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THE STORY

OF

AUNT BECKY'S ARMY-LIFE.

BY

S. A. PALMER.

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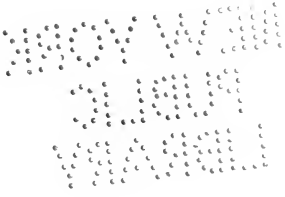

PREFACE.

In presenting the following unpretending story of the hospital-labors of Mrs. Sarah A. Palmer to the public, it was thought best to give it the autobiographical form, as it was found in her diary of three months, and in repeated and extended conversations with her almost daily during the period of its writing.

A full diary had been kept up to the occupation of City Point as a hospital-base, but was lost with a trunk of clothing, and never recovered.

She relies on memory for the date of many incidents, and should they be found incorrect, begs it to be remembered in extenuation of the errors, that her mind was so filled with the anxiety, and her body so wearied at times with watching, that it would be strange if everything was laid away in its proper niche in Memory's store-house.

There is no gild of fiction over this plain story; the events are related as they occurred, and hundreds will attest to their truthfulness.

That "Aunt Becky" was well beloved by the soldiers of the Ninth Corps, numerous and unobjectionable testimonials have been received. Said one soldier, who served three years in his regiment, "I never knew a woman so much thought of as she was by the boys—she never showed any partiality—we all got the same attention—officers no more than privates."

Said another, when asked if he ever knew a matron called "Aunt Becky," in the Army Hospital; "Know her—I guess I did—she saved my life;" and forthwith all business was dropped for the time, while he hastened to find her home.

With no thought of publishing her hospital life, it was suggested to her that she should do so, as a duty to herself, that through its sale some provision might be made for her future comfort.

With health broken by exposure, and spirit saddened by the many scenes of death which she witnessed, and the constant sight of painful wounds, she returned home, weary and worn, feeling, as she expressed it, "As though she had not had sleep enough for years." Not even allowing herself a week for rest, she went to hard and unremitting toil again.

It was talked of amongst the members of the One Hundred and Ninth Regiment, that a memorial should be presented to Congress, stating what her services had been, and asking an appropriation of

two thousand dollars with which to purchase her a home. The "Story" had been thought of in the meantime, and her reply was, "Let those who would help me buy a book, and then they will get the worth of their money. If I have done anything for my country's soldiers, I am glad of it; but Congress has enough of its own little bills to pay."

Now, with a heart too large for the slender frame which holds it, no weariness is brought up as an excuse when a sufferer calls for aid, and her readiness to watch by the bedside of the sick and dying is widely known, and many drafts are made and honored upon the broad humanity which, although "the feet were worn through till blood wet the shoe soles," has not withheld its hand from those who asked and needed help.

It was an undertaking from which many shrank, because the cry was loud, "It is no place for women," and although many dared to brave the tide, few held to post longer or more faithfully than she. Some swept with silken trains through the well-kept hospitals, ordering what should be done, and one, as she held up her sumptuous riding-habit with her jewelled hand, looking scornfully on the humbly-apparelled woman who was dressing a painful amputation, said, "That is no work for you."

But *her* heart said anything was her work which

would soothe one throb of pain, and she quietly kept on with her task.

There is no high-sounding record of what those women did, who, in plain, hoopless dress, recognized as army nurses, on a pay of twelve dollars a month, stood by the beds of death-struck soldiers—combing out locks of matted hair, binding up their wounds, and smoothing out the pillow when in the delirium of pain they called for mother, wife, or sister.

Hers was a hand which shrank from no festering wound, which recoiled not when the blood and dirt of the deadly trenches bespattered the torn uniform —she washed away the grime of battle smoke from faces unrecognizable through the mask surrounded with the locks of tangled and scorched hair. Her hand fed with pitying gentleness many a one whose good right arm, mangled by shot or shell, lay food for the worms. Surely a reward should be due her for this faithful toil, even if the pages of her story failed to bring an interest to those whose hearts have bled, and been well-nigh broken before the stroke of battle.

Many were "Unknown" who were brought into those hospitals—perhaps it was her hand which closed the eyes of him for whom *you* mourn—perhaps it was her hand which helped to make decent the shroud in which your noble one was brought home to you

so silent and cold, after the bullet had done its fearful work.

Many years will pass away, we trust, before another desolating war shall sweep over our land, but should the cry "To Arms," again resound over our hills and valleys, and our brave ones go to the hot affray, may her example, and the record of what one woman did to mitigate the horrors of the battle serve to endow other souls with equal courage, and when the Reaper sends his unripe harvest in, let there be

> "No dearth of woman's nursing
> And no dearth of woman's tears."

With these explanatory lines we respectfully submit to a generous public, which will not fail to deal fairly, the pages of this unpretending Story of Aunt Becky's Army Life.

SYLVIA LAWSON COVEY.

Ithaca, N. Y., *May* 10, 1867.

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THE STORY

OF THE

NINTH CORPS HOSPITAL MATRON.

CHAPTER I.

It is no record of bloody battles which these pages are opened to detail; neither do I purpose to depict the horrible scenes of carnage which made the "Sunny South" one red field of flame: only to show one weak woman's work amongst the sufferers gathered up from those dreadful slaughter-plains, and those driven in sick and exhausted from the unwonted exposure in camp and march, this work of recording is begun.

Standing firm against the tide of popular opinion; hearing myself pronounced demented—bereft of usual common sense; doomed to the horrors of an untended death-bed—suffering torture, hunger, and all the untold miseries of a soldier's fate; above the loud echoed cry, "It is no place for woman," I think it was well that no one held a bond over me strong enough to restrain me from performing my plain duty, fulfilling the promise which I made my brothers on enlistment, that I would go with them down to the scene of conflict, and be near when sickness or

the chances of battle threw them helpless from the ranks.

I found it *was* a place for woman. All of man's boasted ingenuity had been expended to devise terrible engines with which to kill and maim God's own image; and if war was right, it was right for woman to go with brothers, and husbands, and sons, that in the time of peril the heart might not faint with the thought of an untended death-bed in the crowded hospitals, where no hand but the rough soldier's should close the dead staring eyes.

It was something to brave popular opinion, something to bear the sneers of those who loved their ease better than their country's heroes, and who could sit down in peace and comfort at home, while a soldier's rations, and a soldier's tent for months and years made up the sum of our luxurious life.

Had there been more women to help us, many a brave man, whose bones moulder beneath the green turf of the South, would have returned to bless the loved ones left in the dear old home behind him. But all alone, while the shadow of the valley of death was fast stealing over the numbing senses, his spirit went back, and his white lips murmured words which the beloved so far away would have given worlds to hear; and we heard them, but could not repeat them from the dying lips.

It is past and gone. The long agony is over, and the nation breathes free. Yet hardly a heart or home but holds the remembrance of some brave one, near and dear, who gave his life to save his country's honor.

On the battle-field they fell, in tented hospitals, within noisome prison-pens breathed out the last breath of life, and counted it no loss if the glorious stars and stripes could but follow in the path which they helped to clear with tired, blistered feet, and blood dropping from throbbing wounds.

Should traitors again assay to grasp the helm of state, and the cry go up for succor, while the legions of young men spring armed from the North, let there be no words of sneering spoken to keep back those whose hearts go out with them, and who would gladly leave home, and friends, and comfort, to follow the brave one to the battle, and bind up his wounds when the day was won, and his life fast ebbing away with the gory stream, drawing, with every shifting sand, nearer and nearer the fountain. Let no one say, if war and its attendant sufferings be Christian, that where men are in the midst of the dreadful work, "it is no place for women."

The One Hundred and Ninth had been gone two weeks, and I did not care to leave till the change and exposure to which the raw regiment was unused had wrought sickness, and made my presence needed; and September 3d, 1862, I left Ithaca, N. Y., in company with one of our men, who had returned with the body of a comrade, killed by the cars while on guard-duty along the railroad, at Laurel Station, Md.

It was one of those rare mornings peculiar to that beautiful month. Deliciously cool, with soft breezes whispering in the tree-tops, then sweeping low to shake from the grass-blades a million of diamond

drops. No bird-songs thrilled the still pulses of air like those which charm the summer mornings; the deep hush of everything but soft-sighing winds seemed to rush over me with overwhelming sadness, till for a moment, as I thought of the two little girls whom I was leaving motherless, I felt a wild desire to return—a shrinking from the duties which I had undertaken, and sickened at the thought of dressing bloody wounds, of combing out hair tangled and matted with the thick gore—of being alone of my sex at times in the camp of soldiers, whose trade was death.

Then better feelings took possession of me, and I knew if they could suffer so much, and *die* for their country, I could at least give some years of my poor life in the attempt to alleviate their sufferings; and I took up my burthen of duties again, and watched listlessly the changing scenes along the road.

The cool September morning ripened into the hot, dusty day; still we kept on our journey, arriving at Baltimore, weary and hungry, on the morning of the 4th.

We went for a moment's rest and escape from the dust into the ladies' room, our empty stomachs suggesting the roundness and thickness of the flakes of flesh which once clung round the bare ham-bone lying on the shelf, and the probable age of the remnant of cheese over which the sprightly skippers were rioting.

We had no time to go in search of food, and our lunch had long since disappeared before the ravages of hunger, and soon were on board the cars again,

arriving at Bladensburg at ten o'clock A. M., finding Co. G., of the One Hundred and Ninth Regiment N. Y. V., my own band of gallant men.

The greeting assured me that I was welcomed, and when we unpacked the boxes of provisions which had been prepared by the hands of mothers, wives, and sisters in the old well-remembered kitchens at home, there was silence for a moment, as the heart of the soldier throbbed with a half-homesick feeling, then beat again in its patriotic measure, and voices grew loud and hilarious over "the box from home."

CHAPTER II.

I was anxious to find my work, and in the afternoon of our arrival, Captain Knettles went with me to Beltville, where the hospital had been established the day previous.

The building was an old three-story wooden house, which had been unoccupied for some months, and was in a ruinous condition. No fence separated it from the street—no shrubs or flowers marked it as the former abode of civilized men and women. The kitchen floor was level with the ground, and laid in brick; an arched fireplace yawning its black cavernous mouth at one end, and a similar one in the room opposite, which we used for a dining-hall.

I could romance as I wrought on the dirty floors, and put my hands to the work of cleansing. I could speculate on the joys and sorrows which had been born and nursed, and had died beside that hearthstone; but the half hundred men who, sick mostly with fevers and measles, lay on the damp, dirty floors —no pillows for the restless head, no beds for the aching body, nothing but the two blankets which each had drawn for covering, and pillow, and bed—all this forbade long speculation; my heart ached for their

hard condition, and studied how best to make them more comfortable.

I was eyed curiously by the strangers in the hospital, and overheard whispers of "She will soon play out," "It's a new broom that sweeps clean," as I went into the work with a will. I laughed to myself, for I knew my own strength. I had not come to the South with any purpose of shirking my duty wherever it lay.

They had provided no room for me, and I was obliged for the present to find some place in which to sleep and eat. I was fortunate enough to obtain board and lodging at the next door, where my room was with a crew of as hateful specimens of humanity as ever had a stepmother do duty over them.

I returned to Co. G. the next day, and stayed with a Union family named Boughtnot, where I met with a Mrs. Youngs, a cousin of Mrs. Southworth's, the authoress, and to her I took an exceeding fancy. Although "secesh" in principles, and her whole heart in sympathy with the rebel army, yet she nursed many a poor Northern soldier back to life, and gave him again to his country to fight those she loved.

My return to the hospital, and the beginning of its routine, was marked by my first meal at my new boarding-house. It consisted of the favorite dinner of boiled vegetables, and the seasoning of the whole cabbage came on to my plate alone, in the shape of a huge angle-worm, intact.

I thought, every one for himself, and ate my dinner in silence, keeping down as best I could the rebellious

upheavings of my stomach, which hardly relished such sauces of the ground.

At tea-time, I got in before the meal was ready, and found the mother holding the youngest "pet" on her knee, making him tidy for the appearance of the strange "hospital woman."

"Sisey" had put on her dishwater, like a thrifty housewife, before the meal, and it being quite handy, and "pet's" hair in tangles, "Ma" wet the comb therein, that the curls might more readily yield to the gentle pulling process. That over, and the hair in order, the dishcloth, which lay handy on the table corner, was called into requisition, to wipe the dirt from the little snubby nose and freckled face, greatly to my disgust.

Think of it, when I was hungry, and waited for my supper!

All night a brindle pup belonging to the owner of the house kept up its howling, driving sweet sleep from my eyelids, and bringing to mind the old superstition, that death was waiting for some one without those doors then following thought over to the hospital, where, in the languor of fever, some were listening to the call.

For five days I endured the bad meals, and the night's disturbed repose, when I told the steward I could stand it no longer. The nurses gave me their own room, and fitted it up very pleasantly for my accommodation. They were all so kind to me that I felt fully repaid for all privations which I underwent, and the consciousness that I was doing some good to

those sick and suffering men, soothed down the home-sickness which would come, now and then, at thought of children and home.

The Autumn was mellowing the tints of the trees —the strange trees, and the bristling pines shot up like lances against the blue sky, while I looked away to the North, and pictured to myself the fearful aspect of the hills, and the low-lying valleys, while around me the foot-prints of War wore plainly into the trodden dust.

Our trio of surgeons, consisting of Drs. Hunt, Johnson, and French, were very kind to the men, treating them like patients at home, willing and able to pay the just fee for attendance, not as in after months I saw men treated, while my woman's blood boiled up, and run over—when a man was less than a dumb beast, because if he died there was no market value lost.

I had been in Hospital three weeks, when I was prostrated with an attack of pleurisy, which kept me from duty a few days, and I learned afterwards, that serious doubts had been entertained of my recovery. Had I doubted before in what respect and gratitude I was held, I could do so no longer, when the inquiries relating to "Aunt Becky's" situation came pouring in.

My recovery was rapid, and again I went on duty. Our food was substantial, consisting of bread, potatoes, pork, beans, beef, rice, tea, coffee, and sugar, while by the kindness of neighbors we were often treated to milk, eggs, and chickens.

Often, in the after months of our sojourn, we contrasted our fare at Beltville with the hard tack and coffee, and, unseasoned as it was with luxuries, it seemed delicious indeed.

One by one our men died—no friends around them, only some soldier comrade, so low in fever and delirium as to be half unconscious also. My work was hard;—many a night I went to bed but not to sleep;—my pillow was coarse straw, and every motion which I made in my restlessness, rattled its contents, and sent up new bristling stems to thrust them into my head and face.

At our next door—my old boarding place, they still kept the howling brindle pup, and one day as I dropped in for a moment, I chanced upon the final scene of its brief career. Our steward had given him a dose of something effective, and as his master was playing roughly with him, calling him into his lap to show his sprightliness, he leaped into the air—shuddered, and fell dead. I shed no tears over his untimely demise.

Our Chaplain made us a visit, bringing a trunk of Hospital clothing from the ladies of Binghamton, some fruit from Sanitary at Washington, and a firkin of butter from Owego. The last was a seasonable gift,—now we could butter the toast for our convalescing men, while before we were obliged to use salt and water, sometimes seasoned with a spoonful of milk.

The clothing enabled us to change the fever-saturated garments of our patients, and the fruit cooled

the parched tongues of some who would never taste the like again.

One of our fever-patients received a box from home, sent in the kindly spirit which forwarded so many tokens to the boys, but it proved his death. He was recovering, and his weakened mind clung to this last link from those he loved, and was content only with the box beside his bed. I begged to be allowed to keep it safely for him, but could not obtain his consent, and he ate of the cake surreptitiously, rapidly grew worse, and died.

Two deaths from Co. G. occurred about the same time.

CHAPTER III.

We proposed a Thanksgiving dinner, but Dr. Hunt thought we could not get one up for the whole Hospital, but I, being a private myself, was unwilling to assist in cooking dainties for the officers alone, and the matter was given over to me to manage in my own way.

Four days previous to the day, I gave in my requisition for the solid things which should flourish at the feast.

My order was for two pigs, seven turkeys, five chickens, beef, rice for puddings, seasoning for pies and cake, and with bread and vegetables, I thought our table would be well furnished for the occasion.

We had one hundred and eighteen names on our dinner-list, yet some were not able to eat a full supply. Matters began to look doubtful to me, as my order was not filled at the time I wished to prepare them, and the steward, with some of the boys, got permission to go out into the country, and see what they could obtain.

They returned with wild and tame turkeys, and pigs, and chickens, and we were soon on the high road to success.

Our pies Coleman and I made at night, and I cut out two hundred biscuit, thinking bread would eke out the supply, but we must have some of our home fixings, or it would not seem like Thanksgiving.

Our cooks, Stillman, West, Quick, and Georgie, prepared the vegetables, and Thanksgiving came.

Thanksgiving! How thought went back to our homes in the North, where the snow lay over the dead leaves, on the sear grainfields, and on the orchard paths, where the moss clung to the rocks and fences along the way. In the dear homes, by the warm fires they talked of us, who were so far away, and going on, no one knew how soon, into the valley of battle-fields, some—ah many, never more to set foot upon those homeward paths, never more to cheer the loved ones who would wait their coming till the certainty of death broke the heart with its convulsive terror.

In the midst of so much preparation I could not indulge much sadness, and a box arriving to me from home, running over with just the things which I needed to crown the feast—cake and butter, and enough to go around withal, I felt a thankfulness which was in strict accordance with the day.

Our men had an excellent dinner. The table looked as homelike as we could make it by spreading sheets over it, and the new tin cups and plates, with the knives and forks, were laid neatly upon it.

We set the table for the officers in the steward's room, also spreading sheets thereon for a cloth, and the little handkerchiefs of cotton which the Binghamton ladies had sent for the use of our sick men, we

used for napkins;—we were anxious to support some style while yet in the regions of civilization.

Adjutant Hopkins, forgetting that we should need them for the destined purpose ultimately, pocketed his, and was called back to deliver it up, amidst much laughter. They would soon forget the use of napkins in the camp, and on the hard marches; we could excuse it if he had passed into partial forgetfulness thus early in the day.

Col. Ireland of the One Hundred and Thirty-Seventh N. Y. V. took dinner with us, and seemed to enjoy the occasion.

I put my hands to all the work which lay in my way;—now washing—now mending—now making a toast, or cup of tea for a sick man, yet the days were long at times, and the nights endless, and sleepless. And yet I was not sorry to be where I was, I was not homesick—I would not have returned if I could.

Some jokes were perpetrated, and some patients suspected of not helping Nature in rapid recovery,—still it was hard to think this of men who had done all the duty thus far required of them.

We had one man who "did not complain of feeling very well,"—his lungs were bad, and I proposed blistering. He had few friends, for above all a true soldier despises a sneak, and such we thought him to be—whispering and drawing his face into unusual length whenever he came near the steward or myself—of whom he was a little in fear, having been told that we were "cross."

Some of the boys in the secret said I would not

induce him to submit to a blister, but I thought differently, and proposed mustard at first, which hurt some, but did not effect the cure,—he was still "weak in the lungs." Next, a blister of Spanish flies, well rubbed with vinegar to make it adhere, was applied, and he was *cured.*

We were very tired of him before he went away, but his blister served him one good purpose, whenever after that he was ordered to go on duty, all he had to do was to lay his hand on his lungs, and he was excused.

In the month of Jan., 1863, we were ordered to move to Laurel, to join those sick at that place—our hospital having been divided heretofore. The steward's mother was with us at that time, and once again I enjoyed the society of a woman, to whom I could talk without restraint. So strange it had seemed to me—no faces but those of bearded and mustached men.

I was anxious to go, for those whom I had come to the seat of war to tend in sickness were there. I took the cars, in company with a Mrs. Bennett, on a cold windy day, when the sun would peer at us by snatches, while white clouds with inky borders, as though they had dipped down into the troubled mire of earth in their flight, went hurriedly over the blue sky above us.

It was a dreary place to which we went, but I was welcomed to it so heartily, and found my room so cosy, I took it with a sigh of relief.

Our hospital buildings consisted of an old store, and

a two-story dwelling house. As we had but little to move, only the precious sick, it took but a short time to settle ourselves, and be at home in Laurel Hospital, and our sick-list numbered only twelve men.

We were in the midst of a rich farming country, and as we tired of our bare rations, the boys made frequent requisitions on the neighbors, and drew a pig, then a turkey, then a goose, using all strategems, deeming them always fair in love and war, and the people were only loyal as they stood in fear of Northern bayonets.

Our cellar was open to the light of the sun, our door having fallen in, and, like tenants who expect to move in a week or so, and having no particular love for the landlord, we had delayed repairing it.

The boys enticed two pigs into it one day, regaling themselves in prospect of the delicious roast, which in savory sweetness lay palpitating beneath the bristling hide of the unthinking porkers. They had them nicely captured, and accustomed to the place, when Dr. Johnson was prompted by some spirit to go into the cellar, and out ran a pig. He asked me how it happened—pigs in the cellar—and I, not knowing how to account for it, said the boys must have concluded not to keep their pigs over, but had driven them in preparatory to the slaughtering.

Surgeon Hunt left us at Laurel, and Dr. Churchill, from Owego, took his place. We were very sad to part with him, for he had proved himself a kind, humane man—a friend to us all, and we had trusted in him to do so much for the recovery of the sick.

Dr. French went to Annapolis Junction to take charge of some of our regiment stationed there, and our medical corps was sadly broken up. Our sick-list swelled to thirty names, mostly down with fever, and my brother amongst them, prostrate with typhoid fever.

We had enough to eat, and comforts for the sick in a measure, and a box arriving from Sandy Springs, a few miles distant, sent by a Mrs. Deborah Lee, containing wine, jelly, and pickles, furnished cooling drinks for the sick, and many a little bit of relish for the convalescing.

Often we had chickens, and a cow would be milked by some unknown "fairy," and the contents of the pail deposited in our kitchen before the sun was up in the morning.

March, which brought its bitter winds to our Northern hills, came to us with now and then a clear sunny day—a promise of the coming spring. With every streak of golden light came a wild throbbing at my heart, for battles would be fought again—the contending forces only waited for the work of nature's hand to begin again the carnival of death. When her sweet breath had breathed life into the bud, and stem, and tangles of bloom rose in the waste places —then the blue sky with its fresh smile would be clouded with the thick smoke of battle, and the tender grass be dyed with the blood of human hearts.

How could the flowers open in those trampled dells again, where under the blooming tangles the root was yet wet with the gore of last year's carnage?

But nature smiles, let man desolate as he will; her kindly hand begins with every recurring spring-time the work of renovation. The grass grows ranker where some heart spilled its life blood, and where some soldier's bones lie mouldering beneath, the grain grows heavy in its unripened richness, bending its tassels to the very ground. O! doth it not strive to hide with its tangled beauty the devastation which man's hand hath wrought?

CHAPTER IV.

Death waited often at our door. Some lay very low, while every attention which it was possible to give was rendered unto them. Our faithful nurses wrought over the sick-beds with constant fervor. Their names—Jacobs, Gager, Robertson, and Stevens—will always be remembered by me, when somehow I, like the rest of womankind, are apt to forget that men may have tender, sympathetic hearts.

Jacobs' wife came to stay with her husband for a time, and I highly appreciated her society, and realized how much is always lost in the absence of women from any place where human beings congregate.

One young man named Raymond was very low, and in the uncertainty of his recovery we sent for his parents, who came on immediately. I had known them before coming out to the army, and the familiar faces were like a glimpse of home to the heart-sick wanderer.

They remained a week, and left him recovering, but how anxiously their thoughts dwelt around the boy whom they were leaving in the care of soldier nurses—the boy who had never known one hour of sickness,—but his mother was beside him, to smooth

his pillow, and relieve his pain. How on the homeward journey their hearts came back to him, lying on the bare hospital bed, when the little white-curtained room at home was empty, and with all its comforts, and the plenty around, lone and unused.

Such visits were very frequent from the North, at the beginning of the war, but as the strangeness grew into a familiar thing, and it was nothing new to hear of "the boys" being ill in hospital, and later of suffering from wounds received in battle, the difficulty of reaching them increased, and many a poor fellow died, yearning for his mother, when in her heart agony she was denied the comfort of receiving his dying words.

The cruel war of the Rebellion taught many a strange, sad lesson to us all, it made tongues familiar with tales of starvation, and death in prisons, and wrought descriptions of wounds so horrible, that the heart and soul grew sick, remembering the comeliness of the young soldier, who, in his suit of blue, marched proudly away to the war, and now—Oh, the wreck of beauty and manliness is hard to dwell upon.

