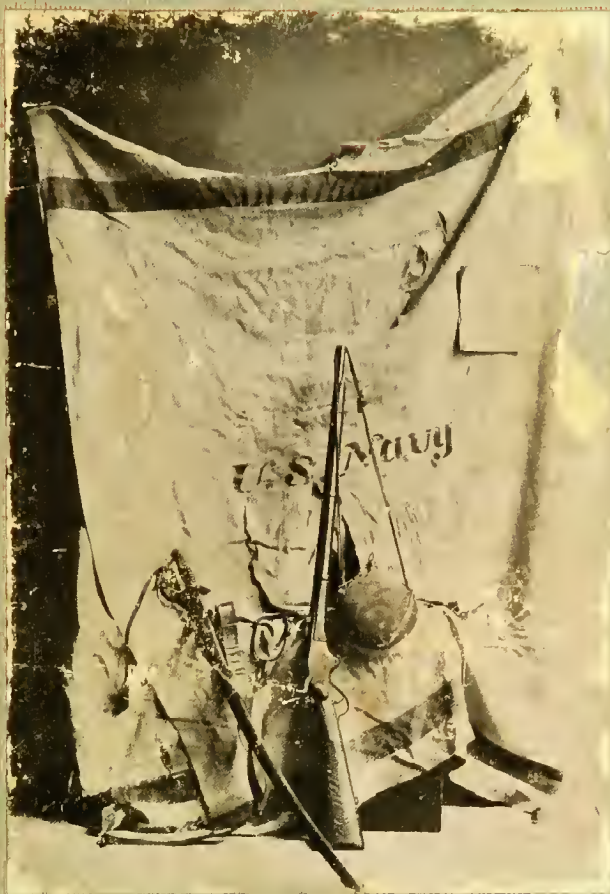


A PAIR OF BLANKETS



War-time History in Letters

← →
WILLIAM H. STEWART

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Lieut. Col. William H. Stewart C.S.A.
A Photo taken in War-Time

A Pair of Blankets

*WAR-TIME HISTORY IN LETTERS TO
THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE SOUTH*

BY

WILLIAM H. STEWART



BROADWAY PUBLISHING CO.

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By
WILLIAM H. STEWART.

I inscribe these Memoirs, entitled "A Pair of Blankets," to my Nephews, Charles A. Stewart, Jr.; Robert E. B. Stewart, Jr.; Henry E. Stewart, Wm. Moseley Stewart, and Robert T. Stewart, and through them to the young people of the South.

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PREFACE.

I have written "A Pair of Blankets" in response to the request of some young people desiring to hear accounts of battles from a soldier who had served in the field, and if possible, to aid in interesting our people in preserving the history of the Confederate War.

From Colonial days to the present the South has been equal to any section of our country in patriotism and chivalry; but has not preserved her history and landmarks in a way to be truly represented before the world.

I hope our people have learned from experience to be jealous of the South's history as other sections are of theirs, so as to preserve her records as a most valuable legacy for future generations, and to help foster this spirit, I have ventured this work.

W. H. S.



A Pair of Blankets.

LETTER NO. 1.

INTRODUCTION TO MY STORY.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

I am writing you something about my life as a soldier, thinking you may be interested in what occurred during one of the greatest wars which ever happened in the world, and I am going to name my story A Pair of Blankets, for the pair under which I slept during four years or more.

When I joined the army, I thought I would get a great deal of fun out of war. I believed that I would be high up in the firmament of greatness if I could be a son of Mars. I was greatly afraid the contest would end before I could get in a real battle. I soon found out that a soldier had a hard and dangerous time. I hope you will never have to be a soldier and go through the sufferings and dangers I did during my four years' service in the Confederate army. I was an officer, too, and did not have to endure as much as the privates who experienced every hardship.

When this country was discovered by white men, you know, it was inhabited by red men. The first

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English settlement was at Jamestown in Virginia in 1607, and the next at Plymouth Rock in Massachusetts, where the Pilgrims landed on the 22d day of December, 1620. From these two settlements grew thirteen British colonies. The emigrants bought or took by force the lands from the Indians. They were often most unjust to the red men and that made the hatred between them extremely bitter.

When these colonies had grown quite large, the British government taxed them without allowing them representation in the parliament which made the tax laws.

A bitter controversy took place and war was declared between the mother country and her colonies. General George Washington was the commander-in-chief of the colonial army. After a war lasting seven years the colonies were successful. The fact that Great Britain was fighting France at the same time, made independence possible; for the colonies could not have won, had all the strength of the mother country been concentrated against them.

On the 23d day of September, 1783, Great Britain acknowledged the independence of each colony as a separate sovereign state. There were thirteen at that time, and they afterwards formed a union to be called the United States of America.

George Washington was the first president of the republic. Thomas Jefferson was the third president. He bought from Napoleon Bonaparte, the vast territory over the Mississippi river, which made many more states; then by the war with Mexico, from April, 1846, to May 30th, 1848, this country got a large ter-

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ritory for more states. The Southern States contended for State Rights, that is, that the State had a right to govern its own affairs without the interposition of the general government, except so far as the States had given by the Constitution, and they therefore contended for the right of their citizens to carry their property in slaves into the territories, which were by all the rules of justice and equity common property; but an abolition party had sprung up in the North and West which denied these rights of the South.

The hatred of this party was so bitter towards the South, that it denounced the Constitution of the United States, and did not hesitate to violate it, because it said slavery was morally wrong and the constitution upheld it. Away back in 1619, a Dutch vessel brought twenty Africans to Jamestown and sold them to the colonists; after this a lively trade sprung up between the coast of Africa and this country, and many vessels, principally owned in the North, were engaged in bringing black savages from Africa and selling them as slaves, until after awhile, slavery existed in every colony and afterwards in every state. This kind of property was not profitable in the cold North, so the slave owners sold out to the Southern people, and after they got their money, they wanted to take the slaves away from the South without paying for them, which they finally did through the perfidy of Lincoln. When he was inaugurated president, he said he had no lawful right to interfere with slavery in the States and had no inclination to do so; yet before two years had passed, he issued a proclama-

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ation declaring them free. He not only committed this act of gross injustice, but he allowed the war against the South to be conducted in a most inhuman and uncivilized manner. The son of the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin in an address on the 100th anniversary of her birth, said: "This much must be conceded that the Northern States were just as much responsible for the existence of slavery as were the Southern states, and that slavery ceased to exist in the Northern states, because it was for them an economic failure, and it grew stronger in the Southern states after the invention of Eli Whitney's cotton gin, simply because it was enormously profitable, and property and slaves correspondingly valuable."

* * * "Now as slaves were property according to law, any attack upon this form of property was an attack indirectly upon all forms of property, and an attack also upon the Constitution of the United States." This concession condemns the emancipation proclamation stronger than any language I might employ.

The black people were much better off as slaves in the South than they were in Africa living in the woods without clothes and feeding on nuts like monkeys and squirrels.

They were contented and happy on the Southern Plantations, where they were made to labor in the fields and given comfortable clothes and good food. While they were not taught in schools they were brought up under religious influence and rapidly became true Christians. I remember when they had revivals; and such good times they would have in

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getting happy and shouting! The mourners were intensely enthusiastic. My father owned "Aunt Eunice," who would dress up in her best frock to go to meeting, but would always take along her old dress to put on, when she got happy and shouted. The slaves were generally good and kind people, much better than their free descendants of this day. Some had bad masters who ill-treated them, but not more than bad husbands in abolition families who treated their wives cruelly. During all the time of our great war the slaves on the plantations were faithful to the families of their masters, who were serving in the army. We owe these great respect and gratitude, for their conduct was guided by a Christian spirit.

There were in the year 1860, in this country, 3,953,760 slaves, distributed as follows: Alabama, 435,080; Arkansas, 111,115; Delaware, 1,798; District of Columbia, 3,185; Florida, 61,745; Georgia, 462,198; Kansas, 2; Kentucky, 225,483; Louisiana, 331,726; Maryland, 87,189; Mississippi, 436,631; Missouri, 114,931; Nebraska, 15; New Jersey, 18; North Carolina, 331,059; South Carolina, 402,406; Tennessee, 275,719; Texas, 182,566; Utah, 29; Virginia, 490,865.

LETTER NO. 2.

MY FIRST MILITARY SERVICE.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

I am never going to say that it was best for the South that the Confederacy was overthrown; I do

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not believe it. I do not think that such tyrannical trusts would have been tolerated and such debauchery in politics could have existed, as we now have, under the flag of the Southern Cross.

I am sorry that General Lee was forced to surrender at Appomattox, Virginia. I wish the Confederate States was a living, physical republic to-day.

I could not fight for it again; but if the National government would voluntarily turn loose the Southern States, I would rejoice to see a Southern Republic with the old battle flag unfurled again in all its mighty glory. It is not to be; but a simple wish for it is harmless.

I first recall political agitation away back when "Bethel," the old voting precinct on the North West Canal in Norfolk County, Virginia, was a Whig stronghold. They voted then with the living voice—without the secret ballot.

I remember my father came home one afternoon and said he had been to "Bethel" to vote; that he and a red-haired man were the only Democrats at the polls.

I was about eight years old when I began to watch the trend of political affairs.

I was politically speaking under "hack" at the old field school, for the boys were all Whigs, and I was the lonesome Democrat, and they called me by the detested name, "locofoco."

I remember the great political battles between the Whigs and Democrats, and vividly recall the coming of the American Party. The "Know Nothings" as the American Party was called, made political things

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bubble and boil, surely there were "hot times" in those days. The contests were high spirited, but always honestly conducted.

I remember how the sentiment changed in that Whig and Know Nothing community, when old John Brown invaded Virginia to murder the white people and free the slaves.

Whigs, Know Nothings and Democrats, including the red-headed man, all were of one mind to resist the Black Republican emissary. I, at once, "joined the cavalry," and was made an officer by some of the same boys who had called me a "locofoco."

Our company was organized at Hickory Ground, in Norfolk County, and called the "Wise Light Dragoons," for the fiery tribune of the Virginia Democracy, Governor Henry A. Wise.

This company was not required to go to the seat of war at Harpers Ferry as we earnestly desired, but still the horsemen continued to ride to their drills once every month.

On the 17th of April, 1861, the Virginia Convention, in session at Richmond, passed the "ordinance of secession," which was precipitated by Lincoln's proclamation calling for troops to subdue the states which had seceded.

Three days after, the greatest excitement prevailed among the people of Portsmouth, where the government navy yard was located. The volunteer military companies of the third Virginia regiment were called out by the governor and stationed at various points near the Gosport Navy Yard.

The entire community was excited to the highest

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pitch and on every hand arrangements of a warlike nature were being made for the sectional war, then imminent.

On the day and night of the 20th of April, 1861, obstructions were placed in the Elizabeth river to prevent United States war vessels from coming in or going out of the harbor. About twelve o'clock on this day the gates of the navy yard were closed to all outsiders and were heavily guarded by U. S. marines. During the day, marines, sailors and other attaches of the yard were engaged in destroying small arms and other instruments of war and throwing them in the river.

On the evening of that day, about dark, the United States vessel *Pawnee* came steaming into port from the city of Washington, with a large number of marines, sailors and soldiers on board. She came in with banners flying and a band of musicians playing national airs, and her guns were loaded and run out of their ports. She proceeded to the navy yard and immediately the marines, sailors, soldiers and their officers went ashore, and they began removing valuable materials to the ships, and the destruction of cannon and other things which could not be easily transported, and this work continued the entire night.

Just before day when all of their forces, except a few who escaped and the two officers who were commissioned to fire the powder trains intended to destroy the ships and buildings were unintentionally left in the excitement, went on board the *Pawnee* and the sail frigates *Constitution* and *Cumber-*

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land and proceeded to Fortress Monroe. The fire which was burning the ships and buildings spread rapidly, and from the main building in the yard communicated to dwellings on the north side of Lincoln street in the city of Portsmouth and destroyed quite a number, and but for the direction of the wind the whole city would have been destroyed.

The terror of the people, aroused in the night time, to find the great sweeping flames apparently rushing to destroy everything before them, is beyond the power of my pen to describe.

The trembling women, hastily robing, servants frantic and children screaming, increased the dismay; from all appearances it seemed that the town would be swept off the face of the earth in two hours, and it would have been had not the wind blown southwardly. All the horses and oxen used in the navy yard, a considerable number, were burned alive, a horrid cruelty, but can you conceive a more diabolical act than to fire so many buildings at the dead of night, endangering the lives of men, women and children, many of whom were quietly sleeping, placing more faith in American sailors than to imagine that they could be capable of such an outrage.

Afterwards, for some days, the whole population was in nervous dread, fearing the return of the *Pawnee* to finish the destruction of the town.

While the fires were still burning and the ashes of this great destruction were smouldering, the "Wise Light Dragoons" rode to the bay shore to be videtts on the beach for the State of Virginia and there was

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my first military service. We were quartered in Denby's church in the Northern part of the county about eight miles from the city of Norfolk.

The first lieutenant and I slept within the altar rail, our captain in the pulpit, and the non-commissioned officers and privates lodged on the long benches for their beds. I did not have a pair of blankets there, for these for which I have named my story were on board a hostile man-of-war, flying the stars and stripes, anchored over across Hampton Roads.

I am now seated in a comfortable chair before an open fire in my home, and there are the blankets hung up on the wall. The like of them was never seen before, and yet they are of the size and kind of many millions that have gone into the rag bag of the long ago.

They are now thin and worn thread-bare in many places; but the "U. S. Navy" in fadeless letters of red is on them still. They are relics of one of the greatest wars that ever thundered upon the face of the earth, they are unique in experience and they served on both sides, under two flags.

The canteen, Spencer rifle, spur, sword and belt are silent witnesses of the scenes of war that have gone forever. They are captured spoils of war, and you will desire to know how I got them.

I will let the "Blankets" tell their own story as if in their own language, partly based upon surmise and partly on facts, and I will tell you about the other relics and the long and faithful service of the old blankets.

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LETTER NO. 3.

THE TALE OF THE BLANKETS.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

“Mary had a little lamb,
His fleece was white as snow,
Every where that Mary went,
The lamb was sure to go.”

But we, the “Blankets” were neither borne nor born on the back of Mary’s little lamb; we imagine that we first saw light away beyond the “Father of Waters” on a ranch of the great North West and many lambs bore us over the plains, grazing the while to give us strength and length, until they became fat sheep for the shearing time. Then the sharp scissors separated us from our mothers and fathers to be washed and baled for a long journey to New England. There we found a great building on the banks of the river Merrimac, with long cylinder chimneys constantly spouting clouds of smoke from the furnaces which were creating steam for the boilers to run great engines by which the looms were worked, and the humming, buzzing machinery would fill your ears everywhere over the great structure. We were carried from the cars to a large room in the factory and made to sleep on the bare floor without covering. When we were taken out we were rushed into the mouths of the great machines, carded, spun and

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woven into the form you now see us, only we were whole and fresh like new born twins. The "U. S. Navy" was in plain red letters as a mark to keep us from running astray, for Uncle Sam ordered our creation to give comfort to his Blue Jackets.

We were sent from the mills with thousands of others to be enlisted in the American Navy and were first put in a hammock on the U. S. sailing frigate *Cumberland* for a jolly good tar with whom we sailed for Mexico on our first cruise.

A revolution was in progress there between two factions, one known as the Church Party and the other as the Constitutional Party. This may after awhile inspire you to read some history of that country. The Home Squadron under Commodore Garrett J. Pendergrast was sent to Mexican waters to look out for the interest of Americans.

On the 22d of December, Miramon, the leader of the Church Party was completely routed and Juarez with the Liberal army entered the City of Mexico on Christmas Day.

When we were off Vera Cruz on the ninth day of February, the flag of the commodore was transferred from the old side wheel ship *Powhatan* to our ship.

Then we heard that times at home were bestirred with rumors of civil war and orders came for our return to American waters, so on the 25th day of February, 1861, we were sailing from Vera Cruz homeward and our good ship on the second day of March anchored in Hampton Roads after encountering a succession of severe gales off the Atlantic coast.

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On the 29th day of March we went up the Elizabeth river and anchored off the Naval Hospital in the harbor of Norfolk and Portsmouth; afterwards our ship was towed up to the Gosport Navy Yard, where there were many big ships of war with famous names. The *Merrimac*, the *Delaware*, the *Pennsylvania*, the *United States*, the *Raritan*, the *German-town*, the *Plymouth* and the *Dolphin*. War seemed to be in the air, our great guns were shotted and the sailors were kept at quarters.

On the 28th day of April, 1861, the commotion was great and the excitement intense all around us. The report came that the Virginians had sunk the Light Ships in the channel of the river to prevent our escape, and the trains constantly running on the Petersburg railroad were thought to be transporting troops to capture the navy yard. During that day and next, arms, munitions, and stores were brought from the navy yard on board of our ship.

Sailors and marines were sent ashore to destroy the cannon and prepare for the general breaking up. About eight o'clock at night the *Pawnee* steamed up to the yard with the third Massachusetts regiment. As she passed us, our boys greeted her arrival with three hearty cheers. The soldiers were immediately landed to help in the destruction of the ships that were fastened to the wharves and moored in the stream. The turpentine powder and waste recently brought from Washington by the *Annacosta* were taken ashore for laying trains to the ships, store-houses and the great buildings in which men-of-war were constructed, for the terrible element, fire, was

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soon to be turned loose for sweeping destruction. Early in the morning our ship, towed by the *Pawnee* and *Yankee*, started down the stream to Hampton Roads. At a signal rocket the trains of powder were lighted and the great conflagration swept with the wind over the doomed buildings and ships. The flames from the great buildings and huge ships illuminated our vessels and the two cities, perfectly. It was an awful sight! The marines and sailors were on the decks of our outgoing vessels with loaded muskets and the cannon were shotted and ready for action as we passed slowly by the twin cities. No hostile demonstration was manifested on shore and we passed out without firing a musket. We anchored in the river to examine the barriers before attempting to pass over, but finding we could get over, the tugs *Yankee* and *Keystone State* hooked on and dragged us over and down to the anchorage under Fortress Monroe. We were glad to rest after the great excitement and congratulated ourselves that we were still peacefully folded in our hammock. Flag Officer Pendergrast directed the affairs of the Home Squadron from this anchorage for some time.

LETTER NO. 4.

THE TALE OF THE BLANKETS (CONTINUED).

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

About the fifth of July, 1861, we heard our sailor boy say that our good ship would sail out of the

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capas, turn southward to observe the condition of affairs off stormy Hatteras, and then turn northward for the Boston navy yard.

July the eleventh found us in the dry dock at Boston. All the time we spent there a great hammering was a din in all ears. However the repairs were soon completed and the *Cumberland* sailed for Hampton Roads on August ninth; arriving in the Virginia sea, she took position off Newport News to protect the building of shore batteries and watch the "Rebel" James River Fleet, with which she had a brush on September 15th without damage to either side.

The spring of 1862 found us safely riding at anchor at the mouth of the James river only shifting with the tides that flow in and out twice each day; and often the winter winds would whistle through the rigging and shrouds making the Jack tars shiver when cleaning the decks.

On the eighth day of March, about nine o'clock in the morning, our sailor boy said: "Yonder are two steamers off Smithfield Point and I am suspicious of them," and then about noonday, three vessels under steam were standing down the Elizabeth river towards Sewell's Point.

The crew was at once beat to quarters, the guns were double breached on the main deck, and the *Cumberland* was cleared for action. Fatal day!

At one o'clock in the afternoon the enemy hove in sight, gradually coming nearer; the iron clad steamer *Merrimac*, accompanied by two steam gun boats, passed ahead of the frigate *Congress* and stood down towards us. The *Cumberland* opened fire on her

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with solid shot, but she halted not, stood on and struck us under the starboard fore channels, delivering her fire at the same time; the crash was fatal and terrible. Through the great hole made in our starboard bow by the prow of the *Merrimac* the water rushed in volume and the ship was sinking. At three-thirty o'clock in the afternoon the water had gained upon us, notwithstanding the pumps were kept actively employed, to a degree that the forward magazine being drowned, powder had to be taken from the after magazine for the ten-inch gun. Five minutes later the water had risen to the main hatchway, and the ship canted to port, a parting fire was delivered as she settled down, and the sailors jumped overboard to save themselves.

One hundred and twenty-one of our men were killed and drowned of the 376 on board when the fight commenced. We heard that the enemy had only two killed and eight wounded. The prow of the *Merrimac* was broken off and her armor slightly damaged, her anchors and flag staff were shot away, and smoke stack and steam pipe riddled; but she turned and went back to fight the *Congress*.

We (there were two of us), were nicely folded in our sailor boy's hammock, in the early morning, but when the water rushed into the bowels of the ship it lifted the hammock clear off the hooks and we floated out on the bosom of the James River to meet the destiny of the tides. Our sailor boy had gone down fighting the last gun and needed us no more to enfold his sleeping form.

The men of the *Cumberland* had fought with the

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ardor and gallantry of true knights and served the guns until the rushing water had killed the powder, and the ship went down with the flag at the mast-head, never surrendering.

Naval warfare does not record higher courage and bravery, and they won unstinted praise for their glory from our enemy. The tide bore us along towards the sea, but rounding Sewell's Point we struck the sand beach and lodged under the rifled gun battery. A "rebel" of the garrison made us prisoners; "fair spoils of war" he said, "and much needed, too."

Sergeant P. Pritchard was our captor, reserving one pair and the hammock for himself, he sold us for ten dollars to his captain and so we became comforters, aiders and abettors of the "Rebellion."

We were not deserters, yet we changed masters. We were afraid our motives might be impeached for we did not relish the idea of being called deserters; we, however, consoled ourselves with the knowledge that our mission after all was one of mercy, and not of bloodshed; so being forcibly landed in the Confederacy, we made peace with our conscience and gave all our blessings to a spirit of the South, which still cherishes its memories with unabating love.'

LETTER NO. 5.

THE BATTLE OF SEWELL'S POINT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Virginia seceded on the 17th day of April, 1861, subject to the ratification of the ordinance of her con-

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vention by the people at an election to be held on the fourth Thursday in May following. The prevailing sentiment foretold its overwhelming adoption and as Virginia by force of circumstances was to be a great battle ground, the Southern troops commenced their march hitherward before the vote was taken which would irrevocably fix the status of our state.

When the "City Light Guards" on the 19th of April, 1861, left Columbus, Georgia, for Virginia, they bore a beautiful silk banner—the flag of Georgia, which had been presented by Miss Ella Rose Ingraham, and on arriving in Portsmouth, Va., the company first camped at the Naval Hospital. Capt. Peyton H. Colquitt was its commander and it was assigned as "Company A" of the Fourth Georgia Battalion. This company was ordered from the Naval Hospital to Sewell's Point where it participated in the first battle in Virginia. Capt. Colquitt who commanded the forces in this engagement was afterwards made Colonel of the 46th Georgia Regiment, which after serving some time in defence of Charleston, S. C., was transferred to the Western Army, and while fighting in the bloody battle of Chickamauga on Sunday, September 20th, 1863, was mortally wounded at the head of his command and soon expired. The division commander said in his report of the battle: "The noble, brave and chivalrous Colquitt, who fell in command of Gist's Brigade, was a soldier, a gentleman, a Christian and a friend." The beginning of the battle of Sewell's Point was on the 18th day of May, 1861. The *Kahukee*, Capt. Babel Taylor, which used to ply through the Dismal Swamp

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canal, was sent to take a force of laborers to Sewell's Point to build a fortification there. She landed the laborers but being observed from Fortress Monroe, the U. S. Str. *Star*, afterwards named the *Monticello*, was dispatched after her. The *Monticello* chased the Steamer *Kahukee* up the Elizabeth River to a point where she was in reach of our guns at Boush's Bluff Battery. A gun was trained by Thaddeus Gray of the Norfolk Junior Volunteers, Company H, 12th, Va. Regiment infantry, and as soon as it could be made to bear on the ship, one shot was fired by Capt. William Young, the instructor in heavy artillery. This shot stopped the chase and the *Monticello* retired, but when abreast of Sewell's Point vigorously bombarded the unfinished fort. The *Monticello*, commanded by Captain Henry Eagle, U. S. N., kept up a constant fire for more than an hour, when the steam tug *Thomas Freeborn*, Commander James Ward, U. S. N., carrying one gun, came to her aid and the two vessels continued the bombardment until the close of day without any serious injury to the works, only burying unmounted cannon in the sand.

The tug returned to Old Point and the *Monticello* moored with broadside on, with the intention of continuing the attack, in order to demolish the works or prevent completion.

The Confederates worked on the fortification during the whole night, and early next morning, May 19th, other guns and equipment were hurried to the works.

The City Light Guards of Columbus, Georgia, detachments from the Woodis Rifles, Company "G,"

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Sixth Va. Regiment, the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues, Lieut. Thomas Nash, and the Norfolk Juniors, Lieut. Holmes, were ordered from neighboring posts to garrison the fort and occupy contiguous points. This fort was located just North of the Virginian Railway Coal Pier.

The contingent from the Juniors contained a number of men familiar with handling of heavy guns on shipboard, among them Thaddeus and James Gray, who were especially useful and acted with conspicuous gallantry when the battle was on. When the garrison reached the battery they found everything in confusion, guns unmounted, no shells and no preparation whatever to repel an attack from the water. General Walter Gwynn, commanding the Virginia forces around Norfolk, put all the forces and guns at this fortification under command of Capt. Peyton H. Colquitt, who promptly ordered all hands to work finishing up the earthworks and mounting the guns.

They covered the port holes with blankets and dug up the cannon which had been buried in the sand by the bombardment of the previous day. They cleared away the sand, and succeeded in getting in position three 32-pounders and two small rifled guns by the afternoon; and just as the gunners were loading the cannon, the *Monticello* and *Thos. Freeborn* reopened the bombardment; and now they met with vigorous opposition. The guns on the ships were admirably handled and fired with great accuracy, several balls passing through the embrasures of the fort, one struck a 32-pounder within the battery, and one shell exploded in the fort. They expended fifteen stand

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of grape, twelve 10-inch shot, thirty-two 10-inch shell for 32-pounders and forty-five 32-pounder shot, making a total of 114 shots.

The *Monticello* was struck five times by cannon shot in the hull and her upper works well peppered with rifle bullets. She had two men wounded during the action. The Virginians and Georgians fought with great enthusiasm and bravery side by side, and two members of the City Light Guards who dug away sand in front of one of the port holes during the hottest of the fire received especial mention in the official report of Capt. Colquitt.

Fortunately not one of the garrison was injured; but one man was buried under a pile of sand hurled down upon him by a passing shell. After he was dug out by his comrades, it took a minute or more, and considerable feeling of his person up and down, to satisfy him that he was "all there." A very ludicrous scene.

The only soldier injured of the Virginia troops was Private Alex. Sikes, of the Wise Light Dragoons, who was on vidette duty some distance away from the fort. He was slightly wounded on the leg by the fragment of an exploding shell; and a few hours afterwards was admired by crowds on the streets of Norfolk for being the first soldier who spilt his blood in Virginia's war against the invaders of her soil.

Captain Colquitt says: "Our firing was less frequent than that of the enemy as our ammunition was scarce; only two rounds left after the engagement, which lasted one hour and a half." Notwithstanding

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the vessels were driven off by the effective fire from the fort and they retreated to Old Point. There was neither a Virginia nor a Confederate Flag at hand to raise over the fort consequently the flag of Georgia above-mentioned was unfurled on the ramparts by Major Wm. E. Taylor, an aide of Gen'l Gwynn, who was also acting as aide to the commander of the forces in action. The first engagement on the soil of Virginia in which blood was shed was under the single star blue banner of Georgia, the Empire state of the South. This victory created great rejoicing, and the ladies of Portsmouth responded by giving the Georgians a Confederate flag. The ceremonies of presentation took place at the camp near Sewell's Point on the 22d of May, and the spirit of the occasion may be noted from the address of Miss Belle Bilisoly, the beautiful and accomplished young lady, who presented it. She said in part: "We do not aim to make any invidious distinction between your gallant corps and those brave troops who shared with you the glory of achieving the first victory on the waters of our beautiful Elizabeth, for you have all nobly sustained yourselves and given evidence to the world that the honor of woman is safe in your keeping." * * * "But to you soldiers of Georgia, it behooves us as appreciative citizens to tender, not only our thanks, for your alacrity in responding to the cry of distress from our dear old mother and the promptness in expelling her foes, but this beautiful flag of our Confederacy as a memento of the esteem and confidence reposed in each and all of you as patriots and soldiers, citizens and gentlemen."

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LETTER NO. 6

DENBY'S CHURCH AND DISBANDMENT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Now that the Blankets have told you the story of their service in the United States Navy, and you have heard in my last letter about the first victory in Virginia, I will take you back to Denby's Church with the cavalry. The only thrilling incident of this service was the wounding of Vidette Sikes. I saw him in Norfolk the same afternoon with his trousers rolled up to his knee exhibiting his wound to admiring crowds on the corner of Main Street and Commercial Place. He attracted a larger assembly than any medicine fakir you ever saw. The Methodist Church known as Denby's Church, located at Tanner's Creek Cross Roads in Norfolk County, was our first shelter in the active military service of Virginia, and from these headquarters squads of horsemen were sent out to patrol the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and Hampton Roads from Ocean View to Sewell's Point, and to watch the movements of the enemy's vessels.

General Robert E. Lee, who had been made commander-in-chief of the Virginia forces, ordered fortifications to be constructed at different points to protect the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth, and before the fort at Sewell's Point was completed, as before related, it was attacked by Federal vessels which were

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driven off and defeated. You will have observed that although the convention had passed the ordinance of secession it was not to be effectual until ratified by an election to take place on the fourth Thursday in May, so this battle took place before our State was a member of the Confederate States. It was Virginia's victory, with the aid of Georgia. The routine duty of our cavalry was kept up until the eighth day of June, 1861, when the military establishment of Virginia was turned over to the Confederate States.

As I remember, it required sixty men for a company to be mustered into the service of the Confederate States, and the "Wise Light Dragoons" were short of that number, so there was no alternative but to disband, and it was accordingly done and all departed from Denby's Church.

Some of the men immediately enlisted in other commands, but the largest number formed the nucleus for an infantry company, which soon after organized at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in the Southern part of the county, under the name of "Jackson Grays." It was named for the brave Jackson who killed Ellsworth at Alexandria.

I was unanimously elected captain, and there again we were quartered in a church, and our awkward squads were daily drilled. The county having appropriated \$12 each for equipping her soldiers, cloth was purchased for our uniforms, and the ladies of the neighborhood assembled every day in a near-by mansion house to make them up. It was not long before my men were dressed in gray with glittering Virginia buttons.

