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Vol. VIII.

Richmond, Va., February, 1880.

No. 2.

Sherman's Meridian Expedition and Sooy Smith's Raid to West Point.

A Review by General S. D. LEE.

In the October number of the *Southern Historical Society Papers* of 1879 is the address of General Chalmers before the Society at the White Sulphur Springs in August—his theme being "Forrest and his Campaigns." This address is a valuable contribution, and paints, with a comrade's partiality, the character and deeds of Forrest. General Chalmers, however, makes some statements and draws certain conclusions from which I feel compelled to dissent, and I think I am sustained by the facts of the case.

Lieutenant-General Polk was killed in battle. Forrest is dead. Is it necessary, when General Chalmers desires to eulogize Forrest, that he should censure Polk? I think it a duty to give my version of Sherman's Meridian expedition to do General Polk justice. General Chalmers dwells almost entirely on the operations in which he personally took an active part. He forgets that while Forrest was encountering seven thousand (7,000) Federal troops another cavalry command, in the same State, at the same time, no larger than his own, was encountering twenty-six thousand (26,000)

Prison Life at Fort McHenry.

By Rev. Dr. T. D. WITHERSPOON, late Chaplain of the Forty-Second Mississippi Regiment.

PAPER No. 1.

On the evening of the 4th of July, 1863, when it became apparent that the army of General Lee was in quiet and undisturbed retreat from its position before Gettysburg, I found myself in the midst of three or four hundred men of the brigade in which I served, who were too severely wounded to be transported to the rear. Two alternatives presented themselves, to leave these men in the hour of their distress, or to remain within the enemy's line. The decision was soon made; and the consent of superior officers having been obtained, I stood by the roadway waving adieu as the little remnant of the gallant brigade tramped silently and sorrowfully by; and then turned to the tenderest and saddest ministry of my life, as under open flies, on the bare ground, or a mere pile of straw, these gallant men lay heroically suffering or unconsciously moaning their lives away. For a few never-to-be-forgotten days this ministry was permitted me, and then our field-hospital was broken up, the few surviving wounded were removed to the field-hospitals of the Federal army, and the Confederate surgeons and chaplains transported to Northern prisons.

On the very day before the order came to break up our field-hospital, tidings had come to us that the Colonel of the regiment in which I served, Colonel Hugh R. Miller, was lying mortally wounded at a private residence in Gettysburg, and had expressed a desire to see me. I reached his bedside just in time to receive his dying expression of his faith in Christ and his readiness to depart. Through the generosity of the kind family (a Maryland family) at whose home Colonel Miller had been so assiduously and tenderly cared for, the services of an embalmer were secured, and the body skilfully embalmed and inclosed in a metallic case. The Commandant of the Post at Gettysburg, whose name I do not recall, but who was a true gentleman as well as true soldier, on application being made to him to send the remains through the lines by flag of truce, did all he could to further this end. For he not only sent the remains to Baltimore in charge of one of the members of his staff, but he allowed Edwin Miller, the youthful son of the Colonel, and myself, his chaplain, to accompany the remains as escort with a letter to General Schenck, the Commandant at

Baltimore, requesting that we should be permitted to accompany the remains by flag of truce to Richmond.

The scene on the arrival at General Schenck's headquarters in Baltimore was one that beggars description. The polite and gentlemanly Lieutenant who had accompanied us presented the letter from his superior officer, and it was handed to Colonel Fish, General Schenck's Adjutant. He read it, and asked, "Where is the body?" The Lieutenant produced the receipt of the Adams Express Company, who had it in charge, and the Colonel, receiving it, handed it to one of his subordinates, and said, "Go and get that body and have it buried." "Where shall I bury it?" asked the surprised official—to which the answer was in substance that he did not care where, so as the body was put out of the way, adding that he had stood all that he was going to stand of this paying honors to Rebel dead. Edwin Miller, overwhelmed with the thought of the dishonor about to be done to his father's remains, plead most earnestly to be permitted to accompany the officer and see the remains interred, and it was only after a long interval, and through the intercession of friends of Colonel Fish, who were the witnesses of the boy's agony, that he was permitted to accompany the remains to their sepulture, and have them placed in a vault instead of being buried in the ground.

When the question of the disposition of the body had been finally settled, the Lieutenant in charge of us asked, "What shall I do with these men?" referring to Edwin Miller and myself. To which the reply was, "Let them go down to the guard-room." Now this guard-room was a dark basement room of the hotel in which General Schenck had his headquarters, provided with an iron door and a small grated window to admit a little light, into which the provost guard emptied the sweeping of the streets. Drunken soldiers, deserters, bummers, *et id omne genus*, constituted its ordinary population. Hence the Lieutenant was startled by the proposition, and said, "But this man is a minister of the gospel; you won't send him there?" "Why not," asked the now irate Colonel, "the preachers are more to blame for this war than any others. The best thing we could do would be to hang a few of them when we capture them." And so without further ceremony I was marched down by a sentinel to the guard-room. The iron door swung open and closed behind me, and I found myself, as the shadows of evening were coming on, in one of the vilest dens in which any respectable man ever spent the night.