To vary the monotony of our life, sometimes, in company with some hospital visitor, we would go in an ambulance to Washington, and, of course, inspected the public buildings while there, as did every nurse and soldier whose time allowed the stroll.

Of course my eyes opened wide as they looked on pillar, and dome, and fresco, and gilding, and marble whiteness. I am not to attempt any formal description of what has been given in detail time and time

again, so that even those whose eyes have never rested on the huge white piles, covering acres and acres, have something of a correct idea of the glory of our nation's capitol.

In passing through them one sees many rich and noble things, so much dazzling whiteness and glare that the eye wearies with the grandeur, and would fain turn away to rest on some little patch of green, fresh with showers, stretching out before a tiny cot, suggesting quiet home peacefulness, but sees it not.

The great wide streets look like dreary commons over which the ranging cattle have made beaten tracks—there is a dreary monotony about the muddy stretch, so unlike our northern streets, that one is glad to escape from them anywhere out into the free country beyond.

It was once a great thing to visit the Capitol; now, where is the home in the North out of which some member, friend or relative has not passed, to stand under the shadow of the marble dome, and the tasselled curtains of the White House lost many a bit of silken fringe which lies to-day, with moulder clay from Petersburg and Fort Fisher, and shivers of granite from Sumter, and battle relics and prison tokens, in treasure-boxes all over the land.

The war developed one thing at least—a thorough knowledge to many, of the extent and grandeur of the public buildings at Washington.

I was glad to remember the Smithsonian Institute, as it stood with its noble works of art before the

flames rioted upon them. I visited it only the day before it was burned.

The Patent Office bewildered and amazed me—so much brain had been expended in fashioning those implements of useful industry. In their perfect finish, they told so many tales of years of privation and toil, when the soul, still confident of success, and sure of its powers, kept the hand at its cunning, rising above the want which perchance looked in at the window, and now the object was obtained. Was it the worker who reaped the reward—who saw his name enrolled on the list of benefactors to the human kind?

Many sad thoughts peopled those buildings for me; yet I am glad to remember that I too have been under the shadow of the Republic's glory, as expressed in the Capitol and other public buildings at Washington.

I wondered if the silken and velvet robes which trailed down the white steps covered hearts which beat like mine. After all, does the golden glint from piles of wealth throw any softer light out unto the world around for those who look over it? does any stronger throb of patriotism urge those pulses when all the world holds the name on its tongue? had those hands any potent power for healing which was denied us, who passed in lowly garb?

Who could tell? But I had no envy for the ease which had rusted its lines into those once fair faces, shaded now in their wan waxen whiteness by folds of soft, costly laces. I felt only a pity that those jewelled hands would not find a work as I had, into which

heart and soul had entered, which brought in its faithful performance the peace of a life well filled and spent.

April came to us as sunny as when a child I used to wander in the woods by Cayuga's side, searching for all the sweet flowers which sprung up from the dark rich wood mould. I thought to how many this was the last Spring which should drop its flowery offerings at their feet.

Dying men looked into my face beseechingly, and I could give them no hope. They called for wife, and mother, and child in the swift workings of delirium, but no wife, or mother, or child could stand by the death-bed, to hear, as I heard, the dying words.

One lay even then, while the April sun was shining so brightly, asking for her who had promised to stand by him in sickness and in health—in the ravings of his sick fancy calling me by the dear name of her he loved, so happy for the moment to believe she had come to tend him, and nurse him back to life; and while he talked of what they would do when he was at home once more, how my heart ached for the woman who knew not that a few hours would leave her widowed.

Not till the soul had left the precious dust would she know how she was bereft, and the only comfort, if comfort it could be called, would be to gaze upon those mute lips which her own had pressed but a little while before in parting, and know that never a throb of life would pulsate through that still heart again. and the green grass would grow in long summer

days over the silent dust of her soldier husband, starred with the daisies, and wet with God's showers and diamond dew, under the shadow of his native hills.

I experienced naught but kindness, where I had been warned of a soldier's roughness, and I was very content with my work, so long as the eyes of sick men followed me about and grew brighter at my approach. So still it made my life to feel that some little good was growing out of it, when so much was wasted.

Colonel Tracy and Lieut.-Col. Catlin visited us, and both were interested in everything pertaining to our boys, providing for them as fathers would provide for children. How the nobleness of such souls shone out in the fiery struggle through which they passed. Men were tried as by a fire at red heat, and if dross made up the measure of humanity, there it lay an ashen heap.

These were men who would not ask others to go where they could not lead—men who would divide rations and money to the last with a private soldier, and would not feel their manhood dishonored. Men on whom the dignity of office was in no way cast down by sympathy with the common soldier—whose Democratic spirits recognized the fact, that "*All* men are created free and equal," and a shoulder-strap had no signification of higher material than earthly dust having been incorporated in the frame, which a shot or shell made as easy prey for worms as though it struck through the coarse blue of the private in the ranks.

I occasionally went from the hospital to visit the

different companies of the regiment; going once in April with one of our nurses, Ira Gager, who had lost his voice, and, consequently, I had quite a silent ride.

Everywhere the touch of the awakening Spirit! Everywhere the evidence of the beauty which Summer's sunlight would ripen into Autumn's golden fruitage!

Soon the May blossoms nodded by the road side, and the orchards stood filled with perfumed globes, which flung out rose-tinted streamers when the wind passed them by.

I bethought me of our over-burthened geese, which needed stripping of their downy plumage, and with help from the boys, they were soon secured, and the preparations made.

But I was disturbed in my work by the appearance of an old "Secesh," looking for his stray geese, which, strange to say, were two in number, one gray, one white. Singular that mine should be of these colors; his with clipped wings, so were mine; but I was defiant—I was a woman; and as he stood eyeing me with gaping mouth and staring look, the echo of a smothered laugh from manly throats just inside the door, warned him to leave the contest, and another pillow was added to our store.

The boys often brought in honey—and how could honest throats relish such stolen sweets? but they did nevertheless. War makes strange havoc with civilized principles.

CHAPTER V.

The returning Spring brought anxious thoughts to my heart. How long, I asked myself, will our regiment be detained on guard-duty, and escape the fatigue of marches and the chances of battle. I listened eagerly for any flying report; but May's fairy fingers fringed the borders of the dusty road, and Hooker's men fought again on the old contested ground, to retreat wearily and hurriedly across the river, to leave their seventeen thousand comrades dead, wounded, or prisoners.

We followed them in thought to the river's side, where they contended for a passage and won it—to the heights of Fredericksburg, where victory crowned their charging columns; then through reverse and retreat, and the final recrossing of the river to encamp on the old ground; to miss so many faces, to hearken vainly for voices which had strengthened the courage of many a one whose heart recoiled at the prospect of bloody battle.

Spring rapidly glided into the early Summer, and rumors of Lee's approach suggested descents upon the railroad, and our regiment now on strict duty, almost envying the soldiers of the Army of the Potomac,

whose *bivouac* for the night had lengthened into an encampment for days.

Silence at last fell over the movements of the army. Rumors were flying thick and fast. Now General Lee was within eight miles of Sandy Springs, and our boys caught the scent of the battle afar off. It was the first glow of the fire for them, and produced quite a sensation in camp; and in the hospital the sick lay, uncertain whether they were to fall into the hands of an enemy, or listen to the victorious shouts of their comrades as they drove the rebels back.

The troops at Annapolis Junction came on the double quick to Laurel to join the regiment, and the excitement ran high. Many were elated with the prospect of a sight at the foe—some who faced him months after, and were stricken down by the fatal shot which sought and reached the heart.

The citizens were panic-stricken. Women and children with white faces waiting for the beat of the rebel drums, and men standing in mute terror, gazing upon their homes which a few hours hence might be smouldering in ashes, nothing left to remind the stranger of what now stood, in sightly peace, a human habitation.

One man, who had since our forces were stationed there, floated the stars and stripes from his dwelling, pulled them down. If the "Johneys" came they wouldn't disturb him—you know. His loyalty was of the safe kind; he had no idea of sacrificing to either friend or foe.

The women connected with our hospital were in

a great state of trepidation—some even packing up their clothing, in case they were taken prisoners.

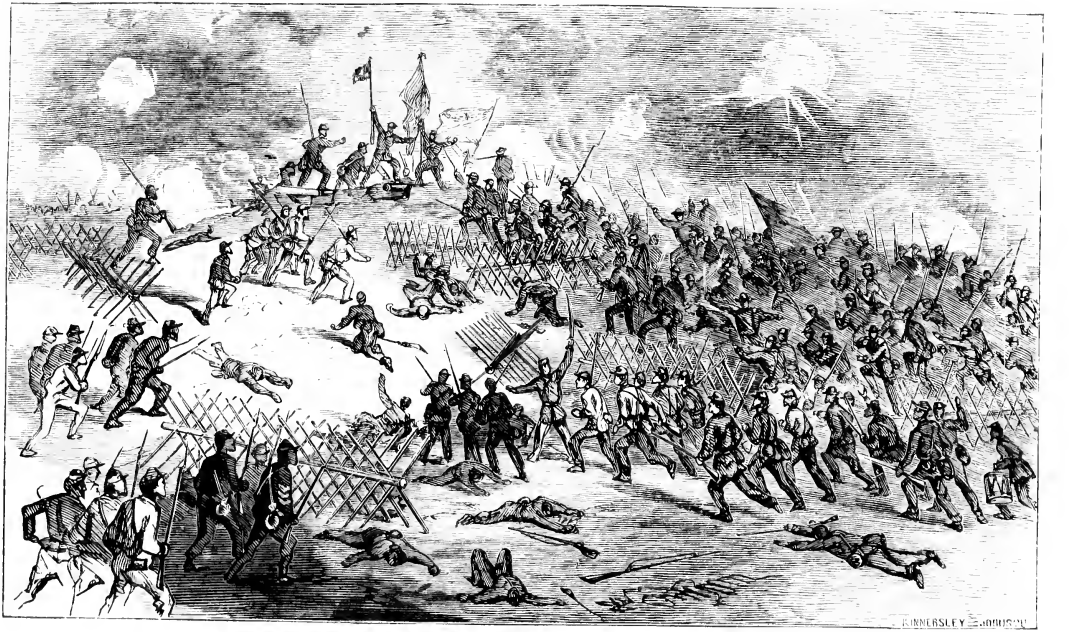
I was excited, as was natural, but had no notion of being carried off by Gen. Lee's posts. But the days passed, and quiet settled upon us again, as we learned that the alarm had been occasioned by the presence of raiders, foraging on the farms near Sandy Springs.

It was too bad to disappoint so many who made loud protestations of bravery, but there was many a sigh of relief heard that no sound of rebel drums echoed along the valley, and no rattle of musketry proclaimed the meeting of hostile forces.

Now the grand army had broken camp, and were again on the move, no one could tell where, while Lee's men swept like a whirlwind through Maryland, and up into Pennsylvania, and men rallied to the defence of their homes; with hands unused to labor, they took spade, and shovel, and pick, and went into the work.

It must be a good thing to stir up the patriotisms of stagnant blood in the human heart. Those who had listened to prudential reasoning of business cares, now trusted the intricate work to other hands, and proved themselves capable of brave things—when the war was to be waged over their own hearths.

The latent soul fired up, and the coward who took his life, and left home and friends, beareth forever after the mark upon his forehead. Better to die one brave death fighting over the bodies of the slain, than to die the thousand deaths of fear which convulse the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heart of the coward. No Paradise waits for his successive ghosts,—the hell of despair yawns at his feet, and blindly he stumbles into its depths, while the land of Beulah awaits the soul of the dying brave.

We heard the boom of the far-away cannons, when the feet of hostile forces paused on the sacred hill at Gettysburg. The vibrations were plainly felt like the tremblings of an earthquake, and we knew that men were being cut down like ripened grain. The silence of days was broken, and men talked of the dreadful heat on the dusty highway, where soldiers fell prostrate by hundreds, stricken down by sunstroke.

Eager eyes sought every scrap of information from the daily journals,—and waited, hoping for the best.

Lee's army, laden with spoils, went back into Virginia, uncaptured, and no one knew why,—so sure they were if a conflict was risked every rebel gray-back would be taken prisoner of war.

Hundreds came from the North to visit the field for relics—dead bodies were stripped, and the harness taken from bloated horses lying rotting where they were killed,—it was safe to indulge curiosity and acquisitiveness then, with Gen. Lee miles and miles away, and only the boys in blue with their loyal guns to guard the field.

Two visitors came to our hospital thence. It was whispered about that their eagerness for relics had caused them to indulge in undue freedom with proscribed things, and in consequence they were obliged

to dig the grave for a horse's festering carcass, and bury it within.

Such was the tale, however true it might be, and those hands unused to labor, in that hot July sun, must have blistered with the heavy work. The relics, if they were retained, have a weightier meaning for them, no doubt, than the bare fact of being gathered from the battle-field of Gettysburg.

I went to Annapolis Junction to see the wounded, who, five hundred in number, were lying in the hospitals at that place.

It was the first sweep of battle-harvest which I had seen—yet, there was nothing at that late day to offend the senses, all was clean and neatly kept,—the wounds carefully hid. I heard but few groans telling of anguished suffering from those white lips.

Dr. Wheeler, afterwards in charge of the Division hospital, was in charge here.

I returned almost surprised and disappointed that my feelings had received no shock. Conjuring up in fancy the scenes which attended each removal from the bloody ground on which they fell,—the dusty uniform dyed with patches of gore—the faces blackened with powder smoke, and the life stream slowly ebbing away on to the trampled grass—but nothing of this appeared. So little one can tell who visits a hospital after the wounded are cared for, as I found months after, when I stood watching the gory procession brought into the tents, for our hands to minister unto.

Perhaps it was better for me that none of these

terrible signs met my eyes till in the first search after my regiment, the anxiety which hastened my steps on and on was a kind of armor-plate to my tenderer sympathies.

CHAPTER VI.

Summer's heat burned into the heart of the grasses, and they withered to spring up again under the cool dew of Autumn nights. The foe made no more northern demonstrations, and we slipped back into the old routine again.

Our convalescents sometimes made raids into the woods, and captured the pigs which fattened them. We had one on an eventful day roasted to delicious perfection, and waited for the meal, when one of the boys came hurrying in, while visions of the guard-house disturbed his agitated digestion, saying, as he went, close to my ear,

"O! Aunt Becky, hide the pig—Col. Tracy is coming."

Aunt Becky said, "No, Col. Tracy will stay to dinner, and shall eat of it—it is so nicely done—you know."

And he did remain, and as he sat at the table eyed me sharply for a moment, then smiled, and ate the roasted pig as any honest soldier would when he knew it was fattened on rebel stores.

Nothing ever came to the boys of the lost pigs, although a sharp search was made for them soon after. Sick men of course could not know, and we

women were not adepts at capturing the lank specimens of porkology which only needed kinks tied in their tails to keep them within the bounds of a rail-fenced wood-lot.

One of our men—Private A. M. West, died in August, and his father and wife came on in time to catch the last fleeting breath, although he was too far gone to recognize them. Still it was a comfort to be with him in the death hour—perhaps his spirit was conscious, if the body made no sign—and in after years they will remember when the grass is thick with many summers' growth, that hands which he had clasped in love, closed his dead eyes, and bore his pale clay back to the quiet churchyard, to sleep far from the shock of coming battles.

September returned, and I had been gone from home one rolling year. The golden haze hung over hill and wood top, and a homesickness came over me, which I could neither reason away nor subdue. I longed for the dear old spot again with childish furor; —I could not be witheld longer, except I saw for a while the faces of friends and children, and felt once more the surging waves of civilization sweeping around me again, far from camp, and hospital, and battle array.

I took the cars, having obtained leave of absence for a few days, and hurried home. Still my heart was with its work, and the visit which I thought would be so pleasant, was crowded with anxious thoughts of the boys, who might any day be ordered to the front, or might sicken and die, and I away.

I received intelligence of the proposed moving of the hospital to Falls Church, Virginia, and that I was needed to help make the change.

I returned to Laurel, having been absent thirteen days. It was the only break in my hospital life for nearly three years, for while so much was to be done, and so few hands for the work, I could never bring my homesick heart to desert its post, although alone of my sex in the hospital at City Point—weary and dejected at times, and sick of man's heartlessness and cruelty.

Soul and body, both were in the work, and strange as it may seem a fascination pervaded it which amidst all its trials and privations still kept the tired hands at the task, and they would not accept release.

The autumn waned, still the armies kept the field, doing enough of their bloody work to fill the land with mourning, and the hospitals with sick and wounded men.

The raw winds of November still found them on the offensive, and wearied but brave, many a soldier chose the excitement and din of march and fight, rather than the monotonous months of camp life, when the mud was knee deep, and cold, drenching rains froze on the tent-roof, and raw winds crept like thieves through the thin walls of his unsubstantial shelter.

The desolation of winter flaunted its signs in our faces, as with wild, gusty breath the departing autumn blew down the dead, discolored leaves, and the rain penetrated the thick uniform of our guards, suggesting,

by contrast, the warm fires at home, around which gathered forms which he saw now only in dreams of the night.

How often they talked of their soldier, unconscious of the storm which beat upon his head.

The regiment had orders to move in this dreary time —a part going to Mason's Island across from Georgetown, and a part to Falls Church, Virginia, to which latter place I was assigned, and glad to go. The monotony of our long stay at Beltville was becoming wearisome, and we longed for a change.

It was like breaking camp to the brave soldier, whose spirit is fired with the prospect of coming battles, and who longs to forget in the excitement of marches, hoping to meet the enemy, those dull days of life, when the sameness had become almost unbearable.

So I was eager to go. Dr. French procured transportation for the sick, cooks, and nurses, but forgot me in the hurry of the transaction. I told him to make himself easy about it—I thought I could "cheek" it through.

The pass called for the exact number of privates, nurses, and so on, and Major Morell, our paymaster, thought I could not do it. When the conductor came around, asking me for my ticket, I said, "I belong to the Hospital of the One Hundred and Ninth N. Y. Volunteers."

He straightened himself up, saying, "This pass calls for only so many privates."

"Nevertheless," I replied, "I am supposed to be a

private—I don't wear shoulder straps," and he said I could go on, and left me, doubtless revolving in his mind the wisdom of allowing such a reply to "pass" a woman, and being wholly unable to see the point.

We arrived at Mason's Island a little after noon, and having there a brother's wife, who had come out to remain with her husband while in camp, I remained there over night. It was a hurrying scene in the gray November afternoon, when the ferry-boat touched the landing, and the sick who were to be left there were taken in ambulances to the hospital.

There was greeting of friends who had been separated for months—and a glad, homelike feeling throbbed through those sluggish pulses at the sight of familar faces.

The next morning I recrossed the ferry, and went in an ambulance to Falls Church, eight miles distant. The ride was very pleasant in the cool November sunshine, where the leaves rustled down, dry and dead, with every breath of wind, all colored as I had seen them always by my own home which bordered on Cayuga lake.

And as I rode I tried to think myself winding along the roads which by and by would give me a glimpse of the bright waters, with the white breakers running in wild play over them. But again I looked on my strange carriage;—we did not ride then from neighbor to neighbor in vehicles made to take the wounded from the battle-field, and I was myself again —the hospital nurse, going to her new field of duties.

It seemed long—very long since September went,

and I had taken the hurried peep at home and children, and the uncertainty of the next meeting filled me with sadness, which almost ripened into actual homesickness, when I beheld the great barren church, which the hand of war had arrested in its completion.

The gaunt skeleton, with its huge ribs uncovered, stood grinning, waiting for the sick to enter the door, and my work lay before me. Any unfinished building appears desolate and gloomy—we shudder as though the frame work of some human body stood before us, waiting to be clothed in fleshy habiliments.

I could not remain there until some arrangements could be made for comparative comfort, and while the boys procured lumber, and finished me off quite a comfortable little room, I staid with a Union family —a Mrs. Chapel by name ; and as we had only five names on our sick-list, and none in immediate danger, the work was lighter than with the burthen of anxiety weighing down the heart.

CHAPTER VII.

Our regiment was now broken indeed. Co. G was left at Bladensburg, Co. B and Co. I were about two miles from Falls Church, others were at Mason's Island, and a part with us. Yet they were enjoying themselves, and had many a privilege which was denied the soldier in camp.

The long roll beat one night, and the order for our boys to double quick it a mile, to where the Second District lay, for a band of raiders were supposed to be there. Excited, but fearless, they reached the spot in time to find that the alarm was only occasioned by the pickets firing upon an old white horse which, in his ghostly garb, had startled them with visions of a surprise.

The boys laughed as heartily as any one over the joke, some, in their hearts, no doubt, glad that the enemy was not a formidable force of desperate men, which had roused them from slumber in the December midnight.

The weather was quite severe for the climate, but we were as comfortable as could be expected.

While at Falls Church I visited one afternoon with Capt. Gordon's wife. They had a room, and

were keeping house. Her furniture must have been quite in contrast to that which was waiting them when the war should be over, in the old home—one cross-legged table, two chairs, a camp-stool, a trunk, and a bed in the corner completed the inventory. When we took our tea, the trunk was drawn up to the table to make the third seat, soldiers making but little display for company.

Mrs. Gordon did the cooking over a huge open fireplace. I could have imagined myself in some pioneer settler's cabin, if the room had been walled with unhewn logs, and the ceiling unplastered; as it was, I remembered how many comfortable afternoons I had been out to tea with a neighbor, when we had no war items to talk over—no hopes and fears for the dear ones in peril to express, and I wondered if any of them ever proved any pleasanter or more profitable than this.

I had but little acquaintance with Mrs. Gordon previous to this visit, but knew she was thoroughly good, and eminently womanlike.

A "molasses lick" was a moral feature in our winter entertainments, and Dr. French and I were invited to attend one at the boarding-place, by Lieut. Waterford's wife. We went, of course, and waited patiently until eleven o'clock, and finding out that the molasses was not likely to come to the "licking" point till past midnight, we returned home without it.

At Christmas Mrs. Major Morell sent us a turkey for our dinner, and we had a feast. Private Close

helped me cook, and do the work of the hospital, and I learned to rely greatly on his thoroughness and ability, and will always remember his kindness of heart to all who needed his assistance.

We were at Falls Church three months, when the Second District Volunteers were ordered into our places, and we were again to move.

My youngest brother was brought in on the eve of our departure, prostrate with lung disease, and as I could not leave him to the care of strangers, Dr. French left me a man, Private Haywood, to help me take care of him. Procuring rooms at Mrs. Chapel's I had him moved there, and staid to my lonely task.

The Dr. had little hope of his recovery, but I could not give him up without a desperate struggle. I saw the ambulances move away with our patients, and felt how desolate it was to be alone with strangers, fearing the approach of death to one who was as dear as my own child to my heart, for I had tended him in infancy as a mother tends her babe.

Five days of unremitting watchfulness over him, and Dr. Woodbury gave him up to die before the morning dawned again.

Haywood was stricken with the same disease, and with delirium and the prospect of speedy death I grew almost wild in my exertions to save him. I had slept none for three weeks only by snatches, while my brother slept, and but for the kindness of the women of the house my heart would have sunk entirely.

But the disease was arrested in its progress, and

he became better, and once more I felt as though I had breathed the air of freedom.

Haywood was also recovering, and I felt that I could leave them in safety, and go to Mason's Island. One branch of our hospital had been moved to Alexandria, and the steward, after a visit there, brought back the sad intelligence of the death of one of our best nurses, Squire Gager, who died of small-pox in the pest-house.

We shuddered to think of the death by that loathsome disease, from which it is no wonder that every civilized being shrinks in trembling horror, and mourned him as one of our noblest men—so patient with the irritable sick soldiers' fancies—so kind to all.

We could ill spare such men when the work which we came out do was only begun. But who shall tell when the harvest is ripe, and the reaper gathers in his own, grown golden and heavy for the fall?

I went by way of Alexandria, looking in upon those whose constant attendant I had been for months, then crossed to Mason's Island, and took up my quarters in the camp.

My tent was made very cosy and comfortable; the boys ceiled it up, and laid a floor, and the Adjutant gave me his stove, which, insensate thing, black and bare as it was, seemed the dearest relic from the land of civilization—I could cook many a little delicacy over it for the sick. I had an iron bedstead, a chair, a stand made by the boys, and with my trunk I never felt richer in worldly possessions.

