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Cyclone in Calico

The Story of Mary Ann Bickerdyke

MARY ANN BICKERDYKE

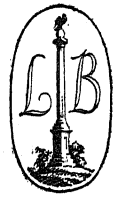
Woodcut by Bernard Brussel-Smith

Cyclone in Calico

The Story of Mary Ann Bickerdyke

by

NINA BROWN BAKER



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To

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Cyclone in Calico

The Story of Mary Ann Bickerdyke

I

SUMMER comes early to the Illinois prairie. Now in late May the fenced front yards of Galesburg were a blaze of petunias and phlox. Dust lay thick in the streets around the square, powdering the board sidewalks and the leaves of the arching maples. A few rigs were tied in front of the Brick Congregational Church. Not many, for most Galesburg citizens preferred to walk to service. They were gathering now, converging from the side streets, greeting each other in hushed Sabbath voices, herding their scrubbed, dressed-up children before them. At the church steps they halted for a few minutes of friendly visiting. Then, at the warning clangor of second bell, they filed inside and found their pews, reaching automatically for the palm-leaf fans scattered on the seats, by courtesy of the local undertaker.

As the reed organ swelled into "Old Hundred," Dr. Beecher made his dramatic entrance. Dramatic is the word for it. All the Beechers were superb actors, with a natural flair for showmanship. Dr. Edward was only a lesser Beecher, neither so distinguished as his father Lyman, nor so eloquent as his brother Henry Ward, nor so charming as his sister Harriet. But he was a bona fide Beecher just the same, and he and the small-town parish he served never forgot it. The Congregational dissidents of Old First knew what they were doing when they summoned him to the pastorate of the new Brick Church. The luster of the Beecher name, and Dr. Edward's creditable sustaining of the Beecher legend, had drawn

the cream of the flock away from Old First. The citizens who settled back into their pews on this hot May morning made up the best-dressed, the most prosperous, the most influential congregation in town.

They were comfortably certain that the sermon, though it might be long, would not be dull. Dr. Edward was doctrinally sound, but he had the Beecher knack of embellishing his discourse with bits of homey humor, alternating with soaring flights of poesy. His sincerity was no more in question than his piety. It was good solid gospel that he preached. If he brought to his preaching the talents that would have won success on any stage, so much the better for his listeners.

Today, after the opening hymn, he began with a prayer of thanksgiving. Fervently he thanked God for the peace and quiet of this Sabbath morning, for the increase of farm and shop, for the blessings of health and food and raiment. One after another he named them, the everyday blessings that well-fed, secure people take for granted; the sound roof to keep out the weather, the bountiful table, the bed spread with clean white linen. Within the memory of most of them these things had come into being. Less than a quarter of a century had passed since George Washington Gale had led his little group of York State farmers into this virgin prairie land. They had broken the sod to the plow, built their log cabins, their church and school. Now, under God's providence, the log cabins had given place to modern comfortable homes, Knox College had come into being, stores, mills and factories flourished. For all these blessings, and for many more, Dr. Beecher's opening prayer returned thanks.

When he ended, with a resounding Amen, he stood silent a moment, thoughtfully studying the reverent faces lifted to his. Slowly and deliberately he put on his spectacles and opened the great Bible. "My text this morning—" he began, and paused.

He waited, and the congregation waited. Then, with a sudden swooping gesture, he closed the Book.

"My text this morning does not come from the Word. Instead I propose to read you a letter."

Deliberately he unfolded a sheet of paper. A rustle of anticipation swept the pews. You never knew what Dr. Beecher would do next!

The letter was from Dr. Benjamin Woodward, a young Galesburg physician who had answered Lincoln's call for volunteers when Sumter fell. Dr. Woodward had not gone alone, for five hundred Galesburg men had enlisted at the first call.

They were stationed at Cairo, in the southern tip of Illinois, where the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers meet. The war was not yet two months old. None of the Illinois troops had been in battle, or seen a gun fired except for practice. But Dr. Woodward's letter was a furious, harrowing description of suffering and death among his soldier patients. The Galesburg boys, and others from all over the state, were dying like flies in Cairo. Dying, not on the field of battle, but in filthy, ill-equipped hospital tents, neglected and untended. Dying of dysentery, of pneumonia, of typhoid, of all the civilian ills from which proper care might save them. They had no proper care. They lay on rotten straw, under rotten canvas that let in the rain or the broiling summer sun. They ate, or did not eat, the salt pork, hardtack, beans and coffee that were the army ration. The army did not distinguish between a sick soldier and a well one, except that a man too sick to stand was excused from drill. Sick or well, he drew his eleven dollars a month and his ration of uncooked beans and bacon. What he did with them was his own concern. The army doctors were expressly classified as surgeons, not physicians. Their business was the care of wounded men after battle. Soldiers were not supposed to be sick. Succumbing to civilian disease in camp carried a strong suspicion of malingering to the army mind. The regular surgeons paid very little attention to such patients. If they did bother to visit and prescribe, it was unlikely that the medical stores held the proper drugs to fill the prescription. The only nurses were convalescent patients, often too weak themselves to turn a sick man on his straw pallet. If a stricken soldier survived his illness, Dr. Woodward wrote savagely, he regained his own strength only by callously ignoring the needs of his sicker comrades. If he died,

the government generously shipped his body home for burial, free of charge.

Dr. Woodward was young, and indignant. His practice, a comfortable one among Galesburg's best families, had not prepared him for the experience at Cairo. He wrote at length, illustrating the abuses he denounced with instances taken from his daily observations. He named names, many of them Galesburg names. Mothers whose sons had written with boyish bravado that they were "down with a touch of army trots" now learned for the first time what the phrase implied. Wives and mothers who had not heard at all began to realize that there might be more than masculine carelessness behind the silence.

They had all heard something of this before. Actually, Galesburg had already received two bodies, shipped at government expense, from the Cairo camp. One was a young Knox College student, the other the sexton of this very church. The relatives of the two dead soldiers had comforted themselves with the thought that they died peacefully in bed of familiar illness, not torn to bits on a bloody battlefield. Dr. Woodward's letter rudely shattered the comforting illusion. If the men had had proper care, the sort of care they would have had at home, they might not have died at all.

Dr. Beecher read slowly, movingly, sparing them nothing of the pathos and the horror. As he read a chorus of muffled sobs rose and swelled and died again, that no heart-rending detail might be lost.

It was the more distressing because of the contrast in all minds created by the opening prayer. As their pastor had reminded them, these people were greatly blessed. Here they sat, comfortable and safe, with good Sunday dinners to go home to, with clean soft beds waiting when night came. Only a few short weeks ago the young men of Galesburg had shared those comforts. The men who lay on rotten straw at Cairo, who called through fever-blackened lips for water when there was none to give them—these were not strange sick soldiers of the United States Army. These were Gales-

burg men, related to most of them, known to all of them. These were *our boys!*

The reading ended, and the sound of women's weeping filled the church. Men's voices muttered angrily. A pregnant young wife began a wild shrieking, quickly hushed by the older women near her. Dr. Beecher nodded to the organist. Softly at first, then rising and swelling, the notes of the old hymn rose above the tumult.

A mighty fortress is our God,
A bulwark never failing;
Our helper He amid the flood
Of mortal ills prevailing.

The pastor's strong voice took it up, and they stumbled to their feet, brokenly joining him in the words that were a reaffirmation of their faith. Singing, they quieted, their tear-clouded eyes searching their shepherd's face. Kindhearted Dr. Beecher would not inflict this ordeal upon them for nothing. There must be a purpose behind his reading of the letter.

There was. Very calmly Dr. Beecher refolded the letter and put it away as the last Amen died. The church was still.

"You have heard what Dr. Woodward wrote me," he said. "It was your right to hear. If you choose, we will now proceed with our regular Sabbath service. Or if you prefer, we will suspend everything and discuss what can be done to improve the situation at Cairo. What is your wish?"

The oldest deacon spoke first, as was his right. Rising in his pew, his gnarled hands clenched on the supporting cane, he shouted, "Brother Beecher, the Master said that when your ox falls into the pit, you dig him out first and pray afterwards. I vote we get our ox out of the pit!"

He spoke for all of them. The Sunday service turned into a business meeting. They were practical people, and this was something they could deal with. War was a mysterious business, with its jargon of drill and weapon, of strategy and tactics. They had thought all that could safely be left to the generals. But this was not war. This

was illness, a familiar enemy, against whom the weapons were known. The congregation pulled itself together and began to plan the campaign.

The weapons themselves, medicines and invalid food and clean linen, were quickly subscribed. It was estimated that about five hundred dollars' worth of supplies was pledged in the first half hour of discussion. Then Dr. Beecher motioned for silence.

"You have been most generous, my brethren. But I must point out one thing. The need, the great need of our boys down there, has not been touched. Certainly they must have the material goods you offer. But have you thought on what Dr. Woodward told us? Who is there to administer the medicines, to hand the food, to spread the wretched beds with your fresh sheets? No one but poor weak comrades, themselves hardly fit to be afoot. Will they do it? Can they do it? What can we do to fill the most desperate need of all, the need for competent nursing? I ask you to consider this."

"I know what we can do!" An old woman, shaking with palsy, shaken with emotion, scrambled to her feet. "We can go down there and give it to 'em! What them boys need is their mammies. My Danny's down there, Brother Beecher. For all I know he's one of the sick 'uns, and callin' for me like he always done when he was sick. All us women here's got somebody down there. How are we going to sleep in our beds, knowing what we know now? I'm ready to start tomorrow. And any woman here that calls herself a mother will go with me."

She sat down, fanning herself fiercely. Half a dozen women started to rise, but the old deacon forestalled them.

"Sit down, ladies, and let me git in a word!" he bellowed. "The sister means well, but she's talkin' foolishness. Does she think the gover'mint is goin' to have a passel o' women movin' into an army post? I was in the 1812 War; I know what I'm talkin' about. No women in quarters, that's regulations. You can't get past regulations. Not in Uncle Sam's army, you can't."

The women glared, but Dr. Beecher nodded.

"I think it is true that army regulations would prohibit our sister's

Christian proposal," he said. "As good citizens we cannot set ourselves against the constituted authorities. At the same time, I am deeply concerned to see that our contributions are properly distributed and used. The suggestion I was about to make before the sister spoke was this. Let us send some sensible, level-headed person with the supplies. He can confer with Dr. Woodward, and perhaps with the commanding officer. It may be that the officer could be induced to detail able-bodied soldiers to the work of nursing their sick comrades. Dr. Woodward has tried that. So far he has failed. But I think our position as donors of five hundred dollars' worth of supplies gives us some rights. Surely we have the right to see that they are not wasted. Does this suggestion commend itself to you?"

He waited for their nods of approval. Then earnestly he went on: "The choice of our representative is a serious one. Dr. Woodward writes that he himself expects to be transferred to St. Louis soon. It is not even certain that he will be at Cairo when our agent arrives. I think it is vital that our man have some medical knowledge of his own; at least enough to judge whether the supplies we send are suitable, and to advise us of lacks and future needs. In addition, he must be a person of strong determination. We all know that army authorities are impatient of civilian intervention. We must send someone who is not afraid to stand up to the officers and demand that our lads receive proper treatment. The task may be neither easy nor pleasant. If we choose the wrong person, the mission may fail. And it must not fail! I ask you now to join me in prayer, that we may be guided to choose aright."

When the long eloquent prayer ended, a lady rose quietly in her place. She was the wife of a Knox College professor, and president of the church's Ladies' Aid Circle.

"Brother Beecher, I wish to propose a name for the congregation's approval. The person of whom I speak has medical knowledge, and wide experience with illness. No one in Galesburg has a better reputation for moral character, Christian charity and neighborly goodwill. In addition, this person is known to all of you as skillful,

economical and sensible. I have never known my candidate to flinch from any task, however distasteful, nor to fail to complete any undertaking, however difficult. I do not believe we could place our mission in better hands."

She waited a minute, and Dr. Beecher smiled encouragingly. "You have given us the description of an ideal agent, sister. May we have his name?"

"Certainly." She shot a glance of ladylike defiance at the old deacon. "The name is that of Sister Mary Ann Bickerdyke."

All heads turned toward a back pew. Massive shoulders straight and square in black mourning, the Widow Bickerdyke sat erect between her two little boys. She had wept with the others, but silently, composedly, wiping away her tears with a black-bordered handkerchief before they overflowed the strong plain face. There was sympathy in that face, and rugged kindliness, but the set of the jaw promised an iron determination. She met the curious glances calmly, without speaking.

The old deacon snorted, but Dr. Beecher's smile broadened. And on other faces too the smiles spread, smiles of relief. There was no doubt about it. Mary Ann Bickerdyke had every qualification the pastor had demanded, and more. True, she was a woman, and there were the army regulations. The women of Brick Church, this morning, were not feeling too kindly toward army red tape. They did not know the army, but they knew Mary Ann. The deacons knew her too, for she had never hesitated to speak up on church affairs. It was pretty well established in Galesburg that when Mary Ann Bickerdyke took sides, her side won.

Dr. Beecher asked for more names, received none, and put it to the vote. Mrs. Bickerdyke was unanimously elected to accompany the donations to Cairo, and to make arrangements for their effective use. Then, at Dr. Beecher's urging, she rose.

"I'm no hand at speechmaking," she said bluntly. "You give me a job to do, and from what Dr. Woodward says, it's a hard job. All right. I'm used to hard jobs. All I ask is that some of you look after my boys here. Once I get them off my mind, you don't need

to worry. I'll go to Cairo, and I'll clean things up down there. You don't need to worry about that, neither. Them generals and all ain't going to stop me. This is the Lord's work you're calling me to do. And when I'm doing the Lord's work, they ain't nobody big enough to stop me."

I I

WRITING many years later, Dr. Benjamin Woodward called her "a woman rough, uncultivated, even ignorant, but a diamond in the rough." Mary Livermore wrote more gently, "She lacked only early advantages to have been a remarkable woman." Dr. Woodward's acquaintance with Mrs. Bickerdyke was superficial and brief. Mrs. Livermore worked with her throughout the war years, and saw her frequently in the years that followed. The young doctor's appraisal may be discounted, but the Boston lady's cannot.

Mrs. Mary Ashton Rice Livermore of Boston and Chicago, Teacher, Author, Wife, Mother, Army Nurse, Soldiers' Friend, Lecturer and Reformer, to quote her title page, knew what she was talking about. She herself had had all the advantages, and was a shining example of what they could produce in the way of remarkable womanhood. She first made her patronizing comment on Mary Ann Bickerdyke in her book, *My Story of the War,* published in 1887. She repeated it frequently from the lecture platform where she was a star of the Redpath circuit. Apparently she repeated it once too often. Someone, either Mary Ann herself or sympathetic friends, appears to have decided that if early advantages were wanted, she should have some. The result remains in print to bedevil the inquiring historian. When fiction is disentangled from fact, the known truth about her early life reduces itself to a few scanty paragraphs.

Mary Ann Ball was born on a pioneer farm in Knox County,

Ohio, on July 19, 1817. Her paternal grandfather, David Ball, came to Ohio from New Jersey in 1803, taking up a thousand acres of rich Owl Creek bottom land which was later divided among his four sons. Mary Ann's father was Hiram, the eldest. He married Annie Rodgers, who died when the child was only seventeen months old. Little Mary Ann was turned over to her mother's parents in nearby Richland County, and remained with them until her father remarried a few years later. She returned to her father's home then, but at twelve decided that she preferred the Rodgers farm, and went back to the grandparents. On their death she lived with the family of a Rodgers uncle. In 1833, when she was sixteen, she went to Oberlin, Ohio. While she was in Oberlin, Uncle Henry Rodgers moved to Hamilton County, near Cincinnati. Mary Ann joined her uncle's family there. In 1847 she married Robert Bickerdyke, a Cincinnati widower with young children. In 1856 the Bickerdykes moved from Cincinnati to Galesburg, Illinois, where the husband died three years later. The Mrs. Bickerdyke who rose so confidently to Dr. Beecher's appeal was a forty-four-year-old widow, currently supporting her children by practicing as a "botanic physician."

So much is known for certain, confirmed by county histories, family records and letters, and surviving members of her father's family. Her own reminiscences provide a little meat for the bare bones. There are persons still living who knew her in her old age, and to whom she sometimes spoke of her childhood. She recalled the great shady maples and chestnuts of the old Rodgers farm, the big spring where the watercress grew, the orchard planted for her grandfather by Johnny Appleseed. John Chapman must have been a familiar figure in her childhood, for he had one of his apple seedling nurseries only a few miles from the Rodgers property. The child may have talked with him, and heard his impassioned harangues on the medicinal values of horehound, wintergreen and dog fennel, the herbs whose seeds he scattered with such zeal. This lore need not have come from him, of course. Her grandmother and all the old wives of the neighborhood could have told her as much, and probably did.

Most vivid of the memories she recalled in old age were her grandfather's war stories. Old man Rodgers had covered himself with glory from the time he faced the British at Bunker Hill, a barefoot Massachusetts boy of sixteen, until the end of the eight-year conflict. General Washington himself had charged him with the vital task of keeping campfires blazing to fool the Hessians while the army crossed the Delaware. Grandpa Rodgers had a pair of wool socks knitted by Martha Washington in appreciation. The socks proved everything, and silenced all doubters.

If there were doubters, they were among the haughty Ball clan into which the Rodgers daughter had married. The Balls, from New Jersey. were related to the Balls of Virginia, and therefore to Mary Ball Washington, mother of the first President. Zenas Ball, Mary Ann's uncle, was Knox County's leading citizen. The first Sunday School was held in his home, and his sister Lydia did energetic missionary work among the heathen Indians. All the Ball brothers were prosperous, but Uncle Zenas seems to have been the most eminent of them.

The early county histories, which exalt the Balls, do not mention the Rodgers family at all. Apparently Grandpa Rodgers was more proficient with the sword than with the plowshare. After a later war his granddaughter was to show endless patience and sympathy with veterans struggling to turn themselves into farmers. She may have grown up knowing that it is not so easy as it looks.

Mary Ann's life up to 1833, when she was sixteen, is definitely placed on an Ohio farm, her father's, her grandfather's, and then her Uncle Henry's. It was the ordinary life of the pioneer farm girl; helping with the housework, learning to spin and weave, to milk and churn, to care for children and the sick. At the one-room log schoolhouse she studied Webster's blue-back Speller and the Rule of Three. In nearby New Lancaster a red-headed boy, two years her senior, was following the same well-worn path to education. There is no evidence that William Tecumseh Sherman and Mary Ann Ball ever met in childhood, although it could have happened. It may have been old acquaintance, or it may have been only the common

background that accounted for the mutual trust and understanding of their wartime association.

Mrs. Livermore, that apostle of culture, has only pity for Mary Ann's lack of formal schooling. In her book she labors the point by frequent direct quotations that are certainly ungrammatical. Although Mrs. Livermore was a notebook addict, it is unlikely that she recorded all conversations on the spot. Much that she reported Mrs. Bickerdyke as saying must have been reconstructed from memory later, and is not above suspicion. However, Mrs. Livermore had a Boston fussiness about grammar. She would not have remembered the " 'taint's" and "I done it's" if they had not existed. For all her insufferable condescension, there was no malice in the lady. She liked Mrs. Bickerdyke, and appreciated her. It is impossible to believe that she deliberately represented her as uncultured when the facts were otherwise.

In her extreme old age, after Mrs. Livermore's book had achieved best sellerdom, an interviewer questioned Mrs. Bickerdyke about the impression it gave that she was "an uneducated, illiterate woman." "Mary Livermore knew better than that," the old lady answered. "I can't understand why she wrote as she did."

This is as close as Mrs. Bickerdyke is known to have come in claiming a college education. She spent some time, possibly as much as four years, in Oberlin, Ohio. She went there in 1833, the year that Oberlin College opened. There seems little doubt that she went with the hope of enrolling as a student. The college records do not indicate that her hope was achieved. The registrar's office has searched for her under Ball, Bell, Rodgers, Rogers, and every conceivable variation of her name. It does not appear anywhere.

Mrs. Bickerdyke's cousin, Mr. F. Grant Ball of Fredericktown, Ohio, advances a plausible theory. He thinks that the girl found work in some household, possibly that of a faculty member, and was allowed to audit classes without formal matriculation. This could have happened. It would account for her claim to have "gone to Oberlin," if she made such a claim. Two of her biographers, women who knew her personally in her old age, refer to her as

having been a student at Oberlin College. This is in line with their determined effort to pretty her up and give her the early advantages whose lack Mary Livermore deplored. There is at least some shadowy foundation for the college story. There is none at all for their statement that she took nurse's training in Cincinnati and earned her living as a hospital nurse until her marriage.

By the time the two books were written, nursing had become a profession, and a highly respectable one. This was not the case in Mary Ann Ball's girlhood. She could not have trained as a nurse, because nurses' training schools did not exist. Setting aside the excellent Catholic institutions, Cincinnati had one hospital, the Commercial Hospital and Lunatic Asylum. It was a pauper place whose chief value was to provide the young gentlemen of the medical schools with diseases to study, operations to watch, and cadavers to dissect. Dr. Victor Robinson's description of hospital nurses in pre-Nightingale England applied equally to pre-Civil War Cincinnati. "Nurses were recruited from the almshouse, the asylum, and the prison. A woman denied employment as a domestic because of objectionable habits, and too old and ugly for harlotry, as a last resort turned to public nursing. She who could not enter the establishment of a self-respecting shopkeeper, was welcomed at the infirmary."

In that age, when Sairey Gamp was accepted as a recognizably accurate portrait of the nurse for hire, young women of respectable families did not even consider nursing as a career. At home, of course, it was different. Every woman needed to know how to care for the sick in her own household. Grandmothers and maiden aunts were in great demand when illness struck. Some elderly ladies, from large families and without men to provide for them, moved from one relative's home to another, spending all their days at bedsides. They earned their keep, certainly, but they would have been insulted to be offered money. Their patients were their own kith and kin, however remote the relationship. And it was only decent for members of the family to "help out where there was sickness."

Neighbor women helped out too, as a matter of Christian duty. So did the family hired girl, if there was one. A maidservant who was "a good hand with the sick" could always be sure of finding a job. If the job was actually that of a practical nurse, she was still a hired girl, and never dreamed of calling herself anything else.

So whatever Mary Ann Ball did in those early years, she was not a professional trained nurse. One elaboration of the story has it that Dr. Reuben Mussey called for volunteers in a cholera epidemic of 1837, and that Mary Ann responded and gained her training under him. This does not stand up under examination. For one thing, Cincinnati did not have a cholera epidemic in 1837. There was one in 1832–1833, and a bad one in 1849–1850, but 1837 was happily free of the plague. Besides that, Mary Ann was just twenty in that year. Dr. Mussey was real enough, a Dartmouth man who held the chair of surgery at Ohio Medical College. He knew, as every orthodox physician of his time knew, that female nurses must be married women, and mature in age. The sickroom presents many indelicacies unfit for a maiden's notice. Nothing that is known about Dr. Mussey indicates that he was eccentric enough to engage twenty-year-old virgins as nurses for his patients.

It is easy to demolish the fanciful accounts of Mary Ann's life up to her thirtieth year, but very difficult to replace fiction with fact. Perhaps she did nothing in particular but help her aunt bring up the young cousins. She was a big, bossy girl with limitless energy, not uncomely with her blue eyes and thick brown hair, but without coquetry. In that day of early marriages, she was not sought, or she rejected all offers. She filled in those ten years until her marriage in some way, and it is most unlikely that she filled them as a trained nurse under Dr. Mussey. It seems far more probable that they were spent as student and practitioner of the healing art as taught by Dr. Hussey.

Dr. Mussey and Dr. Hussey. Could there be a confusion of names here? Both were medical gentlemen of Cincinnati, both were engaged in medical education. They had little else in common. To Dr. Mussey, a pillar of the conservative Ohio Medical College,

Dr. Zimri Hussey can have been nothing but a quack. For Dr. Hussey labored humbly in a cheap little private school that called itself grandly the Physio-Botanic Medical College.

It was an age of splinter medical parties. Hahnemann's Homeopathy, introduced into the United States in 1825, had touched off a "medical reform" movement that took various unrelated shapes. The Physio-Botanic system originated with Dr. Samuel Thomson, of New England. Dr. D. W. Cook of Cincinnati taught Thomsonism in his school, with a few added frills of his own. His version, under the name of the Physio-Medical Reform System, later attained some prominence, particularly in the Middle West. The Cincinnati school, Dr. Cook's first effort, never fulfilled his high hopes. It gave up the ghost in 1880, when the center of the movement shifted to Indianapolis.

In Mary Ann Ball's day, Dr. Zimri Hussey, instructor in Materia Medica, did most of the teaching at Cincinnati, for Dr. Cook's heart was in his writings. The Reform groups, including the homeopaths, were far more favorably disposed toward women than the established medical system. Dr. Cook accepted women students, and conferred his degree of Doctor of Botanic Medicine upon them. If we could find that Mary Ann was such a student, there would be no question. She could have trained under Dr. Hussey, not Dr. Mussey, in her Cincinnati girlhood. It would explain her setting up as a "botanic physician" in Galesburg. It would certainly account for the therapeutic practices by which she so outraged the army doctors later.

For Dr. Cook's views on the treatment of the sick were pretty revolutionary. A few quotations from his magazine, the *Physio-Medical Recorder,* are enough to show how radically his methods differed from the accepted ones:

> The [mercuric] poisons of the medical world, blood letting, blistering and all the tormenting and injurious treatment of the old school are entirely discarded. In place of these are substituted harmless but efficient medication, the free use of water in its proper temperatures and application . . . and a full instruction of the patient as to the nature of his or

her complaint, and the proper means of relief and future avoidance. . . .

Persons with weak lungs should learn to dread the close, hot room, and to love the open air. Weak-lunged people should go abroad every day, without fail. . . .

[For "spasms."] A suitable portion of black root and golden seal. An injection of bonset and a little ginger, in starch or elm water. If twitchings continue, a pill of lobelia seeds, lady slipper and prickly ash, rolled in extract of bonset. In addition to medication, it will be *positively* necessary for the patient to avoid *all* articles of diet that do not agree with his stomach, to eat moderately at all times, and to be especially sparing of food at supper.

The "free use of water," so highly recommended, meant hot baths, the inhalation of steam, prolonged application of wet dressings, and copious water drinking in the form of herbal teas. "Nature's water," as found in fruits and vegetables, is also favored. "Let the patient eat freely of such watery comestibles as potatoes, onions, apples and blackberries, but forbid him to gorge upon salted meats while his fever lasts."

Clean hot water and fresh air, a careful diet that included fresh fruit and vegetables, plenty of impressive-looking pills whose effect could be no more than mild purgation, frankness as to the nature of the ailment and reassurance about "the proper means of relief and future avoidance" — these were the simple weapons with which the Physio-Botanic cult armed its graduates. They could not compare with the formidable arsenal of the regular practitioners, the pain-killing opium, the heroic doses of calomel, the bloodletting and blistering. They did have one advantage, though. Knowledge of them was easily acquired, for Dr. Cook's scholastic standards were not high. Unlike Dr. Mussey at Ohio Medical College, he did not require his students to have served a three-year apprenticeship with a recognized physician before matriculating. His lecture series was short, and his fees were low. He had no expensive plant to keep up. Sessions were held in a room of the disused Cincinnati College, where were housed the institute's "Medical Library, Geological and Conchical Cabinets and valuable Herbarium." While Dr. Cook toiled over his pamphlets and magazine, Dr. Hussey did most of

the active classroom work. There were three other instructors on a part-time basis.

It was a poor man's college, and it turned out doctors to poor people. The wife of a Cincinnati brewing magnate could be properly ill in a hermetically sealed room, soothed with laudanum, purged with calomel, and scientifically bled by a frock-coated, silk-hatted regular physician. The river boatman's wife had to content herself with a fifty-cent-a-visit "doctor" who prescribed fresh air, a vitamin-rich diet and frequent bathing. There are no statistics to show which system proved the most effective. No doubt both schools saved some patients and lost some, as medical science has done through the ages, and goes on doing.

The Physio-Botanic course could have been easy for Mary Ann Ball. She was already familiar with a great deal of what it taught. The herbs which figured so largely in its pharmacopoeia were common ones, in use by pioneer women from the earliest days. Horehound syrup for coughs, blackberry juice for diarrhea, boneset tea to reduce fever — she must have seen these remedies applied over and over in her childhood days. Doctors were too scarce and too expensive to be summoned to a wilderness farm without grave reason. Mary Ann's training as a botanic physician must have begun very early, under Grandma Rodgers. What she learned from Dr. Hussey could only have been an extension and elaboration of knowledge already acquired.

Of course there is no proof that she learned anything from Dr. Hussey, or ever came into contact with him and his school. This is all the merest speculation, unsupported by student registration rolls which a diligent search has failed to find. Nevertheless it could have happened. If it did, it explains a great many things that are otherwise inexplicable.

The ten years from 1837 to 1847 are unaccounted for, except by the unlikely story that she trained under Dr. Mussey and worked as a professional nurse. If instead she studied with Dr. Hussey and earned a living as a botanic physician, it all fits in. What she did would not have been too different from what a visiting nurse does

now. She would have gone into homes, bathed the patient, kept a sharp eye on the diet, opened the windows and lectured the family on the need for cleanliness and fresh air. Her fees would have been modest, but she could have lived on them, perhaps with help from her uncle. And with it all she could have acquired her matchless nursing skill, along with the confidence that later enabled her to set her opinions against those of army surgeons and batter down their resistance.

If she had been a botanic physician before her marriage, there was nothing strange about her resuming practice as such in Galesburg when her husband's death left her penniless. Without the presumed Cincinnati training and practice, it is difficult to see how she suddenly turned from a simple housewife to a physician, even of an unorthodox school. Galesburg was no backwoods clearing, but a progressive, cultured college town. Mary Ann Bickerdyke was a popular and respected figure there. If her fellow townsmen accepted her as a doctor, she must have convinced them that she was one. A certificate from Dr. Hussey's school would have done it.

After 1861, when she volunteered for war service, Mary Ann Bickerdyke became a public figure. From that time on her life is easy to trace. The girlhood years in or around Cincinnati are obscure, and likely to remain so. Equally shadowy is the period of her courtship and early married life.

III

ROBERT BICKERDYKE was the son of a Yorkshire tenant farmer, crowded out when industry took over the Midland valley where the family had lived for generations. Some of the sons adapted themselves to change and went to work in the new mills, but two of them, Robert and John, turned their eyes toward America, where land was to be had for the asking. Robert, who was unmarried, went first to scout the possibilities.

The way west was by paddle-wheel steamer on the Ohio River. In 1840 Robert Bickerdyke came ashore at Cincinnati. For him the quest ended there. Dutifully he resumed his journey, wound up in Illinois, and looked over the prairie acres that were so cheap and so promising. His enthusiastic report brought his brother John, with wife and nine children, to settle some fifty miles southeast of Springfield. Robert met his relatives at the Public Landing in Cincinnati, and sped them on their way. An Illinois farm was a wonderful thing for a Yorkshire farmer who craved land of his own. But Robert was through with farming. He had fallen under the spell of Cincinnati.

It must have been an exciting town in those days. The products of the rich inland farms flowed into it, and flowed out again as dressed pork, flour and whiskey. Industry and commerce boomed, wealth multiplied, culture flourished. It was the culture that attracted Robert Bickerdyke. Specifically, it was music.

The Germans had been coming to Cincinnati since 1830, bringing

their music with them. Every beer garden had its small orchestra, every German neighborhood its singing society. Little German bands wandered the streets, playing for the coppers tossed them by householders. The Germans alone would have made a musical city of Cincinnati. But there were other influences, equally strong. The Negro roustabouts on the levee sang, the pioneers had their own traditions of singing school and square dance, and every well-furnished home contained a piano or parlor organ. Young ladies in the local finishing schools learned the piano if they learned nothing else. The evening musicale was the most popular social gathering.

This musical atmosphere exactly suited the young man from England. Nobody knows where he got his passion for music, or where or when he mastered the bass viol. By 1846 he was good enough to play in Maestro J. Tosso's Melodious Amateur Orchestra of twenty-four instruments at a Monster Benefit for — naturally enough — Maestro J. Tosso. The affair, held at the Melodeon, the city's popular concert hall, featured the *première* of Maestro Tosso's own composition, "Storm at Sea." It sounds an ideal vehicle for the debut of a virtuoso of the double bass.

Playing in amateur orchestras was satisfying to the soul, but it was not a living. For his bread and butter Robert Bickerdyke took up painting, "Sign, House and Ornamental." His imitation of wood and marble graining, and his block letters, "cut and ornamented to order," were well thought of. The growing city, rich enough to command the elegancies of his trade, rewarded him with a modest prosperity. He married, bought a house at Seventh and Plum Streets, and became the father of several children. Nothing is known of the first wife, or the date of her death. It was a widower with a ready-made family that Mary Ann Ball married in 1847.

How she met him is also unknown. The children were very young, their mother but lately dead. While there may have been as many as five of them, only three are accounted for later. Perhaps two little ones died in the Cincinnati years of the second marriage. Some accounts of Mrs. Bickerdyke's life say there were

five children. She herself, long years after, said that she "raised" two stepsons and a stepdaughter, as well as her own two boys.

Robert Bickerdyke at the time of his marriage was forty-one, extremely tall, fair haired, and "of dignified and courteous demeanor." How much romance entered into his courtship of the plain-featured, plain-spoken Miss Ball is uncertain. His motherless household needed a woman's care, and she was eminently fitted to provide it. By the standards of her day she had been ten years a spinster. Now, at thirty, came the most attractive proposal she had ever had. It may have been the only one. His reasons for making it, and hers for accepting, are veiled in the decent reticence of her later years.

Mrs. Livermore's book quotes her as saying, "My husband might have lived twenty years longer if he had not worn himself into the grave trying to boss me. He wanted me to do everything his way, and just as he did. But his way was too slow, and I just couldn't stand it." Another biographer, Florence Shaw Kellogg, vehemently questions this quotation. "I cannot believe this. I have heard her speak of her husband many times, but never in any but terms of love and praise. She gave me always to understand her married life was happy and satisfying. Had it been otherwise would she have felt such longing that her grave should be by the side of his?"

The marriage was a love match, or it was a sober arrangement of convenience. It was "happy and satisfying," or it was a struggle of wills. Whatever it was, it began on April 27, 1847, at St. John's Protestant Episcopal Church, across the street from the Bickerdyke house. Mary Ann was a Methodist, but she loyally followed her British bridegroom into the American version of the Church of England. The ceremony was performed by Bishop Charles P. McIlvaine, head of the diocese. The couple had only to cross the road again to begin married life in their own home.

While Mary Ann energetically reorganized the forlorn little household, Robert went cheerfully along his accustomed way. He worked at his trade and played in amateur orchestras. When he was doing neither he "hung around the music store." He was self-employed,

working by the job, so the closest thing he had to an office was the music store of Peters & Field. Customers with painting to be done could always find him there, or be certain that a message left there would soon reach him.

The Peters & Field store was in the Melodeon, "among the most prominent and elegant buildings in Cincinnati." It had three stories. Melodeon Hall, where the concerts were given, was upstairs, occupying most of the two upper floors, although part of the second was given over to Faris's Daguerrean Gallery. Peters & Field, Music Publishers and Purveyors of Finest Imported Musical Instruments, took up the ground floor, "tesselated in marble." The building with its marble floors and pillars, with its gilded cornices and rosewood staircase, was the city's musical center until after the Civil War, when it was converted into a de luxe gambling establishment.

Robert Bickerdyke was not the only musician to hang around Peters & Field's. He and his friends were very useful to the management, ready and willing to demonstrate an instrument to a prospective purchaser. In addition they plugged the songs and dance music published by the firm. Touring artists who played the music hall counted on picking up their accompanists from the local talent always available in the shop downstairs.

A good example of Robert Bickerdyke's musical life is the four-night engagement of the Heron Family, "a series of Miscellaneous Concerts consisting of Comic, Operatic and Ethiopian Melodies, in Costume and Character, with full Orchestra accompaniment." The Herons, father, mother and three daughters, gave full value for the one-dollar admission. On this visit their talents were augmented by that of "Mons. J. Collins, late of the New Orleans Grand Opera." The program for the closing concert featured an "Aria from La Somnambula with Vocal Variations by Miss Fanny, The Bold Sojer Boy by Miss Mary Ann in Comic Male Attire, Annie Laurie, A Scotch Song, by Mons. Collins in Kilts," as solo offerings. Then came the three girls and Mons. Collins in blackface as an Ethiopian Quartette rendering Camptown Races. This feast of song was only the first half of the program. After an intermission to allow for

a prize drawing of Musical Instruments, Gold Jewelry, Ladies' Albums and Valuable Oil Paintings Handsomely Framed, there was a Very Laughable Burletta entitled "A Chance for a Wife; or Lodgings by Day and Lodgings by Night."

The full orchestra accompanying the Musical Herons consisted of Papa Heron at the piano, Mama Heron, violin, and Professor Robert Bickerdyke of This City, bass viol. How much the Professor received for his services, or whether he was paid in anything but the gratification of a public appearance, is unknown. The prize concert, the last of the series, played to a crowded house. Concerts with a prize drawing as the intermission attraction were so much the rage that the editor of the *Daily Cincinnati Gazette* was moved to severe editorializing. Several citizens, he wrote, had signed a memorial to the city council calling attention to their Immorality. The concerts flourished just the same, and can have kept Professor Bickerdyke's evenings fairly full if he participated in all of them.

Between professional bookings, the Melodeon was free for the demonstration concerts frequently staged by local music houses with instruments to sell. Every time a river steamer landed a new shipment, the house to which it was consigned gave a Gala Musical Evening to show off the latest importations. Admission was by invitation only, with the invitations going to a selected list of possible purchasers. This opportunity to perform before the city's prosperous music lovers was eagerly welcomed by local talent, of which Cincinnati had a real wealth. A program of one of the demonstration concerts, made up of selections from Handel, Haydn and Mozart, is quite impressive. Robert Bickerdyke's name does not occur, but he is known to have performed at several such concerts sponsored by Peters & Field.

Mary Ann's husband may have induced his associates to take his musical activities seriously, but apparently he was not so successful with his wife. She liked music well enough, in its place. Her invincible good nature kept her from nagging him about the hours he devoted to it. After all, a husband could have worse habits. Robert Bickerdyke was a sober man. He did not gamble. He was

a reasonably good provider, although he might have been a better one if he had looked for houses to paint as zealously as he looked for chances to perform gratis. She did not grumble because he spent his evenings away from home, and without her. She could not have gone to the concerts if she had been asked. The young stepchildren needed her. There were her own babies, little sons less than two years apart. She had the work of the house to do. For her spare time, when she could find some, there was more serious work than the frivolous pursuit of music.

Cincinnati, just across the river from slaveholding Kentucky, was an important station on the Underground Railway. Mary Ann Bickerdyke received fugitive slaves into her Plum Street house, hid them as long as was necessary, and passed them on to a Quaker group in nearby Hamilton, the next stage of the long road to Canada and freedom. Often she drove them to Hamilton herself, using her husband's wagon and team. When she could she persuaded Robert to take over, arguing that a load of ladders and buckets covered by a paint-spattered tarpaulin would attract less attention if driven by a paint-spattered painter. It was better for the runaways if Robert drove, and unquestionably better for Robert's soul. Let him see that there was real work to be done in the world, far more important and pleasing to the Lord than the making of sweet sounds.

So gently, reasonably, as a good wife should, Mary Ann Bickerdyke tried to lead her husband out of his chosen ways and into her conception of nobler paths. In at least one instance she had a notable triumph.

Early in 1851 the word went round that Jenny Lind, the Divine Enchantress, the Cantatrice Supreme, would positively give a series of spring concerts in Cincinnati. The immediate result was a long and bitter struggle between the management of Melodeon Hall and the National Theater for the honor of presenting her. Melodeon Hall was more gorgeous, but the National Theater had a greater seating capacity. Moreover, its manager proposed to do a complete job of redecorating, installing a new curtain of Lyons

velvet shot with gold thread, and a hand-painted backdrop depicting the Appian Way. The auditorium seats would be reupholstered in Grade A maroon plush, Brussels carpet laid in the aisles, and the star dressing room newly furnished in gilded wood and pink satin.

Impressed either by the proposed magnificence or by the extra number of seats available, P. T. Barnum wrote that he had chosen the National Theater. Late in March Barnum's representative, Mr. LeGrand Smith, arrived to direct arrangements for the concert series. From his quarters in the Burnet House, Cincinnati's newest and most magnificent hotel, he poured out a stream of advance publicity that would do credit to any Broadway press agent. Most of it was run as straight news or editorial matter in the local press. The articles, although never failing to mention Miss Lind's beauty and artistic supremacy, dwelt at greater length on her exemplary character, with convincing anecdotes. Certain well-known operatic arias were not included in her repertoire because they expressed sentiments incompatible with womanly delicacy. Even the pressure of Royal Command had failed to induce her to soil her lips with them. Not Royal Command nor any other urging could make her ride the steamcars on the Sabbath Day. Wherever the Lord's Day found her, the Queen of Song never failed to attend divine services, taking her place without ostentation among the humblest worshipers.

None of this was news to the well-read Cincinnati music lovers, who had followed Miss Lind's astounding progress from the moment she landed at Castle Garden. Eastern newspapers and national magazines scarcely went to press without some mention of the Swedish Nightingale. The Jenny Lind fever was at its height in that spring of 1851. The gentlemanly Mr. LeGrand Smith must have had an easy job of it in Cincinnati.

The original booking at the National Theater called for three concerts, spaced throughout the week. Prices for seats ranged downward from a five-dollar top. However, it was not to be a simple matter of buying tickets at the box office. Instead, an auction would

be held the morning of the concert, not for seats, but for a choice of seats. The highest bidder would have the privilege of selecting any seat in the house, and buying it at the box office price. The auction would then be resumed for second choice, and third, and so on until all the reserved seats were taken.

This arrangement made it certain that the audience would be composed entirely of what Cincinnati journalist Charles Cist playfully referred to as Loud Guns—a current slang expression that translates accurately into Big Shots. At the first auction a Loud Gun named E. McElway, "with a pocket full of rocks," secured first choice of seats by a bid of $575. This was the highest figure, but no others ran lower than $100. It was quite evident that although all of Cincinnati panted with longing to hear the glamorous Jenny, only the affluent would have the privilege.

Everyone knew this, but everyone had hopes. Railroads and steamship lines ran cheap excursions into the city for Jenny Lind Week. Hotels and boardinghouses were jammed. Families played host to out-of-town cousins they had not seen in years. Showmen of lesser stature than the immortal Barnum saw their chance to cash in on the gala crowds. Every available theater was engaged. Citizens and visitors who could not compete with the Loud Guns for Lind concert seats might console themselves with half a dozen second-string entertainments. The Melodeon had the Herons back again. There was a musical spectacle called "Aladdin" at the Olympic. The Museum featured the Great French Moving Dio-Panorama, "The Emperor Napoleon's Funeral," with Band Accompaniment. Spalding & Roberts' American Circus moved into a vacant lot, and there were two showboats cruising the river.

The grand entry occurred on the morning of April 12, with a resounding civic welcome as the steamer docked. Counting Barnum himself and his illustrious artist, the troupe numbered thirty-nine persons. Miss Lind was suitably chaperoned by Barnum's daughter and an elderly female companion. There were two assisting singers, the baritone Giovanni Belletti and Battista Salvi, tenor, both with great European reputations. Julius—afterward Sir Julius—Bene-

dict, English composer, pianist and conductor, was the musical director. Under him was an orchestra of fifteen New York musicians. The others were secretaries and servants.

The star was hurried to a closed carriage, the others took their places in a string of vehicles provided by the mayor, and the cavalcade whirled off to the Burnet House. There Miss Lind retired to rest from the journey, while Mr. Barnum received the press. He was able to give the newspapermen impressive proof of the singer's piety. The third and final concert had been set for the Friday of the following week. The date was now changed to Thursday, since Miss Lind's conscience would not permit her to give a concert of worldly songs on Good Friday.

It might be thought that a lady so devout would have known about Good Friday when the booking was arranged. However, no reporter asked awkward questions. Miss Lind's sensitive conscience admirably demonstrated that here was truly a Christian gentlewoman using her God-given gift of song to His greater glory.

The auctions for seats were presided over by Mr. Barnum in person. Demand was so great that he immediately decided to add two more concerts to the series. During the ten days that the troupe remained in town, interest was never allowed to slacken. Miss Lind herself was kept in discreet seclusion most of the time, emerging only to attend church, modestly and disappointingly veiled from the public gaze, and to take afternoon tea with a few of the city's dowagers. She addressed a girls' Sunday School class gathered at the home of their teacher, and sat for her portrait in Mr. Faris's Daguerrean Gallery. For the most part, however, she remained invisible between platform appearances.

Mr. Barnum, shrewdly rationing his star's public exhibition, was generous enough with his own. On off nights between concerts he delivered a series of Temperance Lectures at the different churches, denouncing the Demon Rum in ringing terms. It was reported that three thousand men signed the pledge at these meetings. By a striking coincidence, that is exactly the number of converts claimed by the famous temperance lecturer James B. Gough on his visit to Cin-

cinnati two months earlier in the same year. Two months is a long time for a confirmed drinker to keep the pledge, in a city where whiskey was dirt cheap. Perhaps there is a little repetition here.

Miss Lind and Mr. Barnum, sustaining and even elevating the city's moral tone, did not disappoint those admirers whose principal interest was in the lady's art. The concerts were as successful as everyone had expected them to be. Toward the end of the series, even the most stiffnecked Puritans were breaking all precedents and entering a theater for the first time in their lives. The final concert was hallowed by the presence of Dr. Lyman Beecher, head of Lane Theological Seminary, and of Bishop McIlvaine. These outstanding clerics applauded the blameless arias from *I Puritani* and *Norma,* they listened with delighted smiles to the "Herdsman's Song" with its bell-like echoes; they wiped away tears at the poignant notes of "Home Sweet Home." It is unlikely that they joined the frenzied gallants in evening dress who unharnessed the horses and drew Miss Lind's carriage back to the Burnet House. But their presence and approval were tribute enough, and one that Mr. Barnum did not fail to exploit in subsequent publicity releases.

The impresario had every reason for gratification over the Cincinnati engagement. It paid off in hard cash as well as in critical acclaim. The total receipts of the five-concert series ran to $80,000. Out of this Miss Lind graciously returned $3000 in carefully apportioned donations to local charities. It was a final goodwill gesture that completed her conquest of Cincinnati hearts.

The Cincinnati engagement, so gratifying to the principals, was made equally pleasant for the lesser members of the troupe. The gentlemen of the orchestra, recruited in New York, found a hospitable welcome among local instrumentalists. One of them, the bass violist, allowed himself to be wined and dined beyond the point of discretion. On the night of the third concert he showed up somewhat the worse for wear, although he managed to take his place without attracting the conductor's attention. Somewhere in the opening overture, "Fra Diavolo," he went astray. Further details are not available. It is known only that by rehearsal time

the following morning, Julius Benedict's orchestra had a vacancy for a double bass. A call was sent to Peters & Field's, and Robert Bickerdyke came hurrying in as a replacement.

He was good, and very good. So good, in fact, that Benedict dropped the erring New Yorker from the pay roll and offered his job to Robert. Mary Ann's husband played in the last two concerts, while he took time to think it over. This was triumph. This was the end and goal of all his musical dreams, of all that he had never dared to dream. To tour the country in support of Jenny Lind, under the golden Barnum management, playing in the best concert halls, before the most discriminating people, to be a part of all that glamour, to find his own pot of gold at the end of his entrancing rainbow —

Robert thought it over. He consulted with his wife. Fifty years later his widow, in a conversation with Julia Chase, told it this way. "He declined it with the remark that his home life was sweeter and dearer to him than any fame or fortune which the association with the Lind company might offer."

Well, maybe. Whatever he thought, or his wife thought for him, he declined. Instead he recommended a friend, one Domenico Mariana. Domenico, who had no home life or did not find it sweet, proved acceptable to Maestro Benedict and departed with the company. If he won fame and fortune he left no trace in the annals of American music.

IV

THINGS began to go badly for Robert Bickerdyke after his great renunciation. There is not necessarily a connection. He may have been a frustrated soul who had not the heart to seek out painting jobs any more. Or painting jobs may actually have become scarcer, as the growing city caught up with itself. There is only his wife's story to give a glimpse of the man. It is certain that she never took his music seriously, or thought of it as anything but a spare-time hobby. On this one occasion when he had a chance to turn it into a profession, she appears to have acted sensibly according to her lights, keeping him in the safe, well-trodden path of his trade. She knew Robert Bickerdyke as we cannot. It may have been the wisest thing she ever did. Or it may have been the one cruel action of a long and kindly life. There is simply no knowing.

They are dust now, Robert's ambitions and Mary Ann's practical decisions, sleeping tranquilly side by side under the maples of Linwood Cemetery. Whether the decision was entirely hers, or whether sober second thought dictated his refusal, is unknown and immaterial. The family life went on as before, except that Robert earned less, and his wife found it harder to make ends meet. In 1856, five years after the Lind concerts, it was decided to pull up stakes and make a new start.

Robert's brother was writing to urge them to come to Illinois. Mary Ann, a farmer's daughter, would no doubt have been happy to move to an Illinois farm, but Robert was stubborn about that.

He had had all the plowing he wanted as a boy in Yorkshire. He would go to Illinois, and gladly, but not to farm. An Illinois town, where there was building going on, where painters were not too plentiful, where living was cheaper than here in the city — that was the place for them.

Mary Ann agreed. For one reason or another, they fixed upon Galesburg. There was a great bustle of preparation, and endless discussion. The two stepsons, now in their early teens, had jobs in Cincinnati and did not want to go. The first wife's relatives, across the river in Kentucky, protested against their taking the little girl so far away. In the end, the girl was left with the Kentucky aunts, and the two boys were settled in a Cincinnati boardinghouse. James and Hiram, the two children of the second marriage, were eight and six now. They were thrilled with the idea of the journey, begun by steamer on the Ohio River. Late in the spring of 1856 the Bickerdyke possessions were loaded aboard, and the family set out for the west.

Galesburg was good to them. The trim, tidy prairie town was famous for its white-painted frame houses. New ones were going up. Knox College was erecting two new buildings, with plenty of interior woodwork to be properly grained and varnished. Robert Bickerdyke had no difficulty in finding work.

He found, too, that he had not cut himself off from music by moving to Galesburg. Len Miller's music store was quite as good a place to hang around as Peters & Field's. For Robert Bickerdyke, trailing his clouds of glory from the Lind engagement, it was even better. Galesburg's aspiring musicians looked up to him as counselor and guide. There are few details of his musical activities there, but it is certain that it was as an outstanding musician that he most impressed his new fellow townsmen. His obituary does not mention his work as a painter, but dwells exclusively upon his musical eminence.

On March 26, 1859, the *Galesburg Free Democrat* carried the notice of a Benefit Concert for Professor Bickerdyke. Such benefits were frequently given for amateur directors, who served without

pay, as a practical expression of gratitude by the musicians who worked under them. The Bickerdyke concert featured the Chorus Class of the Galesburg Academy of Music under the direction of Professor L. B. Miller (who owned the music store), with Full Orchestral Accompaniment. The *Democrat's* editor recommended it wholeheartedly:

> The music-loving public may expect a rich treat this evening in the Concert for the benefit of Professor Bickerdyke at Dunn's Hall. The program is one of surpassing excellence, comprising many pieces which have never before been practised in Galesburg. We learn that new and novel Arrangements have been made to increase the attractiveness of the performance and add to the convenience of the Audience. The object is a worthy one, and we trust a crowded House will greet the performance, and are confident that those who attend will not be disappointed. Our best Instrumentalists are engaged for the occasion.

The concert, a highly successful one, was held on a Saturday evening. On the Tuesday following, Robert Bickerdyke, "apparently full of vigor and life, was suddenly taken with a fit, and died on Thursday morning."

