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THE TWO-FACED SHIELD.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF THE WAR.

BY A VIRGINIAN.

[First Paper.]

IT is with unfeigned reluctance that I have undertaken to write upon subjects which have been so recently and exhaustively treated by contemporaneous pens and pencils; to pass over ground which has been illuminated by the calcium light of the American press; or to touch on questions which have been subjected to the intelligent scrutiny of Congressional Committees; yet I am encouraged by the hope that views taken from an original and somewhat peculiar stand-point may still possess sufficient attraction to justify their publication, and that a personal narrative, with all its incidental trivialities, errors, inconsistencies, and egotism, may find an acceptable apology in the superior interest of the grand historic drama with which it is interwoven.

A native of the valley of the Shenandoah, I have passed the greater part of my life on the Northern border of Virginia—a region which, from its geographical position and mixed population, has always been debatable ground between the contending opinions of the age, and which eventually became a most important theatre of the war, resulting from these opinions. It is thus that I became, almost from

necessity, an interested observer of many of the opening scenes of the contest, and subsequently an active participator in its armed solution.

During the winter of 1860-61 I was residing at my father's house in Martinsburg, occupied with my private affairs and arranging plans for a future of peace and seclusion. These dreams were disturbed from time to time by the indications of the approaching storm, but I resolutely closed my eyes and stopped my ears, determined not to be disturbed. I had never taken any active interest in the party politics of the day, and was the less disposed to mingle in the present strife, as I sympathized with neither of the extreme factions which, from opposite quarters, seemed to be mutually intent on breaking down the Government and destroying the peace and prosperity of the country. I saw nothing in the contest but the rage of adverse dogmatism, sharpened by the baser lust for official plunder—that party spirit, which, Addison says, “robs men, not only of all honor and decency, but of every particle of common sense.”

In the rapid progress of events, however, it became manifest that the questions before the country were not to be put aside with this cyn-

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VOL. XXXIII.—No. 193.—A

that he flourished in his hand. He hummed—the worn-out old creature who had not sung since his childhood—hummed, as he paced the platform, the few fragments he could remember of a worn-out old song.

The train was due as early as eight o'clock that night. At five minutes past the hour the whistle sounded. In less than five minutes more the passengers were getting out on the platform.

Following the instructions that had been given to him, Mr. Bashwood made his way as well as the crowd would let him along the line of carriages; and discovering no familiar face on that first investigation, joined the passengers for a second search among them in the custom-house waiting-room next.

He had looked round the room, and had satisfied himself that the persons occupying it were all strangers, when he heard a voice behind him, exclaiming, "Can that be Mr. Bashwood!"

He turned in eager expectation, and found himself face to face with the last man under heaven whom he had expected to see.

The man was—MIDWINTER!

THE FALL OF RICHMOND.

NOTWITHSTANDING the current representations as to the privations and hardships of the denizens of the Confederate capital, life in Richmond during the war was not altogether one of discomforts. As to material wants, almost every thing for their supply, not only as to necessities but luxuries, could be had, if one only had the money, and fortunately Confederate notes were almost as abundant as "leaves in Vallambrosa." True, the war rested like a heavy incubus upon the heart; but even that in time we became used to; and there never was the terror and apprehension for the safety of the city which outsiders probably supposed. General Lee and his army were between us and danger; and that was enough to quiet all fears. So that we could hear the thunder of battle so near that it seemed almost in the city, and still move on in our usual occupations without much uneasiness as to how it would terminate.

Indeed there was even an amount of gayety which seemed altogether untimely. Expensive parties, balls, private theatricals, and other amusements abounded. Richmond never was gaymer than during the winter of 1864-65; so much so, indeed, that the clergymen of the various denominations felt called upon to remonstrate from the pulpit; while the more religious portion of the population were stimulated, by way of counteracting the evil tendencies and of averting the judgments of Heaven, to be still more attentive on the daily prayer meetings, which often filled the largest churches, and seemed characterized by great devoutness and fervor.