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The noble women presented us with a beautiful silk flag when we were ready to march to war. At that time they thought every company would have its flag, but a regimental flag was only used in battle, so our flag had to be folded away after we left Norfolk. We marched to Norfolk over the old battle field at Great Bridge, the good farmers sending wagons to take our luggage, which was too much for the exigencies of war, but at that time we did not see far in the future. Arriving in Norfolk the "Jackson Grays" paraded on Main Street and facing the Custom House were met by Major E. Bradford, the mustering officer, and on that eleventh day of July, 1861, were mustered into the army of the Confederate States, and then for a time we were quartered in the court-house at Portsmouth, from there we were ordered to Fort Nelson, where we had a most delightful time, until December, when we were sent to man the masked batteries at Sewell's Point. While camping at the naval hospital park, our skirmish drills in the afternoons attracted large crowds of visitors and the presence of the beautiful and handsomely dressed ladies gave us great delight.

LETTER NO. 7

AT THE MASKED BATTERY.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

There was a sandhill or ridge a short distance from and a little northwest of the Confederate fort at Se-

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well's Point, the scene of the first victory in Virginia, which I have already described. On the 12th of April, 1905, this sand hill was graded down for a building location, and the laborers discovered many human bones. It was evidently the burial ground of the Chesapeake Indians, for this place was in the bounds of their hunting grounds. One thigh bone, perfectly preserved, was twenty-two inches long, showing that it must have been that of a giant. It was sent to the Smithsonian Institute at Washington, D. C. A battery mounting two guns was located in this sand hill. The guns were thirty-two pounder rifled cannon, in casemates, with railroad iron roofs, supported by a massive framework of yellow pine timber. The casemates were buried in the great sand hill, and the embrasures were large enough to permit the guns to train upon Fortress Monroe and the Rip-Raps, and west across Hampton Roads, but not enough to the left to cross fire with our main Sewell's Point Fort.

These guns were originally smooth bore, taken with the navy yard after the Federal evacuation, and rifled there, with a strong wrought-iron band shrunk around the breech to resist the force of the charge of powder. The rifling gave them a range of three miles, covering the main channel across the Roads, and also reaching the Rip-Raps. There was another battery in course of construction on the Doyle Farm completely masked by a thick pine woods. It was designed for four guns, one rifled gun in casemate with railroad iron roof and the other three in barbette, with the magazine and bomb-proof traverse adjacent.

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The "Jackson Grays" were sent to garrison these two batteries. They also manned a ten-inch smooth bore cannon en barbette just south of the two-gun battery.

A long board building was constructed behind the sand ridge for our quarters. We drilled with both small arms and heavy artillery every day, but were not allowed to unmask our battery, although we were bombarded every day from twelve to one o'clock by the Sawyer gun on Rip-Raps, which was very annoying to us as we were not allowed to reply, and our guns had equal range with this tormentor. The shells used by this gun were covered with lead. Most of them buried in the sand without exploding, and when dug up were as bright as a silver dollar. Digging them up was a daily amusement for the soldiers. The only damage which ever happened from these shells up to March 8th, 1862, was the killing of two soldiers by an explosion caused by attempting to unscrew the cap of one of them. After waiting and watching from December until March 8th, 1862, our opportunity came, and we joined in the great battle which revolutionized naval warfare.

The scene of the first battle in which I was engaged is the heart of American history. The ocean waves are only a few miles distant, where the wild Atlantic thrusts its arm inland to make the "Mother of Waters" upon whose finger in 1607 was born the American nation. Ralph Lane came up from Roanoke Island in 1585 to discover and name the great bay for the tribe of red men, whose hunting ground was between the confluence of three great rivers and the sea,

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where the Indian warriors went to meet the landing party from Newport's ships and shot their bows over the sand dunes to draw the first English blood in Virginia. Within cannon sound Cornwallis surrendered his sword, and Admiral Cockburn's guns reverberated along the shores of Hampton Roads while thundering at the gates of Norfolk and Portsmouth in 1813. Hampton Roads is a beautiful inland sea, where the billows break and foam from hour to hour—where the fish swim in schools—where the luscious oysters live on the bottom—where gulls fly to shelter from the storms of the sea—and where the ships float in safety at anchor while the hurricane rages with mountain waves on the breast of the near-by ocean.

I well remember that Saturday when the *Virginia*, accompanied by the gunboats *Raleigh* and *Beaufort* steamed around Craney Island, passed in front of our battery, and turned into the channel south of the middle ground, heading for the mouth of the James River. The two gunboats stopped at the mouth of the Elizabeth River to watch the movements of the Federal vessels anchored off Old Point. I saw the battle opened by the *Virginia* delivering her broadside into the *Congress*, as she passed by to engage the *Cumberland*.

As the "Blankets" have told you of the death of the *Cumberland*, I will pass on to the fight with the *Congress*.

The *Virginia* was some time in getting into proper position, owing to the shoal water and the ship was hard to manage in or near the mud. She was obliged to run a short distance above the Federal batteries on

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the James River in order to turn, and all this time she moved slowly because her keel was in the mud bottom. Thus she was unavoidably twice subjected to the heavy guns of all the batteries in passing up and down the river. She, however, kept her guns in action, silenced several batteries, and did much injury on shore. While the *Virginia* was thus engaged in getting her position for attacking the *Congress*, the prisoners afterwards stated that it was believed on board of their ship that the *Virginia* had hauled off. Their men left their guns and gave three cheers. They were sadly mistaken, for soon the *Virginia* opened upon her again so hotly that she ran ashore. The carnage, havoc and dismay caused by the shots of the *Virginia* compelled the Commander of the *Congress* to haul down his colors, and hoist the white flag at her gaff and half mast another at her main mast, and many of her crew immediately took to the boats and went ashore.

The Confederates instantly ceased firing and a signal was made for the *Beaufort* to come within hail of the admiral. He ordered Lieutenant-Commander Parker to take possession, allow the crew to land and burn the ship. Parker ran alongside, received her flag and surrender from Commander William Smith and Lieutenant Pendergrast, with the side-arms of those officers. They delivered themselves as prisoners of war on board the *Beaufort*, and afterwards were permitted, at their own request, to return to the *Congress* to assist in moving the wounded to the *Beaufort*, and never returned. While the *Beaufort* and *Raleigh* were alongside of the *Congress*, and the surrender of that

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vessel had been received from her commander, she having two white flags flying, hoisted by her own crew, a heavy fire was opened upon them from the shore and from the *Congress*, killing some valuable officers and men.

Under this treacherous fire the steamers left the *Congress*, but as Admiral Buchanan was not informed that any injury had been sustained by those vessels at the time, he took it for granted that his order to burn her had been carried out, and waited some minutes to see the smoke ascending from her hatches.

During the delay the Confederates were still subject to the heavy fire from the batteries on the shore, which was promptly returned. The steam frigates *Minnesota* and *Roanoke* and the sailing frigate *St. Lawrence* had previously been reported to Admiral Buchanan as coming from Old Point, but he was determined that the *Congress* should not again fall into the hands of the enemy, and remarked to Flag Lieutenant Minor, "That ship must be burned." Minor promptly volunteered to take a boat and burn her. Lieutenant Minor had hardly reached within fifty yards of the *Congress* when a deadly fire was opened upon him, wounding him severely and several of his men.

On witnessing this vile treachery, the Admiral instantly recalled the boat and ordered the *Congress* destroyed by hot shot and incendiary shell. About this time the gallant Admiral was wounded, and he was forced to transfer the command of the fleet to Lieutenant Catesby Jones.

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LETTER NO. 8

MY FIRST FIGHT

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

The reinforcing ships coming up from Fortress Monroe had to pass directly in front of our two-gun battery, and now was our opportunity to unmask the guns without further orders. Each casemate had a gun's crew of twelve, and as soon as the *Minnesota* heading toward Newport News reached our line of fire we opened upon her. Our first shot went over her and fell wide of our mark, but the second one struck her mainmast, and then she fired a broadside at us, but having only smooth bore cannon, it fell at least a half of a mile short of us. She was under steam, was quickly out of our range, and aground soon after. Next the *Roanoke* passed within our line of fire, and we gave her one shot through her foremast and cut away a shroud on each side of her fore rigging. Then the *St. Lawrence* came on and our shot struck her under the fore foot. Thus these three great ships had their first taste of war from our Sewell's Point rifled gun battery, before they encountered the terrible *Virginia*, and two of them retreated before the iron-clad could get a show at them. The log of the *Minnesota* says: "At 2 o'clock, when off Sewell's Point, the enemy opened fire on us, which was immediately responded to by this ship. One of the enemy's shot

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took effect on the mainmast. We immediately fished and secured it with a hawser over the masthead," and Captain Van Brunt of this ship, in his official report says: "While passing Sewell's Point the rebels opened fire upon us from a rifle battery, one shot going through and crippling my mainmast. I returned fire with my broadside guns and forecastle pivot."

The log of the *Roanoke* says:

"At 2.30, coming in range of Sewell's Point battery, they opened fire, and several shot and shell passed through the foresail and cut away a shroud on each side of the fore rigging; put on stops at once. The forward pivot gun was trained on Sewell's Point battery, and fired, but fell short. Passing Sewell's Point the battery kept a brisk fire on us each way, the shots passing over us and some fragments striking us in hull and rigging. When out of range we came to anchor." The log of the *St. Lawrence* says: "At 5.25, passing Sewell's Point, the batteries opened upon us, firing some half dozen shot and shell, one of which passed over our quarterdeck forward the mizzenmast and just clearing the bows of the whaleboat, another carrying away the starboard quarter foreyard. Fired 12 shot and shell in return to Sewell's Point, all falling short, distance too great." Captain H. V. Purveance of this ship reported that: "At half-past two we got under way in tow of the *Cambridge*, and when abreast of the rebel battery at Sewell's Point, the battery opened fire, one of the shells exploding under the forefoot of the *St. Lawrence*, doing, however, no material injury. The fire was returned, and it is believed with some effect." Thus is told the story of the

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engagement of the three ships and our rifle gun battery by the enemy whom we fought in the great battle of Hampton Roads.

Our cannon having a longer range, could reach the ships, while all of their shots fell far short of the shore.

By firing one of our guns too rapidly in the excitement it was heated to such a degree as to cause the expansion to break the breech band, which forced it out of action, so we had but one gun to play on the retreating *Roanoke* and *St. Lawrence*.

Our inexperienced gunners could not allow time enough between shots for cooling the gun before ramming the charge, and it was a wonder that a premature explosion did not occur.

During the engagement a shell from the Sawyer gun on the Rip-Raps entered the embrasure of the casemate and exploded on the breech of the gun, wounding First Lieutenant William C. Wallace, and privates Alex. B. Cooper and William H. Warden. Cooper's skull was fractured, and he was maimed for life, and Warden died a few weeks after at the naval hospital from the effects of his injuries.

I was blinded for some minutes with smoke and sand, as was the entire gun's crew. It seems almost a miracle that we were not all killed or wounded.

The *Minnesota* grounded in the north channel, where, unfortunately, shallow water prevented the *Virginia* from getting near enough to destroy her. The *Virginia's* pilots declaring that it was unsafe to approach nearer, she returned to the south channel, leaving the middle ground between them, and then

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the duel continued until dark, when the Confederate squadron anchored off Sewell's Point, except the *Beaufort*, which had proceeded to the Naval Hospital at Portsmouth with the wounded and prisoners as soon as she had left the *Congress*. It may be well to say that the middle ground is shoal water between two channels in Hampton Roads.

The sight of this greatest of marine battles was at once grand and awful! I still wonder at the spectacle, and picture it in my mind over and over again. I remember as the sun went down the flaming smoke was floating over against the red and purple sky, the white puffs from the blazing muzzles of the cannon, which were thundering over the water, lingered for awhile in the shrouds and rigging of the great crafts of war and drifted out on the mazes of the evening to vanish with the wind.

As the penalty for the treachery under the white flags that were floating over the *Congress*, the red-hot shot and incendiary shells from the ports of the *Virginia* crushed into her sides, her sailors jumped into the sea, and swam for the shore, and her hull blazed from every port.

Now night covered the face of the waters, the Confederate fleet was anchored abreast of Sewell's Point, and over the way the light of the burning ship made the surface of the water like a sea of living glass.

The burning tar in the oakum seams made flickering lines of light over the decks and along the sides of the ship, the fire ran up the shrouds and stays, blazed along the yards; pillars of smoke twisted about

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the great pine masts with wreaths of flame breathing out to die on the wind.

The great frigate in full blaze was an awful thing of beauty! Down in the "hold" the fire swept away the lower decks, charred the ribs and the great live oak knees, fired the shotted guns and the wild flying missiles shone like meteors streaming through the sky. After the hour of midnight, the magazine exploded, and threw up a volume of fire from the bottom of the sea, like the breath of a volcano. It thundered and rocked the land and water as an earthquake tearing out the bowels of the earth.

The force of the powder broke the strong timbers, scattered the fragments into the air, and sent the remains of the *Congress* floating over the surging waters to go with the ocean tide, and when the glittering sparks of the vanished column of flame died out, night shrouded the waters with silent, death-like darkness. What will be the outcome of the morrow? The *Minnesota* is disabled, and her consorts are under the guns of Fortress Monroe, and her fate seems to hang on the will of the *Virginia*.

LETTER NO. 9.

THE DUEL OF THE IRON-CLADS.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Worn out in watching the burning *Congress* and never-to-be-forgotten scene, I fell asleep on the beach in front of our battery, with the sand for my bed, and

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the rising sun on the ninth day of March, 1862, awoke me from my slumbers.

I saw a yawl boat put off from the *Virginia* and head for the shore a little distance below my position. I walked to the point of landing and saw it was bringing off ship the wounded Commander. I saw the great Admiral tenderly landed in the arms of his faithful seamen and heard him send a fighting message back to his successor in command.

This morning in the early dawn a sailor's hammock marked "Cumberland," containing two pairs of blankets with the "U. S. Navy" in red letters on them, was found by Sergeant P. Pritchard of the "Jackson Grays" on the sand beach near our fort. Afterward I purchased a pair from him for ten dollars, and so they became my nightly comforts for many years, and that night they were on my bunk in our quarters behind the sand hill. These are the blankets pictured to you in this narrative.

About eight o'clock this morning the *Virginia* got under way and steamed toward the *Minnesota*, when, within a mile, as near as the midde ground shoal water would permit, she opened fire, and the battle raged for some time, then I saw a queer little craft creep around from behind the *Minnesota* and fire at the *Virginia*. It appeared like a cheese box floating on a plank, and she was called the *Cheese Box* after that.

She had reached Old Point about nine o'clock on the night of the eight of March, and at two o'clock on the morning of the ninth hauled alongside of the *Minnesota* between that ship and the Newport News shore.

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So, in the nick of time, appeared the *Cheese Box* to take up the gauntlet of battle and relieve the *Minnesota*. The ships of the enemy were out of the range of our battery, so I sat upon the beach below, near the water, and watched the fight.

It was a beautiful Sabbath day—one to gladden the heart of a Christian, bright and clear, with wind enough to make the little waves race with measured murmurs, as they kissed the shore in the morning sunlight.

The duel between the ironclads was the most intensely thrilling engagement I ever witnessed.

I could see the white smoke puff out of the port holes, then hear the boom of the cannon, and the solid shot glancing from the shield of the *Virginia* would come ricocheting over the surface of the restless waters and sink near our shore as the force was spent.

The ships soon closed together as two great wrestlers striving for the championship of the world, one ponderous and slow in manœuvring, the other agile and moving around her antagonist at pleasure. Now the supreme moment, the *Virginia* finding the opportunity, put on all steam, and struck the *Monitor* a side blow. Oh! for that lost prow! The glancing blow was of little effect, because the engine was reversed too soon. An eyewitness on Craney Island, who could see the upside of the *Monitor*, said a few more revolutions of the *Virginia's* propeller would have buried the *Monitor* and sunk her to rise no more.

The commander of the *Virginia* (Lieutenant Catesby Jones) said: "When we saw that our fire

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made no impression on the *Monitor* we determined to run into her if possible. We found it a very difficult feat to do, our great length and draft, in a comparatively narrow channel, with little water to spare, made us sluggish in our movements, and hard to steer and turn. When the opportunity presented all steam was put on; there was not, however, sufficient time to gather full headway before striking. The blow was given with the broad wooden stem, the iron prow having been lost the day before. The *Monitor* received the blow in such a manner as to weaken its effect, and the damage to her was trifling; shortly after an alarming leak in the bow was reported. It, however, did not long continue." Lieutenant Jones says that the shells from the *Virginia's* guns seemed to make no impression on the *Cheese Box*, until one struck her pilot house, and blinded her captain.

They had fought and wrestled for three hours, and after this occurrence the *Monitor* withdrew to the shallow water of the middle ground, where the *Virginia* could not follow her. She waited on the battleground an hour, but the *Monitor* would not return to the contest: then it was decided to take the ship to the dry dock in the navy yard to have another iron prow put on, to have shutters for the port holes, and bear her down lower in the water so as to better protect her wooden hull. At twelve o'clock, noonday, the *Virginia* stood for Portsmouth. None of her crew was killed or wounded in her fight with the *Monitor*. When the *Virginia* left the scene of battle, she had nothing to fight, the *Monitor* having gotten out of her reach in shallow water, and the pilots said

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she could not be taken near enough to destroy the *Minnesota*, as she was leaking and could not get to the dock except at high tide, it was part of wisdom in Commander Jones to go up to the navy yard at that time.

The Federal loss in the two days' battle was reported as 201 killed, and 108 wounded. The Confederate loss was 7 killed and 17 wounded on shipboard, and 3 wounded at our battery, making 20 wounded.

LETTER NO 10.

THE "VIRGINIA" VICTORIOUS.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

The wrestle of these terrible iron monsters in deadly conflict, like fabled leviathians out of the broad, deep seas, was grand, awful, magnificent, sublime to behold! There was the world's most radical change in naval warfare—there was the passing of wooden men-of-war—there was the greatest event in all the history of marine engagements. I saw it, but could not realize it. It had no parallel in the annals of time. But one year before was published "Ordnance and Gunnery," by Lieut. E. Simpson, U. S. N., designed as a text-book for the Naval Academy, which said: "Iron vessels are utterly unfit for war"; and giving the comments of Sir Howard Douglass on the French ship *LeGaloire* and the British ship *Warrior*, concluded that from the opinion of this standard authority that

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there was not much to be feared from these iron-clad monsters.

Sir Howard Douglas had written many treatises on fortifications and one on naval gunnery, which was standard authority in foreign countries. He died in November, 1861, too soon to realize the failure of his opinions.

Alas! for the theories of these distinguished writers. I saw them buried in the waters of Hampton Roads in the bright sunlight of a glorious Sabbath day without hope of resurrection.

The North was overwhelmed with consternation and dread, and the alarm was sounded in every north Atlantic city, while the South was jubilant over the results of the great battles of the eighth and ninth of March, 1862.

The Confederate fleet had successfully encountered, defied, and beat a force equal to 2,960 men and 220 guns, as follows:

Congress, burned, 480 men, 50 guns.

Cumberland, sunk, 360 men, 22 guns.

Minnesota, riddled, 550 men, 40 guns.

Roanoke, driven off, 550 men, 40 guns.

St. Lawrence, driven off, 550 men, 40 guns.

Two or three gunboats, disabled and driven off, 120 men, 6 guns.

Monitor, iron-clad, disabled and driven off to shoal water, 150 men, 2 guns, and the forts at Newport News, silenced, 200 men, 20 guns.

The tug boat *Dragon* was sunk alongside of the *Minnesota*. This victory frightened the enemy so he prepared to run in every direction. The famous old

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ship, *Brandywine*, then used as a storeship, was hastily towed up the bay to escape destruction, and every preparation was made to obstruct the channel of the Potomac, to save the national capital from capture by the *Virginia*. Another ship of her capacity, commanded by an officer of the same judgment and nerve as Buchanan, would have made the North sue for peace at the close of our victorious battles of Hampton Roads. Yet it has been written by Northern historians, and believed by many Northmen, that the *Monitor* defeated the *Virginia*, and even by some Virginia historians it is called a drawn battle. When two men fight and one cries "enough" he who cries is whipped. When two men clinch in a fist fight, and one disentangles himself and runs away beyond the reach of his antagonist, he who runs is whipped.

The *Virginia* and *Monitor* were fighting in close contact; the *Monitor* drew off into shallow water, out of reach of her antagonist, and dared not return to the contest, therefore, I say it was a brilliant and magnificent victory for the Confederacy. The *Virginia* was victorious, the *Monitor* was defeated, and just historians must so record and declare.

The victory of the *Virginia* over the *Monitor* is admitted in the report of Mr. Ballentine, made on the 31st day of May, 1884, to the Forty-eighth Congress on the bill to give prize money to the crew of the *Monitor* for the alleged destruction of the *Virginia*. It says: "All of the evidence leads us clearly to the opinion that the *Monitor*, after her engagement with the *Merrimac*, on the ninth of March, declined again to engage her, though offered the opportunity, and that

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so great doubt existed with the United States naval and military authorities as to the power of the *Monitor* to successfully meet the *Merrimac*, (he calls her by her original name before she was converted into an iron-clad by the Confederates) that orders were given to her commander by the President not to bring on an engagement. It also appears that the *Merrimac*, so far from being seriously injured, was enabled, after the engagement, to protect the approaches to Norfolk and Richmond until after the evacuation of Norfolk."

* * * "We assume that the proof shows that the only serious damage sustained by the *Merrimac* was inflicted by the *Cumberland*, and that the *Merrimac* went back to Norfolk when her adversaries were out of reach; and they being in shoal water, and she, on account of the great depth of water which she drew, was unable to attack them, went back to Norfolk for repairs, and again came out and offered battle, which was refused; and that eventually, on the evacuation of Norfolk by the Confederate forces, she was destroyed by her officers and crew to prevent her falling into the hands of the Union forces, and that, therefore, her destruction was not the result of her engagement with the *Monitor*."

After citing all the evidence, the report goes on to say: "From the above-mentioned facts, we think it clearly appears that the *Monitor*, after her engagement with the *Merrimac* on the 9th of March, never again dared encounter her, though offered frequent opportunities; that so much doubt existed in the minds of the Federal authorities as to her power to meet the *Merrimac*, that orders were given her commander not

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to fight her voluntarily; that the *Merrimac* was so far from being seriously injured in her engagement, that it effectually protected the approaches to Norfolk and Richmond until Norfolk was evacuated; that the *Merrimac* could not have gotten to Washington or Baltimore in her normal condition; that, although she could have run by the Federal fleet and Old Point (barring torpedoes in the channel) and threatened McClellan's base at Yorktown, in exceptionally good weather, yet would have had to leave the James River open."

LETTER NO. II.

THE "VIRGINIA'S" SECOND CHALLENGE.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

After the *Virginia* had received repairs, a new prow and shutters for her port holes, on the eleventh of April she went down to Hampton Roads to challenge the Federal fleet to battle. She left the anchorage off the Naval Hospital about six o'clock in the morning, under command of Flag Officer Josiah Tatnall, and went within long range of the Federal land batteries, but the *Monitor* kept close under the grim fortress as her protector. I was filled with intense excitement, expecting to witness another famous battle of the iron-clads, but was sorely disappointed.

The *Monitor* cowered under this challenge while the *Virginia* held the battle ground until late in the afternoon.

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A telegraphic report to the Federal Secretary of War says: "Day opened bright and clear, with the broad expanse of Hampton Roads almost unruffled by wave. About seven o'clock a signal gun from the *Minnesota* turned all eyes towards Sewell's Point, and coming from under the land, almost obscured by the dim haze, the *Merrimac* was seen, followed by the *Yorktown*, *Jamestown*, and four small vessels, altogether seven in number. There was instantaneous activity among the transports and vessels in the upper Roads to get out of the way of the steamboats, several of which were crowded with troops, and moved out of danger. Steam tugs ran whistling and screaming about, towing strings of vessels behind them, whilst sloops, schooners and brigs taking advantage of what air there was, got up sail and moved out of harm's way. In the course of an hour the appearance of the crowded Roads was greatly altered. Forests of masts between Fortress Monroe and Sewell's Point disappeared, and the broad expanse of water bore on its surface only the rebel fleet and two French and one English man-of-war, which with steam up, still maintained position. Curious maneuvers! eight-thirty o'clock. For the last hour the maneuvers of the rebel fleet have apparently been directed towards decoying our fleet up towards Sewell's Point. When the *Merrimac* first appeared she stood directly across the Elizabeth river, followed by her consorts as if they were bound for Newport News.

"The *Merrimac* approached the English sloop-of-war, and after apparently communicating with her,

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fell slowly, and moved back towards her consorts in rear.

"The French and English vessels then moved up as if they had been informed that the lower Roads were to be the scene of the conflict, and they had been warned to get out of range.

"For an hour the rebel fleet kept changing position without making any decided advance in any direction. On our part no movement was made. The *Monitor*, with steam up and in fighting trim, laid quietly near her usual anchorage. The *Naugatuck* (Stevens "Battery") came out and took position alongside of the *Monitor*. Signals were exchanged between our vessels, the fort and Rip-Raps, but no movements were made. Curiosity grew rapidly into suspense. A bold stroke. At length the Yorktown moved rapidly up and after advancing well towards Newport News, steamed rapidly towards Hampton. The object was then seen to be the capture of three sailing vessels, two brigs and a schooner, transports, which were lying either aground or had not been furnished with a steam tug in order to make their escape. The bold impudence of the maneuvering continued; the apparent apathy of our fleet excited surprise and indignation. There was a rebel boat, not built for war purposes, having the protection of the *Merrimac* and her consorts, where it appeared to impartial eyes, she could easily be cut off, and yet no attempt on our part to do it. Of course there were good reasons for this policy, though the crowd could not see it." The above is a vivid and forcible confession from an enemy on the spot that the *Monitor*

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and all her consorts including the "Stevens Battery" were afraid to meet the *Virginia* on a fair field. It was the C. S. Steamer *Jamestown*, Lieut. Commander Alexander, which captured the Brig *Marcus*, of Stockton, N. J., the Brig *Saboah*, of Providence, R. I., and the Schooner *Catharine A. Dix*, of Accomac, Va. One of the brigs was loaded with hay, and the other two vessels were in ballast. The capture of these vessels almost in cannon shot of the *Monitor* did not effect her movement, so for the second time she declined combat with the *Virginia*. In the first as before stated she retired to shallow water and declined further contest with the victorious *Virginia*.

The commander of Her Britanic Majesty's ship *Rinaldo*, which had arrived in Hampton Roads from Charleston, S. C., on March 10th, 1862, reporting on this affair says: "The *Virginia* and her consorts continued steaming for Fortress Monroe but when abreast of Sewell's Point, well out in the stream, the gunboats and tugs stopped, and the *Virginia* proceeded as before, passing within two hundred yards of me. At 7:45, the fort on Rip-Raps fired two shots at her, both falling short. I then slipped my port anchor, and in company with the French steamers *Catinet* and *Gassendi*, headed for Newport News, keeping out of range of the Federal guns. At 9 a. m., the Confederate gunboat *Patrick Henry*, with some little assistance from the gunboat *Teaser* captured three transports close in shore on the Federal side, without being interfered with, and towed them up to Norfolk. From this hour until 4 p. m., the Confederate squadron cruised about the Roads without

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opposition, the *Virginia* occasionally going within range of the Federal guns on the Rip-Raps and Fortress Monroe, as well as those of the large squadron under the guns of the fortress. At 4 p. m., the *Virginia* fired three shots at two Federal gunboats inside of the bar for protection of the schooners and transports. They immediately returned fire, but the range being too long no damage was done either side. The *Virginia* then steamed back to Craney Island with the rest of the squadron. I was at this time anchored near Newport News. The next day the *Virginia* and her consorts steamed down to Sewell's Point and remained there all day, the Federal squadron making no attempt to harrass them."

Here is the direct evidence of a foreigner, an impartial witness, showing the refusal of the *Monitor* to accept the second challenge to battle from the *Virginia* extending over two days, and with another iron-clad to help her.

LETTER NO. 12.

THE "VIRGINIA'S" THIRD CHALLENGE

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

The third retreat of the *Monitor* occurred on the eighth of May, 1862.

The captain of the tugboat *J. B. White* deserted with his boat this morning, reported to the enemy that the Confederates were preparing to evacuate Norfolk and Portsmouth, and had sunk the *Virginia*.

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This, however, was a little premature. His name was Byers and as master of the tug had been employed by the contractors in building the Albemarle and Chesapeake canal from September, 1860, to this date, when he escaped to Fortress Monroe, where he met and told Lincoln about affairs in Norfolk and Portsmouth.

The commander of H. B. M. Ship *Rinaldo* in a letter to Vice-Admiral Sir Alexander White, K. C. B., says: "On this intelligence becoming known, at 12:30 o'clock p. m., of the same day, a Federal squadron consisting of the *Dacotah* and *Oneida*, screw sloops of six guns each, the *San Jacinto* screw of eleven guns, *Susquehanna* paddle sloop, fifteen guns, the *Monitor* and *Naugatuck*, iron cased batteries, moved up the river towards Sewell's Point and commenced shelling the Confederate battery on that point at very long range.

"This was the prelude to their intended attack upon Norfolk. The Confederates returned a slow fire. I suppose their guns are not very long range. The Federal squadron continued firing up to 2:30 p. m. without intermission. The *Monitor* was at this time about 1,800 yards from Sewell's Point, and in the direction of Newport News. The smoke of a steamer could be seen rising above the trees and moving along towards Hampton Roads from the direction of Norfolk. At 3 p. m. the Confederate iron cased battery *Virginia* rounded Sewell's Point, and the whole Federal squadron steamed down quickly under the guns of the fortress.

"As the *Virginia* alone came within range of their

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guns, and those of Fort Wool on Rip-Raps, the Federal frigate *Minnesota*, accompanied by four large steamers, which are intended to act as rams, proceeded up the river abreast of Old Point and joined the rest of the squadron. With the exception of a few shots fired from the Rip-Raps at the *Virginia*, the Federals made no attempt to molest her. They left off firing at Sewell's Point immediately on sighting her coming from Norfolk. She would likely have made her appearance before, had the water been sufficiently high. The *Virginia* having driven the Federal fleet away, returned and anchored under Sewell's Point, where she now remains."

This is a correct description of the *Monitor's* third white feather before the champion of Hampton Roads, the iron-clad *Virginia*, and this time she had another iron clad to run with her. This bombardment of Sewell's Point was the most terrific I ever experienced, even more dreadful than the famous Gettysburg, when I was on Seminary Ridge, July 3d, 1863.

Our battery could only get in a few shots before the Federal squadron had passed too far to our left and were out of range. The whole squadron concentrated its fire on the main Sewell's Point Fort, and made it too hot for the gunners to work the parapet guns. Being out of our range we could do nothing but keep close in the casemates which protected us from the shells, which rained like hail all around us, many of which were huge parrot shells of enormous size.

Our quarters were set on fire by the shells and en-

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tirely consumed, but no one was hurt and the "Pair of Blankets" was rescued from the burning building with the other personal effects of the soldiers.

As the Englishman says, as soon as they saw the *Virginia*, they, one and all, made haste to escape to Old Point much to our relief, for we had prayed for the *Virginia* more than two long agonizing hours, and oh, what a relief was her coming!