Elsewhere in the same issue that contains the formal death notice, the *Free Democrat* pays its tribute.

> Died in this city on the 31st ult., Mr. Robert Bickerdyke, in the fifty-fourth year of his age. The deceased was born in Yorkshire, England, and removed in early life to Cincinnati, O. . . . Although residing in Galesburg but a few months [it was three years], he had already won the hearts of our people by his dignified and courteous demeanor, and eminent musical qualifications. The community, and especially the musical societies of this place, will miss him in their accustomed places of assemblage. He has long been known in the musical world here.

And so, taken with a fit, or worn-out from trying to boss his wife, Robert Bickerdyke passes from the scene. He left his widow with two half-grown boys, an infant daughter born in Galesburg, and practically no money. Some women would have been dismayed. Mary Ann, never known to show dismay in later years, did not yield to it now. She had, after all, a profession to fall back on.

Courageously she nailed her shingle to the Prairie Avenue cottage. "M. A. Bickerdyke, Botanic Physician," was ready for business.

She seems to have done very well at it. The methods of her school made her more nurse than doctor. Already in her Galesburg life she had demonstrated that she was "good in sickness." The neighbors were used to coming to her for advice when a baby fretted with summer complaint, or Grandma's rheumatism was bad. She was always ready with herb tea, with hot compresses, with cheery reassurance. It was reasonable that her services, freely given before, should be paid for now that she must earn her living. The good people of Galesburg respected her independence and valued her advice more highly because it cost them a moderate fee.

The year after her husband's death the baby, two-year-old Martha, also died. It was in this same year that Mrs. Bickerdyke joined Dr. Beecher's Congregational church. While she was a woman of unshakable religious faith, she was broad-minded about dogma. "I worship with the Methodists, the Congregationalists or the Episcopals, as I happen to light on 'em," she once told an interviewer.

Most of her Galesburg friends were Congregationalists. The church's active Ladies' Aid circle valued the zeal with which Mrs. Bickerdyke canvassed the town to fill missionary barrels. She was very shrewd about unloading discarded ball gowns and French-heeled slippers on secondhand men, turning them into cash to buy cotton cloth for decent Mother Hubbards to clothe the heathen. No one could stretch a dime or a yard of calico so far as Sister Bickerdyke. The Reverend Dr. Beecher said so himself. No one in Galesburg disputed him. Mary Ann Bickerdyke's executive ability, her willingness to tackle the toughest jobs, her utter refusal ever to concede defeat — they knew all about these qualities in Galesburg. Pretty soon now the United States Army would know about them too.

V

On the morning of June 9, 1861, Mary Ann Bickerdyke left the Illinois Central train at Cairo, Illinois. She had sat up all night in the half-empty day coach, wedged uncomfortably among the boxes and bundles she did not trust out of her sight. There was one hundred dollars' worth of relief supplies in that pile, and she was responsible for every cent of it. She did not leave the train until the harried conductor and a fellow passenger had dumped it all safely on the muddy depot platform. Then, clutching the canvas holdall with its medicines, she descended and looked about her.

Cairo was not much to see. The low-lying river town, hemmed in on three sides by earth levees so high that the water was not visible from inside them, steamed and sweltered in the hot June sun. There had been rain in the night, turning the unpaved streets to thick mud. Through it a file of empty mule-drawn army wagons rattled toward the station yard. The train, all freight except for its single passenger coach, was unloading military supplies. Mrs. Bickerdyke drew her own little hoard closer about her as huge boxes and barrels came hurtling down, seized by sweating, cursing men she did not recognize as soldiers. She was in everyone's way, but she could not move without danger of losing her possessions in the scramble. So she stood her ground, waiting for Dr. Woodward.

It was not long before he came, driving up in his familiar buggy. Like most civilian practitioners new to the army, the Galesburg doctor had brought his horse and buggy with him, as much a tool of his

trade as the little black bag. Before long most of the medical men had gone completely military and taken to horseback. But some surgeons stuck persistently to the light, single-seated, one-horse carriage, finding it more comfortable on the long marches, handy for keeping instruments and dressings close at hand, and invaluable for the emergency transport of dangerously wounded — and high-ranking — patients.

Dr. Woodward, Mrs. Bickerdyke noted with approval, was in uniform. It had been made for him by the Galesburg tailor before he left home, faithfully copied from an engraving of General Winfield Scott in the Mexican War. Officers, who provided their own uniforms, were usually quite well supplied. The private soldiers unloading the train were still waiting for the government to issue theirs.

Dr. Woodward looked doubtfully at Mrs. Bickerdyke's luggage, but on her insistence he stowed it all in the buggy. Then he helped her in, sitting high on a bundle of bed linen, and took his place beside her. With difficulty he threaded through the press of wagons in the narrow street, and out the short road to Fort Defiance.

"I've got you a pass for the day, ma'am," he said anxiously. "It wasn't easy. General Prentiss doesn't like women around the camp. You'll have to leave before the sunset gun."

"We'll see about that," she answered placidly. "I'll leave when my work is done. What's that ahead? Is that what you call a fort? Why, it's nothing but a dirt pile, with a few cannons sticking out on top."

"But those cannons command the river, ma'am. Both rivers, do you see? The fort overlooks the very spot where the Ohio and the Mississippi come together. We've got another gun emplacement on the far Mississippi shore, and one on the other Ohio bank. That's Rebel territory across the river: Kentucky and Missouri. Oh, they've not seceded yet, and maybe they can be kept from doing it. But there's no doubt how the people feel over there. They're Southern sympathizers to a man. So are a lot of the folks here in Cairo, for that matter. If the Rebels can take Cairo, they'll have control of the

rivers, and that means control of this whole western country. We can't have that."

"No, I reckon not." Mrs. Bickerdyke was never greatly interested in military problems. "What's that man pointing his gun at me for? Does the fool think I'm a Rebel?"

"He's the sentry, ma'am. This is the camp gate." Dr. Woodward fished in his pocket and produced Mrs. Bickerdyke's pass. They drove through a gap in the rail stockade and into a sea of freshly churned red mud. Wood-floored headquarters tents stood high on piling, very neat in their clean white canvas, with flags flapping listlessly in the muggy air. Beyond them, clustered at the foot of the steep-sided earth mound they called the fort, were rows on rows of smaller tents sitting flat in the mud. Campfires were burning in front of them, for it was nearly noon. A blue reek of frying bacon hung over the tent city, with little knots of jeans-clad men gathered around the fires.

Dr. Woodward turned his horse to the left, where three tents stood apart. "My regimental hospital," he said briefly. "Let me help you down, ma'am."

She stepped out into the mud, clutching her carryall, not bothering to lift her skirts. Mary Ann Bickerdyke had come dressed for action. Her gray calico dress drooped over a scanty layer of plain muslin petticoats, unsustained by the fashionable hoop. Mary Ann had left her Sunday hoop-skirted black at home, along with her crepe-veiled widow's bonnet. Her thick brown hair was covered by a black cotton bonnet of Shaker shape, plain and practical. It had not occurred to her to dress up for this mission. There was work to be done. She had come in her working clothes.

"Well, don't stand there," she said sharply to the young doctor. "Show me what there is to see. Then I'll know what there is to do."

"Yes, ma'am." But still he hesitated to lift the first tent flap. "I ought to tell you, Mrs. Bickerdyke. You may be a little shocked at what you see. I wasn't fooling when I wrote that letter. Things are bad here, ma'am."

"I know they're bad; that's why I came," she snapped. "Come on now, doctor. Let's have the worst."

It was far worse than the doctor's faltering pen had been able to picture. Worse, much worse, than the comfortable citizens of Galesburg could possibly have imagined. Ten men were crowded into the first tent, one or two on cots, most of them on straw pallets spread with an army blanket or a winter overcoat. The beds were so close together that there was scarcely room to move between them. The mud floor was foul with human excrement. A swarm of bluebottle flies circled low over the sufferers, keeping up an angry humming almost as loud as the groans and moans and painful labored breathing. The patients lay in shirts and underdrawers, filthy with vomit, rank with perspiration. On a cot near the door a human scarecrow sat, dressed like the others, feebly stirring the fetid air with a palm-leaf fan. At his feet was a tin water pail with dipper. It was empty. It should have been full, for this man was the nurse, and one of his duties was to fetch drinking water from the nearest storage barrel. He tottered off the cot as the doctor entered, and stood shakily at salute.

"Do you want to talk to the men?" Dr. Woodward asked uncertainly.

Mrs. Bickerdyke shook her head. "Not until I've seen them all. Show me the other tents."

The others were no different, and no better. Mrs. Bickerdyke asked a few questions of the "nurses," and then drew Dr. Woodward out into the open air.

"Doctor," she asked bluntly, "how many of these men are dying?"

"Who knows? All of 'em, most likely. No, I don't mean that. They're tough young fellows, they'll pull through, most of 'em. I guess. I'd hate to make any bets on it, the way things are. If I had 'em in their own homes — "

"That's not what I mean," she broke in. "I asked you how many of them are dying? Dying right now. How many won't see the sun come up tomorrow?"

"It's hard to say. That typhoid case in Tent 3 won't even see the

sun set tonight, if I'm any judge. Two with bloody flux are pretty low. That red-headed Chicago boy is not very sick, but he's starving to death. Can't keep anything on his stomach. Does that answer your question? I'd say that three of them are certainly dying. Some of the others I wouldn't want to commit myself about, one way or the other. We can only hope for the best."

"Yes." She spoke absently, her clear blue eyes scanning the landscape. Near where she stood were half a dozen hogsheads that had once held brown sugar. Now they were empty except for a swarm of flies.

"Doctor, the first thing you got to do is get me some able-bodied men. Don't ask me how. That's your job. You're an officer in this army, ain't you?"

"A junior medical officer," he reminded her.

"All right. You're a captain, I see. Don't them silver bars on your fancy epaulettes mean anything? The privates have to take a captain's orders, don't they?"

"I don't know," he said frankly. "I haven't given any yet. Except to the patients and nurses, of course. The major is the senior surgeon."

"You make me sick!" she said scornfully. She turned away and tramped toward the nearest campfire. The soldiers looked up from their meal as her sturdy shadow fell upon them. For a long moment she stood silently, staring down at the unsavory display of burned, half-raw salt pork, boiled white beans and hardtack.

"Not very good eating, I'd say," she remarked. "A piece of fried chicken 'ud go better. And some lightbread with blackberry jam. I tell you what, boys. The captain has a little job that needs some strong backs and willing hands. If you fellows can see your way clear to helping him out, I can find you some better grub than you got there."

They came willingly to the alluring bribe. Friendly but firm, she stood over them while her orders were carried out. Men were set to sawing the casks in two, while water boiled in every container of any size. Mrs. Bickerdyke opened her stores and brought out sev-

eral cakes of strong brown laundry soap. Then, beckoning the doctor and two or three volunteers to accompany her, she marched upon the first tent.

She waited a minute, while the dull eyes of the sick men turned toward her. Then, unexpectedly, she laughed.

"If your mas could see you now! I bet they ain't one of you had a bath since you left home. Well, we're going to clean things up around here, boys. We're going to clean you up, too. Now how many of you can walk if you try real hard? I got men here to carry you if you can't. But how many can get up for a hot bath and a clean bed and a real home supper? This ain't the sergeant getting you up for drill, remember. Come on, now. Who can walk for fried chicken?"

A surprisingly large number of them could, and did. Those too weak to totter out on their own feet were carried, and set down near the hogsheads-turned-bathtubs.

"You boss this job, doctor," she ordered. "See they're handled easy. But I want every man of 'em ducked and scrubbed. You got scissors on you, I reckon? Well, cut their hair and whiskers down to the skin. I can see the graybacks crawling from here. You'll find new drawers and undershirts in that biggest box. If they ain't enough, wrap 'em up in clean sheets. But don't put none of their old clothes back on 'em. I want that stuff burned, and the straw and blankets along with it. You see about it, doctor. And get me some clean straw."

"Really, Mrs. Bickerdyke," the doctor protested. "I'm afraid this won't do. Several of these men are running high temperatures. A body bath — in the open — It may do them grave harm. I couldn't be responsible."

"Don't worry, you won't be," she said flatly. "I'm responsible. It's ninety in the shade today, and not a breath of air stirring. Nobody's going to take cold. Come on now, who's first in? Get off them clothes, sonny."

The man nearest her shrank as she began unbuttoning his undershirt. She gave him a hearty thwack on the shoulder.

"Modest, huh? Don't like to take a bath in front of a lady? Well, that's all right. The lady's not going to be here; she's got other work to do. Somebody get me a spade. Here, you, what's your name? Andy? Get two spades, Andy. Me and you'll redd out the tent while the doctor tends to the baths. You get at it, doctor. And get me that straw, too."

Inside the stifling tent, her calico skirts tucked up to her substantial knees, she set to with her spade. With the dazed young soldier to help, she shoveled the filthy mud outside, and scraped down to a new layer that was fairly dry.

"This'll have to do for tonight," she told Andy. "Tomorrow we'll get hold of some boards. Now go rustle up that straw, buddy, and hurry. The quicker we get 'em into a decent bed the quicker you can all eat. Fried chicken, Andy. Don't forget it's fried chicken you're working for."

"You sound just like my mom," Andy told her. Young Andrew Somerville of Iowa had not been long away from home; a mother's commands still seemed more natural than a drill sergeant's. Mrs. Bickerdyke laughed and ruffled his curly hair. "You're a good boy, Andy. I bet you're a good son to your mom. Now you go tackle them other tents. You know how I want the floor done. Get someone to help you. Lord knows they's plenty standing around doing nothing."

The bathing operations had attracted a considerable crowd of bored, idle soldiers. Their mornings were given to drill, but no one had been able to devise any employment for the long hot afternoons. The officers, most of them, were in town, enjoying the hospitality of private citizens or local taverns. So far, it was not a bad war for the Union officers stationed at Cairo.

By late afternoon all the sick men were back in bed, scrubbed pink, resting on clean sheets spread over clean straw. Mrs. Bickerdyke used the shirts and drawers she had brought as far as they would go, making a note to send for more. Some of the officers' hospitals furnished their patients with nightshirts, but the men of the ranks were accustomed to sleeping in their long-legged, long-

sleeved canton flannel underwear at home, and would have felt foolish in anything else. The "sanitary supplies" that Mrs. Bickerdyke afterward requisitioned in wholesale quantities always included vast stocks of underwear.

When she had them all back in bed, she dealt out the home-cooked food she had brought from Galesburg. The patients were fed first; what was left went to the willing helpers. Most of the patients showed remarkably good appetites. Those who could not swallow solid food got toddy, a mixture of whiskey, water and brown sugar. Mary Ann Bickerdyke was an uncompromising temperance advocate, with searing contempt for any man who drank whiskey for pleasure. Whiskey as medicine she esteemed highly, ladling it out with a generous hand.

As the shadows lengthened, Dr. Woodward plucked nervously at her sleeve.

"It's almost time for the sunset gun, ma'am," he reminded her. "I had trouble enough getting your pass as it was. You've simply got to be out of here before sundown."

"Don't worry, doctor, I'll be out. Just one last chore. Andy, did you get them buckets? Well, come along."

She marched into the first tent. "Boys, look here a minute," she began briskly. "This here over by the door with the dipper in it is the water pail. You know what a water pail's for, I guess. Well, now this other bucket I'm putting right here in the middle, where you can all get at it. That's a little chloride of lime in the bottom. Is they a man here don't know what this 'un's for?"

An embarrassed snicker answered her question.

"All right, then. I expect you to use it. Anybody's too weak to get to it, the nearest man will pass it to him. I ain't fooling, boys. It took a lot of hard work to get this place cleaned up. I aim to keep it that way. Now I know how it is when you got the trots. I'm not going to be hard on any of you for what you can't help. All I ask is that you help all you can.

"You've done good so far. I was proud to see how some of you got up and walked when you didn't think you could. It's no fun

being sick away from home, without your womenfolks to take care of you. I know that. But it don't help none to lay there and feel sorry for yourselves. It don't help none for me to stand here and say I'm sorry for you. I'd a heap rather say I'm proud of you. And I'll say it to every one of you that gets well and walks out of here. Now get a good night's sleep. I ain't naming anyone as nurse tonight; you all need rest. Them that's able will help the ones that need it without being told, that I'm sure of. Tomorrow we'll see what we can fix up. Good night now, and sleep tight. I'll see you in the morning."

At each tent she repeated her little speech. Then, under the doctor's repeated urging, she walked toward the gate.

"You'll have to hurry if you're to make your train," he warned her.

Mary Ann Bickerdyke laughed and rolled down her sleeves.

"Did you think I was going back, doctor? I'm staying here. This is not a one-day job you thought up. And I stay till the job is done. Look here, you better get back to that fellow with bad typhoid. He's the only one I'm worried about. I wish I could a stayed with him tonight. You go on, doctor. I'll find me a room in town somewheres. Andy, I want to see you in the morning. You're a right handy boy. I'll be needing you. You tell whoever's your boss that I want you to help me. Now run along, both of you. I'll ketch a ride back to town, or walk. 'Tain't far. Good night, doctor. Good night, Andy."

"Good night, Mother." The boy's answer came unthinkingly. Mary Ann smiled her warm, wide smile, touched him gently on the shoulder, and settled her Shaker bonnet more firmly.

"See you both in the morning," she called cheerfully, and trudged off into the gathering dusk.

VI

She found a room by the simple process of knocking on doors and asking for one. A Cairo widow took her in for the night. Before she slept, Mrs. Bickerdyke sat down to write a vigorous letter to her fellow church members back in Galesburg.

Of the five hundred dollars pledged, only one hundred had gone into the supplies she brought with her. She had been very firm about that, insisting that she could not possibly know what was most needed until she had looked over the ground. Now, in the light of what she had seen, she revised her tentative list.

Feather pillows wasted too much space. It would be better for the ladies to buy stout ticking and sew up mattresses and pillow sacks. These could be filled with straw or grass, easily discarded and renewed while the cases were washed. Muslin pillow slips would be needed, but sheets were not so important as she had thought. Blankets and cotton quilts, with a little warmth in them for chilly nights, would be more useful. She needed all the underwear they could send, more soap and sal soda, and some decent chamber pots. Not fancy china ones, mind, but unbreakable zinc, the kind they used at the poorhouse and the jail. This was *very important.*

Then she went on to her main requirement. It was not enough to distribute the supplies and go home again. She would have to stay here until she got things in shape. That might take all summer, the way the army ran things. She would need a room for herself, with a cookstove in it. This would probably run as high as five

dollars a week. Besides that, she'd have to have cash to buy food and firewood. She suggested that the committee send her ten dollars every week. And some skillets, stewpans, kettles and a washboard. She expected she'd be able to scare up washtubs in Cairo, though the dear knows what she'd have to pay for them. Prices here were out of sight. But she'd do the best she could.

The letter does not mention her two sons, so hastily left behind. She knew, none better, the common neighborly practice of "taking the young 'uns off her hands" when a mother was faced with some emergency. This was her neighbors' emergency, not hers. Their sons were the ones who needed looking after here in Cairo. She assumed — and quite rightly — that soldiers' mothers would be glad to take care of *her* boys while she grappled with the graver problem of what was to be done about *theirs*.

Within a few days she had established herself to her liking. The room she chose was a good-sized summer kitchen, long disused, but fitted with a big cooking range, and handy to water and woodpile. Her landlady set up a cot in a corner for her. Firmly settled for an indefinite stay — the brethren at home had approved the ten-dollar weekly allowance — she took a good look at her new job.

Army life was something new in Mrs. Bickerdyke's experience. The army life she saw in that first war summer was something new in everyone's experience, a weird and wonderful product of inexperience and confusion and conflicting theories. Except for the faraway Mexican campaigns and occasional Indian fighting, Americans of her era had no war memories to draw upon. How do you fight a major war? How many men does it take? What will they need? How much will it cost? How will it be paid for?

Nobody really knew. Everybody had notions, or guesses, or passionate convictions. Everyone who could rushed to put his ideas into effect. General John C. Frémont in Missouri, on his own responsibility, placed an order abroad for an immense quantity of castoff Austrian rifles. A New England lady started the havelock craze, setting women all over the country to making white duck sunbonnets for Northern soldiers soon to be exposed to the fierce

Southern sun. The Austrian guns, bent and battered, rusted and with vital parts missing, were so dilapidated that they proved only slightly dangerous to the unlucky soldier who attempted to fire one. The dainty white havelocks made nice dry carpets for mud-floored tents.

The difficulty of raising and equipping an effective national army was complicated by the sacred principle of States' rights. The Southerners, who talked most about the principle, had no monopoly on it. Feeling for it was equally strong in the North. There was a wonderful idea, when the war began, that the Union could prosecute it without encroaching upon the sovereignty of the individual Northern states. The volunteers who answered Lincoln's call after Fort Sumter fell did not enroll in the United States Army. Instead they joined their home state militia organizations, organized, equipped and controlled by state authority. Many of the volunteers were already enrolled, for the militia companies were popular among athletic young men. They went into camp for a few weeks every summer, maintained armories or drill halls that were very convenient for dances, and cut a fine figure in parades. Many of the troops were mounted. They escorted visiting dignitaries, turned out for important funerals, and generally lent a colorful note to civic functions. Their chief activity, however, was competitive drill. These drill tournaments, usually followed by a military ball, were as exciting as a World Series and much prettier.

The troops designed their uniforms to please themselves. A favorite style, particularly in the East, was the Zouave costume, modeled after that of France's Algerian brigade, with full baggy breeches, tight-fitting short jacket and red fez. It was not necessary, of course, for American militia companies to stick to any known designs. Some imaginative troops did even better on their own. One Iowa regiment went to war in "a light gray blouse with green collar and patent leather belt, dark gray pants, striped for officers, a black felt hat turned up at one side and fastened by a tin bull's eye, the size of a sauce plate, which displays the red, white and blue."

Besides choosing their uniforms, the militiamen elected their

own officers, subject to confirmation by the state governors. As in most clubs, the officers were usually gentlemen of means who could be expected to make generous contributions toward running expenses.

This was the foundation upon which the Union Army was built. It took a long time and some disheartening experiences to weld it into the mighty unified force that won the war. In the beginning no one thought winning the war would be too difficult. The first call for volunteers asked only for ninety-day enlistments; ample time, surely, to bring the seceding states back to submission. Long before the ninety-day period was up, Lincoln issued his second call, asking the governors of the states to furnish forty regiments to serve for three years. It was still a matter of volunteers, so the militia commanders had not only to find a lot of new men, but also to talk the ninety-day men into signing up for the longer period.

The provision of supplies, as well as the recruiting of personnel, was left to the states. Each governor was expected to see that his men had what they needed, and send the bill to Washington. Governor Yates of Illinois, an able, energetic man, had done pretty well for his boys. Tents were no problem, since Chicago did a brisk business in supplying canvas-topped covered wagons to west-bound immigrants. On the other hand, wool blankets were so scarce that recruits had to be asked to bring their own. Many of them turned up with homemade patchwork quilts instead.

The prewar militiamen had their exotic parade uniforms, much too grand to wear in the mud and dust of camp life. Many new recruits arrived in their accustomed clothing, broadcloth frock coats and starched linen or butternut jeans, patent leather boots or rough farm clodhoppers. Some local communities made it a point of pride to outfit their home contingents before they left for camp. Small town tailors, overwhelmed by the volume of work, turned the bulk of it over to ladies' sewing circles. The good women altered and improved the designs as they thought best. If good cloth was not obtainable in army blue, they chose brown, gray, Scotch plaid, or any other serviceable color. Of the six regiments stationed at Cairo

in June, five had uniforms of different colors, and none had any sort of sameness in cut.

Ridiculous though the homemade uniforms were, they were far better than the ones supplied by contractors, called in when the size of the problem became apparent. These profiteers chose a material called "shoddy," described as "alleged cloth, made from the sweepings of tailor shops, pounded, rolled, glued and smoothed to look like cloth." Uniforms of shoddy, charged at from eight to fifteen dollars against a private's clothes allowance, were so scantily cut that they looked trim and neat when first put on. They ripped at every movement, and simply disintegrated in the first heavy rain. The homemade garments, made of sturdy prewar woolens, their deep seams overcast by conscientious home dressmakers, outlasted all the shoddy suits a man could pay for.

Paying for them soon became a personal problem. An enlisted man was allowed forty-two dollars a year for clothing, including shoes. When he exceeded that amount, he paid for whatever he needed out of his own pocket. His army pay, eleven dollars a month at first, was raised by Congress to thirteen dollars in August 1861.

Besides his cash pay and his clothing allowance, the ordinary soldier was entitled to his food at government expense. Lloyd Lewis says in his life of General Sherman:

> Company cooks were not in the plan of army organization. Each man received his rations and could prepare them as he pleased: pork or bacon, ¾ lb.; fresh or salt beef, 1½ lb.; flour, 1⅛ lb., or hard-bread, ¾ lb., or corn meal, 1¼ lb. To every hundred rations were added 10 lbs. of beans or rice, or as a substitute, 9¾ lbs. of desiccated potatoes; mixed vegetables, 6¼ lbs.; green coffee, 10 lbs.; sugar, 5 lbs.; vinegar, 4 qts.; and candles, 1 lb.

This was the complete list, very seldom available to the last item. Difficulties of transport and supply might cut it down to two or three varieties of uncooked food. Even when it was all on hand, the average American male had little knowledge of what to do with it. Cooking, particularly in the Middle West, was regarded as exclusively woman's work. A great many of Mrs. Bickerdyke's patients

that first summer were the victims of grave digestive disturbances caused by nothing on earth but poor food, poorly prepared.

It was one of the conditions she undertook to remedy. When cooking fires were lighted she left the hospital to make hasty rounds, demonstrating how beans and salt pork could be made edible, if not palatable. Later, when the army set up a system of company cooks at Cairo, Mrs. Bickerdyke trained them. Her recipes were handed about wherever Cairo men found themselves on the long front.

Through the long hot summer days Mary Ann Bickerdyke divided her time between the camp and her kitchen. She badgered Dr. Woodward into providing an army buggy to transport her and her supplies. It did not take her long to organize the Fort Defiance hospital properly. She managed to get the convalescent nurses replaced by able-bodied men, lounging in the guardhouse for minor offenses. Mrs. Bickerdyke looked with a tolerant eye upon the misdoings that sent them there. Gambling, fighting and drunkenness were only to be expected where men had nothing better to keep them busy. She had something better, and she kept them busy with motherly firmness. They liked it. Hospital police duty proved so popular that it soon had to be abolished, and the nurses drawn from eager volunteers.

Shortly after she settled in, Mrs. Bickerdyke found that she was not the only woman to concern herself with the sick soldiers of Cairo. A young lady of the town, Miss Mary Safford, had visited the camp several times, bringing jelly and soup, and flowers from her garden. She had seldom been allowed to pass the gates, usually leaving her gifts with the sentry on duty. Mrs. Bickerdyke immediately sought her out.

Mary Safford was a Vermont girl who had come to live with her brother, Cairo's richest banker. She was young, beautiful, patriotic and sweetly romantic. She had heard of the suffering in the camp hospitals, and earnestly desired to smooth pillows, stroke fevered brows and read consoling passages from the Scriptures. This role of ministering angel, very popular in the fiction and poetry of the

time, was one that many well-meaning girls aspired to play. A great many of them tried it, particularly in the large cities. Washington's improvised hospitals suffered from a perfect plague of angels, smelling salts in hand, drawing their skirts daintily about them, shrieking and fainting at the sight of blood. Cairo, a much smaller place, had only one angel, Mary Safford. She was just at the threshold of her celestial career when Mary Ann Bickerdyke caught her and brought her down to earth.

Mrs. Bickerdyke took her into the tent hospitals and showed her exactly what needed doing, and the hard, unglamorous, often repulsive labor by which it must be done. Beneath her airs and graces Mary Safford was an intelligent young woman. After the first shock had passed, she settled down to steady, day-after-day work under Mrs. Bickerdyke's direction. The older woman spared her the worst of it. She herself stood over cookstove and washtub through that hot steamy summer, cooking the food, washing clothes and bedding. Miss Safford's was the pleasanter task of spreading clean beds, spoon-feeding the very ill, reading aloud in her pretty cultivated voice. It was pleasant only by comparison, for the stifling heat, the flies and the smells were beyond Mrs Bickerdyke's control. But the two women worked well together, complementing each other's efforts, and bringing a measure of cleanliness and comfort where there had been nothing but squalid misery. Miss Safford's money, or her brother's, was freely spent where it would do most good. The handsome Cairo mansion was frequently used as a convalescent rest home. Mrs. Bickerdyke always felt that she did a good day's work when she enlisted pretty Mary Safford. It was quite agreeable to her that the men began calling their charming young nurse the Angel of Cairo. They called *her* Mother, a homelier title that pleased her better.

Before the summer passed Mrs. Bickerdyke was Mother to every enlisted man in camp, sick or well. Some of the "boys" were her own age, or older. The upper age limit for enlistment was forty-five, but the recruiting authorities were not too fussy about birthdays. If a man was able and willing, with no obvious physical de-

fects, few questions were asked. There were fifteen-year-olds at Cairo, and men close to sixty. To Mrs. Bickerdyke they were all her boys. To all of them she was Mother.

Although she stoutly maintained that she "treated an officer as well as a private, so long as he behaved himself," Mrs. Bickerdyke's heart was always with the rank and file. She was impatient of authority, declaring that she would not be bossed around. The newly commissioned officers at Cairo, untested in battle, overimpressed by their epaulettes, were a bossy lot. Mrs. Bickerdyke fought some royal battles with them. Her most notable conflicts were with the army doctors.

On her second day in camp she learned that Dr. Woodward's hospital was only one of six, two of them across the rivers at Bird's Point and Fort Holt. Each of the six regiments stationed in the Cairo area had its own group of hospital tents, or hospital set up in stables or sheds. The other five hospitals were even more wretched than the first one she had seen. Mrs. Bickerdyke charged into them one by one, scouring and cleaning, making herself a blessing to the patients and a confounded nuisance to the surgeons.

It was the Bird's Point doctor who went to General Prentiss with the first official complaint. This gentleman, a civilian physician of Cairo, was a "contract surgeon." The new army, with not nearly enough medical officers to meet its needs, had resorted to engaging local doctors for part-time work in the camps. This particular man, discreetly identified in the old histories as Dr. M——, fitted in his camp visits as his private practice permitted. The regimental hospital at Bird's Point was the worst neglected and the filthiest of the six, with the highest mortality rate. Mrs. Bickerdyke was in the midst of her cleaning-up activities there, and in a rare fit of righteous rage, when Dr. M—— had himself rowed across the river on his leisurely rounds. In the presence of his patients, she told him exactly what she thought of his hospital, and of him.

The doctor, unable to make himself heard over her tirade, went back across the river and straight to headquarters. Purple in the

face, stuttering with anger, he shouted to the astonished commandant that a "cyclone in calico" had invaded his hospital and turned it upside down.

Brigadier General Benjamin M. Prentiss was an Illinois businessman who had served in the Mexican War. When Lincoln's summons brought the state militia regiments into the national service, Prentiss was a militia colonel. His Mexican War experience was so valuable that Governor Yates commissioned him a brigadier general in the new Illinois army.

At Cairo, Prentiss had the job of turning militiamen and green recruits into soldiers. He was a sensible, hardheaded man who did pretty well with the innumerable new problems thrust upon him.

The general was in no mood, this morning, to worry over the ruffled feelings of a civilian surgeon. The long-delayed shipment of rifles had arrived, complete with ammunition that did not fit them. Chicago had dispatched enough canvas to outfit a camp ten times the size of Cairo, but no tent rope. There was no news of the uniforms ordered from a contract tailoring firm, definitely promised for last week. His desk was piled high with written complaints, from officers reporting insubordination in the ranks, from privates indignant over weevily corn meal, from Cairo citizens outraged over swaggering soldiers who pushed them into their own municipal mud. A visiting clergyman had noted with sorrow that the men did not say grace before meals. An Illinois congressman hoped the general would remember that his son, a newly arrived lieutenant, was delicate and required a minimum of eight hours' uninterrupted sleep every night.

Pushing these weightier matters aside for the moment, General Prentiss listened courteously to the doctor's complaint. He could not make head or tail of it. This was the first he had heard of Mrs. Bickerdyke.

"The matter is easily disposed of," he said briefly. "Women are not allowed on post unless they have passes to visit relatives. Even then, they are only permitted at certain hours and in restricted areas. How did this woman enter the camp?"

"Sir, my information is that she was brought here by Dr. — or should I say *Captain?* — Woodward. For an army officer, I must say he shows very little respect for military regulations. Of course I'm only a lowly civilian myself, but — "

The feud between the army doctors and the contract surgeons was an old story, and a tiresome one. General Prentiss rose in dismissal.

"Thank you, doctor. I'll see Captain Woodward about this. Good day to you."

The general's messenger found Dr. Woodward, and Mrs. Bickerdyke with him, for she had followed hard on her accuser's heels. She insisted on accompanying Woodward to the headquarters tent. The interview that followed is not recorded, but in after years Mrs. Bickerdyke said simply, "I talked sense to him."

Whatever she said, she convinced the general that her services were too valuable to lose. From that time on, she had semiofficial standing in the camp. Her room became a diet kitchen, supplied in part from the army's scanty hospital fund. This fund was something new, worked out as the hospitals filled up. Before the need became so plain, a sick soldier ate his regular rations or he did not eat. Now instead the cash value of his ration went into a fund from which sick-diet food could be purchased. Mrs. Bickerdyke undertook to do the purchasing, as well as preparing the food. There was never enough money for what she needed. She pieced out the hospital diet by coaxing or demanding the delicacies sent from home to men who were not ill.

These home-packed boxes cluttered the trains and railroad sidings. Homesick recruits, writing their mothers and wives of the horrible army food, stirred the good ladies into action. As Mary Livermore tells it, "Women rifled their storerooms and preserve closets of canned fruit and pots of jam and marmalade, which they packed with clothing and blankets, books and stationery and photographs. Baggage cars were soon flooded with fermenting sweetmeats and broken pots of jelly. Decaying fruit and vegetables, pastry and cake, badly canned meats and soups ruined clothing and

papers." The summer was hot. Cars with civilian shipments lay for days on sidings while right of way went to military necessities.

Mrs. Bickerdyke salvaged what she could of the food that arrived in Cairo, and shamed the recipients into turning it over to her for her patients. She had a hearty distaste for the pampering of healthy young men. They were soldiers now, she reminded them, and a soldier ought to be tough enough to put up with army fare. A sick soldier, of course, was different. Nothing was too good for him. She saw to it that her sick boys got everything good that came into camp.

Before the summer ended, the flood of well-meant gifts became a problem to the military authorities. The garrison at Cairo changed frequently, as regiments moved out and new ones came in. Forces from Iowa, Wisconsin and Michigan took the place of the all-Illinois contingent there. The soldiers' families, unable to keep up with troop movements, sent their boxes to camps from which their men had already moved out. The men wrote from wherever they happened to be, complaining that no one thought to send them anything. There was a growing impression that the officers grabbed all the goodies and ate them up themselves.

Mrs. Bickerdyke certainly grabbed everything that came to Cairo. If the box was addressed to an individual soldier, and if she could find him, she got his consent. But as the summer wore on, she was delighted to find that more and more boxes bore the return address of the Soldiers' Aid Society, Chicago. The Soldiers' Aid boxes were efficiently packed, contained sensible nonperishables, and were marked for general distribution where the need was greatest. The capable Mary Livermore had taken the Chicago situation in hand.

Mary A. Livermore of Boston had come west a few years before with her clergyman husband. Considered a woman of rare intellectual gifts, she had been a teacher before her marriage, and a governess in a Virginia plantation family. What she saw of slavery there made her an ardent Abolitionist. In Chicago the Reverend Daniel P. Livermore, of the Universalist faith, founded a religious paper called the *New Covenant.* Its pages were brightened by his

wife's poetic prose. Mary Livermore was unquestionably a snob, with a strong conviction of superiority and a trying attitude of condescension to her associates. Her flowery literary style makes amusing reading now. Yet with it all she was an earnest, warm-hearted woman, with a real talent for getting things done. She brought order and efficiency to the Chicago Soldiers' Aid Society. Hers was the long view that the women at home should work for the welfare of all soldiers, not for that of their own relatives alone. The idea spread, and Mrs. Livermore traveled all over the state, organizing similar societies in the smaller towns. When the United States Sanitary Commission decided to set up a Chicago branch, Mrs Livermore was the logical person to organize it.

The United States Sanitary Commission, forerunner of the American Red Cross, received its national charter in June 1861. "Sanitation" was a new word, and a new science. The American army administration had no place for it. A New York Unitarian clergyman, Dr. Henry Bellows, had been impressed by the work of the British Sanitary Commission in the Crimean War. Backed by three distinguished doctors, he went to the Army Medical Department to propose a similar agency for the Civil War. The Commission would advise on camp locations, water supply, and control of contagious diseases. It would send its own inspectors to see whether sanitary regulations were being obeyed. The make-up would be civilian, but full co-operation with military authorities would be pledged.

Dr. Bellows fought a courageous fight in Washington before his plan was grudingly accepted, with the warning that the Commission was to act as an advisory body only, with no power to enforce its recommendations.

In spite of these discouraging restrictions, the Sanitary Commission achieved notable success, much of it in fields not even contemplated when Dr. Bellows drew up his original plan. A good deal of credit must go to the General Secretary, Frederick Law Olmsted. This frail little man, botanist, landscape artist and later the father of New York City's Central Park, trained a force of in-

spectors who traveled to far-flung camps, stubbornly insisting that garbage must be burned and latrines provided. "Even in all these woods!" one disgusted officer wrote home.

The Sanitary Commission inspectors found hospital conditions appalling. In the words of a Wisconsin soldier writing home, "Our hospitals are so bad that the men fight against being sent to them. They will not go until they are compelled, and many brave it out and die in camp. I really believe they are more comfortable and better cared for in camp, with their comrades, than in hospital. The food is the same in both places, and the medical treatment the same when there is any. In the hospital the sick men lie on rotten straw; in the camp we provide clean hemlock or pine boughs, with the stems cut out, or husks, when we can jerk them from a secesh cornfield. In the hospital the nurses are convalescent soldiers, so sick themselves that they ought to be in the wards, and from their very feebleness they are selfish and sometimes inhuman in their treatment of the patients. In the camp we stout hearty fellows take care of the sick — rough in our management, I doubt not, but we do not fail for lack of strength or interest. . . . We need beds and bedding, hospital clothing and sick-diet, proper medicines, surgical instruments, and good nurses — and then a decent building or a good hospital tent. I suppose we shall have them when the government can get round to it, and in the meantime we try to be patient."

This letter was written in November, when the war was eight months old. The plain fact was that the Army Medical Department was utterly unprepared to cope with full-scale war. Two years had to pass before the government was able to supply beds, medicines and dressings in anything like the quantity needed. It was never able to solve the transport problem, so that even existing supplies were often unavailable in the worst emergencies. In those two years, from its organization in June 1861 until late in 1863, the Sanitary Commission was the main supplier of the army's hospital needs, furnishing everything from crutches to specially equipped trains and steamboats.

The money came from voluntary donations, in cash and in goods. A large part of it came from the women's Soldier Aid societies that sprang up all over the North. The women rolled bandages and scraped lint, made shirts and drawers, sewed mattress cases, contributed home-dried fruits and vegetables. Local branches of the Commission were set up in ten cities, where supplies were collected, sorted, and sent wherever the field inspectors requested them.

Many prominent Chicago businessmen contributed to setting up the Northwestern branch, but Mary Livermore and her friend Mrs. Jane C. Hoge did most of the work. The Commission office, in the McVicker's Theater building on Madison Street, was a clearing house for donations. Mrs. Eliza Porter, another minister's wife, was placed in charge of the "rooms." Since some of the needed supplies were of an intimate nature, and since most of them were expected to come from women, it was considered important to have always at the office "the constant presence of a lady of intelligence, character and social position . . . to receive visitors of her own sex calling at the rooms . . . to maintain a correspondence with leading ladies of the Northwest." It must have been very reassuring to lady donors to find that they could discuss chamber pots and underdrawers with a member of their own sex, and one of social position.

These were perfectly valid considerations in those Victorian days. Eliza Porter, described as "lovely, gentle and refined, yet courageous, heroic and devoted," undoubtedly lived up to all the adjectives. Her later war record is one of selfless devotion and unwavering courage.

While Mrs. Livermore and Mrs. Hoge bustled about, organizing, lecturing, turning a steady flow of donations toward Chicago, while Eliza Porter in the elegant Madison Street offices gently charmed lady visitors into more substantial contributions than they had intended, Mary Ann Bickerdyke labored on at Cairo. All she knew of the Commission was that after October, when the Chicago Commission was set up, more supplies began to come in, and more sensible ones. She calmly appropriated them until the Commission opened a depot of its own at Cairo, in charge of a retired preacher

named Folsom. It was a little more difficult then, for she had to talk the reverend gentleman into releasing them to her. She was making very good progress at it when the phony war period came to an end.

All summer long the men at Cairo had drilled and idled in the mud, waiting for something to happen. It happened very soon after Colonel Oglesby, who had replaced General Prentiss, was in turn replaced by General Grant.

VII

THE WAR had found Ulysses S. Grant keeping store in Galena, Illinois. A West Point graduate and a veteran of the Mexican War, he had left the army and settled down to a not-too-successful business career when the Civil War called him back to arms. He helped raise the Twenty-first Illinois regiment from among his neighbors, was elected its colonel, and two months later commissioned brigadier general. Before assuming the Cairo command he had distinguished himself by occupying the town of Paducah, Kentucky, a feat that discouraged Confederate sentiment there and went far toward keeping Kentucky in the Union. Under his leadership the men from Cairo were to get their first taste of battle.

Belmont was not much of a battle, as battles go. It is not even quite certain who won it. Early in November Grant loaded 3000 Cairo men aboard steamers and sailed twenty miles down the Mississippi River. His purpose, in his own words, was "to make a demonstration on both sides of the Mississippi River, with the view of detaining the Rebels at Columbus within their lines."

Columbus, on the Kentucky side, was a Confederate strong point, too heavily fortified for attack by Grant's small force. But directly opposite it, in Missouri, was a smaller Confederate camp at the village of Belmont. Grant attacked Belmont on November 7, in a four-hour engagement that left the camp in his hands.

This would have been a sufficiently satisfactory "demonstration" if it had ended as the general planned, in a safe and speedy with-

drawal. But the Cairo boys had other ideas. It was their first battle, they had won it, and they were in the mood to celebrate. They ranged through the captured camp, setting fires, picking up souvenirs, eating and drinking, making speeches and singing songs. They had seen the Johnny Rebs run. Wasn't that enough? So far as the Cairo boys were concerned, the war was won. It only remained to find Jeff Davis and hang him on a sour apple tree.

Grant found his officers as demoralized as their men. It took time to bring them to their senses and get the expedition headed toward the steamers. In that time the Confederates across the river took to their own boats and crossed in force, with General Leonidas K. Polk at their head. Fighting broke out in earnest down on the sandy shore. The heaviest losses on both sides occurred during this second skirmish. Under murderous fire the Federals managed to embark. Later both sides claimed the victory. The Confederates had forced a confused, hasty withdrawal. But Grant had destroyed the enemy's Missouri beachhead, as well as giving his green troops battle experience.

Victory might be in dispute, but losses were real enough. Federal casualties were 485 killed, wounded and missing. Many of the wounded had to be left on the shore, to be taken prisoner by the enemy. About 200 injured men were helped or carried aboard ship. The steamers, pleasure vessels of previous summers, were equipped with steam calliopes. On the voyage downstream they had merrily tootled "Yankee Doodle." They put back to Cairo now to the doleful strains of a funeral dirge.

Mrs. Bickerdyke and Mary Safford were waiting at the dock, surrounded by every wagon, buggy, handcart and wheelbarrow they could scrape up. Miss Safford had arranged with Cairo friends to take the wounded officers into their spare rooms. The enlisted men were hurried off to the inadequate camp hospitals.

Even the army surgeons, contemptuous of soldiers who succumbed to civilian diseases, had to admit now that Cairo needed a real military hospital. Within the next few days a large half-

finished hotel was commandeered, to become the first general hospital of the Cairo district. Mother Bickerdyke, with no authority from anybody, hurried the carpenters along. When her patients were moved in, she moved in with them. The surgeon in charge told her that she was not wanted. Nursing would be done by volunteers from the ranks. A diet kitchen was already planned, with a cook who had kept a restaurant in civil life. There was absolutely no need of Mrs. Bickerdyke's services. If women nurses were needed — the surgeon emphatically felt that they were not — they could be obtained later from the Army Nurse Corps now being organized in Washington by Dorothea Dix. For the present, the United States Army would run its Cairo hospital without outside interference.

Mother Bickerdyke didn't think so. She went to General Grant, and came out with a polite note for the surgeon. The general did not wish to interfere in medical matters. But he thought it would be an excellent idea to appoint Mary Ann Bickerdyke matron of the new hospital.

Fuming, the surgeon made the appointment, warning the meddlesome lady that her duties were to be confined strictly to checking and giving out supplies, and overseeing the laundry. Especially she was to keep out of the kitchen, where the professional cook strongly resented interference. Mrs. Bickerdyke smiled and nodded as the surgeon outlined her duties.

"All right, doctor," she said genially. "I've had enough cooking to do me this summer, Lord knows. If your fellow does it right he'll have no trouble with me. If he don't do it right he'll have plenty. Everybody don't do things right, doctor," she ended earnestly, "sooner or later has trouble with me. And not just cooks, neither."

She turned her broad back and marched away, leaving an enemy behind her.

Thanks to Mary Livermore's efficient work in Chicago, Sanitary Commission supplies flowed freely into the Cairo hospital. It was Mrs. Bickerdyke's duty as matron to receive and store the provisions, giving them out on requisition from the surgeons and wardmasters. All the nurses were enlisted men, supervised by junior officers with

the "wardmaster" title. Cooks and stewards were also detailed from the ranks. The senior surgeon had several aides, not all of them with medical degrees.

Mrs. Bickerdyke was not supposed to go into the wards. If a wardmaster came with an order for four bottles of whiskey and six of port wine, it was not her business to inquire into the use made of them. The cook drew upon her for beef extract or preserved fruit, but orders forbade her to follow him into the kitchen or see who ate the delicacies.

Such orders meant nothing at all to Mary Ann. She invaded the wards and the kitchen at her pleasure. It did not take her long to find out what was going on. The liquor went to the "doctors' room," where the chief surgeon and his aide held nightly drinking bouts. The head nurse was doing a brisk business in the sale of donated articles. In the kitchen, Tom the cook and his helpers grew fat on the best food Chicago could provide for army invalids. In the mud and discomfort of the Cairo camp, the new General Hospital was a merry oasis of comfort, prosperity and good cheer. Everyone in it was happy, except of course the patients. And except Mary Ann Bickerdyke.

She went to the senior surgeon and reported bluntly that the Sanitary Commission supplies were being stolen. His answer was to order her out of his hospital. He had never wanted her there. Women had no business in a military installation, and he had always said so. Now that she had begun to make trouble, she could pack up and get out. At once.

Mary Livermore records Mrs. Bickerdyke's reply. "Doctor," she told him flatly, "I'm here to stay as long as the men need me. If you put me out of one door I'll come in at another. If you bar all the doors against me, I'll come in at the window, and the patients will help me in. If anybody goes from here it'll be you. I'm going straight to General Grant. We'll see who gets put out of here."

It was the last thing the doctor wanted. Grudgingly he admitted that he might have been a little hasty. He'd look into her complaints,

and see that the supplies were not misused. But she must remember that she was only the matron, subject to his authority, and required to show the proper respect for his office.

"I respect the office all right," she said grimly. "I respect it so much I aim to see it filled the way it ought to be. All right, doctor, you see what you can do with that bunch of thieves you've got in here. I'll be watching, mind you."

She watched, and she could not see that conditions changed, in spite of the surgeon's promise. One day she invaded a ward and saw the wardmaster, a young lieutenant, gossiping with a crony. It was lunchtime, but the meal could not be served until the officer completed his inspection. He went on chatting, while the hungry patients waited.

Mrs. Bickerdyke was already angry when she approached the lieutenant. The young man's blouse was open, revealing the shirt underneath. It was his undershirt, for the uniform blouse, buttoning to the chin, made it possible to dispense with an outer shirt. Something about the cut of the garment attracted Mary Ann's attention. She came closer, jerked off the coat, and turned back the shirt's neckband. There, plainly stenciled in indelible ink, were the letters NWSC—Northwestern Sanitary Commission.

The lieutenant was young, and slight, and taken by surprise. The furious push Mrs. Bickerdyke gave him threw him to the floor. She planted her substantial posterior firmly upon his stomach and proceeded to remove the Sanitary shirt. She held it up, and the patients cheered.

"How about his underpants, ma'am?" an excited voice demanded. Calmly she explored the waistband. The nether garment, to the disappointment of the audience, proved to be the young man's private property. But the soft hand-crocheted slippers had certainly come in a Soldiers' Aid box, and there was some doubt about the socks. Just to make sure, she removed them also. Then, quite matter-of-factly, she rose and helped her victim to his feet.

"You ain't sick, young fellow," she told him. "Maybe you didn't know, but Sanitary stuff is for sick men, not well ones. Now get

on with your work. These boys have waited too long already for their grub."

She followed in his wake while the barefoot medic made his rounds. It was his last tour of duty in that ward, and in that hospital. That night he applied for transfer to a regiment leaving for the front. Mrs. Bickerdyke bore him no ill-will, and often wondered how he had turned out. She thought he was a nice boy, with the makings of a good soldier. "He just needed somebody to learn him what's what," she said indulgently. She hoped and believed that she had learned him a little.

The episode gave the bored, weary patients something to talk about and smile over for days. Before too long they had another one to brighten the monotony of hospital routine. This one happened in the kitchen, out of their sight, but not out of hearing. The whole hospital heard it.

Mother Bickerdyke found that patients still were not receiving the special delicacies she issued to the cook. She spoke to Tom, who stoutly denied that anyone on the staff ever touched them. If it was true, as she charged, that the kitchen was always full of men with no business there, that was because the water cooler was in the kitchen. Everyone, from the senior surgeon down, came in for a drink of water. That didn't mean they ate the patients' food. She'd get into trouble if she didn't watch out, making charges she couldn't prove.

Craftily Mary Ann laid her little trap. From somewhere in Illinois came a case of exceptionally fine dried peaches. She waited until just before rush hour in the kitchen, and then lugged the peaches in.

"You've got your hands full, Tom," she said kindly. "I'll just stew these on the back of the stove where it won't be in your way. They'll make a nice bite for the boys' supper."

While Tom and his aides prepared the evening meal, Mrs. Bickerdyke hovered about, stirring her peaches, adding brown sugar and cinnamon, until the delicious fragrance stole through the hot kitchen, overpowering the smell of pork and onions. Then she poured the amber fruit into shallow platters and set them on the window sill.

"They'll be cool by the time you're ready to dish up supper. I'll be back to give 'em out myself. They ain't enough to go round, and I want to see they get to the boys that need 'em most. Don't you touch 'em, Tom. And see that nobody else touches 'em. This is patients' food."

Tom scowled at her. "Nobody in my kitchen ever touches patients' food, lady. How many times do I have to tell you? If you'd do your job and let me do mine—"

She smiled at him. "There's nothing I'd like better. Just see you do do your job, that's all. Now remember, nobody's to touch them peaches till I come back."

She went out, back to her little office, where a pile of Sanitary reports waited her attention. In the late afternoon lull the hospital was comparatively quiet. All the ward doors were open for air. Through them came the sound of an occasional groan, or a snore, or a murmur of listless conversation. Through her own open door Mrs. Bickerdyke could watch the usual afternoon parade to the kitchen. Wardmasters, nurses, surgeons and stewards always seemed to need a drink of water at about this time of day, when the principal meal was in preparation. She watched them go by, and without surprise she observed that they did not come back.