We had some men very low now. One a mere boy—dying so far away from his home. His brother, also a youth, had been one of our attendants in the hospital for many months, and I had become quite attached to him for his goodness of heart.

How I pitied the boy when they told him his brother must die—so young—only sixteen, yet old enough to breathe out his life to swell the list of sacrifices on the altar of his country. We had small-pox in our hospital at Mason's Island, and the pest-house to which they were taken proved in almost every instance the dead-house also. It was said that the men in charge would tie the patients to their iron bedsteads, while they went to Washington, visiting the theatres and concert rooms, leaving the sick in the delirium of suffering to fight the battle of death all alone, in the dreadful place. Could any punishment be fit for such wretches? Could any hell yawn deep enough to receive their shrivelled spirits? Rather I would have seen our men, one by one, laid under the sod, than see them taken to that place to suffer and die thus.

We had one man, private John Vail, who was down with the varioloid, but I was determined he should not be sent there,—that I would take the care myself, and with help from the boys bring him up out of the danger. He was quite ill, but I told him when the Doctor came along to whistle, and make it seem that his illness was of little account; and he did so, being passed in the hurry without any critical examination, and as good luck would have it the Doctor went to

Baltimore for two days, and when he returned Vail was on the fair road to recovery.

The first of April we moved into our new barracks, which the boys had built; I had a snug little room just out of the kitchen, with my tent furniture within, and a cupboard in addition, in which were ranged to make as wide a display as possible our *white dishes.*

The building was long, low, and unpainted, but it was an improvement on the tents, and we could care for the sick in greater comfort.

Miss Dix visited us here, and seemed quite well suited with our arrangements.

With the forward motion of the Army of the Potomac, when sunny skies bent over the devoted troops, came the rumor that our regiment was going to the front. At last the boys were to meet other foes than citizen rebels and the lurking diseases of a new climate.

My heart grew sick when I thought of the determined man who stood at the head of the grand army, and I knew that Richmond *must* fall,—that Lee's army *must* surrender; and then came in long array the thought of dismal marches through swamp, and morass, the hurried bivouac, the bugle-call in the morning, when some who saw the rosy dawn flushing up the fleecy clouds lie ghastly corpses before the setting sun.

I thought of the weary soldier as his tired feet could hardly support him while he made his cup of coffee over the fire of light wood—some rebel planter's fence rails—and shot, and shell, and sun, and storm

would work out wounds, and sickness, and death for many a one now flushed with ambitious hopes, and eager for the fray.

But the order came, and soldiers must obey. I went down to see them for the last time before they joined Burnside's Ninth Corps, but I felt that the shadow of death was over them, as I looked upon them, clad in new bright uniforms, so many, alas! which would prove their shrouds.

As one by one said, "Good bye, Aunt Becky," I knew there were those amidst them whom I should never see again, or seeing them, it might be, in the crowded hospital, with wounds, and dying sighs to make the place a house of horror.

My brothers seemed going from me forever, and I tried to reason with the uprising in my heart that this was why they had taken their lives in their hands, leaving peaceful pursuits behind them to fight the battles of their country. They had been spared very long the attendant hardships of active warfare—they did not shrink—why should I?

Perhaps it was because a woman's heart beat in my bosom, and woman, you know, cannot brave the battle shock only as she goes in to minister to those who fall,—*she* could not give those dreadful wounds.

Lieut. Barton said as he shook my hand, "Good bye, Aunt Becky, good bye forever." And he fell the first in the fight at Spotsylvania Court House.

How many such a foreboding hung round those men—how many saw the close black shadow which even then flung its blackness across their way from

the coming death, and how true thousands of premonitions proved to be.

Many a one at home waited with high hope the sure return of the soldier from the wars, knowing that *somehow*—God only knew how—the dear one should escape the bullet and bayonet, while to others the farewell was the last on earth.

A noble band of men had gone—they were all noble, as regiment after regiment joined the veteran corps; heroic blood fired the hearts in every rank, while coward fear drove some wild with its desperation. It is folly for men to stand now, afar from the scenes enacted on those Southern battle-fields, and tell of regiment or corps the "Grandest that ever faced a foe."

All were grand; all were heroic; the blood of mortal men beat in their hearts; situations, and opportunities may have given some the precedence over others, but the same enthusiasm fired all the ranks, given the same time, and place, with a master spirit to lead, and no one corps or regiment went beyond what it what it was possible for all to do.

Many a one rose to be a hero, who, if the war of the rebellion had never cursed us, would have remained as common place at home as the humblest day laborer who eats his bread by the sweat of his brow; the heroism was in the occasion, and the man's heart met it without quailing, and forthwith became a hero.

When I went to camp to see the regiment before starting, we had twenty-six sick men in the wards of

the hospital; when I returned one of the nurses came to me, saying I was wanted in a particular ward; I went, and found only one patient left—private Talman, who was too ill to go to the general hospital.

I felt that everybody was dead or dying, and went to my room, and indulged, woman-like, in a long rain of tears. My occupation seemed gone for the time, it was terrible to think when and how my next work might come to me.

In the morning the cooks were going, and only myself and Dr. French would be left. Very silent was our first breakfast alone. We had coffee, bread, and an egg each, and sat facing one another thinking of beefsteaks cooked rare, and seasoned with fine salt and pepper, and spread with generous slices of yellow butter—of mashed potatoes, and steaming rolls, and the frothy cream lying flaky on the rich brown coffee, but we made no outward demonstration of rebelling against soldier's fare; we saw a time not long hence when this breakfast even would have seemed luxurious.

CHAPTER VIII.

I HAD promised never to leave the boys, whether in camp or at the front, and that day I went to Miss Dix to see about being sent up. She gave me her word that I should go as soon as any woman was allowed there, and I rested for the time, with the wild beating at my heart which told of death and wounds to those who were dear as brothers and children to me.

I took the cars for Hyattsville, Md., where I found my friend, Mrs. A. E. Youngs, and was welcomed to her house. I enjoyed the rest in body, although, with the floating rumors of extensive movements, my mind was constantly on the march with our brave troops, dreaming of them nightly; the morning's first awakening filled with thoughts of them, perhaps preparing their coffee by the hasty fire, perhaps called by the long roll from the drowsy arms of sleep, to rush into the foray with breakfast untasted as yet.

I received while at Hyattsville the first letter from our regiment, from Sergeant Kresgee of the Pioneer Corps, giving me in detail the incidents of their march, the first night with Burnside, of the halt at Fairfax Station, and thence, as all the world knows, the move-

ment on the Wilderness; the bloody ground on which the May blossoms were springing up, telling no tale in their sweet freshness of the gory stains which only the spring before wet their tangled roots.

Again, over that dreadful spot, the tragedy of death was enacted. Again, through the tangles of underbrush almost impenetrable, where years of undisturbed growth had woven the mass into one intricate thicket, taking no heed how men should die there by thousands, there our gallant men fought their way, contending for mastery over the dead bodies of the fallen.

In the lull of the crash of battle, when a hundred giants seemed to be falling in the forest, men listened in horror to the groans of comrades suffocating, burning alive in the woods which had been fired by hot shot and shell, and they were powerless to aid them.

Rumors of these terrors came flying thick and fast. Faces grew white with apprehension, when the heart remembered that in the ranks of that fighting host were some whom they loved as life itself. So to me came the tidings of the dreadful May battles, and receiving my orders, I prepared to go to do the work which the carnage had rendered a necessity.

I was to go to Fredericksburg; and on the 12th of May I went on board the "Lizzie Baker," bound to Belle Plain, on my way there.

A number of officers were on board, going to join their commands, and several women, amongst which was one who was "going on her own hook" to nurse our poor fellows. The bloom of youth had long since

departed from her features, and her love of dress, if she had ever possessed any, had gone the way of the world's vanities. She wore a "horrible" bonnet, and a pair of scissors hanging from her left side conspicuously. She persisted in heaping opprobrious epithets on Miss Dix and "old Abe Lincoln," till we wearied of her tongue. Yet, in the kindness of her heart, she was going into the hospital city to do a woman's work amidst suffering men.

We arrived at Belle Plain on the afternoon of the 13th, and there the horror of battle burst upon us in sad, sad sights. Hundreds of wounded lay around in every stage of exhaustion, waiting for transportation to Washington.

I shall never forget the pale faces grimmed even then with the powder-smoke; eyes hollow, telling of long and intense agony, and patches of gore staining the uniform which bore the marks of swamp and thicket.

I remained all night with Mrs. Spencer, of the New York Relief, my companion a Miss Robertson, of the Cavalry Corps, who was going to Fredericksburg also. Our tent was pitched on the hill-side, and the rain began to fall in drenching showers, completely saturating everything about us—driving away sleep, even in our tired condition. I was glad when the gray morning dawned, and I could go out and help make the coffee for breakfast for the wounded boys.

I had assisted about an hour when the doctor on board of the transport sent for me to come and

dress wounds. It was a hard morning's work, and at eleven o'clock I was relieved, having an opportunity to go on to Fredericksburg. *There* I knew were men over whose wounds not even a cleansing sponge had been passed—men whose limbs were literally alive with a crawling mass of maggots.

It was a tedious journey; the roads were broken and rutted by the heavy trains which passed over them, and we were till four o'clock reaching our destination. My boat companion and Miss Robertson were both with me in the ambulance, and even in the midst of my anxiety, I could not suppress a laugh, as the hideous groans escaped from under the horrible bonnet, each time when the shaky vehicle seemed to lose its balance.

All day, the wounded who were able to crawl, were passing us on their way to Belle Plaine, eager to get to some shelter, where food and attention were possible. My brother was in the throng, but fortunately I did not know it then.

At about three o'clock it set in to rain, and we went in our drenched clothing through the muddy streets to report to Surgeon Dalton for duty. He assigned me to the Fifth Corps. I protested against it; said that my regiment was in the Ninth Corps, and I could not be put permanently in any other. He assured me that I could get relieved when my Corps came in, which they had not then done, and I went out through the rain and mud to find something to do.

The house to which I went and reported to the

surgeon in charge, was once the home of Washington. It had been an elegant mansion; the rich carving, broken and cut away for relics, showed the perfection of its finish. The yard was full of trees, but no fence enclosed it. It was told to me by the colored family with whom at the next door I obtained a place to sleep, that the cherry-tree cut by Washington's little hatchet grew near the house walls, and its roots yet remained in the ground.

I fully made up my mind to remain on duty where I was assigned no longer than till I found some of our own men, and went out to find something to eat, having fasted since morning.

At the New York Relief, I found some hard tack and coffee, which I relished exceedingly well in my half-famished condition. I found my bed at my lodging-place a mere bundle of straw shook into a dark place which had once been a dish-closet, but the dishes were not in the house now. I lay down with my cloak for sheet and covering, and no fastidious horror of bugs or mice drove sleep from my eyelids. The next morning I awoke quite refreshed, but with an empty stomach began dressing the wounds of the poor sufferers.

CHAPTER IX.

Such sights never before haunted my waking vision. You, afar off from the scenes amidst which we worked through those May days, can have but little conception of the horrors which filled the hospitals of Fredericksburg.

You shudder when a child mutilates its tender fingers, and the wound is carefully cleansed and dressed; then what emotions would have thrilled through every nerve of your body could you have seen those shattered frames, with limbs wrenched from the trunk by exploding shells, with gaping fissures, through which the soul had nearly escaped. Oh! it was horrible, and still the long trains poured in their hundreds a day.

They bore their sufferings with heroic fortitude, closing their white lips to repress the groans which every breath brought up, and clenching their strong hands in the intensity of mortal pain.

At nine o'clock I was called to hard tack and coffee, feeling the need of it to strengthen me for the work in hand.

We had a patient who occupied a small bed-room alone, whose wound was through the lungs, and

mortal. He was young—too young to die away from the kind attentions of mother, and sisters, of whom he talked to me in the lull of his pain. He told me also of one other who was waiting for her soldier to return, that life might be crowned by the joys of his constant presence.

We knew he could not live, but he was full of hope, and when the numbness of death crept over him, soothing his anguished senses, he said, "Now I can go to sleep, and shall waken much better."

He dropped into an easy slumber, and *did* waken better—he wakened in a land where there is no more pain or sighing—no battle-grounds strewed with shattered wrecks of mortality, and we closed his eyes, thinking how dreadful the tidings would come to that peaceful village in the North—to mother, sister, and beloved, when they knew he for whom they prayed "died of his wounds after the battle was over."

In my nervous anxiety to find my own regiment, I could not rest after the death-scene was over, and went out in search of something to lead me to them, if they were yet reported as being in.

I had walked only a short distance, when a familiar voice called "Aunt Becky," and I turned to greet Col. Tracy, who was ill and suffering extremely. To my trembling inquiry after the One Hundred and Ninth, he said, "They are badly cut up," and with the dread of meeting those brave men, mutilated and nigh to death, I proceeded on my search.

Going in the open door of a church, I found one of our boys, Fred Bills, with a mortal wound, and

his suffering agonizing. He said, "O stay with me, Aunt Becky," and I promised to do so, reporting and being assigned to the Second Division of the Ninth Corps, Dr. Snow in charge.

The hospital was located in the Presbyterian Church, and my bed-room the high narrow pulpit, in which I was so cramped and confined I could not lie at ease, even if my nightly vigils were undisturbed by groans and sighs of the wretched men below me.

Poor Fred Bills followed me with his anxious eyes as I went amongst the patients, and I held him upright in my arms many an hour, for in that position only could he obtain repose. He lived eight days, and a dreadful horror seemed to fill his mind at the thought of being buried in an uncoffined grave. He dwelt on the terror of falling an easy prey to the worms, before decay had fastened on his body—he seemed to feel the weight of the stiff clods over his bosom, and exacted from a me promise to see him "buried in a box."

Fortunately I had a dollar in my pocket, and with that bought some boards, out of which one of the boys promised to make a rude coffin, and I saw him laid on the stretcher, with closed eyes, and limbs decently composed, and went back to my work, waiting for the arrival of the rude six feet by two in which we would lay poor Fred Bills in his narrow resting-place.

Looking out at the window a little later, I saw him lying in the wagon to be conveyed to the grave-

yard—lying with upturned face, and uncoffined body. I was indignant at the outrage, for it was known that he was to be buried in a box, and my blood boiled because they heeded no more the last strong wishes of a life which had been given to save just such cowards from a like death.

I ordered him laid again upon the stretcher, and after some parleying it was done, and again I went to my work, but ill at ease, looking often from the window. Again I saw him lying in the dead-wagon: to outwit a woman they were outraging the body of the slain, and I cannot tell what feelings rushed over me, and almost sent me wild.

They were about to drive off, and I called upon the steward in my anger, and orders were given which threatened any who should disobey them with the guard-house.

The coffin came, and the soldier's body was decently laid within it, wrapped in a clean sheet, and carried to his resting-place in the hospital graveyard.

Days, in lulls of duty, I kept up my search for our wounded boys, and going to the door of the Planter's Hotel, I learned it was the hospital of the Third Division of our Corps, in which was the One Hundred and Ninth Regiment.

I inquired if any of our boys were there, and a voice inside said, "There is Aunt Becky," and going in I found twenty from our regiment, some badly wounded. A faintness came over me, which I had not before experienced, as I saw them huddled together, such piteous creatures in their helplessness, those

whom last I beheld in the lusty pride of life, now lying so low, with death near one, at least, of the number.

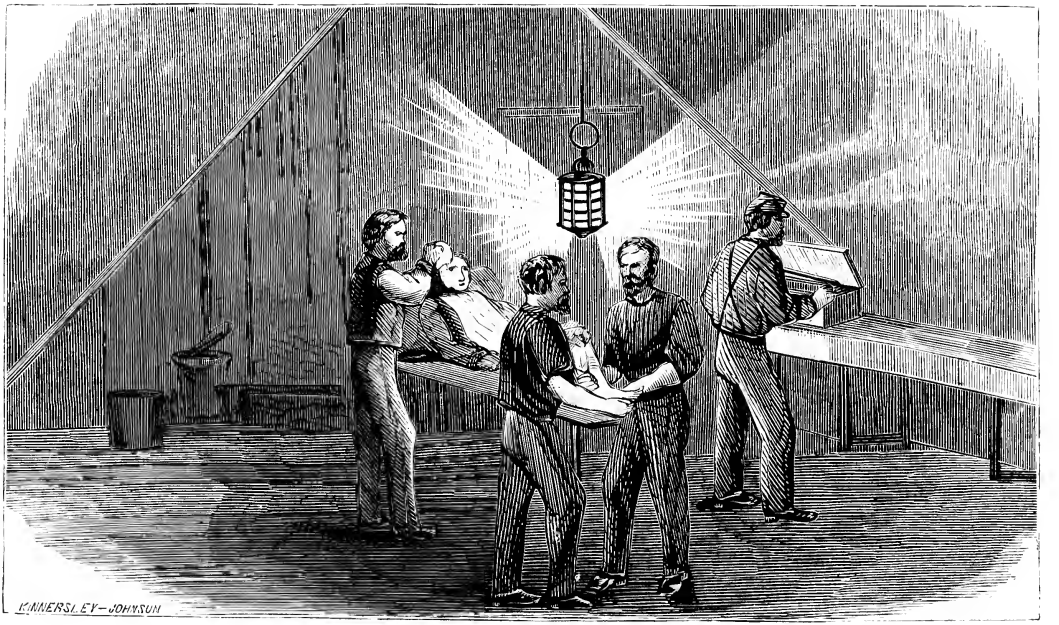
Shuddering as I heard a few groans escape him in his agony, the faintness passed away, and I felt equal to almost anything. In the second story I found ten more suffering extremely.

As I looked from the upper window to shut out the terrible sight of blood and wounds, my eyes fell upon another still as dreadful, and appealing urgently to my heart for help. A soldier lay on the bare ground —his head raised upon a pile of stones, the hot sun pouring down upon his pallid face, in which was no sign of life. Some moments passed, and he stirred not—then I questioned a nurse who was passing, and he replied to my inquiry of "Is that man dead?" "No, but about as good as dead—he can't live."

I never paused till I reached his side, and seeming to gather supernatural strength I helped to bring him into the house, after feeling his pulse, and ascertaining that there was life still in the body.

I gave him brandy, and in an hour he opened his eyes, and seemed to be a little conscious of what was going on about him. While striving to revive him the Doctor passed that way, and paused, asking, "What are you doing with that dead man?"

"Going to raise him for myself," I replied very deferentially, and he went his way, muttering about "calico nurses" being such plagues in a hospital, but I had come to Fredericksburg to meet just such rude sneers from just such men, while I strove to take up


KINNERSLEY—JOHNSON

the tangled threads of work which they had promised to do, and tie them myself, and he was thanking me for it. Well, it was one satisfaction that I craved no praise from men of his calibre—if I did any good to any poor suffering men in the coarse blue of a private soldier, I hoped to be remembered in his heart—that was all.

I saw my patient—who had been left to die, and would have died soon but for the help he had—made comfortable, and tended him daily, till he was sent to the General Hospital, and had the satisfaction of knowing that he fully recovered. I saw him afterward in Washington.

CHAPTER X.

Growing weary of my restless nights, so cramped in the high, old-fashioned pulpit, I sought a room where I could sleep in comfort, and was fortunate enough to find one with my companion of the night, and journey to Fredericksburg—Miss Roberston of the Cavalry Corps,—in a dwelling opposite the hospital.

We were company for each other in the long nights, when groans kept us wakeful, and I learned to appreciate the noble-heartedness of the untiring nurse, whose duties were for humanity's sake, not surely for the twelve dollars a month, and soldier's rations.

That was but a sorry recompense, so far as a return for the days of toil, and the haunted nights, and the scanty fare. Still there was no murmur of discontent—men needed a woman's hand to minister unto them, and in their sore need she withheld not her own, so strong with a brave woman's honest purpose.

Every place was searched by me in vague anticipations of meeting some one—I knew not who—whose desperate case wanted my help that moment. One day I found Private Vanvaulkenburg, wounded in the arm, and I think by the broad smile which

fairly lighted up his face, that he was glad to see me, although I could do nothing but give him a cheering word.

Farther on I found Private Silas Phezonias, and Charles Godley, wounded badly, and I feared mortally. Phezonias had suffered an amputation, and his life was slowly going out. His thoughts also, centred on the one idea of his burial. He was conscious that only a few more days were left for him, and looking earnestly into my face, as though my woman's will could work miracles in that devoted city, asked if I could not get a box also for his poor body.

How could I withhold a promise asked by those dying lips? God only knew how keen my anguish was, when I saw death stealing away the senses of those men who were dear to my soul, and I knew I could move Heaven and earth to grant the dying request of a soldier, and I promised that his body should not lie in an uncoffined grave.

After that he grew content, and one night they came to me, saying that he was dying, and wished to see me before he went. Hurrying away to the comfortless spot, I found that his spirit had gone, and the words he wished to say had perished with his breath.

I found with infinite search a scrap of lumber, and a rude coffin was made for him also. When it was finished, and we went to lay the body within it, what was my horror to find it gone!

I hastened to the graveyard, resolved to have it exhumed in case of burial, and found them standing beside the remains, about to offer up a prayer for his

repose. I said, "What is a prayer to a promise?" when the Chaplain argued that others had no coffins—it was unwise to establish such precedents, and he wished to conclude the ceremony as quickly as possible.

I ordered the sexton to take him from the grave, and with some demurring he complied, and I left a guard over the body, till I could return with the coffin. I combed his hair, and washed his face, and they laid him into the unstained box, and again he was lowered into the shallow grave, this time to rest in peace.

My feelings were bitter toward those unfeeling men, who thought of nothing only how best and quickest to put the poor clay out of sight, before it become an offence to the senses. Such familiarity with death may harden some natures—surely there was the semblance of utter callousness of heart in many such scenes, where dead men were hurried into the graves with scarce a foot of earth above the rotting clay.

Going out about two miles distant, I found a number of our regiment, one from Co. F—Sergeant Starkey—wounded badly through the back. He was lying on his face—his dirty, bloody blouse his only pillow, and as he grasped my hand, great sobs shook his manly frame, and tears even fell on his coarse sleeve.

I was almost unnerved for a moment—had he been my own brother I could hardly have grieved more, for they *were* all brothers to me. I had been

acknowledged with so much respect by them—had received so much kindness at their hands, that my own kin were nearer only as blood is thicker than water, I suppose.

I asked what I could do for him, and he said, "Bring some apple-sauce, and lemons, and green tea, such as you use to make, Aunt Becky," and difficult as it was, I got them. I can't tell what spirit animated me at such moments, but I felt a strength which would have carried me through fire and water, if I could not else have obtained what I wished.

At such times how slow Government seemed in furnishing needful comforts for the suffering men—they had not been tardy in rushing them into the dreadful battles to uphold that Government, and when I saw how comfortless was their situation, bitter feelings would uprise in my heart, till I wished to see the whole body of officials, in whose hands these things rested, lying helpless as those poor men.

I knew it was a heavy work—I knew also that the people were not willing that their own sons, and brothers, and husbands should suffer such horrors, when it was possible to relieve them, and as I knew my own strength to do, so I calculated what those high in power should do, when no expense or ingenuity had been spared to bring them thus low.

Starkey looked his thanks as I returned, bearing the desired drink and food, and two blankets also, with which he was made much more comfortable than before. He was moved to Washington at the gen-

eral clearing of the hospitals in Fredericksburg, and died soon after of his wounds.

His name doubtless swells the list of those who might have been saved, could it have been possible for them to remain quietly while nature asserted her healing strength, but the evacuation of Fredericksburg being considered a military necessity, there was no room for questioning the wisdom of the journey over the rough road leading to Belle Plain, and with many a brave man he bore it in silence, although death came soon after.

In coming from Washington I lost my trunk, and for twenty-one days had no change of clothing. The discomfort was felt exceedingly, although I said to myself, So long as I keep well, and these poor sufferers have less than I, it is not right for me to make complaint.

As one after another of our boys were found in my daily walks, I learned of the killed, and over none did my heart yearn as a mother over her son, more than when I learned that Willie Lewis was killed—both legs being shot away, his life went out with the deluge of blood. He had been with me for months in the hospital, and together we had watched over his dying boy brother, and I had taken the home-sick child into my affections as a son, and now mourned him as such.