Two days afterwards, Norfolk and Portsmouth had been evacuated and the great ship was run aground at Craney Island "bite" and destroyed by order of her own commander. He says: "The ship was put on shore as near the mainland in the vicinity of Craney Island as possible, and the crew landed. She was then fired and after burning fiercely fore and aft upward of an hour, blew up a little before five o'clock on the morning of the eleventh."

Commodore Tatnall, her commander, was greatly censured for her destruction and a court of inquiry reported that "her destruction was unnecessary at the time and place it was affected"; but the court martial which followed unanimously concluded its findings as follows: "The court doth further find that the accused had, while in command of the *Virginia*, and previous to the evacuation of Norfolk, thrown down the gage of battle to the enemy's fleet in Hampton Roads, and that the enemy had declined to take it up; that the day before Norfolk was evacuated a consultation, at the instance of the Secretary of the Navy, was held by a joint commission of navy and army officers as to the best disposition to be made of the ship; that the accused was in favor

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of passing Fortress Monroe and taking the ship to York River or running before Savannah with her; that in this he was overruled by the council, who advised that she should remain on this side of Fortress Monroe for the protection of Norfolk and Richmond; that, in accordance with this advice, she proceeded to regulate her movements; that after the evacuation of Norfolk, Westover, on James River, became the most suitable position for her to occupy; that while in the act of lightening her for the purpose of taking her up to that point the pilots, for the first time, declared their inability to take her up, even though her draft should be reduced to its minimum of 18 feet; that by the evacuation of Norfolk and the abandonment of our forts below Westover both banks of the James River below that point were virtually given up to the enemy; that the ship, being thus cut off from Norfolk and Richmond, was deprived of all outward sources of supply save those of the most precarious and uncertain character; that her store of provisions would not last for more than three weeks; that when lightened she was vulnerable to the attacks of the enemy; and that, after having been lightened, there were no available means of bringing her down to her proper draft and fighting trim; and that she had but two small boats, each capable of landing not more than fifteen or eighteen men at a time, even in smooth water. Such being the facts and circumstances under the influence of which the *Virginia* found herself after the evacuation of Norfolk, it was, in the opinion of the court, only necessary for the enemy to continue to refuse

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battle, as he had done since it was first offered by Captain Tatnall early in April, and thenceforward to keep strict watch about the *Virginia*, in order, when her provisions were exhausted, to make her his prize and her crew his prisoners. Being thus situated, the only alternative, in the opinion of the court, was to abandon and burn the ship then and there, which in the judgment of the court was deliberately and wisely done by the accused." "Wherefore the court do award to the said Captain Josiah Tatnall an Honorable acquittal." Whether the sober judgment of history will sustain this action of the court still remains in doubt.

LETTER NO. 13.

THE DIMENSIONS OF THE "VIRGINIA."

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

The destruction of the *Virginia* ended the Confederate battles on Hampton Roads.

They had indeed been the marvel of nations, and eventuated in an evolution of war vessels beyond the dreams of the most famous admirals of the world.

Forty-one years, one month and five days after the death of the *Virginia*, I saw a new *Virginia* baptized in her victorious warpath showing the impress that the departed iron-clad had made upon the world by her battles in Hampton Roads with the Federal fleet.

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The *Virginia* and *Monitor* of 1862 are to the monster iron battleships of this twentieth century as a pigmy to a giant. The Confederate States Steamer *Virginia* was a reconstruction of the frigate *Merri-mac*, which was scuttled and burned to the water's edge on the night of the destruction of the Gosport Navy Yard by the Federals.

The old ship was raised, put in the dry dock and cut down to within three and one-half feet of her light water line and a deck was built from one end to the other.

On this deck was constructed a roof, shielded with iron plates. Inside the roof the deck was covered with plank on beams, but outside the shield, at both ends, it was built of solid timber, and covered with iron one inch thick.

The ship was 262 feet 9 inches long from her stem to the after side of her stern post; from the stem to the forward part of the shield was twenty-nine feet six inches; from the tiller to the after part of the shield was fifty-five feet, and the length of the shield was 178 feet and 6 inches. The length of the gun deck under the shield was 167 feet and 7 inches. The rafters of the shield or roof were yellow pine, fourteen inches thick, bolted together and placed at an inclination of thirty-five degrees; on these were four-inch pine plank placed horizontally and on this was a course of four-inch oak plank up and down; then a course of rolled iron bars or plates, two inches thick and eight inches wide, also placed horizontally and another layer of the same iron up and down, all

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securely bolted, through the wood frame and held with nuts on the inside.

The roof was 26 inches thick—22 of wood and four inches of iron. The deck or top of the shield was fourteen feet wide and protected by an iron grating of two inches square iron with meshes two inches square. The pitch of the gun deck was seven feet. Both ends of the shield were rounded so that the pivot guns could be used as bow or stern chasers or quartering. She had a cast iron prow weighing about 1,500 pounds, which was broken off in ramming the *Cumberland*. As a safeguard to protect the hull, a course of iron one inch thick was fastened all around her, three feet down from the Knuckle. The iron for her shield was rolled at the Tradegar Iron Works in Richmond, Va., into plates two inches thick and eight inches wide. A vessel with a cargo of railroad iron bound from Liverpool, Eng., to Baltimore, Md., went ashore in a storm on the North Carolina coast. The Confederate government took possession of the iron, had it transported to the Tradegar Iron Works, where it was rolled into plates as stated before. The government paid the owners in gold. When the Virginia went out to fight she had 18 commissioned officers, 7 engineers, 6 petty officers, 4 pilots and a crew of 300 men; her armament was two 7-inch rifle guns with a range out of three port holes, and eight smooth bore 9-inch Dahlgren guns of the *Merrimac* battery.

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LETTER NO. 14.

THE EVACUATION AND FIGHT AT POINT OF ROCKS.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

The Confederate authorities having ordered the evacuation of Norfolk and Portsmouth preparations were going forward with much haste, and this becoming known to the Federals, they landed about six thousand troops under General John E. Wool on Willoughby's Spit in the early morning of the tenth of May, 1862, and commenced the march for Norfolk. This unexpected maneuver forced the hasty evacuation of all the fortifications at Sewell's Point, and the garrisons at once took up small arms to throw themselves in the path of the enemy at Denby's Church. Arriving there in good time, a line of battle was formed at Tanner's Creek Cross Roads, but we were soon ordered to continue the retreat to Norfolk. When our rear guard had passed Indian Pole Bridge, it was set on fire, and when the enemy reached the north side he was unable to cross the creek, so Wool was compelled to countermarch his troops and to take a more distant route, delaying his entry into Norfolk until five o'clock which gave our forces time to get out of the city.

The "Jackson Grays" marched through Norfolk and crossed on the ferry steamer to Portsmouth. The boat was crowded with soldiers, citizens and

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women. Two pretty girls with whom I was quite well acquainted, said: "Ar'n't you ashamed to desert us?" I did feel quite abashed for I recalled the speech I had made receiving our flag from the ladies of Pleasant Grove, and the two girls were of the party which had made the presentation, I put it on military orders and obedience to superior authority, for really it was a trying ordeal to leave our homes and friends with little hope of returning.

Everybody was excited in Portsmouth and great commotion existed in every direction. I halted my company at the court house to rest, and there we were called upon to destroy barrels of ardent spirits to prevent the enemy from getting it, and for a time the gutters on Court Street ran with ardent spirits.

I had no orders and had to act upon my own responsibility. My company was so fagged out with the movements of the day that we were not capable of a long march to escape the Federal forces which were expected over the ferry every hour. I prevailed upon the provost marshal to give us transportation on the last train out of the city, and we rode upon flat cars of this train to Suffolk, and next day we were transported by train to Petersburg, and my "Blankets" went along with my luggage. I do not remember all of our movements in and about Petersburg, but the first night we were quartered in a large building on Sycamore Street, and my "Blankets" served for cover, bare floor for bed and a brick for my pillow, and this was the hardest bed I had experienced in my military life up to that time. Several unassigned companies joined our seventh bat-

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talion here, and the 61st Virginia Infantry Regiment was formed, and the "Jackson Grays" was designated as Company "A," Wilson Guards as "B," Blanchard Grays as "C," Jackson Light Infantry as "D," Border Rifles as "E," Isle of Wight Avengers as "F," Confederate Defenders as "G," The Virginia Rangers as "H," Bilisoly Blues as "I," and Floyd Guards as "K." On the assembling of the company officers in Jarrett's Hotel on the 22d of May, 1862, I was elected Major, and this promoted First Lieutenant Wm. C. Wallace to the captaincy of the company. My commission was issued by George W. Randolph, Secretary of War, on the fifteenth of July to date from the 22d day of May, and on the 23d day of May, my "one bay horse" was valued at \$225 by a board of officers, called a board of survey.

Our regiment was encamped on Dunn's Hill, on the north side of the Appomattox River; the authorities being advised of an expedition up the river with a view of destroying the railroad bridge and securing a large quantity of coal stored at Port Walthall, companies "A" and "C" of our regiment under my command were sent down the river bank to resist the advance of the fleet by firing on them from the shore.

On the 26th of June, 1862, the Federal fleet under command of Flag Officer John Rogers, reached the Point of Rocks. It consisted of the *Port Royal*, flag ship; *Monitor*, *Island Belle*, *Mahaska*, *Muratanza*, *Jacob Bell*, *Stepping Stones*, *Southfield*, *Delaware*, and *Satalite*. Our infantry opened fire upon them from the cliffs of the rocky hills, with startling effect, wounding a number of sailors. The vessels ran

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aground, whether from the low tide or bad steering caused by the consternation of the infantry fire from the shore, I am not advised, but they were two days in getting off for retreat to the James River, and one vessel, the *Island Belle*, was burnt to prevent her from falling into the hands of the Confederates. So here again the "Jackson Grays" saw another "Back out" of the *Monitor*, and this was our last sight of her, for not long thereafter, on the 31st day of December, 1862, she foundered in a storm off Hatteras, and went to the bottom of the sea to be seen no more. Four officers and twelve men were lost with her but the rest of her crew was rescued by the U. S. ship *Rhode Island*, which was along as her tender.

The great battles of the Peninsula had been fought and General Lee was marching on Manassas, when we were ordered from Petersburg, marched over the turnpike to Richmond, halted on Main Street to rest, and camped at Brook Church, and from there we were transported by rail to Gordonsville, soon finding ourselves camping on the Rapidan and helping to rebuild the railroad bridge.

LETTER NO. 15.

IN MAHONE'S BRIGADE.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Arriving at Gordonville two companies, "E" and "F," were sent on to Staunton for provost duty under General Davidson, as there were large military stores

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there, part of which came from the captures of Stonewall Jackson from Banks.

After the railroad bridge over the Rapidan was constructed, the eight companies of our regiment were ordered forward to Culpepper, Rappahannock station and Warrenton.

While guarding these points, Col. Samuel M. Wilson having resigned, an election was held to supply the vacancy. Col. V. D. Groner was elected by a majority of the company officers over Lieut. Col. Wm. F. Niemeyer, and our regiment was soon after assigned to Mahone's Brigade.

Three companies of the regiment and a detachment of cavalry from the 15th Va. Regiment under my command were ordered forward to Bristoe Station on the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to recover some of the spoils of the second great battle of Manassas, which took place on the 29th and 30th of August, 1862.

We found a number of derailed locomotives, cars and other railroad material. On the 17th day of September, 1862, after we had retracked the engines and cars and sent them with most of the other truck to Richmond, a detachment of Federal cavalry from D. B. Birney's command, who had headquarters at the "Seminary," appeared before our pickets with a flag of truce requesting permission to bury or remove their dead. I at once suspected that it was a ruse to gain information as to the number of our forces, therefore I declined to receive the flag without first communicating with the authorities in Richmond, which would have required about three days. Upon

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my refusal the party retired, and General Birney communicating with his commanding officer said: "Flag of truce met by a party of Confederates at Bristoe Station, under command of Major Wm. H. Stewart, who stated that it would take three days to communicate with his general and declined to receive the flag." * * * "The force there was small and might be surprised and captured if I had authority to send a cavalry force against them." This authority was quickly given him and he sent his force forward, but in the meantime, I hurried up the balance of the work, had my train of flat cars loaded with the remaining railroad material, while keeping full steam on the engine, and as soon as the cavalry pickets were driven in, I ordered the evacuation of Bristoe Station; three companies of infantry boarded the train and as our locomotive pulled out we saw in the distance the enemy in large forces charging on the Station to find that the bird had flown. Our work had all been accomplished and the retreat made in the nick of time to save our capture by the overwhelming force of the enemy sent against us. The enemy gradually threw his outposts forward and on the 27th day of September we had a lively fight at Catlett's Station.

On the evening of the 15th day of November, 1862, General R. E. Lee directed Brigadier General W. H. F. Lee, commanding the cavalry, "To order the 61st Virginia Volunteers, Col. Groner, commanding, and the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues, Capt. Grandy, commanding, to proceed at once to Fredericksburg. They will take the route by Stevensburg, crossing the

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Rapidan at Racoon Ford, till they intersect the plank road to the city from Orange Court House to Fredericksburg. Should they learn that Fredericksburg is unoccupied by the enemy, they will pursue the plank road to the city, but should they learn of its occupation, they will fall back through Spottsylvania Court House, and take position on the Fredericksburg and Richmond Railroad, where it crosses the North Anna. After crossing the Rapidan, Col. Groner must send forward his staff officers to ascertain the best roads, prepare forage for his command, etc., at points where it will be needed. He will be careful on the march to permit no straggling, depredations upon citizens, country, etc., and be careful to pay for all articles consumed or give receipts for the same. I have the honor to be with great respect, etc.,

“R. E. LEE.”

This order to his son seems to have been written by the hand of General R. E. Lee without the interposition of a staff officer, and it was most careful and minute in all directions for Col. Groner. These forces under our colonel promptly moved as directed by Gen'l Lee and reached Fredericksburg on the morning of the 18th day of November, 1862.

The advance of General Sumner's Federal troops arrived at Falmouth on the afternoon of the 17th, but they were confronted at Fredericksburg by Col. Ball's 15th Va. Cavalry, four companies of Mississippi Infantry, and Lewis' Battery of Horse Artillery, and did not attempt to cross the Rappahannock.

On the night of the 18th Col. Groner distributed

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his men through the woods and caused them to build many bon-fires to create the impression upon the minds of the enemy that a large Confederate force confronted him. Thousands of rails from the worm fences of the farms served as fuel for these fires. The enemy did not cross that night, and the Army of Northern Virginia came up in good time. Whether the bon-fires made any impression upon the enemy could not be ascertained except by conjecture. As previously ordered the 61st Va. Infant. Regt. now merged into Mahone's Brigade, of Anderson's Division, and as now constituted was composed of the 6th, 12th, 16th, 41st and 61st regiments and thus remained to the end.

LETTER NO. 16.

WINTER QUARTERS AND THE DECEMBER BATTLE.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Burnside did not cross over the Rappahannock at this time, but established his headquarters and his great army in camp on Stafford Heights for a more convenient season to cross. The Army of Northern Virginia was encamped on the south of Fredericksburg in the most available positions for resisting the advance of the enemy. We were located in a woods on the sunny side of some hills between Salem Church and the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad.

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My tent was pitched, and after the construction of a stick and clay chimney with a barrel stack, I had quite a cozy room with an open fire-place, and oak log fuel made fires delightfully comfortable in those bleak winter days.

While sleeping in this tent on my straw pallet under my faithful "U. S. Navy Blankets," the long roll sounded to call us out for the December battle of Fredericksburg. We marched out and were placed on the left of the army behind a great hill, and the battle roared and thundered as never before heard around the historic old city. When Burnside was bombarding the city, the noble spirit displayed by the inhabitants, especially by the women and children, elicited the highest admiration. They abandoned their homes night and day during all the inclement weather, cheerfully and uncomplainingly, with only such assistance as our army wagons and ambulances could afford. We saw women, girls and little children trudging through the mud to bivouac in the open fields.

At last Burnside's grand army crossed over the river into the ill-fated city, assaulted the Army of Northern Virginia, was disastrously whipped, and he was doubtless glad when his broken and disheartened corps had recrossed the river and settled in their old positions on Stafford Heights.

Although under artillery fire during the whole battle our regiment was not actively engaged, had only one man wounded and none killed. Col. John Bowie Magruder of the 57th Virginia regiment of whom I shall write more particularly hereafter, wrote from

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his camp near Fredericksburg, December 20th, 1862, the following account to his father. "As you have seen in the papers, the great battle of Fredericksburg has been fought and won. My regiment occupied a position in the immediate front on the line of battle, and was supported by Jenkins' South Carolina Brigade which was posted about 600 yards in our rear—I should have said that Armstead's Brigade was supported by Jenkins'—Pickett's Division occupied the centre, and as the centre was not attacked, we had nothing to do. Armstead's Brigade occupied a line of rudely constructed breastworks, made by piling felled trees and digging a ditch in rear and throwing the earth upon the piled timber—the bush cut from the trees was thrown in front and against the timber, to prevent the Federals from charging it successfully. This line of breastworks was about two miles below the town, and about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the river and immediately in front of the lower pontoon bridge over which Burnside crossed his army. It was in easy range of the Federal artillery, though as the centre was not attacked, they did not attempt to dislodge us. My regiment was thrown out on picket for one day and night about 600 yards in front of these breastworks and to the left of them, and distant from the Federal pickets about 300 yards, but nothing of any interest occurred. Not a single man in the entire brigade was wounded; in fact we can hardly be said to have been under fire, as the centre was not attacked, and only a few rambling shells flew over our heads. The Federals occupied a position a little to our left and front during the whole time, but re-

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mained as quiet and peaceable as lambs. I had a fine view of the battle which raged very fiercely, a little to the right of our front, as we were just at the foot of a hill, and at the commencement of the broad open low lands of the river—a description of it is impossible and I should not attempt it in this short letter. The Federal column, perhaps 25,000 strong, suddenly moved up from near the river bank, in solid phalanx, and swept around to our right at a double quick, as if to flank our gallant army—on they moved in battle array—a splendid sight to behold—well might a tyro on our side tremble for the consequences—for not a gun from our side is heard—neither infantry nor artillery—not a Confederate soldier was to be seen, save 8 or 10 standing firmly by a few pieces of artillery posted just behind an eminence, several hundred yards in front of the Federal phalanx, and even these quietly and calmly receiving a murderous fire from the Federal Batteries on the other side of the river; for, by intuition as it were, although this battery had not yet opened, and had not yet been unmasked, they guessed its whereabouts—onwards moves the Federal host, becoming more and more confident at every step—now they near a piece of copse-wood, and sweep around as if to encircle it—just then a stream of fire is emitted from the gun surrounded by those undaunted 8 or 10, and scarcely has the sound reached you before your ears are deafened by the long loud rattling musketry, the booming of fifty cannon at once, the bursting of shells and the dull “thug” of grape and canister—the battle on the right has commenced in earnest—yet not a Confed-

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erate can be seen—the Federal host halts, wavers, falls back, is rallied and brought up again, this awful firing from cannon and muskets continuing all the while—see the Federal host again halts, wavers, and just now such a yell as almost rends the earth is heard above the rattling of musketry and the booming of cannon—the Confederates emerge from their ditches just in the edge of the woods and charge—the Federal host fall back, halt, waver, run, fly, pell mell to the cover of their batteries—our men pursue and bring back many prisoners—again and again did the Federals move up and as often were they driven back—it was by far the most exciting scene I ever witnessed and I grew far more excited then than I ever did while engaged myself. The fighting was confined almost exclusively to the right and left wings—the centre was not attacked. I had quite a good view of the fighting on the right.

About 12 M. on Tuesday, December 16, we returned to our present encampment, which is very near our former camp. I then availed myself of the opportunity (for the Federals had retreated across the river) to ride over the *two* battle fields, for they are separated by an interval of at least one and three-quarter miles in which there was no fighting. I never saw such carnage in my life—the wounded had all been removed (for this was Tuesday and the battle had been fought on Saturday), our dead had all been buried as well as many of the Federals, and yet there they still laid in heaps, in every conceivable position and mangled in every conceivable way. On the right the fighting was less concentrated, but the slaughter

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was more terrible—on the right the line extended for about one and one-quarter miles—on the left about a half mile. Even when I visited the left, although many Federals had been buried and many had been carried off by them in their retreat, one might have walked a quarter of a mile stepping from dead Federal to dead Federal without once touching the ground—at the lowest calculation there were 2,500 *killed* on the right and not fewer than 2,000 killed on the left. Their entire loss in killed and wounded could not have been less than 12,000—our loss was 1,759, *killed and wounded*—not more than 350 killed—not a single cannon taken by either side—at one time we had possession of six, but they were taken again before they could be removed—not an inch was gained by the Federals, although they fought as well as usual. They took about 300 prisoners and we took about 1,200; many small arms, much ammunition, numerous knapsacks, overcoats, canteens, etc., etc., were captured by us. Altogether it was one of the most brilliant victories of the war. Never before did our men behave so well—never did an army occupy a better position than General Lee's in the recent engagement—it occupied every eminence, and was almost wholly concealed until the enemy came upon it, in nearly every instance occupied breastworks, and the hills and cliffs around seemed to have been formed with special reference to this very battle—the men were still, calm, cool, collected, and could therefore aim with precision. The Federals, on the other hand, occupied the low flat land bordering on the river, had no breastworks, no commanding positions on which to place

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their artillery, knew not where we were, as they could not see us, had to advance, and naturally became excited, which deranged their aim.

The town is almost ruined; there is scarcely a house which has not been struck more than once—two entire squares on Main Street have been burned—every house was ransacked and many valuables carried off. The Federals had possession of the town from Thursday at 12 M. till daylight Tuesday morning. It is said at General Lee's headquarters that Burnside was very anxious to renew the fight on Sunday, but Sigel, who joined him on Saturday with 25,000 men, swore that not one of his men should cross the river to fight Lee in such a position, and that all the commanding officers of Burnside's army protested against it, on the ground that their men could not be induced to fight again in such a place—nothing was left for him therefore but to retreat. It is impossible to say what will happen next, but the opinion generally prevails that the army will change its base to the south side of the James, leaving Sigel to threaten and advance on Richmond from this side—a deserter from the Federals, who came over last night, says that they are now very busy building winter quarters. The truth of this I will not vouch for, not much reliance to be put in such men."

The deserter was truthful this time, for the Federals did go into winter quarters.

Colonel Magruder's figures given above are doubtless from battle-field estimates, which were generally exaggerated, and therefore not free from error. The official reports were not then available, and since Gen-

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eral Lee's Adjutant General has put them down as follows: "The losses of the Federals, 12,653—1,284 killed, 9,600 wounded, and 1,760 missing; and on the side of the Confederates, 5,322 killed and wounded." These figures are generally accepted as correct, but I believe our loss is over-estimated.

I have given my account of this battle in "The Spirit of the South," and will not venture another description here.

" 'Tis the soldier's life
To have their balmy slumbers wak'd in strife."
(*Othello*, Act II, Sc. 3.)

The great dramatist may never have dodged his head from the whiz of a bullet, but the veteran of a dozen wars could never have so well described the uncertainty of a soldier's life in two lines. When in the peace of camp, with all the appearances of security, then suddenly burst forth the fiercest fights.

After the battle of Fredericksburg Mahone's men settled in camp near Salem church, about three miles from the city, with all the conveniences possible for Confederate soldiers, except rations and clothes, which were scant.

The pastimes were varied from a game of seven-up to snow-ball battles. The latter were as frequently indulged in as the weather would permit, that is as often as the snow came.

Mahone's and Wright's Brigades, usually opposing in regular array. Wavering fortunes attended these friendly contests, as in the bloody struggles with the Federals.

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Sometimes Mahone's men would capture Wright's ground, and then fickle fortune would permit the surrender of Mahone's camp ground. Spiders, pots and tin pans constituted the principal booty of the snow wars, but of course they would be returned after a treaty of peace.

The smallpox invaded our camp and created some alarm, but with the exception of destroying the beauty of several soldiers no damage was sustained.

On the 19th day of February, 1863, the Sixty-first Virginia Regiment struck their tents, which had been nicely fitted up with chimneys and bunks, to go on picket duty along the river bank in and adjacent to the city of Fredericksburg.

The enemy was friendly, and very often ridiculous dialogues would take place between the outposts over the river and our men. And some evenings the bands of both armies would play "Home, Sweet Home," and the cheers of the soldiers would mingle and resound along both banks of the silent river.

LETTER NO. 17.

THE GOLD MINE CAMP.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

On the 17th day of March, 1863, our regiment was relieved and ordered to join the brigade further up the river at the United States Ford. There our camp was located in a thicket of diminutive pines on

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a low, undrained plane. Near the Ford is the gold mine formerly worked by the government. The glittering scales in the rocks and earth looked as worthless to the soldiers as the sands on the seashore. This was a horrible place, for famine and plague demoralized the whole camp. The road approaching it was almost impassable and rations reached our soldiers less frequently than biting necessity demanded. Boiling grass and sheep sorrel with an ounce or two of pork was commonly seen in the little tin buckets swinging over diminutive stick fires in front of the fly tents. Some of the soldiers were suffering with scurvy and resorted to grass diet, hoping for relief, and others to satisfy hunger. Soon after our location there, malarial fever broke out, to which many poor fellows fell victims. Their uncoffined remains were buried near the mine and there their dust remains in unmarked graves, but to me their memories are most sacred.

On the 28th day of April, 1863, a force of the enemy crossed the Rappahannock below Fredericksburg to divert attention from the manœuvre which contemplated a grand crossing at Kelly's Ford and Ely's Ford. On the 29th day of April, Hooker effected a crossing at Germana Ford on the Rapidan, capturing sixty of our brigade pioneer corps, and having disclosed a large force, General Mahone with wonted sagacity quietly withdrew his small force by the old mine road, a short distance above Chancellorsville. There a line of battle was formed and the men began to fortify with all possible haste. The night was dreadfully stormy, and the wet soldiers passed

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the dark hours shivering in the cold. Just at the break of day firing was heard in front, which was thought to be our pickets firing off their wet guns; but it was soon discovered that the enemy was advancing in heavy force and had captured nearly all of the Norfolk Juniors, commanded by Capt. Thomas F. Owens, which company constituted the outer picket line.

Genl. William Mahone and his Adjutant General, Robertson Taylor, rode in front to reconnoitre, and discovering two horsemen, whom they took to be Confederates, being in gray uniforms, hastened forward to learn the news, but were utterly astounded, when within a short distance their supposed friends drew carbines and fired at them. This drew the exclamation from the general, "I believe our cavalymen are drunk." These two officers had a very narrow escape and found that the two gray cavalymen were backed closely in the rear by a large force with blue uniforms. Genl. R. H. Anderson, commanding the Division, soon arrived on the field and ordered our small force to fall back slowly. We retreated towards Fredericksburg until we reached Zoar Church, and there formed a line of battle. The enemy pursued hotly and our men were forced to seek protection from the aim of the sharpshooters. They soon killed one poor fellow, and Joe Sam Brown, of the Blues Battery, escaped from sudden death by a hair's breadth. He was standing behind a limber chest with his head resting on the lid, in the act of cutting a second fuse, when a Belgian rifle ball struck the horse, passed through his flank, through the lid of the chest

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and struck Mr. Brown on the breast; fortunately its force was sufficiently broken to save him with only a bruise.

About eight hundred yards in front of our line of battle was McCarty's Farm across which ran a slight ridge, on which by the roadside stood a log crib. This house was occupied by the enemy's sharpshooters, and they were exceedingly troublesome in firing at every man in sight.

LETTER NO. 18.

MC CARTY'S FARM FIGHT.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Early next morning May 1st, 1863, Generals Lee and Jackson rode up to the church, and after talking a few moments, an advance was ordered, and thus commenced the great battle of Chancellorsville. The two great generals rode away after General Lee had ordered the forward movement, and I never saw Jackson again. Our line of battle arose from the little earthwork which had been thrown up during the night and moved to the front in splendid style, evidently inspired by the presence of Lee and Jackson. The enemy stubbornly resisted, but were pushed back a half mile or more, and then they made a desperate stand. Mahone held a line across McCarty's Farm with his left resting on the turnpike near the log crib. Perry's Floridians were on the left just across

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the road in a pine woods. The Norfolk Blues Battery was unlimbered on both sides of the turnpike. The Twelfth Virginia Regiment had been thrown out in advance as skirmishers, but were soon forced by overwhelming numbers to fall back on the main line of battle. And then the battle raged with great fury, our line holding to its ground firmly, and finally, the enemy yielding, was driven back on Chancellorsville.

One solid cannon shot ploughed through the right of our regiment, killing instantly Lemuel S. Jennings and George D. Bright, two of our best and bravest soldiers. On the left young Warren had his arm blown off by an exploding shell, a fragment wounded me on the leg, and the flesh from Warren's arm, at the same time, flew in my face, blinding me for a moment, and when I wiped it off with my hand I was sure it was flesh from my own cheeks. I did not learn better until I had washed my face at the spring down the hill, when a comrade told me my face was unscarred.

A few minutes before this occurred a bullet struck my field glasses in the side pocket of my coat, breaking both glasses in one barrel, making a hole through my coat, and passing on, under my arm, fortunately leaving only a slight bruise on my side. Capt. V. O. Cassell of Company "D" received a desperate wound, which caused the amputation of his leg, and Lieut. Alex. B. Butt, formerly of our regiment, but then adjutant of the 41st regiment, received a mortal wound. Wilson M. Kher, about seventeen years of age, was mortally wounded early in the action. I was very near him and noticed him particularly, because of his

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wonderful coolness. I saw him fire his musket with deliberate aim probably a dozen times, but at last as he was taking it from his shoulder to reload, a minie ball struck him in the eye and crushed through his head, his rifle fell to the ground from his grasp and turning to me, said: "Major, I am killed; tell my father my face was to the enemy." He calmly walked to the rear and died next day at the field hospital or on the hospital train en route to Richmond, I do not now remember, which. This scene thrilled my very soul even in the midst of battle, when bullets were flying like hail, and in deepest sympathy and in silent admiration, I watched the young hero, who felt the glory of dying for his country, walk down the hill towards the rear, where the field surgeon was located. Here was an exhibition of noble self sacrifice—of lofty patriotism—of courageous chivalry—of true nobility of soul worthy of commemoration.

This touching incident has often recurred to me and made a more lasting impression than any observation of the war through which I served. I never had the opportunity of delivering the sacred message of this boy hero, who now sleeps in an unmarked grave. He was a soldier of Virginia, but a native of North Carolina, sister states, sisters in community of interest, sisters now in peace, sisters then in war, baptised at the same altar of patriotism with the blood of their noblest heroes.

If it was not such a sister, I should envy the birth-place of the noble boy, Private Wilson M. Kher, of Company "C," 61st Virginia Regiment, of Currituck County, North Carolina.

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The gallant men of the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues fought with the power of patriots and fairly beat the battery of United States regulars which was fighting them. The brave General Semms came dashing in at the head of his Georgia Brigade during the thickest of the iron hail to reinforce our left, and rode up to compliment the Blues, while the enemy were sending at them torrents of bullets and shells. W. C. Land, a noble young man, the only son of a widowed mother, was killed and among the wounded of this bloody fight were Lieut. Thomas Peete, Sergeant J. C. Watters, John Day, John Wilkins, Joseph Floyd, Wm. McGowan and Melville Keeling, all of the Norfolk Light Artillery Blues.