The kitchen door remained closed, but presently strange sounds seeped through the heavy oak. Mrs. Bickerdyke smiled, and went on with her paper work. Soon, however, the hubbub in the kitchen rose to such a pitch that patients in distant wards were startled into wakefulness. Mary Ann rose and made her unhurried way to the kitchen. She left the door open behind her, for she was not one to deny her patients any little occasion for innocent merriment.

A distressing sight met her eyes. All over the kitchen floor, or sagging against table and wall, writhing, retching men cursed and groaned in pain, clutching their stomachs and calling upon their Maker. Mother Bickerdyke, usually so ready with sympathetic aid in the face of suffering, stood and watched them with an unfeeling grin.

"What's the matter, fellows?" she asked cheerfully. "Peaches don't

agree with you, huh? Well, let me tell you you're lucky. Hush up now, you ain't going to die this time. All you got was a little tartar emetic. Next time it'll be rough-on-rats, and then you *will* have something to groan about. Get up now." She gave the prostrate Tom a little push with her foot. "My boys are waiting for their suppers. And remember when I tell you to leave the patients' food alone, *I mean it.*"

It was a drastic lesson, but it was not enough. Delicacies continued to disappear from the kitchen. At Mrs. Bickerdyke's urgent request, the Chicago Sanitary Commission sent down a large refrigerator with a strong lock. Mary Ann personally stowed the perishable foods in it, and put the key in her pocket. That first night the lock was broken, and the refrigerator rifled.

This time Mrs. Bickerdyke took the action she had long threatened. She went to the provost marshal, and with him to General Grant. There was a thorough airing of her charges, supported by testimony from the Sanitary Commission agent who had delivered the delicacies, and from the patients who had never received them. The chief surgeon and his officers escaped with a reprimand, and transfer to distant posts. The enlisted men, stewards and nurses, were returned to active duty with their regiments. Tom the cook spent some time in the guardhouse first.

A new chief surgeon, a Dr. Taggart, took charge. He won Mrs. Bickerdyke at once by asking her to advise on the selection of the new personnel. Out of her wide acquaintance with the rank and file she selected nurses and helpers she felt could be trusted. She had already moved into the kitchen on the day of Tom's arrest. Now, with cooks of her own choice to help her, she was able to manage the meals without giving up her matron's office.

Thanks to her untiring efforts, the Cairo General Hospital became widely known as a model institution. She had no pattern to follow, for permanent military hospitals were new to the United States Army. The Medical Department in Washington wrangled, and laid down rules, and changed them overnight. In civilian life, nobody had really approved of hospitals. Conservative people did not really

approve of them now. A hospital was a place for sick paupers, whose relatives could not care for them at home. They were places where doctors "experimented," learning their trade on indigent human guinea pigs. Something of the old stigma still clung to the new military hospitals. Mothers and wives were outraged to hear that their precious boys were lying helpless in hospital wards. If they lived near enough, the anxious ladies put on their bonnets and descended upon the hospitals to see for themselves what went on. A good part of Mrs. Bickerdyke's work at Cairo General was receiving and reassuring her patients' female relatives. Very skillfully she turned their anxiety into useful channels. Pointing out the clean white sheets, the nourishing special diet, the little comforts that meant so much to the patients, she explained that all these things came from the Sanitary Commission. And the Sanitary Commission was supported by local Soldiers' Aid Societies. Women like themselves had bought and hemmed the sheets, canned the soup, knitted the bedsocks. To go home and throw herself into this work was the greatest contribution any mother could make to her own son's welfare, and to that of all mothers' sons.

Mary Livermore, journeying about the Middle West to inspire small-town Aid Societies to greater effort, heard a great deal about Mother Bickerdyke. She inquired of the Reverend Mr. Folsom, the Commission's Cairo agent, and received an enthusiastic report. Pretty Mary Safford, unflaggingly pursuing her angelic activities, was responsible for much of the hospital's favorable publicity. Miss Safford hung the white lace curtains at the bare windows, and saw to it that there were flowers or autumn leaves in season to brighten the dreary wards. Miss Safford's Sunday afternoon prayer meetings, with sacred music and guest preachers, were well thought of. The local Cairo press, perhaps not unmindful of Banker Safford as a powerful financial force in the community, gave a great deal of space to hospital doings.

The Commission's Cairo agent, quite willing to give the glamorous Miss Safford her due, felt bound to tell Mrs. Livermore that the real creator of the efficient, smoothly running hospital was Mary

Ann Bickerdyke. It was Mrs. Bickerdyke who received the Sanitary stores, and made them go farther than anyone could have expected. Her sensible, down-to-earth suggestions had resulted in real savings. For example, she had asked the Commission for three strong rat traps. For their cost, slightly under a dollar, hundreds of dollars' worth of flour and farina had been saved. It might seem from Mrs. Bickerdyke's requisitions that she used an inordinate amount of soap, scouring powder and lye. The agent could assure Mrs. Livermore that the spotless cleanliness of the hospital was a vital factor in the patients' contentment and satisfactory progress. He had nothing but praise for the matron's high standards, and for the thoroughness with which she maintained them.

Mrs. Livermore would have liked to see the Cairo hospital for herself, but she was far too busy. After the battle of Belmont in November, there was a lull in the fighting that lasted well into the new year. The Union was gathering its forces for massive attack, and the Sanitary Commission had its work cut out. No one now thought that this would be a short war, ending before much blood had been shed. The high army chiefs in Washington were preparing the campaigns in which the blood would be shed, and the Sanitary Commission was getting ready to mop it up.

Mary Livermore was darting about her territory, urging the Soldiers' Aid societies to send more lint and bandages, and above all to raise some money. The Commission was about to embark upon its most ambitious project, the fitting up of floating hospitals. For this hard cash would be needed. Mrs. Livermore and the Chicago businessmen associated with her raised several thousand dollars in the autumn of 1861, enough to charter five Mississippi River steamers.

Traffic on the Mississippi, booming throughout the 1850's, had come to a standstill with the outbreak of war. Every river harbor was clogged with idle shipping. The Union Navy took over the famous river queens, and at St. Louis and at Cairo began converting them into gunboats. The white gingerbread balconies vanished behind walls of sheet iron broken only by protruding cannon. Iron

was scarce and precious, so the smaller vessels were merely boarded up with heavy planks. The valiant mortar boats, built in such numbers at St. Louis, were little more than rafts, with high built-up iron walls, open to the sky, and without motive power. They were towed into position by gunboats. The converted river steamers, besides providing transport for men and munitions, amazed the world by carrying naval warfare into the heart of the inland South. By the time Admiral Farragut took New Orleans and opened the river to the regular naval vessels, the improvised Mississippi fleet, shallow of draft and well suited to the sluggish Southern rivers, had proved its worth as a valuable fighting arm.

Dr. Laurence Aigner came down from Chicago on behalf of the Sanitary Commission. He leased the *City of Memphis,* the *Hazel Dell,* the *Franklin,* the *War Eagle* and the *City of Louisiana.* This pretty well exhausted the funds the Commission had been able to raise so far. Later the five ships, as well as a number of railroad passenger cars, were fitted out quite elaborately as hospitals. For the present, Dr. Aigner had to content himself with filling the steamer cabins and staterooms with Sanitary cots, obtained from the Commission's Cairo depot. The Reverend Mr. Folsom, the resident agent, helped with all the supplies he could spare. The two men had the benefit of Mrs. Bickerdyke's counsel, for nothing that concerned the welfare of soldier patients escaped her attention.

Mother Bickerdyke and Mr. Folsom were old friends by now. An equally warm friendship grew up between her and Dr. Aigner. He was the first physician she had met who shared her view that army hospitals ought to have women nurses. No one else thought so. Even Dr. Woodward of Galesburg, who had appealed to his fellow townsmen for hospital supplies, had been disconcerted when he found that he had to take a female nurse with them. Dr. Woodward was gone now, transferred to another camp. Dr. Taggart, superintendent of the Cairo hospital, approved Mrs. Bickerdyke's work, but considered her exceptional. Lady "hospital visitors," as Mary Safford and her friends were officially classified, were well enough to cheer the patients for short periods. A competent, sensible

matron to look after linen room and kitchen was a real asset, as Mrs. Bickerdyke had proved. But women in the wards at all hours, women performing the intimate services that helpless men require — no, it was not to be thought of. Certainly not in the United States Army.

Far away in Washington, Dorothea Dix was listening to the same objections. Like Mrs. Bickerdyke, Miss Dix was firmly of the opinion that suffering men, in or out of the army, needed a woman's care. Unlike Mrs. Bickerdyke, Dorothea Lynde Dix was a famous person, author, lecturer and reformer, and in a position to exert considerable influence in Washington. While Mrs. Bickerdyke struggled single-handed at Cairo, Dorothea Dix was triumphantly organizing her Female Nurse Corps as a division of the army's Medical Department.

Miss Dix was a homely, acid-tongued spinster of sixty who had already forced reforms in the care of the insane. She met the objections to women army nurses with complete candor. No modest woman would undertake such work, it was argued. And the immodest ones, who might — who would they be but abandoned hussies using their unique opportunity to play upon the base passions of their patients? The army hospitals already had troubles enough. There was no inclination to multiply them by introducing the fearful menace of Sex.

Miss Dix conceded that the morals of the soldiers constituted a sacred trust. She had no intention of recruiting any hussies. The nurses she chose would be middle-aged women of unblemished character, recommended by their pastors. As evidence she submitted to the army authorities a circular she had drawn up. It ran:

> No woman under thirty years need apply to serve in government hospitals. All nurses are required to be very plain-looking women. Their dresses must be brown or black, with no bows, no curls, no jewelry, and no hoopskirts.

Miss Dix hounded the Medical Department officers until they reluctantly agreed to the formation of the corps, with her as its head. She scrupulously lived up to her undertaking. There is only one

recorded instance in which she accepted a volunteer under thirty. Miss Rena Littlefield of Indiana was an estimable young person for whom, to judge by her portrait, the adjective "plain-looking" would be sheer flattery. Nevertheless, she was only twenty-eight. She bribed her way into the corps by bringing six elderly ladies as recruits. Thirty was the minimum age, and not much favored by Miss Dix. She liked the forties and the fifties better, and so did her superiors of the Medical Department.

Miss Dix's duties as superintendent were confined to recruiting and certifying nurses. Except for those gathered in and around Washington, she seldom saw the candidates. Their applications and credentials were forwarded to her by mail, accompanied by photographs and detailed descriptions. If she approved, she stamped the papers and passed them along to the Medical Department. It was then the nurse's business to persuade the head of her chosen hospital to ask the Department for her services. On his requisition, she was put on the army pay roll to serve in his hospital. The pay was twelve dollars a month, a dollar less than a private soldier's. A nurse had no clothing allowance, and no uniform unless she chose to design one for herself and pay for it. She drew army rations and was entitled to transport if a surgeon requested it for her. She was directly under her surgeon's orders, and could be dismissed by him if he found her unfit.

Miss Dix's screening system must have been effective, for it is gratifying to report that no army nurse was ever dismissed for moral laxity. Quite a few lost their jobs for "impertinence" to doctors. Many died of exposure or disease contracted in the service. Many more went home when the war ended, permanently broken in health. Thirty years later, in 1892, Congress finally got around to voting nurses' pensions, twelve dollars a month. Since they had been middle-aged women when they entered the service, only a handful survived to make a claim, and the cause of congressional economy was nicely served.

VIII

By JANUARY 1862, General Grant had perfected his plans for the assault on Fort Henry, on the Tennessee River. On February 2 the expedition of 9000 men embarked at Cairo, moving up the Ohio to its junction with the Tennessee, and then across Kentucky on the muddy Tennessee waters, swollen with the floods of a mild, rainy winter. Fort Henry lay just across the state line, in a bend of the river. Its capture would give the Union forces possession of a navigable stream right through the enemy's territory, all the way to Muscle Shoals in Alabama.

Escorting Grant and his 9000 soldiers was Flag Officer Andrew Hull Foote, with his little fleet of seven gunboats. Credit for the Fort Henry victory must go to Foote, who disabled the Confederate water batteries and was steadily pounding the walls to pieces when the flag of surrender was run up. The victorious army entered to find that the place held less than a hundred men. The garrison had withdrawn during the bombardment, hurrying overland to Fort Donelson, twelve miles to the east.

Fort Donelson was on another important river, the Cumberland. Sixty miles upstream lay the important Secessionist city of Nashville. If Grant could take Donelson he would have an easy waterway straight into Nashville. The key strong point of Donelson was well situated for defense on a hill sloping up to a hundred feet above the river. Emplacements for the heavy guns of the water batteries had been cut in the hillside, well protected by earthworks. On the

land side in the rear, the direction from which the Union land forces must come, there was a line of rifle pits screened by felled trees, trimmed and pointed to form a spiky abatis. The land itself provided every possible obstacle against invasion. Between the two rivers with their two forts lay dense woodland broken by ravines and creeks, overflowing from the recent rains. The sodden ground mired heavy artillery and wagons, making progress almost impossible. It took Grant six days to cross the twelve-mile strip and come within striking distance of Donelson.

The only pleasant thing about the march was the weather. Although it was early February, the Southern sun beamed down with all the warmth of May. The Union soldiers, who had marched and drilled in the rain all winter, were delighted with the Tennessee climate. With cheerful improvidence they tossed away the blankets and rubber ponchos that weighed them down. Even wool uniform blouses and overcoats were hung on trees, to be picked up on the way back. They had left their tents at Fort Henry. The easy victory there had produced a happy glow of optimism. General Grant knew better, but he could not be everywhere. The rank and file marched cheerfully to Donelson, cursing the Rebel mud, but approving the Rebel sunshine. All they had to do was to take this second fort as they had taken the first one. Then they could get on their boats and go back to Cairo, where a hero's welcome awaited them. This was the first chance most of these boys had had to be heroes. They could hardly wait.

There was some fighting on February 13, as the Union troops approached the Confederate outer line, but Grant was waiting for water support before he opened the battle in earnest. Flag Officer Foote had taken his gunboats back to Cairo for repairs after the Fort Henry engagement, and would return by way of the Cumberland, meeting the land troops at Donelson.

In the week since Fort Henry, reinforcements had poured in to swell Grant's army to 30,000 men. They spent the night of the thirteenth of February "lying on their arms" in the woods and ravines in the rear of the fort. Their arms were about all they had to lie

on, and long before morning they began to regret the blankets and tents they had left behind. They were forbidden to light fires for fear of betraying their positions. It rained that night, a drenching, chilly downpour that put an end to the stretch of unseasonable spring weather. Although the sun was shining when morning came, there was a glitter of frost on the grass. Toward noon the sun disappeared behind sullen clouds. It shone no more for the three days of the battle of Fort Donelson.

Foote and his gunboats arrived on the morning of February 14, a welcome valentine. Now the battle could begin. "The plan," wrote General Grant, "was for the troops to hold the enemy within his lines, while the gunboats should attack the water batteries at close quarters and silence his guns if possible."

It was a good plan that had worked well at Fort Henry. It did not work here. Donelson's guns, heavier and better protected, and with greater elevation, cut the little fleet to pieces. Foote steamed within range of the fort's guns at three in the afternoon. Before five o'clock he was dropping back down the river, his flagship disabled by a shot that had wrecked the pilothouse and killed the pilot, and himself badly wounded. Of his six ships, one had had its steering gear shot away, and two others had lost their pilothouses. All of them had suffered major damage. Fifty-four men were dead or wounded. The Confederates had not lost a single man. General Pillow, commanding the fort, sent a triumphant message to Richmond, reporting that he had put the Yankees to flight.

The Confederate general was a little overoptimistic. He had a tendency that way, as Grant remembered from Mexican War days, when he and General Gideon Johnson Pillow had been brother officers. Grant had little respect for Pillow's military capacity. For that of Pillow's senior at Donelson, General Floyd, he had none at all. Floyd was a Virginia politician who had been Secretary of War in President Buchanan's cabinet. He left office by request, after he had failed to explain some questionable actions in connection with government contracts. Grant, dismissing him shortly as "no soldier," felt certain that he would follow Pillow's lead.

The Yankee gunboats were limping back to Cairo, but the Yankee army in the field had not yet been engaged. Grant had about decided on a cautious policy, digging in behind the fort and maintaining a siege until the fleet could be patched up and return. Foote had estimated that the repairs would not take more than ten days. However, the impetuous General Pillow took policy-making out of Grant's hands.

The night of the fourteenth was bitterly cold, with light snow and sleet. The Union soldiers, as yet with no wounds to complain of, complained vehemently of the weather. "We might have known the Rebel climate would be treacherous, like the Rebels themselves," one soldier wrote home. There was little sleep in the shivering Union camp that night. What there was ended abruptly before dawn. At five in the morning, an hour before daylight, the Confederates burst out of their fort in a surprise attack. "We will roll the enemy in full retreat," the optimistic Pillow had predicted, "attacking them on the flank and rear, cutting up the Federals and putting them completely to rout." This was in the dispatch to the Confederate capital in which he announced the defeat of Foote's naval force.

From dawn to darkness the battle raged, through the woods and gullies, uphill and down, part of the day in a blinding snowstorm. When night fell the Confederates were back in their outer defenses, the Yankees were in their old position in the rear of the fort. On a military map, nothing had changed. But in General Pillow's headquarters, where three anxious men held midnight council, the prospect of change had to be faced.

It was warm and cozy in the general's headquarters, a log farmhouse two miles above the fort. Sleet rattled like musketry against the windows, and a howling gale occasionally puffed smoke back down the chimney where a log fire blazed.

The same wind howled in the blasted woods behind the fort, the same sleet pelted mercilessly down upon twisted, broken bodies lying where they fell. Pickets on both sides kept up a nervous fire all night, making it impossible for stretcher parties to bring in the

wounded. The unburied dead froze quietly and without protest. The wounded groaned if they were able, and thrashed their tortured limbs about to try to keep the blood moving. As the cruel night wore on, dead and living alike were pinioned to the ground by their wet garments, frozen into the freezing earth.

Moored to the opposite side of the river lay a single steamer that had come in at dusk. She was the *City of Memphis,* the first of the Sanitary Commission's hospital ships to reach Donelson. Her decks were dark, her portholes screened so that no light might draw the enemy's fire. But behind the darkened windows the lamps blazed on a scene of orderly confusion. Long rows of cots, set in every available space, were being made up with feather pillows and fresh linen. On the galley stove soup and gruel were already bubbling, while hot water boiled for coffee and tea. Moving quietly about, seeing that nothing was overlooked, was Mary Ann Bickerdyke. Her gray calico dress was starched and spotless, her thick brown hair smoothly brushed, her face calm but growing a little anxious.

As Dr. Aigner hurried past her she caught at his sleeve.

"When will they bring 'em, doctor?" she demanded. "It's nigh midnight, and not a man yet to put to bed. It ain't good for wounded men to lie out in that weather; the general ought to know that. Why don't he send 'em down?"

The doctor shook his head. As a Sanitary Commission agent, his position with the military was a delicate one. In theory, the army would have its own surgeons here, and would have set up field hospitals behind the lines. It was not for an S. C. man to interfere with the army's arrangements.

"I'm sure everything's being attended to, Mother Bickerdyke," he said kindly. "No doubt it has proved more convenient to hold the wounded in field hospitals for the night. They'll be bringing them aboard in the morning. Why don't you go and get some rest? Tomorrow will be a busy day for you."

With a last look at her arrangements she turned away.

"I reckon you're right, doctor. But I don't trust them army doctors far's I can see 'em. How do I know they got them boys in? Seems

like I ought to go hunt up General Grant and ask him what's being done."

"Oh, I wouldn't do that," he told her. "The general's got a lot on his mind tonight. Everything will be all right in the morning, you'll see. Now lie down and get some rest while you can. That's what all of us are going to do."

She took his advice and slept, the last night's sleep she was to have for weeks on end. The men out on the hillsides slept too, fitfully or permanently. General Grant, with the ease of an old campaigner, snored away in his tent. But in the farmhouse where the three Confederate generals met there was no sleep that night.

The Confederate force at Donelson, for the size of it, was top-heavy with brass. General Pillow had been in command until Floyd's recent arrival. Next in rank to Pillow was Brigadier General Simon Bolivar Buckner, the only real soldier of the three, in Grant's opinion. At the midnight conference, while his seniors dithered, it was the thirty-nine-year-old Buckner who pointed out the harsh necessity for surrender. Fort Donelson was a trap. The day's battle had been a reckless attempt to break out of it and cut a path of retreat back to Nashville. The attempt had failed, with heavy losses. Buckner was firmly of the opinion that a second attempt would be suicide. Surrender, he insisted, was the only alternative.

Reluctantly General Floyd came to agreement. "But who will do it?" he asked nervously. "*I* can't surrender, gentlemen. You know my position with the Federals. It won't do, it won't do!"

They knew his position very well. It was likely that the Federals would not treat General Floyd as simply a high-ranking prisoner of war. In the last year of peace, while he was Buchanan's Secretary of War, he had issued some peculiar orders. One of them directed the removal of arms from Northern to Southern arsenals, where they were available to the Confederates when war came. This could very well form the basis for a charge of treason now. And if that were not enough, there was a civil indictment hanging over him for a contract deal known as the Indian Trust fraud. General Floyd had good reason for not wishing to fall into Union hands.

"You're next in command, Pillow," he fluttered. "You'll have to make the surrender."

General Pillow struck one of his dramatic attitudes. "Never!" he thundered. "I will neither surrender myself nor my command. I will die first!"

"Then," Buckner said coolly, "I suppose the surrender will devolve upon me."

The plans were hastily made. Floyd transferred command to Pillow, who promptly passed it on to Buckner. The two senior generals spent the rest of the night arranging to save themselves. Since Foote's withdrawal the river was open to them, and some Confederate shipping was available. Floyd seized what vessels there were and embarked for Nashville with his Virginia regiment. Pillow and his staff crossed the river in a small flatboat and made their way to Clarksville by land. When a full report of their conduct reached the newly inaugurated Confederate President Jefferson Davis at Richmond, he relieved both generals of their commands.

In the meantime, with a heavy heart, Buckner sat down to write a letter to General Grant. In it he proposed the appointment of commissioners to agree upon the terms of capitulation. The morning light showed a white flag flying over Donelson. The melancholy notes of a bugle called attention to a rowboat just putting out, also carrying a white flag, and a messenger with Buckner's letter.

Grant's answer came promptly. It read:

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY IN THE FIELD,
CAMP NEAR DONELSON,
February 16, 1862.

GEN. S. B. BUCKNER,
CONFEDERATE ARMY.
SIR:

Yours of this date, proposing armistice and appointment of commissioners to settle terms of capitulation, is just received. No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted. I propose to move immediately upon your works.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
U. S. GRANT, *Brig. Gen.*

This is the "unconditional surrender" note that changed the meaning of Grant's initials for Northern newspaper readers. Its apparent harshness was more a matter of policy, to strike terror into Rebel hearts, than an expression of Grant's attitude toward the men at Donelson. For General Buckner himself he had only the friendliest feelings. The two men had been together at West Point for three years, and had seen some army service together. After the surrender Grant gave a dinner party to Buckner and his staff, where over good Kentucky whiskey they discussed the recent battle. "He said to me," Grant writes, "that if he had been in command I would not have got up to Donelson as easily as I did. I told him that if he had been in command I should not have tried in the way I did."

It was all very genial and pleasant at headquarters. A high proportion of West Point-trained officers had gone over to the Confederacy, so that Grant seldom entered a battle without encountering old classmates. He fought them as viciously as though they were personal enemies, but when it was all over he welcomed them as the personal friends they had once been. His memory of their capabilities, or lack of them, was very useful in planning campaigns. He had been sure that the vainglorious Pillow could never hold Fort Donelson. It was lucky for him, he admitted frankly, that command passed too late into Buckner's hands.

Although he had refused to be bound in advance, Grant was generous in his treatment of the Donelson garrison. A number of Confederate private soldiers were allowed to escape through the Union lines on pretext of burying their dead. Others, who said frankly that they were tired of war and would not be caught in the ranks again, were allowed to go home. The gallant General Buckner, soon released in exchange for a Union prisoner of comparable rank, returned to his Confederate command and played his part at the battle of Chickamauga.

IX

THE Stars and Stripes were run up over Fort Donelson at noon of February 16. It could have happened a little earlier, but the occupying regiment, the Fifty-eighth Ohio Volunteers, had to wait until their band came up to play the Star-Spangled Banner.

In spite of the music and the cheering and the salute from the captured batteries, the occasion was not a very happy one. The wooded hillsides behind the fort were littered with dead and dying men. The celebration was cut short so that the grim work of gathering them in could proceed.

All afternoon the stretcher parties worked under the iron sky, chopping away at the iron ground, uncertain often whether they were freeing corpses or living men. About many of them there could be no doubt, for they lay beneath the ice of shallow creeks, or crushed under fallen trees.

The number of casualties at Donelson does not sound very impressive, compared with battle figures in more recent wars. When the final count was made, it was found that 237 Confederates and 446 Federals died there. The combined wounded totaled less than 3000. They did not lie in groups, close together and easy to locate. One of the horrors of those horrible three days was that many a man found himself isolated in the deep woods, masked by fallen trees, unable to move, or to make his cries heard, or to know whether he would ever be found.

When living men were chopped from the frozen mud, their

sufferings were not ended. The field hospitals of which Dr. Aigner had spoken so confidently did exist — a few sheds or barns, a cabin or a country church. There were no beds and almost no surgical supplies in them. The men were carried in and laid on the bare floors, to wait until transport could be arranged. Three or four harassed army surgeons moved from one station to another, contriving bandages from the patient's own shirt if he seemed likely to bleed to death. And if he had a shirt. The doctors were not to blame. They worked valiantly, with nothing to work with. The only hope was to get the suffering men down to the river, where the *City of Memphis* lay.

The work went on until late into the night. Farm wagons and carts were the only ambulances. In them the men were jolted down the rutted roads, over fallen trees and stumps, and finally to the blessed flatness of the riverbank. Stiff and heavy, encased in frozen mud and their own frozen blood, the mummylike figures were carried aboard, where Mother Bickerdyke waited for them.

"I never saw anybody like her," one of Aigner's associates wrote afterward. "There was really nothing for us surgeons to do but dress wounds and administer medicines. She drew out clean shirts or drawers from some corner, whenever they were needed. Nourishment was ready for every man as soon as he was brought on board. Everyone was sponged from blood and the frozen mire of the battlefield, as far as his condition allowed. His blood-stiffened, and sometimes horribly filthy uniform, was exchanged for soft and clean hospital garments. Incessant cries of 'Mother, Mother!' rang through the boat, in every note of beseeching and anguish. And to every man she turned with a heavenly tenderness, as if he were indeed her son. She moved about with such a decisive air, and gave directions in such decided, clarion tones as to ensure prompt obedience. We all had an impression that she held a commission from the Secretary of War, or at least from the Governor of Illinois."

She had, of course, no commission from anyone, and no authority whatever. She was not yet an employee of the Sanitary Commission, and she had no business to be on the Commission's ship.

Dr. Aigner, in choosing helpers for his rescue mission, had gathered up male volunteers in Cairo, doctors where possible, but chiefly ministers and businessmen. He may or may not have invited Mrs. Bickerdyke, the only woman in the party. She would not have waited for his invitation, any more than she waited for his instructions when the rush began. Where she was needed she went. What needed doing she did. To her it was all perfectly simple.

Toward ten o'clock that night the relief parties reported that all the living had been brought out, and either carried aboard the *Memphis* or left in the field hospital stations until morning. They had left the dead scattered where they lay. Grave digging would be difficult in the frozen ground, and in that intense cold there was no hurry.

Mrs. Bickerdyke, regretfully certain that there was not an inch of space for another patient on the steamer, worried about the men still in the comfortless field hospitals. When everything was quiet she wrapped herself in her shawl, packed a basket with crackers and dried apples, and made the rounds. There was little she could do at that hour, but she was able at least to give the men a bit to eat and the assurance that relief would come in the morning.

It was midnight when she turned back toward the *Memphis,* but she was uneasy still. The searchers had sworn that every man with a spark of life in him had been brought in. But could they be sure? They had told her of working to free some man, only to find that he had been dead all the time. The searchers were nervous, and cold, and sickened at what they found. They would have been anxious to finish and get back to their campfires. Perhaps in their haste they had sometimes assumed death where life still flickered. She had to be sure. She could not sleep until she was sure.

In his tent on the field, a Union officer was sleepless too. Colonel John A. Logan, the Illinois congressman who had voted for war and resigned to help fight it, tossed on his cot and cursed his wound. It was not a bad wound, and had not kept him from finishing the battle, but it stung and ached in the quiet night hours. He got up for a drink of water, and looked out to see how the weather was.

The weather was cold, but the sky had cleared, with a waning moon dimly lighting the darkness. While he looked, it seemed to Colonel Logan that he saw another light, close to the ground, and moving a little. It strengthened as his eyes accustomed themselves to the night, and flitted to another spot.

The colonel shuddered. Some ghoul, robbing the dead? What else could it be? Out there, in those pitted hillsides, those shot-seared woods, only the dead were left. What did they have worth stealing? The searching patrols had gathered in their weapons. Pitiful personal treasures — a ring, a few coins, a chew of tobacco. What sort of creature would be low enough to search a midnight battlefield for these?

Yet someone was searching. The light was no will-o'-the-wisp, but a lantern carried in human hands. Colonel Logan roused his sleeping orderly. "Find that man and bring him to me!" he roared.

The orderly went, and for a long time he did not come back. When he did, he had Mother Bickerdyke with him.

"I was glad to have your boy's help," she said cheerfully. "It was quite a job, combing through them woods by myself. All for nothing, too. I must have tramped miles. But I had to satisfy myself. They ain't nobody alive left out there. Now I know that, I can sleep. You ought to be asleep yourself, son." She peered at him, holding her lantern high. "Wounded, ain't you? That's a mighty messy-looking bandage you got there. Let me fix it."

She rearranged the bandage to her own satisfaction. When she finished he asked her to have a cup of tea with him. The meeting was the beginning of a long, warm friendship between them. Mary Ann Bickerdyke was not by nature inclined to friendliness toward officers. For the few exceptions she made, Sherman, Grant, Logan and a few others, her highest compliment was to say that "you'd never know they was officers. They acted just like *people*." She admitted John A. Logan to the company of "people" at sight.

A newspaperman covering Grant's campaign picked up the story of Mother Bickerdyke's midnight search, and sent it in as a human interest touch. Newspaper readers were delighted with it. Several

Northern papers carried it in varying versions. Mary Livermore used it effectively in her appeals for Sanitary Commission donations. It became one of Logan's stock anecdotes when he returned to political life after the war. And it inspired a California poetess, Mrs. Eliza Pitzinger, to veritable heights of lyric ecstasy.

Behold the light! It moves around
Through all the dreary night!
Whence comes that slow and muffled sound?
Who bears the charmèd light?

. . . . . .

'Twas neither angel, sprite nor elf,
Nor spectre; it was like
The dear, good, kind and loving self
Of faithful Mother Bickerdyke!

. . . . . .

She turned their faces to the light;
Placed to their lips her trembling ear,
To know if yet perchance she might
Some low, faint sign of life still hear.
With soul anointed deep with love
She on that night its wealth did prove.

. . . . . .

Oh, let her radiant sons be blest,
Their deeds be blended with her lore.
Her martyrs, risen to their rest,
Be loved till time shall be no more!
And bear a deathless crown of light
For Woman's love and Woman's might!

In a small and modest way, Mother Bickerdyke was a public figure now. She was not impressed. She had more important things to do than to read newspapers and poetic effusions. For the first ten days after the Donelson battle, she never slept in a bed or took off her clothes. "I felt," she said afterward, "like my nerves was stretched seventy-five miles." They were steel nerves, and equal to the tension.

Within the next two days the Sanitary Commission's other ships came down from Cairo, bringing badly needed supplies and a throng of willing workers. Mary Safford came with several friends, "ladies of refinement and gentlemen of fortune." All of Grant's forces at Donelson were from the Middle West, three quarters of them from Illinois. The Chicago newspapers had reported the suffering in glaring headlines. Relatives, friends, doctors, preachers, reporters and sensation seekers hurried to Cairo, clamoring for a place on the hospital boats. Some of them, obviously unfit for the work, were generous contributors who could not be refused. When it seemed that the Sanitary Commission boats would be swamped, some eager souls chartered vessels of their own and joined the expedition of mercy.

Mother Bickerdyke and Dr. Aigner, working with the volunteers from the *Memphis* and the handful of army surgeons, thought they had the situation fairly well in hand before the cloud of angels descended upon them. The *Memphis* had already steamed downriver with a load of patients bound for the Cairo hospital. The others were being made as comfortable as possible in the inadequate shelters that could be found. Mrs. Bickerdyke's passion for "cleaning 'em up" had been frustrated when the fresh clothing gave out, but at least she washed their faces for them, and gave them coffee and hot soup. Considering what she had to work with, she did not think she had done too badly.

Nevertheless, the ladies of refinement and gentlemen of fortune were appalled at what they saw. And well they may have been. The rate of amputation, slow because of the lack of surgeons, was stepped up with the arrival of doctors and surgical supplies. It was the principal operation of Civil War surgeons, performed on a wholesale scale after every battle. The newcomers at Donelson, hastening into the field hospitals, had to pick their way past untidy heaps of human arms and legs. One of them records an incident apparently less horrifying than inspiring to her:

"At one of the miserable rooms where amputations were going on, a fine-looking young man was observed, enveloped in an officer's

cloak. There was no place to sit down. He, deathly pale, and with closed eyes, was leaning against a window for support. No word was spoken, and the narrator and eye-witness of the scene, having just come in, did not understand the cause of his evident agitation. At length, moved by a sudden impulse, he quickly advanced to the surgeon's table, and, stooping down, searched for a moment among the severed limbs, that formed a fast-accumulating melancholy pile by its side. In an instant he drew out an arm, crowned with a pale, refined hand; and suddenly raising it, swung it above his head, crying out, 'Hurrah! Hurrah for the Stars and Stripes!' He had just suffered amputation, and it was his own arm which he thus waved aloft, a votive offering to his country!"

Gruesome scenes like these—few of them with its redeeming patriotic uplift—were too much for the visiting do-gooders. Most of them went home as soon as they could find transport. Some did better work there than they could ever have done on the scene, raising money for the Commission, writing to their congressmen, bringing political and editorial influence to bear on the army's Medical Department.

Those who remained fell into two groups. The first were relatives who concerned themselves with individual soldiers. Home was not far away; their one thought was to find their boy and take him there. Where they could arrange to do so, by rail or by water, permission was readily granted. Grant's generosity with "sick furloughs" helped relieve the overtaxed hospital facilities and enormously increased his popularity.

The relatives were comparatively few in number. After they and the sightseers had departed, there remained some forty or fifty persons who set themselves unflinchingly to the job they had undertaken. Most of them were men; one out of every three was a minister of some Protestant denomination. The others were elderly gentlemen, retired or with private means, and time to spare. What there was to do this group did, uncomplaining, selfless, without rest and with scarcely time to snatch a bite of food. Night after night they sat in the rough sheds where the wounded lay,

tending them, comforting them, cheering them with the prediction that the very next boat would carry them home to the North.

Lovely Mary Safford was one of the faithful who stuck until the job was done, the last man removed to a real hospital. She was sickened and revolted by what she saw, by what she had to do. With all her good intentions, she lacked the tough fiber the born nurse must have. Each suffering man wrenched her soft heart unbearably; she could never accustom herself to watching men die. She tended the pain-ridden, comforted the dying, closed dead eyes and wrote gentle letters to the next of kin. But it took its toll. Mrs. Bickerdyke watched her appetite fail, her beauty dim, her rare rest disturbed by nightmare horrors. Hoping a change of scene would help, she took the girl along on her evacuation journeys. The Sanitary steamers, even with their cargoes of patients, were less harrowing than the Donelson camp. Mary Safford did good work on the five journeys she made with Mrs. Bickerdyke, to the military hospitals at Cairo, Mound City, St. Louis and Louisville. She held herself remorselessly to the task until the last man was safely stowed at Louisville. Then she went home to Cairo and a nervous breakdown.

The five trips on the *Memphis* gave Mrs. Bickerdyke her first look at military hospitals other than the one at Cairo. If she approved what she found she said so; if she did not she freely offered her suggestions for improvement. On the whole she was pleased. Army hospital care had come a long way since she had lifted the first tent flap at Cairo. She was especially delighted with the new general hospital at Mound City, Illinois, staffed entirely by women nurses. Her deep conviction that women made the best nurses was gratifyingly confirmed by the cleanliness and order, the splendid progress and evident contentment of the patients at Mound City. Their nurses were nuns, sisters of the Holy Cross of Notre Dame. Mother Angela, head of the hospital, was a cousin of General Sherman's wife. The order had provided the hospital, equipped it out of its own funds, and was paying running expenses. It was nonsectarian, as freely at the disposal of the Union Army as any other

military hospital. Later the same nursing sisterhood took over the General Hospital at Cairo, where Mrs. Bickerdyke had served as matron.

By that time Mary Ann was far away. She never returned to her Cairo post. The pioneering days of general army hospitals were over now, with a fair degree of standardization established. The Sanitary Commission was recruiting women nurses, to be approved by Miss Dix and placed upon the army pay roll. There were never enough of them, but at least a start had been made. Mrs. Bickerdyke could feel reasonably sure that wounded soldiers would have good care once they reached the permanent hospitals of the North. Once they reached there — that was what disturbed her. She had been moved to fury by Donelson's field hospitals, and by the delay in getting the patients into them. It seemed very plain to her that she was needed nearer the source, closer to the battlefields. Without consulting anyone, she calmly attached herself to Grant's army. When it moved south, she moved with it.

X

THE FALL of the two forts left the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers open to the Union forces, and made Nashville untenable for the Confederates. General Johnson withdrew to the south, and the municipal authorities surrendered the town ten days after Donelson fell. Except for Memphis on the Mississippi River, the Federals now held all of western Tennessee.

Grant's next objective was Corinth, just across the Tennessee border in the state of Mississippi. This town, held in force by the Confederates, was the junction of the two most important railroads in the Mississippi Valley, one connecting Memphis and the Mississippi River with the east, the other running south to the Gulf of Mexico.

Corinth was less than twenty miles west of the Tennessee River. In the middle of March, eighty-two transports loaded with men and matériel moved up the river to a point just northeast of Corinth. They pitched their tents around Pittsburg Landing, on the west bank of the river, spreading out through the woods toward Corinth. The line extended two miles inland to the little log chapel known as Shiloh Meeting House.

After landing the front-line troops and their equipment, the fleet backed downriver for a few miles to Savannah, a forlorn little Tennessee town with some reputation as a summer resort. There were a couple of hotels there, and a number of boardinghouses. The Union command chose it as a reserve depot for men and supplies, and a hospital site.

No hospital ships came with the army, but Mother Bickerdyke did. She had attached herself to the Twenty-first Indiana Volunteers on the gunboat *Fanny Bullet*. Grant had given her a pass, and transportation for a number of boxes and barrels labeled Sanitary Commission supplies. This would have astonished the Reverend Mr. Folsom at Cairo, where he was loading Sanitary supplies aboard the agency's own steamers. The army Medical Department, in one of its frequent tiffs with the Commission, had refused the offer of Sanitary aid on the new expedition. The Department asserted loftily that it was now in position to provide whatever was needed in Mississippi. This was not so, as the situation after the battle unhappily demonstrated. The Commission, with Christian forbearance, accepted the ruling and went on preparing to come to the rescue when help should be needed.

Mother Bickerdyke, offering her aid to the surgeon in charge of setting up temporary hospitals at Savannah, was soundly snubbed. She was not greatly distressed, for she had another job that had priority anyway. She established herself in a rented room, with her boxes and barrels piled in the back yard. The landlady complained that they blocked her way to the woodpile, and besides that, she added, they didn't smell good. Mrs. Bickerdyke assured her that they would not be there long.

Shamelessly playing upon old friendship, she wangled the promise of a wagon and team from the quartermaster. All she needed now was labor. Half a dozen husky boys would do. That, regretfully, the quartermaster could not manage for her. He had not enough men to handle the manual labor of his own department. As it was, he was going to have to fall back on contrabands.

In answer to her blank look, he tried to explain the term. He did not explain it very well, for he did not understand it very well. General Benjamin F. Butler had first applied it to runaway Negro slaves at Fortress Monroe in Virginia. General Butler in peacetime was a Massachusetts lawyer, with a good lawyer's gift for finding legal terms to fit a case. In international law, contraband of war meant enemy property likely to be used in the enemy's behalf, and

therefore subject to seizure. Slaves were enemy property. Slaves were being used by the Confederates to dig entrenchments. Since some slaves were being so used, all slaves were likely to be. This, very neatly, made all slaves contraband of war, who could be seized as legally as though they were cannon or ships or mules.

There were flaws in General Butler's reasoning, and all Union commanders did not agree with him. At this stage of the war, there was no clear agreement on the Negro question anywhere in the North. The Abolitionists were passionately convinced that this was a holy war dedicated to the overthrow of human slavery. President Lincoln, on the other hand, was standing firmly on the principles outlined in a letter to Horace Greeley:

I would save the Union. . . . If there be any who would not save the Union unless they could, at the same time, save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be any who would not save the Union unless they could, at the same time, destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object is to save the Union, and not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race I do because I believe it helps to save this Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe that what I am doing hurts the cause; and I shall do more whenever I believe that doing more will help the cause.

In September 1862, Abraham Lincoln concluded that the Union could best be saved by freeing the slaves. The Emancipation Proclamation went into effect January 1, 1863. After that date, all Negroes were—in theory at least—free men. The date was nine months in the future when the Union forces gathered for the battle of Shiloh. The slaves who left the plantations and made for the Union lines were contrabands, in army slang if not by official designation. It is no use pretending that they were received with universal cordiality. No fighting army likes to burden itself with a horde of noncombatant refugees. The contrabands fared best in the East, where they could reach good-sized towns suffering from

the war labor shortage. Grant's policy in his territory, the invaded South, was to discourage them and send them back to the plantations until the war should be won. It would be time enough then to decide what to do with them. This policy was rather strictly enforced in the case of women and children and old people. Some limited use was made of able-bodied men, who worked for army meals and castoff garments. There was as yet no provision for paying them wages.

Mrs. Bickerdyke's quartermaster friend was not concerned about the Negroes' status. All he knew was that a lot of them hung around camp, pestering him for jobs. General Sherman had said that if the work got too much for his men, he could employ a few. The work *was* too much, and any day now he aimed to get himself some contrabands.

"Well, that's all right," Mary Ann said placidly. "You get me some contrabands, then. I'd just as lief have 'em as soldiers, long as they work good. Get 'em right away, will you? This business is not going to keep much longer."

"What business?" he asked her, but she shook her head. She had already spent two busy days in Savannah, prowling the town, talking to the women who lived there, making a mysterious deal or two. Now she was fretting to be off. Under her vigorous prodding, the quartermaster produced an army wagon with its team of mules, and half a dozen Negro men. One of them came forward to drive. She motioned the others into the wagon, hopped up beside the driver, and directed him down the road to her boardinghouse.

With relief the landlady saw the pile of boxes and barrels loaded on the wagon. The Yankee lady might say it was nonsense, but her nose knew what it knew. Those boxes smelled *awful!* And look at the bluebottle flies buzzing around them. A body'd think there was something dead in there. She was mighty pleased to see the last one hoisted aboard, and the wagon rattle away.

"Stop down the road a piece," Mrs. Bickerdyke ordered. "I got to see a Secesh woman in that white house."

The townswoman brought out a huge black iron soap kettle and

a couple of pitchforks. "I'll be wanting them back," she said sullenly.

"You'll get 'em back. Did your old Gram enjoy the tea? It's lucky I had a little with me."

Smiling and nodding, she motioned her driver to go on. It had been choice Sanitary tea, too good for Rebels. Better than money to trade with down here, tea was. Which was a good thing, for she had no money.

She stopped at another house and picked up another soap kettle, and a crock of homemade soft soap. A little farther along she gathered two more kettles, more soap and a big can of lye. Four kettles were nothing, but she'd have to make out with them this time.

At the edge of town she took a road that branched off into deep woods. She kept a sharp lookout until she found a site that pleased her. It was a grassy clearing, sunny and rimmed with low-growing hazel bushes. Nearby a little creek trickled pleasantly.

"This'll do, boys." She climbed down. "Get the load off first. Then gather me some firewood and pile it up here. I'll need plenty, so stir your stumps."

While the others scattered, she beckoned the driver to her.

"Here's a hatchet. Get these boxes and barrels open, will you?"

He pried up the first lid, and jumped back. "My sweet Jesus!" he breathed.

"No cussing, boy," she said sharply. "What's the matter? Don't like the smell? You should a seen the fellows I took 'em off of. Maybe you think they liked it. Come on now, don't stand there gaping. We've got work to do. Dump all this stuff in the stream. Cold water'll soak it loose a little. And then help me build some fires."

The stuff was underwear, blankets and bandages from the Fort Donelson wounded, discarded when they were brought aboard the hospital steamers. It was filthy with mud and blood and pus and vomit, stiffened and caked and verminous. Dr. Aigner had ordered it burned. Mrs. Bickerdyke had gathered and packed it with her own hands, marked the boxes with the protecting S. C. label, connived to get them transported with army stores.

She had told no one, for she knew that no one would approve. There was much too much shortsighted squeamishness around the hospitals, Mary Ann thought. This was good sound cotton and wool, the materials that had been so desperately lacking after Donelson. Men had died there for want of dressings and something warm to wrap up in. Did they think it couldn't happen again? The army said they had plenty of medical supplies of their own down here. Maybe they had. But how did they know how much they'd need? It was better to have too much than too little. And it was a sin and a shame to waste scarce material when a little soap and water would make it fit to save a life.

Soon she had roaring fires beneath her four kettles, each one with brook water boiling in a different solution. Soft soap and lye were for cottons, soap alone for wool. There was a quick carbolic acid dip for everything before the final rinse in running water.

The caldrons bubbled, the black men circled around them, stirring with pitchforks and long sticks. Again and again the kettles had to be emptied and refilled, the same articles returned for another boiling. Mrs. Bickerdyke was not trying to kill germs, of which she had never heard. She knew she killed fleas, lice and bedbugs, for she saw them come to the surface and float upon the suds. The carbolic was to make certain that no insect eggs survived. For the rest, she was merely trying to get things clean. When they were clean enough to suit her, they had undoubtedly lost their germs along with their nap and fiber and most of their bulk. It was a sorry mass of shredded rags that she finally hung on the bushes to dry.

She was really disappointed. Too much time had gone by, the filth had penetrated too deep. The underwear was only fit for dressings. The army blankets, not too good to start with, had gone to pieces under strenuous handling. Still they would do to stuff into mattress ticking, warmer than grass or leaves. And a generous supply of clean rags was sure to come in handy sometime.

The sun was low when she hung the last tatters on the hazel bushes. "We'll let 'em have all night and all day tomorrow in the air," she decided. "I'll only need one of you and the wagon to bring

'em in. Wash out the kettles good, boys — we got to take 'em back. I wish I had some of my own. This is not the last washing I'll be doing down here."

She sat silent, lost in thought, on the short drive back to town. "These boys done real well," she told the quartermaster. "See you give 'em a good supper. They earned it."

The next day she gathered in her laundry from the woods, and went to the chief army surgeon to offer her supply of fresh dressings. She was coldly received. The Savannah hospitals were liberally provided with new muslin and lint from the Medical Department. They did not need her washed-out rags. Nor did they need her nursing services. At present, the hospitals were empty except for a few soldiers sick of dysentery or typhoid. They were being adequately looked after. The surgeon made it very clear that no meddling would be tolerated.

So for a week or two Mother Bickerdyke had nothing to do, a condition that she always found intolerable. She employed her unwelcome leisure in renewing old friendships among the soldiers, many of whom had been at Donelson. She taught them to improve their cooking, and to do a better job at washing their own clothes. She would neither cook nor wash for well men, but she didn't mind teaching them to do it for themselves.

With time to think, she thought about a discovery she had made. No one else seemed to realize it, but war meant washing. Wherever there were army hospitals, there would be heaps of bloodstained, discarded material that could be salvaged, and would not be. This stuff she'd brought from Donelson — if she'd been able to get at it right away, she could have saved nearly all of it. Made it as good as new. There ought to be some way to do that next time. No use expecting the army to do anything about it. But the Sanitary Commission could, and should. She sat down and wrote an urgent letter to Dr. Aigner, now back at Cairo. She wanted some washing machines and wringers, the kind used in commercial laundries. They cost money, she knew that. But she could save their cost hundreds of times over, in the value of supplies made fit to use again. Besides

saving money, washing the dressings and garments would save transportation, always a difficult problem for the Commission. And best of all, it would save time. The reclaimed material would be available right on the spot, where it was needed. She made her arguments as strong as she could, and finished with a clinching example, the pounds and pounds she had salvaged from the refuse dump at Donelson.

Dr. Aigner passed the letter along to Mary Livermore in Chicago, with a favorable recommendation. He was too busy himself to give it much thought. The Sanitary fleet was assembling in full strength, for word had come that a big battle was impending. A number of surgeons and volunteer nurses were already gathered at Cairo. They could do nothing but make their preparations and wait. The army doctors at Savannah were still complacently certain that they could handle any casualties without outside assistance.

The expected battle, in Grant's plan, would occur at Corinth, where the Confederate General Albert Sidney Johnston was established with a strong force. Grant was unable to move on Corinth at once, because he was waiting for General Buell to bring reinforcements from Nashville. While they waited, Grant's men made themselves comfortable in the woods between Corinth and the river. It was balmy spring weather, already too warm for sleeping in the stuffy small tents. There was a craze for building "shebangs," huts made of freshly cut green boughs. Some of the men were veterans of Donelson, boastfully confident that after that victory anything would be easy. Many of the others were green troops with no idea of what a battle is like. To all of them the Corinth expedition was a picnic. They had a couple of weeks to enjoy it. Their easy life was not spoiled by the necessity of laboring on trenches. As Grant ruefully wrote afterward, "The fact is, I regarded the campaign we were engaged in as an offensive one, and had no idea that the enemy would leave strong entrenchments to take the initiative when he knew he would be attacked where he was if he remained."

This was one instance when Grant's foreknowledge of his opponent did not work out very well. He and General Johnston had

met during the Mexican War, where Johnston won considerably more distinction than Grant did. The Southern general had been a prominent citizen of the Texas Republic. He had worked for annexation, and when the Mexican War came he threw his whole soul into the conflict. After it ended he remained in the United States Army, serving as commandant of the Utah district. While Grant was keeping store in Illinois, Johnston was fighting Indians. Grant, from his early impressions, had put Johnston down as "vacillating and undecided in his actions." Perhaps he had been, when Grant knew him. There was nothing undecided about the bold action that Johnston took on Sunday, the sixth of April.

In the beautiful Sabbath morning, with the sun just rising through the blossoming peach trees, the Union camps were hardly awake yet. "Some of the officers were slumbering; some were dressing; a portion of the troops were washing and cooking, and others were eating breakfast." The calm was broken by the screaming crash of shells, the whistle of bullets, and the wild yells of pickets flying into camp. Confederate cavalry followed hard on their heels. Johnston had decided not to wait for an attack on Corinth, but to make his assault on the unfortified enemy line.

Commanding a division planted across the Corinth road was General Benjamin Prentiss, the former Cairo commandant who had heard the first complaint against the "cyclone in calico." It is not true, as Confederate papers gleefully reported, that General Prentiss was captured in his bed. He was captured, and 2200 officers and men with him, but not until late in the afternoon of that bloody day.

"Shiloh, bloody Shiloh!" was the title of a popular poem that described the battle in harrowing detail. It went on for ten hours, until darkness came. By that time the Union troops had been pushed back to the river, and the Confederates were telegraphing Richmond the news of a glorious victory. The telegram was signed by a new commander, General Beauregard. The gallant Albert Sidney Johnston, wounded early in the afternoon, refused to leave the field and bled to death while he still sat his horse. General Beauregard, who

was summoned from a sickbed in Corinth to take command, gave the order to halt for the night.