The spring of 1865 found things much in this condition. One day, not long before the Confederate Congress adjourned, I happened to cast

my eye toward the Capitol building, and saw that the flag raised to indicate that they were in session had by mistake been put up that day bottom upward, and was in fact "Union down," the signal of distress. Superstitious minds might have read in this apparent omen the coming doom of the Confederacy; but few, if any, took that view.

Occasionally expressions were heard from individuals indicative that their confidence and hope were failing them. One very intelligent and well known gentleman so entirely lost heart that it became a matter of common remark and somewhat of merriment. But the most discouraging person I encountered was a member of the State Legislature of high standing, who had evidently "given up." Meeting with him at a friend's one evening, his conversation was almost entirely on that subject. Among other things he stated, substantially, that General Lee had been before a Committee of the Senate, I think the previous November, and had stated that he could hold out if he could be reinforced with some twenty thousand fresh troops; that in February—three months after—before that or a similar committee, General Lee had stated that if he had fifty thousand reinforcements he could maintain his ground; but that he had neither received the fifty thousand nor the twenty thousand, but had lost by sickness and desertion; so that the inference was irresistible that he could not hold his ground. Such statements were discouraging; but perhaps the impression made on most of the auditors was simply that that man was no longer loyal to the cause.

Rumors had, it is true, been coming from the army that the men were losing heart; that patient and enduring as they had shown themselves, there was a limit even to their powers; that they could not suffer on, and starve on, and fight on, year after year interminably, and that, too, without the prospect of any increment of fresh material to meet the constantly accumulating and overwhelming forces they were called to confront. There was, indeed, but too much truth and force in what they said; and one could not help feeling that such a struggle could not be protracted very much longer—especially, too, in view of the constantly increasing scarcity of food, and the equally alarming failure of the facilities of transportation. Still, we had been enabled to hold out so far against what might have been regarded as impossibilities; and we hoped it might continue to be so.

The first Sabbath in April, 1865, dawned upon us in this state of things. It was a bright, pleasant day. The churches were full—as they generally were—and the ministers gave their people such truth as they considered most appropriate. At the church which I attended the text and sermon seemed almost prophetic. The words of Scripture were, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter;" and the object of the discourse was to render the hearers resigned and contented under even the most mysterious and unwelcome allotments of Providence.

The sermon over, the congregation joined in the Doxology to Old Hundred, accompanied by the grand notes of the organ, and then reverently dispersed. That was the last service ever to be held there under the Confederate Government. As I was passing out through the vestibule two friends came up, and said they wondered what could be going on; that there must be something of unusual importance; that the President and some of the other high functionaries had been sent for out of church; and that there was evidently some exciting news.

On leaving the church-door I saw a bank officer meet another one for whom he appeared to have been in search, and as I passed them I heard a few words indicative of trouble. Just then espying a young man whose connection with the Government ought to make him acquainted with any important intelligence, I asked him what it was that was producing such a ferment. He replied that he was not at liberty to communicate what he knew, but that there had been terrible fighting near Petersburg.

"Favorable or unfavorable?"

"So far as we have heard not favorable." Then, in a subdued voice, he added, "I'll tell you that I shouldn't be surprised if we are all away from here before twenty-four hours."

This was news indeed! No wonder the President hurried out of church, and no wonder bank officers held solemn council.

Returning to the house of the friends with whom I was sojourning, and believing that there need be and could be no longer any secrecy about such events, I mentioned at the dinner-table what had been told me. The ladies were greatly agitated and distressed—apprehending violence from the dreaded "Yankoes," and also lamenting the separation which the withdrawal of the Confederate army would make between them and their young relatives who were in it. In a moment the deep pall of uncertainty and gloom was cast over every thing. What scenes that day or the next would disclose, who could tell?

Before we had arisen from dinner one of the young gentlemen of the family connected with a government bureau came in, with a countenance indicative of serious work, asking that his trunk might be gotten, and adding that they were to be off at six o'clock that evening—that the city was to be evacuated! This was the signal for every one of our little company to be on the move to save what he could. Silverware was quickly collected for hiding; watches were gathered up to be sent away; spoons and forks likewise; and every preparation, practicable in the short time and amidst the excitement and confusion, made for the speedily anticipated pillage.