The ribaldry, blasphemy, obscenity of these poor half-drunken creatures was horrible. But not only so ; there were among the prisoners one or two stout, stalwart Baltimore roughs, Irishmen, whose sympathies were with the South, and who, true to the open-hearted instincts of their mother-land, were outspoken in their sentiments, and not at all averse to a submission of them to the arbitrament of battle. And so every now and then some drunken Federal soldier would cry out amidst the darkness, "I can whip any man who is for Jeff. Davis." And from across the room would come, like an ominous echo out of the darkness, "Hurrah for Jeff. Davis." Then there would be a collision about the centre of the room, partaking at first of the character of a fisticuff between two, and then of a general melee with the idea of "wherever you see a head hit it," and a very painful foreboding that your own head might be the next one to attract the attention of some accommodating belligerent.

It is hardly necessary to say that there was no sleep that night, or that, squeezing as closely as possible into an angle of the room, and protected fortunately by a kind of breastwork made of the bodies of those who were too much overcome with liquor and sleep to take part in the engagement, I maintained a strict neutrality, keeping ingloriously silent even when some besotted blue-coat would move up menacingly towards me and dare me to "chirp for Jeff. Davis." Nor need I say how rejoiced I was when the morning came, and being abandoned now by all hope of return to the South, I was ordered to Fort McHenry, and the life enacted of which some account will be given in the following pages.

On an arm of the Patapsco river, some two miles below the city of Baltimore, and guarding the entrance to its harbor, stands this old fortress, in existence as early certainly as 1794, bearing, in honor of one of the heroes of the first revolution, the name of **FORT MCHENRY.**

Its chief claim to historic interest lies in the conspicuous part which it bore in the defence of Baltimore during its memorable siege by the British in the autumn of the year 1814. Ross, the British General, having completed his work of vandalism at Washington, had taken fleet with his army and entered the Patapsco, with the design of seizing the city of Baltimore and wintering there. The whole issue of the campaign, and with it, apparently, the fate of the war, depended on the capture of the city. To effect this, a passage must be forced under the guns of Fort McHenry, held at

that time by the heroic Colonel Armistead with a garrison of only 1,000 men and an armament of guns far inferior to that of the enemy.

The attack was made by the British Admiral at early morning, with a squadron of sixteen vessels, and the engagement lasted through the day, night closing upon the combatants in the midst of a terrific storm of shot and shell—not a single vessel having succeeded in cutting its way through. At midnight the British commander made an assault by land with a picked body of 1,500 men, hoping to carry the defences by storm, but the gallant band of defenders, though wearied with the long struggle of the day, met the assailants successfully at every point, repelling them again and again with terrific slaughter until at length the British General gave up in despair, withdrew his forces, and left the fort and the city to the peaceful possession of their heroic and gallant defenders.

On one of the British transports lying just outside of the harbor was Francis Key, a patriot of Maryland, held as a State prisoner because of his loyalty to the American cause. Confined between decks, where he could hear the din of the conflict, but could learn nothing of the results, he spent the long night in anxious thought of the banner which he loved waving upon the walls of Fort McHenry, and in earnest prayer that it might not go down before the enemy's furious assault. When the morning light had broken again over the scene, and the din of conflict was hushed, and his eye caught a view of the flag of his country still waving upon the ramparts of the old fortress, his exultation found expression in that hymn which has immortalized both his name and the banner he so loved—

“O say can you see by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming.”

He little thought that the day would come when that same banner—the emblem to him of freedom from oppression—would still wave over Fort McHenry, and beneath its folds, patriots of Maryland, as pure and noble-hearted as himself, should, under a like stigma of rebellion, waste away their lives in dreary casements and under galling fetters of imprisonment.

All this, however, is merely by way of introduction to the old fortress, of whose hospitalities I was permitted, during the summer of 1863, to partake. At the time of my first introduction, it was

used principally as a place of rendezvous for detachments of Confederate prisoners on their way to permanent places of imprisonment at Point Lookout, Fort Delaware, Johnson's Island, &c.

Prisoners brought in from the lines of the Army of the Potomac in small detachments were here assorted and sent away, the officers to Johnson's Island and Fort Delaware, the privates to Point Lookout, &c.—detachments being often held for a week or two until suitable arrangements could be made for them at some of the more populous, if not more popular places of resort.

Now it chanced that after the battle of Gettysburg a number of surgeons and chaplains found their way along with other prisoners to this *point d'appui*, having either been detailed for hospital service and left behind on the retreat from Pennsylvania, or having voluntarily remained with the wounded and dying of their commands.

If any one should ask me how it came that surgeons and chaplains were held as prisoners of war by the Federal Government, I can only answer that I do not know. In all civilized warfare surgeons and chaplains being considered as non-combatants and their mission being regarded as one of mercy, are not reckoned as prisoners of war, but, when captured, are released upon their own parole and sent into the lines of the army they serve. But I also know that I was captured in the afternoon of a beautiful Sabbath day, the 5th of July, 1863, in a hospital tent, on the battlefield of Gettysburg, in the midst of a religious service, surrounded by the wounded on every hand, to whom I was ministering, and at whose urgent solicitation I had voluntarily remained within the enemy's lines.