Soon after sunset the weather changed, and a heavy rain began to fall. The Union troops, huddled in a small area on the riverbank, were without shelter. Their shebangs and tents lay trampled in the mud, and far behind the enemy's new line. General Grant himself could find no better roof than a spreading pecan tree. He was suffering from a sprained and bruised ankle, and it kept him wakeful. "Some time after midnight," he writes, "growing restive under the storm and the continuous pain, I moved back to the log house under the bank. This had been taken as a hospital, and all night wounded men were being brought in, their wounds dressed, a leg or an arm amputated, and everything being done to save life or alleviate suffering. The sight was more unendurable than encountering the enemy's fire, and I returned to my tree in the rain."

The log cabin Grant mentions was a fisherman's shack down at the water's edge. It served as a first-aid station only, for there were boats available to take the seriously wounded back to Savannah. There the army medical men had a chance to test the hospitals they had opened, and which they had claimed were adequate. Of course they were not. Mother Bickerdyke had warned them, and she probably rubbed it in now. But when the casualties began to pile up on the Savannah dock, she was there to take charge. One of the army surgeons, who had not met her before, met her now. Mrs. Livermore describes the encounter:

She was wrapped in the gray overcoat of a rebel officer, for she had disposed of her blanket shawl to some poor fellow who needed it. She was wearing a soft slouch hat, having lost her inevitable Shaker bonnet. Her kettles had been set up, the fire kindled underneath, and she was dispensing hot soup, tea, crackers, panado, whiskey and water to the shivering, fainting, wounded men.

"Where did you get these articles?" [the surgeon] inquired; "and under whose authority are you at work?"

She paid no heed to his interrogatories, and indeed did not hear them, so completely absorbed was she in her work of compassion. Watching her with admiration for her skill, administrative ability, and intelli-

gence — for she not only fed the wounded men, but temporarily dressed their wounds in some cases — he approached her again.

"Madam, you seem to combine in yourself a sick diet kitchen and a medical staff. May I inquire under whose authority you are working?"

Without pausing in her work, she answered him, "I have received my authority from the Lord God Almighty. Have you anything that ranks higher than that?"

Mrs. Livermore was not present at this meeting that she describes so vividly. There is no doubt that it happened as she reported it. Mother Bickerdyke's crushing retort, seized upon as evidence of the crusading piety of Northern women in the war, provided the theme for many an edifying sermon. There is a possibility that Mrs. Bickerdyke herself saw the incident in a slightly different light. When, an old, old lady, she told the story at soldiers' reunions, she always finished with a triumphant chuckle, "And *that* shut him up all right!"

If the doctor had pressed his first question, she might have had more trouble in shutting him up. Where *did* she get the soup, the crackers and the whiskey? There were plenty in the quartermaster stores at Savannah, but they would not be available to an unauthorized civilian. She may have coaxed her friend in the Quartermaster Department to give her the key, or she may have broken in without his knowledge. The doctor's question was to occur over and over again. Mother Bickerdyke could always get what her boys needed. She admitted that her methods were sometimes frankly illegal. When the Sanitary supplies began to come into Savannah, she grabbed them without scruple. She was convinced, both by her "botanic" training and by her own experience, that wounded men did better if they were fed at once. Whatever happened, she always managed to feed them.

The rainstorm raged all night, slashing the last peach blossoms that the bullets had spared. The Union forces, penned in on the riverbank, had had to leave most of their wounded behind them. The fallen lay out on the field, as they had lain at Donelson, untended and unsheltered. However, this time they had not so long to

wait. In the middle of that same night General Buell arrived, and before dawn General Lew Wallace came up with 5000 more men. This time it was the Union forces that attacked at dawn. General Beauregard had lost his chance. By late afternoon he and his army were in full flight back to Corinth.

The losses on both sides were fearful. General Grant, in his matter-of-fact report, says, "Shiloh was the severest battle fought at the West during the war, but few in the East equaled it for hard, determined fighting. I saw an open field, in our possession on the second day . . . so covered with dead that it would have been possible to walk across the clearing, in any direction, without a foot touching the ground."

When a count was made, it was found that the Union loss in the two days' fighting was 1754 killed and 8408 wounded. General Beauregard's estimate for the Confederates was 1728 killed and 1012 wounded, although Grant considers these figures far too low. The Confederates had abandoned their field hospitals as they withdrew, so that most of the enemy wounded had to be cared for at Savannah. The miserable little hospitals there were overwhelmed. Again the Sanitary Commission had to come to the rescue. Some supplies were hurried forward as soon as the news of the battle reached Cairo. On the third day the hospital steamers arrived, loaded with medicines, dressings, food, doctors and nurses.

XI

AMONG the clergymen, doctors and businessmen brought by the Sanitary steamers there was one woman. With delight Mrs. Bickerdyke clasped Mary Safford in her arms, exclaiming in the same breath that she never should have come. Miss Safford had risen from a sickbed to do it, against her doctor's advice and her brother's pleadings. She had been ill since Donelson, unable to eat, her sleep broken by remembered horrors. Nevertheless, when the call came she gathered strength to answer it.

Mrs. Bickerdyke did her best to spare the girl. But there was no way of sparing anyone in the rush of evacuating the wounded. Again the hospital steamers plied the rivers, distributing the victims among the permanent hospitals. Miss Safford made several trips aboard the *Hazel Dell*. A wounded captain of the Fifty-seventh Illinois Volunteers bears testimony:

> God bless Mary Safford! She saved my life. When I was wounded at Shiloh I was carried on board the hospital boat, where she was in attendance. My wound got to bleeding, and though I was faint from loss of blood, I did not know what was the matter. She found it out, for she slipped in a pool of blood beside my bed, and called a surgeon to me just in time to save my life. Gracious, how that little woman worked! She was everywhere, doing everything, straightening out affairs, soothing and comforting, and sometimes praying, dressing wounds, cooking and nursing, and keeping the laggards at their work. For herself, she seemed to live on air.
>
> And she had grit, too, I tell you. They brought Sam Houston's boy

aboard, wounded, a rebel officer, wearing the Confederate uniform, and ordered one of the privates removed from a comfortable berth to make room for the young traitor. You should have seen Miss Safford! She straightened up as if she were ten feet tall, and declared, in a grand way, that "the humblest Union soldier should not be removed to make room for a rebel officer, not if that officer were General Lee himself!" She stood by the berth, and looked so resolute that they were glad to find another berth for Sam Houston's son. I do not wonder that all the boys called her the Cairo Angel.

Miss Safford's health, already undermined by the ordeal of Donelson, could not stand the strain of many such trips. She was carried home from her last one in a pitiable state of collapse. When she was a little better her brother sent her on a sea voyage, a favorite remedy for those who could afford it. She lived for some time in Italy, and later in Norway and Switzerland. She did not return to America until some years after the war ended.

Mrs. Bickerdyke, losing her female co-worker, soon gained another one. A hospital steamer returning from Paducah brought a Very Important Person in Sanitary Commission circles, come to see that Sanitary supplies were properly distributed. The VIP was Eliza Chappell Porter, the lady of refinement and social position who preserved the proprieties at the Chicago office.

Mother Bickerdyke had heard a great deal about Mrs. Porter's refinement from the other Sanitary officials, and had had a brief opportunity to observe it when the lady led an inspection party through the Cairo hospital. She had had further evidence in the gracious, formal letters that answered her blunt demands for less marmalade and more brown soap. Refinement is a quality that seems to have obsessed the gentlefolk of the Civil War period. The observer who thrilled to see the young officer wave his severed hand at Donelson did not fail to note that it was a refined one. Mrs. Livermore was refined, and Mary Safford. But Eliza Porter surpassed them all.

In spite of all that her biographers tried to do for her later, it cannot be glossed over. Due no doubt to the lack of early advantages — Mrs. Livermore's charitable assumption — Mary Ann Bickerdyke never did have much refinement. Lacking it herself, she was tolerant

of it in others. There was no harm in fancy talk, she reckoned, if the talker was a good worker. Mrs. Livermore was a good worker when it came to raising money and getting things done. Mary Safford worked fine when she had someone to show her how. About Mrs. Porter she reserved judgment. She didn't look like much of a worker, too little and frail and lily-handed. It didn't matter, though. She wouldn't stay long. She'd sweep through the hospitals, run her finger along window ledges for dust — as if a body had time to dust! — wrinkle her nose at the smells, and then retire to the chief surgeon's office for a polite chat over a cup of tea. Mrs. Bickerdyke had seen Sanitary Commission inspectors before. Sometimes they put the fear of God into the army doctors, which was good. Sometimes they'd listen to her own urgent requirements, and promise to do something about them. The good Lord knew she lacked plenty here at Savannah. She hoped she could get hold of this lady for a good talk before she left.

Mrs. Bickerdyke's own duties kept her from observing Eliza Porter's progress through the sixteen hospitals at Savannah and nearby Hamburg Landing. The two women had no more than a passing word together until the second night, when Mrs. Porter came to Mary Ann's boardinghouse. Her husband, the Reverend Jeremiah Porter, was with her. They were heartsick at the suffering and inefficiency of the army hospitals. Someone, perhaps a doctor, more likely a patient, had told them that things would be a heap worse if it hadn't been for Mother Bickerdyke. They wanted Mother Bickerdyke's counsel on what could be done.

She was eager to give it. What was needed worst at Savannah, she said vehemently, was women nurses. The gentlemen who had come down with the Sanitary steamers meant well, but they didn't know anything about taking care of sick folks. It wasn't something you learned overnight. A mother learned it as her children grew up, seeing them through their childish illnesses, getting her hand in, you might say. There was a knack about turning a sick person in bed, giving a sponge bath, coaxing an unwilling eater — well, any mother would know what she meant. It was woman's work, nursing.

By rights, these wounded boys ought to be back home with their mothers, Mrs. Bickerdyke thought. Since that wasn't possible, the least the authorities could do was to give them substitute mothers in the form of women nurses.

Mrs. Porter, mother of nine, had to agree. There was nothing like a mother's care. She appealed to her husband. The Commission had already recruited a few women nurses for the hospitals at Louisville and Paducah. Mrs. Porter was sure she could find more; sensible, capable women with children old enough to look after themselves. She could think of one or two in their own church. An appeal to the other churches in and around Chicago would surely bring volunteers. Of course they would have to be certified by Miss Dix.

"That'll take forever," Mother Bickerdyke objected. "We need 'em right now. By the time you write to Washington, and the head lady there writes back, these boys will be dead of neglect. Lot of foolishness!"

"It may seem so to you," Mrs. Porter said mildly. "But those are the regulations, Mrs. Bickerdyke. The Commission can't place women nurses in army hospitals unless they are approved by Miss Dix."

"Huh!" Mary Ann snorted. "She never approved me. And I'm here, ain't I?"

Mrs. Porter glanced at her husband. Although Mary Ann Bickerdyke did not know it, she had been the subject of some anxious discussion in the Chicago office. Her unauthorized appropriation of Sanitary stores at Cairo and elsewhere had not gone unnoticed. Her presence on the hospital steamers had no official sanction. If she had not claimed to represent the Commission at Donelson and here at Savannah, she had certainly acted as though she did. Various doctors had reported her in various quarters. Just before Mrs. Porter left Chicago, she had received a discreet inquiry from Dorothea Dix. At that very moment, Mrs. Bickerdyke's status was more perilous than she could have guessed. She was completely unaware, and sublimely indifferent.

Mr. Porter filled the awkward pause. He did not think, he observed, that there need be much delay in getting new nurses approved. Miss Dix's representative was in Chicago now, arranging a closer liaison between the Dix office and the Commission. It was highly probable that one of the Commission ladies would be appointed a deputy, with authority to certify any nurses recruited in the area. Mr. Porter had been told in confidence that the deputyship would go to Mrs. Livermore. Very likely the matter had already been arranged, or would be in the near future. Mrs. Livermore, once she knew how pressing the need was, would surely act with speed. The only difficulty would be to find suitable ladies.

"I can do that," Mrs. Porter said confidently. "I'll go back at once and take it in hand. And now, dear Mrs. Bickerdyke, if you will let me have a list of the Sanitary supplies you have already used, I'll see that they are properly entered in our records. We have to keep track of these things," she added, to Mary Ann's blank look. "Can you tell me how many sets of underclothing you have given out? And how many pounds of coffee you have used?"

"No, I certainly can't," Mrs. Bickerdyke answered indignantly. "Do you think I stopped to keep count, with my boys laying there? I used all I could get my hands on. And I'd a done better if I could a got my hands on more. That's all I can tell you."

Mrs. Porter sighed and looked at her husband. He cleared his throat.

"There's a little matter of the butcher here in town," he said. "The man has a bill for fifty pounds of soup meat. He claims he furnished it to you, on your representation that the Commission would pay for it."

"Well, won't they?" she demanded. "I thought that was what the Commission was for, to furnish these poor fellows with what they need. The good Lord knows the army don't do it. Look here, Reverend." She leaned forward, her plain face tense. "You folks up in Chicago just don't seem to understand. We got no time to fiddle around. A man that's wounded, and likely been laying out in the rain all night, he gets brought in here and laid out in a cow shed

to wait till the doctor gets around to cutting off his arm or his leg. Chances are it'll be done without anything to deaden the pain, beyond a tot of whiskey or a chew of tobacco. Well, do you think that boy don't need some good strong hot soup to give him strength to face it? If you think that, you just ain't seen what I've seen. Yes, I bought that meat. There's nothing in the army stores here, even if I could get at 'em, but salt beef with maggots in it. The quartermaster himself'll tell you that. I went looking for fresh meat, and the only place I could find it was a Rebel butcher shop. I didn't have to buy it. Plenty of the boys would have been glad to jerk it for me, same as they do anything else they want that the Secesh has got. But General Grant don't hold with jerking, so I told the butcher it'd be paid for. I knew the army wouldn't do it, but I thought the Commission would. If you don't want to, all right. The boys got the soup. Let the Rebel butcher hold the bag, for all I care. I had to have that meat, and I got it the best way I knew how."

"Of course you did." Mrs. Porter smiled, and laid a white hand gently on Mary Ann's big work-roughened one. "You did exactly right, my dear lady. The necessities of our poor lads cannot wait, as you so eloquently remind us. The butcher shall be paid from Commission funds. And before I leave, I'll see that you are authorized to draw freely upon the Sanitary stores here and to come. I ask only that you will fill in the proper requisition forms when you do so, in order to keep our records straight."

"Well, I will if I have time," Mrs. Bickerdyke agreed. "I don't want to get into no trouble with the Commission, Mis' Porter. But you might as well know it now as later. The boys come first with me. If doing what helps them gets me into trouble, then I'll take the trouble. It won't bother me, long's *they're* not bothered."

The Reverend Mr. Porter remained in Savannah as chaplain to an Illinois regiment, while his wife returned to Chicago. Mr. Porter's prediction proved accurate; Mrs. Livermore now had authority to approve women nurses recruited in the Chicago district. Mrs. Porter found a dozen women, had them certified by Mrs. Livermore, and distributed them among the hospitals to which the Shiloh

wounded were being shipped. Then, against the horrified protests of all her friends, Eliza Porter announced that she was going back to Savannah to join Mrs. Bickerdyke in her active labors there.

Mother Bickerdyke was even more horrified than the Chicago ladies. Mrs. Porter had impressed her favorably by approving female nurses and paying the meat bill. She would have been a valuable ally in the Chicago office, now that she realized the desperate needs of the front-line hospitals. But what could she do here in the rough camp?

What she could do, Mrs. Bickerdyke suspected darkly, was to be an angel. So far, except for a few Confederate ladies who ministered to their own wounded, Savannah was mercifully without one. It appeared now that the elegant Mrs. Porter was to take up the role. Mrs. Bickerdyke felt that Savannah needed a number of things worse than it needed a full-time angel.

It was not much comfort to remember that she had broken in one angel to hard labor and made a competent nurse of her. Mary Safford was young and strong, and respectful of an older woman's authority. Eliza Porter was ten years Mrs. Bickerdyke's senior, accustomed to the deference of her husband's congregation, clothed in the prestige of her Commission office. Clothed, too, in rich black taffeta trimmed in real Brussels lace, with an exquisite India shawl around her slender shoulders, with a beaded reticule holding a cut-glass bottle of smelling salts. And according to what folks said, a semi-invalid on top of everything else. Before Mrs. Porter had been a day in camp, Mrs. Bickerdyke suspected, she'd have another patient on her hands. Where would she put her? What could she do with her? Mary Ann already had her hands full, what with insufficient food supplies, hostile doctors and more patients than one woman could properly look after. She simply did not see how she could find the time and energy to cope with an angel.

She did not have to. Mother Bickerdyke, usually acute in her estimate of human nature, had badly misjudged Eliza Porter. This is not surprising, for she had never come across a personality like this before. Very few people had, or were capable of recognizing

it when they did. It is not given to many to recognize a saint at first glance.

Eliza Chappell Porter was as nearly a saint as her Protestant faith allowed. Her strong strain of religious mysticism colored her life from the age of twelve. Her daughter, Mary H. Porter, writes of her early years:

> She had a natural taste for metaphysics, read Edwards and other theological works with avidity. The difficulty of a problem was a challenge to her mental power and attracted rather than repelled. She would not evade or shrink from the severest truth, but set herself "by searching to find out God." . . . She says of her youth, "I do not remember the time when I had not deep convictions of sin and firm purpose to be a Christian. I wept, fasted, prayed and studied my Bible, but no light came."

This went on for years. By the time Eliza Chappell was twenty, her self-imposed ascetic regimen had brought her to an invalid's couch and the prospect of imminent death. At the last moment, when she said farewell to her mother, enlightenment rewarded her resolute search. "I opened the Bible with trembling hand and read: 'He that believeth on me though he were dead yet shall he live, and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die.' The whole plan of salvation by faith seemed to flash upon my mind. It was wonderful, beautiful, enrapturing. My joy was unutterable. I saw that the design of God in all these years of trial and discipline was to bring me to cease from self and rest in Christ alone. I calmly, triumphantly cast all my care on Him. . . . I had as much joy as my heart could hold."

The miracle was spiritual rather than physical, for it was weeks before she gathered strength enough to walk. Her health was permanently broken, not so much by her illness as by the methods used to combat it. "Her spine was marked from the base of the brain its whole length by the scars of the toothlike lancets used with the cups, and in many places by those of the cautery. She was so salivated by calomel that she lost all her teeth before she was twenty-five, and 'suffered many things of many physicians.'"

Miss Chappell, as she was then, became a schoolteacher and later married her Congregationalist pastor. She went with him to a pioneer parish in Wisconsin. After twenty years in the northwest her husband transferred to Chicago, to a West Side church near the Hull home that is now Hull House Settlement. When the war broke out, the Porters worked so energetically in their parish Soldiers' Aid Society that they came to Mrs. Livermore's notice. Eliza Porter was then fifty-four, a tiny, fragile creature weighing less than a hundred pounds, sweet-faced and serene with the hard-won peace of soul that never left her. Her gentle, pretty manners probably impressed the worldly Mrs. Livermore more than her piety, although that was an asset too. A great deal of the Commission's support came through the churches. Mrs. Porter was quite capable of falling on her knees in the presence of a hesitant donor, praying audibly that God would touch his heart to generosity. Mrs. Livermore, religious enough herself, would have found this method a little embarrassing. It came naturally to Mrs. Porter, and it produced some amazing results.

Mother Bickerdyke, resigned to accepting an angel and unaware that she was to receive a saint instead, made what preparations she could. For herself she had chosen a cot in the boardinghouse kitchen in preference to a bedroom. She always had something simmering on the stove, and she liked to keep her eye on it. She engaged a bedroom for Mrs. Porter, and took time out to clean it thoroughly. It was a poor place, but it would have seemed like heaven to any soldier lying in the crowded hospitals. If it was not good enough for an angel, then the angel would just have to lump it.

Her forebodings lightened a little when she went down to the steamer to meet her new colleague. Mrs. Porter had left her fashionable clothing behind her. She was dressed, as Mrs. Bickerdyke was to see her dressed all through the war, in a plain coat and skirt of dark brown wool, without hoops or ornament. In the carpetbag at her feet were a number of Mother Hubbard aprons, shapeless sleeved garments of gray or brown calico that would cover the woolen suit completely when there was dirty work to be done.

She knew there would be dirty work, and she had come prepared

to do it. This was Mother Bickerdyke's first surprise. There was more to follow. As the two women sat at tea in the boardinghouse kitchen, Mrs. Porter produced a document with the Commission's seal.

"Your authorization," she explained. "I talked it all over with Mrs. Livermore, and she agreed that it would be best to appoint you a Sanitary Commission agent in the field. We thought at first of having you made one of Miss Dix's nurses, but it appeared that there were certain difficulties — "

She hesitated, and Mrs. Bickerdyke laughed. "Too many doctors have sent in complaints about me, I reckon. Well, that's all right. I don't want to be a nurse. The doctors boss 'em around, and they have to keep their mouths shut. It would never suit *me*. Why do I have to be anything, anyhow? I'm doing fine the way I am. The boys are satisfied."

But the doctors were not, Mrs. Porter might have told her. However, she only said gently, "You can do more for the boys, dear Mrs. Bickerdyke, if you have some sort of official standing. As the Commission's agent, you will have free access to such supplies as are available, and can order what you need. You will be free to move from place to place. As our accredited representative, your recommendations will carry more weight with hospital authorities. Although of course you understand," she added earnestly, "that we can only recommend. We cannot insist. Your certificate expressly stipulates that you are to hold yourself always subordinate to military authority. You do understand that, don't you?"

"I hear you say it," Mrs. Bickerdyke answered shortly. "I don't mind doing what they tell me, long's it makes sense. If it don't make sense I do different. I got to do what's best for the boys. Some of these fool doctors — "

"Yes, I know they're sometimes unreasonable. But do try to get on with them, won't you? It means so much to the Commission to keep the peace with the army Medical Department. It's difficult enough — " She sighed, and went on to what she thought was a pleasanter topic.

"I don't know if you realize, Mrs. Bickerdyke, that Sanitary field agent is a salaried position. You will be paid fifty dollars a month so long as you are with us."

"Paid?" Mother Bickerdyke's voice grated harshly. "Paid to look after my boys? You don't know what you're saying, Mis' Porter. You don't aim to insult me, I know that. But looky here. I don't take pay for what I'm doing. You tell your Commission to take their fifty dollars and buy me a washing machine, or some more soup kettles, or a decent cookstove. Fifty dollars will buy a heap of things I need down here. It won't buy *me!* Here, take your old paper back. I don't want it."

Patiently Mrs. Porter explained. The Commission had lately received a donation of nine thousand dollars in cash from the California chapter. After much discussion it was agreed that the money could best be used to support full-time agents in the field. Voluntary help, well-meaning but spasmodic, had already snarled the distribution system, and was largely responsible for the delays of which Mrs. Bickerdyke complained. Eliza Porter, who had coped with volunteer assistance in the Chicago office, spoke with feeling. A salaried employee could be required to devote all her time to the job, instead of dropping out when her family needed her or when she felt like taking time off. She could be rebuked or even dismissed for inefficiency, without the aftermath of hurt feelings and canceled donations.

"Nobody's going to dismiss *me,*" Mrs. Bickerdyke put in. "If they think they are, they might as well get it out of their heads right now. You take your paper, Mis' Porter. I don't work good with somebody over me. This ain't for me."

Eliza Porter looked steadily into her eyes. "I said dismissed for *inefficiency,* Mrs. Bickerdyke. That means failing to distribute our supplies where they are needed, or failing to consider the soldiers' comfort. If you failed in those things, oughtn't you to be dismissed? Oughtn't anyone, however well-intentioned, if she failed our boys? You're an honest woman, Mrs. Bickerdyke. Give me an honest answer."

Mary Ann was silent a minute while she worked it out. "You mean," she said slowly, "that if I go with the Commission, they'll only fire me if I don't do a good job. Well, of course. If that day ever comes I hope I'll have gumption enough to fire myself first. That part of it's all right. Now let's see. If I do go with the Commission, then I can get at the stuff when I need it. That'd be a big help. I wouldn't want to be paid, though. I'd a heap rather the money went into a washing machine."

"You shall have your washing machine," Mrs. Porter promised. "But you must take the salary too, my dear. It is the only way to make you an official Commission agent. I'm sure you can find some good use for the money. Don't you have a family back in Galesburg? It may be helpful to them."

"Yes, that's so, I've worried some about my little boys. I left 'em with neighbors when I went to Cairo, never thinking I'd be away so long. I'd feel better if I could pay their board, I reckon. The folks they're with ain't got much, and they got their own young 'uns to feed. It wouldn't take that much money, though. Not for two little fellows that make theirselves real handy around the place. Twenty'd be enough for what they eat."

"That would leave you thirty dollars a month for yourself," Mrs. Porter pointed out.

"And what would I do with it? I eat army food. I don't spend any money down here. There's my room, of course, but I trade tea and fancy vittles for it." She stopped, flushing. Sanitary tea, that otherwise might have gone to her boys. Not a great deal of it, for she drove a shrewd bargain with her Secesh landlady. But every tea leaf counted, short as they were. Yankee dollars talked down here in Seceshville, for all that Rebel foolishness about printing their own money. Thirty dollars would buy a lot of things here in town, things she could use right now. And thirty dollars every month — Mary Ann's craggy face split into a wide, delighted grin.

"I reckon I been right dumb," she said candidly. "I can sure enough use that money for the boys. I'll go with your Commission, Mis' Porter. If I don't do right they can fire me, like you said. But

mind this. If *they* don't do right, I'll quit and tell 'em why. That's fair, ain't it?"

Mrs. Porter agreed that it was. She went on then to explain her own plans. Her previous visit to Savannah had sickened her with the safe routine of the Chicago office. After a night of prayer, she had turned to her Bible for guidance. The pages fell open at the text: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." She had resigned her Chicago post and applied for a commission identical with Mrs. Bickerdyke's. She did not come to supervise. On the contrary, she humbly begged the benefit of the other woman's wider experience. The two of them would work together, co-partners in the sacred mission of mercy.

Her exaltation was so evident that Mrs. Bickerdyke found herself unable to make more than a feeble protest. It was rough, hard work here in the camps. Was Mrs. Porter sure her health could stand it?

"I am sure," came the serene answer. "I have little strength of my own, but my Master is the Source of all strength. He has called me to do His work. He will sustain me. 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' Have no fears for me, dear friend. And now tell me what there is to do."

From the very beginning Mrs. Porter insisted on taking her full half-share of duties and discomforts. She learned the camp routine quickly, and astonished Mrs. Bickerdyke by needing very little instruction. Her only difficulty was in adapting herself to nursing on a wholesale scale. She was the mother of nine children, and she had been a backwoods pastor's wife. She had nursed gunshot wounds inflicted by careless hunters, chests crushed by falling trees, malaria and dysentery and typhoid. Actually she was as skilled a nurse as Mother Bickerdyke herself. Once she adjusted to the multiplicity of patients, she did as much and as well as her co-worker. The association developed into a smooth-running partnership that accomplished miracles. Mrs. Porter's daughter says of it:

They were so admirably harmonized by contrast that in Sanitary work each seemed to complement the other. Mrs. Porter was gentle; Mrs. Bickerdyke brusque. The mildness of the one was an offset to the positiveness of the other, the noiseless efficiency of the one to the turbulent energy of the other. The culture and social position of Mrs. Porter gave her ready access to the officers; Mrs. Bickerdyke followed her own bent and adaptation, in devoting herself to the rank and file. In person Mrs. Porter was petite; Mrs. Bickerdyke, the reverse. Their very voices acquired during their wonderful army life a permanent quality which in Mrs. Porter was an accent of pity and sympathy, in Mrs. Bickerdyke of protest and cheer.

The two women were closely associated, except for some interrupted periods, from the spring of 1862 until the end of the war. There grew up between them a tender, loyal friendship that endured as long as they lived. Mrs. Bickerdyke, friendly to everyone, was not given to personal attachments. Even her children she treated with matter-of-fact affection, never seeming to mind whether they were near her or far away. When she said that her heart belonged to her boys, she did not mean the Bickerdyke boys. Throughout her long life, her deepest love was for the suffering, broken soldiers she patched up and pushed back into life. Such love as she gave to an individual she gave to Eliza Chappell Porter, her "little brown bird," the "mite of a woman" who came to her at Savannah.

XII

AFTER the Shiloh victory, Grant had expected to push on to Corinth, the railhead that was his original objective. He was prevented from doing so by news that his superior, General Halleck, was coming from St. Louis to take charge in person.

Major General Henry Wager Halleck, who replaced the impetuous Frémont as commander of the Department of the Missouri, had been the star of the West Point class graduated the year before Grant entered the Academy. Even as a cadet, Halleck showed such a brilliant grasp of military theory that his classmates nicknamed him "Old Brains." A book of his, *Elements of Military Art and Science,* became a standard textbook at West Point, where he served as an instructor after graduation.

On paper, Old Brains knew all there was to know about war. His theoretical knowledge gave him a great advantage over most Union officers, who did not even have that. The historian Henry M. Alden puts it very clearly:

> The United States was not at all eminent as a military nation at the commencement of the war. The graduates of the Military Academy at West Point had not been trained in the face of war, as are European students. Besides, the study of campaigns on the Continent of Europe during the last century . . . would, in many important respects, have been inapplicable, on account of the peculiar topographical features of the campaigns of our civil war, and the extended area over which they

were conducted. For two years, at least, the war thus became a series of costly experiments. Then came the winnowing of our generals, and much of the chaff was blown away, though not all.

The winnowing of the generals was a long and painful process, with repercussions that did not subside for a generation. Sides were taken, wires were pulled, reputations were made and unmade in editorial columns and on the floor of Congress. Washington seethed with whispering campaigns, as the partisans of this general or that one strove to advance their favorite and discredit his rivals. It was all very exciting at the time, but the published reports make dreary reading now. While the bickering and the backbiting went on in Washington, the war went on too, a cruel but certain testing ground for the extravagant claims.

General Halleck entered the war with enough prestige to carry him triumphantly through the first three years. He reached the exalted post of supreme commander of all the Union armies before the cracks began to show. To quote Alden again:

> Halleck had no large practical experience in war. In the Mexican War, for some successful skirmishing with the enemy he had been breveted captain. . . . In this Civil War he had not fought a single battle, and the only march he had made was that of his Western Army to the evacuated fortifications at Corinth. Without practical experience, he must resort to theory; and frequently his theories were based upon insufficient premises. In the second place, his distance from the actual fields of conflict, and his subsequent ignorance of the circumstances which must regulate the military operations of his subordinates, led him either to make great mistakes in cases where he gave positive and peremptory orders, or to fall into the exactly opposite error of letting campaigns manage themselves in such a manner that no one could be strictly and fully responsible for their being undertaken or for their results. He assumed too much when he exercised positive and responsible control; and in cases where he was negative, and left everything to the discretion of his subordinates . . . there was no unity of action, and no absolute control by anyone.

These grave defects were not clearly visible when Halleck relieved Grant after Shiloh, at the end of the first full year of war.

They were plain enough to Grant, and to Sherman, who had joined him in the Shiloh campaign. But neither of these subordinates was in favor at Washington. Grant had already been denounced as a drunkard. Sherman had been the victim of newspaper editorials proclaiming him insane. These two men, drawn together at Shiloh, liked and trusted each other from the start. Halleck, who disliked them both, divided his time between trying to bring about their downfall and taking credit for their successes.

Grant, having sent the beaten Confederate Army reeling back to Corinth, thought the town could easily be taken before the enemy recovered his balance. He had already planned his advance when Halleck appeared to take charge. The learned general had other ideas.

The surprise attack at Shiloh had caught the Union forces in the open, without an entrenched line of defense. This was Grant's error, as he freely admitted. General Halleck seized the opportunity to rub it in. This time, the advance upon Corinth would be made in the correct military manner, an orderly progress from one fortified line to another. As Grant tells it:

> The movement was a siege from the start to the close. The National troops were always behind entrenchments except, of course, the small reconnoitering parties sent to the front to clear the way for an advance. . . . Roads were again made in our front, and again corduroyed; a line was entrenched, and the troops were advanced to the new position. Crossroads were constructed to these new positions to enable the troops to concentrate in case of attack. The National armies were thoroughly entrenched all the way from the Tennessee River to Corinth.

This laborious progress took nearly two months to cover the twenty miles between Pittsburg Landing and Corinth. The Confederates made a few sorties to interrupt it, but were repulsed without difficulty. On the twenty-eighth of May, with a good deal of fanfare, General Halleck's troops drove the Confederates from their advanced batteries outside the town. The general made all his preparations for a decisive battle on the next day.

There was no battle. The Union forces moved into Corinth at

daybreak, to find that Beauregard had withdrawn his army, blowing up ammunition dumps and leaving not a man or a weapon behind him. The only trophies of war were a few "Quaker guns," logs about the diameter of a heavy cannon, mounted on wagon wheels and pointed menacingly in the direction of the enemy.

After all the elaborate preparation, the "capture" of Corinth was pretty much of an anticlimax, but General Halleck made the most of it. He pointed out the obvious moral; if the Rebels had known enough to fortify their town properly, they would not have been forced to abandon it without a fight. The conquering Nationals must not fall into that error. It just happened that fortification was a specialty of Halleck's, the subject he had taught at West Point. He proceeded to give his officers an object lesson there at Corinth. Grant again:

> General Halleck at once commenced erecting fortifications around Corinth on a scale to indicate that this one point must be held if it took the whole National army to do it. All commanding points two or three miles to the south, southeast, and southwest were strongly fortified. It was expected in case of necessity to connect these forts by rifle-pits. They were laid out on a scale that would have required 100,000 men to fully man them. It was probably thought that a final battle of the war would be fought at that point. *These fortifications were never used.*

Although the Corinth occupation was bloodless, the long slow march was not without its casualties. A tent hospital was set up at Farmington, a pleasant little town on the road to Corinth. Its cots were filled with the usual cases of typhoid and malaria, and of old wounds that would not heal. It had been a point of pride with the "lightly" wounded to return to duty after broken limbs had been set, or body wounds stitched up. The strenuous toil with pickax and spade did not favor full recovery. Now, with the complications of poor food and the usual camp diseases, there were more patients than the wretched Farmington hospital could cope with.

Savannah, on the other hand, by this time had more facilities

than patients. The army authorities decided to break up the hospitals there and transfer everything to Farmington. Mrs. Bickerdyke supervised the change. By this time, with her new official standing as Sanitary Commission agent, she was able to act without interference. She had an invaluable helper in young Andrew Somerville, the private from Iowa who had helped her clean out Dr. Woodward's hospital tents. At her request, General Grant detached Andy from his regiment and detailed him to escort duty with Sanitary Commission agents and supplies. Grant gave her forty army wagons to haul hospital equipment over the corduroy road to Farmington. She took along half a dozen of the best washermen among the contrabands. Her own wagon, a light Sanitary ambulance known as "Mother Bickerdyke's carriage," was driven by a convalescent soldier, Frank Williams of the Second Minnesota Infantry. Frank became almost as attached to her as her devoted Andy. He drove for her until he was well enough to go back to active duty, just before the siege of Vicksburg.

Mrs. Porter had accompanied the last boatload of patients to Cairo, and was staying there for a brief rest. The little lady's health had withstood her rigorous labors better than had been expected, but Mrs. Bickerdyke was always afraid she would break down as Mary Safford had done. She saw Mrs. Porter off with fond injunctions to take care of herself and not come back until she had gained twenty pounds.

At the last minute two women nurses arrived in Savannah. None had come before, to Mrs. Bickerdyke's great disappointment. Mrs. Livermore had commissioned several of them, but the demand in the general hospitals had been so great that none could be spared for the front. The two who finally did get to Savannah, Mrs. Webb of Wisconsin and Mrs. McCaul of Illinois, were a little put out to find the Savannah hospitals closing. Mrs. Bickerdyke briskly assured them that they would find plenty of work at Farmington. As indeed they did.

The Farmington hospital, when the wagon train reached it, proved to be a group of tents pitched on a ridge, sheltering nearly

1400 men. "A kitchen had been attached to each ward," Mrs. Bickerdyke wrote to a friend, "but nothing good was cooked in any of them."

Her letter goes on to relate an incident that seems to have appealed to her grim sense of humor.

> One day a coffin was brought in the ambulance with a sick man. I said, "What have you got that thing for?" The driver replied, "Oh, we had it on hand, and as he is so nearly dead we thought we'd bring it along." "Well, you take care of your coffin and I'll take care of the man," I said. And Frank — good fellow that he was, he could swear a little on occasion as well as pray — said "I'll split that thing up for kindling wood, and d—n the fellow who'd put a man in a coffin before he is dead!" And he was as good as his word.

The Farmington hospital was worse than anything Mrs. Bickerdyke had seen since her first day at Cairo. The surgeon, a Dr. McDougal, was friendly, but she antagonized the quartermaster and hospital steward by her forthright criticism. This did not bother her at all. She promptly waded in, her corps of contrabands behind her, and scrubbed the place to shining cleanliness. The new nurses got their initiation in the ruthless bathing of filthy, vermin-ridden men. The man who had come with his coffin, and who had been dying of nothing worse than malnutrition and neglect, recovered speedily and turned out to be a professional baker. Mother Bickerdyke had a brick oven built from a ruined chimney, and set him to work. A general kitchen was set up, and a laundry. Before the week ended Dr. McDougal was proudly boasting of his model hospital.

Mrs. Bickerdyke was handicapped at Farmington, as she had been at Savannah, by the lack of large-scale cooking equipment. Home cooking in these little Southern towns was still done over open fireplaces. Mother Bickerdyke could cook wherever she found fire, but for the quantities she required it was a slow, tiring business. She had tried to buy the family-size wood range she used at Savannah, but her landlady refused to sell it. The army was still addicted to campfires. Ever since Donelson, Mrs. Bickerdyke had

been pestering the Commission for a big stove. Now at last, here in Farmington, a Michigan stove manufacturer's generosity brought the answer to her pleas.

Mrs. Bickerdyke arrived at Farmington on July 9, 1862. Two weeks later, when she was beginning to get the disorganized hospital in fine shape, a huge Sanitary shipment came by rail to Corinth. Among other badly needed supplies, there was a wood range, a veritable giant of a stove. It had been specially manufactured for a new Chicago hotel, now unfinished because of the war. It was shiny black with nickel trim, it had an enormous cooking surface, a gigantic oven, and a storage tank for heating water. Mrs. Bickerdyke had never seen a stove so big, nor any object on earth so beautiful.

Late in August, word came that the Confederate General Price was advancing in an attempt to retake Corinth. He was reported to be within five miles of Farmington, a rest depot that could not be defended. Orders were given to evacuate the camp, including the hospital, to Corinth. Overnight the patients were loaded into wagons for the four-mile haul into the larger town. The need of haste was so great that the officers ordered "non-essential" hospital supplies left behind. Mother Bickerdyke would not have that. Her driver, Frank, saw to it that a couple of wagons were lost in the woods, and stayed lost until he and the contrabands had loaded them with cooking utensils and soiled clothing. The monster stove was heaved aboard, to reappear triumphantly at the new Corinth hospital.

This was an institution that came very close to satisfying Mrs. Bickerdyke's exacting requirements. The charming columned building had been a young ladies' seminary, exclusive and fairly expensive. It had wide airy dormitories, spacious parlors, and plenty of room to move around. The kitchen and the laundry, in detached buildings, were badly equipped, for the work had been done by slaves whose convenience need not be considered. But at least the rooms existed, with solid roofs and ample working space.

Early in June, a week after the occupation of Corinth, Memphis

had fallen to the Union's Mississippi gunboat fleet. General Grant went to Memphis as commander of district headquarters established there. The combined force that had entered Corinth was widely scattered, while General Halleck pursued his path to eminence. In July he received what he considered his just due, appointment as general-in-chief of all the Union armies. He departed for Washington, and Grant was recalled from Memphis to take over his western command.

The situation in the Corinth area was not too good. Two strong Confederate armies under Generals Price and Van Dorn were near, and drawing nearer. Grant had only a few thousand men to defend the elaborate fortifications General Halleck had laid out. He observes dryly:

> One of the first things I had to do was to construct fortifications at Corinth better suited to the garrison that could be spared to man them. The structures that had been built during the months of May and June were left as monuments to the skill of the engineer, and others were constructed in a few days, plainer in design, but suited to the command available to defend them.

Corinth was now a vital objective to the Confederates, as it had been to the Federals, because of its two railroads. Early in September General Price made his first attack, not upon Corinth itself, but upon the Memphis and Charleston Railroad at a point twenty-two miles to the southeast. The station was the health resort of Iuka Springs. A Confederate cavalry unit quickly routed the small Union detachment there, and took possession of the railroad yards. General Price moved up with his main body and paused to regroup for the advance upon Corinth. Grant did not wait, but came out to challenge the enemy in his Iuka camp.

It was a bloody little two-hour battle that ended with the Confederates retiring in good order, to reframe their plans for attacking Corinth from another direction. Mother Bickerdyke was on hand throughout the engagement, and afterward. She left Frank Williams, who "could be trusted to manage the cooks," in charge at Corinth, and spent ten days at Iuka Springs. The temporary hospi-

tal was set up in the local hotel, a very luxurious hostelry for wealthy Southerners in search of health from the medicinal spring waters. The hotel had a fine supply of linen, and the choicest of mattresses and feather pillows. The patients picked up from the Iuka battlefield went back to Corinth in railroad box cars made comfortable by piles of mattresses and nests of pillows. It was the best haul Mrs. Bickerdyke ever made.

The Academy Hospital at Corinth, crowded already, overflowed into tents pitched on the wide lawns. The kitchens and laundry expanded to meet tremendous demands. Fortunately there was plenty of help available now. Contrabands from the surrounding plantations flocked into Corinth, begging for work. Mrs. Bickerdyke had work for them, in kitchen and laundry.

The Academy washhouse proving too small, she set up an open-air plant two miles away, in the woods near a large spring. There, under the supervision of soldier overseers chosen by Mrs. Bickerdyke, a force of colored men and women labored from daylight to dark. The size of the job may be judged from the list of one day's washing. It was: 1532 undershirts, 600 towels, 32 blankets, 80 quilts, 478 pillowcases, 22 feather pillows (emptied and washed), 5 blouses, 200 shirts, 175 pairs drawers, 400 handkerchiefs, 70 bedsacks, 6 pairs pants.

There was as yet no equipment but family-size tubs and washboards, kettles that had doubled for soup making and would again, and barrels of soft soap and washing soda. All water must be dipped from the spring and heated over the open fires. The heavy quilts and blankets were wrung by the men, but any woman worth hiring was expected to cope with lighter articles by sheer elbow grease. In general, the women did the washing while the men cut wood to keep the fires going, carried water, filled and emptied the kettles and tubs. It is doubtful whether any of the Negroes had ever worked harder as slaves than they did in Mrs. Bickerdyke's laundry. They seemed to like it. Every morning she had to turn away a throng of new applicants.

Once the laundry was running smoothly, Mother Bickerdyke did

not give it much of her own time. But she had her rules, and her means of seeing that they were enforced. One rule was that there must be no loafing and no hurrying. A good, steady pace that the slowest could keep up with worked out best, she found. Some of the women had babies they could not leave. A shebang of green branches was built to shelter them, and a mother was always excused from the tubs to nurse her child when it cried. Mrs. Bickerdyke employed the common folk pronunciation of her time and called the black people "niggers." She had none of the contempt implied in the present-day use of the word. From the Cincinnati days when she worked for the Underground Railway, she had felt and demonstrated a warm friendliness for Negroes. Her laundry overseers were soldiers who shared her views, or carefully concealed any adverse ones. Just to make sure, she frequently descended unheralded upon the laundry camp.

One of the spoils of the Iuka battle was a Rebel horse, a scrubby farm nag used to drag field guns into position. The Confederates took excellent care of their cavalry mounts, but Old Whitey was a sadly neglected rack of bones when he fell into Union hands. Some of her soldier friends had heard Mrs. Bickerdyke wish she might have a riding horse, so she wouldn't need to hitch up the wagon every time she wanted to go somewhere. They brought Old Whitey to her, remarking apologetically that he needed a little feeding up. Feeding up, whether of man or beast, was Mother Bickerdyke's hobby. While she was at it, she anointed Old Whitey's harness sores and rubbed liniment into his stiff legs. He blossomed into quite a creditable saddle horse, not too bad-looking, docile and willing. He carried his rescuer over many a weary mile of swamp and woods roads, and survived to share her triumph at the war's end.

On Old Whitey Mrs. Bickerdyke rode out to the laundry camp every day or so. She was satisfied that the work was being done as efficiently and speedily as one could expect, with the primitive equipment available. But how much more could be done, and how much better, with proper machinery! There were such things as

washing machines, big wooden barrels that worked like a churn, rocking and tossing garments by the simple action of a crank turned with one hand. There were hand wringers, and great heavy presses called mangles. Mother Bickerdyke knew these marvels existed, although she had seen but a few of them. They were advertised alluringly in the Chicago and St. Louis papers. Of course they cost a lot of money. But the Commission had money. Why couldn't it be spent on sensible things like these? Again Mrs. Bickerdyke took her pen in hand to write the Chicago office. Mrs. Porter was back there now, working at the Rooms when she was supposed to be home for a rest. *She* knew how pressing the need was — indeed, she had actually promised a washing machine in that talk at Savannah. Mother Bickerdyke wrote urgently to remind her to remind Mrs. Livermore to remind the committee that she needed it, and needed it now.

On October 3 General Price made the long-expected attack on Corinth. From the hospital on its hill, Mrs. Bickerdyke was in an excellent position to see the two-day battle. She watched the Union troops file past to take their places in Grant's new breastworks rimming the town. They were coming in, by train and on foot, from all the outlying camps. Toward sunset of the first day a tired, dusty column of Wisconsin boys straggled by. Someone told Mrs. Bickerdyke that these men had been on the road since noon, without food or rest. Hungry and tired, they were heading straight into the battle, now raging in full fury at the edge of town. It was more than her motherly heart could bear.

She hailed a captain, splendid on horseback beside his plodding men, and asked if they could not stop long enough for bread and coffee. He replied curtly that they could not, and rode on. She waited until he was out of earshot. Then, in her deep, strong voice she shouted "Halt!" The column came to a standstill. The exhausted men flung themselves down on the hospital grass.

Nurses and walking patients hurried out with soup and coffee. While the men drank, their canteens were refilled with fresh water, and a loaf of bread was handed to each soldier. When she was

good and ready Mrs. Bickerdyke gave her second order, "Forward, march!" and the men moved on. In the gathering dusk, no one had seen where the orders came from. There was an inquiry later, at which a sergeant testified that he supposed it had been some general who happened to be at the hospital. It certainly sounded like a general's voice to him. Mrs. Bickerdyke, admitting her guilt, nonchalantly accepted a formal reprimand. She knew it was wrong, and she would not do it again. "Unless I have to," she added cheerfully.

On the afternoon of the second day, enemy shells fell in the hospital grounds. No one was hurt, but panic swept the crowded wards. These men, brave as lions in battle, whimpered like babies at the thought of being killed in bed. Mother Bickerdyke quieted them by starting a hymn. "Must Jesus bear the cross alone?" with its swinging revival tune, was an army favorite. When she had them all singing, she slipped away to find the head surgeon and tell him her boys must be got out of here, and quickly.

Nearly a thousand patients were hastily moved to tents set up in Kincaid's Grove, a stretch of woodland outside artillery range. In the course of the battle a number of newly wounded men, Union and Confederate, were brought to the grove and added to the patients already there. There was a great deal of confusion, increased by the arrival of many townspeople also seeking the shelter of the woods. Mrs. Bickerdyke, handing out coffee by firelight, was considerably annoyed when a cup was seized by the kid-gloved hand of a Confederate lady. "Since you're here," she said sharply, "you can at least look after your own. That boy in gray over there needs this coffee a heap worse than you do. Take it to him!"

On the morning of the third day the Confederates were in retreat, and the hospital could be moved back into the Academy building. It was overflowing now, with new wounded running into the thousands. Tents were set up on the lawns and far back into the fields beyond. There were tents enough to go around, but no bedding. Mrs. Bickerdyke gathered a squad and some empty wagons and hurried down to the army storehouse.

The quartermaster had no cots or blankets left. The hospital had requisitioned them all.

"Then we'll have to take what we can get," she answered. She pushed past him into the storehouse. "These bales of cotton and hay will do. Come on, boys, heave 'em out."

The quartermaster protested, "You must bring me an order, ma'am."

"Shucks, I got no time to hunt up officers and get orders," she answered good-naturedly. "Stand aside, little man. We got work to do. Go on, boys, get them wagons loaded."

Back at the hospital tents, the hay was spread on the ground, with armfuls of cotton twisted into pillows. While she was getting her patients comfortably stowed, an orderly brought a message from the chief surgeon. The quartermaster had already filed his complaint. The surgeon ordered Mrs. Bickerdyke to report to him at once.

"I'd be liable to!" she snorted. "With these boys still laying out there on the ground waiting for beds! You go back and tell that fool doctor I got better things to do. So has he, I'd think. Well, you don't need to tell him that." She smiled at the boy's frightened face. "Just say I'm busy right now, but I'll come as soon as I can."

When the last man had been moved under cover, fed and settled for the night, she remembered the surgeon's orders and went up to his office. "You wanted to see me, doctor?" she asked wearily.

"I do indeed. Mrs. Bickerdyke, you are charged with taking quartermaster's stores without proper orders, and over his protest. What have you to say for yourself?"

She was tired, and she had not eaten all day. This was a fine way to spend a bit of hard-earned leisure. But she straightened her aching back and sailed in.

"Who ordered the tents put up on the college grounds?" she demanded.

"I did."

"What'd you do that for?"

"Really, Mrs. Bickerdyke," the doctor said stiffly, "you are not here to question me. I—"

"All right, I'll answer it myself. You ordered them tents put up to shelter wounded men. That's right, ain't it?"

"Certainly. But I really must protest at your manner. You are not—"

"Never mind my manner, doctor. You had the tents put up for the wounded. You knew they couldn't lay out in the open with no roof over 'em. All right. Did you think they could lay on the bare ground? Come on, now, you're a doctor. Did you want us to put 'em down in the mud?"

"I am not condemning your use of the hay, madam. Under the circumstances, it is the best we can do. The point is that you should not have taken it without obtaining an order from me. I would gladly have given it if I had been asked."

"Well, I didn't think of it," she said candidly. "I needed the hay, and I took it. But since you say you're willing, I don't know what all the fuss is about. All you got to do is to draw an order and give it to the quartermaster. That'll straighten everything out."

The doctor, with a bad grace, accepted her suggestion, and the incident was closed. It was only one of many, a small skirmish in her incessant battle against army red tape. She can't have won them all. But her defeats, if there were any, do not survive. She never gave up, and so far as the records go, she always won.

As rapidly as possible, the wounded at Corinth were shipped north by rail. The Sanitary Commission sent down a number of hospital trains, passenger coaches with the seats removed and hammocks slung above the rows of cots on the floor. As beds in the Academy Hospital were vacated, patients were moved in from the tents outside. The day came when it was reported to Mrs. Bickerdyke that all the tents had now been emptied.

This was two weeks after the battle. She had been rushed off her feet, with only her two women nurses and awkward soldier volunteers to help her. The Confederate women of Corinth hardly dared visit their kin in the hospital, for they were always pounced

upon and put to work. There were a great many wounded prisoners, many of them with homes in or near Corinth. It was believed, though never proved, that Mrs. Bickerdyke connived at smuggling some of them out to their families. The opposing armies had their own system for exchanging disabled prisoners of war, but it is quite possible that Mother Bickerdyke did not always wait for it to operate. One patient less meant more food and care for the others. Let the Rebels look after their own.