I had thought so often of him, going out alone to the hot battle, when he had hoped to have his brother beside him, to stand together or fall. He lies with the unrecognized dead on that red burial

plain, while they took his brother's remains from the graveyard on Mason's Island, and carried them to his native town, to rest till the graves give up their dead, while the world never knew of the two young lives which were given up for their beloved country.

Will they some time recognize such humble heroes —will the great men some time unbend from the dignity of office and position, and acknowledge, while the mouldering bones receive due sepulchre, that to thousands and thousands of such unknown soldiers, perishing on the battle-field, in prison pen, or in hospital, they owe their proud estate?

America of all nations on earth can afford to be grateful to the humblest defender of her soil, whose spirit went up with the countless host.

The Sanitary Commission did a work of mercy, so far as they could reach our needs—but it was impossible, when Government could do no more for them, to do everything.

No tongue can tell the suffering which at this time filled Fredericksburg. None only those who were in the midst of the dreadful scenes, can realize in the faintest degree how hunger and death walked there, hand in hand. Our rations did not arrive, and for days we felt the keen pangs of starvation gnawing at our vitals.

To add to my misery, if pains of the body in the centre of so much anxious watching could be called such, I wore my feet out with constant tread, till the blood came through to the soles of my shoes. I thought of Valley Forge, when the intense cold of

a Northern winter stole into the camp of desponding men, and Washington saw the bloody tracks of his soldiers printed in the snow's white purity. *They* suffered for the same country which we loved, and bled in the same cause, counting it no loss if only the end should be peace.

My ward was over the amputation room, and never while I live, will I forget the groans which issued from that place. Heartrending cries for aid, when the surgeons stood with drops of sweat beading their brows—agonized over the pains which they could not alleviate. Oh it was horrible, and sickening to listen to them as we must at times.

Scarcely a building in Fredericksburg but bore the mark of hot shells, for both armies had turned their guns upon the doomed city; still every torn and shattered house held its quota of wounded men, and through the fissure where some screaming shell had penetrated in its fiery flight, the night-wind sighed sadly, and flared the dim lights which we carried, and the rain and mist beat through in the lonesome midnight.

The sound of the organ in the church which we occupied, when played by Miss Gilson, another efficient nurse, seemed like the spirits of another world chanting hymns of consolation to the poor troubled souls of this, as they lay, some in the delirium of fever, fighting again the hard-contested battle—some thinking sadly of homes which should be never more blessed by their presence, of wife and children, who in after years, when peace was reigning again, should

speak in subdued tones of the dear soldier who died of wounds in the hospital at Fredericksburg.

Sometimes the wild wailing of the chords seemed a dirge, which sad spirits were chanting over the souls so soon to pass the dark river with the silent boatman, and I grew tearful, and escaped from my thoughts at once.

My labors were confined mostly to the hospital of the Second Division of the Ninth Corps, although I visited my outside patients every day, and they seemed to look regularly for my coming. I tried to carry a cheerful countenance with my aching heart, for God knew that little enough of sunshine went into those dreary rooms. I could go out into the free air, when the scent of blood and discharges from wounds made the closeness unbearable, but *they* must lie there, and on their hard beds bear it all as best they could.

I found Privates Barber and Loomis in my walk one day—Barber wounded in the arm, while Loomis had lost a leg. Both seemed as comfortable as they could be made without beds, in the crowded rooms; and day after day I went to them, relieving them the best I was enabled to do with our stinted means.

It was dreadful to see the depths into which their spirits were plunged at times, when as comrade after comrade breathed out the last sigh, the uncertainty of their own recovery stole over the enfeebled mind, and agonized with thoughts of all that which they were leaving behind them, they sunk into the depths of despondency.

We had one youth of about seventeen years, whose

cheerful face was like sunshine in our ward; we knew him as "Charlie," and he seemed the light of the place, never murmuring, although his good right arm lay festering somewhere, food for worms.

He would say to me, "Now, I can never write any more love letters, Aunt Becky, do you think *she* will like me as well as ever with only one arm," thus playfully cheering up those whose sufferings were not more than his own, but whose spirits were less sunshiny to endure them.

One day he called me to him in great alarm, and said, "I think I am dying, I feel such a strangeness *there*," pointing to his amputated arm. I undid the bandage, and there, rioting on the fresh festers of the wound, were a score or more of white crawling worms. They had produced the uneasy feeling, and as I picked them off he grew quiet again.

We had a call one day from the Provost Marshal, who said to me, "Madam, I must compliment your hospital on being so clean and well aired, and the men looking so comfortably."

Said I, not knowing who he was, and glad that I did not, "We have done the best we could for the poor fellows, and if it had not been for the *Provost Marshal* would have had bunks also; I wish *he* lay in the place of that old soldier, and I had the privilege of feeding him hard tack, and seeing him try the soft floor till I was satisfied," and the *gentleman*, coloring, and stammering, shortly after left us.

Dr. Hays came in directly, saying, "So you've had a call from the Provost Marshal."

I was so indignant at his meanness, that I would have given him a harder thrust than I did, if I had known him at the time. Having fallen in love with a "secesh girl," who owned a lot of lumber, he had taken the men, sent by the surgeon to make it into hospital bunks, to the guard-house, and set a strict watch over the lot, and our boys lay on the floor to satisfy his selfishness.

The old German soldier to whom I had pointed, wishing the Provost Marshal in his place, was an intense sufferer—his wound through his lungs compelling him to sit upright at all times. He leaned against a pillar of the building, his gray, tangled hair fluttering in the wind, and I was reminded of saints and martyrs hourly, as I looked his way. He talked much of those whom he had left, how hard it would be for them to think he should never come home, when the war was over. All he ate I fed him in lemonade, with a teaspoon.

He died in great agony, after suffering days of untold misery, and death seemed a welcome release.

Oh, if the cruel shots could only kill at once—but this terrible mutilation, when the soul is almost let out of the gaping wounds, and struggles with the full strength of manhood, till faint and weary—weak with the deluge of blood, which has drained the fountain, the cold hand of dissolution clutches at the heart, and the soul goes forth from the torn body, leaving it a poor lump of festering flesh, on which the worms may banquet at will!

CHAPTER XI.

The long three weeks ended, and the city was to be evacuated. Through the lonesome night of storm and darkness, we women held the lights for the soldiers to lift their comrades on stretchers, and carry them down the slippery banks to the transports in waiting on the river. No moon or stars shone on that painful embarkation;—thick clouds of storm were drawn from horizon to horizon, and the rain drenched us, and the chilly wind swept in long gusts, now and then extinguishing the dim lights which we carried.

Groans from manly lips, which could not be suppressed, bore evidence of the torture which they endured, when bare bone, and nerve, and artery freshly bleeding, came in contact with the stretcher.

There was no help—if they died there was no help, and I kept back the tears for those who I knew could never endure the transition to another hospital, or if reaching it, would die speedily.

Three hundred of the wounded from the Wilderness, who fell into the hands of the rebels, and were retaken by a cavalry force of their own number, were brought in, and with them we left Fredericksburg at dark for Washington.

We lost only two men while on the journey—one from a Michigan regiment, the other from Massachusetts.

I dressed wounds, and fed the helpless, while on the way, and although there was many a joke perpetrated, and much laughter from the unhurt portion of the crew, yet I was too sad, as I looked upon the uncomplaining misery of that heroic band of three hundred, to indulge in anything but tears.

While in Washington I visited the different hospitals, searching after those to whom I had ministered in Fredericksburg, under such unfavorable circumstances. I found some very low, and two, mentioned before, on whom death had already set his seal.

Privates Barber and Loomis, whom I saw with severe wounds in Fredericksburg, were both struck with mortal pains. Gangrene had made its insidious attacks, and in their exhaustion they could not rally against it, and died.

I promised to be with them as long, and as often as I could, and finished my care when both lay in the dead house, coffined for burial. I again went to visit Mrs. Youngs, and found her the same uncompromising rebel sympathizer, yet as ready for humanity's sake to do for our suffering heroes, as for those whom the fate of war threw wounded and helpless into our hands.

Her education had been half military, in fact, and her zeal for the relief of soldiers seemed almost indomitable. She was born and reared in the barracks of

the Navy-yard at Washington; her father, brothers, husband, and son were connected with that branch of the service, and she had scarcely been outside the influence of naval manners, till just previous to the breaking out of the war, her son had established her in a pleasant home in Bladensburg.

Thoroughly good at heart, her feelings, so long allied with the South, could not tear themselves away from their first love, and the dead of Southern battle-fields were to her the martyred for homes and principles.

We avoided all these sectional themes, and I loved her for what she was, and many a disabled soldier remembers the woman who, while she bound up his wounds, deemed them the just penalty of invasion.

I returned to Washington for duty, and was ordered to report to White House Landing. In company with a Mrs. Strouse, also ordered to that place, I went to the wharf to take the "Lizzie Baker," bound thither.

When we reached the boat, the Captain ordered her well out into the river, determined that no more "calico" should desecrate his decks. Knowing that he would stop at Geesborough for the mail, I hailed a propeller which was getting up steam to leave soon for the same place, asking the Captain if we could have passage. He replied "Yes," unhesitatingly, and we went on board the little puffer, keeping out of sight till well alongside of the "Lizzie," when we hurried upon her deck as they drew close together to put on the mail. We heard the rather profane ejaculation of the Captain,

"My God, there they come now;" yet as he laughed and acknowledged himself beaten, I could not hold anger against him for wishing to keep "calico nurses" from his decks, his experience as he related it, being anything but commendable to the women.

The Captain was no admirer of them as a kind, and his lines having fallen amongst the unloveliest of the sex, he anathematized them all. However we were cared for very kindly, yet the trip was a terrible one for me—the wind blew a terrific gale, and directly over our heads the horses pawed and neighed, impatient of their restraint. Mrs. Strouse would believe they were coming down upon us at times, and her nervous manner added greatly to my disquiet.

I was hungry, for I had given my lunch to some boys who were returning to their regiments from sick furlough, and had neither money nor rations. I thought Providence would put me in the way of food—any way I could go hungry as well as they. But my trust was not in vain—the cook gave me a cup of coffee, and some bread which satisfied Nature's need.

We arrived the next day at White House Landing, and I looked in dismay at the dreary place, where nothing but blackened chimneys marked it as the former abiding place of men.

White tents flapped their wings over the uneven hillocks of a last year's corn-field, and the bristling canes, mildewed and rotting, stood under the pelting of wind, and rain, and the heat of the hot summer sun.

Our hospital lay on the same uneven ground, and many were very sick, and some dying, with no beds or hammocks on which to breathe out the last sigh. I was so weary I could hardly drag my footsteps thither; but meeting with some of our old hospital cooks, who hailed from the Granite State, they soon made me a cup of coffee, and I went to the tent assigned me, and with my head pillowed on a corn-hill, and my back curved in the exact hollow of the contiguous row, I tried to sleep, and forget how weary I could become.

The dews were like a drenching shower—feet and clothing were heavy with the moisture, which clung to us persistently, waiting for the hot sun to dry it away. It was a great discomfort to us, as we walked from tent to tent, our hoopless skirts clinging so closely to the figure as to impede our progress.

The agents of the Sanitary Commission were then at work with their usual force and energy, and as the wounded were brought in daily, no one can tell the amount of suffering which they helped to allay.

Oh, those little streams rippling down from every town and hamlet in the North, sending their precious contents into the broad bosom of the Sanitary Commission, how we contrasted them with the dews of heaven, which through the tender grass blades in lovely vale and on wooded hill, find the way to the lagging brooks, and thence to river and sea. The little stores which came from the loneliest farm-house, where the old wife knit and dreamed of the soldier whose feet should be encased in the socks her fingers

fashioned, were like the crystal drops which form the sea's great depths, and we meted them out to father, brother, son and lover.

We thought of the maiden who sewed the seams of the coarse hospital shirt, dropping a tear perchance on the garment, when she thought how wounds might pierce one precious body in those stalwart ranks, and hoped some one might do for him what she was striving to do for some other ones beloved.

How little the women thought as they made tiny pillows, stuffing them with hops and soft moss, to lay under wounded arm and limb, of the actual scenes which attended their using amongst the ghastly wounded. Many a bright eye would have grown dim with the tears, could its owner have looked into our hospital tents, and seen the wreck of manliness suffering untold agony with mute lips, and clenched fingers, bearing it all silently.

It was well that they could not follow those gifts down to the place of distribution, else no smiles would have gladdened those faces, and the meetings would have been sad as a funeral gathering.

I met at White House Landing one Christian Commissioner, whose kindness made him universally beloved—whose salutation was always, "Blessings on you," and by that name we knew him in our camp. His kindness to me will never be forgotten, nor the tender solicitude which he expressed for the poor crippled fellows, whose painful torture of body he could not mitigate.

It was distressing to see dying men lying on the

hard earth, nothing but a blanket between; but we did the best we could with the means at hand, and although having better rations than at Fredericksburg, they were poor enough. Many a night I went to bed to think of the crumbs which fell from overflowing tables in low brown farm-houses, which bordered on Cayuga's tide.

We had six women nurses, and the men kept at their work, seemingly untiring, as they ministered to those who should need mortal aid only a little while longer.

We did our cooking by a fire made between two logs rolled close together, while Sanitary was in possession of a stove—an article of great worth in our eyes, perhaps a little envious at times. Sill we made many a dainty bit for the sick men over our rude fire, only giving vent to our feelings when the toast was burned, or a strong puff of wind blew the ashes into our smoke-bleared eyes.

I was sent for one day to attend a doctor who was ill, away back in a a tent aside from the hospital, and I found him in great need of help, getting but little sympathy in his worn and weak condition. It is a misfortune if a man grows ill from over-work in a hospital, that he is so often charged with a disposition to play off, and avoid duty.

The doctor was ill with a low, nervous fever, and I set about trying to relieve him.

I found a young lieutenant in the same tent wounded badly through the thigh, and whose sands of life were dropping silently away. Both doctor and

lieutenant were from Holyoke, Mass. The young officer was a noble looking young man, and his struggle with death was hard, so much life and hope he had.

He said to me, "Will you look at my feet and hands, and tell me why they are so cold and numb? Will I, can I ever get well?"

They were purple even then. I said honestly, "I think you can live but a short time," and sighing, he replied slowly,

"Well, I am not sorry that I came here, even if I have got my death, but it will be very lonely for *her*."

He seemed to dwell upon the thought very calmly, and went on saying, "If the country forgets me, *she* always remembers me; there will be a monument raised in her heart to my memory, and it will always live."

He died as peacefully as a child goes to its slumbers—dropped away silently without a struggle, and as I closed his eyes, and looked upon the great noble figure stiffening in death, I thought how her heart would ache, when she knew that her head could never more be pillowed upon his bosom.

The doctor recovered slowly, and remained an efficient aid in our Medical Corps till the army was disbanded, and each soldier was sent to the Hospital of Home, to draw upon the sanitary resources of individual households.

Four of us tented together, and slept upon the ground till just previous to our breaking camp, when

the boys drove crotched sticks into the earth, and nailed barrel staves over the cross pieces, and over these we spread straw, and slept very comfortably indeed.

Getting desperately hungry one day, two of us started off on a foraging expedition; I in search of mush and milk. We reached a hut occupied by a colored family, and asking for the desired article of food, knowing it to be staple in such places, mine was given me in a tin wash-basin, while my companion received hers in a great yellow dish of antique mould. Nevertheless, we thought it worth a half dollar each, and departed with our hunger appeased in a wonderful degree.

The tent in which the colored wounded were, seemed to fall in my line of duty, and I found within it ten ill with fever and wounds. One little fellow only thirteen years of age, who had been waiter for a captain, and had lost a foot, bore his sufferings with the heroism of a man.

Not even a groan escaped his lips, and the only words which betokened his sorrow were, "What will my poor mother do now?" So young, with the stain of Africa upon his cheek and brow, he would have a hard world with its mountains of prejudice to surmount, and crippled in body as he was, I sighed for his future fate.

CHAPTER XII.

So much waited to be done that I sometimes grew bewildered, and wished for a hundred pair of hands, that I might work out the strength of will which kept up soul and body. I was often sent for while in the midst of a distressing scene, and I hardly knew where to direct my steps. Some were so eager to join their commands, that it needed the greatest watchfulness to prevent them from going even out of sick-beds.

We had a Captain Williams sick with a fever, yet burning with a desire to join his regiment, which was gathering the laurels of battle thickly, in the long list of wounded and dead. No persuasion could turn him from his purpose; he got up from his straw bed, and with feeble steps tottered from the tent, left on the transport, and in ten days his body was at City Point in the dead-house, waiting embalmment.

So the Harvester gathered them in, one after another; before disease as well as by the deadly shot they fell in their manhood's prime, and many hearts ached with the terrible blows which came to them over the electric wires, and they never more rebounded from the fearful shock.

Lieut. Barton was our first officer killed. He met

his death at Spottsylvania Court House; and here at White House Landing I learned that his fears were confirmed, when on taking leave of the regiment at Alexandria, he said to me, holding me by the hand,

"Goodbye, Aunt Becky, I bid you goodbye forever."

Do the wings of death cast their shadows thus over the heart, which is so soon to be hushed in its beating by the clutch of the cold, bony hand? Does the yawning grave open wide its portals to the eye of the soul which is so soon to be free from the clay, leaving the companion of its earthly joys and sorrows to mingle "ashes with ashes, and dust with its original dust?" Are there some spirits so etherealized that they can look beyond the veil of flesh, and know that it is only a little while, and the company of the blest will be their companions forever?

Coward fear may sometimes cause the soul to shrink back in dread dismay, but this premonition of death has a power speaking to the soul, hushing its fears, bidding it make its final peace on earth, and send its farewells to those whom they shall greet no more this side of the eternal river.

It makes no craven of the soldier who feels the full weight of the coming shadow; he meets death like a hero, and his spirit, we trust, goes to the bosom of its Maker.

Very many of our men were taken prisoners, and the horrors of Andersonville and Belle Isle were pictured to us, till they seemed to lie on the borders of the Satanic land; and starvation, and torture by the

hot sun, and exposure to storms and disease, were the fell agents which laid them in the shallow, uncoffined graves, over which a nation mourns to-day.

Their names are inscribed with the band of martyred ones; shall their memory ever fade from the long roll of honor?

We lost our colors and our color-bearer, Grisel, was taken to Andersonville, and in that lonesome pen thought of his wife, and children, and home, till the soul went out of the starved wreck of mortality. They buried him in a grave amongst the murdered dead on that awful field, over which no smoke of battle rolled to make it seem "sweet to die for one's country."

Only one man of all the long list of captured ever returned to tell the tale of woe—Private O. P. Carmer, of Co. F., who lay in the pen of Andersonville, and whose hopeful spirit kept the soul within his emaciated body till the release came; and he returned like one raised from the dead, a wreck of manhood, unable to join his regiment, and scarcely able to endure the journey home.

I thought in the bitterness of my heart, while listening to the horrible details of the treatment of our prisoners by the rebels, and when I knew that my brothers might any day share the same fate, that I could never minister to the wants of their wounded again. But when I saw them suffering in the agony of fever, thirsting for water, now deliriously raving of the fierce charge of battle—then whispering low of the peaceful home which the invader had profaned

with unclean feet, better feelings took possession of me, and I could be as gentle to them as to my brother.

Some woman's heart cherished them—some bright eyes were wet with tears for the missing soldier, and as I would that they should do unto those of mine who fell into their hands, so I tried to do to them; God forgiving me the bitter thoughts which were of my grosser self, and purging my soul of the sin's dark stain.

The tidings reached me here of another brave man killed, Captain Gorman of Co. C., shot by a stray bullet at North Anna. We had little time to dwell on these terrible casualties, for again the order came to move, and no one knew whither.

Our poor men must endure the dreadful journey, and we prepared them for the transport, and on the tenth day of June left the tented corn field, which was now trampled by many feet to a level plain, and I set about looking out for rations for the toilsome voyage.

Our worthy friend, the Christian Commissioner, had given me the promise of a boiled ham, and going after it, I learned to my dismay that they were all on board of the barge. My friend seeing my look of disappointment, and not liking to break his promise, went on board the boat, and soon, but with some trouble, returned with one.

I was looking out for lunch for those who were going to join their regiments, and procuring crackers, I cut the ham into slices, but found it was not

enough for so many mouths, voracious in their newly recovered appetites. I presented the case, and our old friend said, "Blessings on you—you shall have another ham," and I got it, blessing him in my heart as I cut the thick juicy slices, which looked so tempting in their boiled perfection.

On the fourteenth of June we went on board the boat—six nurses of us, with five days' rations of bread, pork, coffee, and sugar, and learned to our disquiet that some one had blundered, and sent some two hundred of the sick on board who should have gone by another boat to Washington.

Our doctor had gone wooing, leaving the charge of affairs to some under officials, and matters were wonderfully mixed. In my vexation at the unpardonable extent of the blunder, I could have lectured every one roundly, who presumed to listen to the soft dalliance of Love, when reeking wounds, and fever-thirsting men lay helpless beside them.

I knew those men could not go without food so long as our rations lasted, and I took the supply into my own hands, cutting up five loaves of bread, and the pork, thinking of the five loaves and the fishes, and wishing I had the power of feeding that multitude with full supply, as did our Saviour in times of old.

A doctor from the Cavalry Corps Hospital was in charge, and to him the women made complaint that Aunt Becky had given away their rations. On the second day we had nothing to eat—only the ham bone remained, and the vengeance of dire hunger was meted out to me in strong measure.

This day the barge which bore our surgeons came alongside, and when they reached the boat the storm of fury broke upon my devoted head. I took it calmly, and when he finished only said, as I thought, that if any of us well women were unable to eat as much hard tack as a sick soldier, she had better go to Washington at once, and remain there.

The startling cry of "*a man overboard*," broke upon the stillness of the next dark, foggy morning. I shall never forget the piercing shriek for help, when no help could reach him. The tide was running high, and in the thick darkness it was impossible to give him any aid, and he sunk to the watery depths. He was a nurse, and a good one, and we missed him sadly from our crew.

We had a rough voyage, all but Mrs. Strouse and myself being sea-sick, she complaining merely of a headache, while I felt strong for any up-hill work which might lay before me.

We had a good cup of tea all around, and I descended into the kitchen to see if anything could be found to eke out the scanty supply of food for the boys. They were selling hot water for coffee for ten cents a pint, and many a poor fellow, whose dirty clothing was innocent of currency, went without for that cause.

I could not endure this, preferring rather to brave the chances of a hand-to-hand conflict with those denizens of the lower regions, than to see the hunger-pinched faces, and hollow eyes of those who had not tasted food or drink for many hours.

I got their coffee, promising to make that for them, at all events, and down I went, being ordered out peremptorily. I did not purpose to go, and was deaf to all orders of the kind. They kindly put out the fire, and I sat down to await its rekindling. They sent up for the first mate, and he came down, furiously repeating the order to vacate the kitchen.

I said, "The Doctor would'nt like to know you were making love to me—I am Aunt Becky," and he replied, angrily, that if I did not leave forthwith, he would throw me overboard.

I said, "O don't drown me yet—I haven't said, *positively*, I won't have you," and he retired in disgust, leaving me victor of the field, with the exasperated darkies punching me every now and then, and regarding me with looks of intense hate. I did not heed things of this sort, a combat usually made me stronger, and the boys got their coffee, and it did not cost them ten cents a pint either. As I saw them swallowing it from their blackened, battered cups, I wondered if I could not find something in the shape of bread to help it relish the next time, and I did.

I found two boxes of hard tack, the owner of which seemed a myth, and accepting them as a Providential gift in answer to my earnest desires, I knocked off the corner of one, and, without a single pang of conscience, filled my apron, and distributed the biscuit among the hungry crew.

Just as I was opening the second box, Dr. Bunnel, the embalmer came up, asking me by what authority I was opening his boxes of hard tack, and I, too eager,

and fearing to lose the contents, said, "Who is opening this box—you or I?" He rather thought I was, and under the circumstances, he could do no better than to yield a graceful assent to the distribution amongst the hungry men, and we became very good friends from that time.

On the morning of June sixteenth, on looking from my window I saw the grim old Fortress Monroe looming up against the glimmering daybreak. We were nearly on the scene of the conflict between the iron clad monsters, when they struggled for mastery. The waters wherein our wheels revolved had been stirred by the contortions of the giants in the close fight.