I was sent, as already narrated, to the headquarters of General Schenck, and by him ordered to prison quarters at Fort McHenry, and although, through the influence of prominent citizens of Baltimore, General Schenck was induced to issue an order for my return to the South on the day following my incarceration, and I was actually taken on board the flag of truce boat to Old Point, yet orders were received at Fortress Monroe to return me to prison, and after a fortnight's confinement in Fort Norfolk I was returned to Fort McHenry, and kept there as a prisoner until, through the unwearied intercession of Colonel Ould, our humane and courteous Agent of Exchange, a cartel was arranged by which we could be exchanged.

Without stopping, however, to inquire into the hows and wherefores of this vexed question, suffice it to say that at the time to

which I refer about a hundred surgeons, with some thirteen or fourteen chaplains, had been collected from various points and were incarcerated at Fort McHenry. As they constituted a somewhat anomalous class, being neither, strictly speaking, officers nor privates, they could not properly be assigned to any of the permanent places of imprisonment, and therefore it was resolved to retain them as the special guests of the prison to which they had first been brought.



Vol. VIII.

Richmond, Va., March, 1880.

No. 3.

History of Lane's North Carolina Brigade.

By Brigadier-General JAMES H. LANE.

No. 4.

BATTLES AROUND RICHMOND (CONCLUDED)—REPORT OF COLONEL
LANE.

HEADQUARTERS 'TWENTY-EIGHTH REGIMENT,
NORTH CAROLINA VOLUNTEERS, Near Richmond, July 12, 1862.

Brigadier-General L. O'B. BRANCH,

Commanding Fourth Brigade, Light Division:

General—I have the honor to report that on Wednesday, the 25th of June, I left camp with my regiment, numbering four hundred and eighty, and with the balance of your brigade proceeded up the Telegraph road, crossed the Chickahominy on the morning of the 26th, and advanced towards the Meadow bridge. Two of my companies were ordered to Mrs. Crenshaw's bridge to apprise Lieutenant-Colonel Hoke, with a portion of his regiment which was doing picket duty on the south side of the Chicka-

Prison Life at Fort McHenry.

By Rev. Dr. T. D. WITHERSPOON, late Chaplain of the Forty-Second Mississippi Regiment.

PAPER No. 2.

It was my lot to be entertained successively in two of the leading hotels of this prison, and of these I will briefly speak. The first was the loft of the stable in which the horses of the officers of the fort were stalled. The floor, which separated us from our neighing neighbors beneath us, was full of broad seams from the shrinkage of the rough boards of which it was composed, so that the hot, steamy air from below had full access to us, and during the oppressive days and sultry nights of July and August, with the thin roof of shingles between us and the sun, and the hot steam arising from the stalls beneath, our situation was anything but comfortable. Nor must you judge us too harshly if I assure you that there was a general feeling of relief when we found one morning, to our surprise, that a process of summary ejection had been served upon our four-footed neighbors and a hundred or more ragged and bare-foot Confederates were being marched in *sans ceremonie* and quartered in their stalls.

The lower story of our hotel having thus come into requisition for purposes of prison transfer, it was not long until the demand was also made for the upper story, as it was near to the office of the Provost Marshal, and, therefore, convenient for the temporary herding of Confederates on their passage through.

Our next hotel was a more airy one, and, therefore, in good weather, a more comfortable one—an old shed, originally built as a barracks for Federal troops, some twenty feet wide by an hundred feet long, with dirt floor, weatherboarding of rough boards set upright and without strips to cover the seams, which were from a half inch to an inch in breadth, with roofing of the same rough boards, warped and shriveled by the sun so that the heavy September rains ran down in torrents upon us. On either side of the long apartment were rows of two-story berths (or *bunks* in soldier parlance), made of rough boards, without mattresses, or straw or bedding of any kind, our only protection from the hard board being found in the army blanket, which each prisoner had brought with him to the fort, or with which he had been provided through the generosity of friends.

In so far as concerns the provisions made for our comfort by the Federal authorities, there is nothing more to relate. The bunks were never supplied with straw. There were no chairs or stools. No basins or towels were given us for purposes of ablution. No plates or cups, no knives or forks or spoons with which to partake of our food. As to ablutions, they were performed during those hours of the day when we had access to the well by water drawn from the pump and poured from canteens into our hands. Most of us were possessors of a pocket knife and a tin cup apiece. Hard crackers served us for plates, and forks and spoons were whittled out of the soft pine wood of the boxes in which our hard tack was served.

Having thus glanced at prison accommodations, let us turn for a moment to the bill of fare. Picture to yourself an immense camp kettle, holding thirty or forty gallons, brought three times a day into our barracks, borne like the famous clusters of Eschol on a pole between two blue coats, whilst behind follows a third soldier, bearing on his shoulders a box some two feet and a half in length. Add at dinner-time a swarthy darkey to close the procession carrying on his head a camp kettle holding six or eight gallons, and you have a complete view of our peripatetic dining-room service as it might have been seen any day during the latter part of our imprisonment. The procession files in through the door of the shed. The four deposit their burdens on the dirt floor. One of them sings out, "I say, Rebs, here's your *raytions*" (why was it that the Federals always pronounced the word that way?). Then the party retire and leave the viands to be consumed after the most approved Rebel fashion.

Let us draw near and inspect the prison fare. The eager rush for the large camp kettle by all who are fortunate enough to possess a tin cup shows that it contains something to drink. What it is depends on the hour of the day. If it is morning or evening the camp kettle contains coffee (so-called). If the hour is noon, the immense cauldron contains bean soup. But as the same vessel brings coffee in the morning and soup at noon, it would be no very easy matter to decide by the taste which is coffee and which is soup.