Mahone, Perry and Posey pressing in front and Wright's brigade on the flank forced the enemy back to his trenches at Chancellorsville as night closed the conflict.

LETTER NO. 19.

STONEWALL JACKSON'S GUNS.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

On Saturday the second day of May, 1863, Mahone's Brigade was moved from the right of the Turnpike over the plank road and located behind temporary earthworks in a thicket of tall pines on the north side of the Catharpin road. There was heavy skirmishing in our immediate front all day; meanwhile Jackson made the detour to strike the enemy on his right flank.

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During the day the enemy discovered a gap between Anderson's Division and Jackson's Corps, and with a strong force pressed down to the iron furnace, thereby cutting off communication with Jackson. Posey with his stern and steady Mississippians attempted to dislodge him, but was forced back until reinforced by Wright's Georgians, then Hooker's men were handsomely driven back.

Late in the afternoon the enemy made an advance down the plank road with two brigades, but they were met by the Third Georgia Regiment and repulsed. This noble regiment had been skirmishing heavily all day, but steadily resisted the charges of the enemy and finally gallantly advancing, drove their assailants to the cover of their earthworks.

We heard Jackson's guns open on Hooker's flank and gradually their sound came nearer, and the news of the success of his movement came to excite the enthusiasm of our troops to the highest degree, but when it was known that Jackson was wounded, all spirits dropped and poignant grief touched all hearts.

At daylight Sunday morning the Army of Northern Virginia made a general advance and drove Hooker from Chancellorsville down to the fords, his only hope of escape. Mahone's men marched from their position in the thicket by the flank, up the plank road, until within range of the enemy's battery. One poor fellow had his head taken off by a solid cannon shot on the opposite side of the road as we were moving by the flank; if it had landed on our side doubtless many in our ranks would have been killed.

The formation of the line of battle was only the

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work of a moment, and then the men rushed forward through the woods and thick undergrowth, over the abattis, mounting and capturing the breastworks, and then as the yelling and charging army corps joined, we saw victory dawn upon the army of the peerless Lee.

There was a great "rebel" yell when Chancellorsville was captured and Hooker's grand army forced towards the fords of the Rappahannock. Our brigade was ordered to close its ranks quickly to press forward towards the river. The "Little Corporal" (Mahone), almost dancing in his stirrups, gave the command "Forward." I well remember how the little general would gather up his reins, straighten his legs in the stirrups and throw his body forward when giving the command "Forward" to his brigade. His peculiar manner seemed to indicate a desire to assist the men in the first movement of their legs. The head of the column was turned down the Mine road and hurried in pursuit of Hooker, but had gone only a short distance, before a counter-march was ordered back to Salem Church; this was about eleven o'clock in the forenoon.

The scant line which had been left to hold the fortifications at Fredericksburg had been driven out by a heavy column of the enemy under General Sedgwick. Famous Mayre's Hill had been captured, and about twenty-two thousand soldiers were advancing rapidly to relieve Hooker, hoping that they might crush Lee between their two great armies as by an upper and nether mill stone.

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LETTER NO. 20.

SALEM CHURCH BATTLE.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Marching at quick step Mahone reached Salem Church about four o'clock in the afternoon, when Wilcox's little band of people was sorely pressed by Sedgwick. Mahone gave the order in person, and as quick as thought the 61st regiment was deployed as skirmishers and advanced at double-quick into a pine thicket on the left of the road, where it made a stand.

Three times Sedgwick's people moving over an open field in order as beautiful as on a dress parade charged towards the woods, and three times did our gallant riflemen repulse them and hurl them back in disorder. Our men held this ground until a flanking column forced them to retire. Just about this time Semmes with his dashing Georgians reached the field and formed behind a bush fence, and mistaking our retreating skirmishers for the enemy, fired a volley into them. Col. V. D. Groner with great self-possession rushed to Semmes' line, made known his command and prevented another volley, which might have mowed down our little band like grass before the reaper. Fortunately the first volley was too high to do much damage, but it taught a lesson, and when the Federal column came sweeping down on the

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Georgians, they fired low with such effective slaughter as to break and defeat Sedgwick's charging column. The men of the 61st regiment leaped over Semmes' line and while under a galling fire and a storm of bullets and shells, Col. Groner seized the colors and ordered a rally, which was as beautifully executed as they had ever performed on drill. Lieut. C. W. Murdaugh fell desperately wounded, while bravely leading his men to the colors, and carried the ounce of lead in his body to his death in 1904. The brave and heroic conduct of Col. V. D. Groner, and the soldierly manner in which his regiment executed the whole movement in advancing, retreating and rallying drew the highest encomiums from every officer and soldier who witnessed it. The regiment was then marched to the left and placed in line of battle, but was not again that day actively engaged. By night Sedgwick's people had been repulsed along the whole line and soundly beaten by a comparatively small force. This closed a second battle on the Holy Sabbath of May 3rd, 1863, in both of which Mahone's brigade had been hotly engaged.

When these series of battles commenced a general court martial was in session near Salem Church, holding its sessions in a large tent. I was a member. It was composed of thirteen officers, an unlucky number. Col. Young L. Royston of the 8th Alabama Regiment was president and Capt. Charles Haynes Andrews of Georgia was judge advocate. It immediately adjourned on the advance of Hooker's army, and the members returned to their respective commands, and all were killed or wounded before the

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sun of that sacred Sabbath day had set. The gallant and accomplished Captain Charles H. Andrews was desperately wounded in the charge of the third Georgia regiment hereinbefore mentioned.

On the fourth day of May our forces were moved to Bank's Ford to cut off if possible the retreat of Sedgwick's army. There we were subjected to a heavy shelling from the heavy artillery on the north side of the Rappahannock river. Being under the impression that we had completely surrounded the Federals, and bottled them up, we quietly awaited the hour of capitulation, but to our utter amazement they forced the stopper and escaped in the night time by marching over the river on a mill dam, and on the dreary morning of the fifth day of May there was not an armed foe in our front on the south side of the river.

Marching orders were given and in a pouring rain storm we trudged from two o'clock in the afternoon to five o'clock, arriving at Chancellorsville as wet as drowned rats, where we camped for the night, and there my "Blankets" stood by me in time of need. On the morning of the sixth of May we marched to the United States Ford, but every armed foe had gone over the river, and then we returned to Salem Church to rest on our old camp ground. This closed the eighth day of fighting and marching with little rest, within which time Mahone's men were engaged in four pitched battles and had marched over the field of Chancellorsville five times.

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LETTER NO. 21.

MARCHING TO THE INVASION.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

“How sweetly smiled the hill and vale
And all the landscape round.”

For June had just spread her profusion of lovely flowers over the fields, and the woods and groves were clad in her beautiful raiment of green, when Salem Church encampment was broken for the last time by the alarm of battle, and the drowsy soldiers gathered from their tents before the east gave her light, for a march towards Fredericksburg. After the three days' bivouac of Mahone's brigade behind the gates of this ruined and desolate city, on the sixth day of June, 1863, it was formed in line of battle along the famous stone wall that guarded Marye's Heights. There it remained to meet any advance that might be attempted by Hooker's Army, until the 13th day of June, when it started on the invasion of Pennsylvania, marching through the lonely depths of the "Wilderness," over its silent battle fields with the new made graves, bullet marked trees and broken shrubs; over the army trodden fields of Culpepper and Rappahannock, crossing the Blue Ridge on the 19th through Chester Gap. We reached the summit about noon; the troops were halted for a short rest

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and quenched their thirst from a cool spring pouring out of a crevice in the ponderous rocks piled on the side of the highway. It seemed to me to be the coolest, clearest and most delightful water ever found in the pathway of tired troops.

While going over the mountain I saw the most beautiful landscape that had ever before appeared to my vision. The village of Front Royal nestling in the green hills at the foot of the Western slope and the proud valley of the Shenandoah spread out in majestic robes made a marvelous and glorious picture. The rivers and streams were gleaming like threads of silver on emerald fields, the golden wheat was shimmering in the sunlight, the verdure of the oak forests was trembling in the gentle swellings of the wind, the lawns of clover were bowing to its sweep, and all were circled with the blue lines of the distant mountains and domed with marble skies. A sight upon which the eyes of the gods might feast, and well calculated to make troubled man forget for a moment the ills of life and be happy while beholding the beauties of nature's blended glories.

As night came on the clouds gathered, and while we were fording the Shenandoah, waist deep, their flood gates opened and poured torrents on our heads; soaking wet the soldiers dreamed away the night in an open field about a mile beyond the river. I lodged on a great rock which I found near a fence, and wrapping my faithful "blankets" about me slept delightfully till the long roll of the kettle drum called for the "fall in." Our line of march was through White Post, Berryville, Jeffersontown, Charlestown

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and Sheppardstown, where on the evening of the 23d day of June, General Lee issued an order forbidding trespassing and enjoining respect for the rights of private property while in the enemy's country. On the 24th day of June, 1863, we forded the Potomac, leaving the Confederacy and entering the domain of the United States.

LETTER NO. 22.

IN THE ENEMY'S COUNTRY.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

The morale of the Army of Northern Virginia was perfect: flushed with the great victory of Chancellorsville, and reinforced by Pickett's magnificent division, which had been temporarily detached to make a diversion in the direction of Suffolk, each soldier feeling himself superior to three of the enemy, made no calculation for defeat and proudly marched on the enemy's soil with the air of conqueror.

General Lee also believed his army invincible, for he had seen it on so many fields powerful, almost beyond human endurance and courage; and his army had perfect confidence and love for him, its commander-in-chief. There was an army and chieftain of which every member from teamster to lieutenant-general gave loyalty and fidelity in truest pride and abiding love.

We soon reached Sharpsburg, the renowned battlefield, and then moved on through Keysville, Boons-

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boro, Funktown and Hagerstown in the state of Maryland. On the 26th day of June, we entered Pennsylvania, marched through Middleburg and Greencastle, and bivouacked four miles south of Chambersburg. The ladies of the Keystone state received us with waiving Union flags, the men with silent contempt, and the Dutch women with horrid imprecations.

One pretty girl of a bevy, who was greeting the "Rebels" with waving star-spangled banners, on seeing the commander-in-chief, dropped her flag, clapped her delicate hands together and exclaimed, "Oh, I wish he was ours." The Dutch women were particularly bitter when our men went to buy buttermilk and eggs with Confederate money, saluting them with fierce frowns and giving parting shots with terrible oaths.

The Cumberland valley, though not so grand in scenery as the Shenandoah, is a fertile and most delightful country. It is cut up in small farms, well tilled, and owned principally by sturdy and industrious Germans and their descendants. Their barns are larger and much more costly than their residences; for stock is their especial pride. The horses were very large, having hoofs almost the size of a peck measure, and were not at all suitable for Hampton's cavalrymen. On the morning of the 27th day of June, while our column was marching through Chambersburg, General Lee met Generals A. P. Hill and R. S. Ewell, who were riding at the head of our column, about the center of the town, and there they halted for a short consultation. A number of citi-

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zens having gathered on the sidewalks, some one exclaimed, alluding to General Lee, "What a large neck he has!" and a soldier in the ranks replied: "Yes, it takes a d——n big neck to hold his head!"

Notwithstanding General Lee's strict order, enjoining respect for private property, some of the soldiers would snatch up a chicken now and then, and hide it in their haversacks as they marched along. At the first bivouac in Pennsylvania some of the Georgians pursued a goose into General R. H. Anderson's tent, but begged off under the pretext that "it was a stray goose!" With rare exceptions the men behaved as gentlemen and obeyed General Lee's order most scrupulously. Our regiment was detailed for provost duty in Chambersburg, and I was made provost marshal, but this office was of short duration, for at three o'clock in the afternoon we were ordered to Fayetteville, a village of one street about a mile long, which is about four miles from Chambersburg, where we camped until July 1st, 1863.

Mrs. Kate S. Macnight recently writing her recollections as a school girl of the occupation of Chambersburg, Pa., by the Confederates, says: "Our home was on Main street, and during the invasion of General Lee, it took ten days of continuous marching for his army to pass our house. Well do I remember the sinking of our hearts as regiment after regiment passed, each one led by its regimental band. During all this time we were in ignorance of the movement of our own men. I gazed with admiration on General Robert E. Lee as he rode by to his headquarters followed by thirty aids. During Lee's

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occupation a guard was stationed night and day at each house, so that the soldiers could not enter a private house, and discipline was so perfect, we slept as peacefully as if surrounded by our own men. I saw them waiting by the oven door while one old colored cook took out her pan of biscuit, which they ate red-hot, accompanied by slices of dried beef cut from the round she had been slicing for our own tea. I sometimes leaned from a second story window and asked information from the guard as to the names of the generals as they approached at the head of the different brigades. One day noticing an unusually fine looking man I inquired who he was and learned that he was General Barksdale of Mississippi." She says she afterwards saw him in a hospital in Gettysburg where a day or two after he died. His brigade belonged to our division and we lamented his death as much as his own brave Mississippians.

Mrs. Macnight's father was a noted Federal surgeon, who was medical director of all the hospitals in her town, and her good words must be most highly appreciated by the survivors of the army of Lee, although she draws too much upon her imagination as to the time it took our army to pass through the town and the number of General Lee's aids.

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LETTER NO. 23.

MARCHING ON TO GETTYSBURG.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

On going into camp near Fayetteville our soldiers captured in a church an elegant repast that had been prepared by the citizens for their soldiers, whose term of enlistment had just expired, and for two days our boys enjoyed the feast and ate with knives and forks from china plates, but marching orders on July 1st, 1863, destroyed all this luxury and ease. The pleasure and plenty were of short duration, and so it goes with a soldier's life.

We crossed the Cumberland mountains, through the gap near Fayetteville, passing the smoking ruins of Thad. Stevens' great iron works, and bivouacked in an oak woods near Gettysburg, from which Heth's valorous troops had already driven the enemy.

General Heth had steadily pressed back Meade's troops over two miles, when he was reinforced by Pender and Rhodes, and they together forced the enemy to seek the protection of Cemetery Ridge, handsomely capturing the town of Gettysburg. A sharp contest was raging when we arrived and I saw from our position the enemy falling back towards Cemetery Ridge. General Heth was wounded and the command of his troops devolved on Gen. James J. Pettigrew, a gallant and distinguished son of the Old

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North State, who was afterwards killed at Falling Waters.

More than five thousand prisoners, three pieces of artillery and several colors were captured in the first day's fight on the soil of Pennsylvania.

The Federals thus defeated, determined to make a stand on Cemetery Ridge, a long row of hills running south of Gettysburg, bending eastward, and terminating in Culp's Hill, and on the left in Round Top Mountain. Our army occupied Seminary Ridge, a lower ridge about a mile distant. On the morning of the second of July our brigade (Mahone's) moved forward and was placed in line of battle behind a small grove of large oaks, to support McIntosh's Artillery, which was then unlimbered on the east of this grove, along the line of a stone fence that overlooked the open field between the hostile lines. Longstreet's First Corps formed the right, Ewell's second corps the left, and A. P. Hill's third corps, to which we were attached, the center of the Army of Northern Virginia. Pickett's division of three brigades, about four thousand five hundred strong, in camp six miles from Chambersburg, received marching orders this morning and followed our route.

While marching through the Gap in the Cumberland mountains, bushwhackers annoyed the column by firing upon it from the rocky fastnesses. At four o'clock in the afternoon it reached a point five miles west of Gettysburg, having made a march of twenty-three miles, and halted for the night.

The fighting on our right and left was very heavy during the afternoon, but we were not ordered from

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our position until night, when, for some reason unknown to subordinates, after moving in line of battle for some distance across a wheat field, we were recalled and ordered to our old position. It was a moonlight night when we marched through the wheat field, and we were sure that we were there to make a night charge upon the works of the enemy. Night charges are the most dreaded of all fighting by soldiers, and you may know we were rejoiced by the recall on this occasion.

About five o'clock on this afternoon, Wilcox and Wright of our Division made a brilliant dash on the enemy's works. The brave Georgians gained the crest of the ridge and drove the enemy down the opposite side. Although closely supported by the Alabamians, both columns were so vigorously attacked at the same time, on front and flanks, as to compel retreat without the artillery they had captured. Hood made a desperate charge on Round Top, and Ewell's people had gained ground on the left. The results of the day encouraged General Lee for a renewal of the attack next day.

LETTER NO. 24.

THE CHARGE ON CEMETERY HEIGHTS.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

On the 3rd day of July, 1863, at three o'clock in the morning, Pickett's Virginians added twenty rounds of cartridges to the thirty already in their

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boxes, and slowly marched towards the front, arriving on Longstreet's line, to whose corps they belonged, about ten o'clock in the morning. The whole morning was consumed manœuvring, and these were long hours of breathless anxiety, for the very stillness of the air seemed to foretell the iron storm that commenced at one o'clock in the afternoon, fringing the crests of the frowning hills with the lurid glare of two hundred artillery guns, whose terrible thunder resounded like some hidden volcano, bursting from the center of the earth and scattering the smoking fragments of its bowels over the trembling hills. During this terrible cannonade the shot and shell made the air hideous with their shrieks and ploughed the earth in bloody furrows. Now and then, on either side, a well trained gun would drop a shell on a magazine, which would send a blazing spout of smoke high up towards the sky, leaving around the wreck dead and wounded gunners, weltering in blood.

All, majestic! grand! sublime! awful! For two hours this mighty duel raged, and as the dial marked the hour of three, two divisions of infantry rose in line of battle under the hailing thunderbolts of war, and at the word of command fearlessly pressed towards the triple-armed hills of their foe.

Pettigrew's brave legions charged from the left, and Pickett's proud Virginians majestically moved forward from the right, the lines converging so as to touch flanks at the works of the enemy. At this supreme moment the fire of our artillery slackened, for the ammunition was almost exhausted, and then

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the enemy's guns on the ridge in front and from the cemetery were concentrated on Pettigrew's advancing column and at the same time a heavy infantry force was thrown against it, forcing the highest courage to yield, and making those brave men recoil from the charge.

Pickett's column swept grandly onward, gaining the works of the enemy, fighting fiercely almost hand to hand for a moment, driving the infantry supports from the front line, then defiantly holding many pieces of artillery until their left flank and front were overwhelmingly assaulted by fresh columns of infantry, which overpowered and crushed the dauntless few who had planted their battle flags on the stone bastions of the cemetery. Then four hundred un-officered soldiers, the remnant of the charging four thousand, sullenly retired. The rest were killed, wounded and captured. Two brigadier generals were killed, one desperately wounded and all the field officers killed or wounded except one.

Wilcox's brigade protected the retreat by a galling fire from an orchard on the right and prevented the enemy from pursuing.

Before the order for the charge, while the cannon were booming and the shells cutting the limbs from the trees on Seminary Ridge, and scattering fragments over the ranks of the soldiers, an adjutant at his post was sitting on the root of an oak reading his Testament.

W. H. McHorney, one of Pickett's men, says: "When I was lying down in line of battle, I had my cartridge box knocked aside by a shell that cut my

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lieutenant in two; when the line rose to charge it appeared that as many were left dead and wounded as got up, but the ranks closed up and went forward; the air was filled with smoke and I could see nothing in front of me except the blaze from the vents and muzzles of the cannon. I went forward until near the stone wall, then I saw only two things to do, go forward and be captured or risk a retreat. I decided to turn back and got out safely."

A man of Company "D," ninth regiment, named Byrd, was wounded on the charge, shot in the arm. He asked the lieutenant commanding to allow him to "fall out," protesting his inability to use his rifle. The sergeant interposing, said: "Lieutenant, they have winged our bird." Byrd was allowed to "fall out," but was killed on his retreat to the rear.

Lieut. Wm. F. Tonkin, commanding Company "G," ninth regiment, says: "When we were lying in line ready for the charge, a shell struck a small tree and splintered it on the side. General Armistead walked up to it and pulled off a long splinter, and turning to us waving it in his hand, said: "Boys, do you think you can go up under that? It is pretty hot out there." "Soon after another shell wounded Colonel Aylett."

General Armistead gave the command in his loudest tone of voice: "ATTENTION, BATTALION, THIRD, THE BATTALION OF DIRECTION, FORWARD, GUIDE, CENTER, MARCH." He then put his hat on the point of his sword, waving it around, led in front. I was wounded and did not get far enough to see him fall."

This testimony of men who were in the charge will

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give you an idea of the heroism and courage of the Virginians on that field.

"From the time men first met men in deadly strife, no more unflinching courage was ever displayed by the veteran troops of the most martial people than the battle of Gettysburg, witnessed in the determined valor of Pickett's Division of Virginians. They bore themselves worthy of their lineage and state."

Yes, they made a name that will sound down all the ages, thrill unborn heroes, and inspire all generations to emulate their courage. All praise for the imperishable glory of these noble men. While others dared their full duty, Pickett's men crowned the battle of Gettysburg with everlasting renown by their sublime and astounding courage.

General Lewis A. Armistead fell while waving his hat upon his sword, although it now rested upon the hilt, and with his left hand upon a captured gun, like a true hero and faultless soldier. Col. John Bowie Magruder of his 57th regiment was shot mounting the stone wall, pointing to the enemy's guns, and shouting to his men: "They are ours."

So, many other heroes died there at the very gates of victory.

LETTER NO. 25.

JOHN BOWIE MAGRUDER.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

John Bowie Magruder was born in Scottsville, Albemarle County, Virginia, on the 24th day of No-

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ember, 1839, was mortally wounded at Gettysburg, Pa., July 3rd, and died in a Federal hospital on the 5th day of July, 1863.

He was the oldest son of the Honorable Benjamin H. Magruder and Maria Minor, daughter of Dr. James Minor, and a great-grandson of Garrett Minor, member of the "Committee of Safety" in 1775 for Louisa County, and its representative in the legislature in 1773. The family moved to "Glenmore," near Monticello, the home of Jefferson, when John was five years old. He was educated at private schools, and matriculated at the University of Virginia in 1856, receiving the degree of Master of Arts in June, 1860.

His plan was to teach one year and after that to take a course at the University of Heidelberg, Germany, preparatory to studying law. When the tocsin of war sounded in the spring of 1861, he was teaching at E. B. Smith's Academy in Culpepper county. He at once gave up the position and his cherished plans for still higher education and a profession, to take a course in military tactics at the Virginia Military Institute.

After a short term there he returned home, organized a military company called the "Rivanna Guards," and was commissioned its captain July 22nd, 1861. This company was first assigned to the 32nd Virginia Infantry regiment and on September 23rd, 1861, was transferred to the 57th regiment and designated as Company "H."

This regiment was first commanded by Col. E. F. Kean, who was in April, 1861, succeeded by Col.

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Lewis A. Armistead, the celebrated brigadier, who led the magnificent charge on Cemetery Heights at Gettysburg and lost his life at "high water mark."

Captain Magruder's first independent field service was on the south side of the James, where we find him on the 29th of April, 1862, in command of Fort Dillard, on the Chowan river, in North Carolina, which was then garrisoned by about 250 men, but he was called to the north side in time for the great struggle around Richmond with McClellan's grand army, and in the bloody charge at Malvern Hill lost 27 men of his company, half the number present, in about forty minutes. The soldierly bearing and superb courage of Magruder attracted the attention of his superiors in rank, and he soon rose from the line to a field officer. He won his spurs as lieutenant colonel on the 23rd of July, 1862, and then on the 12th of January, 1863, was promoted to colonel of the famous Fifty-seventh Virginia Infantry, having brought it to the highest standard in the Confederate army. On the 9th of December, 1862, it numbered 890 members and 576 were present for duty. It appeared when in line and in motion on drill, so much larger than most of the regiments in the army, that it was nearly always mistaken for a brigade. Its strength and efficiency was largely due to its commander, who was ever vigilant and strictly attentive to his official duties. Col. Clement R. Fontaine, the last colonel of this glorious regiment, said of him: "Colonel Magruder by a system of strict discipline, drills, etc., soon brought the regiment to a degree of efficiency never before attained. Not even under

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General Armistead was the regiment in so good a trim for effective service as Magruder had it." Colonel Fontaine, who knew him intimately, said: "He was a man of rare excellence, both in point of education and natural ability. He promised to make his mark in any sphere he might be called to occupy. Had he survived the battle of Gettysburg, he would have been made a brigadier. That was the sentiment of the whole brigade."

Like the great Napoleon he was much younger than the officers whom he commanded, which caused him to be reserved in his associations with them, but he was always kind and courteous.

He was ever thoughtful of his privates and saw that they received whatever should come to them, and lent a sympathetic ear to their troubles.

April 7th, 1863, he was president of a general court martial and also president of a board of officers appointed under act of Congress for the retirement and removal of incompetent and inefficient officers. When he was twenty-three years old, he was given another independent command, made up of the 11th, 17th and 57th Virginia regiments, Macon's Battery of four pieces of artillery and one company of cavalry. This force was posted on the highway leading to Edenton, N. C., from Suffolk, Va., which latter place Longstreet was besieging in order to allow his quartermasters and commissaries to gather supplies for the Army of Northern Virginia, from the tide-water section. Pickett with the rest of his division was holding the Somerton road. The enemy made an attack upon Magruder's line on the 21st day of

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March, 1863, but it was summarily repulsed. On the 24th the enemy came again with large reinforcements and they were most disastrously defeated.

The Federals were under command of General Michael Corcoran of the celebrated Irish Brigade. Their reports say his force consisted of about five thousand infantry, with five hundred cavalry and ten pieces of artillery.

Col. Francis Buel of the 169th New York Infantry was severely wounded, and his lieutenant colonel reported that his regiment was placed far in advance of all others in support of Battery "D," Fourth U. S. Artillery, and unflinchingly faced a continuous and unabating shower of shell, grape and cannister from the well directed fire of the enemy, until orders were received to retire. This is a high compliment to Col. Magruder, coming as it does from the enemy, whose loss in men and equipment was larger than he was willing to admit. The splendid generalship displayed by the young commander was not overlooked by his immediate superior officer, who recognized it in the following order:

"Headquarters Pickett's Division, April 25th, 1863. Colonel:—The Major General commanding directs me to say that it affords him great pleasure to acknowledge the important services of yourself and command during the time that you held the important position on the White Marsh Road. All the dispositions you made to receive the enemy, and especially the manner in which you received them, and notwithstanding their greatly superior numbers, re-

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pulsed them, meets with special approval. He desires you to express his approval in orders to Maccon's Battery, the Eleventh Infantry, Kemper's Brigade, the Seventeenth Virginia Infantry, Corse's Brigade, and your own gallant regiment, the Fifty-seventh."

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
Ro. JOHNSON, A. A. A. G.

Upon receiving this Colonel Magruder issued his general order of congratulations to his troops conveying General Pickett's expression of approval and his own high estimate of their conduct.

General James Longstreet ordered his troops to withdraw from the seige of Suffolk on the night of the fourth of May, and the Fifty Seventh regiment marched from its location to Richmond, where it remained about a week; thence it moved to an encampment within two miles of Hanover Junction, where preparations were made for the advance into Pennsylvania.

Colonel Magruder in a letter to his brother under date of May 23rd, 1863, said: "I enjoyed myself much while stationed near Richmond, visited the city very frequently, saw many of my old friends and acquaintances, and spent all the money I could get. Everything bears the very highest price, among other things I paid \$110 for the simple making and trimming of a uniform coat, \$45 for a pair of shoes, \$10 per day board at the hotel, and \$5 per day for my horse at the livery stable. How in the world the

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people of Richmond manage to live, I can't well see. Beef is \$2 per pound and everything else in proportion." You may well imagine that there were hardships and suffering for the people out of the army, as well as for the soldiers in the field.

On the 24th day of June, Pickett's Division crossed the Potomac River at Williamsport, and bivouacked on the Maryland shore. It entered Chambersburg on the 27th day of June, marched directly through the town, and encamped on the York road about four miles out. The Division was detained here three or four days, destroying railroad depots, work shops and public machinery.

On the morning of the second day of July, 1863, at two o'clock, it took up the line of march to Gettysburg, marching twenty-three miles, and within three miles of that place, before it halted to rest. Early next morning it moved towards the line of battle and in the afternoon made the great charge which shattered and immortalized Pickett's splendid division.

John Bowie Magruder fell mortally wounded within a few steps of the enemy's cannon, shouting to his men, "They are ours." He was struck by two shots—one in the left breast and the other under the right arm, crossing in the breast. He was made prisoner on the spot where he so gloriously fell, mortally wounded.

He was carried to the Federal hospital in Gettysburg, and there languished until July 5th, 1863, when his noble spirit took its flight. He was a member of the "Epsilon Alpha Fraternity," and a frater caused his remains to be encased in a metallic coffin, and with

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all his personal effects, sent to his father by flag of truce to Richmond, October 10th, 1863. He was buried at "Glenmore," his father's home in Albemarle County, Va.

The life of young Magruder must be a mark of encouragement for those who seek good and patriotic ends.

His cousin, James Watson Magruder, himself afterwards killed on the battlefield (at Meadow Bridge on May 11, 1864), writing from camp near Fredericksburg, August 8th, 1863, said: "From information, John now sleeps among the gallant spirits, who that day bore our banner so nobly against the ramparts of the enemy on the battlefield in a foreign land.

If so, he died with his laurels thick around him. I saw him in Loudon (county) a short while before the army left Virginia, looking better and in better spirits than I ever knew him. It almost disposes me to quarrel with the decrees of heaven when he, the noblest of us all, in the flower of his youth, is thus untimely cut off. Why could not other men, who might be better spared, be taken in his stead? But our country demands the noblest for her altars. Our grief is increased by the fact that our country cannot afford to lose such men."

The spirit of this letter exhibits in every line the unselfish patriotism of the Southern youth. Will you forget?

Their sacrifice made glorious the history of the Confederate States! The brilliant record is so close to us that we should see it at every mental glance,

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feel it at every motion and touch it at every step. It is a glorious and fadeless essence, beautiful and brilliant! Its stars, like diamonds in the tomb of royalty, will rest undimmed by the dust and lapse of ages.

John Bowie Magruder, in the flower of his manhood, fell for the glory of his country in the great battle which turned the destiny of the South towards the dark shadow of defeat.

His name is enrolled amongst the heroes of his Alma Mater, the University of Virginia, and listed with the dead on the field of battle, whose courage and devotion and chivalry made the everlasting fame of the Army of Northern Virginia.

He was exalted in patriotism, rich in chivalry, pure in heart, eminent in all the adornments which make a true man and noble warrior.

LETTER NO. 26.

AFTER PICKETT'S CHARGE.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Col. James G. Hodges, his adjutant, John S. Jenkins and Major Robert Poore, of the 14th regiment; Col. John C. Owens, of the ninth Virginia regiment; Lieutenants John C. Niemeyer, George W. Mitchell and Robert Guy, of the third Virginia regiment; Sergeant John R. Dunn, Privates Lemuel H. Williams, William B. Bennett, Richard J. Nash, Thomas C.