It was something for me to look out on to the spot, surrounded by the same land-marks, and remember the deep excitement which filled the land, as the news of the strange battle was borne over the converging wires—to remember how proud New York trembled, lest the traitors' hands should guide the rebel monster up into her crowded harbor, and her merchant princes looked upon their wealth, and felt how uncertain it was all made by this strange new warfare.

They hearkened for the report of the red-tongued flame which belched from its ungainly port-holes, and breathed free only when it had gone to the rusty deep, to be garnished by sea mosses, and filled with old Ocean's drifting treasures.

Another day, and we hailed with delight the ration barge, which came along with bread and bacon, and our men drew full rations.

We were indebted to Capt. Hall of the Michigan Sharpshooters for this kindness and timely aid; he had presented our case, and obtained relief for us. A feast of good things seemed to rain upon us, for another barge came alongside with a barrel of pickled cabbage on board, its savory smell stealing upon our senses with strong desire to partake.

As no such thing ever hurt sick men, I got a pail belonging to one of the nurses, and started for the cabbage, she following, calling out vigorously for her disappearing pail.

Our old friends, the cooks from our hospitals, were there, kind as ever, and they filled and refilled my pail, till the empty barrel remained with only the scent to give evidence of what its contents had been. It was delicious, and our appreciation of it should have been ample recompense to its owner, or owners whoever they were, making allowance for its appropriation, in that our stomachs had grown insensible to all civilized laws of mine and thine.

On the seventeenth we could distinctly hear the report of cannon, and knew that somewhere our men were facing the foe in deadly fight. It came booming over the water in slow solemn measure, and men were hurled to the ground, crushed and lifeless, before every thundering discharge.

CHAPTER XIII.

On the afternoon of June eighteenth, we reached City Point, and landed. We had an excellent meal of canned chicken and crackers, from the Christian Commission, and sat down to await further orders, which soon came. We were to walk a mile distance to find our shelter for the night.

It was a motley procession, suggesting Falstaff's Ragged Regiment, or a Fourth of July demonstration of Young America, as we travelled on, each with knapsack, and such possessions as could not be dispensed with. I, more fortunate than some of my companions, had provided myself with a coffee-pot and frying-pan, which hung to my knapsack, and tired and dusty we kept on our way, regardless of military precision, seeking first one side of the road then the other, to avoid the thick dust, then forsaking it as another path seemed to look more inviting to the aching feet.

Dr. Hays and several others led the way, and a surgeon from the Fifth Regiment Mass. Infantry, going from the hospital to join his command, kept up wearily with the throng.

We arrived, and not a tent to shelter our heads,

and night coming darkly on. There in an open field —in sight of the winding river, we sat down to rest awhile, and think of the long dusty, dreary mile intervening between us and the coveted shelter.

Backward we took our way—faint and almost strangled with the clouds of dust which enveloped our passage. All the women with the exception of Mrs. Strouse and myself—who seemed to be the strongest of the set—got into an ambulance, and thought themselves fortunate in obtaining such a lift in their weary condition.

An artist would have halted in eager admiration of the sight, as we went in single file, the dust flying in gray banners over us, and the gathering darkness lending its witchery to help the scene. But step by step we conquered the distance, and took a room in the building which had been occupied by General Grant as his head-quarters, and were supplied by the Christian Commission with stretchers, on which to spread what bedding we had, to make ourselves more comfortable.

It was early when we arose, and took a walk to view the situation. City Point was not at that time an inviting place. Its inhabitants were mostly colored people, who had no homes, and had gathered into the deserted town from every quarter. There was material, however, which could be made available in our new hospital, and the booming of the cannon assured us that ere long our work would reach us, borne on bloody stretchers from the last battle-field.

Again the Christian Commission supplied us with

a bountiful meal, consisting of coffee, crackers, and Bologna sausage—the first clean meal for five days, and again at ten o'clock we took up our line of march, on the same dusty road, twice travelled before. We found the boys busy putting up the hospital tents, and at two o'clock they came—the long ghastly train of wounded, five hundred strong.

Some were near death, and amongst them I found men from our own regiment. Passing along I was accosted by name, but failed to recognize the dirty, begrimed soldiers, with torn and bloody uniforms, who looked so beseechingly into my face for help. They made themselves known as Sergeants Havland and Avery, both wounded in the hand.

They were as hungry as wolves, and I procured soup from the Sanitary Commission, and fed them, then washed their faces, and dressed their wounds. I kept at such work till many a poor fellow was made as comfortable as they could be on the ground, for our beds had not arrived, and we must have time.

I found George Reed wounded in the foot, so low-spirited and nervous that no efforts could cheer him up; thinking constantly of home, and bearing the pain of his wound with the silence of despair. How my heart ached for him, and when I learned that he was dead, I thought how the black shadow of dissolution had clouded those June days in the hospital, and plunged his soul into the depths of its darkness.

Dr. Snow was relieved at this time, to go to his regiment, and Dr. Wheeler put in charge. We had kind and faithful nurses and doctors, who did all they

could to mitigate the misery of the wounded, and no such privations as stared us in the face at Fredericksburg took away our good spirits. Still we were losing our men very fast, and what fearful wounds we saw, and what groans of agony we heard, and how they suffered tenfold more than death, no tongue can tell.

The hospital, clean and neatly kept—the occupants of its beds freshly dressed, presents no view of the tents, when the first tide of wounded pours in, and torn and gory uniforms, and powder, and dirt hide the features which are as familiar as a brother's, and yet he is a stranger till the grim mask is washed away.

With sleeves rolled up, and dress pinned back, it was no delicate task to bring them to a state of comfort and comparative cleanliness. I was passing through the tents one day, and a soldier asked to see me.

"Are you the nurse they call Aunt Becky?" he said, as I stood at his side.

I replied affirmatively, and he wished me to sit by him, and let him talk of home and friends, which even if he lived he could never see again, for a rifle ball had passed through both eyes, destroying the sight forever.

It grieved him most that he could not go back to his regiment—he would give his life for his country if God so willed it, or living, he would bear cheerfully to be sightless, if only for her sake. He was a Massachusetts soldier, and how often I looked upon her

dying heroes, and thought with pride how nobly the old Bay State had provided for her country in men and means, and how in times of battle the full streams of her Sanitary stores flowed into our crowded hospitals.

Many a dying message was given to me for far-away friends—many a last farewell was whispered in my ear for the dear wife and children, who knew not that death was even then snatching away one they loved, and for whom they prayed. How I wished for the power to bring them to the bedside, and then stand away where only my tears might mingle with the mourner's.

But War knows none of the comforts of peaceful death beds. No friends and family can watch with anxious eye the struggles of the soul to free itself from earth. War breaks down all the sweet charities which Peace nurtures into life, and dead men lie like dumb cattle in a slaughter-house, scarcely heeded, unless some tie of blood or spirit bound the living to the cold, inanimate corpse when life warmed it.

Beds and pillows were in plenty now, and we had good and sufficient food, while Sanitary supplied us with many a little dainty for our sick and exhausted soldiers. We were only just made comfortable, when another battle's shattered heroes were added to our hospital, and our regiment gave its quota to swell the list.

Through the growing corn—under the scorching summer sun, they had followed their noble general to face a determined foe. and many a one had got the

death-wound in his noble breast. But the most entire confidence in General Burnside pervaded—a feeling that he cared for his soldiers as a father cares for his sons—and those who lay wounded and helpless were eager to rise, and rush again into the fray.

A sentiment of humanity seemed to deter him from making wild, reckless charges, even though by such, without any more danger to himself, he might have won a name at once high on the list of victorious generals—but he preferred rather the calm judgment of History, which weighs reckless onslaughts, and persistent pressing of the foe with the great loss of life, and which will award to him the victor's crown.

Our hospital soon numbered two thousand wounded and sick men. Dr. Johnson, head surgeon of our regiment, came down to give us his aid in the heavy work devolving upon us; but we were greatly favored by the cooks, who granted us favors for the sick in season and out of season.

They were sent from the front at the beginning of the campaign, belonging mostly to the Brigade Band, and not especially needed at the scene of conflict. They had been brought up by New England mothers, and knew that the mysteries of the kitchen were closely allied to the sick-room.

Years before, while the farmer boy sat listlessly by the wide open fire in the old home at the North, seeming to watch only the red-leaping flame with his unspeaking eye, he was learning lessons of the mother, as she kept up her round of toil, and when the green corn-fields of Virginia were trampled by thun-

dering artillery, and the feet of thousands opposed to the death, he gathered up those scraps for practical use, and by the knowledge became a benefactor to men suffering from the dreadful havoc of war.

If only strong and bearded men had been accepted into the ranks, I could have borne it better to see them suffer and die; but to see faces of youth, fair and smooth as a girl's, lying under the coarse blankets, and the white lips moaning with the pain of deathly wounds, was hard to bear. Men, if they died, seemed to possess a life which, because it was wanted, had become fully ripe with the glory of perfect manhood.

I saw one boy under the surgeon's knife, so white and still I almost hoped he would never wake to know how he must go through life a shattered wreck, and the journey just begun. Yet he opened his eyes cheerfully upon us, and the mangled limb was tossed away like a useless rag, and laid in the bosom of old mother earth, only because in her laboratory alone it could be resolved into elements inoffensive to living man.

My tent was my fortress, invaded now and then, it is true, by the feet of messengers to summon me to some sick-bed—still my fortress, where I sat in silent hours, and thought of home, and wondered if my children missed me, but all with no wish to leave my post. Had the war lasted fifty years, and I been living in health, I must still have remained. No peace would have visited my pillow, knowing that I could watch beside the suffering, and impart one ray of comfort.

As I lay down at night on my iron bedstead, and looked about the little cloth shelter, seeing the evidences of kindness shown to me by them all, I thought how fortunate I was in thus being provided for with comforts, when others were glad of one-half my accommodations.

Never in my life have I been treated with more respect and consideration, than while a nurse in the Volunteer Army. If woman respects herself, men will respect her. Our soldiers were *men*—some, many of them, the noblest and best in the land, and no woman, whose motives were pure, would have been called to blush in their presence.

In my admiration of the high character of our men as a whole, I thought often and eagerly how, when the war was over, if I had control of the Treasury, I would give good gifts to every returned soldier, when, disabled and war-worn, he should sit down to repose on his laurels.

I thought how comfortable they would be, if amongst a score were divided what a few great men now received to ventilate our Americanism abroad; what happy, cheerful homes I would provide for those whose dear ones fell in the battle's shock, or died of wounds in the hospitals near the field.

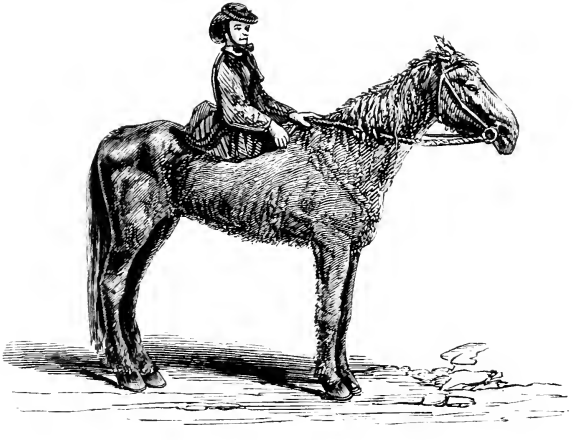
CHAPTER XIV.

Daily our men dropped away. Oh! so sad were those recurring death-beds; again and again I stood beside them, and heard delirious words and lost whispers, till I thought my heart would break with every new weight of woe it carried.

For those whose names were lost on the dear lips which the clay of a strange land would soon cover over, I could weep tears of bitter, bitter sorrow. Not for the dead, who was a hero forevermore, but for those who waited and watched, and saw the sun sink in its glory, and when it rose again, knew that they were desolate.

Our hospital corps of women nurses numbered ten, and our work was hard amongst so many sick and wounded, to which we were receiving daily accessions. Not an hour of daylight passed when the booming of cannon was not heard, and many a one got his death-wound, when no official report of battle was sent forth to the anxious nation. They died when no array of deathly conflict stirred the pulses into martial fever.

July 3d, learning that one of our One Hundred and Ninth men lay at Division Hospital badly wound-



ed, and could not live, I resolved to make a visit up to the front, and see if anything could be done for him.

There seemed no way open, only that I should go on horseback, and, looking about me, I found that Colonel Catlin had gone up to Washington sick, and unable to do duty, leaving his horse at City Point. One of our boys, John Lawrence, who was doing duty at the hospital, proposed to accompany me, I on the colonel's horse; and in the morning at six o'clock we started on our journey.

The great noble creature which I rode was so worn and poor, that the side-saddle which I had borrowed of one of the ladies of the Second Corps turned repeatedly, myself and the bag of articles which I was taking up from the Christian Commission going off together. Lawrence tightened the girth, and on we went over the lonesome road literally lined with the graves of our dead.

No Christian homes brightened the way. The houses, stormed by shot and shell, were deserted, only as our men on duty along the lines used them for a shelter against the inclement weather.

My riding-habit seemed to attract considerable attention from its novelty, being a striped bed-tick, thick and of great service in my work, and a black hat which I had worn in my hospital rounds. Soldiers laughed and stared at us as we rode along, but unheedingly we were enjoying the fresh morning air, and the exhilaration of a horseback ride.

At ten o'clock we reached the Division Hospital,

and I made inquiries for the wounded man, Private Kresge, and was taken to his side. It was the third day, and his wound yet undressed.

I rolled up my sleeves, and went to work over the horrible fissure, now festering with the putrid discharges. The doctor said I had better do something for those who were likely to live, not waste my time and strength on a dying man.

I replied that if he died it made no difference; he would not be buried with the shameful evidence of his neglect still upon him; he could be no worse than he was, and I should not let him lie with his wounds untouched.

The doctor hoped I would not hurt the man any more than I could help, and with this precautionary remark, ordered one of the nurses to assist me, and we went to the hard task.

The rifle-ball had gone in at the back of his neck, tearing through, and coming out at his nostrils. As we syringed the cleansing preparation into his ear, it discharged at both apertures, and was a painful operation for us all, yet he bore it bravely. When he was made as comfortable as possible, we found two more whose condition was as pitiable as his had been, and we washed and dressed their wounds also, and gave them something to eat.

We could not return without a sight at the boys, who were lying in reserve in a dreadful place, about a mile distant. We reached it by going across the old battle-field, and there under a beautiful tree was pointed out to my notice the grave of one of our no-

ble officers, Captain Warwick, who fell with his face to the foe, and was buried where he died. He was mourned sincerely by the whole regiment as one of their kindest and bravest officers.

On we went—my war-horse jumping over the fallen logs, and plunging into the hollows to the imminent risk of my bones; but the hanging-on process could not keep my mind from dwelling on the scenes so lately enacted on that same stretch of ground before me, and I seemed to hear the rattle of musketry, and the screeching of shells as they sent their death-dealing messengers into the ranks of the living, breathing men, and they fell like the tender flowers of summer before the sudden black frosts of November.

We reached them at last, and were greeted heartily—one little darky remarking that is was good for sore eyes to see a white lady, and "one dat didn't put on no style."

I sought the shelter of Captain Knettle's tent, and my reception-room was soon filled to its utmost capacity. I experienced some of the poetry of their situation, as standing beside the tent we heard the shrill screaming of a shell, and saw it fall only a short distance from the door. The little darky said, "Missus, you'd better git out dar; dem rebs don't mind the ladies no more'n dey do gemmen—hain't got no manners, no how."

The rifle-balls whistled through the trees, cutting through the green foliage with murderous sharpness, as though angered because they found no human heart

to riot within. It was a nervous place for a woman; but I endured it, rather feeling a kind of enthusiasm in the nearness to danger and death.

We remained to dinner, enjoying exceedingly the hard tack fried in bacon grease. At four o'clock P. M. we left *en route* for the Division Hospital again, for I was anxious to see my patients once more, and exact a promise that they should be sent up to our hospital as soon as possible.

I found them as I left them, and the second day they were brought to our Corps Hospital. Of the three men, one died, a young Michigan soldier, who was shot just above the lungs, and was delirious till he breathed the last.

The day of our visit to Division Hospital, we had been invited by our sanitary agents to take a sail on the river, but I preferred my visit up to the front; and when we returned, and learned what had occurred to the pleasure-party, we were glad that we declined. In the excitement of the ride, they ventured too far with the boat, and were fired into by guerrillas, and a Mr. Wilson, one of the noblest men connected with the Sanitary Commission, was shot, and lived only a short time. The women were panic-struck, and the excitement was intense.

I received, on the 4th of July, a testimonial from the men of our regiment, in the shape of one hundred and seventy-five dollars in greenbacks, and could not keep back the tears from my eyes, when I thought how kind they all were to me, and I doing nothing but my duty.

We worked and wrought, till the regularity of clock-work governed all the movements in the hospital. We were divided into three divisions, and a cook-house attached to each. Mrs. Hazen was in charge of that belonging to the Christian Commission, and I in charge of the Sanitary, to cook for the sick and wounded. The men cooked for the convalescents.

In my eagerness to improve the most of my time for the benefit of the sick, I drew largely upon the stores, and some in charge fearing that the supply on their own tables might fall short too soon, began to complain, and I left, to the sorrow of the boys and the delight of the agents.

After that, when I desired anything for the sick, it came hard indeed.

We had a printing-press, and as everything had to be procured by order, and as every kind of handicraft known to the arts of peace had representatives in our army, a sergeant from the Fourteenth Heavy Artillery issued orders from the office daily, and with them sanitary stores and diet rations were procured.

We had to cut just the same length of red tape, if a man lay dying for the need of a pin's worth. It was necessary to systematize the arrangements, and necessary that every one should conform to the regulations; but my impetuous nature would vent itself now and then, when sick men moaned, and the desired article was going through the slow process of the rules.

We had a laundry established by the river-side,

where the colored people did the washing for the hospital and for us. Spencer, from the Twentieth Michigan Regiment, had charge of the clothing, as it was distributed weekly amongst the different wards.

It was quite amusing to go down to the river, and watch the gambols of the little darkies, whose fathers and mothers worked over the wash-troughs. The great black hose throwing its steady stream of water into the boiler was a source of some mystery to them, as they carefully avoided treading on its serpentine length, regarding it in the light of a living thing well calculated to inspire awe and respect.

I had little time to get interested in this portion of our people who were fleeing out of Egypt—my white brothers had my entire soul. I went one night to look upon the corpse of an old wrinkled woman who had died, one of their number, over whose sable remains the moans of loud lamentations resounded.

Naught belonging to the deceased could ever be used by a single blood relation, and her scanty possessions were soon scattered amongst the group of sympathizing friends around.

She looked very calm in her last sleep; the slave could wear no more fetters in that land—that blessed country from which no tinge of Africa's hue can debar the uprising spirit. Those hard bony hands had done their work on plantation, and in the planter's kitchen, and those dimmed eyes had looked upon the deliverers, as they broke the bondage of her people.

She could well lie down in peace, while children

and grandchildren were left to solve the problem of newly found liberty.

No doubt there were amongst those sable men souls of unquestioned courage, but I have laughed over the dismal howlings of those wounded so slightly that our merest boys would have blushed to notice it; and in the light attacks of sickness the contortions were like death to the uninitiated.

They were a careless, happy set, as they lolled by the river, and enjoyed themselves in camp. Their prayer-meetings often ended with dancing, and song, in which the negro element was exhibited in its perfection. They had many privileges, good rations—sometimes better than our own men, and were under far less restraint.

They wooed and wedded—had feasts and funerals, and the young ebonies sported by the water, oftimes tumbling in to the trembling horror of the maternal heart. One young fellow with his "girl" paraded our streets one day, and one of our nurses, a mere boy, thinking to tease him a little in his pomposity, made a pretence of falling in love with the dusky beauty, making soft, melting speeches to touch her heart. The negro, enraged, sprung upon him, opened his jack-knife, and with the ferocity of a savage cut the boy's throat from ear to ear.

The boy was taken up severely wounded, and months elapsed before his recovery. Some friends of the negro removed him secretly to Washington, to escape the vengeance which would have fallen on him had he remained at City Point. I never knew that

any action was taken in the matter, and it was a bitter thought with the boys long after, that a negro could do with impunity what would have cost a white man his life.

CHAPTER XV.

Everything had grown into the routine of the strictest military discipline, as City Point became the centre of hospitals, and the booming cannon sent its mangled victims thick and fast upon us. The hot sun of July poured down upon our heads, and a hotter fire burned beneath the devoted fort at Petersburg.

Who that listened to the heavy cannonading on the thirtieth of July, and heard the terrible explosion, will forget the horrors of the scenes which were presented on the battlefield, as men were mown down like ripe grain in the harvest-time.

We worked faithfully to make room for the new recruits which we knew would soon be furnished. We cooked, and I remember how the simple fact of severely burning my dress as I stood between two stoves, annoyed me, from the reason that I thought no time could be spared to mend it. Mrs. Spencer of the New York Relief gave me tobacco to distribute to the freshly wounded who should come in, and be unable to procure it. Abominating the habit as I did, yet I enjoyed a great amount of satisfaction in knowing that I had in my possession that which—weed as it

was—would brighten up many a poor soldier's face, and help him to forget the heavy dull pain of throbbing wounds.

Some of our wounded were to be removed to Washington to make room for the scores of freshly mutilated men which the bloody thirtieth had furnished. One of the men had given me his money to keep while ill, and was ordered on board the transport, State of Maine, before I was aware of it. I knew, in the city, he would want many things which were not included in hospital furnishing, and went to the landing, to see him if possible, and return the money.

The surgeon in charge stood by the plank which rested on both boat and shore, and with no ceremony I stepped upon the narrow way, and was about to pass up, when he stopped me with the information that no person could be allowed to go on board the boat without special orders.

I stated my errand, and he said, "Give me the money, I will find your soldier."

I replied, that small as the sum was it went into no hands but the owner's from mine, and turned away as if giving up the contest. But my will was going to be obeyed, and while the Doctor was busy with some person aside, I passed the guard, went on to the tower-deck, found the soldier, and gave him the money, returning safely.

As I passed the surgeon I could not resist the inclination to let him know that a woman had set his authority at naught, and thanking him for his kindness. I added that the boys looked very comfortable.

He said quickly, "Did you go on board?"

"Certainly," I replied, and very angrily he asked if I had not received orders to the contrary.

"Only verbal ones, which will hardly stand law," I answered defiantly, and passed on, leaving him doubtless revolving the problem of woman's perverseness and obduracy.

I never found resistance from the guards—and red-tape I could endure only as it was sewn on to the white ground-work with many stars, and floated in the free air of heaven.

It was an awful suspense for us who waited for the long, ghastly procession of men to be brought in, and we knew what shapeless, gaping wounds would open their bloody lips under our hands. The days were intensely hot, and I volunteered to help make the chicken broth with which we were to feed the wounded as they were brought from the battle-field.

Our cook-stove was in the open air, and no shelter over us. I wore a black hat, not considering the consequence, and soon, as I began my work over the heated stove, and under the broiling sun, I grew blind and staggered speechless away, and remained in a senseless stupor for some hours. When returning consciousness dawned upon me, vague fears and hopes shaped themselves in my mind, with the variety and rapidity of a kaleidoscope.

With the good care given me by Dr. Hays and the nurses, I was able the next day to be about; but, on the recurring hour of noon each day, for many weeks, I was blind for some moments.

The wounded were brought in, and we were appalled at their number, when we thought of the slain, which must be in proportion. Every tent was filled to its utmost capacity, and still they were borne in; ghastly wrecks were some of them, who only came to die. Ropes were hoisted, and blankets laid over them to keep out the blinding heat of the sun, till busy hands could put up additional tents.

Some twenty rebels were brought in—and they seemed to bear their sufferings well—as wounded prisoners of war. I think they were glad to find rest and sufficient food. They were great, gaunt men, who looked likely to have lived on scanty rations all their days.

Our men died rapidly from fever and wounds, and it seemed impossible to rise from the depression which each new death caused.

It was piteous to hear them moan so sadly, yet utter no words of complaint. A little drummer-boy, only thirteen years of age, who belonged to a Rhode Island regiment, was taken with bleeding at the lungs, and moaned only for his mother. She would be all alone, he said, for his father died when he was only ten years of age. He asked me to write, and tell her how it went with her boy; and I sat there holding the dying child in my arms. I thought how her poor stricken heart would agonize over the cruel, cruel blow.