The smaller camp kettle, which makes its visit only once a day, contains meat. One day "salt horse" (the army name for the poorer quality of pickled beef, which was sometimes issued as army rations), and the next day mess-pork, usually ancient and

rancid. Of one of these meats a half pound a day was issued for each prisoner, and considering the kind of ration this was certainly enough.

The square box contained "hard tack," a kind of ship biscuit that would have been nutritious and wholesome if in good condition, but which was always stale, often moulded, not unfrequently wormy and putrescent. These articles of diet, with once a week perhaps some Irish potatoes and an occasional change to fresh beef, constituted our prison diet. The rancid meat and the mustered bread, which made the staple of it, were utterly destructive of health, and had we not been provided with better food through the generosity of friends in Baltimore, without the knowledge of the officers of the fort, few of us would have survived even the brief time of our imprisonment.

That it was the design of the Federal authorities to subject us to these hardships I seriously question. I think that in both Confederate and Federal prisons it will be found that most of the discomforts and privations came through the negligence or malice or greed of those to whom the care of the prisoners was immediately entrusted. The assistant steward, who brought our rations to us, acknowledged, when closely pressed, that the rations served to us were not those issued to us by the Government, but damaged commissary stores that had been condemned for army use and sold at auction in Baltimore, and which were bought by the steward of the prison for a mere trifle and issued to us, whilst the rations assigned us by the Government were converted to their own use and disposed of at high rates of profit.

We did not live upon these rations. Kind friends in Baltimore supplied us from time to time with money. Cooked vegetables and fruits were brought every day into the barracks for sale, and we were thus enabled to purchase what was needful to our comfort and health. Indeed, if the friends of the South in Baltimore had been permitted to do for us all that their generous hearts prompted, our every want would have been supplied. Day after day we saw carriages enter the fort laden with blankets and clothing, while the white handkerchiefs waved to us as the carriages swept by showed us that these supplies were designed for us. They never reached us, however, and though many of our number were in threadbare clothing, and during the latter part of our stay shivering with cold, the only supplies of clothing they received were those which by secret channels of communication were conveyed to us by friends.

With the daily routine of our prison life I will not weary the reader, for its only peculiarity was its dull and wearisome monotony. With nothing to occupy us from morning until night; chafing under a sense of our own unjust imprisonment, and oppressed with a sense of the misfortunes that crowded thick and fast upon our beloved country; cut off from books and ordinary sources of recreation; forbidden the privilege of receiving visits from friends in Baltimore; our only communications with home being through the doubtful and unsatisfactory medium of the flag of truce correspondence; our only news from the war coming through the fallacious bulletins of the Northern press, it required a constant struggle, as the prison discipline grew more harsh and the hope of release more distant, to ward off that prison melancholy which is so sure a precursor of debility and disease.]

The usual expedients were resorted to for the purpose of driving away dull care. There was all manner of cunning artifice in wood, in gutta-percha, in ivory and in silver. Rings, chains, breastpins, lockets, charms, &c., were made and exchanged with the guard for rations or kept as mementoes for the loved ones at home. Then there was the writing and receiving of underground letters, the rehearsal of the stories of camp life, speculations upon the state of the country, discussion and criticism of military movements, the planning of imaginary campaigns, the achievement of imaginary victories, &c. As these lost their novelty, and the spirits of the party began to flag, the more buoyant amongst us resorted to fresh and somewhat juvenile methods of diversion.

First of all we organized ourselves into a regiment in burlesque of the splendidly equipped and caparisoned regiment which guarded the fort, and thus had the daily diversion of guard-mounting and dress-parade. The uniform of the regiment, it is needless to say, was not up to army regulations. Most of us had come into the fort in badly damaged apparel. Many had been supplied by the ladies of Baltimore through "underground" channels of communication; but many were still somewhat threadbare, whilst of those who were supplied the fit of the uniform was not very exact, as our kind donors could not know the size of those whom they were to supply, and were obliged to send medium sizes of clothing. And thus it occurred that when we were drawn up in line, here stood an officer of more than ordinary height of stature, his long arms protruding several inches through his coat sleeves, and by his side a small but ambitious little soldier, who looked for all the

world as if his coat had swallowed him. These fancy uniforms, capped with the far-famed Confederate hat, which assumed under exposure to the weather every hue of color and every possible transformation of shape, made up a regiment of which Falstaff himself might justly have been proud.

The soldiers of the garrison had their guard mountings, and so had we. We were their prisoners—the rats were ours. Every morning our guard was duly mounted. A sentinel was stationed at each hole where the rats were burrowing beneath our walls. When the alarm was sounded and the enemy under chase, the “Department of the Patapsco” expected every man to do his duty, and woe to the unfortunate sentinel who suffered the enemy to escape.

The great event of the day in the Federal garrison was the brilliant dress parade, held every evening a little before sunset in full view of our barracks, and attended by many elegant people from the city. Our dress parade was our *chef d'œuvre*, too, being held immediately after the other, just outside of our barracks and in view of a considerable portion of the garrison. The Federal regiment prided itself on its band of music, the leader or drum-major of which was a handsome Pole, of almost giant stature, whose tall form was rendered still more imposing by his lofty Cossack hat and plume, and by the immense mace which he balanced gracefully in his hand, marking time for his musicians as he led them along the line of flashing bayonets in the parade.