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Owens, J. F. A. Dunderdale, James W. Lattimer, W. G. Monte and Robert Reed, of the ninth Virginia regiment, my city's (Portsmouth) true sons were among the slain on this bloody field, and now their memories live as sentinels of Virginia's honor, and their courage, remembered as the purest and richest ornaments of manly chivalry. Lieut. Col. William White, of the 14th Virginia regiment, and Judge James F. Crocker, Adjutant of the ninth, were severely wounded while gallantly leading in the charge.

During the charge, Lieut. Charles T. Phillips, waving his sword over his head and leading his men onward, cried: "Home, home, boys! Remember, home is over beyond those hills." What a spectacle of chivalry! When within 200 yards of the enemy's batteries Private W. G. Monte, of company "G," exclaimed, "What a sublime sight!" And taking his watch from his pocket said: "It is just four minutes past three o'clock." At that moment a gun on the right fired a shell into the left company of the 53d Virginia regiment, killing and wounding sixteen men; the brave Monte was seen no more by his comrades, and his ashes sleep in a nameless grave where he fell "foremost in the front rank."

When ordered to charge, Private A. W. Harvey, in his usual humorous vein, called out to one of his comrades, who was not too willing to face danger: "Follow me and I will lead you to victory or death!" Sergeant John K. Beaton displayed extraordinary bravery in encouraging his men by leading several paces in front. He was wounded in this battle, and

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killed on the 16th of May, 1864, near Drury's Bluff. Private William Brownley displayed conspicuous bravery and was highly commended by his comrades. I have heard many more instances of great gallantry in this famous charge, but all cannot be given here.

General Pickett rallied the remnant of his division on our main line, where it was detached as a guard for the prisoners, and escorted seven thousand to Williamsport, Md.

The battle closed with night, and then came the trying ordeal for our regiment. Our brigade had been held as support for the artillery, and was advanced over in front for a short distance, but recalled to the place we occupied during the bombardment on Seminary Ridge. About sundown our regiment was deployed as skirmishers and advanced about half mile to the front as pickets for the resting army of Northern Virginia. All night and the following day and night we were hotly engaged, though somewhat protected by a ditch and fence. The minnie's shrill shriek seemed more fearful and deadly at night than by day. The prayers of the dying and the groans of the wounded made existence during the night on that gloomy field too miserable to describe. It was simply awful to listen to the wails through the darkness!

Our losses were heavy. Among the killed from our regiment were Lieut. Walter C. Ives, Privates Andrew Butt, Joseph Sykes, Julius Ward and Revel W. Curtis, and among the wounded were Frederick Bean, William J. Jones, George King, Jesse McPherson, C. M. Overton and Joseph Thompson.

The army after waiting for an attack during the

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4th day of July, even the glorious fourth, commenced to withdraw after night, but the whole did not get in motion before sunrise on the fifth of July. Although it was very chilly, raining exceedingly hard all the day and night of the fourth, we were kept on the outposts and not recalled until late in the morning of the fifth.

We marched all that day in retreat until late in the night and halted at Waterloo; there we remained, waiting for rations until late in the afternoon of the next day; our route was through Fairfield, Fairfield Gap, in the Cumberland mountains, and Waynesboro to Maryland. We reached Maryland on the night of the sixth, passed through Idasburg, and camped within two miles of Hagerstown. There we remained until the afternoon of the tenth of July, when we marched through that town, and on the eleventh the army was placed in line of battle, "covering the Potomac from Williamsport to Falling Waters." I was given command of the brigade skirmishers, and advanced them to the borders of a woodland overlooking a small field, and when the enemy's pickets advanced to the edge of the woods across the field, they drove out a flock of sheep, which charged upon our line, and my men captured the entire lot. It was like the rain of manna in the wilderness of Arabia, for we were very hungry. Our rations were slim, and fresh mutton chops were delightful to the palate, when broiled on bon-fires even without salt or bread.

On the afternoon of July 13th a steady rain was coming down; hungry and without shelter, you may imagine the discomfort we endured; but my pair of

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blankets was with me in this hour of need, as many times before. That dark and dreary night we were ordered to withdraw and march for the Potomac. It was raining heavily and densely dark when we commenced the retreat from the picket line, and it was with much difficulty that we kept together; arriving at the turnpike we found it almost blocked with wagons, artillery and horses, with the columns of infantry marching slowly alongside through muck and slush. The slippery stones under the mud tripped many and threw them flat in the slush to add to the horrors of the mid-night march, and the fellow who fell did not say his prayers in gaining his feet.

However I was cheered on with the hope of soon being once more on the soil of the Old Dominion and alive.

One great trouble possessed me all through the invasion of the enemy's country. It was the dread of being killed and having my bones left to sleep in the soil of Pennsylvania. I never expected to survive the war, but I hoped to be killed in Virginia and have my ashes rest with my mother state.

You may ask me how I felt in battle. It is difficult to tell. I felt differently at different times. I think much depends on the condition of the nervous system, and sometimes we felt more like fighting than at other times. It is indeed hard to describe how one feels when the cannons thunder—the shells explode—the smoke envelops—the bullets go zip-zip-zip-zip, and the wounded cry out in pain.

On all occasions I felt great dread of a battle—to be killed—to be left with upturned face upon the field

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—to be trampled upon by the heels of soldiers advancing against my comrades—to be wounded and languish in the hands of a pitiless enemy—to die and be buried in the land of hate! Horrible thought!

The chances of escaping death or wounds appeared very slim, when I first realized what a herculean task we had on our hands. Yet almost like a miracle I escaped and only received three slight wounds during the entire period of my service in the Confederate army. A battle is a dreadful ordeal for a soldier in the line. He feels most alarm when the bullets first begin to come, but after the opening he forgets himself in his efforts to drive the enemy. The officer is too busy keeping the soldiers in line—closing up broken ranks and directing the course of the movements to be afraid, and the private in firing and loading his rifle forgets the danger and displays the heroism which gives the glory of the field. I have asked the coolest and bravest men I ever saw in battle if they were afraid, and all answered "Yes," they dreaded the ordeal as much as any.

I expect you have experienced the feelings of a boy on his way to school without knowing his lessons, expecting a whipping or severe reprimand; and then if he should escape with an easy question at the class recital, saving him the scolding or lashing, he feels an effervescent delight which stimulates him to be better prepared next time; add to this many degrees of dread and you will feel like a soldier going into a fight, and then when you safely run the gauntlet of the teacher's questions you will know the feelings of a soldier who gets through a battle without a scratch.

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A fight foot to foot with bayonets gives no time for fear or fright, like a fist-cuff, each strives to conquer. We had such a fight at the "Crater."

A soldier with dread of death is impelled by a sense of honor and duty to overcome this feeling, and when he conquers it in the face of hailing bullets and bursting shells, he is entitled to a soldier's glory and a soldier's honor.

LETTER NO. 27.

IN VIRGINIA AGAIN.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Arriving at the heights of the bank of the Potomac we were halted to rest in a little field on the roadside for probably an hour, then resuming the march, and while going down grade to the river to reach the pontoon bridge, we heard rapid firing up the hill. A squadron of the enemy's cavalry had charged into Pettigrew's Brigade while resting in the place we had just left. The men were taken altogether unawares while lounging about on the grass, out of ranks, but they fired upon the horsemen, every man for himself, and soon unhorsed the entire squadron.

The gallant General James J. Pettigrew, one of the bravest of the brave, was mortally wounded and died a few days afterwards at Bunker Hill, Virginia.

This episode caused our column to halt a short while and then we resumed the march, crossing over the pontoon bridge, July 14th, to the old Virginia shore,

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and I was happy for the moment. On the 15th day of July we resumed the march, passed through Martinsburg, Drakesville and Bunker Hill, and encamped a little way out until the 21st of July.

While here, a foraging party returned to camp and one man had a hive of bees on his shoulder. No one inquired where he found it, but many crowded around for a taste of honey after he had smoked the bees to death. We had one man, William Miller, who was a great hunter, who could climb the largest oaks to capture squirrels in their hollows, and he made good use of his agility while at this place.

Resuming the march we passed through Winchester and bivouacked about two miles out for the night, and next day we crossed the Shenandoah on pontoons and rested for the night very near Front Royal, and on the 23rd crossed over the Blue Ridge at Chester Gap. On the 24th of July we passed through Flint Hill and bivouacked on the banks of the Hazel River, and on the morning of the 25th arrived at Culpepper Court House, where we camped until August 1st, and then were thrown in line of battle to meet the enemy, who were coming from the direction of Brandy Station.

The great open field between these two places gave a splendid opportunity for cavalry manoeuvres. The enemy's cavalry was driving ours pell-mell on our infantry line, and when we emerged from the woods they wheeled about and our cavalry in turn gave them a thrilling chase. We could see the chase, but were just out of range of their carbines, and although charging in line of battle could not get near enough to fire a volley at them. It was a pretty running fight

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in full view of our infantry line without much danger.

We were held in line of battle until August 3rd, and then took up the line of march through Culpeper Court House, and halted at Orange. There we bivouacked on a hill in a beautiful grove of large oaks. One day in a thunder storm the lightning killed one of our soldiers and fearfully shocked one or two others. Their fly tent was stretched at the foot of a great oak, one knee of the tree serving for a head rest or pillow. A musket was leaning against the tree in the tent at the head of the resting men. While the rain was pouring, the lightning struck the tree, the bolt ran down the musket, struck the back of the head of one of the soldiers, streaked down his spine and leg, going through the shoe-sole about the size of a fine needle point. The surgeons made every effort to revive him, but failed, and his body went to a soldier's grave. The others, though fearfully shocked, revived and eventually recovered.

There was a great review of the army, near this camp at Orange. I do not remember the date, as I have no data to refresh my memory. When General Lee and his staff rode down the line in a sweeping gallop, the soldiers sent up a "rebel yell" with the intensest enthusiasm of loving followers, showing that the results of the invasion had not broken the spirits of the Army of Northern Virginia.

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LETTER NO. 28.

BRISTOE STATION

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

On the ninth day of October, 1863, General Lee crossed the Rapidan River and advanced by the way of Madison Court House, with the design of bringing on an engagement with the Federal army, which was encamped about Culpepper Court House extending thence to Rapidan Station.

The progress of the army was necessarily slow, as the march was by circuitous and concealed roads to avoid observation by the enemy.

On the tenth of October General J. E. B. Stuart with a portion of his command attacked the advance of the enemy near James City, and forced it back to Culpepper. The main body of our army arrived near that place on the eleventh, and found that the enemy had retreated towards the Rappahannock, removing or destroying his stores. On the morning of the 12th of October our army was marching in two columns with the design of reaching the Orange and Alexandria railroad, north of the Rappahannock River and intercepting the retreat of the enemy.

Arriving at Warrenton Springs the passage of the Rappahannock was disputed by artillery and cavalry, but they were quickly driven off, and on the afternoon of the 13th, the columns reunited at Warrenton, where

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a halt was made to supply the troops with rations. The enemy fell back rapidly along the line of the railroad. His retreat was conducted by several parallel roads, while our troops were compelled to march by difficult and circuitous routes, and therefore we were unable to intercept him.

General A. P. Hill arrived at Bristoe Station first, where his advance, consisting of two brigades, became engaged with a force largely superior in numbers, posted behind the railroad embankment. He was repulsed with considerable loss. Before the rest of our troops could get up and the position of the enemy ascertained, he retreated across Broad Run and took up a position beyond Bull Run.

General Lee considered it useless to turn the enemy's new position, as it was apparent that he would retire to the entrenchments around Washington and Alexandria, and would decline an engagement unless attacked in his fortifications. A further advance was therefore deemed unnecessary, and after destroying the railroad from Cub Run southwardly to the Rappahannock River, our army, on the 18th, returned to the line of that river, leaving the cavalry in the enemy's front.

The aggregate loss of the Third Corps of our army at Bristoe Station was 933 killed and wounded, and 445 prisoners.

Captain Thomas L. Barraud, of the 16th Virginia regiment, an excellent officer, was killed, and General Carnot Posey, of Mississippi, was mortally wounded, and died in the hospital at Charlottesville on November 13th. He was a splendid officer, not only

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beloved by his own brigade, but generally respected and esteemed by the whole division.

Notwithstanding the bloody mistake at Bristoe, in the course of these operations General Lee captured 2,436 prisoners, including 41 commissioned officers. He would have continued in front of the enemy had it not been for the destitute condition of his men, thousands of whom were bare-footed, a greater number partially shod and nearly all without overcoats, blankets and warm clothing. In a letter to the Secretary of War, James A. Seddon, dated October 19th, General Lee said: "I think the sublimest sight of the war was the cheerfulness and alacrity exhibited by this army under the trials and privations to which it is exposed."

Before the army advanced I had been given a leave of absence, the only one during the four years of my service, and consequently missed the affair at Bristoe, but returned in time to join my regiment about Warrenton Junction.

On the 7th of November the Federals attacked our troops at Rappahannock Station on the north side of the river, capturing the redoubts and about 1,500 prisoners. Our regiment was in trenches on the south side and had a lively fight to keep the enemy from crossing. I remember our chaplain, Hatcher, rode up in the midst of this fight, and I had to order him back out of the danger line. He was a Baptist and brave as a lion. We afterwards fell back to the line of the Rapidan, and marched on the railroad track all day, giving us one of the most foot-sore marches of the war. The field officers had to send their horses

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around the public road with the wagons, and therefore I had to foot it with the men of the ranks.

LETTER NO. 29.

MINE RUN AND MADISON RUN.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

On the 26th of November, 1863, General Meade, commanding the Federal army, commenced an advance on Orange Court House, and our army was withdrawn from the line of the upper Rapidan and marched eastward to strike him. Ewell's Corps was directed to proceed to the old turnpike near Locust Grove and Hill's Corps, to which our brigade was attached, to move down the Plank Road. On the 27th, we met the enemy's outposts and engaged in skirmishing, so anticipating an attack, our forces were put in a good position, which General Lee himself outlined, on the west side of Mine Run, and during the night our men made formidable entrenchments, for they had "graduated in the art of constructing field defenses." On the 28th, Meade advanced his army to the east side of the Run immediately in our front, but made no effort to attack us. We had anticipated with cheerfulness an opportunity of fighting behind breastworks, but were disappointed.

Although we had from time to time thrown up miles of earthworks, we, never during the whole war,

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had the opportunity of fighting behind or resisting an attack on them; of course I mean our brigade. We remained in this position until three o'clock on the morning of the second of December, when we were withdrawn to move to the right to make an attack, but as soon as it became light enough to see, we discovered that the enemy's pickets had gone. We marched down the Plank Road, while Early pursued the old turnpike to overtake Meade. After marching eight miles we were halted, as Stuart had reported that the enemy had recrossed the Rapidan and was proceeding to his old position on the Rappahannock, and then we returned to our former line on the Rapidan near the railroad bridge.

The conduct of Meade's troops in devastating the country was contrary to all the usages of civilized warfare. General Lee in his report of the Mine Run affair to the War Department, says: "I cannot conclude without alluding to the wanton destruction of the property of citizens by the enemy. Houses were torn down or rendered uninhabitable, furniture and farming implements broken or destroyed, and many families, most of them in humble circumstances, stripped of all they possessed and left without shelter and without food. I have never witnessed on any previous occasion such entire disregard of the usages of civilized warfare and the dictates of humanity."

The enemy was not our personal enemy; there is a vast difference between a personal enemy and a patriotic enemy of another country, and we looked upon the Federal troops as soldiers of another country,

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towards whom we could entertain the kindest feelings, when they were not trying to kill us.

When off the firing line on neutral ground our soldiers could take a social drink out of the same bottle, cut a chew of tobacco from the same plug, eat hard tack from the same haversack and drink water from the same canteen; and therefore we felt that such heartless conduct as described by General Lee was inspired by high officials. There were some of our enemies whose bloody and cruel orders engendered a hate which forbade any kindly feelings whatsoever towards them.

Butler, Hunter, Sheridan and Sherman in the field and Lincoln, as chief executive, who upheld their savage crusades against our unoffending non-combatants, made our blood boil in every artery whenever we thought of them. Shall we forget the Indian massacres of the American colonists! Shall we pass over in silence the black deeds of these cruel men!

On January 3rd, 1864, we settled down into winter quarters near Madison Run, five miles north of Gordonsville. Our tents were arranged in city style with broad streets, squares, parade grounds, etc. The soldiers built a log church in the center of the encampment, where the Masons also held meetings and there I was initiated into the mysteries. I remember one bright sunny Sunday morning, Bishop Johns preached an able sermon in the open air to a large crowd of earnest listeners. I wish I could remember his text.

General Mahone had his headquarters a little distance from the encampment across the run, and during the winter had a coop of turkeys near his tent,

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It was a tempting bait for the men, and one fellow conceived a plan to get one of the General's turkeys for his dinner. The turkey was out of the coop. He attached a fishing hook to a long string, baited it with a grain of corn and threw it to the bird; of course it grabbed the bait and as the fellow commenced to drag it away, the General appeared in front of his tent and observed the singular incident; thinking the turkey was chasing the soldier, he exclaimed: "Look at that cowardly fellow running from a turkey." This story was told about camp, but I will not vouch for it.

I have told you about the barefooted condition of our soldiers in a previous chapter, and they were still lacking in the essential comforts of life.

General Mahone took possession of a church near this camp, bought up all the leather he could find, detailed all the shoemakers in his command and opened a shoe manufactory in the church, and by the opening of the spring campaign his men were all well shod. The historian of Orange county says to his credit the church was left uninjured.

It was at this camp that the three years enlistment of our men expired, and they were called upon to reinlist for the war and in a manly and heroic spirit they so responded as to merit a resolution of thanks from the Congress of the Confederate States: "Resolved by the Congress of the Confederate States of America, That the thanks of Congress are due, and are hereby tendered to the officers and men of the Sixty First Virginia Regiment of Infantry and the Fifth Virginia Regiment of Cavalry for having patri-

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otically and in the spirit of self-sacrificing devotion, reenlisted for the war.

Sec. 2, Resolved: That a record of these proceedings be forthwith furnished to the troops composing the above named regiments. Approved February 15th, 1864."

On the seventh of February the enemy having made a demonstration to cross the Rapidan, we were marched through the town of Orange to the river, but the emergency having ceased we returned to our winter quarters, where with the usual camp duties every preparation was made for the spring campaign.

A batallion of sharpshooters was formed from picked officers and men, and drilled for special service, and it proved a most valuable adjunct in the campaign following, beginning in the Wilderness. On the fourth of May we left winter quarters and marched about ten miles to the old camp ground near the railroad bridge.

LETTER NO. 30.

THE WILDERNESS.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

On the fifth day of May, we were ordered from the position at the railroad bridge, and marched fifteen miles to Vadiersville, where we bivouacked for the night, and next morning we started early and hastened to join our troops who were already fighting in the Wilderness.

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Grant, who had won great battles in the West and secured the confidence of his government, had been transferred to the East to retrieve the disasters of a score of commanders of the Federal forces, was advancing with his mighty army of 140,000 men and 300 cannon to overwhelm Lee, who had only 62,000 soldiers.

As we marched down the Plank Road from the open ground into the dark woods, the infantry firing was sounding on all sides and the battle was progressing earnestly and fiercely.

We were at once assigned to support of General Longstreet's line, but some time after were ordered to join and co-operate with Anderson's and Wofford's Brigades of Longstreet's Corps in an attack upon the left flank of the enemy.

General Mahone, as senior brigadier, was charged with the immediate direction of the movement. Anderson and Wofford were already in motion, and in a few moments the line of attack had been formed and three brigades in most imposing order, with a step that meant fight, were rapidly descending upon the enemy.

The attack was a brilliant and complete success. The enemy was swept from our front on the Plank Road where his advantage of position had already been felt by our line, and from which the necessity of his dislodgment had become a matter of great concern. Besides this valuable result the Plank Road had been gained and the lines of the enemy bent back in great disorder and the way was open for greater results. Grant's regulars from his western army had

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been routed. His long lines of dead and wounded, which lay in the wake of our swoop, furnished evidence that he was not allowed time to change front as well as the execution of our fire. Our brigade lost twenty killed and 126 wounded in this movement.

After the battle we halted to reform our line, Longstreet and Jenkins, having ridden to the front beyond our position, were fired upon by troops on the left of our regiment, mistaking them for the enemy's cavalry, and General Longstreet was wounded and General Jenkins killed at a most unfortunate moment. The firing was certainly not from the 61st regiment, but by troops some distance to the left of it.

This unfortunate affair stopped the further advance and doubtless lost the opportunity of giving the enemy a more disastrous defeat than already given.

That night we bivouacked on the battlefield of the Wilderness and next morning we moved forward, coming up with the enemy at "Whitehall," and engaging him in a very spirited fight where we lost several valuable men.

During this march we came across a great bunch of dead cavalry horses and many of their riders were dead beside them. There were many side-arms scattered about, so I set about selecting a light sabre to take the place of my light infantry sword, and finding one to suit, I threw away my old sword and took the sabre which I now have to accompany my "pair of blankets."

A pair of spurs also were found on this field, and the one is left to go with my relics of the war.

On the tenth of May the enemy were trying to

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capture our wagon train and we had a skirmish in driving him off. On the next day still fighting, we held a position on the extreme right of our army, which we fortified under cover of night.

On the eleventh day of May, Grant wrote Halleck: "We have now ended the sixth day of very hard fighting. The result to this time is much in our favor." (?)

"But our losses have been heavy as well as those of the enemy. We have lost to this time eleven general officers killed, wounded and missing, and probably twenty thousand men. I am now sending back to Belle Plaine all my wagons for a fresh supply of provisions, and propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer."

We will see after awhile that this assertion was not carried out and the boastful general in command of the Federal army suddenly changed his mind and resorted to another line.

LETTER NO. 31.

THE SPOTTSYLVANIA BATTLE.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

And now, May 12th, 1864, the great battle of Spottsylvania Court House is raging in all its gigantic fury and terrible turmoil. We were hastily moved to the right nearly in front of the Court House to help our hard pressed troops, and in our first position we ex-

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perienced a heavy shelling and lost several men. Col. V. D. Groner, commanding our regiment, was wounded, and the command devolved on Lieut. Col. William F. Niemeyer.

About one o'clock in the afternoon the brigade was moved still further to the right and more directly in front of the court house to support Lane's brigade, which was charging that terrible battery, which had wounded our colonel. We were moved forward in the woods with orders not to fire as friends were in front.

After marching some distance, a line of battle, lying down, was discovered a few paces in our front, and ours halted, believing it was Lane's Brigade, which we were supposed to be supporting; but as soon as we saw the blue coats and opened a volley of musketry, they scattered like sheep. Numbers were taken prisoners, among them several color sergeants with regimental colors. We ordered them to the rear without a guard, because all our men with muskets in hand were required for the enemy in front, and consequently could not be spared to escort prisoners to the rear. One sergeant with his flag passed within hand's reach of me. As these prisoners emerged from the woods they were taken in charge by soldiers of another brigade, and the flags claimed as their captures and to them were credited in the official reports.

I am positively certain that our regiment was entitled to the credit of capturing one flag that was credited to another. After the enemy had been driven back, our position in the woods was held for some time; here an incident occurred that I shall always

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remember. I was standing on the left of the regiment in rather a good humor from the gratification, I suppose, one always experiences after passing safely through danger, when Lieut. Col. Niemeyer, then commanding the regiment, came up to me with a very sad expression of countenance and said: "I am sure I'll be killed to-day." I made some laughing reply, believing our fighting was over for the day. But, alas! his prediction was true! I little thought that the gallant soldier, true friend and modest gentleman would ere the morning be lifeless on that field.

About an hour before sunset the fortifications of the enemy on the right of the Court House were found to be held by pickets only, and our brigade was ordered to charge them. Our regiment, occupying the center of the brigade, struck an open field, and on advancing up the hill behind which we had been deployed for the charge, were met by a volley of musketry. I was struck on the right arm by a minnie ball, which felt like a red-hot iron crushing through the bones. About the same instant Lieut. William Drewry was shot through the thigh, from the effects of which the gallant soldier afterwards died. I was thoroughly demoralized, and believing my arm was broken, exclaimed: "I am ruined." Capt. B. H. Nash, Adjutant General, ran to me, and when we examined it, found it was only a slight flesh wound, and then we proceeded at a run to catch up with the regiment. Lieut. Gleason was shot clear through the lungs soon after, but eventually recovered. Col. Niemeyer reached the fortifications, and after the charge was all over, was shot through the breast by one of the enemy's sharp-

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shooters. He was a noble specimen of manhood—in manner as gentle as a woman—with a heart far reaching in sympathy and love, in duty firm and fearless, and in all his associations pleasant and affable—a character at once commanding respect and attracting the love of both superiors and subordinates in military rank.

The heart of every soldier in the regiment was stricken with grief when Niemeyer was slain. This was the last sad tragedy in our regiment on this memorable day, and the soldiers slept on their arms that night.

An incident worthy of record, as showing the heroic character of the soldiers of the line, at the same time serious and amusing, if you are familiar with military terms, was related to me by a comrade of another regiment. When the artillery of the Federals was throwing shot and shell all around, and we had commenced the charge, First Lieut. Thomas W. Smith, of company "A," 16th Virginia regiment, was struck by a minnie ball and cut down with a serious wound through his right thigh. Two of his men picked him up and bore him a little to the rear, where he insisted they should leave him and go back to their commands, but finding that he was too weak to walk from loss of blood, one of his men, Benj. H. Hannaford, assisted him on to the Court House, where the field hospital was located. The surgeon there told him that the enemy were shelling that hospital and he must go on to the division hospital, more than two miles away to avoid the danger, but he was then too weak to hobble further. His comrade found a wheel-

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barrow and with the aid of another lifted him into it and placed him as comfortably as possible. Then Hannaford said: "Now, my Lieutenant, I will roll you over to the division hospital." In passing the Court House General Pendleton was sitting on the fence railing around the lot, ordering up and sending in the artillery. The general hailed him, saying: "Lieutenant, what are you doing? Where are you going?" Lieutenant Smith, looking up, saw General Pendleton, and raising himself as well as he could, saluted the general and said: "General, I am passing in review." The old general looked down upon him, smiled and said: "Go on, you will not die," and he didn't die, but recovered to go back to the field and be wounded again. This is probably the only instance on record where a wounded soldier rode from a battlefield in a wheel-barrow.

Lieutenant Smith is still with us, and has done many good acts for his comrades, besides building a monument to the memory of the Confederate dead at Suffolk, Va. He is still a Confederate soldier with a full heart for all implied in that glorious name.

And it is most gratifying to know that Dr. Charles E. Stowe, son of the author of Uncle Tom's Cabin, has declared that: "For the principle of State rights and State sovereignty the Southern men fought with a holy ardor and self-denying patriotism that have covered even defeat with imperishable glory."

Although as the result of bayonet adjudication, secession can now only be successful by rebellion, still the Federal Union must rest upon the principle of

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state's rights and home rule, if it is to exist as a republic.

LETTER NO. 32.

MARCHING AND FIGHTING.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

It is difficult to recall events that occurred many, many years ago. While some are indelibly impressed upon my mind, many now appear more like dreams than realizations; therefore these recollections will be imperfect in some respects; however I rely mostly upon notes and reports made at the time. If I shall be able to record a single incident by which a noble soldier shall receive the reward of a name in history for chivalrous conduct and give you an example of true manhood for inspiration, I shall feel fully repaid for the spare moments I have devoted to the preparation of this narrative, entitled, "A Pair of Blankets."

After the great battle of Spottsylvania Court House had been fought, our brigade was moved to the right about a mile southeast of the court house, where a dense thicket of small pines covered its front. After a few hours of hard labor, we were strongly entrenched and then our worn-out soldiers were allowed to rest several days, but we were still within reach of the bullets from the enemy's pickets. In the meantime Grant was sliding along his "all summer line" towards Richmond.

On the 14th of May, 1864, a soldier was directed to

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climb a tree standing in front of the breastworks which overlooked the surrounding pines and report his observations of the enemy's line. The sharpshooters discovered him at once, and the first shot aimed at him struck and instantly killed Marshall O. Creekmore of Norfolk county, a member of Company "A," while asleep in his tent.

Isaiah Hodges, a member of the same company, rushed to him and while stooping to raise the head of the dead soldier, was pierced by another bullet and fell dead across the body of his comrade. Prompted by the noblest impulses of the human heart he was endeavoring to soothe the dying moments of his friend, unmindful of the danger to which he was exposed; and even while tender accents were on his lips, the swift winged messenger, in the twinkling of an eye, sent him to his eternal home. It was an appalling tragedy, occurring while we were lying around in the shade of the trees. The conduct of this soldier was a grand victory over death.

The man in the tree escaped untouched, but he descended from it with lightning speed.

On the 22nd of May we evacuated these earthworks, marching to the North Anna River, where we again engaged in battle with Grant's troops and thereafter we were moving positions and fighting every day until Grant changed his "all summer line."

I remember, when we were halted for dinner and rest, the avidity with which the soldiers scattered over the adjoining fields to gather polk-salad and wild garlic, and the busy scenes which followed around the little fires over which hung tin cups, tin

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buckets and boilers containing morsels of pork and these aforesaid vegetable delicacies. Grant was then making demonstrations in our front, and time for rest and cooking was very limited. The pickets were fighting fiercely and Capt. R. B. Brinkley of Nansemond county, Va., an officer of the 41st regiment, was killed early in the action.

A line of battle was formed across an open field and the work of fortifying was begun by the soldiers without instructions, for the popping and cracking of the picket's rifles were all the orders they required for this purpose. The pioneer corps was poorly provided with tools and on pressing occasions like this, every available instrument that would throw up an ounce of earth was brought into service—knives, iron forks, tin plates, spoons and pieces of broken canteens were used as spades with most remarkable results. The fortifications were hardly completed before the Adjutant was moving down the line for a detail to relieve the pickets:

As usual on dangerous occasions, or rather it so appeared to me, I was made commander of the brigade picket. It was exceedingly dangerous to go to the picket line in the daytime. The pickets were located in a dense woods with thick undergrowth of gall-bushes and other shrubs. I felt I would be killed and that impression added to the frightful accounts of the fighting, filled me with indescribable dread, but I nerved myself for the occasion and marched at the head of my men to the front. The pickets were over a mile from our line of battle, and during the entire march I was thinking of the doom

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which I felt awaited me. It was late in the afternoon, but before sunset we were in our places, and the worn-out pickets whom we relieved were safe in the rear. About twilight the ambulance corps ventured to the front and bore away the dead body of the gallant Brinkley.

The enemy was only a few hundred yards in our front—the night was dark, gloomy, and almost starless—there were our pickets, some behind trees, others ensconced in pits, perchance red with the blood of a dead comrade—with thoughts maybe only of home and death. My duties as commander made me pass along the line several times during that gloomy night. Every stick that cracked under my feet would draw the fire of some unweary sentinel and each flash from his rifle and “whop” of the bullet against a tree would send a shudder through my frame, expecting the next to pierce me.