She wrote a reply to my letter, and it was read with tears, long after her boy was laid to sleep in the hospital grave-yard at City Point. I learned of the

killed in our regiment as one after another was brought in, by whose side they had been stricken down. Lieut. Griswold and Sergeant Fish were of the first killed, whose names were given to me then, and my heart grew sad when I remembered how I had seen them last, and shuddered and trembled lest I should hear of some whose blood was as my own in the throbbing pulses of my heart.

They told me Chester Phezonias was killed, and I thought of the meeting in the land where there are no more desolate hearts and hearths, while one body slept on the field where he died, and one in the hospital grave-yard at Fredericksburg.

Sergeant-Major Bristol was wounded in the hand, and Sergeant Root lost his right arm, and came to us, remaining but a few days, however, and going thence to Washington to give room to men lower with wounds than they.

Colonel Catlin came in with one foot lost, and Lieut-Colonel Stillson with a ball in his shoulder, both wounded while leading a charge in front of Petersburg, and with them Private Delos Hubburt, hurt on the same day and ground.

One little incident occurred which pained me exceedingly. One of our men, Private Youngs, was brought in so changed by dirt and grim, and sufferings, that I did not recognize him, and, although he called me "Aunt Becky," it did not occur to me that he was any one in whom I was particularly interested, as coming from our regiment.

I had learned that he was wounded, and had been

making search for him, but not till after he died was made aware of the fact that I had been nursing him for a whole day, and had not known him.

He was such a sufferer that I forbade all unnecessary questions, and kept him as quiet as possible. He tried at the last to say something to me, but it was unintelligible, and he died with his unknown secret, himself unknown. I thought, perhaps, I could have received some sign if I had known him, and it was so hard to think of his dying thus, while I stood by his bed, and could not convey the message of the dying to those who loved him, and of whom his latest thoughts and words were spoken.

A small hospital was established nearer the river for those in government employ, when ours was overcrowded with the battle's unripe harvest, and Mrs. Dunbar, one of our best nurses, and my closest friend, went there to do duty. I was very lonely after she went, still I knew she would do more good in that position than any other one of whom I had knowledge, and remembered that I was not in the army for social enjoyment or the sweets of friendship, and so held my peace, wondering when the war would be over, and we could all go home out of the sight of wounds, and such painful deaths.

I thought of the ending that there would be thrills of regret at parting—heart-aches at the breaking of those ties so cemented by blood; but the nation and the nation's soldiers yearned for peace, and its pursuits, and so we waited patiently for the end.

CHAPTER XVI.

Rumors of a change in our cooking establishment made a little flutter amongst us. Things were going on so smoothly in the worn groove, that we hardly liked the prospect of adapting ourselves to a new order of things. The kitchens were so cleanly and well aired, and everything scoured to snowy whiteness. Brawny arms, with more than a Bridget's strength, reached the perfection of a model housekeeper's ideas in the cleansing of the unpainted tables and shelves.

But change was the order of the day—military rules were arbitrary, and we bore it all in outward silence.

Our mess-room was directly back of the medical dispensary, and our cooks made chairs for each, surprising us one day with seats independent of the movements of our neighbors. Owing to some oversight, or a mistake in somebody's arithmetic, we fell short one seat, and they extemporized a nail-keg, which, falling to the lot of one of our women, caused a storm of indignation to arise, and she left the table determined to avenge the insult. And she did report to the surgeon in charge, and was ridiculed for her

tenacious holding to the idea of an intended insult, when no thought of one had entered their brains.

We had good and sufficient food, still some of the convalescents, with appetites sharpened by late fevers, failed to receive all which their voracious stomachs craved, and my tent became the repository for all odd bits from the cooks, and under its white shelter I dealt out the broken remnants, and wished I could augment the store by miracle or material means—I was not fastidious which, if the substance was only at my hand.

I knew one man who would eat three loaves of bread, with crackers in proportion, and still be hungered for more. My heart ached for him as his wistful eyes would scan my board for some bit of extra food remaining, and I gave him again and again.

The chief cook forbid the under men giving me these extra things—he was an enemy to "calico," and seemed to take particular pleasure in foiling me in attempts to get additions to a sick man's rations.

My great cloak, which enveloped my person completely, served me a good turn then—for many a chunk of dried beef, basins of custard, cans of milk, and balls of butter were smuggled out of the kitchen by the cooks under its ample folds, and the sick men brightened at my coming.

He moved on in his consequential dignity, unconscious how he was being outwitted, regarding me with glances which plainly said, "You are only a woman—I think you get only what I will you should out of this establishment." I contracted a dislike for

him, which culminated into almost absolute hatred, when one morning I saw him absolutely *kick* a convalescing soldier in the mess-room, accusing him of taking a piece of bread which he said lay on a plate on the table, which accusation was emphatically denied.

I felt in my anger as though I wished God would strike him dead, and end his miserable existence. To put on the authority and air of a major-general, and then to descend into such depths of meanness, and knowing his real position before taking charge here, was sickening indeed.

At the head of a drum-and-fife band, this man, without moral sense, was set over those of immense superiority, with kindly hearts, and it was quite a trial to me to see him retain his position when I would have made him the lowest drudge over the washing of pots and kettles, in the vilest depths of the cook-house, and hardly think him good enough to do that work either.

Many thanks to those with him, I suffered but little from his meanness, and few luxuries were withheld from the sick, for goodness of heart triumphed over the brief authority of the conceited fellow, and we went our several ways without conflict. My enlarged proportions at times, as I went demurely from the kitchen laden with the good things, made a little flutter at my heart, but I braved the storm, and weathered the voyage to my wards in safety, each and every time.

Thus men of low calibre, and full of wretched

self, often got in places of trust, and caused us much annoyance in the exercise of their authority to withhold.

Such, at one time, was the man dispensing sanitary stores. Cases of fruit, put up by loving hands to tempt a sick soldier's taste, went into rich pies to garnish his dinner table, and wines bottled to revive a sinking wounded body, which some one loved and prayed for, went down throats where water was seldom a beverage. But there were good and humane men also with Sanitary, and of them I never failed to obtain what I wished.

Of the Christian Commission we invariably procured the desired article, if in their stores. Their labor was voluntary, and of course only the benevolent-hearted, in a spirit of humanity, could afford to give away six weeks of valuable time in dispensing the comforts to those who had nearly given up sweet life for their country's sake, while those in the Sanitary department received from fifty to a hundred dollars per month, which, with the chance of fare which they had, and the position which it gave, made it quite an object.

I had an order one day from Surgeon Yount to get some brandy for a man who lay very low—(we had orders for only a pin's worth from Sanitary)—and wanted the best, and "*our*" Commissioner would not let me have it, saying they had none. In less than an hour I met one of our cooks returning from the same place, and he said, "Look here, Aunt Becky," while with a little laugh of satisfaction

he took out a well-filled flask of the purest brandy from under his blouse, and his eyes sparkled with the beaded fleck of foam at the mouth of the bottle.

Well, I was intensely angry—the man for whose use I needed that bottle of liquor, given to a boon companion for a carousal, was sinking fast, and we had nothing but poor "Commissary whiskey" to give him, and he soon died. In my heart I believe he would have rallied if I had obtained for him the brandy which I coveted so much, and which went to wet the lips of a drunkard.

I told him of it—I could not resist the inclination to let him know that by the fact of his withholding, one brave man had gone, and that the poor whiskey was unfit for medicine in any shape. He said, "It is such as Government furnishes for Government troops," and I replied that I did not wonder Sanitary could not furnish any for the soldiers, when they employed such great stout men as he, who gulped down a glass full of raw liquid fire at once, and to whom water would be a dangerous mixing.

I never saw these men dress a wound while I was in the hospital. The most they could do for the boys, to make a demonstration, was to run from tent to tent with a little bag fastened at their sides holding a dozen sheets of paper split in two, and three or four shirts and as many pairs of drawers, and it sometimes took more than one to that.

One right-minded woman, having charge of what the wives, and sisters, and mothers had sent down to

us with prayers and tears, for those who languished in the fever of wounds, or from exposure to the malaria of swamps, could have wrought far better work in their distribution than these great, unfeeling men, who grew fat on the rich spoils.

A woman's taste is generally considered as accurate in regard to testing the freshness of canned peaches, or the purity of domestic wines, and they could have pronounced upon them, too, without taking the most of the contents to fill dishes on their own table.

Of course abuses will exist—but in this matter of providing comforts for those whose lives hung by the merest thread, I would be severe in protesting against the employment of men wherein the least sign of selfish appropriation appeared.

Too many a one I have seen turn away from the plain toast, or crackers, when half a peach, or a dozen red cherries would have made his eyes sparkle, and the lagging appetite come, urging the parched tongue to partake.

I went sadly away from that dying man, and wondered where selfishness would end, and if the legitimate object of war was to harden men's souls to the miseries of their brothers, till they could look upon dead and dying men with no compunctious feeling for what they had withheld, which might have been a timely salvation to the exhausted body.

Such scenes stirred me to the depths of my nature, and my blood boiled, and my cheeks glowed, till only in the quiet of my little tent could I regain the com-

posure necessary for a steady hand over the distressing wounds which I dressed daily.

The Christian Commission built a church, and sometimes of an evening I would sit within it, with head bowed down, listening to prayer and hymn, and wondering if I was at home again, in the little gray church under the hill-side pastures, and if those men whose voices were raised in exhortation, were our neighbors and our friends, fresh from the clover fields which I knew then were red with many blossoms, and the bees were humming over them in the drowsy afternoons.

I could cheat my heart awhile—I liked to think of the ripple of the brook plashing over the white stones, moistening beds of spongy moss, and scattering drops of dew on bending brake, and lonely water-weed. I was a child again—taking the wood-path to the school-house, looking up into the tall trees with feelings akin to worship, and tracing the sun's witchery through the quivering leaves, down into the dark brown mould, grown so rich with the decay of centuries. The quiet way—the hushed repose of the country in the summer sunshine, came with sweeping force upon me, and with a wild rush of feeling I lifted up my head to see blue army uniforms about me—crutches leaning against the bare walls, and I realized that I was an army nurse, down near the battle-fields, where "It was no place for women."

We had a reading-room attached to the same benevolent Commission, and the studious convalescent could lose himself and his misery in the pages of

books, which only a little while before lay on tables, and in peaceful libraries in his own beloved North.

I had so little to do in arranging my toilet that I enjoyed the look of surprise by which strangers signified their thoughts of my appearance. I presume I was called the worst dressed woman in the whole army, for a little satchel held my wardrobe after losing my trunk, and I certainly could not have cared for a "Saratoga" full of dresses and accompaniments.

My pair of bedtick dresses were strong, and would bear washing well, and when they were clean I gave no more attention to my attire, but with sleeves pinned up, had no scruples about going into any work for fear of soiling my dress.

I went to church so arranged, and enjoyed the sermons as thoroughly as though clad in a velvet robe, when those poor men with torn and dirty uniforms were waiting for me on beds of pain. My straw hat sheltered me from the scorching sun, and when, as often I did, it was taken from my head to cover a soldier's whose cap had gone in the battle's charge, Sanitary would furnish me another.

My feet were very comfortable in slippers three sizes too large for them, and as I had no matrimonial designs on that motley throng of men, it was all the same, and they welcomed me with my hands full of rations as kindly as though clad like a queen.

Heart entanglements were hardly safe then, as some found to their cost—too many men married, yet sported with ripe affections, when they were thrust upon them, and the poor deluded woman awoke to

the knowledge of wife and children only soon enough to save herself from a desperate heart-break.

I was laughed at for a little incident which occurred one day, testifying to one man's faithfulness to his wife—even in thought.

One morning the doctor called for me to go and cheer up a man in Ward B, who was so low-spirited he was in danger of running down and dying soon, and I must do something to rally him, if possible. I went to his side, and said, "Now I have got you—the doctor says if I can raise you, I can have you all to myself, and it will be so nice, when the war is over, to take a father back to my children."

I will never forget the look which staggered me as he opened his weary eyes, and said faintly, but firmly, "My good woman, I have got a wife at home." The poor fellow's thoughts were with her even then, and his sinking spirits longing for her presence. I wondered if that wife knew how true and noble her husband was, and then fell to thinking how strange a thing was the human heart, and that the great want of truth of which people complain lies in their own souls. Be true to ourselves, and no one will do us great harm by being false to us.

CHAPTER XVII.

Our hospital was a great laboratory of sighs. Many a brave man breathed out the last whisper to us when death fastened upon his heart. We were called upon to listen to delirious ravings, and to the hardly articulate words of those whose struggle for life was hard and long. Youth lay before us with fair locks, and face as smooth as a girl's, and with them the bullet had done its work at last.

One of seventeen years, who was mortally wounded through the lungs, sent a messenger for me one day, having heard my name spoken by some of his comrades, and I hastened to his ward. Very cheerfully he asked me how many hours I thought he could live, and I said, "You may live a day, and perhaps longer," for it was useless and cruel to deceive when they themselves knew that death hovered near them.

He only sighed, and turned his face away for a moment, then asked me brightly if I would play checkers with him, adding, "It will bring home back clearer to me than anything else, for my sister played with me the last evening we spent at home—and we used to be so happy together."

I got the board and played several games with him, but not being an adept at the work, of course he beat me every time. He would pause to rest, and his features would often contract with the heavy throb of pain, and his breathing was a difficult labor. Yet he let no complaint fall from his lips.

He wished me to write to his friends that he had died for his country, and was willing, and that his last hours were spent in thoughts of them. He died peacefully not long after he had finished the last game, and thus early life's story was told for him.

I could not keep my tears back from my eyes when I covered the face of the young dead, and left him in his peaceful slumber.

Captain Lee, of the One Hundred and Eleventh Pennsylvania Volunteers, was brought in, bayoneted through the right leg, and suffered the most intense agony. He was delirious nearly all the time, but in his rational moments talked of his wife, and sustained the cause in which he was suffering, and was so sure that success would crown the efforts of our noble general.

He died, and a sister came for his coffined remains, bearing them back in sadness to the lonely-hearted wife, in her desolate home.

A Lieut. Dupree, from a Rhode Island regiment, came in badly wounded, also in the leg, and for two days and nights the nurses relieved each other, as they sat with fingers pressed on the severed artery, to keep the life-blood from ebbing away till his wife could reach him.

She came with his brother, and only God and those who have felt it can tell the agony with which she caught his dying look, and knew that the man she loved was so near his death. No efforts to save him availed, and all we could do after the spirit was gone, was to make the poor lifeless body ready for the silent journey homeward.

One man from a Michigan regiment, who was wounded through the brain, I cared for myself, shaving his head, and dressing the wound carefully. He seemed quite comfortable, and was rational at times; but they had told me from the first it was of no use to waste strength and time on a dead man, and on the third day he died.

He was a noble-looking fellow—somebody's pride; and I wished that those who loved him could see the peaceful look which his features wore, and take him to the dear old spot to sleep his last sleep, afar from the din of battles.

A woman came from Pennsylvania to our hospital to see her husband, who was reported as badly wounded through the head, with no hopes of his recovery. When she arrived, with a little tender babe in her arms, how my heart ached for her, and for the little one who should never look upon its father's living face, for he had been dead and buried three days.

The old father came with his daughter-in-law, and the last act they could render to his lifeless remains, was to remove them from the scene of his death, back to the sacred soil wherein each and every one of us desires to repose, when life's fitful dream

is over—the church-yard under the shadow of our native hills.

It was a rare treat to see a little white baby, ebony ones had been in plenty—but a little white baby, with twining flaxen hair, and laughing blue eyes, and rosy mouth, was a rare treat for us. Its dimpled hands wandering over the bronzed faces of the soldiers, made many a one think, with tears almost up to his eyes, of nameless little ones so far away, as I carried the pretty fatherless child from tent to tent.

Many an eye moistened as I told the story of its father's death, and many a one thought of the sweet darlings, from the lumpy baby of two months to two years, who might soon, alas! be fatherless like that tender one.

I saw the widow take the child to her bosom, and thought how it would grow to full stature, and never know, only as an old story, of the journey to the hospital, where the sight of its father's dead face was the only consolation to the bereaved mother.

So many sick and wounded were crowded into the tents, and the transports taking away fewer than arrived, we were obliged to shelter them as we could, and my small house was given to five men, Lieut. Austin of our regiment, his brother, Private Strong, and two soldiers from Western regiments, while we women all went into one tent to sleep.

Chaplain Washburn took us in his way to join the regiment, and was very kind in his efforts to assist us. Erin Van Kirk, of the One Hundred and Ninth, was very sick at the time, and my hands were filled with

work. Major Dunn, Captains Gordon and Mont, were ill also, and the duties were arduous which devolved upon me, more because I had taken every man of that brave regiment into my heart as a brother, and wished to watch over them as such.

We had some cases of gangrene which proved fatal to all who were attacked. So suddenly, while we thought the wound was healing, the poison infused itself into the festering sore, and death came, a speedy release from the agony of pain.

So sad it made my heart as one after another dropped away, and others came in with bloody wounds, some from the beloved regiment, of whose welfare my whole being was so solicitous. The rebel lines seemed impregnable, and the dire casualties of such frequent occurrence, that I grew sick with apprehension, and wondered if the bloody carnage was to fill up the measure of our material existence.

Captain Knettles came in with his right eye shot out—a painful wound, and a brave man to endure the pain. Then came the terrible news of Sergeant Jerome Woodbury's death, killed August 19th, and there were many sad hearts in our regiment, for he had a host of friends to mourn his death. And Capt. Mitchel wounded also, of Co. K., his sister with him.

Well, I just began to think that Miss Mitchel will have a proposal soon, for there is a certain doctor from the Second Corps that visits my tent rather often, and I do not think he comes to see me; for it would be so funny if a shoulder-strap should take so much notice of Aunt Becky.

Woodbury was down to see me the day before his death, and as he left my tent he said, "I feel sensible that I am not going to get out alive," and his prediction proved true. A mother's heart bled at the loss of her hero son; was there not also a throb of pride that he died such a good soldier—such a brave, noble-hearted man?

Every effort was made to find his body, but they were unavailing. His name and regiment were pinned to his clothing by the hands of a comrade, after he died; but although the search was close and long, they failed to discover his remains, and he was doubtless buried where he died, in the soldier's nameless grave.

His sleep is as peaceful as though the sods of his native valley covered him, and spring sows as sweet flowers to deck the green trenches of Virginia, as those which blossom in the quiet Northern graveyards.

The lovely summer weather seemed profaned by these deeds of death, but our convalescents enjoyed the long warm days, when no fatiguing marches or wearing duty rendered them conscious of the heat. They sat at tent doors dreaming of the days which were gone, striving hard to forget the terrible scenes through which they had so recently passed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Some shrewd games were played upon us at times, although I was slow to believe that men, wearing the Union blue, would descend to trickery to remain in hospital, and leave their comrades to brave the dangers at the front.

One who had been a sailor, and once before in the service, was playing the crazy soldier. He had received the bounty for which he enlisted, and was anxious to obtain his second discharge. Sometimes when I talked to him he forgot his part, and seemed to understand as readily as any one, and we thought him trying to play upon us, although we could get no proof. He played so adroitly, however, that he was sent to Washington soon, and did obtain his discharge on the ground of insanity.

One old soldier came in almost bent double with rheumatic pains, and seemed to suffer so much that I became enlisted in his behalf, and ministered daily to his wants. He lay for weeks with no change for the better, and every luxury which I could obtain I carried to his ward, and after a time begged permission of the doctor to have him come nearer to my tent, that I could do more for his comfort.

Not many days after my wish was complied with, the examining surgeon came around and visited my old soldier, pronouncing him an impostor. I protested against the decree—that inflammatory rheumatism often gave no outward sign, and that it could not be he was playing us false.

Notwithstanding the arguments so conclusive to myself, they sent him to ride the horse which had neither saddle, nor bridle, nor lines, with which to make the ride agreeable, and I was very miserable thinking of the hard penance which he was undergoing, and the disgrace to his manhood.

But the cure was effectual; he was erect as any man from that day, and always passed me with an averted face, and hurrying step. I was laughed at many a day for my expenditure of unavailing sympathy for the poor old rheumatic soldier.

I believe we had but few such men; death before the foe was not such a dreadful thing, that they could often disgrace the uniform which they wore by such mean shifts.

In direct contrast to this case was an old white-headed man, who came down to us from the One Hundred and Seventy-Ninth N. Y. Volunteers, very ill from the exposure to hardships which in his old age he had no strength to bear up under.

His name was Freer, from Slaterville, N. Y. He was the greatest example of patience and endurance with which I ever met, and he suffered extremely, never through it all uttering a groan, or word of complaint. Sometimes he thought himself at home,

and would talk like a child which had been long homesick, and was again sitting under the old roof by his mother; then again he realized his position, and would question me if I believed he would ever see home, and children, and the old wife again.

I waited upon him most of the time, and the tears would often come to my eyes when he would speak of the comfort which they should take when the cruel war was over. I knew that when that time came, he would be a heap of mouldering dust, somewhere under the sods of the ground.

A neighbor came all the long distance between him and his roof-tree, to be with him in the last, and take back, with his cold clay, the messages of love to his family. When he came in and took his hand, and he heard the sound of his familiar voice, new life seemed to flow into his lagging pulses—his eyes brightened, and the neighbor thought hope was not yet dead. He said it seemed to him an angel had come from heaven to take him home, and clung to him with the tenderness of a babe to its mother till he died.

I remembered him sadly for many weeks, and the picture of the silver-haired old man is photographed in my gallery of brave men who died to save their country's honor.

I had charge of one ward in which lay seven little boys, all under seventeen years of age, and all ill with fever. I was thoroughly at home there When I had washed their faces and combed their hair, and

made all necessary changes in their clothing, I felt like sitting beside them and rocking them to sleep.

They were gathered from different States, and had succumbed to the hardships of war. Delicate boys, with faces fair as a maiden's, with soft, curling hair, and eyes so bright, and truthful, and loving, I could not think of them as learning the hard lessons of battle, standing in the front ranks of soldiers, meeting without shrinking the deadly charges.

I wished only for the power to nurse them into health, and send them to the mothers who loved them, till the smooth lip should grow downy, and the fair brow bronzed with the winds which manhood's prime must face, and leave them there till years should mature them ready for the next great conflict.

Oftimes I found them all in tears—poor homesick hearts pining for their native hills—longing to lay their heads in a mother's lap, and forget that they had ever thought of onslaught on to any greater game than the squirrels and blackbirds which frequented well-known haunts.

Then I laughed them into spirits again—told them I should order baby-jumpers for the next offender, and left them a little brighter for the day. They called me "mother," and I drifted into it so naturally, that as one by one they convalesced, and were sent away, I felt like a mother weeping for the loss of her bright, beautiful boy—knowing into what hardening scenes they were passing, and trembling for the purity of the young brave hearts.

For four weeks we had a man in hospital, whose skeleton frame seemed ready to drop into the consumptive's grave without a warning. He was not recovering, and the doctor having charge of the ward would not send him away. I thought a change would help him if anything could, and one day learning that the Fifth Corps were to send some of their wounded to Washington that afternoon, I went to the steward and obtained a ticket for one of our men, ordering the nurses to take Brother Jonathan, as we called him, to the boat where the Fifth Corps left, and they did as ordered.

He had been gone only a short time when the doctor came on his round of inspection, and missed the man—wanted to know if he had got well, or died, and as he persisted in his questioning, they were obliged to tell of my share in the transaction—that he had gone off on the transport. "By whose orders?" he thundered sharply.

"Aunt Becky's," was the reply, and he marched away, muttering, "I'll give her the devil."

So, with vengeance in his heart, he came directly to my tent, flushed with anger, and demanded to know what business I had to send men out of his ward, or indeed out of any ward in the Hospital.

I made but little reply—letting the storm rage till its fury was spent—then I said:

"The man was not doing well—he did not belong to you—pieces of men grew together to make Brother Jonathan, and his two eyes haunted me so, I could not help sending him off."

His eyes were like saucers—and the dark rings about them were fearful to behold. The doctor had nothing more to say, and left me victor of the field. I saw the man in Washington after that, looking quite well, and what was better, he had his discharge papers in his pocket.

Some punishments occurred in camp which, perhaps, were deserved, although an unpleasant feeling always attached itself, in my mind, to the manner in which they were performed, so degrading to the culprit—attaching such a shameful thought to all association with his comrades in after-life.