We had a drum-major, too—a noble-hearted Virginian, whose hand I have recently had the pleasure of shaking at Orange Courthouse. Nearly as tall as the Pole, we made up the additional height by stacking some of our old Confederate farmer-shaped hats one upon another. He had carved out of wood a fair counterpart of the mace of his Yankee rival, and, when thus equipped, he moved up and down along the line of the regiment, followed by his band, one with a half flour-barrel suspended from his neck for a drum, another with two tin plates as cymbals, a third with an old cracked flageolet which had been thrown away by some soldier of the fort, and the fourth with a coarse comb, covered with a slip of paper, after the well-remembered mechanism of our childhood, the scene was striking beyond description, especially when, as was generally the case, the full power of the orchestra was exhausted upon Hail Columbia, Yankee Doodle, or some other favorite National *air*.

Then again, for the entertainment of lonely evenings, we organized a literary society, which held its meetings once or twice a week, immediately after supper, and which numbered some twenty or more clever debaters. Many and various were the subjects discussed; vast and heterogeneous the stores of original thought evolved by men who had no access to books, and amidst throes which attested the profoundness of that vasty deep from which the treasures were being drawn up. It is a matter of profound regret that no stenographer was present, and that thus all these purely original thoughts have been lost to the world.

“Like snow drops on the river,
A moment white, then gone forever.”

It would naturally be supposed, the debates which awakened most interest were those in which woman was in some way involved. On these occasions not only would every Rebel be in place to hear the discussion, but Yankees, too, would crowd around us. Even Federal captains and lieutenants would swell the line of blue coats that formed a cordon about our quarters. The usual taps for extinction of lights would be disregarded, and the discussion ran on towards the hour of midnight. Then, alas for the speaker who was appointed to defend the side of the question which was unfavorable to woman, and thus go against the popular current! He might plead with the eloquence of a Demosthenes, or the smooth persuasion of a Tully; his logic might be irrefragable, his arguments conclusive, his positions impregnable; but no inspiring applause greeted his most masterly efforts, while his opponent was cheered at every point, and in the final vote the unlucky orator was sure to be in a lean and helpless minority.

Well do I remember when it was made my duty to defend the negative in the question, “Is love a safe guide in the formation of matrimonial alliances?” I traversed, as far as I could in unaided memory, all history and literature to establish the proverbial blindness of love—then entered the domain of poetry and art, painting Cupid the blind boy, as Aurora with her rosy fingers drew aside the curtains of the dawn, and Apollo, god of day, drove his fiery steeds up along the eastern sky, whilst the poor boy groped in his blindness and shot his arrows at random through the air. Then I entered the domain of Metaphysics, and with Kant’s marvellous trichotomy as my guide, showed how in that three-fold adjustment of man’s nature god-like reason was designed to sit upon the

throne, love with all other passions to be in subjection to its wise control—how perilous in its subversion of the order of nature, therefore, to make love, a mere passion of the soul, our guide. Thus, mingling sentiment with argument, and alternating between pathos and invective, I gave my best energies to the subject, and sat down at length amidst a feeble effort at applause, which, as I saw, came from my colleague appointed on the same side. And when the final vote was taken, my voice was the only one heard in the negative, even my colleague having ingloriously deserted me and whipped over to the other side.

When our stock of available questions had run low and interest in our society began to flag, the expedient was resorted to of re-enacting the celebrated scene in the debating club so graphically described by Judge Longstreet in the "Georgia Scenes." Many of you remember the question in that famous debate, "Whether, in popular elections, the vote of factions should predominate according to the bias of jurisprudence, or according to the force of internal suggestion." At first it was proposed to introduce the same question, but as it was found that one of the proposed debaters was familiar with the debate in "Georgia Scenes," it was found necessary to substitute another; and so, after considerable conference amongst those admitted to the secret, the following question was agreed upon and announced, "Whether the foundations of wise legislation are to be sought in the inherent principles of social ethics, or in the philosophy of practical utility."

The first speaker in the affirmative was a youthful chaplain, who had been until recently a private in the ranks, and for whom a chaplain's commission had been procured by way of promotion for gallantry in the ranks. He was as modest and retiring as a woman, though brave and generous almost to a fault. As his name was called and he took his place upon the floor, it was evident that he was not at all at ease. He began by saying that the question was a new and difficult one, that he undertook its discussion with great diffidence and hoped all due indulgence would be given him. He then proceeded to state as clearly as he could what he conceived to be the question for discussion, and had about gotten before the house a question which was susceptible of debate, when the president interrupted him by saying that whilst the question which he was discussing was a very interesting one, he must remind him that it was not the question of the evening and he would please confine his remarks to the subject immediately under debate. The

face of the speaker crimsoned, he stammered a little, but recovered his self-possession and with heroic courage returned to the question as originally propounded, and again attempted a definition. Scarcely, however, had the question begun to assume tangible shape, when the president again called him to order, stating that he had manifestly wandered from the subject. The situation was now not only critical but perilous for our young orator. The great beads of perspiration were upon his brow. His knees, unconsciously to himself, were smiting together; his fingers were nervously plying as if to catch the thin air by his side; a faint, half-choking "Mr. President"; a somewhat more audible repetition after a long pause, "Mr. President"; a half-vacant stare around the room as if he would catch the lost thread of his argument in the look of some one of his hearers; then the light play of a smile upon his features, as he began to realize the ludicrousness of the situation, a smile followed by a simultaneous outburst of laughter and shouts of huzzah from the audience, in the midst of which the discomfited orator retired, losing himself from view in the depths of the throng.

