California, 15th and 20th Massachusetts, seated themselves on our only chair (the floor) and engaged in an exciting game of "penny poker;" others pitched pennies, played euchre, draughts, &c. But the main portion would for a while gaze out on the capital of

Rebeldom, and then, taking the floor for a stool, sit like "Patience on a monument, smiling at grief." In retired spots could be seen the more thoughtful, perusing with manifest delight a Bible or Testament, rendered doubly sacred by being the last token of the affection of a doting parent or loving sister.

Looking upon these scenes, in such a situation, the feelings that fill a man's bosom are indescribable. It is here that we feel the loss of home comforts, our jovial associates, and all we once held dear; but "Hope is our sheet-anchor," and buoys up the unconquerable American's spirit.

From twelve M. to four P. M. another important duty must be performed, and, as all hands are deeply interested, we participate with a lively interest. Our combined effort is, therefore, a war of extermination on "the defenceless" vermin, which have become so numerous and extremely annoying that an existence mingled with any happiness must result not only in "subjugating" these pestiferous devils, but completely "crushing them out."

Our sentinels keep a vigorous look-out that we do not get our beads out of the windows and thereby get a snuff of fresh air; or, if we should happen to transgress thus much upon God's atmosphere from a third-story window, be waits not to warn us, but, without any scruples, does his utmost to be the "death of a d--d Yankee." We had a practical illustration of their feelings to-day, by being fired at while gazing out of a closed window. The bullet missed the head of a comrade by only a few inches, and passed through the roof. It is needless to add that the sentinel was considered a "brave" by his ignorant and brutal comrades.

The time intervening between a meal nominally known as breakfast and that of supper, is about seven and a half hours, which brings supper (we have no dinner) at seven P.M. Besides our delicate five ounces of bread, we are then favored with a half-pint of soup, made from the fat extracted from the boiled beef eaten in the morning, with a slight mixture of Indian meal. At the hour mentioned, six dirty buckets full of this delicacy are brought us by the darkey prisoners under guard. The appointed sergeant deals out each little mite, and a very short time suffices to finish our not very sumptuous repast.

Cards being scarce, only a few can indulge in that delightful amusement; and various are the means devised for the evening's entertainment. This evening we were treated with songs both comic and pathetic, tragic scenes by those who had at some time figured in some capacity on the stage in Boston, Philadelphia, or New York, and ending with extemporaneous speeches on subjects better calculated to amuse than to instruct. The "universal Yankee" is undoubtedly here, and he is determined to make prison-life as endurable and pleasant as circumstances and the Rebels will permit.