Think of being on a battlefield in the gloom of midnight, which was lighted only by the occasional flash of a rifle that sent its terrible messenger whizzing and whistling by one's head.

Soon after daylight the enemy retreated from our front, and the pleasant feelings that came over me were almost as intense as those of dread which had preceded them. I marched back with my pickets to the earthworks for another change to meet the Federals at another place. During the parting shots a stray bullet found its way to the rear and wounded John Singleton of Company “D” of our regiment while he was stooping to pack his knap-sack more than a mile off.

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LETTER NO. 33.

SECOND COLD HARBOR.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Every day there was maneuvering and fighting. On June 1st there was skirmishing along the whole line of the army. Hoke and Anderson attacked the enemy in their front and drove him to his entrenchments, and the enemy's attack on Heth was handsomely repulsed. Breckenridge and Mahone forced the enemy from their fronts and captured about 150 prisoners.

June 2nd we marched about eight miles to the right and were thrown in line of battle to support Hoke's Division.

June 3rd at an early hour, 4:30 a. m., the great battle of Cold Harbor began with great vigor; Grant having ordered a general advance along his whole line, made assault after assault with severe loss to his troops and by eight o'clock fourteen had been made.

The enemy succeeded in penetrating a salient on General Breckenridge's line, capturing a portion of the battalion there posted. However, Finnigan's Brigade, of Mahone's Division, and the Maryland Battalion of Breckenridge's command, immediately drove him out with severe loss, so this single advantage was no profit to Grant. Our brigade made a forced march from its position to reinforce the point called "Turkey Ridge," and we arrived at the scene

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in the afternoon, and were at once thrown into line on the left of Finnegan to support Breckinridge's troops. While in this position I was struck on my right foot by a grape shot, but fortunately it had spent its force and my injury was slight. Sergeant Ivy C. (Buck) Brown of Deep Creek, a member of Company "B," was instantly killed near me as we aligned in the trenches.

When Percy Greg, an Englishman, was writing his history of the United States, he visited this field and had the positions described to him by men who were in the battle, and he says: "Grant, who pledged himself to fight it out on this line, i. e., to take Richmond from the northeast—if it takes all summer, delivered another desperate attack upon the Confederates on finding them again across his front at Cold Harbor, a few miles northeast of Richmond. The field was a narrow plateau whose descending flanks were thinly covered with branchless pines. Across the plateau ran a ditch and parapet resembling a child's mimic entrenchments in the sand. An English girl of seven on a Shetland pony would have leaped it. A few hundred feet in the rear was a ravine out of which no beaten army could have extricated itself without numerous loss. Behind the slight parapet, strengthened upon the flanks by somewhat stronger works, the Confederate soldiers lay crouched—they could not kneel. Grant on June 3rd hurled against them his whole army.

In half an hour that army was driven back, leaving the ground covered to within one hundred yards of the trenches, with eight thousand dead and

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wounded. Enraged by this last and most humiliating disaster, Grant furiously insisted on the renewal of the attack. He did not, as most Confederate Generals, offer to lead it; and his officers and men, from the highest to the lowest, absolutely refused to stir."

About eight o'clock this night as Breckinridge and Finnegan were attempting to re-establish their picket lines, the enemy made a night assault, but it was easily repulsed. It was a terribly grand scene! All nature was clothed in darkness—the heavens were lit only by the twinkling stars, and the sulphurous smoke still shrouded the battlefield—the prayers and groans of the dying—the pitiful appeals of the wounded for help—the cries "water," "water!"—the commands of the officers, "Forward, guide right"—"steady!" were at once audible. Then came the charging battalions sweeping down upon us. The sheen of their polished muskets was seen by the sparkling flashes that flew from their clicking hammers and sent forth the lurid blazes in swelling lines from their countless muzzles—their roaring fell upon our ears simultaneously with the "zip" and "flap" of the bullets. We were in the supporting line but could look over the front works. Then our comrades in the front line of battle rose up above their breastworks and with steady aim fired one volley, one volley, which sent death, dismay and irretrievable disorder into the ranks of the assailants, making them stagger, reel and fall, and then scatter as the whirlwind sweeps the leaves of autumn before it. Our men of the front and rear lines mounted the crude ramparts and yelled over the victory—officers and

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privates alike made that grand old yell of the Southern soldiery—the remembrance of which even now fires the heart and swells the bosom of an old soldier with mingled feelings of pride and pleasure. Open your mouth as wide as you can, hollo, scream, as loud as you can in lively acclaim, and you may give the “rebel” yell.

This was the last act of Grant’s tragedy at Cold Harbor. His dead and wounded covered our front in almost the same order and regularity in which they had bravely marched to the carnival of death. The whole of this night battle scene was certainly “grand, gloomy and peculiar.” One month had passed with daily and almost nightly fighting. Grant’s loss almost equaled the number of Lee’s entire force. I know figures are dull, but here they speak with so much force they must hold your attention. The Federal loss from the Wilderness to Cold Harbor is summed up as follows:

Battles	Killed	Wounded	Missing	Total
Wilderness	3246	12037	3383	17666
Spottsylvania . . .	2725	13416	2258	18319
North Anna and Potpotomy	591	2734	661	3986
Cold Harbor and Bethesda Church	1344	9077	1816	12737
Sheridan’s First Expedition	64	337	224	625
Sheridan’s Second Expedition	150	741	625	1516
Total	7620	38342	8967	54928

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This settled the "all summer line," and Grant decided to change his mind, and move to the south side of the James River.

Soon after the close of the night battle our position was changed to the front line on the right and we held it until the 12th of June. The pickets of the enemy were so close to us that it was almost certain death to show one's head in the daylight above the earthworks, and for nine days we were kept close within the trenches.

After a while a detail was called for, to charge the enemy's works in order to ascertain information as to his movements. Lieut. Wm. F. Baugh of Company "G" commanded the detail from our regiment, composed of one man from each company. The brigade detail was commanded by Captain Chas. W. Wilson, and they drove in the enemy's pickets, went up to his breastworks and found them fully manned. Only four of this forlorn hope returned to our lines. Private A. D. B. Godwin was one of the four. "Gus" was an excellent soldier and never faltered in his duty. He was the brother of the gallant General Godwin, who was killed at Winchester.

As soon as the enemy left our front, we marched through the White Oak swamp, and again encountered him, June 13th, 1864, on Fraziers Farm, where our column seemed to be marching on a parallel line. We were not thrown in line of battle, as only a few shots were fired at us from a woods across the field, but marched on towards the James. Major Charles R. McAlpine, then captain of Company "I," was severely wounded in the shoulder by one of these

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shots. He was always as true as steel, fearless, calm and cool on the battlefield, and a strict disciplinarian in camp and on the march; everybody admired the courage of "Napoleon" as he was familiarly called. The soldiers gave him this soubriquet, as he bore a personal resemblance to the great Napoleon, and certainly was not excelled in bravery. I should name Major McAlpine, from my personal observation of his gallant conduct on the battlefield, as one of the "bravest of the brave."

Our next camping place was near Malvern Hill.

LETTER NO. 34.

MARCHING BACK TO PETERSBURG.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Malvern Hill, June 1st, 1862, the place and time where so many valuable lives were uselessly sacrificed, brought sad memories to us.

It was now again the beautiful spring time, this 18th day of June, 1864. The sun shone brightly, the young leaves were trembling in the gentle breezes, the wild flowers were in bloom, scenting the air with delightful perfume, the birds were singing merrily and sweetly in the surrounding woods and groves, when our tents were struck on the scene of the bloody battle and we took up the march for the old city of Petersburg. I remember now how delightful it was while riding along the road at the head of my

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regiment, to hear the singing birds and smell the sweet flowers of the tangled vines.

We crossed the James River on a pontoon bridge at Drewry's Bluff, marched over the battlefield on which Beauregard had recently routed the Federal forces under General B. F. Butler, overtrod the burnt leaves and saw the scorched trees with their bullet marks and broken limbs. We bivouacked that night near Chester Station on the Richmond & Petersburg Railroad. Early next afternoon, on the 19th day of June, we reached Petersburg.

The Federal artillery was bombarding the city, and the solid shot and shell were crushing through the buildings.

The sounds that reverberated from their deserted halls were solemn and sad evidences of the destructiveness of men in the heat of war. Many families had been compelled to desert their homes and seek shelter in church buildings, barns and tents beyond the range of the great guns encircling the eastern side of the city. It was to all appearances a doomed city, and the soldiers felt that its rescue from total destruction depended upon their efforts and exertions.

Late in the afternoon we marched through the city, not with the gay air which marked our entry in 1862, but with the determined step of soldiers seasoned to hardships and ready to dare every danger for the dear people of Petersburg.

We were ordered in line in the earthworks on Wilcox's farm. These breastworks were through an open field, exposed to the hot sun, and the only shade-trees near were in a small graveyard, a few paces in

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the rear of the left of the line of our regiment, and there the field officers pitched their tents, and made the headquarters of the 61st Virginia Infantry Regiment over the graves of the dead.

A singular fatality prevailed in the army about this time, for which medical science failed to account. Many soldiers who could see in the daytime, became perfectly blind after dark, and required to be led whenever on a march at night. One of our companies had more night blind than those who could see in the night, therefore men had to be detailed from other companies to lead its blind.

The experience of these poor blind fellows caused many amusing incidents while on the march. When one stumbled there was sure to be a quarrel.

The cause of this blindness and how it passed away no one knew, but many believed it was brought on by sleeping in the open air with the eyes exposed to the moonlight, hence it was called "moon blind." If such had been the cause it would have prevailed more generally, for all slept more or less in the open air.

About half of a mile to our left the lines of the hostile armies came close together, and the artillerists and pickets were fighting day and night. At night the mortar shells were continually darting and flying through the air, and made a much grander display than some of our holiday fireworks. The shells often fell and exploded in the trenches, and in order to sleep securely the soldiers were compelled to dig caves and burrow in the ground, and for this reason,

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all along the breastwork was a perfect honeycomb of dens, caves and earth covered chambers.

The opposing pickets were near enough to converse with each other, though not permitted to show themselves above the pits on penalty of instant death. A private on one occasion was basking in the morning sunshine with one foot exposed above the earthwork and when asked what he was doing, replied: "I'm only fishing for a furlough." A hat on a stick would soon be perforated with bullets.

The Second Division of the Third Army Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia, under Major General William Mahone, made a brilliant record by its dashing achievements during the eventful campaign of 1864. So frequent and rapid were its movements that the soldiers named it Mahone's Foot Cavalry Division.

It was composed of one brigade from each of the states of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Virginia, and about this date commanded respectively by Brigadier Generals Forney, Finnegan, Girardy, Harris and Weisiger, the latter not yet promoted.

The Confederate authorities appeared to be oblivious to the merits and qualifications of our little commander as a military leader, probably from the fact that he had not graduated at West Point.

Although he had acted as a Major General with great ability and success from May 6th, 1864, he was not promoted until July 30th, notwithstanding he was one of the oldest brigadiers in the Army of Northern Virginia. Yet late as it was, he soon won the admiration of the soldiers and the confidence of General

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Lee, and it was generally conceded that the mantle of Stonewall Jackson had not unworthily fallen on the shoulders of Mahone.

His foresight and dash were the great characteristics which gained for him the steady confidence of the soldiers he led in battle.

I believe there is no better criterion by which to judge the merits of an officer than by the opinion of the men whom he leads in battle.

They always admire those officers who display efficiency and courage, and entertain supreme contempt for cowards and blunderers.

LETTER NO. 35.

THE BATTLE OF JERUSALEM PLANK ROAD.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

On the 22nd day of June, 1864, Mahone's and Wilcox's Brigades were withdrawn from the earthworks and moved out to assault the Federals, who were extending their lines to their left. We marched across the open field in our front through a deep ravine to a thick woods, which covered our movements and prevented the enemy from observing us.

After reaching the woods, our column was faced to the left and formed in line of battle. Wilcox following, formed on our left, and advanced in eschelon, some time after we were in motion.

The order "forward" was given, and the men

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leaped a worm fence, which separated the farm from the woodland, and immediately struck the enemy's pickets. They fought in retreat very stubbornly, but we pressed forward as rapidly as possible through the undergrowth and bushes.

During this advance I picked up a new spade and took it along, as our pioneer corps was very much in need of such instruments. Our regiment, about the colors or center, struck the enemy's newly-made earthworks, and by wheeling the right half of the regiment to the left, we were at once in their front and rear, fighting hand to hand with bayonets, butts of muskets, swords and pistols. And now my spade came into unusual use. I saw a man with his musket to his shoulder, who had not yet realized that we had surrounded them, aiming at one of our men over in front of his works. I ran up and struck him a hard blow on the side of his head, forcing him to drop his rifle and surrender unconditionally. Now Wilcox charged up and captured the breastworks on our left with four pieces of artillery. This pell-mell fighting lasted only a short time before the blue coats surrendered and our people were in charge of their extended earthworks, facing on the reverse side.

The manœuvre was so secret and rapid that the Federals were almost completely surprised. They were caught enjoying their dinner, and we were just in time to share their hard tack, pork and beans, a rare treat for us.

Ashwell Curling, the gallant file leader of Company "A," 61st Virginia, which regiment I commanded, in the absence of our wounded colonel, was

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shot through the head and instantly killed, falling very near me, just as the right of the regiment was wheeling around the earthworks.

John Wills of the 16th Virginia regiment, who was mortally wounded, offered Phillip Miller, one of our ambulance corps, twelve dollars in gold to take him off the field, but Phillip, true to his orders, told him it was his first duty to take off the wounded of his own regiment, after which he would return for him, but could not under any circumstances accept his money. Phillip, faithful to his promise, did return, but found poor Wills dead.

After the works were captured, we reformed the regiment, and were advancing again, when one of our batteries, on the main line of our breastworks, opened fire upon us, compelling us to fall back to the captured line. We then moved to the right flank to receive the enemy, who seemed about to attempt to retake his line; but he did not approach near enough for another hand to hand fight.

About night we were moved back to the left and re-occupied the works we had first captured. The enemy opened on us with infantry and artillery fire, but could not dispossess us.

The prisoners captured numbered 2200, more men than we had in the battle, 1500 small arms, ten stand of colors and a battery of four Blakely guns. On this field I secured a fine riding equipment from an officer's horse, which had been killed in the charge. The finely covered McClellan saddle served me through the war and was used many years after its end.

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General Grant in his report to Halleck, dated City Point, June 23rd, 1864, says: "Yesterday and this morning have been consumed in extending our lines to the left to envelop Petersburg. The second and sixth corps are now West of the Jerusalem Plank Road. Yesterday, in moving to this position, the two corps became separated. The enemy pushed between them and caused some confusion in the left of the second corps, and captured four pieces of artillery. Order was soon restored and the enemy pushed back." But in his dispatch of June 24th, he says: "I find the affair of the 22nd was much worse than I had heretofore learned. Our losses (nearly all captures) were not far from 2000 and four pieces of artillery. The affair was a stampede and surprise to both parties, and ought to have been turned in our favor."

General Grant was evidently misinformed about pushing us back, for we were not pushed an inch, nor were we in any manner surprised; for we went out and made the attack, pushing them all the time until we captured their earthworks, and would have pushed them further, if our artillery had not by mistake opened upon us on our flank and rear. General Warren of the Fifth Federal Corps reported that the "Second Corps had a bad fight. Got flanked and lost 2300 prisoners and four cannon."

Captain George F. McKnight, commanding the 12th New York Independent Battery, said: "Four three-inch rifled guns, four ammunition chests, and three limbers lost."

About ten o'clock at night after all our trophies had

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been removed to our rear, we evacuated the position from which we had with ball and bayonets driven the enemy, and marched back to our place on the line of our fortifications.

General William Mahone, in person, with two small brigades, directed this assault upon the enemy's works.

The manœuvre was brilliant and successful in every respect. The next day, June 23rd, the enemy made another demonstration and we had to march out again against him, and of this movement General A. P. Hill reported to General Lee that: "Mahone had better luck than I reported to you last night. After I had left him he caused Perry's little brigade to make a detour, and 600 prisoners, including twenty-eight officers, is the result. Mahone's men have been without sleep now two nights."

LETTER NO. 36.

THE CHARGE OF THE CRATER.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

As the wild waves of time rush on our thoughts now and then run back over the rough billows to buried hopes and unfulfilled anticipations, and often we linger long and lovingly, as if standing beside the tomb of a cherished parent. Like this, the faithful follower of the Southern Cross recalls the proud hopes which sustained him on long and weary marches and

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in bloody battles. These foot-sore marches and hard contested fields are now bright jewels in his life, around which the tenderest cords of his heart are closely entwined. They are monuments to duty! They are sacred resting places for his baffled energies! They are rich mines from which the humblest actor gathers the wealth of an approving conscience! He hears no peons from a grateful country—no national bounty rolls bear his name—yet his faithful military services to his buried nation are as sweet choristers ever chanting priceless praise for the zeal and manhood with which he faced his foe. The veteran of a hundred fields always points with greater pride to one victory as the crowning glory of the ninety and nine other battles. So, the soldiers of Mahone's Brigade look upon their victory at the "Crater."

My little fly tent, which was a trophy of war, scarcely large enough for two persons to rest comfortably, lying side by side, was stretched over a platform of rough boards, elevated about two feet from the ground, in that little grave yard on the Wilcox farm near Petersburg.

I was quietly sleeping under this little shelter, dreaming perhaps of home and all its dear associations (for only a soldier can fully appreciate these), when a deep rumbling sound, that seemed to rend the very earth in twain, startled me from my sleep, and in an instant I beheld a mountain of curling smoke ascending towards the heavens, on the left of our lines. The whole camp had been suddenly aroused, and all were wondering about the mysterious explosion. It

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was the morning of Saturday, the 30th day of July, 1864.

The long talked of mine had been sprung, a battery blown up, and the enemy was in possession of our earthworks for a distance on both sides, and there was no force of infantry between him and the city. Two hundred cannon roared with one accord, as if every lanyard had been pulled by the same hand. The gray fog was floating over the fields, and darkness covered the face of the earth, but the first bright streak of dawn was gently lifting the curtain of night. The fiery crests of the battlements shone out to our left and the nitrous vapors rose in huge billows from each line of battle, and sweeping together formed one vast range of gloom.

The sun rose brilliantly, and the great artillery duel still raged in all its grandeur and fury. An occasional shell from a Blakely gun would swoop down in our camp and ricochet down the line of breastworks to our right. This unwelcome messenger made us hug closely the traverses for protection from the flank fire. Soon after, "Captain" Tom Bernard, General Mahone's courier, came sweeping up on his white charger to brigade headquarters. Then the drums commenced rolling off the signals, which were followed by "fall in" and hurried roll calls. We were required to drive back the Federals, who were then holding our earthworks and within the very gates of the city of Petersburg.

It was startling news! The men were ordered to fall back in scattered squads as if going to the spring in the corn field, so as to keep the enemy from noticing

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our withdrawal from the breastworks, which left them entirely unprotected. While we were forming in line in the corn field, General Lee and Colonel Taylor rode up. General Lee spoke with General Mahone, doubtless giving him orders, and then rode off.

Wright's Georgia Brigade, commanded by Lieut. Col. Hall, and our Virginia Brigade, which numbered scarcely 800 muskets, constituted the force detailed to dislodge the enemy, who held the broken lines with many thousands, and these were supported by many more, probably all told outnumbering the whole of Lee's army. I remember the 61st regiment, which I commanded, did not exceed two hundred men, including officers and privates, and I am quite sure it was the strongest in the brigade. The odds were appalling! I suppose we had marched the half of a mile when we were halted in an apple orchard and the men ordered to strip off all luggage except ammunition and rifles. A few of the sickly men were detailed to watch this luggage, and then we knew hot work was near. We then filed to the left a short distance to go to the banks of a small stream, called Lieutenant Run, down which we could march and be protected by the high bank from the batteries of the enemy. The hills along this stream were not more than four hundred yards from the advanced columns of the enemy and he was already making dispositions to capture these hills, for they were the very keys to the invested city. When nearly opposite the portion of our works held by the enemy, we met several soldiers who were in the works at the time of the explosion. Our men commenced "guying" them for

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running to the rear, when one said: "Ah, boys, you have hot work ahead—they are 'niggers,' and show no quarter."

General Mahone said he saw one running to the rear, and he asked him what was the matter, and without stopping his gait, he replied: "Hell is busted back thar."

This report from the men passing us was the first intimation that we would have to fight negroes, and it seemed to infuse our little band with impetuous daring as it pressed forward to the fray. I never felt more like fighting in my life. Our comrades had been slaughtered in a most inhuman and brutal manner, and black slaves were trampling over their mangled and bleeding forms. Revenge must have fired every heart and strung every arm with nerves of steel for the herculean task of blood. We filed up a ditch, which had been dug for safe ingress and egress to and from the earthworks until we reached the vale between the elevation on which the captured breastworks were located, and the hills on the banks of the stream just mentioned—within two hundred yards of the enemy. In rear of the "Crater," nearer to us, there was a deep and wide ditch called the "Retrenched Cavalier," dug to protect parties carrying rations and ammunition to our troops in the earthworks. The embankment of the "Retrenched Cavalier" was thrown up high enough to overlook the main line of earthworks, and between these two lines the garrisons had dug numerous caverns, pits and bombproofs for protection from the mortar shells

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while sleeping at night. They were cave dwellers, as it were, for the time.

The "Crater" excavation was a tremendous hole, and the fortifications on both sides for some distance, together with the ditch or "Retrenched Cavalier" were literally crammed with Federal troops, thousands upon thousands seemed to be there, and many banners were floating in the wind. I recollect counting seven flags in front of our regiment after we had deployed and were lying down in line of battle with fixed bayonets. As our men filed into this line of battle Mahone in person cautioned them to reserve their fire and not to shoot until they reached the brink of the ditch, and then after delivering one volley to use the bayonet.

The line of our brigade was adjusted and lying down, and the Georgians were going up the ravine and deploying on our right when General Mahone, discovering that the Federals were jumping out of the "Retrenched Cavalier" and advancing in a desultory line, shouted to his aid, Capt. Girardy, "Tell Weisegar to forward." Girardy rushed towards the right, where General Weisiger was, and with sword waiving above his head, repeated "FORWARD!" before he reached the right, and the whole brigade rose and charged as grandly as on drill parade.

The enemy sent a storm of bullets into our ranks, and here and there a gallant fellow would fall, but the files closed up, still pressing onward, unwavering, into the jaws of death.

General Weisiger was wounded in the charge and the command of the brigade devolved upon Col. George T. Rogers, of the sixth regiment. The orders

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of Mahone were obeyed almost to the very letter, the brink of the "Retrenched Cavalier" was gained before a musket was discharged. The cry "no quarter" greeted us; the one volley responded, and the men, jumping in upon the enemy, plied the bayonet with such irresistible vigor as to give success in the shortest period of time possible. Men fell dead in heaps, and human gore ran in streams, which made the very earth mire beneath the tread of our victorious soldiers. The "Retrenched Cavalier" being ours, the men mounted the rugged embankment and hurled their foes from the front line up to the very mouth of the "Crater."

In the meantime the Georgia Brigade had charged, but were repulsed; soon after reforming in columns of regiments, again charged, but it was met by such a withering fire of shell and shot, that it again recoiled with heavy loss.

Our bloody work was all done so quickly that I have scarcely an idea of the time it required to accomplish it. Some said it was twenty minutes, but it must have been longer.

Mahone's Brigade captured fifteen battle-flags, and our regiment owned five of the seven that before the charge I had counted in its front.

You may ascertain how many men rallied to these captured flags that early morning by figures in the official reports published in the so-called "Rebellion Records."

In that supreme moment, when exulting over a great victory, as our eyes fell upon the bleeding comrades around us, our hearts sickened within, for more than

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half of our numbers are scattered, dead, dying and wounded, around us. Oh! the pity of war! It takes the best! One hundred and seventeen was the dead list of our brigade, and their names are now inscribed on a marble tablet set in the inner walls of old Blandford Church, near where they died so gloriously. The wonderful triumph had been won at the price of the blood of the bravest and best and truest in our ranks.

Old company "F" of Norfolk had carried in twelve men, all of whom were killed and wounded. The sixth regiment, to which it was attached, carried in 98 men, and mustered for duty ten after the battle. The battalion of sharpshooters went in with 80 men, and 16 were left for duty. Nearly half of our own regiment had fallen, and the 12th, 16th and 41st regiments had suffered in like proportion.

During the charge, about fifty yards from the "Retrenched cavalier," Captain John G. Wallace, of company "C," 61st Virginia regiment, was shot down with a broken thigh, but insistently refused to allow his men to take him from the field until the charge was over. I saw him lying on his back waiving his hat and heard him urging his men, "Go on, go forward!" It was splendid heroism!

Lieut. St. Julien Wilson, of the same company, was mortally wounded, and died next day. He was a young officer, generally admired for his conduct on the field and manly, Christian virtues in life.

First Lieut. John T. West, of my old company "A," encountered two burly negroes at the brink of the ditch, and while parrying their bayonet thrusts with his sword, was bayoneted in his shoulder by one of his

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own men, too eager to assist him. Lieut. West, after Capt. Wallace, my successor, was killed, was promoted to captain, in which capacity he acted until the end; and after the war was for many years superintendent of the public schools of Norfolk county. His brother, LeRoy M. West, was in the charge with his blanket roll around his shoulders, when a bullet penetrated it, went through his gray jacket and cut out a little piece of flesh, which felt like the burning of a hot iron. When he unrolled the blanket he discovered that the bullet had made twenty-two holes in it. Privates Henry J. Butt, Jeremiah Casteen and D. A. Williams, of the same company, were instantly killed. Private John Shepherd, a noble soldier of Company "D," who followed me over the embankment of the "Retrenched Cavalier" to the front line of works, fell at my side, dead, just as he was stepping into the front trenches.

Capt. W. Scott Sykés, of company "F," 41st Virginia Regiment, was wounded in the shoulder while gallantly leading his company. Lieut. Col. Harry Williamson, of the sixth regiment, lost his arm. Capt. David H. Wright, of company "H," same regiment, was instantly killed at the head of his company. He had been promoted from the ranks to captaincy for gallant and meritorious conduct on the battlefield.

Judge C. W. Hill and John T. Hill, brothers, of Portsmouth, Va., belonging to the same regiment, were wounded almost at the same instant—the first through the left arm, which was afterwards amputated, and the latter through the wrist.

Major William H. Etheredge, commanding the 41st regiment, displayed great bravery and wonderful cool-

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ness in this fight, although he was always brave in danger. As he jumped into the "Retrenched Cavalier," a Federal in the front line fired through the traverse and killed a soldier at his side. The Federal immediately dropped his empty musket and snatched another from a cowering comrade to shoot Major Etheridge. At this moment the Major, with most remarkable self-possession, caught up two Federal soldiers who were crouching in the ditch, and held their heads together before him, swinging them to and fro to cover the aim of the musket, the Federal doing his best to get in his shot so as not to harm his comrades. The Major was a very athletic man, especially in his arms, so by his strength and cool determination he saved his own life. Peter Gibbs, seeing the danger of his officer, rushed up and shot the Federal dead. Gibbs was a dashing and daring soldier, and it was reported that he on that day slew fourteen men. Captain W. W. Broadbent, the gallant commander of the sharpshooters, was mercilessly murdered, his skull was broken in and almost every square inch of his body was perforated with bayonet stabs. He had charged up to the crest of the excavation, was pulled over into the hole and thus done to death.

Although our principal task was over, yet more heavy work remained to be done by others before our lines could be fully re-established. Brigadier-General Bartlett, and five hundred or more men were cooped up in the "Crater" and their capture was the crowning event of the bloody drama. Our wounded were sent to the field hospital as soon as possible, and after piling the enemy's dead on each side of the

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trenches, to make a pass-way, our ranks were closed up in proper order behind the front line of breast-works. General Mahone came in to observe the situation, and I went with him along the line to point out the conditions. He ordered us to keep up a sharp fire on the enemy's works in front, and also on the "Crater" to our right to prevent Bartlett's escape, as our position commanded the track his force would have to follow to get back to the Federal lines.

Mahone then went out to direct the charge of the Alabama Brigade. Soon after Captain George Clark, A. A. C., of the Alabama Brigade, came in to my position, and I explained to him the conditions as I had to Mahone a short time before.

General Mahone ordered the Alabama Brigade to form for the charge on the line of the same location from which we charged in the morning, only moving as far to the right as possible so as to cover the front of the excavation. He called the officers together and gave them specific directions as to what they should do, and as they were leaving his presence said: "General Lee is watching the result of your charge." General Lee, General Beauregard and others observed the progress of the battle from the Gee house across the Plank Road. The Alabamians made a grand charge under a terrible fire, reaching the crest of the "Crater" without faltering, and there a short, sharp struggle ensued. They threw bayoneted muskets, clubs, clods of earth and cannon balls into the excavation, and Major Haskel sent his little mortar shells in upon the heads of the enemy to help in the assault. This novel warfare lasted only a few minutes before Bartlett ordered

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up the white flag, and about five hundred prisoners were marched to our rear. The negroes among them were very much alarmed and vociferously implored for their lives.

One old corn field chap exclaimed: "My God, I nebber pint'd a gun at a white man in my life; dem nasty, stinkin' Yankees fotch us here, and I didn't want to cum fus."

The appearance of the rough, irregular "Crater" hole beggars description. It was at the time estimated that it contained 300 dead bodies. The importance of reconstructing this broken line of earthworks at once prevented the removal of the bodies; therefore, they were buried as they had fallen, in one great heap in the bottom. Spades were brought in, and the earth thrown from the sides of the excavation until they were covered a sufficient depth. By three o'clock in the afternoon all was over and we were settled in our works resting from active fighting, although the bullets still whistled over our heads.

The extreme heat of that July sun had already caused putrefaction to set in and the bodies in our front and rear, and especially the blood soaked earth in the trenches, exhaled such a nauseating smell that I was forced to abandon my supper, although I had not tasted a morsel since the previous night. It was simply awful! There were thousands of captured arms around us, and during the night some of our men would shoot ram-rods at the enemy just for the fun of hearing them whiz, whiz, seeeeee. One that was sent over drew from a Federal the exclamation: "Great

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God! Johnnie, you are throwing turkey spits and stringing us together over here! Stop it!"

Our position was in such close proximity to the enemy that the soldiers could talk to each other in loud tones, but no one could show his head above the earthworks without almost certain death. I picked up the Spenser rifle and the canteen shown in the picture with my pair of blankets in the trenches about noon of this day.

LETTER NO. 37.

SCENES AFTER THE BATTLE.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Next morning was a bright and beautiful Sabbath, and nothing startling occurred; both armies were in the earth pits, but the guns of the pickets flashed over the banks, and not a solitary soldier could be seen within rifle range.

Many hundreds of Federal dead were still on the field between the lines, putrefying under the scorching rays of the July sun. I saw a negro, with both legs blown off, drag himself with his hands to the outside of our earth works, and by sticking three muskets with bayonets in the ground and throwing a small piece of tent cloth over them, improvise a shelter to protect his head from the blistering sun. A pitiful scene! After a while in response to his pleadings some of our men managed to shove a cup of water to him. He eagerly swallowed it and then commenced foaming at

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the mouth and died. He had lived with his terrible wounds nearly twenty-four hours, and death was relief from agony.