I made a custard one morning for a ward of the sick, baking it in a four-quart basin, and giving it to a nurse to distribute. He gave them each a tablespoonful, ate some himself, and sold the remainder to the boys. Before it was known to me, I heard the fife and drum, and saw the culprit parading the camp with the board on his back, marked, "Thief."

I knew the offence should be punished, or such things would often occur, but I could not look with anything like complaisance on such a degrading display. I would rather the offender were put on bread and water alone, for a week, in solitary confinement; or that a fine should be exacted, reaching into the next pay. Anything but the return to barbarism, of which the "Rogue's March" was the first downward step.

One morning I went to my tent after some sauces for a patient, accompanied by one of the boys who was acting as nurse, and as we returned, found a letter

lying on the ground, directed for the post-office, to the address of a married lady in Washington. Thinking no more of it, I gave it to the boy to drop into the box. I was sure he did as directed, and the matter rested, till I heard the doctor say he had lost a letter which he was about to post. I went directly to him, saying, I had found one to the address of Mrs. ——, Washington, D. C., and he, coloring up to the roots of his hair, said it could not be his letter, for the lady whom he had addressed was unmarried.

I mentioned the name of the nurse into whose care I had entrusted the letter for the office, and after a few hours learned, to my great indignation, that the boy had been put into the guard-house, because the doctor could not find his letter in the post.

He had been "sweet" on this lady, and we all knew it, and I was determined that no one should suffer for his carelessness, even if the letter had been retained and read, which I did not believe, so, going to the head-surgeon, and stating the case in plain terms, the boy was ordered to his ward again, and the citizen doctor was the butt of many a laugh and joke at the surgeons' mess, for weeks.

Such things tried my soul, and, one day, finding a boy, who was a favorite of mine, tied up by the thumbs to a tree, I took my knife from my pocket in an instant, and the cord was severed, and the boy sent quickly to his ward, with the assurance that I would stand all blame, and if they wished to tie up any one else it might be me, but I hardly thought that would look very well under the circumstances.

Nothing was ever said about it, however, and Aunt Becky went unharmed.

Deserters were shot on the heights above us, within sounding distance of my tent, and I shall never forget the horror in which I listened to the band playing the death-march, as they passed the curve in the road, and the doomed man went to the open grave which yawned for him. I could not help the silence in which I sat, till the music had died away, and the crash of musketry sounding in the sullen distance assured me that the soul of the one time soldier had gone to eternity—ushered beyond the portals by the hands of those whose companion he had been.

I could not reconcile the deed with my obdurate conscience—although I knew the penalty must be severe as death, to hold many in the ranks, yet so often and often men failed to know the true duty of a soldier, and the act of desertion seemed hardly enough to warrant his death at the hands of comrades.

It seemed a cruel thing to make men, who perhaps had been playmates in youth, the executioners of the stern military decree; but I was a woman,—I did not know of these things, and although they tried my soul to the very depths, I was compelled to let them pass silently.

CHAPTER XIX.

Dr. Wheeler was relieved in the summer, and Dr. McDonald put in charge of our hospital. He ordered barracks to be built and the cook-houses to be merged in one, with a low diet, and a full diet-kitchen. Our old cooks were ordered to the front and men from the drum-corps put on duty instead.

The long row of low, unpainted buildings which sprang up would have suggested little poetry in the eyes of an imaginative person, but they were far better than tents, accommodating more patients, and, although destitute of architectural beauty, yet from the comfort afforded, looked well in our practical eyes.

The cannon belching forth its red flames sent men to their long account, and prostrated others with its withering touch; still the ceaseless work never paused, and our hands were not allowed to be folded idly in our laps, waiting for the relay of wounded.

We had always one work which lay ready at our hands. I suppose fastidious women who know not the size or color of a louse, or the uneasy sense of their crawling presence, will be shocked to learn that we had them in plenty in our hospital, in our heads, and in our clothing.

It is an abomination in a civilized family to let children *keep* lousy; but sometimes the best of people will be obliged to make forays on the sudden attack of the pests, but in the army no Sanitary rules—noth ing, in fact—would rid us effectually of them, and we endured them with the heroism of martyrdom.

We endured them, waiting the advent of plenty of soap and water, fine-tooth combs and new clothing, consigning, in fancy, our old garments, the tenant-houses of so many families, to the merciless flames.

In deep seam and hem the creatures bred and grew till they were as large as a kernel of wheat, ripe and full; and any lady can imagine scores of such creatures crawling on her delicate flesh, while the shudder of horror creeps over her; but if lover, or brother, or husband, or son, were in the ranks, she can rest assured that his clothing also was peopled by these army-followers; and if she is in doubt, let her be convinced by his truthful statement.

It was a recreation often indulged in by con-valescing patients—turning the garments inside out, and picking these creatures from the seam, to which they cling in desperation. Our tents were invaded; roof, wall, and floor, were astir with them, and they were an enemy invincible to the foe—reinforcing the slaughtered ranks till their number was legion, and they were left victor of the well-fought field.

Think not we sunk down at first into this sudden defeat, or admitted their foraging with impunity; many an onslought from a nervous hand to the shoulder ended the day of scores; many a deter-

mined raid with brush and comb laid them low by dozens; but still they came; still they swarmed our clothing, and beds, and tents, and we made a virtue of necessity, and *endured.*

I sometimes went to the front, to see the boys of our own regiment, taking up little articles—as stamps, paper, and things not easily obtained there at all times; and one day, in the early September, I proposed to take a journey there, and hardly knew what conveyance I should find.

Still, as my will was generally obeyed in some shape, I looked about me for some mode of travel, first engaging Steward Demming as driver. We found an old horse running about, which seemed to be ownerless, and an abandoned wagon, and proposed to take our journey with the aid of these, in faint remembrance of days of peace, when the wagon trundled over smooth roads, grass-lined, and wound in dusty quiet by the habitations of civilization.

We were to go on Monday—a day on which no thrifty housekeeper thinks of going on a visiting expedition; but our arts were the arts of war; we heeded no washing days at the front.

I had canned fruit and quite a collection of good things which I wished to take up to the boys, and we were astir early, eager as children for a holiday-ride. We tied up our broken wagon, and extemporized a harness out of ropes and old pieces of leather, put together in any shape, to keep the horse from leaving the vehicle behind him in his swift flight.

It was a very warm day, and the poor old horse felt the heat extremely, and the boys bade us "good-bye," with many a joke at our stylish equipage, scarcely expecting to see us return as we went.

But we reached camp at last, and were greeted with loud demonstrations, which would have done credit to the arrival of a favorite major-general; and indeed our whole journey had been a continued ovation.

The boys hastened to the roadside, calling our horse along with hands held forth, suggesting to the half-famished brute the oats, the taste of which had almost gone out of his remembrance, so long ago were they taken into his stomach.

But we were in time for dinner, and remained awhile, dispensing the good things to the boys, to whom hardtack had become second nature. At dusk we arrived back at the Hospital, being greeted like voyagers who had dared some great and perilous sea.

The autumn winds grew chilly over City Point, and we were astonished one day by the sweeping discharge of all the women connected with the Ninth Corps, with the exception of my humble self, who was retained by what process this deponent knoweth not.

Why the others were discharged was quite a mystery for the time. Some said it was because the surgeon in charge disliked women in general, but as he doubtless had wife, mother, or sister, that could not be.

But the women were sent away, and I, alone of my sex, was left in the Ninth Corp Hospital at City Point.

The stewards and myself had our own table, and the cooks prepared our meals, and it was strange again to me to see only men about, wearing the blue uniform, and to hear only their harsh voices in the camp.

Still, when the desire for female society pressed strongly upon me, I visited the nurses of other corps, where hospitals were in close proximity to ours, but time did not lie heavily on my hands, allowing discontentment to spring up in my mind like weeds, overshadowing duty.

The November rain fell alike on the camp and the beleaguered city of Petersburg, and the mud was ankle deep in the streets of our tented town. The stray bullet and cannon still did its fearful work, and sickness struck many a man down in the height of his ambition for glory.

The leaves fell, and the grass withered. We had no birds to leave us on their bright wings. Never a bird did I see here or at Fredericksburg; only a few crows, with black wings, ominous of death and disaster. The storm of iron hail had effectually driven them away, but not forever, we hoped.

It would be sad if, amongst other horrors, the spring-time should bring no birds to build their nests high in the tree-boughs, or low in the June meadows. But although there will be desolation enough, Nature will not withold her gifts to the South—the bright

land of the sun. The birds are there—the blue skies, the tender flowers, beaded with rain and dew; and man may do as he will, she will never fail to renovate when the iron heel is taken from the long pressed sod.

When the screaming shell ceased to speed on its death errand, and the cannon to belch forth its lurid fires, these birds returned, singing in the bright mornings, only to take leave when the black frosts touched with withering fingers all that was frail, and lovely, and blooming.

The trees were naked again, the hill-sides were bleak, and we shrunk from the bitter wind, thinking of another long winter in camp. The army was still amidst active operations, and the foe yet lifted its brazen head strong for the battle. The chill blasts crept into every forgotten aperture, and we drew our blankets closer over us in the dark lonesome midnights.

Yes, it was settled we were again to pass a winter in the South—when the last spring opened I had said, "We will go home before cold weather assails us again," but yet we lingered, rebellion still rampant, and the horrid Moloch of War yet unappeased.

The semblance of Northern seasons dropped upon us in promising flakes, but the white robe was like ermine only for a few moments, the feet of nurse, and cook, and guard defiled its purity, and the sticky mud was left alone after the snow wept itself out in silent tears.

Our ranks were constantly recruited, and the days

wore on. Many a fanciful armament was fashioned by those deft fingers, when the owner lay thinking of the craft which he had followed, and strove to wear away the tedium of the monotonous life in the hospital.

I had many a token given to me—images moulded of the clay which was upheaved when the great mine was sprung at Petersburg,—and of other earth made historic by the blood of the brave men spilt upon it —little ornaments carved of beef bones, polished till they were like ivory in whiteness and beauty.

One chain was given me, each link composed of some carpenter's implement—axe, saw, file, everything in fact—but some covetous hand stole it away, and it lies a confiscated relic in some treasure trove. I wish it were in mine.

In work like this, in reading and silent thought, the men passed the days, and the winter months wore off with no great incidents to mark them in my calendar.

February drew near, and came at last, with the promise of a speedy going. As I look over the diary kept at that time, and remember the little white sheltering-tent under whose brooding it was written, I think the record of the few weeks inscribed within it will tell best what feelings urged us, and how we longed for home and home comforts to be given to all that sick and suffering throng.

CHAPTER XX.

DIARY.

Saturday, February 4, 1865.

To-DAY being so bright and beautiful, yet so muddy, that as I go from tent to tent I lodge in the mire at times, I almost wish myself at home, where I should not be obliged to go out—still I am content, and happy to be doing some good to these poor fellows, who have neither wife, mother, or sister near them to listen to plans for the future, or to the history of the past.

I am alone of women in the Ninth Corps, yet I was never treated with more consideration than by these rough soldiers, with bronzed and scarred faces, telling that a hero has fought and bled for his country. A year and a half has gone by, and I have not seen my girls. When I think of them, and of home, how I long for the wings of a bird that I might fly away and be near them, to shelter and comfort with a mother's love.

Shall I write it? O Journal, bear witness to the weakness of women, I wish the war was over, and I could sleep upon a bed of feathers, and sit within the arms of a cushioned rocking-chair!

How the cunning things of this earth entangle the

heart, and how hard it is to break away from such habits of civilization. I have often thought it was a mistake that nature made me so small and weak, with all a man's ardor and enthusiasm pent up in my heart, and this wild fancy which would soar so far away, and beyond my poor strength.

I would do so much that this weak hand is impotent to work out, that I seem useless, either to myself or to others. Yet I know in some way it is all right, and I will make no more complaint—content to bear my little load in patience, and when I come to lay it down, thank God it was no heavier.

There has been no death in the Ninth Corps for three weeks, and only one man from the One Hundred and Ninth Regiment ill, and he in no immediate danger.

Sunday, February 5.

This morning is wild and windy, with close clouds over the sky, and soul and body are in sympathy with the inclement weather. Yesterday was so sunny and mild, and to-day the cold rain winds are moaning, and borne upward on their wailing the soul of one of our men has gone.

John Bush, of the One Hundred and Eighty-sixth N. Y., died this morning, and he will be buried while no tears fall on his pale dead face, when for the last time the light of day falls upon it.

Men die here, and are forgotten, but *there*, friends mourn over the pallid form, and lay it reverently in the church-yard, and go to the desolate home to mourn

for the loved who went out of its shelter, never more to return.

Life here is like a leaf from the tree, borne down by the passing gale, and amidst all the summer's greenery no one can tell that it is gone. By and by when the sad news reaches those who have prayed for him, and felt his absence from home, then will be shed tears of regret over his memory, while they think with heart-pangs of the returning veterans of war, amongst which he will not be marching.

It is such a blessed thing that time can heal such grief—that the gentle flowers of remembrance can by and by spring up on their graves, and though never forgotten, yet the keen pain is soothed—the bitterness is washed away, and again life holds out its tempting cup for our eager lips, and we quaff and are at rest, waiting the meeting beyond the river.

I had a pleasant evening after an unpleasant day, and then dreamed away with the night my weariness of heart.

Monday, February 6.

I feel quite like myself this morning; the cold air seems to brace me, although I long for the sunny days to come with warm winds and balmy skies, and varied flowers strewing the grass. The question of peace seems to be the one absorbing theme. How I hope something may grow out of it to fill the land with joy.

When I think of the dear ones out of so many lonely homes which want their presence, I can im-

agine what a thrill of joy will run into every pulse at the coming of the blissful time when the war is ended and the army melts away into the bosom of families, and communities.

Then hands which now wield the death weapon will be turned to the arts of husbandry again, and no more dreadful tidings of death and carnage be borne on the net-work of wires.

But, with all the joy, how many will still be desolate—how many homes will never echo to the sound of returning feet, but forever keep sacred the memory of some brave one who died and found a grave in the sunny South.

Some of our men leave to day on the transport *State of Maine*, for the General Hospital, at Washington. I wish a greater number were going, where they could have more comforts than we can provide for them.

I had my favorite dish of pigs' feet for dinner, and as they used to tell us each part strengthened a part, I wondered if my pigs' feet would all centre their strength in one foot.

To-day is an anniversary. How well I remember, just fifteen years ago, how bright everything looked to me—with Youth and Hope leading me beyond the rugged paths of common existence, to a clearer and higher atmosphere than pervades this world of sin.

How changes came to me—altering the web of life-weaving on the groundwork which should have held roses, and mosses, and trailing leaves, only a dark pattern, fit for a funeral pall.

Where are the thoughts which should have budded into rich blossoms of love—where are the creeping mosses of sweet remembrance? Alas, alas! Here I sit in womanhood's prime, in my coarse dress, with hands roughened by hard toil—a Hospital Nurse,—and my heart is buried in the past.

The evenings are long as I sit alone—hearkening to the wind, or the constant nibbling of the mice, which keep me in a continual flutter. I think of all which has gone away, and wonder if the future holds anything bright in store for me. Life seems a dream—my heart seems to sleep in an enchanted house, haunted by many ghosts.

Well, it is only a little while. How many lamps *I* have seen go out—and mine may disappear as suddenly. I will try to be content in doing the work which my hands find here, and earn the commendation of the Master when we shall go up at that great day, bearing our sheaves with us.

Those mice—Oh, those nibbling mice—I think I will fix them this night, so that sleep may not be scared away from my pillow.

February 7.

Another gloomy day without,—no sun,—no rain,—no wind,—only cold, dull dampness, which chills to the marrow of one's bones, and renders a warm fire a positive necessity. Within my cloth house the horror of a murder lies red and glaring. Only think of a little life going out in Aunt Becky's tent, but I cannot endure the patter-patter of those little feet,

and the incessant nibbling which sends me wild with its monotonous tones.

I am not alone, two soldiers are making free with their onions and johnny-cake here, and enjoying themselves hugely in their freedom from restraint. I cannot check them when I know how near they may be to the river's brink down which so many have plunged with no warning cry.

The poor wounded are now being brought in from the Fifth Corps—the loss is said to be heavy—and yet they call it "victory." Oh! this cruel, cruel war, when will it end, and these men, so precious to somebody's heart, cease to be brought here with bleeding wounds, maimed, helpless—dying?

God, let thy vengeance fall speedily on those at whose door this carnage may be laid—let the rope and the bullet do their work, till the land shall be rid of the evil which wrought this sin, and our brave, noble soldiers be set free.

The greed for ambition and gain has reached this awful climax. Do not those who ventured no risk in the chaos never shrink back from the yawning hell right at their feet? Death, in a speedy form, would seem a punishment too light for them to bear, rather I would doom them to long-lingering decay,—deprived of human society, the four bare walls of an iron cell should enclose them, and not even a glimpse of Heaven's own blue should drift before their vision, for have they not desecrated its semblance in the glorious old flag which floats over our loyal country?

North or South—friend or foe, I care not on

ROSSITER—JOHNSON

whom the curse may fall, if it crushes out this terrible war under which we groan, and our young men bleed and die.

The gloomy day is gone, and a pleasant evening, enlivened by two calls, ends the scene, and I am ready for sleep to charm me away to the land of dreams, where I may hope to meet those long loved, and long lost.

CHAPTER XXI.

February 8.

I HAVE just come in from a visit to the poor wounded men. O how they suffer, yet few groans or cries issue from their lips, as they endure amputation, and dressing of wounds—only the close shutting of the mouth, and the contortion of a muscle, shows how keen is the pain which brings the beaded sweat to their foreheads.

Oftimes the amputated limb seems to lie distorted in the great festering heap, and they beg that it may be laid straight. Strange this sympathy which the member gone seems to have with the frame-work left. How many have told me that fingers or toes were cramped, and even thought if the limb which was gone could be placed aright in the grave, with its mutilated companions, the uneasy feeling would vanish at once.

It is very muddy, and the wind blows a perfect gale, and although the sun shines overhead, I feel a gloom like night stealing over me. I hear the groans of the wounded, and the sound fires me with ten thousand feelings which I cannot express—so many perish, and the end still in the far distance.

February 9.

Still the wounded come in, and little I can do to mitigate their sufferings—so many mere boys, it makes my heart ache for the mothers, whose whole souls yearn over the brave little fellows, who could not remain at home when the old flag was endangered. I look at them and think, what if they were *my* children, how I would bless any one who gave them even a kind word, and I try to cheer them up, telling them the Confederacy must give way with such help as they have given our army, and that they do not suffer in vain.

Some of my old patients come back almost every day. I watch for the familiar faces, whose owners I nursed at Fredericksburg, or White House Landing, and they recognize me in my scant bedtick dress, but perhaps appreciate what I am able to do for them, as well as if I passed hours in dressing for the Wards.

Well, it seems heartless for me to see women caring for curls and colors, when so many need a brave hand which will not shrink from a dirty, bloody wound, waiting to be dressed. I cannot think of such things now—it is no time, or place. I am a common woman, and I come to nurse the common soldier, whose sixteen dollars a month is the exceeding reward of hardships almost unendurable—nursing and burial thrown in if he dies, and if he lives, a wreck, with only the vital trunk intact, eight dollars a month for the term of his natural existence.

I don't say it is not liberal, but I do say, when

men have almost died—nay, worse than died, for the country—that country should, like a grateful mother, gather up her children in her loving arms, protect them and theirs, with her means and her strength, and so far as outward things will go, soften the pathway all through life. She cannot do too much, alas! I fear she will do too little.

My sympathies all centre in the soldiers who wear the common blue of the ranks—whose columns have been swept down like grain before the reaper, whose bones lie many deep under the battle-sods—whose blood has moistened the roots of countless grasses, and dyed many a stream with its muddy flow.

Those who have money and position will receive all which these can bring—it is smaller matter when a soldier, in the coarse uniform, lies low—only the few ripples which widen out to the circle of home, and intimate friends, are seen, and the dream is past.

The prospect is, that this spring's campaign will be the hardest of the war—how I shudder at the thought of so many brave fellows rushing into the jaws of death, and perishing on the instant. Something is wrong somewhere. God never made man in his image to be thus mutilated and murdered by the hand of his brothers. His mighty curse rests on the slayer's head, and shall those who wrought this killing go unscathed?

The giant intellect works at the great problem till it solves a way to take life by the hundreds, and iron missiles are moulded with poison in their hearts, to corrode and steal away the life which they got not

outright. The man under whose generalship thousands are lost to home and friends is the feted hero of the hour.

When I think how each one in dying leaves such desolation in some hearts, and then multiply this by the lowly sodded trenches of Virginia, God knows how my soul agonizes over a land clad in deepest mourning.

February 11.

How kind the soldiers are to me. I appreciate each little act of thoughtfulness, which assures me that I am remembered, and have done some good in coming so far from home into the reach of so much sickness and death. I am not working hard now. The time may soon come when my hands shall be full to overflowing with work. O what work—what work! Ye who sew, and knit, and toil over the heated stoves, while those you love are away fighting the hydra-headed monster of Secession, ye little know how these hands toil at the bruised and bleeding wounds, when fresh "victory" sends its recruits into our Hospital.

I could not be happy away from here while the war lasts, still I look forward with longing to a time when a home and home comforts will usurp this strange life, solitary from my sex, yet as courteously treated as though I were the highest lady in the land.

What is it which inspires even the lowliest soldier in the ranks? Never but once have I been addressed in terms unbecoming to a soldier. Certainly

I have met rebuffs from steamboat captains, and paymasters, and that kind of fish, but from the ranks of our Ninth Corps, and from every soldier in the Union Army, with that one exception, I have received all, and more consideration than was due me.

Sunday Morning, February 12.

The wind rages without like a wild beast howling for its prey. It blows my stove-pipe down, and twice I have had to replace it. I am feeling weak and worn this morning, and I crept back to bed after arising, feeling altogether too miserable to keep my feet.

I think I am experiencing the effect of a fall which I had not long ago, but it was all in the line of duty; I must keep a little quiet now, while I am not so much needed, and then by and by—

Well, I have not been alone, or quiet much today, the evening has been pleasant, but it has gone, and I go—to bed.

February 13.

Again a morning of wind, and air filled with bitter cold; I passed a sleepless night, and my heart lies sad, and heavy in my bosom.

Can I put on smiles, and cheat myself into cheerfulness, even as I cheat these sick men pining for home? I think, as I dress myself, and tidy up my tent, how quickly the years will go away, and no one remember that I ever lived. I shall die, be buried, and forgotten. My children while they live, will

cherish my memory, but it is only one generation, and no one will exist who ever looked upon my face.

But why art thou disquieted, O my soul! So is the life of the human kind—a day of sunshine—a week of storms—a cup of bitter, with only a drop of sweet,—and yet some lives seem beautiful from the beginning to the end. Some hearts seem to throb unhaunted by trouble, and the years glide on. I have reared many a castle in the air, and stood breathless while they tumbled down to earth, bringing my fondest hopes to the mire and clay.

"Man's inhumanity to man makes countless millions mourn," and the crushing sense of poverty loads down many a soul which might aspire to the very sun.

I think sometimes, when this is over, if I could only take my children away from the world's influance, and live and die in some lodge in the vast wilderness, I would be content; but that would forestall God's purpose—the prayer should not be, Lead us not *into* temptation, but, O Lord, keep us *through* temptation.

I have just answered a letter, which, if not too late, will take me when this is over into new scenes of love. I have accepted the Matronship of the Asylum for Orphans at Washington, and if that is my sphere henceforth, I will try to be happy.

February 14.

Still sad and gloomy, and yet denied the privilege of giving vent to my feelings. I feel the need of

female society now—these rough men, kind as they are, cannot sympathize with a woman, even though she pours out her heart at their feet. I look to a time when peace will come, and wonder if I can then forget the sufferings which I have witnessed day after day, when naught but misery and wounds thronged our camps.

CHAPTER XXII.

February 15.

A BEAUTIFUL day out in the free sunshine; within my cloth house the shadows are still lying, but we have many sick ones now, and I try to pass the most of my time with them, to avoid the loneliness of my tent.

I had a call from a bride to-day, Mrs. Major Eden —how happy she seemed, and how proud in the love of her excellent husband. Well, that joy comes once to the most of human hearts, but alas! how soon the tenderness of the lover melts away into the indifference of the husband, and then—God help the young heart pining for sympathy, and guard it that she falls not into temptation.