In the course of the afternoon a relative of the writer came over from Petersburg, bringing us the first definite news of the breaking of the Confederate lines, and the disaster General Lee's army had experienced. Of the full extent of it, however, he was not aware. From

his telling us that the tobacco warehouses had been burned to prevent the tobacco from falling into the Federal hands, we knew that Petersburg was gone.

About nine o'clock in the evening, the young man already referred to not having got off as soon as he had expected, came in and told my relative, who was anxious to get to his family up the country, that his only chance was to go to the dépôt immediately, that the last Confederate trains would leave in the course of the night, and that to-morrow all intercourse would be cut off. Being better acquainted than my friend, and knowing he would encounter difficulties, I went with him to the dépôt. Arrived there, we encountered a file of soldiers obstructing the entrance, and the officer in command positively refusing admittance to any one who had not a pass from the Secretary of War. But that condition was an impossibility. Finding the Secretary of War, under such circumstances, would indeed be "like hunting a needle in a hay-stack." There was no other way, therefore, than just to stand our ground, hoping that something might "turn up." Numerous were the arrivals while we stood there, multitudinous the applications, appeals, and remonstrances, but all to no purpose. The man of the "stars" was inexorable.

In the course of an hour or two one of the trains moved off. "There goes the President and his Cabinet." And sure enough they were gone; and that was the last of the Confederate Government in its capital. The Argus-eyed sentinels must have a little relaxed their vigilance after this, for my friend, who had been on a reconnoissance, soon came back with the report that he had found a place where we could flank the guards and get into the dépôt. This we accomplished. But here a new difficulty had to be encountered. We could find no admittance into the cars. There were numerous trains—all, I believe, rough box cars—waiting their turn to go. One after another of them we applied to, but in vain. One was the Treasury Department, another the Quarter-Master's Department, another the Telegraph Department, and so on. Most of them contained ladies as well as gentlemen. "Can't we get in here?" "No! Impossible! we're crowded to suffocation." Passing on to another: "Won't you just let one gentleman in here? His home and family are up the country, and he is anxious to get to them." "No, no! we're too full already. This car is marked for 14,500 pounds, and we have 18,000 in it now. We'll break down before we get five miles."

We were about giving up in despair, when there hove in sight a man with a lantern, escorting two gentlemen, whom he evidently intended to put into one of the cars. "Now," said I to my friend, "be on the alert, and when he pushes those two up I'll push you immediately following, as if one of the party." We did so, and succeeded. They found out the ruse, it is true, and I heard them berating my friend as an in-

truder; but having the "nine points of the law," he held his ground. Many a day elapsed before I heard what became of him; but I had the satisfaction of seeing him safely out of Richmond, for I stood there until his train was gone, and indeed until all were gone. One after another they rolled off; the guards dispersed; and the dépôt was forsaken and desolate, never more to be visited by Confederates.

Some were very slow to realize what was going on. While engaged in our efforts to get a place in the cars a clerical friend came up, and, recognizing us in the dark, asked if there was any chance of getting away. He said that he had been preaching down on the lines some six or seven miles below the city, and that in the afternoon the colonel of the regiment where he was advised him that he had better go up to Richmond. This, however, our friend not wishing to do, and finding that the colonel seemed to be getting his command ready to move, he thought he would go over to another point on the lines and spend the night there. But on arriving there he found that they also were going to Richmond. As he now had no place to stay, he concluded, though reluctantly, to go along. As they advanced the numbers tending that way thickened, but still for some time he did not see the true state of the case, and it was not until he was half-way to Richmond that the unwelcome truth at last flashed upon him. He was under the influence of this fresh discovery when he encountered us in the dépôt—his mental perturbations by no means allayed by the struggle to get off, and particularly by the fact that when I pushed him up into the same car into which I had thrust my relative they repelled him; so that when I last saw him he was in a most disconsolate and hopeless condition. But he must have got off after all, as I heard of him afterward in North Carolina.