The first speaker in the negative was then called, but was shrewd enough to baffle us by entering a plea, sustained by the president, that as no argument had been advanced on the affirmative side, he had the right to withhold his rejoinder until the second affirmative had spoken.

The second affirmative was therefore called for, and a surgeon responded, one of those ready speakers whose boast it was that he was always ready to speak, and that the more abstruse the subject the better suited to his tastes. He began by saying that he was exceedingly gratified that the subject now under consideration had been chosen for discussion. It was one to the study of which he had devoted much attention. Indeed, its importance could not be overestimated. It was the neglect of this great question on the part of our statesmen which had deluged the land in blood, dismembered a once prosperous and happy republic, arrayed brother against brother in fratricidal strife, &c. After this telling introduction, he proceeded to state that there were two great sources of knowledge—intuitive or *a priori* convictions, and inductive or *a posteriori* conclusions—that from the first of these we derive the inherent principles of social ethics, and from the second the philosophy of practical utility; that the question, therefore, resolves itself into this, whether we are to be governed by *a priori* and intuitive convictions of conscience, or by *a posteriori* and inductive

experiences of reason? and was just proceeding to launch out upon this question when the president very blandly interposed with the statement that he had slightly wandered from the question, which had nothing to do with *a priori* or *a posteori*, but was a question as to the true basis of legislation.

The speaker bowed politely, though it was evident that he was very much disconcerted, and, being a passionate man, somewhat angered. He said, however, pleasantly that if the president would bear with him for a moment he would convince him that his wandering from the question was only apparent and not real; that the president well remembered the two great ethical schools of Europe at the close of the last century, the one having its highest exponent in Paley, whose cardinal doctrine was that expediency was the sole ground of right; the other in Reid, the great master of the intuitional or common sense school. He was proceeding most eloquently to defend the intuitional school, when the president again called him to order. This time the rising storm of anger was apparent, but he checked it, righted himself gallantly and made a third sally and a fourth, only each time to be interrupted by the mild voice of the president, and to be provoked by a suppressed titter in the audience, until at length, when for the fourth time the president had interfered, he turned with flushed face, his eyes fairly flashing fire, and exclaimed, "But I say, sir, I *am* in order." "But I say, sir," said the president, "you are *not* in order." "Then, sir," said he, advancing and bringing his clenched fist down in a menacing attitude, "I would like to know what in the thunder you call being in order?"

The explosion that followed put an end to the discussion for the evening. The committee on questions felt it necessary for a little while to avoid the presence of the "second affirmative," but his good nature soon got the better of him, and he laughed as heartily as any of us over the joke at his expense.



Vol. VIII.

Richmond, Va., April, 1880.

No. 4.

History of Lane's North Carolina Brigade.

By Brigadier-General JAMES H. LANE.

No. 5.

SECOND MANASSAS CAMPAIGN.

After the battles around Richmond, this brigade encamped below that city for a short time and was then ordered to Gordonsville, near which place it remained until just before the battle of Cedar Run, in which battle it bore a very conspicuous part, as will appear from the following report:

GENERAL BRANCH'S REPORT OF BATTLE OF CEDAR RUN.

**HEADQUARTERS BRANCH'S BRIGADE, A. P. HILL'S DIVISION,
August 18, 1862.**

Major R. C. MORGAN, *Assistant Adjutant-General:*

Sir—I have the honor to report that on Saturday, 9th August, whilst on the march to Culpeper Courthouse, I was ordered to halt my brigade and form in line of battle on the left of and at right

Prison Life at Fort McHenry.

By Rev. Dr. T. D. WITHERSPOON, late Chaplain of the Forty-Second Mississippi Regiment.

PAPER No. 3—*Conclusion.*

To one other of our prison diversions I must briefly introduce you. I refer to the regimental courts-martial held as occasion required. One of these will give an idea of the whole. Among the petty annoyances to which we were subjected—for which, however, we could not blame our captors—was the custom on the part of some of the younger and less scrupulous portion of our number to circulate unfounded rumors of our prospective release, or “grape-vine telegrams,” as they were called. The graver and more credulous part of the body would accept them all as true, would each roll up carefully his blanket, fasten his tin cup and wooden fork to his haversack and swing them about his neck, and take his seat near the door, meekly and patiently but in vain waiting for the order to “fall in for exchange.” This practice became so great a nuisance that our Colonel issued an order at length, at one of our evening dress-parades, that the next member of his command who was guilty of circulating a false rumor of exchange should be subjected to court-martial.