The report that all the tents were empty was good news. But with her usual thoroughness, Mrs. Bickerdyke set out to make sure. She prowled through the canvas rows, soon to be taken down, until she came to a tent at the far edge of the field. She lifted the flap and peered in. There seemed to be nothing there but trampled hay, darkness and a horrible smell. A discarded blanket, covered with buzzing blueflies, lay in a far corner. Mrs. Bickerdyke frowned. She had told them over and over never to leave blankets behind, no matter how foul they were. They could always be washed. And every blanket would be needed, with winter coming on.

She trudged across the muddy hay and lifted the blanket at arm's length, disturbing the flies. To quote Mrs. Livermore:

> There lay a man, still breathing, but hardly alive. He had been shot through both cheeks, a part of his tongue had been cut off, which was swollen to bursting in his mouth, and the left shoulder and leg were broken. How long he had been forgotten no one could tell, but the flies had rioted in his wounds and he was in a most lamentable condition. He was brought on a stretcher immediately to the hospital, where she devoted herself to his restoration, fighting grim death inch by inch, hour by hour, until she came off conqueror and the man recovered.

XIII

By late November the Academy Hospital, emptied of battle casualties, had shrunk to a post hospital for the garrison at Corinth. Grant, with the bulk of the army, had moved southward, preparing the massive assault on Vicksburg. The fighting in the west had reached a lull in which for once Mrs. Bickerdyke found nothing to do. Her Galesburg friends were urging her to come home for a rest. It had been over a year and a half since she had seen her children; a period of such unremitting effort that she had scarcely found time to write to them. Their letters had hinted that they were not too happy, separated in foster homes. She decided to go back to Galesburg and put things in order. And once in Illinois, she promised herself, she'd run up to Chicago and have a few things out with the Sanitary Commission. Maybe if she talked to Mrs. Livermore in person she could make her see the light about that laundry equipment.

So, leaving Old Whitey to Andy's care, with promises that she would not be long away, Mrs. Bickerdyke took the train for the north. She was wearing the same gray calico dress and Shaker bonnet in which she had descended upon Cairo in the spring of 1861. The dress was pockmarked with holes from campfire sparks, but it had held up very well, considering. There's nothing like good stout calico for everyday wear, she always said.

The home town welcomed her cordially. In her luggage she had a hoard of souvenirs, little possessions of Galesburg boys who had

fallen at Shiloh and Corinth, who had died with her voice in their ears, promising to see that the mementos got home to Mom or wife or sweetheart. Keepsakes were tenderly cherished in that sentimental age; nothing so saddened a grieving survivor as to have "nothing to remember him by." Mother Bickerdyke never went quite so far to secure authentic keepsakes as Mrs. Porter, who attended deathbeds with a supply of clean handkerchiefs in her reticule. When the man was obviously breathing his last, she pressed the handkerchief into his hand. Then, with a clear conscience, she could tell the stricken family that this was the last thing he touched as his spirit took its flight.

Mrs. Bickerdyke was more inclined to improvise from whatever came to hand—a uniform button, a pocket Bible, or a photograph. She was not so tender of conscience as the saintly Eliza Porter. Where she thought it would comfort a sore heart, she reported religious and patriotic deathbed utterances that probably never got made. To the anguished question "Did he think of me at the last?" she never failed to answer that he did, and looked forward to a Heavenly reunion.

She stayed in Galesburg for a week, visiting the bereaved, addressing Soldiers' Aid societies, pleading with her fellow citizens for bigger and better Sanitary Commission donations. Then, promising to come back for Christmas, she went up to Chicago and her first meeting with Mary Livermore. The Commission's great lady was accustomed to entertaining visiting Sanitary people at her South Side mansion. She had written Mrs. Bickerdyke at Corinth, urging her to make the house her home whenever she came to Chicago.

She arrived on a day when the Livermore family was planning to attend a fashionable wedding. Mrs. Livermore, rushing home from a tea party, explained that their talk would have to be postponed because of the evening engagement. Perhaps, she suggested doubtfully, her guest would like to go to the wedding?

Somewhat to her surprise, Mrs. Bickerdyke accepted, remarking that she had not seen the inside of a church for eighteen months,

and it would do her good to go. She had left her calicoes in Galesburg and come to Chicago in her second-best brown wool. But she had her good black in her carpetbag. It would be like old days to be dressing up for church again.

In her good black with its touch of creamy lace, in the little jet-trimmed bonnet tied under her chin, Mother Bickerdyke made an unexpectedly handsome figure. The Livermores had no reason to feel ashamed of her as she followed them into the church. It is true that she fell asleep during the long exhortation after the ceremony, but she did not snore, and she started awake as soon as the congregation rose. The reception was held in the church parlor. The groom was a handsome young major in full uniform. As Mrs. Bickerdyke moved up to shake his hand, he gave a delighted shout and seized her in his arms.

"Mother Bickerdyke! This is all my wedding needed to make it perfect. But don't you remember me? You took care of me after Donelson."

"I'm afraid I don't, son," she said. "There were so many of you."

"Yes, but there was only one of *you*. I'll never forget what you did. If it hadn't been for you, there'd be a one-legged bridegroom here tonight—if he was here at all. Listen, everybody."

The story he told was unique to him, although Mrs. Bickerdyke could have duplicated it by the dozen. He had been a lieutenant then, carried aboard the hospital steamer with a Minie-ball in his leg, waiting his turn for amputation. He did not want his leg cut off. Mrs. Bickerdyke, happening by with hot tea, listened to his frantic protests and nodded. She was already sickened by the wholesale amputations, done over and over in cases where the wound could have been treated by gentler means. The overworked doctors, with no time or facilities for the gentler treatment, found amputation simpler. But whenever a patient wanted to make a fight, he could be certain that Mrs. Bickerdyke would back him up. She backed up the lieutenant that night, cleaning and dressing the wound herself, hurrying him off to a cot before his turn was reached. And here he was, with the leg as good as new, and a major's insignia

on his collar. She glowed with pleasure, and assured the bride that such a lucky boy would always be safe from enemy bullets.

The bridegroom's story made Mrs. Bickerdyke the star attraction of the wedding reception. Mary Livermore, who had shuddered a little at the uncultured speech, saw that the cultured Chicago guests were utterly oblivious to it. They crowded around this big, confident woman who knew what it was like out there, and didn't mince words in telling them. She told them of the suffering, but she told them some gay stories of camp life, too. It was not all hardship and danger. The open-air living was good for young men, made them strong and healthy, and taught them to depend on themselves. She guessed the ladies would split their sides if they could see some of the messes those boys cooked up to eat. There was one —a Chicago boy from the Board of Trade regiment—who undertook to cook some bacon for his hospital tent. "He got the fire going and the frying pan on," she related, "and then he come to me with the lard can in his hand. 'Mother,' says he, 'how much lard do I put in?' Lard to fry bacon!" She wiped her eyes at the memory, and the wedding guests laughed with her.

The bridal pair left for their honeymoon journey, but the party went on far into the night. Mrs. Bickerdyke, quite unconscious of the sensation she was creating, talked on and on. It seemed that the guests could not get enough of her stories. Thoughtfully Mary Livermore watched her. The Sanitary campaign needed constant stimulation to keep donations up to requirements. She herself, with her poised, gracious platform manner, was always effective, but she had her executive duties to attend to. Her speakers' bureau was swamped with calls from surrounding towns. She had tried to select women of her own type, and train them in her own manner. Now she began to wonder. Mrs. Bickerdyke, homely and down-to-earth as she was, had a quality that touched people's hearts. She certainly was not shy about talking to strangers. Mrs. Livermore, with the Commission's interest always in mind, wondered if she could not be useful here as well as on the battlefield.

The talk the next morning was a frank one. Mrs. Bickerdyke,

cheered and refreshed by her pleasant evening, gladly agreed to do her hostess a favor. Not that it was any favor, asking folks to give to the Commission. She had quite a lot of things she'd like to get off her mind. There was too much homemade stuff coming in, and not enough money. Jellies and cookies and crocheted foot-warmers were all very well, but to feed the boys decently she had to have fresh milk and eggs and butter and vegetables. These things could be bought from the Secesh plantations, but it took money to pay for them. She'd tell her audiences, she vowed, to send less stuff and more cash.

That suited Mrs. Livermore perfectly. From the beginning the Commission had faced this problem of obtaining cash contributions. Judge Mark Skinner, associated with her on the Commission, had drawn up a circular for the guidance of Soldiers' Aid societies. In it he pointed out that "nine hundred and ninety-nine people out of a thousand choose to forward supplies rather than money. And yet every solitary package, large or small, involves more or less expense that has to be met somehow. Four quires of letter paper a day; postage on a hundred letters daily; the drayage in and drayage out of a hundred and fifty packages daily; the cooperage; cards on the boxes; depot hire; clerk hire; and other inevitable expenses, need money in large amounts."

In spite of the judge's appeal, the out-of-town Aid societies continued to swamp the Chicago office with their boxes, packed by loving hands, filled with unneeded or unsuitable articles. For really big expenditures, such as the fitting up of hospital trains and steamers, the businessmen on the Commission did very well at levying contributions from their own ranks. Raising money for smaller day-by-day cash expenditures was left to the women, headed by Mrs. Livermore. It was one of her most vexing problems. If Mother Bickerdyke could do something about it,.she would be delighted.

So Mrs. Bickerdyke embarked on a fund-raising tour that took her to Springfield, Aurora, Milwaukee and several other surrounding towns. Knowing from her own experience how little money passed through the average housewife's hands, she directed her cash

appeal straight at the men. Many of the supporting Aid organizations were made up of women's auxiliaries to popular lodges such as the Masons, the Odd Fellows and the Knights of Pythias. The meetings were held in the lodge rooms. Mother Bickerdyke insisted that they be held at night, when the husbands could be present. For church groups she chose to speak at the mid-week prayer meeting nights or at the regular Sunday services. She was forceful, direct and not at all tactful with her men listeners, reminding them flatly that it was a man's business to fight. If he was too old or too soft to fight with a gun, then he must fight with his dollars. The wives shivered as they listened to her bold challenge, but it worked. She came back to Chicago with more money and pledges than the elegant Mrs. Livermore had ever gathered in that territory.

At the end of the tour, with success behind her, she claimed her reward. She'd raised all this money, and glad to do it. But she reckoned she ought to have some say in how it was spent. She reckoned that right now, before it all melted away for stamps and drayage and such, some of it ought to go into laundry equipment. She'd written the Commission over and over about how badly it was needed. Now the money was on hand. She was here in Chicago, where she could pick out just what she needed, make the money go as far as possible. She calmly announced that tomorrow morning she intended to take some Milwaukee cash and go shopping for washing machines.

Tactfully Mrs. Livermore explained that this was impossible. The money must be turned into the Commission treasury. The Executive Board, of which Mrs. Livermore was only one member, must pass upon the purchase of laundry equipment. If the Board approved it, it would issue an order. Then—

"Orders again!" Mrs. Bickerdyke sniffed. "A body'd think this was the army. Well, let me tell you, Mis' Livermore, I get enough of that foolishness down South. I ain't turned over the Milwaukee money yet. Tomorrow morning I aim to buy me a washing machine, some wringers and a mangle. If they's any left over the Commission'll get it. Now what you got to say to that?"

Mrs. Livermore thought quickly. The Reverend Mr. Folsom, the Sanitary agent at Cairo, had frequently reported that Mrs. Bickerdyke was given to requisitioning Sanitary stores without proper authorization. Mrs. Porter had observed the same. In fact Mother Bickerdyke's appointment as Sanitary agent was made chiefly to regularize her raids on Sanitary supplies. Both Mr. Folsom and Mrs. Porter warmly commended the use she made of them; both of them praised her transparent honesty. But they confessed themselves unable to make her conform to regulations. Nobody could do that, not even the United States Army. Mrs. Livermore, remembering all she had heard, decided not to try.

"I'll arrange a special meeting of the Executive Board," she promised. "Mr. Blatchford is out of town, but I'll get Judge Skinner and Mrs. Hoge, and any others who are available. I'm sure they will approve the purchase, Mrs. Bickerdyke. But you'll have to wait—"

"I'll wait till tomorrow morning, Mis' Livermore. If you want to get them folks together tonight, it's all right with me. I'll tell 'em what I aim to do. But tomorrow I go get me that washing machine."

Mrs. Livermore summoned the committee to her home, or enough of them to vote the necessary expenditure. There were no hard feelings—quite the contrary, in fact. The shrewd Mrs. Livermore realized, and made her fellow committee members realize, that in Mrs. Bickerdyke they had a find. The first burst of enthusiasm had spent itself; it was getting harder and harder to bring home to the public the continuing need for contributions. The Commission, never more than tolerated by the army, was a target for criticism in other quarters. Wives and mothers were writing to their local papers that they had heard from Johnny, who had never received the box they sent him through the Commission. Patients wrote home that the doctors were growing fat on delicacies *they* never saw. There were stories of Sanitary shirts and drawers on sale in camp stores. All these stories had some truth in them, as no one knew better than Mrs. Bickerdyke. At her recent meetings she had answered questions frankly, admitting that the gifts sometimes fell

into the wrong hands. But not when she was around, she added, and she told the story of the stewed peaches and the hospital underwear. Her blunt, straightforward talks had done more to dispel suspicion than all the Commission's circulars and appeals. Contributors were certain that in her they had a watchdog who would see that their gifts were not wasted, nor their Johnnies neglected. The Commission simply could not afford to alienate her now.

They gave her permission to buy her washing machines, asking only that she render an itemized account afterward. This she promised to do, but Mrs. Porter was sent along with her to make sure. She had a delightful morning shopping with her old friend, now in better health and eager to rejoin the army. Mrs. Bickerdyke was not sure where she would go next, and urged Mrs. Porter to wait until she knew. "I'll send for you when I find out where they need us," she promised. "Till then you take it easy and put some meat on your bones. You'll need your strength before this winter's over."

While still Mrs. Livermore's house guest, Mother Bickerdyke asked her hostess's advice about the two boys, now fourteen and twelve. They could not go on living indefinitely with Galesburg neighbors, and she wanted them to be together. With her salary as Commission agent, she could pay well for their keep. What did Mrs. Livermore think would be the best thing to do with them?

Mrs. Livermore had a solution ready. The question had already arisen in the case of some of the women nurses recruited in Chicago. A childless couple in that city, a Presbyterian minister and his wife, had opened their home as a children's boardinghouse. She took Mrs. Bickerdyke to see Reverend Mr. Nichols and Mrs. Nichols at Forest Home, a pleasant suburban house set among trees. The children there seemed happy and well cared for. They adored Ma Nichols, a plump jolly woman and an excellent cook; they stood in respectful awe of her dignified husband. Mrs. Nichols saw that they got off to school with a good breakfast in their stomachs and clean handkerchiefs in their pockets. Mr. Nichols gave Scripture instruction and herded them to church and Sunday School. Mrs.

Bickerdyke, after a searching scrutiny, agreed that there could not be a better temporary home for Jimmy and Hiram.

She went back to Galesburg for a last Christmas there, and then took the two boys with her to Chicago. They found the Nichols home as agreeable as their mother had hoped. They were good boys, quiet and well-mannered, fond of their mother but reconciled to her absence. Jimmy, the older one, was a reader, with a thirst for education. Hiram's one ambition was to go west and fight Indians. Neither of them, their mother said in late old age, ever cost her a night's sleep.

At Christmas time she wrote to General Grant to ask where she could next be most useful. The general suggested Memphis, an important concentration point for Union forces. By this time Mrs. Bickerdyke was in high favor at Grant's headquarters. Mrs. Livermore says:

> There was perfect harmony between the military authorities and herself; and she readily obtained from them any co-operation she desired. As her work increased she asked for details of more and more contrabands and rations for them, until there were from fifty to seventy men in her employ. General Grant gave a pass which would take her anywhere within the lines of his Department, with authority to draw on any quartermaster for army wagons to transport Sanitary or hospital stores. . . . The Chicago Sanitary Commission authorized her to draw on its depots of stores at Memphis, Cairo or Chicago, for anything needed for the boys, and she was never refused by the Indianapolis, Cincinnati or St. Louis Commissions.

She had completely won over the generals and the Sanitary Commission officials. She had always possessed the confidence and affection of the soldiers. But although she had made friends with some army surgeons, she still antagonized most of them on first encounter. The medical director at Memphis, Dr. J. D. Irwin, had heard of her, and disliked what he heard. His hospitals there were to be models of military efficiency. No nosy old woman was going to come poking into them, babying the men and turning them into mammy's boys. The army, in the opinion of this doctor and of many eminent authorities, was supposed to toughen up its men.

Make their hospital stay too comfortable and they'd go soft, unfit for further combat. Some of them were obviously unfit anyway, with missing arms and legs, but this made no difference. A soldier was supposed to be tough. Dr. Irwin, young, able, fired with patriotic zeal, meant to make his soldier patients tougher than the army had ever seen before.

Early in January, 1863, Mrs. Bickerdyke called on him and asked for an assignment. He looked at her, in her shabby calico, with her plain face and her big work-reddened hands. The young doctor was not unsusceptible to the charms of lady angels, some of whom had brightened the hospitals in his Washington post. An angel visitor now and then did not hurt morale in the wards, and tea in the doctors' room afterward made a pretty little interlude for the hard-working medicos. Angels he could tolerate. But here obviously was no angel.

Whatever she was, she flourished General Grant's pass and demanded to be put to work. He considered awhile, his distaste growing with every word she spoke. "He could not," comments Mary Livermore, "see any excellence in a woman who worked with her own hands, who held no social position, and who was as indifferent to the Queen's English as to his red tape." Finally he had an inspiration. Outside the town, at Fort Pickering, was the army pesthouse, an isolation hospital for smallpox patients. Fear of contagion was so great that these men could not be brought into the new hospitals being readied in the city. They had no attendants except each other, for well men refused to go near them. At the moment, Dr. Irwin noted from a report on his desk, nine bodies lay in their beds there, awaiting burial. The officer at Fort Pickering was afraid of mutiny if he ordered a burial party to go in for them.

The doctor read the report aloud to Mrs. Bickerdyke, and then looked at her with lifted eyebrows.

"You say you are anxious to serve, madam. Perhaps you could find scope for your talents at Fort Pickering. Or is that asking too much?"

"Not a bit, doctor," she answered sturdily. "From what you say,

it's just another place that needs cleaning up. I've cleaned up heaps of 'em. This can't be worse than some I've seen. Tell me how to get there."

Medical practice knew of no treatment for smallpox. Once a victim contracted it, there was nothing to do but isolate him to keep him from infecting others. He got well or he died. The post surgeon at Fort Pickering did not even visit the pesthouse. What was the use? The patients could dispense the food and water placed inside the door. When enough had died to make the effort worth while, a squad could be forced to bring them out for burial.

The pesthouse at Fort Pickering, with no interfering medical superior, gave Mother Bickerdyke a unique opportunity. Ordinarily she got very little chance to practice Botanic Medicine in army hospitals. This time there was no one to stop her. She had the dead removed, the filthy bedding burned, and then she proceeded to clean up the place. Andy Somerville had rejoined her at Memphis. He rounded up a corps of Negro men who had once had smallpox and were immune to it. They scrubbed the floors, whitewashed the walls, filled in the old latrine and dug a new one. The patients were bathed, put to bed in clean clothes on clean bedding, dosed with black root and goldenseal, sassafras tea and beet juice, and fed all the milk and fresh vegetables they would take. A surprisingly large number of them recovered. Those who died died peacefully, with a woman's hand in theirs, and a woman's prayer in their ears.

There were too many hospitals at Memphis for Mrs. Bickerdyke to spend all her time at Fort Pickering. But knowing how easily it could fall into neglect again, she was anxious to leave a woman in permanent charge. She wrote Mrs. Porter in Chicago, asking her to find someone, preferably a woman who had already had smallpox, but by all means a strong, sensible person who could stand disagreeable sights and smells. She was dismayed when Eliza Porter wrote that she was coming to take the job herself.

In spite of Mother Bickerdyke's misgivings, it worked out very well. Besides the smallpox hospital, there was a large convalescent

camp at Fort Pickering. Mrs. Porter's husband, the Reverend Jeremiah, got himself appointed chaplain to the camp. Anxious to spare his delicate wife, he did the hard, unpleasant work Mrs. Bickerdyke had done, and did it as well as she had. Mrs. Porter was kept busy with the cooking and the brewing of herbal teas. The Porters were warm advocates of Botanic Medicine, whose vogue was strongest in their part of the country. The camp surgeon, a Dr. Andrews from Chicago, may have been a Botanic man to start with, or Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Bickerdyke may have converted him. At any rate, Botanic practice remained the rule at Fort Pickering.

It was one of the few army hospitals where Mrs. Bickerdyke had a voice in the medical treatment of her patients. Her faith in the medicinal value of hot baths, gentle vegetable laxatives, nourishing food and fresh air was always justified by a high recovery rate, but the "regular" doctors continued to scoff at such quackery. She stubbornly applied it whenever she could, pouring away the laudanum and calomel, substituting her own vegetable brews behind the doctor's back. She never had much tact, but she did have enough to keep out of medical arguments. It was easier to keep to the role of fastidious housekeeper and vainglorious cook. It was expected that middle-aged women would be fussy about cleanliness, and anxious to show off their skill at the kitchen range. It certainly was not expected that an uneducated farm woman would anticipate antisepsis and vitamins a generation before science found out there were such things. The army doctors came to accept her, even with gratitude, for the cleanliness and order she brought into the hospitals. She was wise enough to leave it at that, practicing her peculiar brand of healing under their very noses. It must have been a relief to practice it openly at Fort Pickering, and to see it carried on after she left.

She stayed long enough to see the Porters satisfactorily installed, and then went back to Memphis to make life a burden for Dr. Irwin. The new Adams Block Hospital, a converted hive of stores and offices, did not please her. The kitchen was too small. There was practically no space for a laundry. Where, she demanded, was

she expected to install the washing equipment sent on from Chicago?

Dr. Irwin told her briefly that she could install it anywhere she liked, so long as it was outside his hospital. Mrs. Bickerdyke thought otherwise. There was a heated argument, which she won. The doctor yielded a basement room, but warned her that he wasn't going to have "a swarm of niggers" clogging up the hospital halls. The laundry help would have to use an outside door, and keep to the laundry room.

Mrs. Bickerdyke accepted his terms. The hospital was filling rapidly, mostly with men sick of typhoid and pneumonia shipped in from Grant's new headquarters at Holly Springs. The war had reached a midwinter lull, while the Union forces prepared to besiege Vicksburg down the river. There was some fighting around Holly Springs, and a disastrous raid into Arkansas. But for the most part the patients were fever-stricken rather than battle-wounded.

The army surgeons were notoriously impatient of civilian diseases. Dr. Irwin chose to believe that Mrs. Bickerdyke was coddling the men in Adams Block. The tension between them flared into a series of clashes. One of them came when the surgeon found a typhoid convalescent with half-a-dozen boiled eggs hidden under his pillow. The man, it seemed, had been craving boiled eggs all through his illness. He was still on a liquid diet, but to humor him Mother Bickerdyke had given him the eggs, telling him that he could eat them as soon as she gave the word. The doctor was furious. He confiscated the eggs and stormed down into the kitchen, where he found Mrs. Bickerdyke at work.

"I'll have no hens' nests under the pillows in my hospital!" he told her.

She looked up from the soup she was stirring. "Seems like that was pretty harmless, doctor," she said mildly. "The boy wanted 'em. He was afraid they wouldn't be any when he was ready for solid food. So I let him keep his own against the day. What's wrong with that?"

"It is contrary to my rules," he answered. "No food in the wards except when dispensed at mealtime. What are you trying to do

here, break down all military discipline? I tell you I won't have it."

She straightened up and looked at him. "That boy must feel real bad about you taking away his eggs, doctor."

"Yes, he feels bad all right," he said scornfully. "Blubbering like a baby when I left him. And he's supposed to be a soldier! I have never been so disgusted in my life."

"Bawling, is he? Well, he's pretty weak yet, doctor. You oughtn't to hold that against him. Go on, now, give him back his eggs."

"I will not."

"Oh, you won't, huh?" Sudden anger flamed through her forced mildness. On the kitchen table was a big pailful of boiled eggs, ready for the patients' supper. She caught it up.

"Looky here, doctor. I'm going to take this pail up to that boy and set it under his bed. They can set there till they hatch, and you won't lay a hand on 'em. And if you're a mind to try, let's see you do it!"

She strode out of the room and into the ward, where the young egg-lover lay miserably weeping. "It won't be long now," she soothed him. "Maybe tomorrow, if you behave yourself and get a good night's rest. Now just rest easy, son. They's a couple of dozen eggs under your bed, and they're all yours. Nobody's going to take 'em away. I'll be in tomorrow and see if I think you're ready to start on 'em."

The infuriated doctor tried reporting her to his military superiors, but he found them unsympathetic. When it came to patients' welfare, he was told, Mother Bickerdyke knew best. He would do well to try to get along with her. The army had plenty of surgeons, but only one Mother Bickerdyke. Besides, she was not in army service. If Dr. Irwin wanted to complain of her, he had best take his complaints to her employer, the Sanitary Commission.

He had a chance to do that a few days after the egg incident, when Mary Livermore came down to Memphis. In the pressure of war work, the Chicago lady had been forced to give up her literary life. But a young Eastern woman, Louisa M. Alcott, was creating a sensation with a series of newspaper articles, later collected under

the title *Hospital Sketches,* on her experiences as a war nurse in Washington. Mrs. Livermore, already an established author, saw no reason why she should not outdo Miss Alcott's maiden effort. She had come to Memphis partly to inspect Sanitary arrangements there, but mostly to gather local color by actual hospital service. She turned up at Dr. Irwin's hospital just in time to receive his furious denunciation of Mrs. Bickerdyke.

Mrs. Livermore, among her manifold accomplishments, had a nice gift for diplomacy. As one cultured person to another, she admitted that Mrs. Bickerdyke's manners were uncouth, and that her misuse of the Queen's English was an offense to the ear. But under the rough exterior, she insisted, there was a heart of gold. The common soldiers — not too refined themselves, poor brave fellows — were at ease in her presence. And, Mrs. Livermore added warningly, the Commission thought highly of her. Delicately she hinted that with the hospitals depending so heavily on Sanitary beneficence, it would be a pity to stir up trouble over a valued Sanitary agent.

The doctor was only partly pacified, but for the time being he took no further steps. On the war front, action was speeding up. General Grant came to Memphis and went away again, leaving General Stephen A. Hurlbut in command. The main forces were converging at Young's Point and Millikin's Bend, on the road to Vicksburg. Since Memphis was more accessible than the hospitals farther north, Dr. Irwin was kept busy opening new ones, preparing to receive casualties from the big battle that was expected to come at Vicksburg. Mrs. Bickerdyke had a finger in every pie, but it was usually Mrs. Livermore who presented the older lady's ideas to the medical director.

Mrs. Livermore, who was thorough if she was anything, threw herself into nursing under Mother Bickerdyke's direction. In the book that grew out of her experiences, she shows a taste for the picturesque incidents — the deathbed conversion, the romantic youth who came back from death's door when a sweetheart's picture was held before his closing eyes. But though she kept her notebook with her, Mary Livermore did not slight her nursing duties. Mrs. Bicker-

dyke commended her, and Mrs. Bickerdyke did not praise what she could not honestly approve.

One of the newer hospitals was the Gayoso, converted from the city's largest hotel. It had a spacious basement, and Mrs. Bickerdyke moved there from Adams Block. Her laundry took care of linens and bed wear for all the Memphis hospitals. It was a good-sized job already, although nothing to the monumental task it became later, when every available hospital in town was crowded to capacity. Even in these early days, however, she kept twenty-five or thirty Negro men busy. Their pay was army rations and a pound of chewing tobacco every month. This always seemed an unnecessary extravagance to Dr. Irwin. The laundry work could very easily be done by detailed soldiers under army discipline. In an army hospital, that was the way it should be done.

Mrs. Bickerdyke kept the bargain she had made at Adams Block, and saw to it that her colored helpers did not invade the hospital proper. She could not stop, and did not try to stop, the rich-throated singing with which they accompanied their work. It made the work go faster, and in her opinion it was pleasant to listen to. The patients, sharing her pleasure, begged her to leave the doors open so they could hear. Dr. Irwin, a cultivated young man who liked Italian opera, found the spirituals and work songs intolerable. He closed doors and Mrs. Bickerdyke opened them, while Mrs. Livermore exerted all her charm to keep the peace.

On a mild February morning Mrs. Bickerdyke and Mrs. Livermore took the day off to visit the Porters at Fort Pickering. The Southern sunshine turned to rain in late afternoon; they came back through a fierce downpour. They were undressing in the hospital room they shared when Mrs. Bickerdyke remembered some errand in the laundry. She put her calico dress back on, picked up her oil lamp, and padded down to the basement room.

The laundry should have been closed for the day, but she found the lights still burning and the workers standing around in a forlorn group. Their work was done. The soiled clothes baskets were empty, the tubs wiped out and hung up, the floor mopped. A pile of

fresh, sun-dried linen was heaped on the table by the mangle, to be pressed in the morning. What were they waiting for?

Crowding around her, fearful and distressed, they told her. A soldier had come at closing time and tacked up a notice on the wall. They couldn't read, but he told them what it said. It said they weren't to come here any more. They had to go to the contraband camp. Out there in the woods. Where a man couldn't have his woman and kids with him. It was an awful place, that contraband camp. Niggers starved to death out there, and nobody cared. They'd rather die now than have to go to that old contraband camp.

Mrs. Bickerdyke strode over and read the order, signed by Dr. Irwin. So this was what he was up to, the minute her back was turned. Well, she'd see about that.

"You boys go home," she ordered. "They won't send you to no camp. See that you're back here on time in the morning, that's all. We got a big wash tomorrow."

She went out to the stable and roused Andy, bedded down beside the ambulance mules. "Hitch up and get ready," she told him. "We're going to General Hurlbut's headquarters."

Back in her room, she shook Mrs. Livermore awake. "Come on. We got to go see the general."

By this time the shower had turned to a terrific thunderstorm. "We can't go in this weather," Mrs. Livermore protested. "Besides, these streets aren't safe at night."

"All right, stay behind, if you're a cowardy calf!" Mother Bickerdyke snapped. "Safe or not safe, me and Andy are going."

Mrs. Livermore, "knowing that I had more prudence than she," agreed to go. She had been quite right in saying the streets were not safe. The people of Memphis had done their best to wreck their city before surrendering it. Pavements were torn up, street lights were smashed, fallen trees lay everywhere. In the lashing rain the two-mule ambulance lurched across town and up the long hill to the mansion that was Union headquarters.

"I don't even know General Hurlbut," Mrs. Livermore said nervously.

"I do," Mrs. Bickerdyke chuckled. "Comes from South Carolina and talks like a Secesher, but he ain't. He's all right. I met up with him at Donelson and Shiloh. Yes, and at Corinth, too. It was after Corinth that I saved his life. Hope he remembers it now."

"You saved his life?" Mrs. Livermore asked. "I hadn't heard about that. Do tell me."

Andy Somerville, on the driver's seat, heard and snickered. "You tell her, Mother. Tell her how we saved the general."

"Don't know's I ought. Nobody's ever heard this story, Mis' Livermore. It's just between me and Andy. Still, if you'll promise not to let it go any farther. Well, it was like this—"

It was a pleasure to find a discreet listener, one who would not gossip to the general's detriment, but who could be expected to share the joke. With relish Mrs. Bickerdyke launched into the tale.

She had her hands full at the Academy Hospital after the Corinth battle. For one thing, the well ran dry, and there was no water for her urgent needs. Then they carried in this General Hurlbut and put him in the doctors' room. The doctor was out, and the general's orderly came running for her. The general had to have attention right away. Drop everything else and come straight to the general.

So she went, thinking he was mortal wounded, and him laying there without a scratch on him. What he did have was a hard congestive chill. Teeth chattering, and shaking so the bed rattled like rifle fire. Might have been malaria, might have been a cold coming on, or might have been just nerves, for all she knew. General Hurlbut was a fine soldier; the boys said he hadn't turned a hair while the battle was going on. If he got a fit of the shakes when it was all over, a body needn't blame him. But he could have gone to his tent and slept it off, not come pestering a hospital full of worse cases.

"I didn't tell him that, though," she smiled. "I was sympathetic as all get out. 'That's a bad chill you got, general,' I says. 'We got to break it up before it goes to your lungs. Now what you need is a good steaming hot bath.' The orderly spoke up. 'That's what I

thought, ma'am. But seems they ain't no water in the hospital, hot *or* cold. I didn't know what to do, so I come to you.' 'Well,' says I, 'we can soon fix that. If the general will give me an order, I'll send some men with some barrels out to the spring. 'Twon't take long to heat it on the kitchen stove. You just make out the order, general, for a wagon and two or three men to do what I tell 'em.' He did, and I sent 'em off after the water. In no time at all I had a good hot tub in the general's room. Remember, Andy? We put him in for a nice soak, and then we tucked him into bed with a hot toddy. He was all right the next morning. Didn't even have a sniffle."

"Well, that was very thoughtful of you," Mrs. Livermore commented. "I don't wonder the general is grateful."

"Wait a minute, I ain't come to the point yet. When we got the general to bed, Andy and the orderly carried the tub of water out into the ward. And you know what we done? We bathed sixteen men, right off the battlefield, and needing it a heap worse than the general did. I'd been at my wits' end trying to think how to get water for them. 'Twasn't no use asking to have it hauled just to bathe privates. But a general now, that's different. Yes, sir, sixteen men went into the tub after General Hurlbut, and every one of them lived to thank me. Don't you never tell this, Mis' Livermore. Makes the general look kind of foolish, and he ain't foolish at all. He's a mighty good man. And I don't think he's going to take that hospital doctor's side against me."

General Hurlbut was as agreeable as she had hoped. He greeted her warmly, listened to her story, and signed an order for her to retain whatever Negroes she needed to assist her at the laundry. Late as it was, Mrs. Bickerdyke did not sleep until she had torn down the doctor's notice from her washroom wall.

He came the next morning to find work proceeding as usual, with a fine chorus of song shaking the rafters. Mrs. Livermore and Mrs. Bickerdyke were in the kitchen next door. The gentlemanly doctor was, in Mrs. Livermore's words, "vulgarly angry, raving in a manner that was very damaging to his dignity."

Calmly Mrs. Bickerdyke produced the general's order. This

scarcely soothed the irate medico. "I'll run you out of Memphis!" he threatened. "You'll be sent home before you're a week older."

Mrs. Livermore must have whipped out her notebook to record the reply. With some slight variations in construction, her report is very close to Mrs. Bickerdyke's own version, repeated many times to amused listeners.

"But I shan't go, doctor," Mary Livermore says she said. "I've come down here to stay, and I mean to stay until this thing is played out. I've enlisted for the war, as the boys have, and they want me and need me, and can't get on without me. And so I shall stay, doctor, and you'll have to make up your mind to get along with me the best way you can. It's no use for you to try to tie me up with your red tape. There's too much to be done down here to stop for that. And there's no sense in getting mad because I don't play second fiddle to you. I've not got time for it. And doctor, I guess you hadn't better get into a row with me, for whenever anybody does one of us always goes to the wall. *And 'tain't never me!*"

XIV

By the beginning of the spring campaigns of 1863, the war had settled into a weary grind in which both sides had lost all hope of speedy victory. This hope had been highest in the east, where the two capitals were. The Army of the Potomac had had some successes and some defeats, but it still was no nearer to taking Richmond. Robert E. Lee had come close enough to Washington to throw the city into panic, but had been turned back. The notable early battles, Bull Run, Antietam, Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, were all parts of this struggle for the enemy capitals, as were later and even more famous battles. The eastern section of the war, better reported and understood than the western, assumed greater importance in the public mind. Even General Grant considered action in the east as of paramount concern. He says:

While at Cairo, I had watched with very great interest the operations of the Army of the Potomac, looking upon that as the main field of the war. . . . On one occasion, in talking about this to my fellow-officers, all of whom were civilians without any military education whatever, I said that I would give anything if I were commanding a brigade of cavalry in the Army of the Potomac, and I believed I could do some good. Captain Hillyer spoke up and suggested that I make application to be transferred there to command the cavalry. I then told him that I would cut off my right arm first. . . . In time of war the President, being by the Constitution commander-in-chief of the army and navy, is responsible for the selection of commanders. He should not be embarrassed in making his selections. I having been selected, my responsibility ended with my doing the best I knew how.

Doing the best he knew how in the west, Grant decided, involved gaining complete control of the Mississippi. New Orleans at the mouth of the river had fallen to Admiral Farragut in April of 1862. The capture of Memphis gave the Union forces possession of the stream north to its source. But between New Orleans and Memphis the river port of Vicksburg remained defiantly Rebel, choking off navigation, rendering the river highway useless. Vicksburg was a nut that Grant had to crack.

The Confederates were confident that this was impossible. High on a bluff, protected on one side by the river and on the others by a network of formidable redoubts, Vicksburg was considered nearly as impregnable as Gibraltar. There was a strong concentration of Confederate troops inside, under General Pemberton. The citizens, passionately anxious to help, worked tirelessly at strengthening the excellent defenses. Early in January the Confederate President, Jefferson Davis, visited the town to urge that it be held at all costs.

Grant spent the first months of the new year in working his way across Mississippi, swarming with enemy troops bent on barring his approach. The roads were bad, the creeks and bayous were flooded from the spring rains, supply trains failed to keep up with the advance. A stream of patients flowed back into Memphis, victims of minor engagements or of disease. Most of them were victims of both. The army on the march was living on salt beef and hardtack. By March there was an outbreak of scurvy that filled the 11,000 beds at Memphis. Mrs. Livermore went back to Chicago to alert the Commission to deal with this new and fearful menace.

Scurvy was so rare in the agricultural Middle West that many of the Commission's supporters had never heard of it. A co-worker of Mrs. Livermore's, Mrs. Sarah Henshaw, had to prepare a circular to describe the disease for them. She made it very vivid.

This dire enemy, more deadly than ball or bullet, kills by slow degrees; saps the spirits and strength of its victim; changes his complexion to a sickly, greenish hue; covers him with purplish, unsightly spots; renders him feeble, weary, and unequal to exertion; stiffens his limbs; swells his body; and shortens his breath. His gums become spongy;

his teeth loosen; cuts and scratches bleed profusely; old sores break out afresh; old fractures separate and refuse to reunite. A small taint of this disease undermines the strength of an army; increases the risk of a battle; aggravates the danger of amputations; augments the bleeding of wounds; complicates sickness; retards recovery; and causes death where, but for its presence, life would be assured.

Thoroughly alarmed, the ladies of the contributing societies went to work. The Commission's doctors knew the classic antiscorbutic, lime juice, but they also knew that limes were practically unattainable. Lemons, the natural substitute, also were in short supply. Limes are sour, lemons are sour, vinegar is sourer than either. Since apparently it was sourness that cured scurvy, the medical gentlemen came up with a cheap and delightfully simple solution. Vinegar! But no soldier in his right mind would drink vinegar straight. So, by a roundabout process of reasoning, the Commission doctors arrived at their recommendation. The sovereign cure for scurvy was pickles, and more pickles.

The Midwestern ladies knew nothing of scurvy, but they knew all about pickles. Now in midwinter they lacked fresh cucumbers and green tomatoes, but jars of them, put up the summer before, were dragged up from family cellars. Without summer vegetables to pickle, they turned to winter ones. They shredded thousands of cabbage heads into sauerkraut and grated hundredweights of horseradish. When they got down to the commonest vegetables, onions and potatoes, they pickled them. One soldier gave it as his profane opinion that of all the dreadful things that happened to him in the war, the worst was having to eat pickled raw potatoes. The Commission sent hundreds of barrels to Memphis, along with an incredible amount of pure vinegar.

The funny thing about it is that it worked. The scurvy epidemic dwindled and died under the flood of Sanitary Commission pickles. It is possible that the homemade cider vinegar did retain some of the apples' vitamins, or it may be that the vinegar failed to kill the vitamins in the uncooked vegetables. Some soldiers, not liking the taste of pickled potatoes and hardily taking their chances with

scurvy, soaked the vinegar out with clear water and then cooked and ate the potatoes. They seem to have fared as well as their comrades who dutifully ate the pickled article. Of course, spring was coming on, the Southern pastures were beginning to show young shoots of pokeberry and dock and dandelion. These made a fine "mess of greens" for a camp supper. Maybe the home pickling parties, with their toll of stained hands and smarting eyes, were all for nothing. General Sherman, who would not eat pickles and did eat greens, set an example that was widely followed. It is just possible that it was the greens and not the pickles that eased the scurvy situation.

Mrs. Bickerdyke's patients got greens and pickles both, and fever-reducing sponge baths in the surplus vinegar. She was still not quite happy about their diet. Her own theories called for plenty of fresh milk and eggs. She was buying them from the surrounding plantations, but she did not find this very satisfactory. For one thing, the price was excessive: forty cents a quart for milk, which she was convinced the Secesh farmers watered, disguising the blue color with chalk. This may have been true, and probably was. There was no question at all about the staleness of the eggs, "with a smell," as she put it, "to make a self-respecting hog hold his nose."

She took her troubles to the medical director, Dr. Irwin. In January this man had been her bitter enemy, vowing to run her out of town. Now, in April, he was her indulgent patron. The tactful Mrs. Livermore and the gentle Mrs. Porter had persuaded him; General Hurlbut had had a sharp word with him. The pompous young doctor, an able medical man and no fool, had seen for himself how efficiently the hospitals ran under Mrs. Bickerdyke's firm hand. He preserved his superiority by accepting her as a "character," endlessly amusing, the source of a fund of good stories with which he could always get a laugh in the officers' mess. He referred to her as "my old biddy," quoting her tart sayings with a discoverer's pride. If she heard of his witticisms they did not disturb her. She had warned him that he'd have to learn to get along with her. Apparently he had learned; that was all that mattered to her.

She came to him now with her complaints about Secesh dairy products, and her proposed remedy. She wanted twenty days' furlough to go north and bring back some decent milk and eggs for her boys.

Dr. Irwin smiled at her simplicity. "Milk and eggs spoil pretty quick in this warm weather, Mother B. But I suppose you have some scheme for keeping them fresh."

Yes, she told him, she had. They wouldn't spoil, she'd guarantee that. Could she have the twenty days off? Or must she go to General Hurlbut about it?

Dr. Irwin's old-biddy jokes had not gone over too well with the commanding officer. In his opinion, General Hurlbut took Mrs. Bickerdyke too seriously. This was a good chance to prove his point — that the old lady was a little cracked, but side-splittingly funny.

"The general would have to approve the furlough anyway," he said. "Suppose we go and ask him? I know he'd love to hear how you plan to keep milk from turning sour."

General Hurlbut, hearing about the high price and poor quality of Southern milk, nodded gravely.

"You're quite right, Mother. The 'cream' they bring me for my coffee doesn't even color it. But I don't know what we can do. I'll try to get more money for the hospital fund, so you can buy more milk. But that won't help the quality."

"Mother B. thinks what's needed is Yankee milk," the doctor put in. "She wants to go up North and bring some back. A fine idea, don't you think, general?"

Mary Ann Bickerdyke gave him a scornful glance. "If you've had your fun, doctor, maybe you'll let me talk. The general is a busy man. Yes, sir, I do want to go North and get some decent eggs and milk. If you'll give me twenty days off I'll come back with enough to feed my boys all summer."

The general smiled uncertainly. "If you say so, Mother Bickerdyke, I'm sure you can do it. But you know there's no refrigeration on army boats, and mighty little ice here in Memphis. How do you expect to keep them from spoiling?"

"Now that's a sensible question. If the doctor had a asked me, instead of snickering over it, I'd a told him. It's easy, general. I'll bring back cows and hens alive. Secesh feed is all right, and they's plenty good grass around here. I can get me some contrabands to look after 'em. This ain't going to cost the army anything, general. Illinois farmers will be glad to give when they know what it's for. And our sick boys will have what they ought to have."

Dr. Irwin was ready with a guffaw, but the general checked him.

"A very practical scheme, Mother," he said cordially. "I don't know why it hasn't occurred to your superiors. Go, by all means. I'll see that you have army transport homeward with your livestock."

She went north in mid-April, on a tour that took her all over Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Her mission, simple and direct, had a strong appeal to the practical farm people she approached. There was no red tape about it, no prospect of vexatious delays. The gift of livestock involved a financial sacrifice, but at least it did not call for the laborious toil of the pickling meetings in which farm women had lately exhausted themselves. Mrs. Bickerdyke's meetings were lively entertainment. She spoke humorously of her struggles with Secesh milk, seriously of the patients' need for the best nourishment she could get them. She ticked off her wants with mock ferocity, warning them that she was a farm woman from away back, with a keen eye for a good milker and a good layer. She wanted nothing else. No use trying to push off poor stock on her, because she wouldn't have it. These were their boys down there in Memphis, trying to get well on chalk and water. Were they saving their prize milkers for the county fair? Would they rather have a blue ribbon than save some boy's life?

The response was terrific. Mrs. Livermore tells the story:

> Jacob Strawn of Jacksonville, one of the wealthy farmers of Illinois, with a few of his neighbors, gave the hundred cows without delay. They were sent to Springfield, Illinois, whence Governor Yates had promised they should be shipped to Memphis, in herds of fifteen or twenty, with some one in charge of each detachment to take care of the animals.

The hens were sent to the rooms of the Commission in Chicago. In a week after the call our building was transformed into a huge hennery and all the workers therein were completely driven out. The din of crowing and cackling and quarreling was unbearable, and as the weather was warm, the odor was yet more insupportable. The fowls were dispatched to Memphis in four shipments in coops containing about two dozen each. Before her twenty days' leave of absence was ended, Mrs. Bickerdyke was on the return route to her hospital, forming a part of a bizarre procession of over a hundred cows and one thousand hens, strung all along the road from Chicago to Memphis. She entered the city in triumph, amid immense lowing and crowing and cackling. She informed the astonished Memphians that "these are loyal cows and hens; none of your miserable trash that give chalk and water milk, and lay loud-smelling eggs." General Hurlbut . . . gave up to the noisy newcomers President's Island, lying in the Mississippi opposite Memphis, a stretch of land so elevated that it is above the highest stage of water. Contrabands were detailed to take charge of them . . . and until the hospitals were broken up . . . there was an abundance of milk and eggs for their use.

When the Memphis hospitals were approaching their end, the chickens became stew and broth. But the cows moved on when the army moved. They learned to "march as good as mules," Andy Somerville said. Through deep swamps, over corduroy roads and temporary bridges, wherever a mule could go, they plodded in the wake of the army, to supply "Bickerdyke whiskey" in many a desolate camp hospital.

Mother Bickerdyke did not stay long in Memphis after her return from the cow and hen mission. Field hospitals were being set up along the road to Vicksburg. The enemy was contesting the advance in a series of fierce battles, so there was plenty of work for her.

By May 1863, when two direct assaults upon Vicksburg had failed, General Grant decided on a siege of starvation. Union gunboats held the river. On the land side, Union forces were encamped in a tight ring that closed all access to the outside world. The brave people of Vicksburg held out until they had eaten their horses and mules, and some say their dogs and cats. The beleaguered city fell on July 4,

making good the Yankee boast to celebrate the national holiday in Vicksburg.

Grant sent a messenger to Cairo, the nearest telegraph station, with a dispatch to General-in-Chief Halleck at Washington. The man brought back a message just received in Cairo, announcing Lee's defeat at Gettysburg on the same glorious Fourth.

Grant's men celebrated the double victory with a riotous week in Vicksburg that did not endear them to the starving inhabitants. Then they went into rest camps in and around the town. It had been a tough campaign. Now, for a few weeks of midsummer, word came down the line that they were due for a little relaxation. Furloughs were to be had for the asking. Some of the men, instead of going home, invited their families to visit them in camp. Every steamer discharged excited civilians, loaded down with picnic baskets, thrilled at the chance to see for themselves how their boys lived. There were band concerts, dances and amateur theatricals every night. Children played in the trenches, swarmed over the siege guns, heckled the army mules. It was a gay interlude that provided the last taste of gaiety many of these men were ever to know.

One colonel's lady brought her little boy, a child of nine. In the course of the visit the youngster came down with measles. Nothing was too good for the colonel's child, so his mother sent to the hospital for Mrs. Bickerdyke.

She came, looked the patient over, and gave his mother a piece of her mind. In the first place, the boy had nothing but ordinary childhood measles, with which any mother ought to be able to deal. In the second place, he had no business to be here anyhow. This was a war, not a Sunday School outing for children. And in the third place, Mrs. Bickerdyke was a busy woman with several hundred sick or wounded men to look after, and she'd thank the lady not to take up her time with any more foolishness.

She flounced off, leaving the mother in tears. By the time her husband came home she had progressed to hysteria. He hurried off to General Sherman with the report that his wife had been grossly insulted by a nasty old woman.

"I didn't know we had any nasty old women in our army," General Sherman remarked. "Who might she be, now?"

"I believe she calls herself Bickerdyke, sir."

"Mother Bickerdyke?" The general laughed. "Oh, well, this is too bad. You've picked on the one person around here who outranks me. If you want to lodge a complaint against her, you'll have to take it to President Lincoln."

The story got out and made the rounds of the camp. Mrs. Bickerdyke took it calmly when it reached her ears. "Well, I always say I hold my commission from God," she remarked. "Reckon I do rank Billy Sherman. But it takes a big man like him to say so."

From Vicksburg on Mrs. Bickerdyke was closely associated with General Sherman. He was her pet general. She had deep respect for the silent, austere Grant, and tender affection for Logan and Hurlbut. But Billy Sherman, a fellow Ohioan, as energetic and practical as herself, was exactly what she thought a general ought to be. They came from adjoining counties and were nearly the same age. It is possible that they had met in childhood, for Sherman's brother lived with a Mt. Vernon family. Their first adult encounter came after Shiloh. When the friendship began is uncertain, but it flourished mightily in the Vicksburg camp. Lloyd Lewis says, "Between herself and Sherman there played some unintimate but powerful understanding." She was sure of her ground with him, certain that he knew she had no ax to grind but the welfare of his men. He was notably impatient with the angels and do-gooders who swarmed into the hospitals. He was frequently brusque with representatives of the powerful Sanitary Commission. But he trusted Mary Ann Bickerdyke as he trusted no other civilian. From Vicksburg he made a formal request to the Commission, asking to have her permanently assigned to his corps, the Fifteenth.

Once the assignment was confirmed, he sent for her to give her an order. A hard autumn campaign lay ahead for the Fifteenth. The general wanted all personnel in tiptop shape. So Mrs. Bickerdyke would take two weeks off and go back to Illinois for a rest. It was an order.

She was able to accept it, for even her iron-bound conscience found little to do in the idle camp. It would be nice to see Mrs. Livermore, of whom she had grown quite fond, and wonderful to surprise her boys in their Chicago foster home. She decided to bypass Galesburg and spend all her leave in Chicago, where she knew Mary Livermore would have a bed for her.

On a blazing July day she made her last hospital rounds, warning the soldier nurses to keep the mosquito nettings closed at night, seeing that each patient had a pitcher of water and a palm-leaf fan in easy reach. Then she packed her carpetbag for the journey.

For a change, she had new clothing to pack. She had worn the second-best brown and the good black on the cow and hen trip; very good dresses still, in her opinion, though maybe a mite out of style now. To the ladies of her audiences they had seemed extremely shabby. Mrs. Livermore, distressed that a Commission agent should look so threadbare, had dropped a tactful hint to some of her friends. The result was a whole new wardrobe shipped to her just before she left Memphis. Mrs. Bickerdyke had sniffed as she unpacked it. Lace-trimmed drawers, embroidered chemises and ruffled petticoats. To say nothing of a bottle-green silk dress cut to an indecent inch below the collarbone, and smothered in velvet ribbon. Those women up there in Chicago must be crazy, putting their good money into such things for her.