During our long tarrying at the dépôt one of the batteries from below—the last, it was said—came up, carrying torches and cheering, I suppose to keep their spirits up. They moved off over the bridge, thus completing the departure of the entire army from our side of the river, and thus completing also the abandonment of the capital of the Southern Confederacy.

The curtain had now fallen on one act of the stupendous drama; it was soon to rise on what, in its opening at least, would prove even more striking and impressive. But the interval between the two acts was one of painful suspense. The Government and army which for years had guarded and protected us was gone; that other army which had been stretching out its hands in vain to grasp this most coveted prize—that army which had come so near that they could hear our church-bells and we could see the flash and smoke of their guns—that army which had been so repeatedly foiled, and with such sore disappointment and terrible slaughter—that army, probably by this time exasperated and infuriated to the last degree, was to be upon us with the dawn of the coming day, and we helplessly at

their mercy. What will be the fate of this beautiful city? what the fate of these hitherto happy homes? what the fate of these noble-hearted and lovely women? The accounts which we had received of the burning and pillage of Columbia were fresh in our minds.

After seeing the last of the Confederate Government I did what not very many in Richmond did that night—went to bed and slept soundly. About half past four o'clock in the morning I was awakened from profound slumbers by a tremendous concussion. But I fell asleep again, and slept until about half an hour longer, when I was aroused by what might almost have awakened the dead. The earth seemed fairly to writhe as if in agony, the house rocked like a ship at sea, while stupendous thunders roared around. This was the blowing up of the Confederate magazine; and this was the opening gun of the august and sublime pageant of that ever-memorable day. Soon after the flames burst out from the tobacco warehouses, set on fire to prevent the tobacco from becoming spoils to the enemy, and proving the cause of the terrific conflagration which ensued. The bridges across the river—one of them the lofty Petersburg Railroad bridge, about a mile long—were speedily long lines of flame; while on the side of the city the devouring element set to work in fearful earnest. The fire had scarcely got fairly under way when the arsenal, containing, it was said, seven hundred and fifty thousand loaded shells, and the dépôts of cartridges and fixed ammunition, with the laboratory and its combustibles, began to explode. This was not instantaneous, but continuous, resembling the cannonading and musketry of a heavy battle, and lasting through most of the day.

Imagine our condition, left by our own army and anticipating the enemy's; the entire business part of the city on fire—stores, warehouses, manufactories, mills (Galligo's the largest in the world), dépôts, and bridges—all, covering acres, one sea of flame, and as an accompaniment the continuous thunder of exploding shells, and in the midst of it that long, threatening, hostile army entering to seize its prey—imagine all this, and you will probably conclude that those who were there will not soon forget that third day of April, 1865, in Richmond.

Our unwelcome visitors were not so quick to avail themselves of the now open door into Richmond as we had anticipated, some hours elapsing before the first of them made their appearance. My host, anxious to get his ship in order for the coming storm, went down to his place of business early in the morning, and returning soon afterward, announced to us that "the Yankees" were in the city, he had seen the first of them pass up Main Street. It would be impossible to convey to any one not of our way of thinking and feeling the impression produced by that piece of intelligence; the disappointment and regret, the realization that all we had been looking and hoping and struggling for through weary years was gone, and that all we

had most deprecated had come; that our mortal foe was at last in the fruition of the spoils he had most desired; that the fortunes of war had made him our master, and placed us in the position of a conquered people. Such thoughts, mingled with anxiety as to what was to be our fate, flowed freely through our minds when assured beyond all doubt that "the Yankees" were in the city.

Notwithstanding the uncertainty as to how far it would be safe for a citizen to venture out, I determined to make the experiment, and see what was to be seen. Never expecting and fervently hoping never again to have the opportunity to see a victorious army enter a conquered capital, I was willing to run some risk. Moreover, I wished if possible to save some valuable papers I had down town from what now threatened to be an almost unlimited conflagration.