A correspondent of one of the New York daily papers, writing a description of this battle from reports of wounded Federal officers, who arrived in Washington, D. C., on the second of August, 1864, says: "Often have the Confederates won encomiums for valor, but never before did they fight with such uncontrollable desperation. It appeared as if our troops were at their mercy, standing helpless or running in terror and shot down like dogs. No such scenes have been witnessed in any battle of the war. The charge of the enemy against the negro troops was terrific. With fearful yells they rushed down against them. The negroes at once ran back, breaking through the line of white troops in the rear. Again and again their officers tried to rally them. Words and blows were useless. They were victims of an uncontrollable terror, and human agency could not stop them."

On Monday morning a truce was granted and the Federals sent out details of men to bury their dead who had fallen between the lines or been thrown over to clear out our ditch.

Before the flag of truce was recognized not a human being could be seen above the ground within cannon shot, but as soon as the officers of the opposing armies met under the white flag, men like magic sprung up out of the ground, numbering tens of thousands; and the ramparts on both sides were lined with rows of men.

They swarmed together like bees, mingling as neigh-

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bors and talking as sociably as life long friends. It was surely an impressive scene to witness two armies, which had been fighting to the death an hour before, spring out of the earth and come together in such a friendly manner over the burial of the dead. If these grim soldiers had been given authority doubtless peace would have been declared on that Monday morning.

The spademen dug a long ditch about one hundred feet long and placed the dead bodies crosswise, several layers up. It was estimated that 300 white and black soldiers were put in and then the ditch filled. This long grave was just half way between the lines, and in filling it they rounded up a ridge, but General Mahone observing that this might be utilized as a breastwork for an advancing column, ordered it leveled even with the ground around, and this ended the tragic scenes in and around the "Crater."

The following congratulatory orders from Lieut. General A. P. Hill and Major General William Mahone were promulgated soon after the battle:

"HEADQUARTERS THIRD ARMY CORPS, AUGUST 4, 1864.

"GENERAL ORDER No. 17:

"Anderson's Division, commanded by Brigadier General Mahone, so distinguished itself by its successes during the present campaign as to merit the special mention of the corps commander, and he tenders to the division, its officers and men his thanks for the gallantry displayed by them whether attacking or attacked. Thirty-one stands of colors, fifteen pieces of artillery, and four thousand prisoners are the proud

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mementoes which signalize its valor and entitle it to the admiration and gratitude of our country.

“A. P. HILL.”

“HEADQUARTERS OF ANDERSON’S DIVISION,
AUGUST 6, 1864.

“GENERAL ORDER No. —.

“I. The glorious conduct of the three brigades of the division, Wilcox’s, Mahone’s and Wright’s, and especially the first two employed on the 30th of July, in the expulsion of the enemy from his front, and the magnificent results achieved in the execution of the work, devolves upon the undersigned the ever pleasing office of rendering his thanks and congratulations. The immortalized Beauregard has praised you. Your corps and army commanders have expressed their gratitude for your invaluable services on this occasion and their admiration of the splendid manner in which your duty was approached and performed. The enemy had sprung his first mine in the new plan by which he now seeks to penetrate our lines; he had gained possession of the Crater and of contiguous works; he had previously massed three corps and two divisions of another to prosecute his anticipated success, and he had now given the order for the advance of his crowded line, but fortunately for the “hour,” you had made the ground. With the tread of veterans and the determination of men, you charged the works upon which he had planted his hated flag.

“The integrity of the whole line was by your valor promptly re-established, and the enemy’s grand effort to penetrate our rear signally defeated, and the results

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achieved unparalleled in the history of war, when compared to your strength and the losses you sustained.

“With less than a force of three thousand men and a casualty of 498, you killed seven hundred of his people, and by his own account wounded 3,000. You captured 1,101 prisoners, embracing 87 officers, 17 stands of colors, two guidons, 1,960 stands of small arms. These are the results of the noble work which you performed, and which entitles your banner-scroll of honorable deeds to the inscription:

“The Crater, Petersburg, 30th July, 1864.”

“II. While thus we have so much cause for congratulations and pleasure. let us never forget the memory of the noble spirits who fell in the glorious work, whose consummation we were spared to establish and commemorate.

“WILLIAM MAHONE,
“Brigadier General.”

On the second day of August, President Davis informed General Lee: “Have ordered the promotion of General Mahone to date from the day of his memorable service, 30th July.”

LETTER NO. 38.

THE BATTLE OF WELDON RAILROAD.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Around the beleaguered city of Petersburg affairs assumed their wonted routine after the battle of the

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Crater. The engineer corps still worked on counter mines, and Grant told his people if the Confederates should penetrate under his lines not to intercept them, but have a strong second line of battle, in order that he might trap the charging force, if we should undertake a plan like Burnside.

He did not care about his men being blown up, if he could slaughter more Confederates, than they could Federals, for brute force was his only hope of conquering the South.

The pickets, nearest the city where the lines were close, kept up a fierce contest day and night, allowing no one on either side to come in sight out of the ground, and during the early evening the mortar batteries continued to make their fire balls track the heavens, sparkling and flashing like a thousand dazzling meteors darting through the skies.

The troops which had won such praise from Robert E. Lee for their grand charge on the Crater as, "Every man in it has to-day made himself a hero," were relieved on the following Wednesday from the position in the earthworks they regained from the enemy on that memorable occasion.

Mahone's old brigade re-occupied its former position on Wilcox farm. This was out of range of shot and shell, except a long range Blakely gun which sometimes threw its missiles along our works, having an enfilading range upon us.

The pickets in our front oftentimes had friendly intercourse with the Federals, and swapped "backer" for "grub." A plug of good tobacco would bring a haversack loaded with good rations, and these traders

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were so sly about it that it was hard to catch them on their "underground" trips.

On the 16th of August our brigade relieved Harris' Mississippi brigade, at Battery No. 33, on our left, as Harris had been ordered to the north side of James river to meet an advance of the enemy, on the extreme left of the Army of Northern Virginia.

General Grant, the commander-in-chief of the United States Army, having failed in an effort to turn or pierce our left, suddenly pushed Warren's corps forward on the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad. He very naturally supposing that General Lee had sent all the force he could spare from the south side of the Appomattox River to resist his effort to get into Richmond by breaking through our extreme left. General Grant had already made one or two disastrous efforts to get possession of the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad.

General Warren struck the railroad about opposite the Gurley House, and then moved up to the Yellow Tavern, where he sat down and began to throw up fortifications, having there been confronted by two brigades of General Harry Heth's Division, which Lieut. Gen. A. P. Hill had hurried out to meet and to arrest the advance. The front thus formed by the two brigades of General Heth's Division was two miles in advance of the earthworks guarding Petersburg. The Federal forces had only extended their lines a little south of the Jerusalem Plank Road. They undertook to extend them further, but were driven back by Mahone on the 22nd of June.

There was then between this position of General

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Warren on the Petersburg and Weldon Railroad, and the left of the main line of the Federal army a considerable distance, which it was not reasonable to suppose had been covered by anything more than a picket line. It was all woodland and thickly set with undergrowth. General Mahone with quick foresight at once comprehended the situation, and suggested to General A. P. Hill on the morning following General Warren's lodgment on the railroad, that Warren could be easily surprised and dislodged by a bold dash upon his right flank. Three brigades of Mahone's division, the Mississippi, Florida and Georgia brigades, had not yet returned from the extreme left of our army, whither they had been sent to arrest the Federal attack on the flank before mentioned. This left only the Alabama and Virginia brigades in the trenches. Shortly after this suggestion was made by Mahone, Hill informed him that General Beauregard desired that he should attack Warren on the plan proposed, and that General Beauregard would send him two brigades of Hoke's Division, which, with one of his own, that being all the available force, would constitute the attacking column. General Mahone strenuously urged more force, for it was plain to be seen that the success of the enterprise could not be pushed against such odds, to that completeness which lay open. It was known that General Warren's whole corps was there certainly, and it turned out that a part of General Burnside's corps was also there.

Three depleted brigades were hardly sufficient to take care of such a small army in itself, no matter

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at what disadvantage we should take them. But no larger force could be spared, so our daring commander, grappling the circumstances with his clear head and master mind, made the attack with Clingman's North Carolina and Colquitt's Georgia brigades of Hoke's division, and his own Virginia brigade, commanded by General Weisiger.

The column was formed just in rear of the earthworks, near division headquarters, out of the enemy's view, and then it moved up a deep ravine which ran across the open field in our front, thereby keeping out of sight until protected by the woodland. When in the woods we marched a short distance to the left of the enemy's rear line, confronting General Heth, held by Mott's division of Warren's corps, occupying two lines across the railroad, then we were thrown in line of battle and moved forward during a rain storm, which made marching through the bushes very disagreeable, but our soldiers pressed on, hastily gathering and eating ripe whortleberries, that were plentiful along the route. We rushed on the enemy's videtts, captured their cooking dinner of pork and beans, and passing beyond this picket line without returning their fire, the column was formed in battle array, Clingman and Colquitt in front with the Virginia brigade in support.

General Mahone being a fine civil engineer and perfectly acquainted with the country, well knew that we were now full in rear of the enemy's line, confronting General Heth, and on the flank of Mott's position at the Yellow Tavern, and that a line drawn perpendicular to the line of our attacking force at its

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center would pass through the Federal headquarters at the old Tavern.

Our line moved quickly and steadily to the front, and it was not long before it encountered a skirmish line, which the enemy had thrown back, manifestly out of precaution as a cover to his line confronting Heth.

The firing which followed disclosed to Mott that we were in his rear, and soon his people were falling into the hands of Colquitt's and Clingman's brigades, until in fact, they were, with the exception of a small portion of Colquitt's left, overwhelmed with prisoners, of whom 2250 were taken.

Warren had now drawn his cannon out of their position and turned them upon us; and it was now that we had arrived at that point in the enterprise when its consummation was capable of completeness. So perfectly had been the surprise, that four brigades might possibly have done the work, certainly five would have effected it, but our Virginia Brigade was all that was left. This brigade pressed to the left front and boldly held the large force now confronting it, which was reinforced by two brigades of Burnside's division, until Clingman and Colquitt could harvest all that could be gathered, and then retired.

The Virginia brigade was in an exposed and most desperate situation. It was cut off from the other brigades and faced the enemy's fire on three sides, but held its ground with stubborn valor. It was in what seemed to be the "last ditch." As soon as General Mahone learned the situation, he ordered the brigade to retire, which was promptly and orderly

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executed. The position was one of the most perilous the old brigade ever held during the war.

During the battle Major Starke of A. P. Hill's staff was sent by General Mahone to ask Heth to extend his left to a junction with him, and while on his way was captured by a squad of the enemy. Major Duncan of Mahone's staff, who happened to be on the same route, which was over the ground we had just passed, rallied a few of our stragglers, and captured the whole party, thus releasing Major Starke.

The capture of Colonel Wm. Ross Hartshorne, commanding a Pennsylvania brigade by Robert R. Henry, the gallant division courier, was a dashing feat worthy of record.

General Mahone sent Henry to find General A. P. Hill and request him to direct General Heth to form a junction with him. Henry rode down a cart path, in the direction in which he supposed General Hill to be.

The road ran through a dense thicket of undergrowth, which was impossible to penetrate on horseback, but he soon came to a large clearing, and there saw, not more than one hundred and fifty yards away, what seemed to be two batteries of artillery, supported by infantry with a train of ambulances. The artillerymen were whipping their horses and otherwise urging them to pull the guns through the mud, on the up-grade.

Henry seeing that he would be captured if he attempted to cross their path, turned back to report the situation to his general. When he had gone back to a sharp turn in the path about one hundred yards

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from the place he left General Mahone, he suddenly came upon a Federal officer and another mounted man. They seemed to be bewildered, evidently lost. The surprise was mutual, but Henry had the most nerve, and drawing his Remington revolver; demanded their surrender, which they did without even attempting to draw their arms.

Henry had recently captured the pistol at the "Crater," and it was not in order to shoot, but answered the purpose on this occasion. He kept close behind his captives, shouting all the time to them to "go faster" until he got to a little clearing, where he found General Mahone. He reported the reason for his failure to find General Hill, and after disarming his prisoners, General Mahone directed him to take them to division headquarters, which he promptly executed, and soon returned mounted on General Hartshorne's horse. Henry was highly complimented by General Mahone for this action. He was a gallant young Virginian, enlisting as a school boy before he was sixteen years of age, and served through the war as a private, although richly meriting a commission by gallant conduct on the field of battle.

He was detailed as division courier by Major General R. H. Anderson, after the battle of Fredericksburg, and as such often put regiments and brigades into battles and withdrew them on the orders of the division commanders.

He had a horse shot under him at Gettysburg, another at the Wilderness, one at Spottsylvania, and three around Petersburg, including the one captured

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from General Hartshorne, two of them being wounded twice. He, himself, was wounded several times and so severely at Burgess Mill on October 27th, 1864, as to be unable to return to the service.

Henry like many other boys was afraid the war would be over before they could get in it, but afterwards thought it would never be over, and peace seemed like a vision of glory as far away as the stars at night.

Gen. Thomas L. Clingman was wounded while leading his gallant North Carolinians in the charge.

General Lee in his report to the Secretary of War says: "General Hill attacked the enemy's fifth corps yesterday afternoon at Davis house, three miles from Petersburg on the Weldon Railroad. Defeated and captured 2700 prisoners, including one brigadier general and several field officers."

Our sixty-first regiment was for some time subjected to a terrible flank fire from Burnside's troops, which occupied elevated ground, while we were located in a ravine below. Out of less than 200 rank and file seventy-seven were killed, wounded and missing. Although General Hill was commander of the corps, he entrusted the management of this affair to General Mahone, and this triumph over overwhelming odds was secured by Mahone's matchless management of his troops, confirming the fact that he was possessed of a mind with each and every qualification of a dashing and successful leader. With the force of a division at his command no doubt he would have captured Warren and all of his people, and repossessed the Weldon Railroad.

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This was but one of many occasions where a telling blow was not given for the want of a few brigades at the right time, and no one regretted more than Mahone the loss of this splendid opportunity, but he well appreciated that the troops under his command could do no more.

LETTER NO. 39.

WILLIAM CURTIS WALLACE.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Captain William Curtis Wallace of Company "A," 61st regiment, an efficient officer and noble man, received his death wounds in the battle of the Weldon Railroad. He was captured where he fell and removed by the enemy to the field hospital and there died on the 22nd of August, 1864.

Dr. W. N. White, the Federal surgeon in charge, wrote in a memorandum book, which the Doctor found in the wounded soldier's pocket, the following note: "Capt. Wallace was wounded August 19th in both legs—left limb in the knee—right limb much shattered. When brought to the hospital was much prostrated by the shock. After administering stimulants, limb was amputated on the 20th. He commenced sinking about twelve hours afterwards and died on the 22nd. In him I found the elements of true manhood and regretted his fate. I will forward his pocket-book and other effects, which may be valued as souvenirs by his friends."

(signed) W. N. WHITE,
Surg. 1st Div. 9th Army Corps."

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My schoolmate, my comrade, my friend, my kinsman, Captain Wallace, was buried near the battlefield in the Federal Cemetery near Petersburg. The pocket-book and other effects sent by Dr. White were gratefully received by his family. Dr. White's kindness of heart, as expressed in his note, cannot fail to draw feelings of gratitude from every friend of the noble young hero, whose memory is still enshrined in many bleeding hearts.

Long after the war, I ascertained from the War Department the address of Dr. White and wrote asking him for the particulars of my comrade's death. He promptly answered, saying: "The moment I saw him I was attracted towards him. He was fatally wounded, and all recognized the results, which he accepted with greatest calmness. The thoughts which seemed uppermost in his mind were, had he done his duty, and that he fell in a battle for right. He was very appreciative of all we tried to do for him, was wholly uncomplaining, and perfectly resigned. As occasion permitted, I sat by him from time to time during that night and next day. He spoke very affectionately of his family, and took from his pocket the Bible that his mother had given him, and gave it to me with his personal effects, asking me to send them to his relatives within our lines. As he did so, he gave such a look of grateful confidence and assurance that I would do it that I could not have violated my promise to him, even in keeping it I had lost my right arm.

I have always felt the effect for good of this occasion. Such an object lesson of devotion to one's con-

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viction of what is right, even to giving up one's life without a murmur or regret, is patriotism of the highest order that can be conceived. No blood richer in all that makes a man noble ever mingled with the soil of Virginia than that of Captain William Curtis Wallace."

What an eulogy! Such a tribute from a foeman is like precious ointment to the soul of man.

True, indeed, Wallace possessed all the elements of splendid manhood—brave, yet gentle and affectionate in disposition as a woman, and pure in heart as a Christian martyr:

"And such is human life, so gliding on,
It glimmers like a meteor, and is gone."

But a life so pure and spotless as this leaves a living light to guide eternal ages.

Captain Wallace was born at "Glencoe" in Pleasant Grove Magisterial District of Norfolk County, Va., on the 23rd of March, 1842, and consequently was only a few months over twenty-two years of age when he fell.

He graduated at Hampden-Sidney College at the age of 19 years, receiving the degree of A. B. He was awarded the senior orator's medal, and was during his last session one of the editors of the college magazine.

While commanding a gun's crew in the casemate during the engagement between the "Virginia" and "Congress," he received a slight wound from the fragment of a shell which entered and exploded on

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the breach of his cannon. Though engaged in nearly every battle of his regiment, he escaped with this exception until the fatal wounds of the 19th of August, when he, one of the truest men who ever filled a soldier's grave, went down with two mortal wounds.

Captain J. B. Riddick, a gallant soldier of the sixteenth regiment, was wounded in his side, and Lieut. J. Thompson Baird, a soldier as brave as a lion, lost his leg while leading the old company once so grandly led by the chivalrous Barraud.

After the war Lieutenant Baird returned to his home in Portsmouth, Va., where his upright manhood bound him close to the hearts of the people, who many times re-elected him to the chief magistracy of the city, and he died in office with fidelity as high and true as his valorous conduct on the battlefield, which he sealed with his blood.

LETTER NO. 40.

REAMS STATION BATTLE.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Although we were frequently on the move and our men constantly fighting on picket duty, we were not again in a pitched battle until the 25th of August.

Hancock was a hard fighter and seemed to handle his men better than any other Federal general with whom we came in contact during the eventful cam-

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paign of 1864, in fact I have regarded him as the best general officer among all who fought against us during the four years of war, and I think he had a higher conception of the usages of civilized warfare than any of their statesmen or generals, except McClellan, who ordered his army to observe them strictly. While Warren was fighting for the Weldon Railroad, Hancock was on the north side of the James opposing Longstreet, but Grant ordered him to return on the 21st of August to the lines before Petersburg, arriving there he was hastened to his left in rear of the position occupied by Warren, where he arrived the same afternoon.

The next day he engaged in destroying the railroad. When our forces appeared on the scene, Hancock concentrated his whole force behind breastworks at Reams Station.

Gen. A. P. Hill made an assault upon these lines about two o'clock in the afternoon, the first unsuccessful, but the second assault carried Hancock's whole line.

Cook's and MacRae's North Carolinians under General Heth, and Lane's North Carolina Brigade under General Connor, with Pegram's artillery, composed the assaulting column.

Our Mahone's Old Brigade, arriving on the field as the second assault was going forward, were thrown in to support, assisting in driving and holding the captured works of the enemy.

Hampton's cavalry with great gallantry carried one line of breastworks, contributing largely to the success of the day.

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On our supporting charge, I halted several of my infantrymen to turn captured guns upon the retreating enemy, but inexperienced with field artillery, the first shell took off the limb of a tree high over the heads of Hancock's fleeing soldiers; however, the next shot had good range and we helped greatly in the closing fight. We were moved from left to right and put behind the railroad bank and desultory firing was kept up some time after dark. The fruits of this victory of the North Carolinians were 12 stands of colors, 9 pieces of artillery, 10 caissons, 2150 prisoners, 3100 small arms and 22 horses. General Hill's loss in cavalry, artillery and infantry was 750.

Hancock was very much disheartened by this signal defeat, and his biographer says: "Hancock had seen his troops fail in their attempts to carry entrenched positions of the enemy, but he had never before had the mortification of seeing them driven, and his lines and guns taken, as on this occasion; and never before had he seen his men fail to respond to the utmost, when he called upon them, personally, for a supreme effort; nor had he ever before ridden toward an enemy, followed by a beggarly array of a few hundred stragglers, who had been gathered together and pushed towards the enemy. He could no longer conceal from himself that his once mighty corps retained but the shadow of its former strength and vigor. * * * 'I do not care to die,' cried Hancock, 'but I pray God I may never leave this field.' The agony of that day never passed away from the proud soldier."

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LETTER NO. 41.

THE BATTLE OF BURGESS' MILL.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

The various contests between Lee's right wing and Grant's left lost to the latter four times as many men, but what mattered that to a general whose policy was to destroy the life of the Confederacy by virtue of his overwhelming numbers without regard to loss of life on his side, for he knew he could supply their places fourfold by recruiting from every nation of the globe, while the South had no more men to bear arms, and every one killed or made prisoner was an irretrievable loss.

Although many of our men succumbed to the terrible strain of constant movements and fighting, the body of our troops stood up like the Roman legions, standing fast in faith, always acquitting like men, strong under all conditions. A Federal officer of a New Jersey regiment, describing a charge upon his regiment after a front line had been broken and rallied behind him, said: "An ominous silence ensued for a moment, when suddenly the dense woods in our front became alive with rebels, who came at double quick, shouting and yelling like so many fiends, firing as they advanced." * * * "The spiteful buzz of the bullets, the shriek of the solid shot, and the fierce tearing whirr of the cannister were enough to terrify brave hearts and older heads."

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Then he goes on to tell how his regiment bore the shock and in turn charged the enemy.

He said the rebels who made the charge were Donovan's and Mahone's Brigades of rebel cavalry (dismounted).

Mahone's men were infantry, but they had to move so often and rapidly that they called themselves Mahone's foot cavalry.

A deserter from the 9th Florida regiment told the Federal General Sharpe, that he heard that some general told General Mahone that he could march his troops down to Reams Station three times a day, and that Mahone replied that he thought he could; that he would try it anyway. This was probably a "grape vine" story of the camp, but it was true that we were constantly going back and forth to meet the advances of the enemy on our right, and nearly every day we were under fire.

On the 27th of October, 1864, we were marched out to attack the enemy on the Boydton Plank Road, and General A. P. Hill reported to General Lee: "That the attack of General Heth on the Boydton Plank Road, mentioned in my dispatch last evening, was made by three brigades. General Mahone in front and Hampton in rear. Mahone captured 400 prisoners, 3 stands of colors, and six pieces of artillery. The latter could not be brought off, the enemy having possession of the bridge. In the attack subsequently made by the enemy, General Mahone broke three lines of battle, and during the night the enemy retired from the Boydton Plank Road, leaving his wounded and more than 250 dead on the field."

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This fight was rather disastrous to our regiment. We charged through a thick woods. I could see only a very short distance down our line, and in consequence of being forced to penetrate the thick undergrowth, the men became much scattered. On reaching an open field, disordered groups charged on to a point probably midway the field, driving the enemy, then we were ordered to fall back on the woods line and reform.

Here it took considerable time to rally the men, for many had been lost in the thick woods. A number had verged too much to the left and were made prisoners. However, we held the line, thanks to Wade Hampton, who made an attack on the rear in time to prevent the enemy from closing in upon us, as we were now between two of his columns.

"Do you recollect, you and I charging the Yankees alone? We charged through the woods and drove the Yankees from a rail fence, and you and I coming out in the field ran ahead of our lines, thinking they were following, but our line stopped at the fence, and we found ourselves between two fires. I got behind a small persimmon tree and you remarked: 'Tom, let's get out of this,' and we ran back to our line." So wrote Private T. O. C. Murphy from his far-off home in Arkansas last year a short time before his death.

Before we got out of the woods a heavy rain storm came up and literally soaked us, and then marching through the bushes to the Plank Road made things worse. I was thoroughly chilled and had it not been

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for a drink from a captured canteen, I would have been forced to the hospital.

Some of our best soldiers were killed; among them Captain John Hobday, one of the most valuable officers of the regiment. He fell in the field ahead of the line, as Murphy says we were. A number of our men lost their way in the woods and were taken prisoners; so while the general battle was successful to the army, our regiment suffered from its unfortunate location in the advancing line of battle, because the men were ignorant of the surroundings and we had not been told of the direction of the enemy on our left.

This movement of Grant was said to be for the purpose of bolstering up Lincoln's political prospects, hoping a victory, which could be heralded throughout the North, would fire the hearts of his supporters, but it did not materialize as he wished.

LETTER NO. 42.

FIGHTING AND FASTING

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

Although generally our soldiers held to their faith like true Christians and uncomplainingly stood up under all conditions, some, not so long suffering, gave up and deserted to the enemy. General Lee ordered a special investigation to ascertain the cause of desertions in the face of the enemy, and his board con-

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cluded that it was on account of hunger more than anything else. Men who had been good fighters became disheartened from constant marching and fighting without sufficient food to satisfy the cravings of hunger, and besides exposed to all kinds of weather, with scant clothes and little shelter, and foreseeing the ultimate result, threw down their arms and went over to the enemy. Many stout hearts quailed under these circumstances, which had never faltered before, and made the fatal, despairing leap, which carried them down to disgrace.

It appeared to us all that death from starvation or bullets was only a short time before us. I felt that every move would bring my last fight, and I had no hope but of an honorable soldier's grave. After the Burgess Mill affair we marched back to the breastworks in front of Petersburg and resumed the routine duties, which were arduous enough without the frequent calls to meet the movements of the enemy on our right.

As the deserter told General Sharpe, Mahone's Division was completely tired out in marching backward and forward on the railroad.

On the night of October 30th, General Mahone sent out a detachment from the breastworks, which penetrated the enemy's picket line and swept it for the half of a mile, capturing 230 men and officers, without the loss of a man. I have forgotten the name of the officer who commanded the detachment in this most remarkable *coup de main*.

On November 11th we were relieved from the breastworks and sent to a position about half a mile

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from the Boydton Plank Road to put up winter quarters, where we were more convenient for arresting the extension of the enemy's lines.

On the 7th of December it was discovered that the enemy in heavy force was moving down the Jerusalem Plank Road.

General Wade Hampton threw his cavalry forces across his path and General A. P. Hill moved his infantry force through Dinwiddie county towards Belfield.

The enemy proceeded slowly and did not appear before Belfield until 3 o'clock in the afternoon of the ninth, when he made a feeble assault upon the troops of Col. Garnett, which, with the assistance of two batteries, easily repulsed him.

That night Generals Hill and Hampton made arrangements to attack the enemy early next morning.

Our brigade had made a forced march from our camp on the Boydton Plank Road, and were bivouacked in a church grove for the night of the ninth of December, 1864. Major Charles R. McAlpine and I pooled our blankets, and with an oil cloth underneath and one over our blankets, my "Cumberland blankets," with his, made our bed. We slept most delightfully, and were greatly astonished next morning when we peeped out to find our covering reinforced by about two inches of snow.

After our men cooked and partook of the very scant rations, which the wagons had brought up that night, we were deployed in line of battle and moved forward to strike the enemy, but found him in full retreat. A few scattering shots reached us and one

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bullet penetrated the haversack of my orderly, going through the loaf of bread which we had for dinner. Being unable to catch up with the flying enemy, we were marched back to our camp on the plank road.

Col. Groner having now entirely recovered from the wound which he received on the morning of May 12th, at Spottsylvania, returned to the regiment for duty, about the middle of December, having been absent on its account from that time except for a few days about the 19th of August, when he went in the fight on crutches, but finding the duties too arduous for his condition, was forced to return to the hospital.

I commanded the regiment in all the battles, engagements and skirmishes from the 12th of May to the 14th of December, except the battle on the 19th of August, so in turning over the command of the regiment I issued the following order :

“HEADQUARTERS 61ST VA. INFT., DEC. 14TH, 1864.

“GENERAL ORDER NO. 14:

“As the lieutenant colonel is about to relinquish command, he desires to express to the officers and men his heartfelt thanks for the uniform courtesy and prompt observance of all orders. He congratulates you on the noble part you have taken in the brilliant successes of the campaign. Besides participating in the capture of artillery, small arms and prisoners, eight battle flags are trophies of your prowess. Soldiers! These achievements have only been attained by a sad depletion in your ranks. Let the noble deeds of your fallen comrades and the oppressive slavery of your kinsmen stimulate you to renewed efforts in behalf of

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your afflicted country. Stand steady and firm by your tattered battle flag in the future as you have in the past, and soon an honorable peace with the independence of your country will be a glorious reward.

“WILLIAM H. STEWART,
“Lieut. Col. commanding.”

Alas! for the anticipation expressed in this, my last order! Only a few months remained before all our fondest hopes were blasted in defeat at Appomattox.

LETTER NO. 43.

THE HARDSHIPS OF HATCHER'S RUN.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

On the fifth of February, 1865, the enemy moved in strong force to Hatcher's Run, not many miles from our camp. Part of his infantry, with Gregg's cavalry, crossed and proceeded on the Vaughn Road—the infantry to Cat-tail Creek, the cavalry to Dinwiddie Court House, where its advance encountered a portion of our cavalry. In the afternoon parts of Hill's and Gordon's corps demonstrated against the enemy on the left of Hatcher's Run, near Armstrong's Mill, but finding him entrenched, withdrew after dark. On the morning of the sixth Pegram's Division moved out from camp to reconnoitre, one brigade moving near the Run and the other further to the right, and along the Vaughn Road. In these positions the brigades

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were vigorously attacked by both cavalry and infantry in heavy force.

Gordon's Division, commanded by Brigadier General Clement R. Evans, sent forward in support, formed on Pegram's left, charged and drove the enemy before it, but was finally forced by superior numbers to retire. It was readily reformed near the enemy's lines, and again advanced with spirit, while Pegram charged on the right. The enemy was again driven back, but General Pegram, who was riding immediately with his troops, being killed, and Col. Hoffman, commanding the brigade, severely wounded, a portion of the line was thrown in confusion. The battle was obstinately contested for several hours, when Mahone's Division arriving was put in position to fill a gap between Evans and Pegram.

The whole line advanced to the attack and drove the enemy in confusion to his works on the bank of the run. I distinctly remember as we formed in line of battle across a small farm patch, the enemy were driving Pegram's men pell-mell out of the woods, when we charged with a great yell and turned them to run like lightning through the woods for apparently a mile.

General Finnegan was in command of the division, as Mahone was absent, sick. In the charge through the woods our ranks were broken by the undergrowth and trees, and the men were so much scattered, I went up to the general and suggested a halt to reform our line, which he did, and then we moved forward in closed order to see the enemy seek shelter in his earth-works.

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The weather was terrible, and we had been marching and fighting all day without food.

We were now drawn back to straighten and adjust our line of battle, expecting an attack next day.