She dug deeper into the box, and her frown relaxed. There were some good plain woolens, and a black silk that would do, if she ripped off the frilled overskirt. Also several summer lawns and dimities, cool looking if much too fussy. No calicoes, of course. She'd have to buy some for herself when she got to the city. She'd keep the cottons and woolens, though, and the black silk. Everything else could be traded to the Secesh ladies here in Vicksburg. They didn't get much chance at pretties, poor things. They'd be just fool enough to swap her some rocking chairs for fancy underwear. She needed rocking chairs so her convalescents could sit outside the stifling hospital tents.

As she made up the bundle for barter, she hesitated over two

white cambric nightgowns. They were long, and full, and beautiful with lace and tucking and ruffles. One even had a bow of baby-blue ribbon at the throat. Nothing would delight the Rebel ladies more. The nightdresses alone ought to be good for all the rocking chairs she needed.

Perhaps the dainty garments touched some slumbering memory, some forgotten yearning of young Mary Ann Ball, whose trousseau had lacked such loveliness. Or perhaps the practical middle-aged Mary Ann Bickerdyke, with a thought toward Mary Livermore's elegant guest room, decided to keep them until she came back from her visit. Whatever her reason, she put the two nightgowns into her bag, along with the new summer dresses.

She made a busman's holiday of her trip North by escorting twenty Vicksburg patients to the general hospital at Paducah, Kentucky. The trip was made by rail, a slow, hot progress in ordinary day coaches that took the better part of three days. The train was due in Paducah at 10 P. M. of the third day. But just before sunset it was halted by a man waving a white rag on a stick. The conductor got out to investigate, and came back fuming.

"Just a couple of discharged soldiers," he told his passengers. "Got no tickets, and want me to haul them into Paducah free. Well, the Mobile and Ohio don't do business that way."

He reached for the signal cord, but Mother Bickerdyke was out of her seat.

"Discharged soldiers? Are they wounded, conductor?"

"Reckon so. But they're not soldiers any more, ma'am. Got their walking papers to go home. No business of mine to get 'em there."

"But if they're wounded they've got to get into hospital," she protested. "I'll see about 'em. You hold the train till I get back."

"Can't do that, lady. We're late as it is. Got to get on."

"All right." She tied her bonnet strings and reached for her carpetbag. Then she addressed her charges. "You boys will be all right now. 'Tain't but a few more hours to Paducah. You'll be met at the depot. If nobody's there, just get into hacks and go straight to the hospital. They'll take care of you. I got some business to tend to here."

She jumped off the train, and it moved away into the gathering dusk. There was no town, nothing but a crude wayside shelter. The man who had flagged the train was waiting for her.

"Well, son, what's the trouble here?" she asked briskly.

"It's Sam, lady. We was on the morning train, and Sam took to fainting on me. I got scared. I thought we'd better get off and find a bed in some farmhouse. But seems like they ain't none around here. We been here all day and not seen a soul. I thought we'd best get back on the first train that come along, but I can't find our tickets. Sam had 'em, and I guess he must a lost 'em somehow."

"Never mind all that." She pressed on into the hut, where Sam lay moaning on the dirt floor. His left leg, amputated just below the hip, had healed well enough to satisfy the army surgeons. His friend had lost an arm. Both men, discharged as unfit for service, had been given railroad tickets home. The army's responsibility ended there.

Rapidly Mrs. Bickerdyke's competent hands went over the man on the floor.

"Is he going to die, Missus?" his friend asked. "He says he is. That's why we got off the train. Sam don't want to die on no train."

"He won't die," she assured him. "His stump's all right, just a little sore and tender, that's all. They're always like that till they toughen up. He's got some bad sores, though. Been bleeding on him, too."

"They was just little cuts. The docs said they didn't amount to anything. I got some too. You don't think about them when you lose your leg or your arm."

"Well, they ought to be cleaned up." She rose from her knees. "You boys ain't so bad off. Got anything to eat?"

He shook his head. "We left our rations on the train. The conductor didn't want to stop very long, and all I thought about was getting Sam off. I got some water, though. Found me a tin pail down at the crick."

"Well, that's fine. I'll see what I can scare up. You build us a fire, sonny, and put your pail of water on to heat."

She opened her bag. She had hardtack and jelly, the remains of her lunch, and a little packet of tea. Nothing at all for bandages. She dug deeper and pulled out the two cambric nightgowns. The material was clean and white and soft. There were yards and yards of it. Ruthlessly she tore off wide swathes from the hems.

She washed the "little cuts," some of them badly infected, scolding gently when the men winced from her probing fingers, bandaging them with the fine white cloth. She massaged the healed stumps and padded them with soft new bandages. She washed their faces and hands for them, and then looked distastefully at their ragged, muddy, blood-caked shirts.

"We left our knapsacks, too," the boy told her apologetically.

"So I see. Well, I don't carry men's shirts around with me, boys. But here's something that'll do fine. Sam, can you sit up a little? I want to put your new shirt on you."

She propped him up while she slipped the ruffled nightgown over his head. Sam had stopped moaning as she worked over him. Now, when she bundled his friend into the second gown, he laughed weakly.

"But this is a woman's nightgown!" the first boy protested. "Honest, lady, we can't wear this."

"Look here, son," she said earnestly. "In the officers' hospitals they got nightshirts. I seen General Hurlbut himself wearing one. He didn't look any different from what you two look now. Nightgowns or nightshirts, what's the odds? Who's going to know? They'll think you're a couple of officers."

"Did the general have ruffles on his?" Sam asked innocently.

"Shucks, Sam, you seen nightshirts," his friend put in. "The old judge was wearing one the night he come out with his shotgun when we turned over his privy. Hallowe'en before last that was. You know what a man's nightshirt looks like. It don't look nothing like this. Anybody'd know this is women's stuff."

"And what if they do?" Mrs. Bickerdyke demanded. "You can say you jerked 'em from some Secesh house, can't you? That'll tickle the boys. Now let's not have any more foolishness. They're

clean, and they feel good. You make up your own story, and I'll back you up. But you don't take 'em off till I get you to hospital. Now let's see about something to eat."

They sat around the fire, drinking tea, eating crackers and jelly, elaborating the story of the Secesh nighties. It grew into a fairly ribald saga as they told it later in Paducah. Mrs. Bickerdyke loyally kept her mouth shut. The true story did not come out until long after the war, when the veterans told it to a Chicago *Inter-Ocean* reporter.

Mother Bickerdyke stopped the first train in the morning and shepherded her new patients into Paducah, to the Soldiers' Home there. These Soldiers' Homes, or Soldiers' Rests, were the Sanitary Commission's newest enterprise. Once a disabled veteran was mustered out, he had no claim on the army hospitals. The hospitals, never adequate, were constantly swamped by new cases sent in from the battlefields. They did not attempt to provide for convalescent care. That was a business for the man's family in his own home.

The men and their families thoroughly agreed. The difficulty was in getting home. A man too badly disabled to fight again was not generally in very good shape for train riding. Service was poor; there was usually the necessity to transfer from one short line to another, with long waits in junction depots. The Sanitary Commission met the need by setting up Soldiers' Homes in the important rail centers. These were free boardinghouses, with food, bed and nursing available for short periods, where a man could renew his strength to go on, or could wait until some able-bodied relative came to get him. In the closing years of the war, when the home-bound tide swelled to mammoth proportions, the operation of the Soldiers' Homes became the Commission's major activity.

In the summer of 1863, when Mrs. Bickerdyke deposited her beruffled patients at Paducah, the Homes were just beginning to function. This was the first one she had seen. She looked it over carefully, for her next stop was to be Cairo, where the west's largest Soldiers' Home was in full operation. Mrs. Livermore, hearing that she was headed north, had written her to come straight to Cairo. Her advice was needed there.

XV

For all its popularity, the Cairo Soldiers' Home was a sorry makeshift, housed in two converted tobacco warehouses, with rooms partitioned only by hanging canvas. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Maddy, the couple employed by the Commission to operate it, were doing their best and performing marvels under every possible handicap. The Commission had been putting pressure on General Grant for a new building to be erected at government expense. The general's approval had just come through. Mary Livermore had hurried down to plan the new structure. Besides Mrs. Bickerdyke, she had sent for Mrs. Porter, who took a leave of absence from Fort Pickering. She had also summoned Mother Bickerdyke's successor at the Gayoso Hospital in Memphis, a Mrs. A. F. Grant.

Mrs. Grant, a preacher's widow, had served under Mrs. Bickerdyke in Memphis. As fanatically clean as Mrs. Bickerdyke herself, efficient and hard-working, she should have been a thoroughly satisfactory assistant. Mother Bickerdyke never said she was not. She recommended Mrs. Grant for her own post when she gave it up. The only criticism she ever voiced, made in confidence to her beloved Mrs. Porter, was that Mrs. Grant was an "awful picky woman." She thought the Chicago lady attached undue importance to extreme neatness, scolding the patients for wrinkling their bedspreads, fussily offended if some shaky hand spilled the soup. Mrs. Bickerdyke's own bent was toward cleanliness rather than tidiness. She hated to see her boys lectured for minor infractions of rules

they were too weak to keep. However, she valued Mrs. Grant's real capability too highly to quarrel with her. On the surface, they were friendly enough. Mrs. Grant charitably overlooked Mother Bickerdyke's indifference to "keeping things nice," since it was obvious that she did not come from a background of refinement.

With her counseling ladies, and with a large party of male Commission officials, Mrs. Livermore inspected the site chosen for the new Home. At the old one, where they were all staying, they went over the plans. One of the functions of the Home would be to house relatives visiting seriously wounded men in the Cairo hospitals. Gentle, sensitive Mrs. Porter, knowing how often these visits ended at a deathbed, was anxious to have a private room set aside, where a stricken widow or mother could be comforted with Scripture and prayer. Mrs. Livermore wanted a spacious office for Commission conferences. Mother Bickerdyke worried more about kitchen and laundry space than anything else. Mrs. Grant had ideas about table-setting. One employee, she observed, must be given exclusive charge of china, glass and silver, seeing that they were properly and neatly laid out. A butler's pantry would therefore be desirable.

Since the government was paying, the Committee generously accepted all recommendations for number and proportions of rooms. Outfitting would be at the Commission's expense, but the details could be left until the building was near completion. An architect from the quartermaster's office drew the final plans. He estimated that the building could be ready for occupancy early in the new year, 1864.

With their work done, Mrs. Porter went back to Fort Pickering, and Mrs. Livermore took Mother Bickerdyke home to Chicago with her. She was well remembered from her previous visit. Although a round of speech making and church meetings gave her little time for rest, she enjoyed herself immensely. She went to see her sons in their Chicago boardinghouse, and found them doing well. Their clerical guardian was especially pleased with James, who was so studious and serious that it seemed very likely he'd turn out a preacher. Hiram, his younger brother, cared more for games than

books, and still talked of going Indian fighting when he grew up. Both were well-fed and healthy. Assured that they needed nothing from her, Mother Bickerdyke was free to go back to her boys of the army, who needed everything.

As the Commission's agent in the field, Mrs. Bickerdyke had to put up with a good deal of supervision from headquarters. Meddlesome officials from Chicago were likely to descend upon her without notice, criticizing her use of supplies, making impractical suggestions. She was always able to cope with them, but it took time and trouble she hated to spare. In this autumn of 1863, with Sherman's gigantic Atlanta campaign looming ahead, she was blessedly free from Sanitary visitors. The Chicago headquarters was putting on a campaign of its own, as venturesome in its way as anything Sherman ever planned. For those two months there was no time to go junketing down to the Southern front. Every Commission bigwig was thoroughly immersed in what one of them called "the flowering time of patriotism." Chicago was about to hold the first Sanitary Fair.

The idea was Mrs. Livermore's. It all began on a fairly modest scale. The Commission's need for cash was growing, while cash contributions slackened. Mrs. Livermore, who had been accustomed to raising church funds by means of bazaars and parish suppers, decided to apply the same time-tested methods to the present need. She talked with her friends and Commission associates, Mrs. Hoge and Mrs. Henshaw of Chicago, Mrs. Colt of Milwaukee. Their response was favorable. The ladies decided to hire a hall, stock it with contributed articles, and hold a Sanitary bazaar. Well-to-do Chicagoans who hesitated to *give* must be persuaded to *buy*. With great audacity, the women set $25,000 as a possible goal. They called a convention of representatives of the Soldiers' Aid societies and unfolded the plan.

The Aid Societies had grown out of church or lodge groups, whose members had practical experience with fund raising by means of bazaars. They heartily endorsed the scheme. Mrs. Livermore gave out twenty thousand circulars to be distributed in their

home communities. The ladies were urged to enlist their local newspapers and prominent citizens. They went home fired with enthusiasm, and the project commenced to snowball.

Mrs. Livermore herself began a letter-writing campaign to win over "governors, congressmen, members of state legislatures, military men, postmasters, clergymen and teachers." In a single day she sent out seventeen bushels of mail matter relating to the Fair. As the responses began to come in, she expanded her plans. This would not be a local Fair, but a national one. She had hoped that the women of Chicago and its neighborhood would send in crocheted antimacassars and hooked rugs for sale. She was overwhelmed to receive offers of oil paintings, imported tapestries, and farm machinery. President Lincoln, to whom she addressed her first appeal, offered the original draft of his Emancipation Proclamation to be put up at auction.

Mary Livermore took it all in her stride. Boldly poaching on the territory of the Eastern Sanitary Commissions, she sent Mrs. Hoge to solicit in the great cities of the East. At Pittsburgh, where she had relatives, Mrs. Hoge obtained a donation of kerosene, appropriately packaged in "hundreds of beautiful casks with painted staves and gilded hoops, bearing mottoes of undying loyalty." Boston sent "specimens of Chinese handiwork, of Fayal laces, of Sea Island algae as delicate as vapor and arranged in sets, curious fans, slippers, pictures, and tableware in the highest style of Japanese art."

The men of the Commission, a little skeptical at first, hastened to jump on the bandwagon. Potter Palmer, the Chicago hotelkeeper, "took the city of New York in hand, obtaining contributions from her importers, jobbers, and manufacturers, amounting to nearly six thousand dollars." A temporary building had to be put up to house the threshing machines, wagons, pianos, organs and barrels of refined coal oil. One Kentuckian contributed five thoroughbred colts. A Wisconsin breeder sent his prize bull. There was so much livestock that a patriotic Chicagoan emptied his livery stable and turned it over, with the free services of his hostlers.

The Fair opened on October 27, 1863, with a procession three miles long. The mayor had proclaimed a holiday so that everyone who

was not in the parade could watch it. There were bands, and floats, and citizens in carriages and citizens on horseback and citizens afoot. Chicago's city buses were in line, filled with school children waving flags and singing "John Brown's Body." The farmers of Lake County drew cheers with their section, hundreds of flag-decorated farm wagons loaded with vegetables. In bright October sunshine the procession wound its way to Bryan's Hall, where the Great Sanitary Fair officially opened. It ran for two weeks, with Bryan and the five subsidiary halls crowded day and night. Sales were good. Or as Mrs. Livermore so prettily puts it, "To judge from the liberality of the purchasers, one would have supposed that each possessed the inexhaustible purse which the fairy gave to Fortunatus."

Besides the sale of contributed articles, the Fair had a fine source of revenue in the dinners served in the Bryan building. This was clear profit, since all food was donated. Service was strictly high class. "Fourteen tables were set in the dining hall, with accommodations for three hundred at one time. Every table was reset four or five times a day. Six ladies were appointed to take charge of each table throughout the Fair. Two presided daily — one to pour coffee, the other to maintain general supervision. These ladies were the wives of congressmen, professional men, clergymen, editors, merchants, bankers, commissioners — none were above serving at the Soldiers' Fair dinners. Each presiding lady furnished the table linen and silver for her table, and added any other decorations and delicacies that her taste and means suggested, or that her friends and acquaintances contributed. The table waiters were the young ladies of the city, deft-handed, swift-footed, bright-eyed, pleasant-voiced maidens, who, accustomed to being served in their own homes, transformed themselves for the nonce into servants."

Prices for such elegance were high; higher even than the elegant Palmer House dared to charge. As a matter of fact, all Fair prices were unmercifully high. No one went home with any bargains in Sea Island algae or Japanese curios. Seats to the amateur evening concerts were more expensive than any local manager would have risked asking for professional talent. But it was all in a good cause.

"If the sales slackened," Mrs. Livermore noted, "the fair traders had but to utter the talismanic words 'Buy for the sake of the soldiers!' " That did it. At the end of two weeks, with daily crowds swelled by cheap excursion tickets, the railways' contribution, the Fair closed in a blaze of glory. It had put $100,000 into the treasury of the Northwestern Sanitary Commission. It had also set a pattern for Commission fund raising all over the country. Sanitary Fairs were held in most large cities of the Union, and on a smaller scale in many towns. The Brooklyn Fair, running two weeks from Washington's Birthday, 1864, was the financial triumph of the series, rolling up a breathtaking net return of $300,000.

Mrs. Livermore, with a keen sense of their publicity value, invited all the women nurses she knew to be guests of the Fair. There was a hospital booth in the main exhibit hall, a faithful reproduction of a field hospital tent, with a dummy patient and a real nurse in attendance to demonstrate her work and answer questions from the crowd. Mrs. Livermore would have dearly loved to have Mother Bickerdyke take a turn there. Mrs. Bickerdyke, back at Vicksburg, sent a curt refusal. The army was about to move, and she was moving with it. She had no time for play-acting.

Mrs. Porter came, creating quite a sensation among the Fair-goers. The little lady's work at Fort Pickering was dwindling, and she was looking about for new employment. When the Fair closed she went down to Cairo to serve for a few weeks at the Soldiers' Home. Then at the close of the year she went south again, to join Mrs. Bickerdyke at Chattanooga.

Mother Bickerdyke and General Sherman's Fifteenth Corps left the Vicksburg camp in late September. With several weeks of rest and good food behind them, their knapsacks sagging from the weight of home comforts accumulated over the summer, they were in high spirits as they swarmed aboard the river steamers that would take them to Memphis. From there they would "ride the cars" of the Memphis & Charleston railroad into Alabama. They did not know where they were going, but they did know that train riding was a heap pleasanter than foot marching.

The riding was not so pleasurable as they had expected. From Corinth on, the enemy had been busy tearing up the tracks. The passengers had to pile out and rebuild as their trains crawled along, sometimes making less than three miles a day. A Confederate cavalry force, 5000 strong, was in front of them, ripping up track and frequently swooping down in night raids. Horses and cattle were driven off; provision tents were set on fire. By the middle of November, with the weather turned bitterly cold, the men were ragged and shivering on half-rations. Sherman received an order from Grant to abandon the railroad and proceed on foot to Chattanooga.

The march across northern Alabama and up into Tennessee was a harrowing one. Mother Bickerdyke, sometimes mounted on Old Whitey and sometimes riding Andy's ambulance wagon, found little rest at the end of a day's march. A stream of soldiers poured into her tent, begging her to do something about their feet. The shoddy army boots went to pieces on the rough trails, and it was no fun marching barefoot. She dressed their blisters and stone bruises, and cut up army blankets into moccasins soled with tree bark. This made marching more comfortable and sleeping less so. It was poor country through which they traveled, ravaged by war, deserted by its poor white inhabitants whose cabins offered little plunder. By the time Chattanooga was sighted, it was a dispirited little army that straggled into camp.

There had been fierce fighting in eastern Tennessee throughout the summer, ending in the battle of Chickamauga Creek in September. Chattanooga remained in Union hands, but Confederate troops were dug in among the surrounding hills, with their strongest fortifications on Lookout Mountain, from which their artillery commanded the town. Until they could be dislodged, possession of Chattanooga meant nothing. The Union armies were encamped outside the town, strung out along the valleys behind log and earth breastworks, gathering strength for an assault on the Rebel mountain citadel.

So the men from Vicksburg, who had hoped to find roofs to shelter them at the end of their long march, had to pitch their tents

and try to keep warm by campfires. Most of them had only summer clothing. Northerners' persistent belief that the South had a perpetually warm climate died hard. The Tennessee winter might be mild by comparison with winter in Illinois and Wisconsin, but these Illinois and Wisconsin men had never had to face their own winters under such conditions. It was true that they saw very little snow. There was plenty of sleet, borne on mountain winds so violent that the pellets broke the skin on unprotected faces. The wind off Missionary Ridge overturned their tents, scattered their fires, and howled incessantly with a demon's voice to make a man's flesh crawl. The soldiers swore that the voice spoke in distinct words. There were heated disputes as to whether it said "Go home!" or "You're next!" Neither rendering was reassuring.

The newcomers had three days to grumble about camp discomforts. Grant had been waiting for Sherman to come up with his division. On the fourth day after the arrival, November 23, the assault of Lookout Mountain began. Mrs. Bickerdyke waited in her field hospital, a group of tents conveniently close to the Tennessee River. The tents were set up in a ring around a pile of burning logs. Over the fire swung a huge laundry caldron of boiling water. Soup bubbled in a second one. The faithful Andy had been up since long before dawn, hauling water from the river, setting the battery of barrels close to hand. Bricks from a ruined chimney were heating in the coals. There would be very little to work with here. Surgical supplies were short. There were few drugs and almost no food. Fortunately a raid on a Rebel still had produced several jugs of corn whiskey. It would be needed before this day was over.

Mother Bickerdyke saw nothing of the battle, veiled in the thick mists that crowned the summit. But by early afternoon of the first day the stretcher-bearers began to stumble down the slope with the first victims. The tents were half full before dark. Then, when night brought a lull in the fighting, the trickle changed to a torrent. Men were laid on the frozen ground, propped against trees, dropped on the path when the exhausted bearers could go no farther. Outside the operating tent the grisly pile of severed limbs grew and grew.

Mrs. Bickerdyke, assuming charge of the patients after amputation, listened to the old, painful pleadings. Please, can't my leg be buried like a Christian? What will they do with my arm?

What they did with them, as they and she well knew, was the same thing that they did with the slaughtered horses. Bodies, including Rebel bodies, were given Christian burial on the field, with a prayer and a Psalm. But arms and legs and horses were piled up, doused with kerosene, and burned. The men who pleaded now had served in such details often enough. When it came to their own limbs, they could not endure the thought. Mrs. Bickerdyke soothingly promised to see to it. Yes, of course she'd have their limbs properly buried. She'd take them out when they got well and show them the graves. Now all they had to do was eat their nice hot panado and go to sleep. Everything would be all right.

Panado, her favorite postoperative nutriment, was Mrs. Bickerdyke's own invention. It consisted of whiskey, hot water and brown sugar, into which she crumbled army hardtack to make a mixture thick enough to eat with a spoon. Some veteran of the Mexican War, with vague memories of *empanadas,* had named it, although there is little resemblance. Mother Bickerdyke thought it gave additional nourishment to the popular hot toddy of whiskey and sweetened water. Also it satisfied her temperance principles. Although the doctors gave straight whiskey to nerve a patient for unanesthetized operations, she was proud of the fact that she never in her life offered the devil's brew to mortal man. Diluted with water and sugar, and especially if redeemed by cracker crumbs, the devil's brew turned into a legitimate medicine. So far as is known, she never touched the stuff herself, even in this harmless form.

The battle went into its second day, and a second night that brought a fierce gale and driving sleet. Mrs. Bickerdyke hurried from tent to tent with hot bricks and cups of panado and soup. With a ruthlessness that was pure mercy she hurried dead bodies into stacks outside the tents, yielding to the living the shelter they needed no longer.

This second night saw the conquest of the mountain completed. The mists that gave the battle the name "Battle in the Clouds" cleared before morning. The rising sun showed the Union flag waving from the summit. On the same day the Federal troops cleared the enemy from Missionary Ridge, pursuing them as far as Ringgold, Georgia. A battle there completed the rout. The four days' fighting left Grant in triumphant possession of the Tennessee River. It left Mother Bickerdyke with 2000 badly wounded men and practically no facilities for taking care of them.

As usual the Sanitary Commission had to come to the rescue. The single-track railroad between Nashville and Chattanooga was undergoing repair, so the Commission had to send supplies in a mule-drawn caravan. The wagons reached Chattanooga a couple of weeks after the battle. At Mrs. Bickerdyke's request, most of the space had been given to dressings, clothing and medicine. Food, badly though she needed it, would have to wait. The one food item she asked for was a good supply of baker's yeast.

With the yeast on hand, she was ready to make bread. A Secesh mill on the Tennessee supplied the flour. She needed an oven, but there would be no difficulty there. A squad of volunteers, intrigued by the promise of fresh homemade bread. went to work under her directions.

A house being in due time demolished, the brick from its chimney was converted into ovens. A barrel was laid down in a convenient spot, and covered with mud. This in turn was covered with bricks, then with another layer of mud, another of bricks, and with mud over the whole. A fire was then made inside, by which at the same time the barrel was burned up and the ovens dried; and all was ready.

All was ready for the baking of tender, crusty loaves such as few soldiers had seen since they left home. Corn pone and saleratus biscuits they could manage over their campfires; the government issue hardbread, a thick flour-and-water cracker, was not too bad. Softened in cold water and fried in pork fat, it was the mainstay of camp cooks who could not be bothered to attempt corn-meal mixtures. The eastern armies were fortunate in having ex-bakers in

their ranks who turned out real bread. The men of the west were seldom so lucky.

While the Sanitary yeast held out, Mother Bickerdyke baked lightbread. When it was gone she switched to salt-rising bread, a pioneer specialty that depends on the leavening agency of fermenting corn meal. It is not so "light" as yeast bread, and Mrs. Bickerdyke did not consider it as digestible for her patients. Both kinds were a great treat to the men at Chattanooga. On a good day she turned out five hundred huge loaves. When a second Sanitary shipment brought a case of dried peaches, she turned them into several hundred pies. She could make cookies of almost anything, often of crumbled crackers, water and brown sugar, with a sprinkling of Tennessee black walnuts. She was, she admitted, a good hand at baking. In spite of all pleading, she kept to her rule of cooking for patients exclusively. Any aspiring soldier cook was welcome to watch her bake until he got the hang of it, but he could not touch or taste.

The only time she relented was at Christmas, that dismal Yuletide of 1863, when not a single home-packed Christmas box got through to Chattanooga. They were piled high in the railroad yards at Nashville, but military supplies had priority on the little single-track line. On Christmas Eve Mrs. Bickerdyke made molasses taffy for every man in camp, sick or well. They pulled taffy around the campfire, sang songs and told stories, and surprised themselves by having a fairly merry time.

Christmas week was intolerably cold, with high winds blowing. There was no way to heat the hospital tents except to leave the flaps open for such heat as the central campfire furnished. Although the Pioneer Corps had cut a good supply of logs, Mrs. Bickerdyke burned them so recklessly that the pile was dwindling. On New Year's Day, when the thermometer touched zero, the pile gave out.

Mrs. Bickerdyke had taken her wagon into Chattanooga to meet Mrs. Porter, who arrived about noon. She was delighted to see her friend, and still more delighted to see the pile of luggage Mrs.

Porter brought with her. The station agent at Nashville grumbled over it, muttering his opinion of ladies who traveled in wartime with so many dress hampers and bandboxes. Mrs. Porter had insisted sweetly that her personal baggage was very important to her. The hampers and boxes held tea, farina, raisins, dried peaches and apples, medicines and bandages.

With Mrs. Porter was another Sanitary agent, Mrs. Annie Turner Wittenmyer, who had joined her at Nashville. She had come to inspect rather than to nurse, but Mother Bickerdyke found plenty of work for her during her short stay.

They got back to camp to find that the fire was very low. The woodpile had disappeared. With a hasty apology, Mrs. Bickerdyke stowed her guests in her own tent and hurried off to find the surgeon in charge.

"The fire's mighty nigh out, doctor," she told him. "We got to have some wood quick. You'd best send out a chopping party right now, before it gets any later."

The doctor glanced at the sky. "I'm afraid it's too late now, Mrs. Bickerdyke. It'll be dark in another hour, and it would take the men that long to get ready and reach the woods. Besides, it would be barbarous to send them out in this bitter cold. We'll just have to try to pull through until another day. There's nothing we can do about it tonight."

He mounted his horse and rode off to Chattanooga, to the warm comfort of his quarters there. Mrs. Bickerdyke stood in the road and shook her fist after him. Then, wrapping her red shawl tightly against the cutting wind, she tramped the half-mile that separated the hospital from the nearest camp.

The commandant, like the doctor, preferred to sleep in town. The highest officer she could find was a sergeant of the Pioneer Corps. She ordered him to bring some men and some mules over to the hospital. When he hesitated, she held out a bit of bait. "I got a crock of toddy just going to waste, sarge. Reckon your men could stand a little sup on New Year's Day."

They came, and drank, and took her orders. Near the hospital was a line of breastworks, built of logs with earth heaped against them. The old dry timber was exactly what she needed for firewood. With the enemy gone, they were of no value now. They couldn't serve a better purpose than to keep her patients warm.

Destroying military fortifications without orders is quite a crime, but hot toddy is very persuasive. The Pioneers tore out the logs with mules and chains, chopped them up, and piled them on the fire. Then they had another round of toddy and went back to camp.

The major heard about it in the morning. He put the sergeant in the guardhouse and hurried over to deal with Mother Bickerdyke. She was too busy to listen to him. With Mrs. Porter and Mrs. Wittenmyer she had been up most of the night, making pie from the dried fruit out of the dress hamper. Now the three ladies were bustling from one hospital tent to another, serving out wedges of hot fresh-baked pie. The fire was burning gloriously.

The major put himself in Mother Bickerdyke's path. "Madam, consider yourself under arrest!" he said sternly.

With a sweep of her powerful arm she brushed him aside. "All right, major, I'm arrested. Now don't bother me. I got work to do."

A Northern newspaper, publishing the story, said that she spent some time in the guardhouse. This seems not to be true. But there was an official inquiry, at which she coolly admitted her guilt. Then she spoke frankly to her officer judges.

"It's lucky for you fellows that I did what I did. For if I hadn't, hundreds of men in the hospital tents would have frozen to death. No one at the North would have blamed *me,* but there'd have been such a hullabaloo about your heads for allowing it to happen, that you'd have lost them whether or no."

She was right, and they knew it. The citizens "at the North" kept a sharp eye on their citizen army, with press and politicians always ready to pounce on any injustice. Mrs. Bickerdyke's hearing ended with most of the officers warmly commending her. The chairman went so far as to advise her "to pursue the same course again, under

the circumstances." She told him not to worry, she meant to.

Early in March of the New Year Mrs. Bickerdyke went north on Commission business, spending a week in Chicago. Again she was Mrs. Livermore's guest. Her hostess arranged for her to address the Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce. It was Ladies' Night, a purely social affair. Milwaukee had been more than generous to the Sanitary Commission. The Chamber had just pledged $1200 in cash every month, to be continued until the end of the war. Mrs. Bickerdyke, as the guest of honor, was to accept the gift on behalf of the Commission. Mary Livermore had hinted that, since there was to be a musical program afterward, a few graceful words would suffice. She did not know Mother Bickerdyke yet.

The Chamber's president, after a long and flowery speech, bowed to Mrs. Bickerdyke and led the applause as she rose. She stood calmly, waiting for silence. Then she spoke in her strong, uncompromising voice:

"I'm much obliged to you, gentlemen, for the kind things you've said. I've not done much, no more than I ought. And neither have you. I'm glad you're going to give twelve hundred dollars a month for the poor fellows in hospital. It's no more than you ought to do. And it's not half as much as the soldiers in hospital have given for you. Suppose you'd got to give tonight a thousand dollars for your right leg. Would I have to beg you to give it? Two thousand dollars for your right arm; five thousand dollars for both your eyes; all you're worth for your life? How about that, gentlemen?

"But I've got eighteen hundred boys in my hospital at Chattanooga, who've given one arm, or one leg, or both. And yet they don't seem to think they've done such a great deal for their country. In the graveyard behind the hospital and the battlefield a little farther off, there's the bodies of thousands who freely gave their lives to save you and your homes and your country from ruin.

"Oh, gentlemen of Milwaukee, don't let's *us* be talking about what *we've* given, and what *we've* done! We've done nothing, we've given nothing, alongside of *them!* And it's our duty to keep on

giving and doing just as long as there's a soldier down South fighting or suffering for *us*."

Mrs. Livermore, who records the speech, does not comment upon the reaction. Apparently it was not unfavorable, for Milwaukee continued to lead all Northwestern communities in cash contributions.

XVI

In March, while Mrs. Bickerdyke was in Chicago and Milwaukee, the Union high command underwent drastic changes. The ambitious General Halleck stepped down, and his post of commander in chief went to General Grant. As a signal token of confidence, Congress revived for him the rank of lieutenant general, created for George Washington and never before conferred on any other American.

Grant went to Washington to receive his appointment from the President in person. He stayed on to plan and wage his Wilderness campaign against General Lee. This took Grant off the western scene for good. The move against Atlanta, which he had planned, fell to General Sherman, his successor as commander in the west. Sherman immediately began a vast concentration of supplies in Chattanooga, close to the Georgia state line. This was to be the take-off point for the Atlanta push.

Nashville, at the head of the railroad running to Chattanooga, filled up with food, grain, hay, saddles, horses and ammunition. In his first day as commander, March 24, Sherman issued an order forbidding the use of the railway to all private persons and freight. He had already enforced such a rule in part. Now he made it absolute. It included all shipments of the Sanitary Commission, and transportation for their agents. Even in regard to army stores, Sherman was practicing a Spartan simplicity. He decreed that marching troops would carry no tents. In his own words:

"My entire headquarters transportation is one wagon for myself, aides, officers, clerks and orderlies. I think this is as low down as we can get until we get flat broke, and thenceforward things will begin to mend. Soldiering as we have been doing in the past two years with such trains and impedimenta is a farce and nothing but absolute poverty will cure it. I will be glad to hear Uncle Sam say 'We cannot afford this or that . . . you must gather your own grub and wagons, and bivouac and fight not for pay but for self-existence.'"

Mrs. Bickerdyke, arriving at Nashville on her way back to Chattanooga, found the town full of worried Sanitary agents, and of Sanitary stores spoiling in the railway yards. The agents did not have to tell her how badly the supplies were needed at Chattanooga. They had tried to tell the military authorities who controlled the railroad, but had met only the firm reply, "General Sherman's orders." What were they to do?

Mrs. Bickerdyke went down to the freight yards to see for herself. A number of ambulances were being loaded, filled with stretchers, operating tables and hospital tents. These were army Medical Department goods, and necessary. But there were chinks between the ambulance loads that Mother Bickerdyke considered a waste of space. She stuffed them with a selection from the neglected Sanitary stock. When she thought it advisable, she was not above tossing out the Medical Department's choices in favor of her own. Assisted by quaking fellow agents, she loaded some seventy ambulance wagons before the trains pulled out. She'd fix it all up with the general when she got to Chattanooga, she told her friends.

They did not see how she was to get there, since the prohibition against civilians exempted no one. Mrs. Bickerdyke laughed. For one thing, she had General Grant's pass, authorizing her to call upon army transport to go anywhere within the Union lines. For another, Billy Sherman wasn't such a fool as they thought him. Certainly not fool enough to bar *her* from her own hospital.

Flourishing the pass with Grant's signature, she went aboard the next train and landed in Chattanooga. She went straight to Sher-

man's headquarters. An aide in the anteroom looked at her in surprise.

"Mrs. Bickerdyke! Why, how did you get down here?"

"Come down in the cars, of course. Ain't no other way of getting down here that I know of. I want to see the general."

"He's in there, writing." The officer nodded toward an inner room. "I don't think he'll have time to see you, though."

"I guess he will." She knocked and pushed the door open. "Good morning, general. Can I come in?"

"Looks like you are in," he said gruffly. "I've got no time to spare. What is it now?"

She strode forward and planted herself squarely in front of his desk.

"Look here, general. We can't stand this last order of yours nohow. You'll have to change it sure's you live. We can get along all right without any more nurses and agents. We got to have the supplies. When a man can't carry a gun and has to drop out of line, you officers are all through with him. You turn him over to the hospitals for us to get him well and back in service. Well, how're we going to do that now? You want us to make bricks without straw, like the Bible says. We can't do it, general."

He shuffled his papers impatiently. "Really, Mother Bickerdyke, I'm too busy to discuss it now. We'll take it up some other time."

"We'll take it up now!" She slammed her fist down on the desk. Then she tried persuasion. "I'm not asking anything for myself. You had me assigned to your corps on purpose, because you knew I'd take good care of your men when they got hurt. Well, how'm I going to do it if I got nothing to do it with? Have some sense about this, general!"

With an unwilling laugh he pushed his work aside. "I swear I don't know what I'm going to do with you, Mother. By rights I ought to call the guard and have you put under arrest. Didn't you ever hear of such a thing as insubordination?"

"You bet I've heard of it. Many's the time. It's the only way

ing what lay ahead, but they knew that this would not be an uninterrupted journey. Although there was news of skirmishes by other detachments, advancing on other roads, the Fifteenth rolled along for a week without sight of the enemy. Then, on May 14, it came.

All afternoon there had been the sound of cannon up front. It was dark when the ambulance reached a little clearing just short of Resaca, Georgia. Mrs. Porter pointed to the ground, littered with knapsacks. "We're coming to a battle," she whispered. Both women knew the army custom of discarding knapsacks when active fighting began.

They climbed down and peered about in the dark. Andy brought a lantern. Stumbling among the trees, they walked toward the confused sounds of gunfire in the distance. Before long they came upon a kitchen table set up under a tree, with a surgeon at work. The patients lay about on the grass, their wounds roughly bound with their own shirt tails.

The doctor wiped his bloody hands and turned to speak to them. He was Mrs. Bickerdyke's old friend Dr. Woodward of Galesburg. It was their first meeting since the early Cairo days.

"Glad to see you, doctor," she said briskly. "Looks like you got a job on your hands."

"I was never so glad to see anyone in all my life," he answered. "I hope to God you've brought some bandages. There's nothing here. Just nothing at all."

"We got plenty. You go on with your work, doctor. Andy, tell Frank to bring up the wagon. We'll start the hospital right here."

They had no tents, no cots, no mattresses. She put Frank and Andy to work cutting pine boughs and covering them with blankets. She got a fire going, and a kettle of soup. Mrs. Porter, washing the blood from wounded faces, was horrified to recognize many personal friends, for this was a Wisconsin regiment. Some of these boys had been her Sunday School students when her husband was pastor at Green Bay. One of them told her that her son's Chicago battery was in the battle. She worked on by lantern light, always fearful that the next face uncovered might be young Porter's. He

dashed into the hospital camp at dawn, unhurt, but too busy for more than a hug and a reassuring word.

With daybreak the rest of the ambulances pushed through the woods, loaded with Sanitary supplies. Mrs. Bickerdyke fed her patients and then set up a kitchen for the fighting men. All day long, whenever they had a chance, weary men stumbled in for soup and coffee, hastily gulped before they went back to the front lines. Mrs. Bickerdyke crammed their pockets with crackers and apples. It was the only food they had for the two days before Resaca fell. The army ration wagons were somewhere out of the range of fire, waiting to come up until danger passed.

On the second night the Confederate General Johnston gave up Resaca. Sherman's troops marched in on the morning of May 16. Mother Bickerdyke, given a free hand to choose among the houses still standing, disposed her wounded as comfortably as possible. She hated leaving them there, but Sherman was on the move, and she meant to move with him. Luckily she knew where to find substitute nurses to take her place.

Just before she left Chattanooga, Mrs. Bickerdyke had had a call from two strange gentlemen. They introduced themselves as delegates of the Christian Commission. They were J. F. Loyd and H. D. Lathrop, both Protestant ministers from Cincinnati. The reverend gentlemen were in great distress. They hoped that Mrs. Bickerdyke, of whom they had heard so much, would find a way to aid them.

Without much enthusiasm Mother Bickerdyke invited them to tell their story. To put it plainly, she did not think too much of the Christian Commission. So far she had had little to do with it. The organization was an eastern one, sponsored by the Young Men's Christian Association, supported by the American Bible Society and the American Tract Society. Its purpose, primarily religious, was clearly set out in the first appeal for funds:

> The chaplains wish our aid, Christians in the army call for it; and the precious souls of thousands, daily exposed to death and yet unprepared, demand it of us, in the name of Him who died for us. It is a

field white unto the harvest. The soldiers are ready to hear the Word of God spoken in love, and to receive the printed pages. Brethren, will you aid us?

The Christian Commission delegates, ordained ministers or devout laymen, visited army camps and hospitals, holding services, making converts and admonishing backsliders. They distributed Testaments and tracts, kept the army chaplains on their toes, and generally pursued their aim of bringing salvation to the Union Army. Their contribued funds went to traveling expenses and moderate salaries for delegates, the purchase — at wholesale, through the grace of the American Bible and American Tract Societies — of religious literature, and the erection of chapel tents. An early delegate wrote plaintively to his Philadelphia office:

Can you not get estimates from some honest Christian sailmaker who will make these tents at a little profit?

The tents, with pulpit and harmonium, cost $525. The Commission bought six hundred of them before the war ended.

The Sanitary Commission, supported by church Aid Societies, staffed in large part by preachers and preachers' wives, resented the other group's appropriation of the "Christian" label. Sanitary agents also distributed religious literature. They too prayed with the sick, read from the Bible, and snatched brands from the burning. Mary Safford and Eliza Porter both were meekly proud of the deathbed conversions that stood to their credit. The Sanitary Commission was as Christian as it was Sanitary. It was also more efficient at raising funds. Both organizations existed upon donations. The keen competition for contributions bred a spirit of most unchristian rivalry, carefully and completely cloaked under a surface of brotherly harmony. The Sanitary Commission had a running start. The Christian Commission, although organized early in the war, only began to function on a large scale in 1864, a year before the war's end.

General Sherman, who never really liked to see any civilian face around an army camp, was particularly intolerant of the Christian Commissioners. Mrs. Bickerdyke's callers, the two delegates from

Ohio, had reached Nashville before the Lookout Mountain battle. They had applied for rail transportation to Chattanooga, to meet refusal in a curt note:

> Certainly not. There is more need of gunpowder and oats than any moral or religious instruction. Every regiment at the front has a chaplain.
>
> W. T. SHERMAN

The zealous men of God were not discouraged. They hired a wagon and team, loaded it with religious literature, and drove overland to Chattanooga. They missed the battles, but reached town to find hospitals overflowing with dying men, "a field white unto the harvest." And General Sherman callously refused to admit the harvesters to the field. They had come to beg Mrs. Bickerdyke to use her influence to get them hospital permits.

She granted their request. Then, making unscrupulous use of their gratitude, she put them to work. It was vitally important, she agreed, that a seriously wounded man should repent his sins and make his peace with God. But since the poor fellow was only human, his mind would be freer for spiritual thoughts if he were made comfortable in the body. Let the brothers bathe the boys and get them into clean shirts before they wrestled for their souls. She and Sister Porter, poor weak woman trying to do their Christian duty, found it worked out better that way.

The two preachers really were a godsend. Even General Sherman, who had grumblingly admitted them to the hospitals, was impressed by the way they worked. The saintly Mrs. Porter opened their eyes for them. She was as zealous in spiritual consolation as either, but she gave it while she dressed a wound or turned a mattress. Their previous impression, that Sanitary people were "worldly," did not survive the Chattanooga experience. It was a heartening experience for both factions, leading to a considerable extension of Christian Commission work. In a smaller way, the smaller Commission had taken note of temporal needs, packing food and clothing among their Bibles. Mr. Loyd and Mr. Lathrop had left a pile of gift boxes at Nashville. Mrs. Bickerdyke offered to have them for-

warded, if they could be directed to her personally, as Sanitary supplies were.

The Christian Commission delegates agreed, and the goods came through. Then Mother Bickerdyke found out that the gentlemen had a little money to spend. They had meant to open a revival mission hall in Nashville, for the edification of soldiers on leave. She persuaded them instead to buy twenty cows for the Nashville hospital.

When the Chattanooga hospitals were cleared, the two men had gone as far as Huntsville in Mrs. Bickerdyke's wake, working with her at the Calhoun house. They were still there when she faced the problem of leaving someone to look after the victims of Resaca. She consulted with Mrs. Porter, who agreed that Brothers Loyd and Lathrop were the very persons to do it. Andy Somerville was sent off on horseback to summon them. They arrived a few days later, and willingly took charge of the Resaca hospital.

Satisfied that their patients were in good hands, the two women piled into their ambulance and followed Sherman to Kingston. They had a brief rest there, and a new shipment of Sanitary supplies caught up with them. There was no rest after that, from Kingston to Alatoona Pass, from Alatoona to Kenesaw Mountain and Marietta, to the north bank of the Chattahoochee River within sight of Atlanta's church spires. Says Mrs. Livermore:

> I despair of giving any account of the work accomplished by Mrs. Bickerdyke and Mrs. Porter from April to November of 1864. What it is to "follow an army" when there is no fighting in progress can only be understood by those who have experienced it. What it was to follow Sherman's army in that Atlanta campaign, when *it fought every foot of the way* over rugged mountains, through deep, narrow ravines, through thick wood, across headlong rivers — to follow with only the one aim of ministering to the exhausted, the wounded, the dying — with only a blanket and a pillow for a bed; the roar of artillery, the clash of arms, the cries of distress and the shout of battle constantly resounding, to live night and day in the midst of these horrors, in constant attendance on the mangled and anguished soldiers — this cannot be described.

Throughout the summer of 1864 Sherman's army was slowly, ponderously on the move. There were four big battles and scores of minor engagements. The soldiers, when they were not fighting, were rebuilding the shattered railroads. Sunstroke and malaria, dysentery and infected insect bites filled the hospitals already crowded to overflowing with battle wounded. The insects were the worst. Besides the ever-present lice, fleas and bedbugs, the horse-flies that bite and the intolerable mosquitoes, the invaders suffered dreadfully from chiggers. These woods creatures, tiny to the point of invisibility, burrowed deep beneath the skin and set up an itching for which nothing brought relief. The victims scratched frantically, drawing blood and depositing germs from grimy hands. The septic sores were slow to heal, and sometimes brought disability and even death.

The army Medical Department, never too sympathetic toward sickness, had made very scanty provision of drugs. Mrs. Bickerdyke supplied the lack from her botanic lore, drawing upon the resources of the countryside. Blackberries were plentiful, and blackberry cordial is a specific for diarrhea. So is a tea made from "milky pussley," a common Southern weed. She brewed a fairly effective painkiller from the poisonous Jimson weed, and a heart stimulant from wild cherry and bloodroot. There was no substitute for quinine, but tea of willow bark or cottonseed seemed to help a little. For chigger bites she counseled brown soap and will power. It was not the chigger, it was the scratching that did the harm, she insisted. Chiggers bit her all day long, and she just ignored them. Rub the bite with a piece of wet soap, if you want to coddle yourself, and then leave it alone. Those who had enough strength of will to follow her advice found it good, but her converts were not many.

More effective than drugs for the various illnesses, Mother Bickerdyke thought, were hot baths, clean clothing, fresh air and adequate nourishment. Fresh air was easily come by on the long march, with tents eliminated by the general's orders. Where they rested long enough the boys built shebangs, but ordinarily they slept beneath

the warm summer sky. There was water in the creeks, but few pots to boil it in. General Sherman had been ruthless in cutting down nonmilitary equipment to a minimum. Andy Somerville had in his charge two medium-sized kettles, two washboilers, a small iron teakettle, one saucepan, and a wooden trough for mixing bread dough. Everything else, including the Sanitary wheeled caldrons, had been left at the various hospitals, or lost on the confused march. Andy guarded these precious utensils against the raids of camp cooks, and saw to it that they were always first aboard when the ambulance wagon moved out. With them Mrs. Bickerdyke contrived to do the cooking and laundry for field hospitals that sometimes held as many as twelve hundred patients.

If cooking was difficult, finding something to cook was not. The route led past farms whose cornfields and garden patches were ready for summer harvesting. Chickens, cattle and pigs might be hidden in the woods at the Yanks' approach, but hungry soldiers were good at ferreting them out. Sherman's deliberate policy was to live on the country. He had written to General Grant before he set out:

> Georgia has a million of inhabitants. If they can live, we should not starve. If the enemy interrupt our communications, I will be absolved from all obligations to subsist on our own resources, and will feel perfectly justified in taking whatever and wherever we can find.

Mrs. Bickerdyke, in full agreement with the general, did not confine her foraging to food. She never had enough soap. Wherever she could find it, in plantation mansions or Negro cabins, she bartered or wheedled or calmly took all the soap in sight. Sherman's provost marshal, who was supposed to "pacify and compensate" civilians for the confiscation of their property, had more trouble over Mother Bickerdyke's soap than any other item.

At Marietta, Georgia, where Sherman concentrated his troops and supplies for the final move, Mrs. Bickerdyke was able to settle down for the first time in weeks. Her hospital was filled with the wounded of Kenesaw Mountain and Alatoona Pass, but conditions were far better than they had been on the march. Sherman's men

had rebuilt the railway, so that supplies were coming through from Chattanooga. The embargo on civilian goods still held, but everything consigned to Mrs. Bickerdyke personally was forwarded. The Sanitary Commission sent dressings, clothing, dried and canned foods, cooking and laundry equipment. The Christian Commission, along with a mammoth shipment of Bibles and tracts, included several cases of writing paper, a gift much appreciated by hospitalized men.

With some side excursions to nearby battlefields, Mrs. Bickerdyke remained in Marietta throughout the late summer, until Atlanta fell. The hard-fought battle of Atlanta on July 22 marked the beginning of a siege that did not end until early September. Thousands of wounded men crowded the tent hospital, expanded to cover thirty acres of ground outside Marietta. General Sherman, who had forbidden shelter for active men, sent to Nashville for a number of revival tents, big enough to hold a hundred beds. The soldiers called the hospital encampment "Mother Bickerdyke's circus." When one patient remarked that the best thing about a circus was the pink lemonade, she agreed with him. There was lemon extract among the Sanitary stores. She made lemonade, colored it with raspberry juice, and brought a big pitcher into the ward. The drink was so popular with the fevered men that it became a standard article of hospital diet.

On September 2 Sherman led his victorious troops into Atlanta. Two days later he issued his ruthless order expelling all residents from the town. "I am not willing," he wrote, "to have Atlanta encumbered by the families of our enemies; I want it a pure Gibraltar, and will have it so by the first of October." When the city authorities protested that this order was unnecessary and cruel, he replied:

> War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it. . . . You might as well appeal against the thunderstorm as against the terrible hardships of war. They are inevitable; and the only way the people of Atlanta can hope once more to live in peace and quiet at home is to stop this war, which can alone be done by admitting that it began in error and is perpetuated in pride. We don't want your Negroes, or your horses, or your land,

or anything you have; but we do want, and will have, a just obedience to the laws of the United States. That we will have; and if it involves the destruction of your improvements, we cannot help it.

Sherman's ruthlessness was not reserved for the enemy. Mrs. Bickerdyke, calling upon him to discuss new hospitals in Atlanta, found him in a truculent mood. He did not want any hospitals now. The severely wounded would be shipped North as rapidly as possible. Those with minor wounds or disease could get well or go home on furlough. For his next campaign he did not propose to encumber himself with weaklings. There would be no provision for their care. No civilian nurses, no Sanitary wagons with their loads of pampering fripperies. The army ambulances would carry everything that was actually needed. Army surgeons and detailed men would look after the casualties of coming engagements. As for the sick, the general said grimly that there wouldn't be any. He was taking only active young men in tiptop condition, experienced soldiers who could look after themselves. They wouldn't need mothering, and they weren't going to get it.

Mother Bickerdyke argued with him. For once she lost her argument. General Sherman, with commendation from Lincoln and Grant burning up the telegraph wires, was feeling pretty cocky. He'd taken Atlanta, the South's great munition center, with all its cannon factories and gunpowder plants. Nothing, except possibly the capture of Richmond itself, could have dealt the Confederacy a harder blow. He was in no mood to be reasoned with about his methods.

Mrs. Bickerdyke and Mrs. Porter spent two months in clearing out the wounded and sick according to Sherman's orders. Both women made several trips north with hospital trains. In October Mrs. Porter's husband, chaplain of an Illinois regiment, applied for leave and accompanied her to Chicago. They did not return, and Mrs. Bickerdyke finished up the evacuation by herself.