Now in the number of our chaplains was an old minister of the Baptist Church, a most estimable gentleman, and one who contributed in many ways to our enjoyment. He was withal of a mechanical turn of mind, and as our soup-coffee and coffee-soup were usually lukewarm before they reached us, he resolved to construct an apparatus for warming them. The earth had been cut away at one end of the barracks, leaving a steep embankment just outside. In this he constructed a flue of such a kind that a range of cups could be placed on it, and the shavings made by the prisoners in whittling rendered available for heating purposes. The work was somewhat difficult with the tools he had. When completed and the fuel applied, it proved to be like the Irishman’s chimney, which, he said, “drew finely if it was only bottom end up.” He was greatly perplexed at its perversity, and when some one inquired of him as he was half stifled with the smoke, when his cooking range would be ready, he replied that he expected we “would all be exchanged and get home before *that thing* would begin to draw.” In a few minutes the “thing” was draw-

ing finely; and this, coupled with the previous remark, was made a subject of complaint to the Colonel, who ordered a court-martial. The trial was held, contrary to military usage, in the presence of a vast assemblage. The prisoner was ably defended. The counsel first resolved to attempt the proof of an alibi, by showing that the prisoner was sick that day and could not have been present at the time and place specified; but the prosecution thwarted this by introducing a witness who testified that he had seen him on that very day with an immense wooden harpoon fishing in the great cauldron of soup for a piece of "salt horse" that had been left there, the judge-advocate pleading overwhelmingly that no man whose digestion was impaired by sickness could have borne the sight and smell of the nauseous mess. As quite a number of the officers and soldiers of the fort were present, the effect of the vivid description of our prison fare by the judge-advocate may be well conceived.

The counsel for the defence at length agreed to risk the prisoner's fate upon a plea of insanity. And a strong case they succeeded in making. They pointed to the strange under-ground tunnel as a clear evidence of mental aberration. They reviewed his whole course since he had been in the fort; they attributed his insanity to the hard life and unwholesome fare, which they denounced in unmeasured terms. But the court found a verdict of guilty. He was sentenced to be reprimanded publicly on dress-parade, and to be fed until further orders on "hard tack" and "salt horse"—our common prison fare. That evening at dress-parade, the public reprimand was duly administered. Chaplain C. was called out in front of the command and listened meekly with uncovered head, whilst the Colonel (a young Assistant Surgeon, somewhat given to wildness) delivered a homily to him on the impropriety of his conduct, so unbecoming to him and so dishonoring to the command.

Thus the days and weeks rolled away in the midst of high-hearted resolve not to give way to despondency, and of constant and yet ever-varying expedients to rally the spirits of those who were becoming depressed. No one who has not experienced it knows anything of the depressing influence of continued imprisonment, with the mind shut off from its ordinary lines of thought, and the heart from its customary channels of communion with those it loves. He who has passed through the same experience will readily understand me when I say, that notwithstanding all

my resolve not to be disheartened, and the supports which came from an unshaken trust in the overruling providence of God, I have often paced up and down through the long night, along the narrow beat allotted to us outside the barracks, with an eye as sleepless and a step as ceaseless as that of the sentinel whose eye was upon me and whose bayonet flashed in the moonlight as he watched me from the "dead line," only a few paces away.

Many, of course, were the efforts made to escape—some of them ingeniously planned, but all by one contingency and another brought to nought. One method of escape was always open to us—that of bribing the guards, there being very few sentinels over us whose virtue commanded a higher price than a five dollar greenback for each person desiring to escape. To this method most of us were conscientiously opposed. I would have remained there to the close of the war before I would have placed such a temptation in the way of an enemy. Others were not of such tender conscience; and at length, worn by long imprisonment and wearied by long delay, four chaplains and six or eight surgeons bribed the guard and made their escape. It cost me a great struggle not to join them, but I was thankful afterwards that I did not, for within a very days and before they had made their way through great hardships to Dixie, the order came for our release, and we were safely landed on Southern soil.

Their departure, however, led to a denouement in connection with our release, to which I must, in closing, refer. As the roll-call had for some time been dispensed with, the escape of the prisoners had not been detected, but now, as the chaplains were to be released, the roll would, of course, be called, and the escape of the four would be detected. This would lead to a roll-call of the surgeons (the order for whose release had not been received), and when it was found that six or eight surgeons had escaped, the remainder would be subjected to closer confinement and more stringent discipline. To avoid this, four surgeons determined to play the role of the missing chaplains. It was a very hazardous experiment, as most of the chaplains were personally known to the officers of the fort, and a detection of the ruse would probably lead to the retention of the whole body of chaplains in prison. But bold as the expedient was, it was immediately put into execution. An old razor was brought into requisition. The largest coats in the party were put at the disposal of the adventurous four. A very grave and reverend air was assumed, and they took their places in

line, and we were all marched to the wharf, where Colonel Mulford's flag-of-truce boat awaited us. As each chaplain's name was called, he was required to step to the front. The counting went on well until the last name was called—that of Chaplain B, when a tall, handsome surgeon, clerically shorn and dressed, stepped to the front, and a Federal soldier, recognizing him, whispered to the Provost-Marshal: "That is not Chaplain B." "Who is it, then?" "It is Surgeon R——." The Provost-Marshal looked confused for a moment, and said to his clerk; "How many chaplains ought there to be?" The clerk answered, "Fourteen." "Count the men, sir." We were duly counted and found to be exactly fourteen, and without further ado, marched on board the vessel for City Point, where, in due time, we arrived, and after some preliminaries stood once more upon the soil and beneath the flag of our Confederacy, amidst the dearly welcomes and warm congratulations of friends.