The men hastily threw up scant breastworks, not breastworks for such are supposed to be high enough to kneel behind; these were scarcely high enough to lie down behind, and as night was fast approaching our men made brush shelters to protect themselves as much as possible from rain, snow, hail and sleet, but no fires could be allowed in such close proximity to the enemy. During the evening the cooks brought to the men in line of battle a small pone of bread each, the first morsel since early morning; then these hungry soldiers wrapped their shivering frames in wet blankets and slept as best they could under the brush shelters on the frozen ground, while the pickets paced their beats in front to watch the enemy.

The morning broke clear, with long icicles hanging from the tree limbs, which bent under the burden like weeping willows, and the cold north wind was chilling and terrible to withstand. After daylight the soldiers were permitted to cut the sapling trees and build log fires, for they were almost at the freezing point. The men, shivering over these feeble fires, stood up the whole day like martyrs waiting for the enemy's attack. There was no activity in front until late in the afternoon, when the enemy opened fire upon us with artillery. Four soldiers of company "A," 61st Virginia Regiment, Sergeant Cincinatus A. Nash, Captain John T. West, late Superintendent of Public Schools in Norfolk County, Privates James E. Fulford and

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Abner G. Duncan, were standing in line behind one of these log fires. I suppose the enemy aimed at the smoke, as we were not in sight, when a shell came so near the head of the first that the wind knocked him down. Capt. West was severely wounded on the hip, the knee of Fulford was crushed and he fell forward in the fire, which severely burnt his hands and face before he could be pulled out, and he died from loss of blood on the litter before the bearers could reach the field hospital, and Duncan was seriously wounded on the ankle. Fulford had a thirty days' furlough in his pocket when he went in the battle. He was a volunteer for the war, and he volunteered to go into this battle, so he was a double Virginia volunteer soldier. And he fell, a hero of priceless fame!

These were times which tried men's souls and the most desperate days I ever experienced. General Lee tells the story of the sufferings of his men in a letter to the Secretary of War, dated February 8th, 1865, which you will find in Series 1, volume 46, page 1,209, "Rebellion Records," published by the U. S. Government: "All the disposable force of the right wing of the army has been operating against the enemy beyond Hatcher's Run since Sunday. Yesterday, the most inclement day of the winter, they had to be retained in line of battle, having been in the same condition the two previous days and nights. I regret to be obliged to state that under these circumstances, heightened by assaults and fire of the enemy, some of the men have been without meat for three days, and all were suffering from reduced rations and scant clothing, exposed to battle, cold, hail and sleet. I have directed

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Colonel Cole, chief commissary, who reports that he has not a pound of meat at his disposal, to visit Richmond and see if nothing can be done. If some change is not made and the commissary department reorganized, I apprehend dire results. The physical strength of the men, if their courage survives, must fail under such treatment. Our cavalry has to be dispersed for want of forage. Fitz Lee's and Lomax's Divisions are scattered because supplies cannot be transported where their services are required. I had to bring William H. F. Lee's Division forty miles Sunday night to get him in position. Taking these facts, in connection with the paucity of our numbers, you must not be surprised if calamity befalls us." Thus our great commander most truly describes the desperate condition of his troops owing to the neglect or incapacity of the commissary department.

The Secretary of War, John C. Breckinridge, sent the communication to the president for his perusal, and Mr. Davis returned it with the following endorsement: "This is too sad to be patiently considered, and cannot have occurred without criminal neglect or gross incapacity. Let supplies be had by purchase, or borrowing or other possible mode."

At the termination of this expedition we marched back to the tents, which we vacated to fight in the Hatcher's Run campaign. Notwithstanding General Lee's admonition to the authorities at Richmond, little meat came for our haversacks, but the fasting and fighting continued. We marched and fought on the right wing of the army until our brigade was only a skeleton both in its numbers and the physical condi-

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tion of the soldiers. We were truly sick at heart from the fearful losses which had blood-stained the many fields of Dinwiddie County, but at last we were ordered to the line of earthworks, which had been occupied by Pickett's Division, between the Appomattox and James Rivers, to recuperate.

I think it was about the seventh of March, 1865, we entered upon our duties on this line. There we inhabited holes and artificial caves which had been dug by Pickett's men to shield them from mortar shells while resting and sleeping, and we subsisted on one-fourth of a ration, devouring the occasional four ounces of fat pork raw, for fear of losing a drop of grease by cooking. Our condition here was almost Paradise compared with that on the south side of the Appomattox.

Major Robert Stiles, in his admirable book, "Four Years Under Marse Robert," comparing the safe and easy position in which the Richmond Howitzers were placed from June 20th, 1864, to April 2d, 1865, with part taken by Mahone's Division on the right of our army, says: "We were not responsible for being now, as it were, 'mustered out of service,' yet we could not repress a vague feeling that, somehow, we were not doing our full duty. Especially was this feeling intensified when, a few months later, Mahone's Division, which had been manning a very trying part of the Petersburg lines, was brought over between the Appomattox and the James to relieve Pickett's, which was sent north of the James. We thought we had before seen men with the marks of hard service upon them; but the appearance of this division of Mahone's,

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and particularly of Finnegan's Florida brigade, with which we happened to be most closely associated, made us realize, for the first time, what our comrades in the hottest Petersburg lines were undergoing.

"We were shocked at the condition, the complexion, the expression of the men, and of the officers, too, even the field officers; indeed, we could scarcely realize that the unwashed, uncombed, unfed and almost unclad creatures we saw were officers of rank and reputation in the army. It was a great pleasure, too, to note these gallant fellows, looking up and coming out, under the vastly improved conditions in which they found themselves."

I cannot allow unchallenged the "unwashed and uncombed" to apply to Mahone's brigade, although we were quite worn to a frazzle and looked forlorn, we certainly washed our faces and combed our hair every day when not actually fighting in line of battle; although our clothes were thin and our stomachs empty, we stood up to the end, and surrendered in closed ranks with loaded rifles at Appomattox.

When time permitted and a stream of water was near, our soldiers would strip their shirts from their backs, wash them and wait for them to dry in the sun to put them on again, as they had no other in the wardrobe; then you may understand that fighting in the trenches down in the earth day and night made their clothes stiff with stains and dirt hard to remove.

Hungry! Hungry! Hunger was the deepest deprivation in those last days of suffering and suspense.

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LETTER NO. 44.

OUR LAST VICTORY AND LAST MARCH.

MY DEAR NEPHEWS:

The Burmada Hundred lines were under fire from pickets and mortar shells day and night, but no assault was attempted by the enemy until April 1st, when in order to ascertain if we still occupied the earthworks, he made an assault upon our picket lines, capturing some of the pickets, but did not follow it up after finding we were still there.

The Army of Northern Virginia had been greatly reduced by the loss, wear and tear of the long campaign, and the lines stretched from below Richmond on the north side of the James River to Hatcher's run, away beyond Petersburg on the south side of the Appomattox; all told, thirty miles and more. The line of battle along our position was as thin as a skirmish line. Our men were deployed in the breastworks fifteen feet apart.

Grant had been preparing all winter for the spring campaign, and when April came he was ready with his embattled hosts to press the contest. He determined to use the greatest number of troops possible against us, and "to hammer continuously" until by "mere attrition," he would wear us out.

The heroic struggles of Lee's troops on the south side was unavailing and his right wing was pierced

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and driven back towards the Appomattox, forcing the abandonment of the old lines he had so long defended with unparalleled fortitude, and the last march of his army was begun on a bright April day.

About three o'clock in the morning of the third day of April, 1865, we were ordered to evacuate the earthworks and retreat towards Chesterfield Court House; there we halted to rest and then plodded onward we knew not where. I remember at one halt "the boys" searched a log crib on the edge of a field and captured a big rat. He was dressed and broiled for their breakfast. When we reached Amelia Court House, we were thrown in line of battle to meet Sheridan, but soon drove him off and resumed the retreat.

Our soldiers, rationless, hungry and fatigued with marching day and night, pressed forward as rapidly as possible, but thousands fell along the route from physical exhaustion and were captured by the enemy.

On the evening of the sixth of April, Mahone's division, being on the left wing of the army, moved by way of the High Bridge, where we were formed in line of battle to protect it; an artillery duel followed and there we spent the night sleeping on our arms. The enemy that afternoon had captured and burnt our wagons and all my personal effects went up in smoke. I regretted most the loss of my diary and underclothes, for it left me with only those on my back. Early in the morning the soldiers marched across the bridge and the field officers forded the river below on their horses. I remember the men looked very diminutive while walking over the railroad ties.

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We set fire to the bridge, and a barn containing a number of hogsheads of tobacco, near the river, and moved on. The enemy pressed us so closely that the fire on the bridge was extinguished by him and I understood that the Federal troops also crossed on the bridge.

After marching a few hours we were halted at Cumberland Church and formed in line of battle across the highway. Our right connected with another line of our troops, which extended towards Farmville, and our left, entirely unprotected, rested on a ravine; the church being a short distance in rear of the right of our regiment. It was my fortune to be assigned to the command of the division picket line, which was barely established before the hostile sharpshooters were advancing in our front, and the contest began, to continue hotly the livelong day.

The men in the line of battle hastily threw up an earthwork with bayonets and bare hands, which afforded scant protection from the duel that raged fiercely between the pickets.

The enemy's sharpshooters with globe-sight rifles had secured positions in trees across the field and were sighting our men on the line with dangerous results until my pickets charged forward and drove them further away.

The Rockbridge Artillery, Captain Archie Graham, was posted on our line of battle at the public road and rendered most valuable service the day long.

Robert E. Lee, Jr., son of Gen. Robert E. Lee, our commander-in-chief, was a private in this battery, which numbered among its privates many of the most

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distinguished sons of the Old Dominion. The right wing of our army had been crushed, the centre was now being broken, and the left wing only remained to fight with hope of success; and this day saw the last victory of the Army of Northern Virginia. In the afternoon my pickets on the left were forced back by a strong column of troops, which made a dashing charge to turn our left flank. The galling fire from my pickets impeded their charge, and their advance brigade halted for protection in a ravine only a short distance from the left flank of our crude earthworks. General Mahone, watching the movement, quickly sent me a regiment of Georgians from General "Tige" Anderson's brigade, and this held the enemy in check until the gallant Anderson with the rest of his brigade, swept around the left of our position, struck the enemy on his flank and captured, as reported at the time, a whole brigade with a stand of colors; but this does not agree with the reports of the enemy, although they admit defeat. I know a number of prisoners were captured and marched on to Appomattox.

The enemy, as we learn from their official reports, attributed the repulse "to the difficult nature of the ground" and "to the greatly superior force of the enemy," but neither was true. It was due to the metal of our men and the splendid manoeuvre directed by the dashing Mahone, and performed under his eyes.

It was by striking the enemy at the right time in the right place; the enemy having the odds and the vantage ground, but did not see it.

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As before said, Mahone was a fine civil engineer, and naturally his profession gave him advantage and knowledge in selecting the grounds for defense or attack, and with it he was quick to take in surroundings and conditions; he was also remarkably cool in times of excitement, which was another great trait for an officer in battle.

Many were brave enough to go to the last ditch, but too excited to command or direct the movements of troops in battle.

Mahone so often showed himself possessed of the necessary qualifications of a commander that he had the entire confidence of his men, and whenever he was away in time of battle they were always fearful of results, and although some may have hated him personally, they wanted him badly when the fight was going on.

I remember on one occasion when General Finnegan was in command, there were loud lamentations, but the brave old Irishman carried them through the charge like a master in war.

Mahone was a strict disciplinarian in camp and on the march, and this was not at all times agreeable to the men in the ranks, although it is the real safety of the army.

The muskets of the Army of Northern Virginia were generally without bayonets, and on a review you would see most of the brigades bayonetless, but when you noticed Mahone's brigade pass, every rifle held its keen, bright bayonet.

If a man lost or should throw away one, he was punished and furnished with another. It was not

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often that bayonets were needed in battle, in consequence, there was a general aversity to lugging them on the march, and if not strictly watched, soon whole regiments would be without them.

Now I have said we did not require bayonets often, but when we did, we wanted them badly.

Not only at the "Crater," but on several other occasions, we might have been whipped but for Mahone's bayonet discipline.

No official reports were made by the Confederate officers who commanded in this last victory of the Army of Northern Virginia, but it is reported by the Federal General Nelson A. Miles that: "April 7th at six a. m. marched from Sailor's Creek to Appomattox High Bridge. On our arrival at the point the skirmishers of the Second Division had crossed the river, but were being driven rapidly back toward the crossing by a heavy skirmish line of the enemy, which was advancing towards the river. I immediately deployed a strong skirmish line along the bank of the river to keep back that of the enemy, and as soon as my artillery could get up directed it to be opened upon the enemy at once. The order was promptly obeyed, both the batteries (Captain Clark's and Captain Dakin's) going quickly into position, and delivering a well directed fire; the effect was visible immediately in the rapid falling back of the enemy. My division followed the Second across the river at about 9 a. m. and marched to a point near the intersection of the Farmville Plank and the old stage roads, where the enemy was found in position behind breastworks. My division was placed in

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position under a severe fire of artillery from the enemy's works, the skirmish line being actively engaged. Careful observation induced the belief that we were opposite the extreme left flank of the enemy, and an extended skirmish line was therefore swung forward and to the left with a view of enveloping it. At the same time my division was moved to the right by the flank as far as the main road referred to, and preparations made for an attack. The Third Division kept up the connection by following the movement. The skirmish line swung forward until it struck that of the enemy, when three regiments of the First Brigade (the Eighty-first Pennsylvania Volunteers, Fifth New Hampshire and Second New York Artillery) were ordered to charge the left of the enemy's line. The charge was gallantly made, but was unsuccessful owing to the difficult nature of the ground, which was broken by numerous small and sharp ravines, over which the men were unable to move in order. While the regiments were falling back the enemy advanced over their works in pursuit, but were quickly driven back. A picket line was established, and the Second Division moved up and extended my line to the right, and the command bivouacked."

Col. Geo. W. Scott of the First Brigade, First Division, Second Corps, says: "April 7, moved at daylight with the division, closely following the retreating enemy; crossed the Appomattox at High Bridge, and, moving to the left of the railroad, passed to the north of Farmville, the Fifth New Hampshire being deployed as skirmishers and flankers. We struck the

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enemy near Cumberland Church, driving in his outpost. The brigade formed line of battle connecting on the left of the Third Brigade. The 26th Michigan and 140th Pennsylvania Volunteers were then advanced to our right and front as skirmishers; the 5th New Hampshire Volunteers having expended most of their ammunition upon the skirmish line, were now relieved by the 61st New York Volunteers.

About 3 p. m. the remainder of the brigade, 81st Pennsylvania Volunteers, Second New York Artillery, and six companies of the Fifth New Hampshire Volunteers were by direction of the general commanding the division, moved to the right, and here made a most gallant charge upon the enemy's works; but after repeated and persevering assaults, we were owing to the greatly superior force of the enemy, flanked and repulsed, my command at one time being within fifteen paces of the enemy's main works. In this charge we lost many brave officers and men killed and wounded, one color (Fifth N. H.), and a few men captured. The color was, however, recaptured at the surrender of Lee's army, and is now again in the possession of the regiment." You will observe that General Miles attributes his defeat to the "nature of the ground," and Colonel Scott to the "greatly superior force of the enemy." Neither statement is correct. The charging force of the enemy only drove in my pickets, but in doing so did get very near to the left of our line, and it was then that the Georgians charged them, captured the stand of colors and a number of prisoners. The enemy never attempted another advance that afternoon. The pris-

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oners were marched to Appomattox under guard and the color of the New Hampshire Regiment was not recaptured, but was given up as other military property not excluded by the terms of surrender.

Lieut. Col. W. A. Crafts, commanding the Fifth New Hampshire, said: "The colors advanced to within a very short distance of the enemy's works. The enemy throwing out a strong force upon their flank, the colors, with 52 men and 5 officers, were captured. During the day 110 men and 10 officers were lost."

Capt. F. R. Humphreys, commanding the Second New York Artillery, reported: "April 7 continued the advance; passed through Farmville; crossed the Danville Railroad at High Bridge, met the enemy entrenched in a double line of works. At about 3 p. m. charged with the brigade, and met with a repulse, resulting in the loss of 6 killed, 67 wounded and 74 missing. Lay in rear of the battlefield all night. April 8, passed through the enemy's works, they having quietly left during the night."

Major C. W. Shafer, commanding the 61st New York Infantry, reported that he lost in this affair two enlisted men killed and 24 wounded.

Capt. W. A. F. Stockton, commanding the 140th Pennsylvania Regiment Volunteers, reported: "One commissioned officer and three enlisted men killed, and one officer and 26 enlisted men taken prisoners."

Capt. L. H. Ives, commanding the 26th Michigan Volunteers, reported: "Five men killed and eight wounded, one officer and twelve enlisted men captured."

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General A. A. Humphreys, commanding the Second (Handcock's) Corps of Grant's army, reported: "Here he (Barlow) overtook the rear of the enemy just as they had fired the wagon road bridge and as the second span of the railroad bridge was burning. The wagon road bridge was secured—a matter of some importance, as the Appomattox was not fordable. A considerable force of the enemy was drawn up in a strong position on the heights of the opposite banks to oppose our passage, a position the strength of which the redoubts on the opposite side increased. Their skirmishers attempted to hold the bridge, but were quickly driven from it, and the troops crossed over, General Barlow's Division leading. Artillery was rapidly put in position to cover our attack, but the enemy moved off without waiting for it. The redoubt forming the bridge-head on the south bank was blown up as we approached and eight pieces of artillery in it, abandoned to us, as were ten pieces of artillery on the north side. High Bridge was saved, chiefly by the exertions of Colonel Livermore, of my staff, with the loss of four spans." * * * "An attack was then made from Miles' right with three regiments of the first brigade, but without success and with considerable loss."

I have quoted these reports of our enemy to show you how well our men stood up under the greatest difficulties, winning a victory while negotiations for the surrender of the army were going on.

After the brilliant feat of the glorious Georgians my picket line was soon re-established, but not without the sacrifice of some of our bravest men. During

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the fight on the left, in which I was absorbed, my picket line on the right was broken, and I was forced to walk along the line of our works, not breastworks, for they were only high enough to protect the men lying flat, the half of a mile, fully exposed to the enemy's sharpshooters armed with globe-sight rifles. At every step a shot would whiz by my head or strike near my feet, still I marched erect, appearing brave, but scared you may know. That was the longest half mile I ever travelled, and I never expected to reach the end, but I was spared and secured the detail to re-establish my line on the right, so my pickets were lined up for the remainder of the day.

Conspicuously gallant in this battle was a handsome young artilleryman, not out of his teens, who, when not engaged with his cannon, would borrow the rifles of the infantrymen, stand up while others were lying down protected by the earthworks, and with deliberate aim fire at his man, regardless of the continuous shower of bullets to which he was subjected. Finally he was shot down, desperately wounded, and borne off the field to the residence of Mr. Hodgden, which was converted into a field hospital.

Subsequently Adjutant Griffin F. Edwards, a youth of twenty, of our 61st Virginia Volunteers, while gallantly rallying his detail of men to recover the lost picket line in front of his regiment, was also severely wounded.

After dark he was taken to the field hospital. The yard was strewn with the wounded and dead; the

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kitchen, the out houses and even the stables were full of bleeding men.

There was one vacant place in the parlor of the old mansion where a blanket was spread for Adjutant Edwards. The soldier nearest happened to be the brave artillery boy, who had been shot down while acting as volunteer infantryman, as before stated, and he appeared to be in the agonies of death. Although severely wounded, the chivalrous Edwards ministered to him in every way in his power; and as he gave him a drink of water from his canteen, the boy whispered: "My name is Minor."

For three days these wounded companions remained side by side without surgeons or nurses. Then the captured wounded warriors were separated and heard nothing of each other until about thirty years afterwards, when Adjutant Edwards learned that his hospital comrade, Launcelot Minor, was a prominent lawyer in Newport, Arkansas.

When Private Minor recovered consciousness, he found a note pinned inside of his shirt, requesting that in case he died, that some one would give him a decent burial, and a five dollar gold coin was enclosed in the note to pay expenses. He kept the gold as a souvenir, but never discovered from whom it came.

Private William Mason of our regiment was the only one of our 61st killed in this affair, and the pity that one of our staunchest and bravest men should have lost his life in this our last battle.

The shadows of evening found our weary and starving soldiers in full possession of the battlefield of Cumberland Church, and rejoicing over their last

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victory. The only rations which could be issued on this retreat were a few ears of corn to each soldier, but these men were of pure metal, which yielded neither to danger nor hunger. Soon after dark the troops were withdrawn from the line of battle, and proceeded on the march towards Appomattox, where Mahone returned the silken trophy, which was so gallantly won by the Georgians at Cumberland Church, to his released prisoners.

I was left with my pickets to cover the retreat, with orders to withdraw them from the line at three o'clock in the morning, and follow the army. The long hours of darkness with dreadful anxiety dragged heavily on my mind, while my ever watchful pickets experienced with me the unpleasant anticipation of being killed or captured. I determined to make good our escape, if possible, and on the hour and minute, we quietly withdrew from the field of our last victory.

About eight o'clock next morning we overtook the army, and though desperately tired, rejoiced with a "rebel" yell over our escape from capture, for which we received the congratulations of General Mahone, for he had no idea that we would escape the clutches of the enemy.

That night of the eighth of April our brigade slept in line of battle on the brow of a hill facing to the rear, and next morning at the break of day we moved on, arriving at Appomattox before sunrise. The command was thrown in line fronting the rear, and the men commenced tearing down a rail fence to make breastworks, but were soon called to the ranks and

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moved forward, crossing a bridge over a creek and when near the celebrated apple tree under which General Lee *did not* surrender, we were countermarched to the first position, where we learned definitely that all was over with our country.

I have told the story of the surrender in "The Spirit of the South," and will only say here that after securing my parole, which the colonel was authorized to issue by the terms of surrender, I got a piece of that apple tree under which General Lee stood before he went forward to meet General Grant, also a piece of General Lee's headquarters flag, and mounting my horse with equipments and the "one roll of blankets," noted on my parole, which contained the "pair" which came from the "Cumberland," rode to my father's home in Norfolk County, Virginia. I did not go far with the log from the apple tree before I found it too heavy to carry and threw it away by the road side.

My orderly was a good natured Irishman, who had no home to which he could go after the surrender, so he decided to go with me as "help" on the farm. I had only one mount and it was necessary for Pat to have an animal to go along with our cavalcade of eight or ten. I rode across the field to a place where the Federal quartermasters had packed their wagons and the teams were grazing around. Among them I saw a small Yankee mule, which seemed to need an owner, so I captured him and led him over to our bivouac for Pat to ride. The mule was so diminutive that Pat's feet were not far from the ground when astride.

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However, the mule was young and in good condition and trotted off nimbly enough to keep up with our party on the homeward march.

The Federal Commissary at Farmville furnished us with rations enough for two days.

Not far from Petersburg we ran into a corps of Federal soldiers bivouacked on both sides of the road, and the woods and fields were blue with them.

There had been a heavy rain the day before, and their wagons had cut up the roadway so as to make it almost impassable. We felt a little curious riding through this great host of men in blue, but none seemed to notice us until the little mule plunged into a deep mud hole, and Pat was forced to dismount to get him out. You may know, those ten thousand Yankees shouted and roared with laughter. The scene was most ludicrous. They cried out: "Oh, Johnnie, put him in your haversack." "Take him out in your arms." "He's too little to ride," etc. Pat was not "set back," but led his mule out of the mud and mounted again and jogged along with us until we reached the old homestead.

My "Pair of Blankets" served me for more than twenty-five years after the close of hostilities, and then worn thin, as you see in the picture, I put them in a glass case as a souvenir.

When I got to my father's home I fared from his farmer's table, which I called sumptuous, and every night dreamed, dreamed the war over and over again, fought in my dreams every important battle in which I had been engaged, experiencing all the fear, dread and excitement of the real fight, with the

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roar of cannon, sizzing of minie balls and the agonizing cries of the dying soldiers sounding in my ears.

When I finished dreaming over all my war experiences my appetite settled to the normal of the human being in peaceful pursuits.

LETTER NO. 45.

LOVE OF LEE.

M EAR NEPHEWS:

pathway of honor is so plainly pictured by General Lee in a letter to his son that I must quote it for your edification:

Arlington House, April 5, 1852.

“My Dear Son: I am just in the act of leaving home for New Mexico. My fine old regiment has been ordered to that distant region, and I must hasten to see that they are properly taken care of. I have but little to add in reply to your letters of March 26, 27 and 28. Your letters breathe a true spirit of frankness; they have given myself and your mother great pleasure. You must study to be frank with the world; frankness is the child of honesty and courage. Say what you mean to do on every occasion, and take it for granted you mean to do right. If a friend asks a favor, you should grant it, if it is reasonable; if not, tell him plainly why you cannot. You will

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wrong him and wrong yourself by equivocation of any kind. Never do a wrong thing to make a friend or keep one; the man who requires you to do so is dearly purchased at a sacrifice. Deal kindly but firmly with all your classmates; you will find it the policy which wears best. Above all, do not appear to others what you are not. If you have any fault to find with any one, tell him, not others, of what you complain; there is no more dangerous experiment than that of undertaking to be one thing before a man's face and another behind his back. We should live, act and say nothing to the injury of any one. It is not only the best as a matter of principle, but it is the path to peace and honor.

"In regard to duty, let me, in conclusion to this hasty letter, inform you that nearly a hundred years ago there was a day of remarkable gloom and darkness—still known as the dark day—a day when the light of the sun was slowly extinguished, as if by an eclipse. The Legislature of Connecticut was in session, and as its members saw the unexpected and unaccountable darkness coming on they shared in the general awe and terror. It was supposed by many that the last day—the day of judgment—had come. Some one in the consternation of the hour moved an adjournment. Then there arose an old Puritan legislator, Davenport, of Stamford, who said that if the last day had come he desired to be found at his place doing his duty, and, therefore, moved that candles be brought in so that the House could proceed with its duty. There was quietness in that man's mind—the quietness of heavenly wisdom—an inflexible will-

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ingness to obey present duty. Duty, then, is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things like the old Puritan. You cannot do more; you should never wish to do less. Never let me and your mother wear one gray hair for any lack of duty on your part. Your affectionate father,

R. E. LEE.

“To G. W. Custis Lee.”

The father who prescribed such rules of conduct for his son, afterwards became the leader of the Southern armies and the father of a people who love his virtues and honor his name.

In concluding my story you may desire me to tell you something about General Robert E. Lee besides the general way in which I have already presented him.

I have described to you characters in the lower grades of military rank with most attractive virtues and superb courage. General Lee in many respects may be likened unto them or they unto him; but none with high rank possessed the mysterious essence which made all men love, admire and fear.

If there is love at first sight, to look at him was to love him, and the ever shining halo, which forced that Yankee girl on the soil of Pennsylvania to drop her waving flag to clap her hands and “wish he was ours,” was the thing which bound your heart—his quiet dignity of manner caused reverent fear as in the presence of a mighty man—his benevolent and benign expression made you his friend.

I never saw him too often, perhaps because I thought we were safest when he was near, and that

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he knew how to manage us in the presence of the enemy with the least possible loss.

A new recruit, when the Yankees were hotly shelling his company, exclaimed: "They will murder us all; for God's sake, Captain, go ask General Lee to take us out of this or we will all be killed." General Lee had our love and confidence—he held our faith in bonds so strong that no adversity could shake it.

During the siege of Petersburg I sometimes rode into the city to see my friends, and one afternoon I went to call on a friend, who was a refugee from our tide-water land and was introduced to Miss Lee, a cousin or niece of the commander-in-chief of the army. I was enjoying the company of these delightful ladies when it was announced that General Lee had reined his horse up to the gate. "Oh, General Lee is at the gate!" they exclaimed. I can't tell you how I felt, but you may have heard of the "poor boy at the fashionable frolic;" well I expect I felt like the "poor boy," only more so. It was so unexpected that a strange feeling came over me not unlike the fright of going into battle. It was surely an embarrassing ordeal to have such a distinguished personage as the commander-in-chief of the Army of Northern Virginia ushered thus unexpectedly into my presence.

Although his salutation and greeting with a hearty handshake was assuring, I could not feel free to talk with him like other folks. He conversed with the ladies in a chatty manner and laughed in the enjoyment of the conversation. I nerved myself to put in an occasional word; but I could not entirely rid my-

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self of nervousness and soon conceived an excuse to retire.

I was mad with myself, because I could not bravely enjoy this opportunity of seeing more of my commander, but I am proud to be able to tell you that I have twice grasped the hand of the greatest general of the English speaking people of the nineteenth century, or I would rather say of any people of any century. The whole appearance of the man made you feel like Jackson, that you could follow him blindfolded.

General Lee was a soldier of splendid physique, and sat upon his horse like a knight of chivalry—he wore an imperial air with the grace of a lord, which inspired his soldiers with the greatest pride, especially when the Pennsylvanians looked upon him with awe, while riding along their highways.

His loving language gave greatest pleasure, and his glorious expression of satisfaction for the conduct of his troops burned in their hearts an everlasting love.

I first remember seeing him galloping over the hills under the smoke of the thundering guns, followed by his staff, directing his army at Fredericksburg against Burnside. I saw him at Chancellorsville on the first day of May, 1863, near the Tabernacle with Jackson, and heard him direct the forward movement. I saw him the second day riding along our line and heard him inquire about the sound of Jackson's guns, then roaring in Hooker's rear. I saw him on the third day in the midst of his victorious troops around Hooker's headquarters, when the air

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was thick with smoke and the heavens resounded with the "rebel" yells of his victorious soldiers. I saw him at the head of his army—proud of its might—when marching on the land of the enemy north of the Potomac, and listened to his orders on dress parade, directing scrupulous regard for private property and protection for unarmed citizens. I saw him on the streets of Chambersburg, when its citizens were looking upon him as a lion in their midst. I saw him riding along the line of his troops on Seminary Ridge at Gettysburg, when the artillery was thundering and the air was thick with the fragments of broken bomb shells, which forced the men to hug the ground and made the squirrels desert their hollows and scamper in a wild panic on the limbs of the oaks overhead. I sat upon my horse at the head of my regiment and saw him review his army at Orange—heard the great "rebel" yells as he rode down the line and the loud acclaim of his proud veterans when they passed the reviewing post. I saw him in the "Wilderness." I saw him at Spottsylvania near the bloody angle, when I trembled for his safety. I saw him often during the "all summer line" and under the siege of Petersburg. I saw him giving orders to Mahone as we were about to march on the "Crater." I do not remember seeing him on the retreat from Petersburg, but I stood in line to hear the adjutant read his farewell order and saw him ride away from Appomattox on his way to Richmond. I last saw him not long before his death in Portsmouth, Va., passing from the cars to the ferry on a visit to his Norfolk friends.

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A great crowd was there to greet him and I had only a parting glance. Every time I saw him my faith strengthened and my love increased. You should be proud of him, for his life is the most valuable asset in all the history of America.

THE END.

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