She had several interviews with the general, begging him to reconsider and let her accompany him. He was good-natured but firm. Finally he offered a compromise. Before spring came he expected

to be in Savannah on the Atlantic Coast. He knew he would not get there without fighting. Suppose she came round by sea, bringing the Sanitary supplies she set such store by? There'd probably be work for her by then. And in the meantime, he suggested acidly, she might go home and mother her own young 'uns for a change.

"Don't you worry about my young 'uns, Uncle Billy," she flashed, giving him the name soldiers called him behind his back. "You never worried about Jim and Hi when you needed me. You think you don't need me now. You think just because you picked out a bunch of healthy fellows they're going to stay that way. If that ain't just like a man — never thinks he's going to be sick till he is, and then he's worse than a baby. Well, all right. If you want to be pigheaded about it, you'll just have to find out for yourself. Reckon I can find plenty to keep me busy in the hospitals up North. But mind you let me know when you want me, and I'll come a-running."

She left Atlanta on the last train out, just before the Union troops burned the depot. The rest of the town was already in flames. A heavy pall of smoke followed the train all day. A chaplain sharing Mrs. Bickerdyke's seat was moved to a pious comparison between the doomed town and the Cities of the Plain. Mother Bickerdyke comforted herself with remembering that she and Andy had searched the houses the night before, making sure that no living creature, not even a kitten, remained in the path of destruction.

XVII

MOTHER BICKERDYKE went to Cairo, staying overnight at the Soldiers' Home, where her old Memphis associate, Mrs. A. F. Grant, was in charge. The new building had been completed early in January.

The Home was, in its construction, a model of convenience. "It could not possibly be improved," is Mrs. Grant's testimony. She made it a model of order. Washing, scrubbing, cleaning, cooking, and all household processes, went on under her remarkable administration as regularly as in a private house. The dining tables were scoured after every meal, and were kept so white that tablecloths were a superfluity. There were regular days for the scrubbing of floors, porches and water barrels. . . . The kitchen was the pride of the establishment. Its huge apparatus for cooking was kept in shining order. . . . Three tubs were permanently arranged for dishwashing. In the first, the dishes were washed; in the second they were rinsed, and by a rule of Mrs. Grant's, the water in this tub was so hot as to necessitate taking them out with a skimmer. In the third, they drained for a moment on a rack. Then they were wiped while hot, and passed through a window into the dining room, where the tables were instantly reset, to be ready for fresh guests.

Besides the elaborate equipment, Mrs. Grant had an ample staff of cooks, dishwashers, kitchen boys, waiters and housemaids. Mrs. Bickerdyke was not overcome with amazement to find that, given such facilities, she ran the Home efficiently. Fresh from the Georgia campaign, remembering the smoky campfires and inadequate cooking utensils, the shortage of soap and insecticide, Mother Bickerdyke found the Cairo Home a little overwhelming. With only a

fraction of Mrs. Grant's resources, how much better she could have taken care of her boys on the march! It was nobody's fault that she had lacked them. It certainly was not Mrs. Grant's. Just the same, she could not help feeling a little unhappy as she dressed for dinner in one of the four private rooms set aside for guests. Too much here, not enough there. She couldn't make it seem right.

Waiting for her in the matron's parlor, with its tastefully set table, were her hostess and another guest, introduced as Mrs. Annie Turner Wittenmyer, a Christian Commission lady. Mrs. Grant made a great point of sisterly concern for the less affluent Commission. Christian Commission delegates were always entertained free at the Home, "saving to their own Commission expenses which would otherwise have been large and inevitable."

Mrs. Grant's present guest was the same Mrs. Wittenmyer who had accompanied Eliza Porter to Chattanooga. She was a pastor's wife from Keokuk, Iowa, a strikingly handsome woman in the mid-thirties, with high-piled hair prematurely white, and a lovely pink-and-white complexion. She had begun as a hospital angel, worked at organizing the Iowa Soldiers' Aid societies, and risen to prominence as a Sanitary agent. She was a lady who liked to shine, and it may be that Mary Livermore's monopoly of the Sanitary spotlight irked her. For whatever reason, she switched her allegiance early in 1864, and was now the bright particular star of the Christian Commission. Her present title was Organizer, Manager and Supervisor of Special Diet Kitchens.

The renewal of old acquaintance was warm on Mrs. Wittenmyer's part, and somewhat less so on Mother Bickerdyke's. She was bewildered at being appealed to as a natural supporter of Special Diet Kitchens. She had never even heard of the scheme, which was Mrs. Wittenmyer's own. She was just back from Washington, and flushed with success. The Christian Commission officials, Congress and the War Department had endorsed it. The surgeon general gave it his warm approval. It was only a matter of time until all the general hospitals were equipped with Special Diet Kitchens.

Mrs. Grant led the way to the table. Throughout the meal Mrs. Wittenmyer dominated the conversation in her pretty deferential way. She deferred to Mrs. Grant, and she deferred very sweetly to dear Mother Bickerdyke, whose wonderful work she had been privileged to assist at Chattanooga. Mrs. Bickerdyke knew all about hospital food, of course. Surely she must agree that there was a crying need for Special Diet Kitchens and Dietary Nurses?

Mrs. Bickerdyke, who had spent three years in hospital kitchens, cautiously agreed that sick men couldn't be expected to eat regular army food. Even the army doctors had found that out by this time. Every hospital nowadays tried to give its patients something tasty that they could digest. She didn't see anything new about that.

"But dear Mother Bickerdyke, it's the *plan* that's new!" Mrs. Wittenmyer explained. "Do let me tell you. You see, we aren't going to interfere with the regular hospital kitchens at all. We'll have our own little room, provided and equipped by the government. The Christian Commission will furnish two lady Dietary Nurses for each kitchen — I am to have the honor of training and supervising them. They will prepare just the very special dishes that the big kitchen doesn't have time or skill to make. Of course they won't upset the hospital routine — they'll be quiet as little mice, and not bother the doctors in any way. Maybe you'd like to see our circular."

The circular set out the proper deportment of little mice.

> The order of the Surgeon in charge is the law of the Kitchens. . . . Under the Surgeon in charge, it will be your duty to prepare such articles of diet, *and only such,* as are ordered or approved by the Surgeon in charge. . . . A spirit of censoriousness and evil speaking and intermeddling, unchristian everywhere, is doubly mischievous here, and dangerous to all concerned. First impressions of what can and ought to be done in a large hospital, are very likely to need the correction which extended experience and candid observation are sure to give. . . . Neatness and simplicity of dress, are intimately connected with your success. . . . A uniform Christian deportment, above the shadow of reproach, and the avoiding of the very appearance of evil, is absolutely necessary.

Mrs. Grant was very favorably impressed. The two ladies eagerly discussed the project, while Mrs. Bickerdyke ate her good dinner in thoughtful silence. It still didn't make sense to her. From what she could make out, the government and the Christian Commission were putting a lot of money into this scheme. Money for picky little kitchens-within-kitchens to turn out little dabs of soup and coddled eggs. If these Dietary Nurses were such good cooks, why couldn't they do their cooking in the regular hospital kitchen, where Lord knows it was needed? A husky young fellow don't get well on soft eggs and broth. They're all right to tide him over, or maybe ease him out comfortable if he's too far gone. But if he's going to get well, he's got to have good solid meat and vegetables, and bread that's fit to eat. That's where you need your women cooks. Not shut up in a little room by themselves, knuckling down to the surgeons and bound to hold their tongues if they see anything going on that shouldn't.

The Special Diet Kitchen scheme was very attractive to Mrs. Grant, with her love of meticulous detail. Ignoring Mrs. Bickerdyke's silence, the two women talked on, discussing now the selection of Dietary Nurses. They must of course be Ladies, in every sense of the word. Mrs. Wittenmyer explained that they would not be called upon to do the actual cooking. The army would furnish "kitchen attendants" from among enlisted men, who would labor under the ladies' direction. Mrs. Wittenmyer herself had worked in the first Special Diet Kitchen at Sedalia, Missouri, for several weeks. Not once in that time had she found it necessary to remove her gloves. She held up her smooth white hands to prove that the Dietary Nurses need not lose the caste mark of a lady.

The meal ended, but the high, assured voices went on and on. Mrs. Bickerdyke had had enough. When they rose from the table she asked her hostess to excuse her. She had an early train to catch, and she needed her sleep. Mindful of her manners, she complimented Mrs. Grant on her smooth-running establishment, and wished Mrs. Wittenmyer success with the Special Diet Kitchens. They were good Christian women, and they meant well.

It would be all right with her if she never saw either of them again.

With relief Mrs. Bickerdyke took the morning train to Chicago. Her beloved Mrs. Porter, visiting a married son at Beloit, Wisconsin, had written, urging her to join her there. She'd have a day with Mrs. Livermore, go out and see her sons, and then hurry on up to Beloit. She was homesick for a sight of her little brown bird.

In Chicago she found a minor problem waiting for her. The couple with whom she had left the Bickerdyke boys were breaking up their boardinghouse, and she would have to find new quarters for Jim and Hi. With Mrs. Livermore and the Nicholses she discussed what could be done. The quiet, studious James would be welcome anywhere, but the Reverend Mr. Nichols hinted that there might be a little difficulty about Hiram. He was thirteen now, quite old enough to be learning a trade. The only trade that interested him was the one he had chosen long ago, Indian fighting. He'd taken up with some boy whose folks had tried homesteading in Kansas. They had failed and come home busted, but the boy's wild tales of life on the prairie had unsettled Hi. He was bound and determined to go west. He was neglecting his school work, reading dime novels in class, and swearing rough cowboy oaths. His present guardian doubted very much whether any God-fearing Christian family circle would be willing to admit him, if he kept on like this.

Mrs. Bickerdyke had a motherly talk with her son. She did not think the situation was so bad. He was at the rebellious age, and the Reverend Mr. Nichols was a fanatically strict disciplinarian. To his mother it did not seem abnormal for a boy to yearn after adventure. She told him she had no objection to his going west, if that was what he wanted. But of course he was too young to go now. After he'd finished school would be time enough. When the right time came, she'd help him all she could. Yes, buy him a horse and a gun too, and give him her blessing. The West was a great country, from all she'd heard. She wouldn't mind seeing it herself some day.

"I'll make a home for you out there, Ma," he promised. "After

me and Jimmy run the Indians off we'll have us a farm, and you can come keep house for us. You'll come, won't you, Ma?"

"I'll come," she promised. "Now you be a good boy, Hi, and get some better grades before I see you again. And don't sass the Reverend any more. We'll find you a new place where you'll get along better."

The new place was not easily found. Finally, since the Nicholses had given their boarders a month's grace, she left the search to Mrs. Livermore and went on to Beloit.

Mrs. Porter was delighted to see her. She herself was the guest of relatives, but they took in her friend with warm hospitality. A great many Wisconsin boys were in the Armies of the Tennessee and the Cumberland, and had passed through Mother Bickerdyke's hands. The father of one of her patients spoke of the difficulty of farming shorthanded, with his sons away. If he could only get hold of a couple of strong boys—Mrs. Bickerdyke stopped him there. She knew two strong boys who needed a temporary home. A farm, near enough to town so their schooling would not suffer, was just what she wanted for them. Before she left she arranged for Jim and Hi to come to Wisconsin.

She brought them back herself, and saw them happily settled. Then with Mrs. Porter she returned to Chicago, where Mary Livermore had work for them.

The Northwestern Commission was planning a second Sanitary Fair, "as different from the first one as the harvest from the sheaf, as the fruit from the flower, as fulfilment from prophecy." In less poetic words, bigger and better. And not only bigger and better than the first Chicago Fair, but bigger and better than the Brooklyn one. Mrs. Livermore and her friends had never quite recovered from the shock of seeing Brooklyn, an admitted imitator, stage a Fair that made three times as much money as their own. The reason, they were quite sure, was that Brooklyn businessmen co-operated from the first, instead of leaving all the preliminary work to the women and then coming in at the last minute to share the credit. This time it was going to be different.

Using local pride as a lever, Mrs. Livermore went to work on Chicago businessmen. Her success was spectacular.

> Every conceivable trade, business, profession and interest had its committee. Every committee sent out its own circulars, addressed to its own peculiar clients. Agents, to lecture and to solicit contributions, were dispatched into every state. . . . From British America to California, the whole continent was laid under contribution; while across the ocean, London, Liverpool, St. Petersburg, Rome, Florence, Turin, Paris, Berlin, Dublin, Cork, Belfast, Bristol, Brussels, and many other places, had a soliciting agency for the Northwestern Fair. There was an agent even in China.

The far-flung foreign agents were business correspondents, missionaries, and expatriate Chicagoans. To cover the United States Mrs. Livermore needed every articulate well-wisher the Commission could muster. Mother Bickerdyke and Mrs. Porter, with their firsthand war experience, would be ideal.

Both women agreed to go east on a speaking tour, but there was a list-minute shift of plans. One of Mrs. Porter's sons, a lieutenant in a battery of colored soldiers stationed at Helena, Arkansas, wrote his mother about hospital conditions there. The Union Army segregated its colored soldiers in colored hospitals, no worse but certainly no better than those maintained for whites. The one at Helena was pretty bad. There was a worse one nearby in Little Rock. The lieutenant begged his mother to come down and see to things.

He made his appeal a personal one because there was a rather delicate point involved. What happened in Arkansas was not supposed to concern the Chicago office. That territory was served by a different branch, the St. Louis Sanitary Commission. It would not do for Chicago to send an agent and supplies to relieve what must have been neglect by the St. Louis branch. But Mrs. Porter, tactful and discreet, known and loved in St. Louis, would be able to straighten out the difficulty. It was a clear call to duty; to what seemed to her a higher duty than the eastern trip.

So Mrs. Porter went south, and Mother Bickerdyke took the train to New York alone. The Reverend Henry W. Bellows,

founder of the Sanitary Commission movement, was the popular pastor of All Souls' Church there. He took her in charge, arranging meetings at his own church and at those of his brother ministers. She met Horace Greeley, who was strongly impressed by her forthright common sense. Wherever she spoke she was successful in obtaining pledges of merchandise and art objects for the Chicago Fair. There was only one difficulty. She had an incurable tendency to get sidetracked, to forget about the Fair and wind up with a strong direct appeal for hospital supplies. She knew the Fair was important, to raise money for hospital ships and trains, for the Soldiers' Homes, and for all the worthy purposes she heartily approved. Just the same, she could not forget that out in the field, when a battle was over, she had never yet had as much bandages and clean bedwear as she needed. Dr. Bellows found it worked out best to let her give her talk, describing the life of a Sanitary agent in the field, and then take over the appeal himself.

In planning schedules for the Chicago speakers — Mrs. Bickerdyke was only one of a number that later included Mrs. Livermore herself — Dr. Bellows touched Brooklyn very lightly. As the impartial head of the national Commission, he had to steer a delicate course between the rivalries of the two leading branches. Brooklyn's Fair the year before had raised $300,000. If Brooklyn felt that she was doing enough on her home grounds, without making new efforts in aid of Chicago, Dr. Bellows was willing to leave it at that. So he made no official engagements for Mother Bickerdyke in Brooklyn. He could not stop her from going there.

She went in a purely private capacity, to spend her last Sunday morning "sitting under" the famous Henry Ward Beecher, brother of her own Galesburg pastor. She expected to slip into a Plymouth Church pew unnoticed. This was not to be. She was recognized, and presented to the Reverend Mr. Beecher when the service ended. The congregation crowded around her, eager for a word with the celebrity who was creating a sensation in the city across the river. Someone, perhaps Mr. Beecher, asked if she would not give her talk to the Plymouth congregation.

She explained that she was leaving that night for Philadelphia, where Mr. Bellows had laid out a full schedule for her. Then, seeing their disappointment, she volunteered to do a little talking here and now, if they thought their Sunday dinners could wait. It wouldn't be about the Fair, though. She'd talked about the Fair where Mr. Bellows told her to, in New York City. She'd do what he wanted and talk about it again in Philadelphia. But right now, looking at all the Plymouth ladies, something else came to mind. She'd like to have a few words in private with just the women. The menfolks could go on home and keep an eye on that dinner. Would that be all right?

The meeting was arranged on the spot, in the church's Sunday School room. Very few of the women had gone home; those who had done so hurried back when they heard that the famous Mother Bickerdyke would address them. She was quite firm about excluding all men. She kept a wary eye on the sexton, rebuilding the fire in the Sunday School room stove, and did not open her mouth until he had shut the door behind him.

She began by giving them what she had given her New York audiences, an eyewitness account of battle and its aftermath. She had a gift of homely description that brought it all sickeningly close: the piles of amputated limbs, the blowflies that hatched in untended wounds, the gangrene that followed simple frostbite, the filthy bandages that could not be changed because there was nothing to replace them. The field hospitals needed everything, literally everything. Nothing they were asked to give could come amiss. But today she was going to stick to bandages — clean white cotton rags of which there were never enough, whatever anyone told them. Oh, she'd seen the figures. She supposed there were enough somewhere, in army quartermaster depots, in the Sanitary Commission's warehouses, on freight cars and wagons heading for the front. The point was that there were never enough where they were wanted, when they were wanted. Right then, the minute a man was carried off the field — that was when she needed them and didn't have them. That was where she wanted their help today. She wasn't

asking them to scrape lint and roll bandages for the Soldiers' Aid societies, as she knew they were doing and hoped they'd keep on doing. But today, this Sunday morning—

She stopped, and looked consideringly at her audience, moved and shaken by the intolerable pictures she had spread before them. She gave them time to recover, to turn expectant faces toward her. Then a slow smile spread across her face. Her tone lightened.

"I reckon I put it pretty strong, didn't I? Well, when you follow an army for nigh four years, you get so you forget to be dainty about things. War ain't pretty, that's the truth of it. But I didn't aim to harrow you up. Maybe we better talk about something nicer for a minute. They say when women get together they always talk about clothes. Let's us talk about clothes. I don't go so much for fashion myself, but I heard in New York City that hoops are going out of style. They say women are depending more on starched petticoats to hold their dresses out. I was wondering about that. Seeing you Brooklyn ladies, all dressed up for church, made me think. I reckon every one of you is wearing at least one white muslin petticoat. Well, how many are wearing two?"

Wondering, they raised their hands.

"Three? Four? Five?" Not a hand went down, but at "Six?" they all dropped. Five was the fashionable number.

Mother Bickerdyke straightened, her smile vanishing.

"All right, ladies. Every one of you is sitting there in five muslin petticoats—and I had to tie up a dying boy's stump in a piece of gunnysack. I don't know whose boy he was. One of you might be his mother. Does that make you feel good, in all them yards of clean muslin? Ladies, I speak to you now as a mother, and I speak from my heart. Four petticoats is enough for any decent modest Congregational woman. Stand up, all of you. Lift your dresses. They's no one but us women here. Ladies of Brooklyn, in the name of my boys, *drop that fifth petticoat!*"

Between laughter and tears, shaken by her tale of horrors, giggling at the unexpected climax, they stepped out of the garments and packed them up for her. The three trunkloads of petticoats

were forwarded to Philadelphia, her next stop. They were part of her personal luggage when she started south. The hideous running sores of Andersonville Prison survivors were bound with strips from the Brooklyn petticoats.

In Philadelphia Mrs. Bickerdyke received Sherman's summons. His successful march to the sea had ended at Savannah. Remembering his promise, he asked her to rejoin the army there. A small steamboat would be placed at her disposal. She was to bring whatever she could that she thought would be useful.

Philadelphia, a stronghold of the rival Christian Commission, was a little cool to appeals in behalf of the Chicago Sanitary Fair. The coolness did not extend to Mrs. Bickerdyke, who had made friends with Christian delegates in the field. The Christian Commission in the last few months had widened its scope considerably. New Testaments, especially with the use most soldiers gave them, are fairly durable; the Commission had to admit that the Union armies were plentifully supplied. Their delegates who had gone to preach and pray remained to work as well; they sent back urgent appeals for material as well as spiritual offerings. The gifts sent in response never approached those of the Sanitary Commission in variety and volume, but they were a substantial contribution just the same.

Sherman's offer of a ship for supplies, coming at such short notice, put Mrs. Bickerdyke in a dilemma. She had just levied upon the Philadelphia Sanitary branch for everything they could spare to send to the Chicago Fair. Rather than appeal to them so soon again, she took her problem to George H. Stuart, the Christian Commission president. Mr. Stuart, who had had enthusiastic reports of Mrs. Bickerdyke from his delegates, generously undertook to fill her ship for her. "The boat was loaded under his direction with dried and canned fruits, clothing, crackers, butter, cheese, tea, sugar, condensed milk, tapioca, extract of beef, corn starch, lemons, oranges, tin cups, a span of mules and an ambulance for her own use; everything, in short, suggested by knowledge and experience."

So, in a ship provided by Sherman's order, for the express pur-

pose of reporting to him at Savannah, in charge of the Christian Commission's donation to the troops there, Mother Bickerdyke set off. She got as far down the Atlantic coast as Wilmington, North Carolina, and stopped there. While the ship took on water she went out to see what was going on in the town. She came back in haste, ordered her cargo unloaded, and sent off a hasty note to General Sherman. His men never had smell nor taste of the tapioca, nor sight of the new tin cups. Mother Bickerdyke had found a better use for them. The released prisoners of Andersonville were pouring into Wilmington.

At the beginning of the war, the two opposing governments had entered into an agreement for the exchange of prisoners, man for man and officer for officer. The arrangement broke down in 1863, when Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation brought Negroes into the Union Army. The Confederates refused to recognize colored soldiers as prisoners of war. Instead they classified them as runaway slaves, to be returned to their masters. In the face of this contention, the United States Government suspended the agreement for the exchange of prisoners. It was revived on Grant's initiative in the latter part of 1864, when the war was going into its closing months.

The commandant of the Confederate prison camp at Andersonville, Georgia, a Captain Henry Wirz, was later tried by a War Crimes Commission, found guilty of inhuman cruelty, and executed. About the most temperate description of the camp he ran is found in the report of the Confederate Inspector General Chandler, made to Richmond in July 1864:

> No shelter whatever, nor materials for constructing any, had been provided by the authorities, and the ground being entirely bare of trees, none is within reach of the prisoners; nor has it been possible, from the overcrowded state of the enclosure, to arrange the camp with any system. Each man has been permitted to protect himself as best he can by stretching his blanket, or whatever he may have about him, on such sticks as he can procure. Of other shelter there has been none. There is no medical attendance within the stockade. Many (twenty yesterday) are carted out daily who have died from unknown causes, and whom

the medical officers have never seen. The dead are hauled out daily by the wagonload, being first mutilated with an ax in the removal of any finger rings they may have. Raw rations have to be issued to a very large portion, who are entirely unprovided with proper utensils, and are furnished with so limited a supply of fuel that they are compelled to dig with their hands in the filthy marsh before mentioned for roots, etc. No soap or clothing has ever been issued.

The Andersonville survivors, turned over to Sherman in Georgia, had been taken to the port city of Savannah and then sent by steamer to Wilmington. They were a heartbreaking sight when they came ashore. Those who could walk were walking skeletons, repulsive with the ugly running sores of "prison pox," a skin disease attributed variously to exposure, starvation diet and rat bites. The stretcher cases suffered from graver ills, of which septic wounds were the most common. There had been deaths aboard the ships, and there were more at Wilmington. A shockingly large number were absolute mental wrecks, tagged for the lunatic asylums of their home states.

In the face of such need, Mother Bickerdyke lost interest in Sherman at Savannah. The army authorities in Wilmington were making fairly good provision for the prisoners, taking over churches and private homes for hospitals. Supplies were on hand, but not in such quantity that the Christian Commission shipment came amiss. The pressing needs of the Andersonville prisoners were the ones that Mrs. Bickerdyke delighted most to meet. They needed cleaning up and they needed feeding. She bathed them and bandaged them and put them to bed between clean sheets; she brought them hot soup and cold lemonade and tapioca pudding.

She wrote to families who had been without news since their sons' capture, ending their long suspense with glad tidings or with merciful finality. Twelve thousand naked, unnamed bodies lay in the shallow trenches around Andersonville, divested before burial of any pitiful little trinket that might have identified them. But sometimes, talking to a patient, Mrs. Bickerdyke could glean a name or two. Bill had died on the night of the big freeze. They

carried Joe out to the deadcart on Christmas morning. To the parents or wives of Bill and Joe went the letter that ended the long waiting.

The final task of identifying the Andersonville dead went to another greathearted American woman, Clara Barton. That came later, in the early summer of 1865, when the war was over. Miss Barton came across a former Andersonville prisoner, Dorrence Atwater, who had been a clerk in the prison office. This man had secretly kept a list of the men who died. Miss Barton, under authorization of the Secretary of War, went down to Andersonville with Atwater and his list, taking with her forty coffin makers and a crew of grave diggers.

It was then midsummer and it was necessary before fall to reinter the dead who had been packed in shallow trenches. In the boiling feverish sun, sapped as was her strength, Miss Barton kept on day after day with the work — retiring to the tent for the night, only to begin again next morning till the number of 12,800 bodies which they located were reinterred with Christian burial in graves four feet deep. Four hundred Confederates also were tenderly buried. Following this task in the horrible aftermath of war, she did not cease her hunt for the unidentified till 700 more were later found. "Then," said Miss Barton, "I saw the little graves marked, blessed them for the heartbroken mother in the old Northern home, raised over them the flag they loved and died for, and left them to their rest."

Clara Barton's nursing had been done on the eastern front, so that her path and that of Mary Ann Bickerdyke did not cross. It is not certain that they ever met, although they may have done so sometime in the postwar years. Except for a few illustrious generals, Mrs. Bickerdyke had no association with any of the memorable figures of the Civil War period. Perhaps this explains why her own modest fame faded so rapidly, living only in the memory of aging veterans. She must have seen Abraham Lincoln stumping his native Illinois as a political candidate, but there is no indication of any personal encounter. Her friend Mrs. Porter carried on an earnest correspondence with the wartime President, pointing out his duty as she saw it. Mary Livermore was entertained by Mrs.

Lincoln whenever Sanitary Commission business took her to the Capital. By the time Mrs. Bickerdyke came to Washington, a lesser man sat in the White House. He shook her hand and praised what she had done. But a presidential commendation from Andrew Johnson has never conferred immortality on anybody.

XVIII

GENERAL SHERMAN had left Savannah and was moving northward through the Carolinas on his last fighting march. Mother Bickerdyke rejoined him at Beaufort, North Carolina. She had not been missed. Her boys were "fat and sassy," full of rollicking tales of their exploits as "bummers." Random pillaging was still forbidden, but Sherman approved foraging. In his words, "I want the foragers to be regulated and systematized, so as not to degenerate into common robbers; but foragers as such, to collect corn, bacon, beef and such other products as we need, are as much entitled to our protection as skirmishers and flankers." The line between foraging and "bumming," appropriation of enemy property without orders, was pretty thin. It was a poor day when a reconnaissance party rode back into camp without turkeys and hams dangling from their saddle horns. The bummers did not confine themselves to food. Mrs. Bickerdyke found the Beaufort tents liberally supplied with featherbeds, pillows and down comforters, all "jerked" from Southern homes. She mildly reproved her soldier friends for stealing and confiscated the fruits of their crime for her hospital.

Although to hear the boys tell it the march to Beaufort was one prolonged picnic, there had been fighting along the way. There was more to come. The Beaufort hospital had enough patients to keep Mrs. Bickerdyke busy from the day she arrived. It had a great many more as the wounded were sent back from the battle at

Ayersborough. Mrs. Bickerdyke, except for some excursions in the field, remained at Beaufort while the main army plowed its way north. She was there on April 9, Palm Sunday, when all the church bells were set ringing to celebrate Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. Except for the final mopping up, the war was over.

Before another Sunday the bells rang again, a sorrowful tolling for Lincoln's death. Mother Bickerdyke, who had been too busy to join the victory celebration, took time off for the memorial service held in the hospital chapel. National rejoicing or national grief might go on around her, but she had her job to do. The job had not changed, except that now it was harder than ever. The convalescents, who had been expecting to return to the front lines, immediately set up a mighty clamor to go home. Their relatives descended in swarms, impatient of an hour's delay. In a whirl of confusion, impatience, short tempers and unreasonable demands, Mrs. Bickerdyke moved swiftly and efficiently to clear her hospital. By the first of May she had reduced the number of patients from 2000 to 200. It was then that she received a telegram from General Logan, reading:

DEPARTMENT OF TENNESSEE.

ON WAY TO WASHINGTON. SHORT OF RATIONS. MEAGRE SUPPLY THERE. GO UP. LOGAN.

General "Black Jack" Logan, with whom she had had coffee on the fearful battle night of Donelson, was Mother Bickerdyke's closest friend among the high brass. Many a time on the march she had pushed Old Whitey to the head of the column to ride beside Logan in companionable chat. He trusted her with military secrets, often confiding the time and point of his next attack, so that she could make her hospital plans in advance of the battle. He had formed the habit, he said jokingly, of calling upon Mother Bickerdyke for miracles. The telegram he sent to Beaufort involved a miracle of the loaves-and-fishes order. Mrs. Bickerdyke rose to meet the challenge.

Learning that a steamer would leave in a short time for the North, she had all the Sanitary supplies packed for shipping, gave the bedding and clothing to the colored folks, told all [patients] who were able, to look out for themselves, took the nine worst cases into her special care, and in two hours' time from the receipt of the dispatch was ready to sail. She reached Washington Sunday morning in advance of the troops and went at once to see General Easton, the chief quartermaster. From him she learned there were no more government supplies — the Eastern troops had exhausted them. She then visited the rooms of the Sanitary Commission, and found the same state of affairs there.

This was the sort of difficulty with which Mrs. Bickerdyke liked to deal. She immediately sent off a wire to the Sanitary Commission head, Dr. Bellows, in New York:

GENERAL LOGAN COMING WITH 16,000 HUNGRY MEN. NOT A CRACKER IN THE CITY. SEND SUPPLIES.

Dr. Bellows was in his pulpit preaching his Sunday sermon when the message was handed to him. He abandoned his text to call for donations. The wealthy congregation included wholesale grocers, meat packers, and produce merchants. By great good luck there was also a railway executive. In midafternoon a loaded five-car freight train, with a special order giving it right of way, was rolling down to Washington.

The Army of the Tennessee was to bivouac at Alexandria, across the river from Washington. Mrs. Bickerdyke was already at the camp site when the first tired, hungry regiment plodded in. They were the Seventh Iowa, good friends of hers. Their first question was the old army one, "When do we eat?"

"When the train gets here," she told them. "I'm afraid it won't be till late, boys. But it's on the way." Then, looking at their fallen faces, she laughed. "Yes, fellows, I know you're hungry, and I know you're tired. But a heap of work's got to be done tonight. The victuals'll be here all right, but it'll be a big job cooking them and giving them out. Now I tell you. If you'll volunteer to help me with that, I'll take you over to the hotel right now and fill your stomachs with the best meal they can scare up for us. What do you say?"

With her wildly cheering military escort, she descended upon the hotel. As soon as the meal was over she hustled them to the Washington railway yards. The quartermaster had provided plenty of wagons and teams. The train came in at ten o'clock. The Sanitary Commission's Washington agent turned up with instructions about storing the supplies until the following day.

Mrs. Bickerdyke faced him squarely. "That won't do. The men are hungry. They'll have their supper tonight."

She turned away from the fussy protests about the lateness of the hour. "Back the wagons up here, boys. Hurry up, now. We'll have the fellows singing 'Glory Hallelujah' before they sleep."

They drove back to the Alexandria camp, where the last stragglers were in, the tents pitched, and the campfires blazing. The fires had been lighted in simple faith, for there was nothing to cook. Word had gone round that Mother Bickerdyke had promised food, so no one worried too much. She drove in around midnight. All night long she fried beefsteak and bacon, onions and potatoes; she boiled barrels of coffee and handed out slices of soft bread and fresh butter. They'd have to make out with raw apples tonight, she told them, but first thing in the morning she'd make them some pies.

Through that first balmy spring of peace the Union troops poured into Washington, a blue tide that surged endlessly through the streets. Miles deep outside the city their tents whitened the hillsides, lighted at night with thousands of twinkling campfires. The wounded still lay in the Washington hospitals, but they lay there now without benefit of hospital angels. The city's young women, angelic and otherwise, turned to the inspiring task of helping the heroes forget the horrors of war. The heroes from the west had just received an eight-month accumulation of overdue pay. Tavernkeepers, restaurateurs and retail merchants did a roaring business. Although still officially in mourning, the Capital plunged into a period of hectic gaiety like nothing in its staid history. It was all working up to a mighty climax, the two-day Grand Military Review.

On May 22 the black bunting was taken down from house fronts and lamp posts, and replaced with the national colors. Workmen knocked together a reviewing stand in front of the White House, trimmed with flags and flowers, and with the names of battles in gold letters. On the first day the battle names were those of eastern engagements. The marchers were Meade's men of the Army of the Potomac. Sherman and the westerners would take over on the second day.

After their parade the Potomac men had the streets and the taverns to themselves, for their friendly rivals of the west were much too busy for carousing. Horses and mules had to be curried until their coats were satin; harness must be cleaned and polished and twined with bunting; buttons and weapons brought to the highest peak of spit and polish. The easterners might have Zouaves in red pants, and sailors hauling pontoons and boats, but Sherman's men were planning some novelties of their own. In the late afternoon they began moving across the Long Bridge to camp in the Washington streets overnight. The parade was set for nine o'clock the next morning.

As a sort of rehearsal, they crossed the bridge in parade formation. There were four corps, a total of 65,000 men. At the head of the Fifteenth Corps two horses paced side by side, as they had done so often on Southern trails. General Logan's Slasher, his tail and mane braided with red, white and blue ribbon, wearing a neckpiece of red roses, was no handsomer than Old Whitey in a blanket of blue forget-me-nots. The general, who was to take his place on the reviewing stand, had dug his dress uniform out of mothballs and polished up his silver Mexican spurs. Mother Bickerdyke fully intended to do a little dressing up herself. She had a brand-new velvet basque and plum-colored riding skirt, given to her in New York. They were back in her tent now, all ready to put on. But she was busy up to the last minute, and then when she started to her tent to dress Andy Somerville called her to take a look at Old Whitey.

The boys had sat up all night covering the blanket with tiny blue

flowers. They had curried and brushed the horse, polished his hoofs, and tied up his tail with ribbons. All these services she had known about. What she had not expected, the surprise they had saved for the last minute, was the new saddle. It was a proper lady's side-saddle, jerked by some bummer and hidden against this day. A very handsome saddle too, of soft red leather and flowered Brussels carpet. Mrs. Bickerdyke, who considered "riding a-straddle" neither seemly nor comfortable, had covered many a weary mile sitting sideways on a regular army saddle. She could not wait to try the new one. She rode down the company street and back again a few times, and then heard the bugle that meant the corps was moving out. She joined the parade in her everyday calico dress, sunbonnet dangling at her neck, all the New York finery left behind and forgotten.

Punctually at nine o'clock on the morning of May 24 a signal gun boomed, and the first unit emerged from the starting point behind the Capitol. The route lay along Pennsylvania Avenue, lavishly decorated, packed with spectators who had been gathering since sunrise. Housetops and windows were crowded. Little boys darted about, selling flowers and mountain laurel boughs to any who had come unprepared with offerings. Most watchers had stripped their home gardens. The massed flowers made a ribbon of color on each side of the street, sending their fragrance adrift on the soft spring air. It was a perfect morning, the sky gloriously blue, without a hint of cloud. As the echo of the signal gun died away there came a ruffle of bugles, a roll of drums, the sudden glint of sunlight on drawn swords. General William Tecumseh Sherman, surrounded by his staff, came into view, and the parade was under way.

The general, Uncle Billy to his men, had an uncle's concern for their appearance in this public spectacle. They had had very little experience with formal reviews; nothing like the experience of the Army of the Potomac, which had made such a splendid showing yesterday. The eastern forces, based here in the Capital, had done this sort of thing often enough to qualify as professionals. His men

were rank amateurs beside them. As he paced slowly through the shouting crowd, ducking his head to avoid the wreaths and roses that showered about him, General Sherman suffered an agony of stage fright. Not for himself, but for them, those splendid tough soldiers whose long legs had carried them unfalteringly through swamps and mountain passes, but perhaps might miss perfect cadence now.

He was at the head of the procession. He could not tell how it was moving until a brief halt gave him the chance of a backward glance. He records his relief with less than his usual soldierly restraint:

> When I reached the Treasury building and looked back, the sight was simply magnificent. The column was compact, and the glittering muskets looked like a solid mass of steel, moving with the regularity of a pendulum. . . . The steadiness and firmness of the tread, the careful dress of the guiders, the uniform intervals between the companies, all eyes directed to the front, and the tattered and bullet-riddled flags, all attracted universal notice. Many good people, up to that time, had looked upon our Western army as a sort of mob. But the world then saw and recognized the fact that it was an army in the proper sense; well organized, well commanded, and disciplined; and there was no wonder that it had swept through the South like a tornado. . . . It was, in my judgment, the most magnificent army in existence.

The general and his staff rode past the reviewing stand, saluted the President, and then left their horses in the White House grounds and returned to stand beside him. Grant was there, and the members of the cabinet. With them too was Sherman's wife, lovely in rose taffeta and black Chantilly lace. She squeezed his hand and whispered, "It's wonderful!" Sherman thought so too. After greeting the President and cabinet he settled down to enjoy it.

The Fifteenth, Sherman's old corps, came first, its regimental band blaring out "Marching Through Georgia." Just behind the band rode General Logan, with Mother Bickerdyke at his side. He had overruled her protests, reminding her of how often he had issued some order to please her. This time the order was that she must do this to please him.

They approached the reviewing stand, arched over by new gold letters that spelled out the old bloody battle names, Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga and Atlanta. While General Logan executed his dashing salute Mrs. Bickerdyke gazed with candid curiosity. She had never seen a President before. She wished it could have been Mr. Lincoln. This one looked like a good, well-meaning man, though. She hoped he'd make out all right. General Grant, she thought, looked a little thin and peaked, but she'd never seen him dressed so neatly. Anybody could see Uncle Billy Sherman was proud as a peacock, for all he tried to look so stiff and soldierly. He couldn't speak to her now, of course, but pretty Ellen Sherman smiled and waved as she caught her eye.

Behind the White House, where the parade ended, the corps commanders dismounted and came back to the reviewing stand to take their places with the other distinguished guests. General Logan swung down from his saddle. "Come on, Mother. They're expecting us."

"Me? Land sakes, general, you know better'n that. They don't want me up there."

"Yes, they do. General Sherman told me to be sure and bring you. And didn't you see Mrs. Sherman beckon? She's keeping a place for you next to her."

"Well, that's real nice of them, I must say. But I can't do it. I've not got time. You tell Mis' Sherman I'm sorry."

"Oh, come on, Mother. Don't be so contrary. They want you up there, and it's the best place in town to see the parade."

"Who says I want to see it? I been in it, ain't I? That was your doing, general, and I humored you. Now I've wasted enough time. You get along up there. I got work to do."

She turned Old Whitey and rode off. On a vacant lot on I Street, just off Pennsylvania Avenue, she had had two tents set up. One of them covered a newly dug privy vault. The other held a washtub of iced tea and one of cold lemonade, a stack of bread-and-jam sandwiches, cracked ice for sunstroke and dressings for blistered feet. Most of the men, she knew, had been too excited or too busy for

breakfast. Many of them were convalescents who might have overestimated their strength. The bright sun was already hot and getting hotter every minute. Although the preparations were similar, this was not like getting ready for a battle. The casualties would be minor ones that some folks thought would hardly be worth noticing. She'd have thought that herself, if there had been real wounded waiting for her. Since there were not, she might as well make these boys comfortable.

Her first-aid station had its patients before the seven-hour march ended. There were interminable halts under the grilling sun, time enough for a cold drink and a gobbled sandwich, for a relieved dive into the second tent. An ambulance hauled off a few cases of heat prostration and several of simple exhaustion.

Outside the sweltering refreshment tent the parade surged on, hour after hour of marching feet, rolling drums, cheers and singing. Mrs. Bickerdyke heard, but she did not see. She missed a good deal, to judge from General Sherman's account:

> Each division was followed by six ambulances as a representation of its wagon train. Some of the division commanders had added, by way of variety, goats, milch cows, and pack mules, whose loads consisted of game cocks, poultry, hams, etc. And some of them had families of freed slaves, with the women leading the children. Each division was preceded by its corps of black pioneers, armed with picks and spades. These marched abreast in double ranks, keeping perfect dress and step, and added much to the interest of the occasion. On the whole, the Grand Review was a splendid success, and was a fitting conclusion of the campaign of the war.

The war wound itself up in confusion as great as that in which it began. There was a frantic urgency to "get the boys home." War Department clerks worked night and day, compiling the long muster rolls, wrestling with names misspelled or missing, harried by Congressmen whose constituents were pressing them for speed. It was decided that western armies should be returned as units to their points of origin for final mustering out. The Army of the Tennessee was to go to Louisville. The men waited a month in the

Alexandria camp, bored and restless. Mrs. Bickerdyke, joined by the Porters, waited with them. Although the hospitals were emptying fast, there was still work for them, preparing patients for departure, turning them over to relatives, or seeing them aboard the right train with a pillow and a shoebox lunch. The huge military concentration in the Washington area had created a food shortage that Mrs. Bickerdyke relieved by breaking open Sanitary stores. The flow of contributions had ceased with the war's end. She appealed to the local Soldiers' Aid Society for ten dollars to buy ice. A member suggested auctioning off the calico dress and sunbonnet that had attracted amused attention in the victory parade. The two articles brought the incredible sum of one hundred dollars.

The Sanitary Commission, like all the other war agencies, was preparing to go out of business. Chicago's Second Fair, for which so much had been hoped, was caught in the unexpected turn of events. The mammoth exposition was almost ready to open its doors when Lee surrendered. It was easier to go ahead than to cancel the plans and return the contributions from thousands of separate sources. The Fair, with a postponed opening on May 30, ran for three weeks and brought in a disappointing $85,000. The money was used for relief work among disabled soldiers and their families.

In the month she spent in Washington after the Grand Review, Mrs. Bickerdyke had tea at the White House, and was entertained by Dorothea Dix. It saddened her to note that "folks seemed to have lost interest in the boys." Soldiers' Aid Societies were disbanding; nurses and Sanitary agents were resigning in shoals. Mrs. Bickerdyke and Mrs. Porter, talking it over between them, agreed that they would not quit until there was no more work for them.

Early in June the Army of the Tennessee left Washington for Louisville. The two women went along and worked in the Louisville hospitals most of the summer. They also spent a few weeks removing patients from Huntsville, Alabama. The last Sanitary supplies were given out, the last disabled man sent home. They had finished the job.

The Reverend Mr. Porter, who was remaining as a chaplain in

the regular army, was assigned to a Texas post. His wife went with him. Mrs. Bickerdyke accompanied an Illinois regiment to Camp Butler, at Springfield, Illinois. The slow mustering-out process ground on all winter. It was not until March 21, 1866, that the last Illinois volunteer received his discharge. On that same day Mrs. Bickerdyke sent in her resignation as a Sanitary agent.

XIX

MARY ANN BICKERDYKE came out of the war a few months before her forty-ninth birthday, a vigorous, efficient woman in the prime of life, and brimming over with energy. For four years she had worked at the top of her capacity, doing a superb job superbly well. Now, all at once, there was no job. She needed work, not only because idleness was intolerable to her, but because she had to earn a living for herself and her sons. She went up to Chicago to discuss her future with her influential friend Mary Livermore.

Mrs. Livermore had had no trouble in reconverting her own activities to peacetime requirements. She was knee-deep in charitable enterprises, in literary work and in lecture engagements. She listened sympathetically to Mrs. Bickerdyke's problem, and produced a solution. The Protestant churches of Chicago had long maintained the Home for the Friendless, a temporary shelter for destitute women and children. The Home authorities tried to locate relatives and send their charges to them; or if that failed, to place them in self-supporting work. The women usually went into domestic service. The children at ten or over were indentured, the boys to tradesmen and the little girls to housewives. A few very aged and infirm women were permanent residents.

Mrs. Livermore was a member of the Home's Board of Lady Managers. She had already placed one of her protégées there the year before, as superintendent. This was the "picky" Mrs. Grant from the Soldiers' Home at Cairo. The Soldiers' Home closed

October 1, 1865. Mrs. Grant was now running the Home for the Friendless with equal efficiency and elegance. The Lady Managers and the visiting clergy, entertained at tea in the superintendent's tasteful parlor, daintily served by respectful little girls in spotless pinafores, could hardly find words to praise the transformation that Mrs. Grant had wrought.

Mrs. Grant, with a reservoir of free labor to draw upon from among the inmates, had not asked for an assistant. Mrs. Livermore gave her one with the best of intentions. Mother Bickerdyke and Mrs. Grant, who had worked together at Memphis, were assumed to be old friends. They had never been friendly. In Memphis Mrs. Bickerdyke had been Mrs. Grant's superior. Now Mrs. Grant was the superintendent, Mrs. Bickerdyke merely cook and housekeeper, under the superintendent's orders. Mrs. Grant may have enjoyed the reversal of roles, but Mrs. Bickerdyke certainly did not. She stuck it out for a year. All she ever said about it afterwards was that it was "like trying to walk around in a peck measure."

In the summer of 1867 she resigned from her job and went to Beloit to see her sons, still at the farm home where she had left them during the war. James, the scholar of the two, had just finished high school and was planning to be a teacher. Hiram was "making a hand" on the farm, but he reminded his mother that she had promised he could go to Kansas. Wasn't he old enough now?

Mrs. Bickerdyke had heard a great deal about Kansas lately. Chicago was full of discharged soldiers, thousands of them penniless, their families a heavy charge upon the city's charities. Many of the veterans had physical disabilities that made it impossible for them to work at their former trades, even if they could find jobs. Jobs were scarce in the postwar slump. Congress debated the question of pensions, but as yet no workable pension bill had been passed. Chicago social agencies, anxious to be relieved of the burden, had an easy solution. The thing for the veterans to do, of course, was to go west. Many of the sparsely settled western states were offering free land to any veteran who would take up a claim and work it.

Kansas in particular was bidding for settlers from among the ex-soldiers.

It was all very well to talk, but where was the money to come from? Kansas was a long way off. It cost money to get there. It cost more money to make a start on new land. And that was the whole point — these forlorn veterans in Chicago had no money.

They had no money, but they had lots of time. A good deal of it was spent in getting together, reminiscing about the war, swapping army experiences, drafting pension appeals to Congress. Mother Bickerdyke, with her unquenchable concern for her boys, may have spent more time at these informal meetings than her superintendent approved. She could see, if Mrs. Grant could not, that there was a vital connection between her duties at the Home and the welfare of the unemployed men. The Home for the Friendless was overflowing with soldiers' wives and children, stranded there until their men could find some way to support them. She talked to the men, and she talked to their anxious wives. Everyone agreed that Kansas was the answer. They all wanted to go to Kansas, to make a fresh start as their pioneer fathers had done only a generation or two before. All their troubles would end if they could only get out west.

Mrs. Bickerdyke could not tell whether this optimism was well-founded, or whether it was mere wishful thinking. The only way she knew to find out was to take a look at Kansas. With her last month's salary from the Home she got on the train and went out to see what the Promised Land was really like. The broad prairie acres delighted her. She came home with a firm resolve, and a plan.

She went straight to Mr. Jonathan Burr, the banker, who was the financial pillar of the Home for the Friendless agency. She put it to him so persuasively that he took her to see his friend Colonel Charles Hammond, president of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad. Colonel Hammond, a veteran himself, approved her plan with enthusiasm. He guaranteed free rail transportation to Kansas for veterans and their families. Mr. Burr loaned Mother Bickerdyke $10,000 on her personal note.

She chose fifty families to make the first trip with her. They went to Salina, then a town of about one thousand, and located in almost the exact center of the state. From Salina they fanned out, staking their claims of 160 acres each. Mrs. Bickerdyke filed for one in the names of her two minor sons.

Most of her settlers were city men, for those who came from family farms had farms waiting when they left the army. These men had been store clerks, students, warehouse workers and the like. Eager for life on the land, they really knew nothing about it. In addition, many of them were cripples, physically or mentally, health and nerves shattered by their war service. Very few of them had money to buy the barest necessities of their new life. Still fewer knew what to buy with the little money they had.

Mother Bickerdyke, an Ohio farm girl to begin with, knew what a farm needed. She had the Burr loan to dole out. Before she parted with a penny of it, she went over to Fort Riley to have a talk with Uncle Billy Sherman. General Sherman, now commanding the Indian frontier post, was most helpful. He readily agreed to condemn enough army teams and wagons to supply her first fifty settlers. That would save the Burr money for plows and farm tools.

She thanked him, and they chatted for a while, recalling the old days, so near in time and yet already so far away. When she rose to leave he asked when she was going back to Chicago.

"I don't think I am, general," she told him. "They's nothing for me to do there, and I want to stay and keep an eye on the boys. It ain't going to be as easy as they think. I want to be on hand till they get a good start. I've got me a little scheme. If you know any Loud Guns in the Kansas Pacific Railway, maybe you can help me out."

The scheme was to open a boardinghouse in Salina. The town was growing, with five trains a day now, and a regular parade of prairie schooners passing through. There were no decent accommodations for transients. Mrs. Bickerdyke felt certain that if she could get the railroad to put up the capital, she could make a success of a hotel.

Sherman gave her an introduction to railway officials, and she

won them over. She did it by talking very confidently of the commercial possibilities of the new venture. When she got it going, the Salina Dining Hall, or the Bickerdyke House as most people called it, was not exactly commercial. Actually it turned out to be a sort of rehabilitation and counseling center for veterans. Two hundred and fifty families came out from Chicago in the next two years. They all put up at the Bickerdyke House. It didn't make sense to charge them board, for Mrs. Bickerdyke would have had to lend them the money to pay it. She had money to lend, but better uses for it. She fed and lodged them for nothing, while she taught them the elements of farming and bought their equipment for them.

The first fifty settlers helped. Mother Bickerdyke's buggy plied the prairie roads from one homestead to another, bringing bewildered newcomers to see what their comrades had done, to learn how they could do the same. She comforted homesick wives, doctored ailing children, put new heart in the men while they built their sod houses. It was her greatest thrill to see a family settled in a new cabin, to hang the calico curtains, to instruct the housewife in the use of buffalo chips for fuel. She sent for her sons, who came gladly to the first permanent home they had known since early childhood. With their help, and with that of a few veterans too badly disabled for farming, with a colored couple from her old contraband corps, she thought she ran the hotel very capably. The dining room, which would seat a hundred diners, was a sunny, pleasant place serving excellent home-cooked meals. The thirty-six bedrooms were clean and comfortable. Officers visiting the scattered army posts made it a point to stop overnight at Mother Bickerdyke's. There was one evening meal when General Grant and three other generals, Sherman, Sheridan and Meade, sat down at her table. She joined them over coffee and pumpkin pie. General Meade, a stranger to her, was a little startled by Sherman's hilarious greeting. "Well, Mother," he boomed, "how are you? Still outranking everybody but God?" The talk turned to the western battles in which Meade had not shared. Sherman, who had heard the story from Hurlbut, told how Mother Bickerdyke had bathed the shivering general after Corinth. She

completed the tale with her account of the sixteen soldiers who followed Hurlbut into the tub.

In entertaining her old friends, in seeing her old patients happily established in new peacetime lives, Mother Bickerdyke spent two years at the Salina Dining Hall, years that she often said were the happiest of her life. She was happy, but the Kansas Pacific Railway was not. The road had built and furnished the hotel, taking a mortgage that was to be paid off out of the profits. There were no profits, and consequently no payments on the mortgage. Mrs. Bickerdyke was much too busy to worry over personal finances. In February 1869, the Arapaho Indians raided the homesteads from the Salina to the Republican River, killing forty persons, burning homes, making off with horses and other stock. More than a thousand men, women and children were left homeless. Many of them, as Mrs. Bickerdyke wrote to Sherman at Fort Riley, "are *our soldiers,* holding honorable discharges."