I found the streets thronged with the black population, but almost absolutely and literally forsaken by the whites. Richmond seemed in a night to have been transformed into an African city. On getting down as far as the Powhatan House, opposite the Capitol, I at length espied one white man, and as he proved to be an old acquaintance I joined him, and we stood together in the piazza looking on at the spectacle. The United States flag was floating from the Capitol—a sight which had not been seen for many a day; but instead of taking the place of the Confederate flag, it was put up, through some mistake, on the opposite end of the building, thus occupying the place of the State flag; and thus, as some facetiously suggested, unintentionally symbolizing the triumph of Federal centralized power over States Rights. The authorities were probably never apprised of the *faux pas*, inasmuch as the Stars and Stripes were still waving over the old Virginia end of the building when I left, some weeks afterward.

Some of the troops had stacked their arms in the Capitol Square, and were gazing curiously around; others were marching thither through the street before us. The latter attracted much attention from the colored crowds who thronged the sidewalks. I watched with some interest the swarthy spectators, anxious to see how they regarded the advent of those whose coming promised to introduce them to liberty and political equality. A large portion of them—very much the largest, I think—simply looked on, as upon any other novel and remarkable spectacle. Here and there a man waved his hat and huzzaed. The most marked demonstrations were the shaking of hands by those nearest with the passing troops, much of which was done. Some of the women courtesied and bowed at a great rate. One little weazened-faced old woman, her head crowned with a conical turban, seized a soldier's hand in both of hers, and shaking it up and down like a pump-handle, said, "Welcum, masta! you's welcum! Glad to see you, Sah—glad to see you! Thank de Lord, dese hands do no mo' wurk!" A condi-

tion of elegant and luxurious repose was the happy consummation to which she congratulated herself this glorious day was to introduce her.

Becoming after a while sufficiently assured to venture beyond our post of observation in the Powhatan piazza, I pushed through the swarthy crowd around into Governor Street, just opposite the Governor's house. Scarcely had I reached this point when the first body of colored cavalry came moving up the hill. Their appearance called forth a greeting from their brethren in the streets. No sooner had the cavalry fairly comprehended by whom they were surrounded than they returned the greeting with a will, rising in their stirrups, waving their flashing sabres, their white eyes and teeth gleaming from rows of dark visages, and rendering the air with wild huzzas. Considering that they had been slaves, that they were suddenly released and armed, and that they were now entering our city as conquerors, one could not look upon these men without a shudder at the possible impending horrors.

Passing on down Governor Street I persevered until I reached Main Street. Here the spectacle again was most remarkable. The progress of the fire rendered it certain that the contents of the stores and shops would be destroyed, and hence, possibly, the throngs of negroes set to the work of helping themselves to whatever they liked. Here would come one rolling before him a barrel of flour; here another with a bag of coffee or sugar upon his back; another with a bag full of shoes; another with four or five bolts of cotton cloth on his head; another with a bolt of woolen goods under his arm; a woman with an armful of hoop-skirts; a girl with a box of spool thread—and so on through the crowd. But yesterday these articles—run at great risk and expense through the blockade—were bringing fabulous prices; to-day he who wills may have them for the carrying away. Never in the history of Richmond were the colored population so well stocked with necessities and luxuries.

Continuing to thread my way through the crowd, I reached the point on Main Street for which I was aiming. The papers I was in quest of were in a room on the fourth floor, which had to be reached through a store on the first-floor, a tailor's shop on the second, and so on. Entering the store, whose doors were wide open, I saw no one but a colored man, who was filling a bag with shoes from the shelves, all the while talking to himself, and swearing he would have them. And have them he did, for there was no longer any one there to dispute his right. Ascending to the tailor's shop I found it deserted, and the rolls of cloth for which hundreds of dollars a yard had been asked lying there waiting to be burned up. While getting together my papers the flames burst through the windows opposite, and came lashing half-way across the street. There was no time to lose; and as I emerged from the front-door the heated atmos-

phere was already most stifling. I cast a farewell look up Main Street. The *Dispatch* and *Enquirer* newspaper offices were all in a blaze, the banks and the American Hotel were just catching, and from the doors and windows of some of the fashionable stores volumes of flame were bursting.