Here my narrative, properly speaking, ends, but there is one incident which, even though it be by way of postscript, I must append. In one of the hospitable homes of Richmond, whose intimacies I was permitted to share, there was a comfortable chamber known as the "Soldier-boys' room." Let us come by night or by day, we knew that this room was reserved for us; and many a long and weary march ended in sweet dreams of home, awakened by its soft couches of repose. Towards this pleasant home I instinctively turned my footsteps to enjoy the luxury of the "Soldier-boys' room." But when the hour for retiring came, my kind hostess, who had listened in tears to the story of prison trials, said: "I cannot let you go to the 'Soldier-boys' room' to-night." The special guest-chamber of the house has been fitted up for you to pay for those hard boards on which the Yankees have made you sleep so long." So I was duly ushered into the elegant chamber, and in due time was upon a luxurious bed, which seemed to me the most comfortable I had ever enjoyed, but on which I found it impossible to sleep. I had been so long upon the hard boards that the soft bed wearied me. I tossed from side to side, but in vain, until at length seizing my soldier blanket, which had been stowed in one corner, I wrapped myself in it and threw myself upon the floor, sleeping sweetly and soundly until morning.

When at the drawing-room my kind hostess met me with the question, "How did you rest last night?" and I answered, "Splendidly," she replied with a smile, "I knew you would, for I had that bed prepared expressly for you." That dear friend, whose

smile made the sunlight of the hospitable home, and whose heart was as pure as the escutcheon of the country she loved so well, has been called to the citizenship of a better country and the enjoyment of a happier home; but though years intervened, I could never find it in my heart to deceive her, and it was her happiness always to remember how she had honored, with her best chamber and most luxurious bed, the returning soldier boy.

Having presented you with this inside view of life in a Federal prison, I feel that I cannot close without adding my testimony to that of others in reference to the comparative suffering under Federal and Confederate imprisonment. The effort is being persistently made to represent the hardships as all on one side, to throw upon the South the odium of having subjected her prisoners, taken in war, to unnecessary privations and wanton cruelties, and to claim for the North that her prison government and discipline were, with perhaps a few rare exceptions, of the most humane and kindly nature.

Now I have no disposition to stir up feelings of bitterness between the two sections of a common country. I would speak only in the interests of peace and good-will; but I must also speak in the interests of truth and justice, and in vindication of the South. I would call attention to the following points: *First*. It is not true that the prison discipline and the personal treatment of prisoners was either juster or more humane in Northern prisons than in those at the South. When the facts of history are all brought out, and in that sufficient light the comparison is made between Andersonville and Point Lookout, it will be found that the contrast is overwhelmingly in favor of the former; that in point of diet, health regulations, hospital prescriptions, &c., our men at Point Lookout were subjected to far greater privations and hardships than were the Federal soldiers at Andersonville.

But to confine myself simply to what passed under my own personal observation, and of which consequently I am a competent witness, I may say that on our release from Fort McHenry and return to Richmond, a number of us asked and obtained permission to go through all the wards of that portion of the Libby prison in which the Federal officers were confined. We saw their arrangements for sleep, exercise and cleanliness; we inspected the food as it was prepared for them, and saw all the arrangements for cooking and serving it, and we came away with the impression that (although we had been constantly reminded at Fort McHenry that our lot

was a favored one compared with that of our fellow prisoners at Fort Baltimore, Point Lookout and Johnson's Island) these men in the Libby prison were faring like princes as compared with the life we had been required to lead at Fort McHenry.

Second. Even if it could be shown that there was as great or greater privation in Southern prisons than in Northern, this would not relieve the contrast which is so unfavorable to the humanity of the Northern people. We can demonstrate the fact that our prisoners of war were served with as good rations and as abundant as our soldiers in the line. Whatever privations they endured, therefore, were the privations of our own men, and were the result, not of wilful neglect or bitter hatred, but of that dearth of the necessaries of life under which our whole people were suffering. With the North there was no dearth, no scarcity. The granaries of the world were open to them. When they fed our men on scanty and unwholesome fare, it was not because they could not help it, but because they did not care.

Third. For the sufferings of prisoners on both sides, the North and the North alone is responsible. We were always anxious for exchange. It was to our interest, even if there had been no higher motives operating upon us. We could not supply the places of our men when captured. A single musket was far more to us than to the people of the North. They had all Europe to recruit from. They could supply the places of their men when captured. We could not. It was no great burden to them to guard and feed their prisoners, but it was a heavy tax on us to take care of ours. It was, therefore, to our interest to arrange a cartel. It was to their interest to delay it; and an impartial examination of the case will show beyond all doubt that the failure to make exchange on honorable and equitable terms is chargeable upon them and not upon us. Every proposition that in the interests of humanity could be made was made by the Confederate Government, and was made only to be sullenly rejected. The responsibility for all the suffering on both sides is with those who steadfastly refused either to propose or to accept an honorable cartel. And as in all succeeding time, under the influence of heated imaginations, the spectres of Andersonville and Point Lookout, of Libby prison and Johnson's Island will be rising up to disturb the equanimity of the historian, the South will be able to say with truth to each one as it rises—

“Shake not thy gory locks at me,
Thou canst not say I did it.”