"Our soldiers" were in distress, so naturally she had to relieve it. When Sherman told her he could not issue more than a month's rations out of army stores, she took the first train to Washington. The Kansas senator, S. G. Pomeroy, and General O. O. Howard, an old patient, vouched for her at the War Department. She came back with an order for ten months' government rations, to carry the sufferers over until new crops could be planted and harvested. She also got a big supply of surplus army blankets. On her way home she stopped in Topeka and persuaded the Kansas legislature to appropriate money for seed corn and potatoes.

She came back to Salina to find the hotel none the worse for her absence. The rooms were as clean, the food as good, the guests as plentiful as ever. There was not much money in the till, but she had expected that. Her travels, made at her own expense, had taken the year's profits, such as they were. Some would say that those profits should properly have gone to the Kansas Pacific Railway to pay off the mortgage. Mother Bickerdyke didn't see it that way. Give a prosperous railroad the money she needed to help her boys? It would be sheer robbery.

The Kansas Pacific took a different view. The Salina Dining Hall had an excellent reputation among railroad passengers. With proper management, it would not only pay for itself but make good money in years to come. The railroad foreclosed its mortgage, appointed its own manager, and gave Mrs. Bickerdyke an eviction notice.

She was as furious as she had been when Dr. Irwin ordered her out of the Memphis hospital. Now, as then, she was moved to reprisal. She went back to Washington, where the Kansas Pacific was lobbying for an increased subsidy from Congress. Mother Bickerdyke had some good friends in the Capitol. Many officers of the late war were congressmen and senators now. Her warm friend General Logan was back in the congressional seat he had vacated at the call to arms. And General Ulysses S. Grant was President of the United States.

Mrs. Bickerdyke's one-woman counter lobby defeated the railroad appropriation bill. It did not restore her hotel to her. Again she was out of a job. She wrote to her sons that they were old enough now to farm their own claim. Let them get busy with it. She did not know when she would go back. She was going down to New York to do some cleaning up there.

She could never resist a situation that needed cleaning up. This time it was the slums of New York City. Mary Safford, the one-time Cairo Angel, came to Washington especially to see her. Miss Safford was an emissary for Horace Greeley and Henry Ward Beecher. The two gentlemen were greatly concerned over the squalor and vice in which New York's poor lived. The situation was steadily worsening as immigrants poured in, overflowing the jerry-built tenements thrown up to house them. Drunkenness and crime were on the increase; a respectable citizen scarcely dared walk the streets at night. The city's law enforcement agencies were overwhelmed.

Mary Safford, after a few years in Europe, had returned to New York to study medicine. Her tender social conscience was disturbed by what she saw around her. She talked to various prominent persons, Greeley and Beecher among them. The two men remembered

Mrs. Bickerdyke as a forceful, colorful character who had swayed New York audiences in the drive for Fair contributions. Mary Safford remembered her from an earlier day, when she took a spade in hand and turned out the foul floor of the first Cairo hospital tent. All three agreed that Mother Bickerdyke could clean up the New York slums if anyone could.

General Logan and his wife thought so too. They urged her to go. So, early in 1870, she packed her carpetbag and went back to New York with Miss Safford.

The simple social theory of the time attributed all the evil to ignorance, drink and original sin. The cure was stern punishment for lawbreaking, and religious conversion. Mrs. Bickerdyke's employer was the Protestant Board of City Missions. Her duties were to visit the unfortunates in jail and pauper asylum and wretched home, praying with them, exhorting them, distributing tracts, getting them to sign the pledge and "come to Jesus."

She accepted the bundle of tracts and started on her round of visits. Her territory was the old Sixteenth Ward, where workers' homes clustered around the big Stuart sugar refinery. She was allowed a great deal of freedom, required only to make monthly reports.

At the end of the first month she came to a board meeting. She listened to the other city missionaries report the number of persons prayed with, tracts given out and temperance pledges signed. When her turn came she frankly admitted that she had not offered a single prayer nor handed out one piece of literature.

"But Mrs. Bickerdyke!" The chairman broke the shocked silence. "It is your business to pray and give out tracts. If you didn't do that, what did you do?"

"I know what my business is," she answered tartly. "My business is to help them poor folks and get 'em to act decent and live decent. That's what you want, ain't it? Well, I done it the best way I know how. If you want to know, I'll tell you. After the first day, I left the tracts at home. This is what I took instead."

From her pocket she brought out a fine-tooth comb, a scrubbing

brush and a bar of brown soap. "These don't look like Bibles to you, maybe. But they're the only Bibles them folks understand. Listen, gentlemen and ladies. I don't mean to be sassy. But I got to tell you the truth. You think these foreigners are dirty because they're mean. That ain't it. They're mean because they're dirty. If you could see the houses they live in — bedbugs crawling out of the plaster, rats running over the floor. And the privies — they'd make you sick. No wonder the men hang out in saloons when they're through work. Drink's bad. But they ain't a saloon in my district that's not a mansion alongside the homes in it. Now you know I'm a Christian woman. I think about their souls all right. But I got to think about their bodies too. Seems to me I got to think about them first. You asked me what I done if I didn't give out tracts. Let me tell you."

She reached into her pocket for a slip of paper. "I fine-toothed forty-five little girls' heads with kerosene. I clipped nigh a hundred boys' hair to the scalp — no use wasting time and coal oil on them. I scrubbed I don't know how many floors myself, and got the women to help me. I bathed fifty babies and more sick people than I kept count of. I've lost track of the clothes and bed linen I washed. I never done but one job in a flat, and I made the woman promise to keep it up. I'll be back and see, too. They got to learn to help theirselves, the women have. That's if they're able. A lot of 'em are right puny. If they're down in bed, and the kids ain't big enough to help, we'll have to hire neighbor women a spell. 'Twon't cost much. Well, that's what I done this month. It's not much. I was just sort of getting the lay of the land. There's things I can do, bigger things than scrubbing. I aim to see the Stuart brothers and fix it up so the man don't get all his pay. If the factory will hold out a little every week for the wife, she won't have to worry so much about him drinking it all up. I hear the Stuarts are real good Christian gentlemen; I reckon they'll see the sense of it. Well, that's my report."

She sat down, and the committee buzzed. After a good deal of anxious discussion, they agreed to give her her head. She spent four

years in New York, initiating her own brand of social service in a skeptical world. Her case book shows such entries as this:

> Bridget F. was carried to station house in a handcart, (having pawned for liquor everything she could take) leaving four small children and a hardworking husband. Have visited the family twice a week for nine weeks and paid $1 for washing and scrubbing for them. She is now at the Magdalen asylum, and is very much ashamed of her life, and will return to her family this week.

Mrs. Bickerdyke's work for the Mission Board was expanded on the request of the Commissioner of Public Charities and Correction, a city official, so that she had access to the Tombs, Bellevue Hospital, and the institutions on Blackwells Island. She became well known to city magistrates. Every Sunday morning she turned up at the old Essex police court "to see if any children had been run in from the street." If they had, the judge gave her custody of the young stone-throwers and petty thieves. She took them to the nearest mission, cleaned them up, fed them, and herded them into a Sunday School class. After the service she took them home and put the fear of God into the parents. There was nothing soft about her methods. She meant it when she threatened a brutal father with the workhouse. Her recommendations carried considerable weight with police court judges. If it seemed good to her, she did not hesitate to give an abused family breathing space by having its head put away for thirty days. She used the interval to clean up the flat, instruct the mother in her duties and make a decent home for the repentant father's return. He was almost always repentant, for Mother Bickerdyke followed him relentlessly into the jail, giving him no peace until he promised to mend his ways. She had her failures, of course, but some genuine reformations did take place.

It was piecemeal work, and it left the main problem untouched. In four years of devoted effort, Mrs. Bickerdyke did not clean up the slums of New York City. She could only say of her labors there, as she said of her war service, "I did the work of one woman, and tried to do it well." She did it against discouragement, criticism, and a great deal of ridicule. Her successors among contemporary social

workers, with community spirit to back them, with financial resources that would have seemed fantastic to her, with specialized training and new psychological insights — these, with all this, have not finished the job yet.

By the summer of 1874 the two Bickerdyke sons, now full-grown men, were urging Mrs. Bickerdyke to come back to Kansas. Their farm near Great Bend was in fine shape, with a new house and a promising corn crop. So far the boys had done nothing for their mother. Now they were able to offer her a home. "What," quoted the bookish Jimmy, "is home without a mother?" They begged her to come. She was growing old, she had worked hard all her life. Now it was time to rest and let her sons look after her. They had already engaged a good hired girl. It would be their pleasure to see that she never needed to turn her hand again.

It was the last argument to appeal to Mary Ann Bickerdyke. She was only fifty-seven, strong and energetic still, in spite of graying hair and a touch of arthritis now and then. She certainly was not ready to end her days in a rocking chair, as the boys seemed to expect. But she was touched by their pride in the new home, and by their eagerness to share it with her. From what she remembered of life in Kansas, there would be plenty to do there. She gave up her missionary job and took the train for Great Bend.

She approved the new house and the well-built, well-stocked barns. She beamed at the sight of the young cornfields with their promise of a bumper crop. She had exactly a month to drive about, visiting her old soldier friends, admiring the substantial homes that were replacing the old sod shanties, getting acquainted with children born since she left. Then in late summer the great grasshopper plague descended upon Kansas. As in the land of Egypt, "The locusts went up over all the land . . . very grievous were they . . . for they covered the face of the whole earth, so that the land was darkened; and they did eat every herb of the land, and all the fruit of the trees . . . and there remained not any green thing in the trees, or in the herbs of the field, through all the land. . . ."

The herbs of the field in Kansas were principally corn and garden

vegetables. When the grasshopper cloud had passed over, nothing remained but withered stalks. With winter coming on, the settlers would have nothing to sell and nothing to eat. Mrs. Bickerdyke had expected to find something to do in Kansas. She found plenty.

She went back to Illinois, to the generous farmers who had never yet refused her food. At Macomb and Galesburg she asked for "potatoes, flour, corn (shelled or in the ear), cornmeal, apples (green or dried), white beans, onion, turnips, pickles, vinegar, sugar, tea, coffee, concentrated milk, and butter."

She got five carloads inside of a week, and took them back to Great Bend. The supplies were stored in the county courthouse, and given out by Mrs. Bickerdyke on application. The five carloads did not go far. Winter was on the way. The farm wives had counted on the sale of the corn crops to buy winter clothing. Warm clothes would be needed as well as more food.

Mother Bickerdyke went east again, to Chicago and Cairo and Milwaukee and all the towns that had supported the Sanitary Commission. She called the disbanded Soldiers' Aid Societies together and set them to sewing again. She laid her plea for food before former Sanitary contributors. She spoke in churches, lodge halls, wherever an audience could be gathered. She wrote hundreds of begging letters to well-to-do acquaintances. Mary Livermore donated the entire proceeds of a successful lecture tour. Mary Safford, now practicing medicine in Boston, raised several hundred dollars there. Mrs. Porter, from an army post in Texas, sent a barrel of Mexican beans. In the winter of 1874–1875 Mrs. Bickerdyke made ten trips to the East and the Middle West, two hundred set speeches and innumerable talks to small groups, and many personal calls on public officials and financiers. She was not alone in working for "grasshopper relief." But as a direct result of her efforts, two hundred carloads of grain, food and clothing were shipped into Kansas and distributed under her personal supervision.

The Kansas state legislature passed a resolution of thanks, and commissioned a portrait of Mrs. Bickerdyke for the historical room of the state capitol. Topeka admirers planned a mammoth testi-

monial banquet for her, with Governor Osborn in the toastmaster's chair. When the banquet was announced, the committee was swamped with requests for tickets. Old soldiers from all over the state were eager to take part in this public glorification of the soldiers' Mother.

Jimmy brought the telegram of invitation to her where she sat rocking quietly, her hands folded in her lap. She shook her head. "I can do no more. Let me rest."

The son called the hired girl to put her to bed. His alarm grew when she went without protest. If Mother Bickerdyke really wanted to rest, the world had turned upside down, and something was very, very wrong.

XX

SHE LAY GRAVELY ILL throughout the late winter, at first with an acute "brain fever," and later with a pervading weakness that even her indomitable will could not conquer. The weather was bitterly cold, with driving sleety winds shaking the prairie farmhouse. Her doctor recommended removal to a milder climate. Early in the spring her sons shipped her off to California.

It is possible that the younger son, Hiram, went with her for some part of the journey. In a letter written after her death, he says that he never saw his mother again after 1876, the year in which she went to the West Coast. Farming in Kansas, with the Indian tribes pacified, was too tame for the adventurous Hi. Either with his mother, or shortly after her departure, he left the farm to Jimmy and pushed on into wilder regions. He settled down in Montana as a mail contractor, carrying the mail from the railroad terminus to outlying settlements.

Farming was not an occupation that appealed to either of the Bickerdyke sons. With his mother and brother gone, Jimmy disposed of the farm and took up schoolteaching. He seems to have had a real gift for it. His old neighbors speak of him with respectful admiration. A former fellow teacher, obviously a little biased in James's favor, contributes an anecdote to illustrate his superiority over his younger brother.

Both Bickerdyke boys were well known at Great Bend in the '70's and '80's. Jim was dignified, very precise in his speech, never used slang

or profanity. Hi used profanity fluently. These brothers accompanied Don Dodge (deceased) and George Frost (deceased) on the buffalo hunt to Dodge City territory in the fall. Jim was sleeping under the wagon during the nooning hour. Hiram placed some putrefying meat under Jim's pillow. Don said Jim roused up, rubbed his hands and inquired, "What is that awful stench? The effluvia is simply unbearable." Hiram responded, "Stinks like h—, don't it?"

Mrs. Bickerdyke had no objection to her sons' giving up farming for careers they liked better. She was the last person to urge anyone to stay in a distasteful rut. From California, where she had made a quick recovery, she wrote that with restored health and high hopes she was going to work again. She did not know when, if ever, she would come back to Kansas. The boys must do whatever they thought best for themselves. Whatever it was, they had her blessing.

In California, as everywhere else she went after the war, Mrs. Bickerdyke had found herself among friends. The Pacific Coast settlements were filling up with ex-soldiers. They came to farm, to dig gold, to go into business. Like those who had emigrated to Kansas, they came without much capital and with very little knowledge of what lay before them. They brought their wives and children. When they found that Mother Bickerdyke was available, they came to lay their troubles in her lap. Before she had been there many months she was back at the work she loved best, the only job that ever held her interest for long. Again she was "helping the boys."

They needed advice and counsel, sympathy and encouragement, all of which she gave as a matter of course. Money, which they needed worst, she could not give. She was struck by the words she heard over and over, from blinded men, from men who stumped into her room on wooden pegs. "If I could just get me a pension!" They were entitled to pensions. In theory at least, a grateful country acknowledged the debt to men disabled in her service. The debt was hard to collect, but Mrs. Bickerdyke thought if she gave her mind to it she could do it.

The whole pension question was in a snarl that confused keener

legal brains than hers. Congress had passed the first pension bill early in the war, an ambiguously worded act that was only partly clarified by the amended version produced in 1873. The amended bill provided for service-connected total disability only, in the generous amount of not less than six dollars or more than twelve dollars per month. The petitioner must prove, not only ninety-day service and honorable discharge, not only time and place of injury and the fact that it rendered him permanently incapacitated to earn his living, but also that his plight was not the result of his own vicious habits. What Congress had in mind when this last clause was inserted is anybody's guess. It may have been aimed at chronic alcoholism, or it may have been a cautious coverage of venereal disease, the "bad disease" whose specific mention could not be allowed to sully the chaste pages of the *Congressional Record*. Whatever the purpose, the effect was further to complicate the already complicated specifications, and make it tougher for the applicant to prove his eligibility.

There were complications enough without it. The company rolls had been badly kept. Many hospital patients had been sent home without the formality of a discharge. In the confusion at the war's end, many men quietly slipped off before the final mustering out. Others who had been home on leave when peace broke out simply stayed there. These would have been difficult cases under any system. But there were thousands of disabled veterans, honorably discharged and with papers in order, who still could get no reply to their applications. The War Department records were in a tangle, clerical help was slow and inefficient, the ponderous wheels turned with maddening deliberation. It was believed, not without reason, that the only way a man could hope to get a pension in his lifetime was to know the right people in Washington. The Capital swarmed with "pension attorneys" empowered to press veterans' claims for them. Some of these men were honest and able. Many were out-and-out racketeers.

Mrs. Bickerdyke, talking to the disabled veterans in San Francisco, quickly got the hang of the situation. It was the old business

of army red tape all over again. She had dealt with it before, and she thought she could do it once more. Certainly nothing could be done at this distance. If anyone needed the services of a pension attorney, these men on the Coast did. She had found her new job. With power of attorney to represent eighteen California veterans, she took the train to Washington.

Her congressional friend General Logan gave her an introduction to the Pension Commission: "I desire to introduce Mother Bickerdyke. Whatever she wants is right, and what she says will be the truth." Although she pulled strings to expedite hearings, her pension agent activities seemed to have been thoroughly legal. She sniffed at the pension law's troublesome requirements, but she took infinite trouble to comply with them. If she had been less scrupulous, she could probably have scraped up enough political pull to get her claims through without the time and labor she put into it. She spent long hours poring over army muster rolls, tracking down a misspelled name, supplying from her own memory the place and date of some forgotten skirmish.

She did not spend all her time in Washington. Traveling all over the country, she hunted out comrades whose affidavits would support incomplete data, and turned up in the civilian offices of former army doctors who thought they had long since seen the last of her. She went back to the towns where her hospitals had been, taking testimony from former patients who had been Confederate prisoners. "God knows I hated Secession," she said once, "but the only difference I ever made between a wounded Johnny and my boys was to care for my own first. The Johnny got the best I had after that." The former Johnnies and their families remembered her with gratitude. When her search in one disputed case took her to Savannah, Georgia, the wife of the Confederate general Joe Johnston helped her round up a needed witness.

Unlike the pension attorneys who were in the business for money, Mrs. Bickerdyke made no charge for her services. If a client could afford it he advanced her expenses, or reimbursed her after his claim was allowed. She always refused reimbursement when she

thought the family needed the money worse than she did. Handling hundreds of claims, traveling hundreds of miles, she got along on amazingly little money. Her friends in Congress probably got railroad passes for her. With grateful patients wherever she went, she never needed cash for a bed or a meal. It was her friends' idea that, since she was doing this for love, she ought to have a second job that would give her a little income.

General Logan found it for her, a clerkship in the San Francisco mint. It must have been something of a sinecure, for it does not seem to have interfered seriously with her other activities. She took a cottage in San Francisco, but she continued to make frequent trips to Washington in the interest of pension applicants. She organized and helped run a Home for Neglected Youth, drawing upon her New York experience with juvenile delinquents. San Francisco police magistrates came to know her well. She taught a Sunday School class at a Salvation Army mission, and vigorously aided the army in reclaiming fallen women from the Barbary Coast dives. Her little house in the Mission Dolores quarter had a spare bedchamber frequently occupied by some old soldier, hauled out of the gutter and sleeping it off until Mother Bickerdyke chose to wake him with hot coffee, scrambled eggs and a vitriolic tongue-lashing.

All her life she worried about her boys who had fallen into evil ways. On one of her trips east she was to stay with Mrs. Livermore, who had moved to Melrose, Massachusetts. She was expected on the morning train. She arrived late in the rainy night, wet and worn-out. "She had spent the day in Boston, searching for an old soldier from Illinois, who had served out three terms in the house of correction, for drunkenness, during the last ten years." She found him, entered him in a Keeley institute for the cure, and later returned him to his wife. It was no fault of Mrs. Bickerdyke's that the drastic cure, coming on top of years of alcoholism, was too much for him. He died, and Mrs. Bickerdyke got a pension for his widow.

Mrs. Livermore, in the course of her lecture work, once addressed the prisoners of the Massachusetts State Prison at Charlestown. A

lamentably high percentage were former patients of Mother Bickerdyke's. After her talk Mrs. Livermore was besieged with questions. "Was Mother still living? Did she get a pension? What was her post office address?" Mrs. Livermore ends her account on an edifying note: "'Ah, if I had only had a mother like her,' said one, as we parted, 'I shouldn't be here today.' *Similar utterances were made by others!*"

Mrs. Livermore's prison lecture was a free one, arranged by James Redpath, the publicity-conscious head of the Redpath Lyceum Bureau. In a gentlemanly way, on a high cultural plane, Mr. Redpath began where P. T. Barnum left off. He booked his speakers into the tent meetings of Chautauqua in summer, and throughout the winter on the indoor circuit of colleges, high schools, lodge halls and parish houses. Mrs. Livermore was his star attraction for twenty-five profitable years. Her most popular talk, "What Shall We Do with Our Daughters?" was delivered over eight hundred times, and ran through sixteen printed editions. Beneath a bouquet of flowery flourishes, it is a very sensible plea for female education, job opportunity, and political rights. Mr. Redpath begged her to keep off the subject of Temperance, which he felt was being somewhat overdone by other lady lecturers. Mrs. Livermore was not to be dictated to. She worked out a ringing denunciation of the Demon Rum entitled "Does the Liquor Traffic Pay?" She thought it did, bringing its master the Devil richer dividends than all his other nefarious enterprises.

Mrs. Livermore had competition on the lecture platform from other wartime associates. Mrs. Annie Wittenmyer, late of the Christian Commission, stumped the country in the interest of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Charming Mary Safford, now a practicing physician and instructor at a Boston medical college, was in great demand as a speaker for Dress Reform. She denounced the corset, the bustle, dragging skirts and the prevailing type of lingerie. Her hearers were urged to adopt "a dress hung so as never to come below the tops of the boots, the limbs properly and decently covered with leggins which fit closely, or with Turkish

trousers fastening at the ankle." And underneath: "To obviate the necessity for many bands now worn about the waist, we might well unite the vest and the lower garments. This united garment, which we might dub a Ladies Union Suit, if universally adopted would be an inestimable boon to our sex."

Temperance, Dress Reform and Woman Suffrage—these were the popular causes of the day. Mother Bickerdyke approved of all of them, but considered them trivial beside the continuing necessity of "helping the boys." She could always find individual cases where a boy or his family needed her help. Collectively, the boys were doing pretty well at helping themselves. Practically all of the Union veterans were united in the Grand Army of the Republic, the powerful veterans' organization that at its peak numbered over 400,000 members. The G.A.R., disclaiming political bias, was nevertheless a potent political force that brought about favorable pension legislation, government care of the disabled, and Federal jobs for ex-servicemen. Memorial Day was established as a national holiday under G.A.R. sponsorship.

The ladies' auxiliary to the G.A.R. was the Woman's Relief Corps, dedicated especially to the marking and maintenance of soldier graves, and to the welfare of soldiers' widows and orphans. A W.R.C. lobby finally put through pensions for army nurses. Unlike the men's organization, the Corps did not limit its membership to Civil War participants, and so has been able to grow by the infusion of new blood. "Founded solely on the basis of loyal womanhood," it still flourishes, with a present membership of approximately 80,000. The W.R.C. has continued an active broadened service throughout later wars, taking a particular interest in the well-being of the present-day Army Nurse Corps.

Mrs. Bickerdyke helped organize the first Woman's Relief Corps in California, but refused to accept the state presidency. She never liked holding office or working through organizations. As the pension situation straightened out, she found fewer occasions to leave her San Francisco home, and settled down contentedly to her job at the mint and her volunteer social service work. She liked the cli-

mate, her health was good, and she had every intention of ending her days beside the Golden Gate.

Her plans were changed by a letter from Jimmy in the spring of 1887. The Kansas son was spending his summer school vacation in a trip east, looking up relatives and boyhood friends. He wrote from Covington, Kentucky, where he had found his halfsister Mary. This was Robert Bickerdyke's daughter, left with Kentucky relatives when the family moved to Illinois. Jimmy had not seen her since that day. His mother may have done so in the course of her pension travels, although there is no record of it. It is known, however, that she kept in affectionate touch with her stepdaughter by letter. Mary Bickerdyke had grown into a beautiful and talented woman, now forty-three years old. For many years she had been soprano soloist at Covington's Trinity Episcopal Church. When Jimmy came for his visit he found her dying of cancer.

He wrote his mother that there was no hope, and that she must come at once if she wanted to see Mary in life. Mrs. Bickerdyke dropped everything and came. She nursed the invalid until her death, late in July. Jimmy stayed on with her. A local newspaper, in the account of the funeral, says, "Three of her brothers were permitted the pleasure of easing her path to the grave with loving attentions." One brother was James Bickerdyke. The other two must have been the older stepsons, also left behind at the time of the Galesburg migration. This is the only time that Mrs. Bickerdyke is known to have seen these stepsons again. No further mention of them occurs in anything that has been written about her.

Sometime in the course of the Covington stay, Jimmy persuaded his mother not to return to California. He was doing very well in educational work, and he never intended to marry. A former student of his believes there was a blighted romance somewhere, although his prolonged bachelorhood is usually attributed to filial devotion. For whatever reason, he was tired of boardinghouses, and wanted a home of his own. He wanted his mother to keep it for him. He was well able to support her now. And besides that, she

had recently acquired independent means. In 1886 Congress had finally passed a special bill granting her a pension.

This had been a hard-fought battle in which Mrs. Bickerdyke took no part. Her friends of the G.A.R. and the W.R.C. had been lobbying for it for years. It was not easy, for she had never actually been in government service. Mary Livermore went to Washington with a prepared draft of the bill and induced her own Massachusetts congressman, ex-Governor J. D. Long, to introduce it. He ended his tear-jerking speech with a poem written for the occasion by a Massachusetts veteran:

> What a shame to our nation that she has been left
> To care for herself while so poor and so old!
> Is gratitude *dead?* Are our people bereft
> Of their reason, that still she is out in the cold?
>
> Say, boys, who have followed through carnage and strife,
> So faithful and willing and gallant and bold,
> Shall not our brave "Mother," the rest of her life
> Be sheltered from want; taken in from the cold?
>
> Why is it, while Congress has lavished on some
> Her pensions and bounties in National gold,
> That good Mother Bickerdyke never has won
> The pledge of our land, she is saved from the cold?

Although there was not a dry eye in the House when Governor Long finished, and although Logan made an equally moving plea in the Senate, the Pensions Committee heartlessly cut the suggested figure in two, and the amended bill gave her twenty-five dollars per month for life. Her zealous friends had exaggerated her need; she was never in danger from the cold. But the small regular income was welcome, and certainly well earned. Most of it went to buy small comforts for veterans in workhouses and asylums.

Jimmy took her back to Kansas with him. He was then superintendent of schools for Russell County. He resigned a few years later to teach algebra and rhetoric at Kansas Wesleyan University, Salina. He liked elementary school work better, and soon left the college

to settle down as principal of the high school at Bunker Hill, Kansas. The unpretentious little cottage he bought there was Mother Bickerdyke's last home.

Her life in these later years was saddened by a series of deaths. Grant died in 1885, Logan in 1886, and her beloved Eliza Porter in 1887. Increasingly now her mail brought the news that some old patient had given up the life she had once saved for him. The years were whizzing by, and although she hated to admit it, Mother Bickerdyke was growing old. Her will was as vigorous as ever, but the tired old body was less able to respond to its demands. She still found plenty to do, driving about the countryside to see the boys she had settled on farms, visiting the hospitals and institutions where some of them had wound up. At the state insane asylum she created one of her old scenes when she found a veteran sleeping on a corn-husk mattress, after she had sent down a feather bed for him. She still commanded fire enough to get the feather bed fetched from the attendant's bed and placed where it belonged.

She made frequent descents upon the institution at Ellsworth maintained by the W.R.C. for ex-nurses and soldiers' widows and children. The place, called the Mother Bickerdyke Home in her honor, was very dear to her. She speaks of it as though she owned it. In 1898 she wrote to an Ohio cousin:

> The Home and Hospital are doing remarkably well for the means we have to go on. We are free from debt and aim to farm the 160 acres of land That will help supply the institution, but am in need of money to help support it till the crop is raised. . . . I am so anxious to establish the children on the *right* basis. There will be between 200 or 300 children there in the next 2 or 3 months. . . . I aim to make these children self-supporting, bright, intelligent and happy children. . . . I am going down there in a few weeks to remain permanently. I cannot accomplish what I want without it. I must be on the grounds.

Evidently she was dissuaded, for she never resided permanently at the Home. It was under the direct charge of Mrs. Julia A. Chase, a good W.R.C. friend who wrote *The Life Story of Mother Bickerdyke*. She seems to have satisfied Mrs. Bickerdyke that her wishes

could be carried out without her actual presence. The Bickerdyke Home remained for many years a pleasant, well-managed haven for war widows and superannuated nurses. In 1941 it housed fifty women, most of them aged or disabled nurses of World War I. But in 1951 the Kansas legislature voted to transfer the buildings to the state Department of Public Welfare, to be operated under the name of *Ellsworth Home for the Aged,* so the Mother Bickerdyke Home no longer exists.

In an earlier day Mrs. Bickerdyke had been scornful of the domestic help her sons provided. Now she was glad to have someone to relieve her of the housework. Jimmy found her a treasure. Lydia Foster, daughter of a Negro soldier, was a gentle-mannered young girl of infinite tact and discretion. She could get Mother Bickerdyke to rest when no one else could. She did the housework, cooked the meals, drove the old lady on her rounds about the county and fended off an excess of visitors. Old soldiers, passing through, brought their families to see her; their children and in later years their grandchildren. It was unthinkable that she could refuse to see any of them. Lydia was good at serving tea and cookies with a cordial finality that brought the calls to an end. In the several serious illnesses that marked the closing years, the Negro girl was her deft and devoted nurse. She stayed on as housekeeper to Jimmy until his death three years after his mother's.

Lydia did not find Mother Bickerdyke an easy patient. She had drawn unmercifully on the resources of a naturally rugged constitution, and it infuriated her to find those resources had a limit. She kept up an enormous correspondence with old patients all over the country, but now her swollen, stiffened fingers could no longer hold a pen. The crippling was probably caused by arthritis, from which she had suffered since the war. She chose to blame it on blood poisoning contracted when she nursed the prison-pox victims of Andersonville. In the long years since then she had energetically wielded a scrubbing brush in New York's slums, and a pen in the pension office archives. Now, for whatever reason, her hands had gone back

on her. It was the most tragic disaster she could have imagined. Her hands were her weapons; with them she had fought the eternal righteous battle against disease and dirt and starvation that had been her life. Arthritic pains, heavy chest colds, even an occasional bout of pneumonia she could bear as natural ills, unpleasant but transitory. She could never reconcile herself to the bitter fact that her hands were no longer to be commanded as she chose.

Jimmy did his best to help. He sent his brightest high school students to take her dictation, so that the flow of correspondence need not slacken. She wrote affectionately to Mary Safford and to Mrs. Livermore, whose public careers she followed with motherly pride. Mary Livermore, among her other activities, was an ardent suffragette. At her request Mother Bickerdyke dictated a long letter supporting votes for women, and sent copies to a number of G.A.R. posts. With Mrs. Wittenmyer, who besides being a prominent temperance speaker was national president of the Woman's Relief Corps, she was on more formal terms, but she did write her frequently on W.R.C. matters. She wrote to an incredibly long list of her boys all over the country. Andy Somerville, now a rheumatic old gentleman past seventy, was living not far away, at Marceline, Missouri. She and Andy were always planning to "meet up" at G.A.R. reunions, and never quite making it. When his health permitted him to attend one of these meetings, hers kept her at home. It was his lifelong regret that he did not manage to attend the gala birthday celebration of 1897.

XXI

JULY 19, 1897, was Mrs. Bickerdyke's eightieth birthday. An old friend and patient, Theodosius Botkin, was Department Commander of the Kansas G.A.R. He issued an order for a state-wide celebration of the day as Mother Bickerdyke Day. No town was too small to have a G.A.R. post, so celebrations were held in several places. The big festivities were in her own town of Bunker Hill. The local paper said:

At an early hour, in fact on the previous night, friends came from all directions. The immense crowd that finally gathered was put as high as 1500. . . . During the forenoon the doors of the Bickerdyke home were thrown open to the admiring and sometimes curious visitors. Professor Bickerdyke attended to the duties of a reception committee in a cheerful and hospitable manner, and Mother Bickerdyke had a kind word and a friendly handclasp for all who came to do her honor. The crowd in the afternoon was swelled by the arrival of the Russell delegation accompanied by the Russell band. The Bunker Hill and Russell bands proceeded to Mother Bickerdyke's home to escort her to the tent, a very large one put up for the occasion. Mother Bickerdyke and Mrs. G. A. Weed, a former army nurse from Russell, were seated in a carriage, to which a long rope was attached, and drawn to the tent by 80 veterans. The Glee Club of Bunker Hill opened the program by singing "When the Old Flag Waves."

There were speeches, there was more singing, there were patriotic selections by the two bands, "singly and en masse." Comrade Botkin presented a gift in behalf of the G.A.R. and the W.R.C.

It was a silver ice-water service, "symbolic of the cooling drink she poured for sick and dying boys." A W.R.C. sister just returned from visiting Galesburg brought a second offering, a wreath made of evergreen twigs plucked from Robert Bickerdyke's grave.

Robert Bickerdyke, so long dead, so apparently forgotten — what would he have made of it all? He had seen the Loud Guns of Cincinnati society, in top hat and tails, unhitch the horses and draw Jenny Lind's carriage through the streets. It must have impressed him, as it did the Cincinnati reporters, as "the highest honor that can be paid to the most eminent of her sex." Who could have predicted that this highest of honors would one day be paid to his blunt-spoken, hardheaded Mary Ann?

Mary Ann enjoyed it. In a letter to her cousin she wrote, "My son was laughing. . . . Just fancy your mother in a buggy with 80 men hauling her. I demurred, but it did not do any good. There was about 80 men, and most of them my old patients. It was a royal day and long to be remembered, and it was so good of those old patients to show their gratitude so."

In spite of her frail health, she survived the hot, tiring day of celebration with no ill effects. In the early autumn she made a railway journey to another Kansas G.A.R. meeting at Baxter Springs. This was the annual encampment of the John A. Logan Post, made up of veterans from half a dozen Midwestern states. The Baxter Reunion was a one-week affair, in a tent city laid out in company streets, all very correct and military even to cannon-fire salutes and bugle calls. As in the war days, food was cooked over open campfires, but most of the veterans brought along their wives and children to do the housekeeping. There were exhibition drills, band concerts, and endless "speaking" in the big open-air pavilion. Kansas politicians coveting the ex-soldier vote found the Baxter Reunion an ideal forum. Wednesday of the 1897 reunion week was Mother Bickerdyke Day, with the old lady as honored guest. General Logan, under whom the members of the post had served, was dead now, but his widow had come to welcome her. It was another "royal day," giving her a chance to see her boys from Missouri, Arkansas,

Iowa, Nebraska and Oklahoma, as well as from Kansas. Poor Andy's rheumatism still kept him at home, but there were many others whose faces she had not seen since the victory parade in Washington. She had an amazing memory for faces and names. All of them remembered her, although they were surprised to find the strapping calico-clad Amazon of war days shrunken into a bowed, white-haired little lady in gray watered silk. "She used to be so *big!*" they said wonderingly.

She must have had similar surprises. Toil, illness and the years, which had whittled her down, had not left her boys untouched. The Civil War was more than thirty years in the past. Soon a new generation would be off to a new war. Soon callow youths calling themselves veterans would come home to show up their daddies in Memorial Day parade formations. The men of the G.A.R. never thought much of the Spanish-American hostilities. Their war was still The war, and would be until Taps sounded for the last of them.

The brief Spanish-American War seems not to have moved Mother Bickerdyke at all. She was ill in April, when it began, and her convalescence was a prolonged one. It may be that her son and Lydia kept the newspapers from her. In her Toledo speech that autumn she remarked that "these chaps down in Spain have had a picnic." It was not like her to fail to know where the fighting was, or to think that any fighting is a picnic. Very probably her son Jimmy, with visions of her tying on her sunbonnet and charging down to Cuba, had given her the rosy picture in which she seemed to believe.

The Toledo visit came in October of 1898. In these later days, and particularly as failing health began to limit her activities, Mrs. Bickerdyke's thoughts turned back to her Ohio childhood. Her letters to her Cousin Nellie Ball at Fredericktown are filled with nostalgic memories. The sugar camp, the big elm whose roots walled in a little girl's playhouse, the creek where she used to wade — she longs to see them all again. In late 1897 Cousin Nellie came to Kansas on a visit, bringing a barrel of maple sugar and some buck-

eyes to plant in the Kansas dooryard. The cousin's visit stirred her yearnings anew. Her illness in early spring was a warning that she had not too much time left. Jimmy promised that as soon as she was strong enough she should have her Ohio visit. She planned it for the late summer of 1898.

Besides cordial invitations from her numerous relatives, she had two other Ohio engagements that year. One was the national G.A.R. encampment, a mammoth country-wide convention with four days of parades, receptions, banquets and military balls. The other was the smaller, quieter encampment of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee composed of the surviving officers of Logan's old command. Both groups urged Mother Bickerdyke to come as their honored guest. The meetings were three weeks apart, so she could have managed it nicely. She accepted both invitations, but at the time of the Cincinnati affair, in September, she was resting at the home of Cleveland cousins with a bad cold. She may really have been too ill to travel, or her cousins may have persuaded her that the crowds and excitement would be too tiring. Annie Wittenmyer, in pink lawn and lace for a reception at the Scottish Rite Cathedral, in black brocade and lavender chiffon for the closing banquet, was the feminine sensation of the Cincinnati meeting.

Mrs. Bickerdyke spent several leisurely weeks at the home of the Cleveland cousin, Webb C. Ball. His daughter, a small child at the time, remembers a stream of soldier visitors, and Mother Bickerdyke's wildly applauded speech at Epworth Memorial Methodist Church. If she was too ill to go to Cincinnati, she recovered quickly. Late in October Mr. Ball escorted her to Toledo for the Army of the Tennessee convention. A reporter, interviewing her at the hotel there, describes her: "Her strong but sensitive face was seamed and wrinkled. The soft white hair was cut short, and brushed back from the forehead. The blue eyes — shown through the gold-bowed glasses — were as bright, and the smile as sweet, as though she had not seen the untold suffering and sorrow occasioned by the war of 38 years ago."

She gave the Toledo reporter an account of her war experiences,

beginning with a spirited imitation of the old deacon at Galesburg who had moved to pull the ox out of the pit. But her chief interest now, she told him earnestly, was the Mother Bickerdyke Home. Any donations she could collect here in Ohio would come in mighty handy.

The first evening meeting of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee was held on October 26. "Members and lady guests assembled at the Boody Hotel to proceed, under escort of a band, to Memorial Hall." There were forty-one members, none under the rank of captain, and eleven lady guests, Mother Bickerdyke and a few wives.

General A. Hickenlooper, the chairman, opened the session with a long eulogy of Mother Bickerdyke. Her response was brief, and as blunt as the speeches of her Sanitary Commission days. In this group, made up exclusively of former commissioned officers, she did not hesitate to remind them that "Grant and Sherman were good commanders, but I tell you they had good soldiers back of them. Who stood in the trenches around Vicksburg and Champion Hill? It was the *private soldier*. I was there in the thickest of it. I *know*. I must say I am surprised our men have lived as long as they have, with all their wounds and the hard army life they had. These chaps down in Spain have had a picnic."

A few words about the old battles they all remembered, and with a simple, "I guess I have said enough. I want to see all my old boys while I am here," she sat down. So far as is known, this was her last public speech.

At the banquet winding up the convention on the second day, they voted her an honorary member of the Society and pinned its official badge to her gray silk dress. She sat through the long elaborate courses, through the eight toasts, beginning with the President, ranging through all the service branches, Our Late Enemy, Admiral Dewey and Teddy Roosevelt, and finally the Stars and Stripes. Interspersed between the toasts and the acknowledgment speeches the brothers-in-arms sang "Tenting Tonight," "Marching Through Georgia," "John Brown's Body" and "Just before the Battle, Mother." It was three o'clock in the morning before they linked

arms for "Auld Lang Syne" and the gathering broke up. Nothing, Mrs. Bickerdyke told her Kansas friends, would persuade her to stay up all night for such foolishness again. Her cousin Webb Ball had no luck in persuading her not to do it that time. In spite of his worry, she was none the worse for it.

From Toledo she went back to Cleveland for a few days, then to Sandusky to visit the Soldiers' Home, and then on down into Knox County, where she was born. She had a wealth of cousins at Mt. Vernon, at Fredericktown and Mansfield, and on farms scattered throughout two counties. Thanksgiving Day was the occasion of a grand family reunion at Cousin Judson Ball's home in Fredericktown, with relatives gathered in from as far away as Buffalo, New York. They whispered among themselves that their famous cousin Mary Ann was looking very frail, or in the blunt country phrase, "beginning to break up." The Mount Vernon paper notes that "it was a great regret to her friends as well as to herself that her health did not permit her to meet with them as had been so kindly planned by the ladies of the W.R.C. and the old soldiers of this vicinity."

Around Christmas time Jimmy came to take her home. She detained him in Ohio for all his Christmas vacation, proudly showing off "my son the Professor" to relatives he had never seen. His presence gave her an excuse for a final round of visits, a final collection of barrels of children's clothing and maple sugar and hickory nuts. In all the pleasure of renewing old ties, Mrs. Bickerdyke never forgot to gather in what she could for the soldiers' orphans at the Bickerdyke Home.

She went back to Kansas, where the neighbors, seeing her anew after the four-month absence, were shocked at how feeble she had grown. She brought back what she called "my Ohio cold," a bronchial difficulty that never left her. In the summer of 1901 there was another serious illness. When she was better Jimmy urged another trip to California. This time she refused. She had done with traveling.

On the afternoon of Nov. 1 she got up from her chair to cross the room. Professor Bickerdyke asked if he should help her. "Oh, no, my

son, I do not need help," she replied, but before he could reach her she fell to the floor. She was considerably affected by the shock, and grew weaker rapidly until Sunday afternoon, Nov. 3, when she was stricken with paralysis of the left side, and it was thought that the end was near. Word passed around that she was dying. But she clung to life and days of anxiety followed. Her mind as yet was clear and strong. Though she spoke little the few words to her son were full of love and motherly anxiety, but her faith never faltered, her courage was undaunted. Thursday afternoon her mind seemed failing, and at two P. M. Friday morning, Nov. 8, 1901, she lost consciousness entirely and lay quietly breathing until the day was nearly done, when she quietly and easily passed from earth, falling asleep at sunset.

The G.A.R. and the W.R.C. gave her two magnificent funerals, one in Bunker Hill and one in Galesburg. There had been a little comradely ill-feeling over the choice of a burial place, but Galesburg had settled that beforehand. Shortly after her Ohio visit the Galesburg G.A.R. had written to Jimmy, suggesting that as his mother would undoubtedly choose to lie beside her husband, the Galesburg post would willingly assume perpetual care of her grave and the family lot. When her son put the offer before her she dictated a rather curt acceptance. She had been furious with the ambulance driver who forethoughtedly brought in a coffin along with a dying patient. She cannot have been too pleased to have her grave chosen for her before she needed it. But these were her boys, and they meant to do her honor. Linwood Cemetery was a pleasant peaceful spot. Robert was there, and the tiny baby girl. She was old, and tired, and her hands had gone back on her. The Galesburg grave would do well enough.

She lies there now, under two huge maples, weighed down by a hideous granite monument that cruelly overshadows the worn little white tombstone she bought for Robert and the baby. In the years immediately following her death, the Galesburg comrades did very handsomely by her memory. The ornate tombstone in the rather inaccessible old cemetery was not enough. The W.R.C. started a memorial fund to erect a statue in the public square. The G.A.R. took it up, bringing pressure to bear on the Illinois state legisla-

ture for a good-sized appropriation. The monument, erected in 1904, shows Mother Bickerdyke kneeling beside a wounded soldier, holding a cup to his lips.

Years have gone by, and other wars. The G.A.R. has held its last encampment. Nothing that Mother Bickerdyke did survives her, for all she did was to save lives, and those lives were mortal after all. Her boys are gone, and she is gone. The monument in Galesburg courthouse square still bears her name, but it is a name that means nothing to a new generation. Only once, in all the years since her death, that name became a living name again.

The Victory freighters turned out by hundreds in the Second World War had to be called something. There were so many of them that every state got a chance to nominate its regional favorites, down to the very minor ones. Some Kansan offered Mother Bickerdyke's name. The S.S. *Mary A. Bickerdyke,* christened by the superintendent of the Home at Ellsworth, was launched at Richmond, California, in 1943.

The *Mary A. Bickerdyke* made twenty-eight trips to the Pacific; to Tinian, Tarawa, Saipan, Eniwetok, to all the scrubby little island outposts where a new generation of boys-in-need maintained their desperate footholds. She carried Spam and K-rations, sulfa powder and blood plasma, vaccines and Thomas splints, and a wide variety of army food and medical supplies unknown in Civil War days. What Mother Bickerdyke could have done with D.D.T.! Or even, for that matter, with Spam.

Nothing glorious ever happened to the *Bickerdyke*. She was not torpedoed, she took no part in battle, she never figured in press dispatches. She was nothing but a tough ugly workhorse of the sea, stubbornly bucking wind and tide and enemy mines to carry vital necessities to hard-pressed fighting men. The idealized statuary group on the Galesburg courthouse lawn is a very handsome monument. Her ship would have suited Mother Bickerdyke better.

Notes

II

Dr. Woodward's description of Mrs. Bickerdyke is from W. C. King, *Campfire Sketches and Battlefield Echoes of the Rebellion.*

Mrs. Bickerdyke's comment on Mary Livermore's illiteracy charge is from the Florence Kellogg biography.

III

The musical activities of Robert Bickerdyke are from the *Daily Cincinnati Gazette,* March 11–15, 1851, and *Cist's Advertiser,* January 10, 1846.

The description of Jenny Lind's visit is drawn from the *Daily Cincinnati Gazette,* March–April, 1851.

IV

Robert's concert and obituary are described in the *Galesburg Free Democrat,* April 2 and March 26, 1859.

Mary Livermore's *My Story of the War* quotes Mrs. Bickerdyke on religion.

VI

Details of army organization and the quotation on "shoddy" come from Fred A. Shannon's *Organization and Administration of the Union Army.*

The Iowa uniform is described by Franc. B. Wilkie in *The Iowa First.*

There are several versions of the Cyclone in Calico incident. I have

followed the one given by the Reverend Parker C. Cozine in his book *The Chaplain's Story*. He quotes in full a speech made by General Prentiss at a soldiers' reunion in 1897. The dialogue is as General Prentiss remembered it.

The Wisconsin soldier on hospitals is quoted by Mary Livermore in *My Story of the War*.

Quotations on Mrs. Porter are from Sarah Henshaw, *Our Branch and Its Tributaries*.

VII

Details of the battle of Belmont are in Grant's *Memoirs*.

Miss Dix's specifications are from Mary Holland's *Our Army Nurses*.

VIII

The conversation between the Confederate generals is drawn from Benson Lossing's *Our Country*.

The surrender letter and details are in Grant's *Memoirs*.

IX

The surgeon's story of Mrs. Bickerdyke on the hospital ship is quoted by Mrs. Livermore in *My Story of the War*.

Mrs. Pitzinger's poem is from the Julia Chase biography.

The young man with the amputated arm is from Sarah Henshaw, *Our Branch and Its Tributaries*.

X

Lincoln's letter to Greeley is quoted by Henry Alden in *Harper's Pictorial History of the Great Rebellion*.

Union troops on the morning of Shiloh are described in Benson Lossing's *Our Country*.

All Grant material is from his *Memoirs*.

XI

Material on Miss Safford is from Mary Livermore's *My Story of the War*.

Material on Mrs. Porter is from *Eliza Chappell Porter, A Memoir*, by Mary H. Porter.

XII

The coffin story is in a letter from Mrs. Bickerdyke quoted by Julia Chase.

The list of articles washed at Corinth comes from Sarah Henshaw, *Our Branch and Its Tributaries.*

XIII

Judge Skinner's letter is from Sarah Henshaw, *Our Branch and Its Tributaries.*

XIV

Material on scurvy is from Sarah Henshaw, *Our Branch and Its Tributaries.*

Another version of the "She outranks me" story has as the occasion a complaint by an army doctor Mrs. Bickerdyke had denounced for drunkenness. Most of the accounts, however, link it with the refusal to nurse the colonel's child. There is also a little variation in the reports of General Sherman's words. I have quoted them here from Mrs. Livermore's *My Story of the War.* A newspaper account has him say, "H——, she ranks me!" I don't know about the "H——," but I think he did say "ranks." That was, and is, the army idiom. I suppose Mrs. Livermore changed it to make things clear to civilians. It is "outranks" on the Galesburg monument.

XV

The quotations on the Chicago Sanitary Fair are from Mary Livermore, *My Story of the War.*

Ovens and bread-making are described in Sarah Henshaw, *Our Branch and Its Tributaries.*

Mrs. Bickerdyke's speech defending her log-burning is from Annie Wittenmyer, *Under the Guns.*

Mother Bickerdyke's speech to the Milwaukee Chamber of Commerce is from Mary Livermore, *My Story of the War.*

XVI

The Sherman quotations are drawn from the *Personal Memoirs of General W. T. Sherman.*

Quotations on the Christian Commission are from Rev. Lemuel Moss, *Annals of the United States Christian Commission.*

XVII

The quotation on the Cairo Soldiers' Home is from Sarah Henshaw, *Our Branch and Its Tributaries.*

The circular on Special Diet Kitchens is from *The Palimpsest,* State Historical Society of Iowa.

Material on the Second Sanitary Fair is in Sarah Henshaw, *Our Branch and Its Tributaries.*

Material on the Christian Commission supplies is from Mary Livermore, *My Story of the War.*

Inspector-General Chandler's report on Andersonville is from *Harper's Pictorial History of the Rebellion.*

Material on Clara Barton is from Percy Epler, *The Life of Clara Barton.*

XVIII

The Logan telegram is quoted in Julia Chase's biography; also the quotation on clearing Beaufort hospital, and the telegram to Dr. Bellows.

Sherman quotations are from his *Memoirs.*

XIX

Julia Chase's biography is the source for material on Mrs. Bickerdyke's case book, grasshopper relief, and the quotation, "I can do no more. . . ."

"I did the work of one woman . . ." is from Mary Holland, *Our Army Nurses.*

XX

The Jimmy and Hi story is from a letter written to me by Mr. T. W. Wells, Hays, Kansas.

General Logan's letter is in Julia Chase's biography.

The quotation on "Johnnies" was in a *National Tribune* article, December 19, 1901.

The Boston visit and the prisoners' interest are described in Mrs. Livermore's book.

Mary Safford on union suits is quoted in Abba Woolson, *Dress Reform.*

The stepdaughter's obituary is quoted by Mrs. Chase from a Covington paper.

The pension appeal in verse is quoted by Mrs. Chase.

Mrs. Bickerdyke's letter on the Bickerdyke Home was written to Miss Nellie Ball at Fredericktown, Ohio, and is one of a file loaned me by Mr. F. Grant Ball.

XXI

Birthday festivities reports are quoted by Florence Kellogg from Bunker Hill and Russell newspapers.

Mrs. Bickerdyke on the same subject — another letter to her Cousin Nellie.

Material on Bickerdyke Day at the Baxter Springs Reunion is drawn from a letter to me from Mrs. Eulah S. Bulger, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Mrs. Bulger, granddaughter of the camp commandant, was present.

The newspaper interview is from the *Toledo Blade,* October 28, 1898.

The Toledo meetings and banquet, and Mrs. Bickerdyke's speech are from the *Proceedings of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee.*

The description of Mrs. Bickerdyke's death is from Julia Chase's biography.

Information on the S. S. *Mary A. Bickerdyke* was supplied by the New York office of the Robin Line, Seas Shipping Company. The vessel, renamed the *Atlantic Ocean,* now sails under the Honduran flag.

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