Up to this time I do not remember to have seen a fire-engine at work. The young men had left with the evacuating army; the older men, fearing pillage and violence to their families, remained at home to do what they could to protect them; and consequently there was nobody to look after the fire. I myself went to one of the Federals, and told him that unless they went to work to arrest the conflagration the entire city would be swept away. Soon after the military authorities organized the crowds of blacks as a fire corps, and this with their own efforts, and the steam-engines at length brought to play, was instrumental in checking and ultimately stopping the tempest of fire. But all the forenoon, and till well on in the afternoon, flame and smoke and burning brands and showers of blazing sparks filled the air, spreading still further the destruction, until it had swept before it every bank, every auction store, every insurance office, nearly every commission house, and most of the fashionable stores, together with one of the prominent churches, and, as before-mentioned, immense mills, manufacturing, foundries, etc. Seldom has a city, in proportion to its population and wealth, suffered so terribly. Sad, indeed, was the spectacle afterward of those acres of ruin, and sadder that of the many worthy citizens from whom the hard earnings of a lifetime had thus been wrested in an hour.

Of all the days of my life that eventful and terrible day seemed the longest. Not having my watch about me, I could not well judge the flight of time. At last, when I thought it must be toward four o'clock in the afternoon, I inquired the time, and found to my astonishment that it was only twelve o'clock. It seemed as if that day would never end.

Very agreeable was the disappointment at the behavior of the victorious army. Whether it was because, notwithstanding all that had occurred, there was still some lingering feeling of respect for the capital of the Old Dominion, or whether the terrific calamity falling upon the city at the moment disarmed all purpose to inflict further injury, we could not tell; but what most concerned us was the fact that, with few exceptions, the troops behaved astonishingly well, and were remarkably courteous and respectful. Some cases of outrage were committed in the suburbs, but every attempt of the sort in the city, of which I heard, was followed by condign punishment.

The days which followed that ever-memorable third of April were eminently days of leisure. Nobody had any thing to do. All business was brought to a sudden stand-still. Few had any money; my own stock amounted to an

old-fashioned three-cent piece. Some of us spent most of the time sitting on the front steps talking over the past, the present, and the most uncertain future. When occasionally a friend passed we would call him in, or he would call himself—both parties happy to have some mode of relieving the tedium. As to the Confederacy, we gave that up with the fall of Richmond, thinking that General Lee would probably fall back into the interior, and there, after considerable delay and worrying, make the best terms for peace on the basis of the Union restored. But we did not anticipate so speedy a finality, nor of the sort which occurred. Various rumors reached us from day to day of disasters to the Confederates; but as these all came through our conquerors we gave them small credence.

At length, one night my host informed me that the sentinel near our door had just told him that General Lee had surrendered. Though we did not credit it, it seemed worth inquiring into. On further interrogation we were assured that the news was official; and soon all remaining doubts were dispelled by the salvos of artillery from the Capitol Square saluting the tidings of the surrender of the Southern Army and the downfall of the Southern Confederacy. Such an event was, of course, a crushing disappointment to those who, through years of sacrifice and struggle, had staked their earthly hopes and all upon the success of the cause; but, to their credit be it said, most of them seemed to recognize in the event the voice of God deciding by his providence the great question. Though this decision differed widely from what they had anticipated, they knew that the great Arbiter of all human affairs does all things well, and that it was their duty humbly and cheerfully to acquiesce. The Government to which they had acknowledged allegiance for four years being no more, and that under which they had previously lived being now restored, there was but one course open, and that was to endeavor to prove themselves henceforth good and faithful citizens of the United States.

Time will no doubt wear away the hostile feelings engendered by bloody war, and once more restore to terms of friendly intercourse those who were arrayed in this bitter, deadly strife; but no lapse of time can erase the memories of the fearful scenes which marked the progress of the dreadful drama, and in the history which is to record them for coming generations will stand, as not the least conspicuous, that which has formed the topic of the present sketch—the Fall of Richmond.

MISS LETITIA.

MISS LETITIA put aside the muslin curtains from her window, and looked out. She had just made her toilet for afternoon, and she was, as usual, neat almost to primness. Her sombre gray dress was enlivened by no bits of bright-colored ribbon. It fell without a particle