If men only knew how they hurt their own cause by this neglect and coldness, and how much brighter the world would be for them, if they cherished and sympathized with a wife as they ought, much of the misery of the household would be done away.

But, wrapped in selfishness, many men draw themselves into an impenetrable shell, and the world goes on with hearts growing sadder and sadder every hour.

The day and evening have gone—dragged heavily away with the drift-wood of the past, and I go to bed to forget life if I can, and if not forgetting it, to dream of those whom I would fain see soon.

February 16.

Bright again, and two days of sunshine have worked their little wonder in my heart. I am thinking with pleasant anticipations of home, and yet the time may be afar off, for while health and strength last I shall not leave the army.

I wonder if any one is to blame for my being a woman, and not having a sister? I think my heart should have had a broader breast to beat in, because it feels cramped and confined as it is, and I am eager to do something which will tell amongst my fellow-creatures, and my slender woman's frame still holds me in check.

If I only had a sister, if not a sister by blood, why not a sister in the intimate companionship of kindred souls? There has been heavy cannonading to-day on the left, but we have not yet learned to what it is tending—this much I feel, as I shudder with my woman's nerves, somebody is maimed, and dying on that trampled space in front of Petersburg.

February 17.

Very lovely to-day, and I am still feeling better. Our sick are doing well, and a large number have been sent to Washington, on the transport *State of Maine*—only the wounded are left. My brother has

just gone from here;—he came down from the front, and reports all quiet there to-day. I begin to feel anxious to have a letter, it seems so long since I heard from those dear ones—why do they wait thus? If they knew at home how eager our homesick hearts were for the little messengers of love and friendship fluttering down to us on thin white wings, recording every item of change in and about the one dear spot, they would not count it lost,—the time spent in giving them to us poor waifs, thrown out into the country of a hostile people.

February 18.

The sunshine forgot to open its eyes this morning, and the cold wind moaned for it, and I sit shivering over my fire scarcely able to keep myself warm, and the stove-pipe in position. Well, the time comes to all of us when we are sick of soldiering, and wish we were out of the service, then, ashamed of the seemingly coward thought, they grow eager to rush into the fray, and wipe out the stain of seeming dishonor.

February 19.

Many rumors are floating about, but no reports on which we can rely—still Hope holds aloft her streaming banner, and our hearts throb in unison with the great swell of her soul-stirring music. *Will* peace come? God grant it *may* come soon.

Some are very ill to-day, with typhoid fever and diphtheria. I have just come in from the tents, and find them doing as well as can be expected. They

have ornamented for the advent of the good news, but those extra fixings will hardly crush out the rebellion. I wish they might. I have been over to the Second Corps to do some talking, which only we war nurses know how to do rightly.

February 20.

Oh! the beautiful spring day, with birds singing, and the air filled with the yellow radiance, how it reminds me of long gone days, in years away back down the hill of life. There is a peculiar sadness, yet a half-glad feeling mixed strangely therein, which my poor philosophy is puzzled to explain.

The soldiers are enjoying this—sitting by the sunny side of their tents, looking bright as a May day when no moving is going on. I feel languishing and weak, while I ought to feel bright and strong.

February 21.

My little box-stove and poor wood make me feel cross to-day, when so many are waiting for a bit of cooking from my hands.

I think longingly of the great Stewart's, which stand with reservoirs filled with water, and tin attachments, where the toast would keep so nicely warmed, and wish I had Aladdin's lamp, or ring; I would send the good spirits after one out of somebody's kitchen, who was able to get a new one, and wouldn't there be a stir in the Northern streets, as the clatter arose high over the house tops.

Oh! such salt messes as those cooks prepare in that

low-diet kitchen—*low* diet, indeed—codfish, which seems to have slipped, without preparation, into the dishes from the briny barrel—a starving man would have hard work to eat some of that food, and how would one expect sick men to recover their appetites under such a regimen?

Still, a woman is not supposed to know, and these Lords of Creation, first in everything, deem themselves also first in the mysteries of cooking, when a corn mush for the hogs, or a kettle of Irish potatoes, fresh from the hill, was perhaps the extent of practice which they had previous to the advent of secession. Secession! thou hast developed many a trait which dormant lay!—thou hast raised many a talent which lay buried deep—art thou to be cursed or blessed? Oh, shapeless one!

February 22.

Now for the boat again; those who are to go, are as pleased to go as any child with a long-promised visit to a place filled with rare and curious things. I am glad to see them go, for they are nearer home—the spot for which we yearn with wistful eyes turned hitherward, and my homesick heart beats pulse to pulse with their own.

There is heavy cannonading again to-day, but I hardly think Petersburg has yet fallen; delay—defeat! Oh! when will it be ended, and the city lie under the flutter of the old flag?

February 23.

Spring is again affrighted, and the air blows raw and chilly, nearly taking my tent over, and I am fearful of danger if I venture without its walls.

I have just had some calls, which have shortened the time a little, and a letter over which I have puzzled some little time to divine the author's meaning. The nights are freezing. I have never been so exposed before, and consequently never suffered so much from cold as this winter. Feather beds, downy pillows, easy cushioned chairs, when will you welcome this ease-loving woman to your softness!

February 24.

I slept cold all night, and thought of the warm chambers and bedrooms leading from the great old-fashioned kitchens, and of the glow of comfort which crept all through them from the unstinted supply of logs at the farmer's door. My feet were like clods, but I set myself resolutely upon them, and made the gruel which I have not failed to do every day since last June.

Many of our men have bad throats, and I must have contracted the disease by sympathy, for mine is so sore I can scarcely swallow. Still I feel it my duty to go out, and think nothing serious will result from it.

February 25.

The sun shines very pleasantly to-day, and I am myself again, and the men are so comfortable, I have

but little to do this morning, only to think how lonesome I am in this great concourse of men, and wonder how I should enjoy a right old-fashioned tea-party with Mrs. Grundy as host, and the lesser lights of village scandal revolving as satellites around her, in unbounded innocence of heart.

I should like to listen to the shortcomings of the prim dames, who had fallen from their high estate, and hear the virtuous indignation which was expressed at the wrong doing—it would revive my faith in the old creed that "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do," and that human nature was a frail plant, likely to wither under the rude blasts of temptation.

February 26.

My brother has just come in from the regiment, all ready to go home on a furlough. I am so homesick, I could cry if it would do any good, but it would only make him feel unpleasantly, and I hope to be on the same road and journey not many months hence. Then, children, comforts, quiet, and content, I will welcome you all into my dwelling. I am glad he can go if I cannot; he at least can tell me how things look there, when he returns, and till then I can live on the anticipation.

February 27.

May at the North is not more beautiful than this morning. The boat has just gone with its load of sick men, and the day was so lovely I could not withstand

the temptation to ramble, and so went over into the Second Corps, and had a lively chat with Miss Vance and Miss Blackman.

The great guns keep up the heavy cannonading, but hope deferred maketh the heart sick, and Lee's strength holds its own with Grant's pertinacity.

February 28.

The last day of winter in the calendar. I felt so ambitious this morning I wished *to wash*—to do some real hard labor, and I knew I should sleep better to-night if I could do it.

Farewell, old Winter, stern, icicled fellow; you were not very welcome to me, yet I wonder what will happen to this soul and body before you bring your chilly winds again to our planet. Welcome, sweet Spring—joyous season of tender green and brightest-tinted flowers—I see your fluttering robes in the days just coming; your head droops low, and you drop tears for the cold old winter, which to-night creeps off to the North, and leaves you to contend with some bitter winds which, sad truants, forgot to follow their lord.

March 1.

Now for a long month when coy spring coquettes with earth, and rains tears and smiles, sweet smiles, then frowns, and averts her head, and the long thirty-one days will drag. We are so eager to see the ground covered again with the embroidery which is woven by the toilers in air, and sun, and earth, and water.

To-day the rain-drops fall silently and persistently —no wind drives it against the walls of my cloth house, but the constant patter, patter soothes me beyond measure, when some days it would drive me wild. When my mood is right, I like a calm, steady rain like this; but when gusty winds drive it into frozen sleet, and my stove-pipe falls off, and it burns and blackens me in efforts to replace it, I can safely say it is not entirely agreeable to the deponent.

March 2.

The rain continues, and I could not get about much, the mud was so deep and sticky. My tent leaks under the drenching, and I am not very comfortable, as I sit tucked up in my seat, feeling the chilly March air an unwelcome invader to-night. We have quite a large number of sick now—two from my own regiment, not in danger however.

The paymaster has made his welcome appearance, and the little strips of green paper were eagerly gathered up, and some changed hands rapidly. It is the staff of life as well as the bread, and nowhere better appreciated, *when gone*, than in the ranks of the Volunteer Army.

March 3.

Still the clouds pour down their showers, yet I have waded out to see the sick, and have found some very low. How I wish they could be sent home, to be cared for by the hands of those who love them.

Miss Blackman, from the Second Corps, has been

here to see me, and we had a woman's long talk about everything in general and nothing in particular.

Since morning the clouds have cleared away, and the sun has deigned to look upon our drenched camp, with its yellow light. Seven of the One Hundred and Ninth boys on their way home, have been in to see me to-day. I wish I were a soldier that I might avail myself of a furlough; but then I don't think I should particularly like being shut up on my return in the "Bull Pen," for fear I might run away again.

A disgrace to the service; it ought to be riddled, and the material burned, a funeral pyre for the countless host of swarming lice which devour the inmates alive. If Government sanctions the keeping open of that pen, where deserters, prisoners, convicts, and sick men returned from furlough, are put in together, then Government ought to be ashamed of itself, and wipe it out with all speed.

They must have a fine opinion of the courage and honor of enlisted men, when they throw them into that unclean, lousy place to harden towards their keepers. Were I a man, and a soldier, and on return from a furlough, with no crime for which I was held responsible, put into that den, I would shoot somebody when I got out—that I know. I *would* be avenged in some way. Men who volunteered for the salvation of their country to be treated thus like cattle, and worse than cattle!

CHAPTER XXIII.

March 4.

How the little sunshine of yesterday afternoon cheated us! This morning the drizzle, drizzle, drizzle of the March rains make me nervous, particularly when I have many patients to visit to-day. The past night seemed long enough for two, and the mice got so daring, creeping over me, that I could not shut my eyes for fear of losing the end of my nose; and you know, friendly Journal, I haven't any to spare.

The wind blows hard, and in the midnight the clatter of the tents was almost fearful.

My stove-pipe rocks to and fro, and I cannot cook, so I sit here idly scratching down with my pen. After all, life is about the same mixture all the world through; the same proportion of trouble, of joy, of care, of light and darkness is entwined; and perhaps I am as happy as any one. I like to rear great air-castles; by the time they tumble down, as tumble down they always do, I am prepared for it, and have removed my valuables to a place of safety, so the wreck is nothing but moonshine after all; and, as the materials are always at hand, costing nothing, I

can build another, in a brief space of time, grander than the first.

I hope some time to see one built up which will last as long as life—a fabric large enough to hold contentment, and peace, and happiness; high enough to hold God's sunshine, and low enough to look with charity unto all my fellow-creatures. I wonder if the foundations are being laid now, and what form the structure will bear.

I have had a sore throat all day, with a hard cold, and the rain has kept me within my tent; but now I must go, for they have sent for me to make beef-tea and gruel for five men who need it very bad.

Well, my little boxstove carried me through, although the wind did blow, and I feel better for the exertion; I think the men do also. Off to bed after a long day and reading a letter from Mrs. Youngs.

March 5.

A beautiful Sabbath morning; but my cold has the best of me to-day, and if it were not so lonely I would not venture out. The mail-boat has just arrived, and my heart is in a flutter of hope, waiting for the letter from home.

Oh! waiting for the letter from home, how many waited and went into the fierce battle waiting, and fell foremost before the foe; and when they threw off the full soldier's mail, there were the little missives for which his heart had waited, and other eyes than his should read those words of love and cheer. How strange it must have seemed to them at home to write

letters which their anxious souls knew might be too late for the dear eyes; that, even while they were being penned, the soldier's comrades might be heaping the sod over the cold bosom, on which the death-wound lay gaping.

I read and write, and then try to sleep, but those mice—in desperation I take my sword, (O yes, I have a sword; I may some time tell when I got it—not now,) and, with strong intent to kill, I rush upon the nimble-footed little torments, but I only elicit a faint squeal, and they hide beyond my reach, ready for a foray on me again when I get quiet.

I am tired of noise; tired of the tongues which talk, talk, talk at the supper-table; tired of having my house invaded at all hours of the day and evening; tired of the Virginia mud; tired of trying to be happy, and tired of everything. I see the same old camp—the tents, the barracks; the same figures clad in everlasting blue. Sometimes it is a relief to see a new face peeping from under the regulation-cap; but I wish Gen. Lee *would* surrender, and I could go home and get over being tired.

March 6.

A summery day, with air, and sun, and wind cheating us till we seem to be within another clime. I thought I would wash and iron to-day, it being Monday; and I have returned to my tent, tired and hungry, but the kind of tired which a sound sleep rests, and the hunger which a bountiful dinner, supplied by our cooks, entirely appeased.

I found some of the officers who were here wounded last summer, and had calls from two of them; so the day has passed quickly away, and I am ready for sleep.

March 7.

Again like a summer day. How I enjoy the mere pleasure of living and breathing on such days of sunshine, when the brightness is over all, and through all, and in all!

But life is ebbing out with one poor fellow to-day. Oh! so young to die! but he is calm and manlike under his suffering. All remains quiet at the front. I dread the bursting forth of the great volcano which will soon upheave the ground around Petersburg, and then to us will come wounds, death, heart-aches, and after all, and beyond all agony, perhaps, peace.

March 8.

The rain pours down in floods, and it is lonely in my dark tent, but I got one ray of light in the shape of a letter from Mrs. Youngs, my dearest friend in Maryland, and it cheered my heart wonderfully to hear from her. I have a dog in my tent to keep the mice away, and I think he will have hard work to do his duty. I shall have to tie him up to-night to keep him.

March 9.

After a rainy night the morning has dawned beautifully. The dog in his endeavors to catch the mice, and the mice in their efforts to get beyond his

reach, together, kept me awake nearly all night. I am so tired of seeing only men, that I could go to the other extreme and become a nun with a good heart.

They invade my tent when I wish its privacy; and no doubt these lords of creation think nothing in the world is so agreeable to me as their delightful company.

Private Dodge, who was on his way home, called to see me, and I was glad to receive him. I have had a letter from my *heart-sister*—one who bears a closer relation to me than most sisters by blood. How I long to see her; I have so much to say which I can say to no one else.

It is still raining in dreary monotony, and the tattoo sounds, and I am off once more to bed. Oh this going to bed, and this getting up in the morning, to go over the same—same work! Why couldn't we finish up this going to bed, and getting up, as New England housekeepers do their house-cleaning—twice a year.

March 10.

Getting up this morning I found my wood wet, and had an unpleasant task to kindle my fire. I am not feeling well, but I must go out to those who feel worse than I. They seem, all but one, in a fair way to recover. He is failing slowly, but fatally.

We have very changeable weather—now rain, now sun, and then hours when it does neither, and those are worse than all.

Another man shot for desertion within sound of

our camp. How can they do that dreadful, deliberate murder—for I can call it nothing else—when the defenceless man stands by his coffin on the brink of his open grave, and the hands of his comrades send to his bosom the deadly messengers! It is not right to take life away; reason, instinct, conscience, all rebel against the dreadful sin; and it is a foul black one.

Miss Blackman was in, and made me a good long visit. She is such an estimable young woman, every one admires and respects her. I think something less than a "Saratoga" would hold her wardrobe as well as my own. She has no fear of spoiling white hands, nor shrinks from dirty uniforms, as the poor fellows come in, suffering from the battle-field.

I used once to think my cloth house was pleasant; but now it seems so close and lonely, I cannot bear the confinement; and I long and long, and not in vain, I hope, for the end to come, and to get under a roof which does not let the water on to my bed, nor put out my fire when I most need it.

March 11.

The rain has cleared away, but it is cold, and the wind is bitter, as March winds usually are thought to be. I have made my rounds amongst the sick, but feel so depressed, I can hardly account for it. Why can one not be happy in every and any position, if only satisfied that they fill a needed want?

But that is a problem not yet solved in man's philosophy, and must remain dark till the end of time.

Steward Bennett has just come down from the front, detached from our regiment for hospital-duty, and reports our men all well, and for that I am thankful indeed. If the war is going to last forever, I wish they would be in some place where I might be nearer them, but it is impossible. We have Grant at the head of this army, and they don't go into any camps now.

March 12.

The wind blows almost a perfect gale, and my tent sways back and fro like a man drunken with wine; but I am used to that, and if it goes over I shall be here to see.

After my rounds—and I sit here, lonely, and hardly knowing what to do with myself to pass the time away. This is a dreadful state of things, when the next sound which comes to our ears may be the reopening of active hostilities, and then—horror of horrors—there will be no time for loneliness, or lonely thought.

CHAPTER XXIV.

March 13.

Again, I went down to the darky camp, and washed, just for the excitement of the thing, and to earn my good sleep. We have lost one man with fever--a mere boy, from a Pennsylvania regiment. He was too weak to talk, although he manifested a desire to say something to me which I could not understand.

He died very calmly, and we closed his eyes, with a sigh for those who would never look upon his face again. Oh for the death-bed where the last whisper is breathed into the ear of those who love us best! Oh for the quiet burial in the country churchyard, where the grass grows rank over the graves, and the lark builds her nest low among its tufted richness!

I have been on my feet all day, and am very weary to-night. I went over to the Second Corps, and then went down to the New York Relief, and procured six shirts, and the same number of pairs of drawers. So much has been crowded into this long, long day, and I am thankful for night and shadows. It seems like the summer evenings when I was young, and hopes were newly budded in my girlish bosom.

March 14.

The days come and go, they sometimes seem to drag their heavy length along, then again they fly with the rapidity of the wind. Some time, I know, the swift-flying days will bring this to the end, and I am glad of them, and have no care; although they bring to me wrinkles, gray hairs, and tottering steps, it will all be well at last, after our feet have stepped into the water of the river; there will be no more signs of earthly decay; to bathe therein is to render life perennial.

We have had another death to-day, and it has saddened me inexpressibly. We nurses should be insensible to anything only the performance of our strict duty—should have no heart to enter into the feelings of far-away friends—should stifle all humanity in our souls, and be deaf, and dumb, and blind.

To-night, they are bringing in the sick and wounded from the Division Hospital—they have arrived to the number of three hundred, many of them belonging to the ranks of the enemy.

March 15.

I have been to look upon the new recruits of sick and wounded, and find many quite low, and with fearful wounds. Three from our regiment, but they will recover. They are packing up to make a move at the front. How anxious we shall be now to know when and where, and so fearful that *the* great battle is soon at hand.

Oh! if I could still these heart-throbs when the

time draws near, and go my round as calmly as General Grant surveys the great battle-plain, I would be content. Lieut. Bowen has been here nearly all the evening, on his way home, and I am yet unselfish enough to be glad to see any of them go.

March 16.

It is a beautiful morning, only a high wind sweeps over us, dropping down now and then to flap the white wings of my tent, and then sweep like a whirlwind around us. I had a grand night's sleep, and feel much refreshed. The transport *Connecticut* leaves, this morning, for Washington, with those able to be moved.

Lieut. Bowen has just left, and the old homesickness creeps over me again—the old longing for children, and friends, and the North, now throwing off the chains of old winter's forging. *I shall some time go*—when, only the Good Lord knows—not while they need me here, if my heart gnaws itself in the strong agony of despair.

How the wind raves and rages—it has never been so wild since I have been here, and my tent flutters like a hurt bird trying to disentangle itself from the sportsman's net.

The rain is drifting with it now in solid sheets, and my bed is soaking wet, yet I must lie down upon it, or sit up all night and hear the dismal howling of the storm. Both are bad enough, I hardly know which to choose. I think, however, that I will go to to bed, and if my tent blows over, I go with the contents.

March 17.

After a sleepless, comfortless night, I am again astir, to find everything wringing wet. The wind blew fearfully all night, and the rain beat against my tent like strong hands clamorous for entrance.

Two souls have gone out with the raging of the storm—they went up through the surging of the elements, and their bodies will be buried in wet graves to day. I have been my round, and am quite hopeful for the recovery of those left.

I have scarcely been alone a moment to-day, and to-night will be a continuation of the fearful one preceding, but my house holds its own—although rocked like a shell by the stormy waves of Ocean. I shall keep my light burning.

March 18.

The bugle-call roused me from a waking dream this morning, after another wretched night. I feel rheumatic in every joint of my body, and my constitution must be strong indeed to endure this saturating process with no injury.

I am tired of the clatter, and wish it would favor some other portion of the continent with its prank-playing, and take its exit from City Point. We are not likely to lose any of our sick to-day. The transport has gone for another load; they are clearing the way for the new instalment of bloody heroes, from the fresh battle-fields of this spring-time. With shuddering I remember it—in fancy I see the ghastly procession as they are brought in, pale, bloody, and gasping with pain.

Oh! the horror of this carnage! When will the judgment come?

March 19.

Is it possible that the year is nearly one quarter gone? Almost one season's length has passed since New Year's day, and it seems only like one of the long summer days which seemed in my childhood to be endless.

How long a year seemed then—almost an age, as it rolled slowly away, with bright, bright hours when we roamed the meadow for strawberries, and the wild wood for blossoms—when we trod with bare feet the pathway to the old school-house, and set them in the brook as we loitered on the way. And the seasons seemed to be unending.

There was an eternity of winter when the snow lay deep, and we thought it would never melt under the breath of the lagging spring.

Now spring opens, and goes, and summer flies away, leaving the sear flower-stalk a sad legacy to the fleeting autumn, and winter again slips over all her robe of purity, and the cycle ends again. Sometimes in those years we used to think of war,—what horrible scenes were upon the battle-fields of the East,—but the grim phantom seemed to be afar off from our proud land, but it came to us with hot and deadly breath.

Four weary years have dragged along, and thousands of our braves sleep in the trenches, the sleep which knows no waking. Thousands more have gone,

—yielded up sweet life none the less for their country that they died in hospitals of long, wasting disease.

March 20.

Oh! the sun, the renovating sun; the rain and the wind have gone, and the air is thrilled with sunshine, and the streets of our camp are full again. All who are able to get out of their beds, are at the doors, sitting in the light, catching the soft breeze which whispers of the summer.

I have enjoyed the change from the rain and wind, and have passed the day quite cheerily. I have had company from our regiment. How all the faces of that noble band seem like the faces of brothers to me—I can call them all such, indeed, and could dare and do much to aid them.

I have got to gadding, I fear, for I have again to record that I have been over to the Second Corps, and had a gossiping time with the women. Now there is some comfort in that, of which the masculine gender knows nothing. It is a great comfort to know that others are no better than they should be, and that Mrs. Such-a-one has spirit enough to insist upon her husband passing as much time with her as at the next corner with a curled and perfumed Miss. It is a good thing to ventilate one's opinions, if they do soar no higher than the material things of this material earth, and to keep a sharp look out over your neighbor as well as yourself.

Then again the gossiping of neighborhoods is hardly confined to the women, and when a man con-

tracts the habit he is away and beyond all efforts of the most inveterate tattler who ever lifted a tea cup at Madam Grundy's table, and if it is denied, I could bring proofs as strong as has sent many a man to the gallows, with his sins all on his unrepentant soul.

CHAPTER XXV.

March 21.

This pleasant day, so like the days long gone, with sighing wind, and sunny air which send the homesick tears into my eyes, and I cannot keep them back with all my efforts at composure! If I could pour out my heart into some sympathetic ear, perhaps I could find release from all this; but there is no one here for me, and I must keep the sad thoughts in my own bosom.

When will my girls know a mother's love again? Do they think it a long waiting for the cruel war to close? Do they see the days go by as once they went with me—seasons in weeks—ages in a year?

March 22.

After a sleepless night I arose at *reveille*, and tried to write a few lines, but the wind and rain kept up an incessant roar all night, and the water dripped down on to my face, driving sleep from my tortured eyelids. Well, this is the poetry of campaigning. I sometimes think I will go home, but the first low wail of pain from a wounded soldier softens me in a

moment, and I would not leave them for all the luxuries of the world.

Home! How the word thrills through my heart with a joyful pang. It is an old, old word, and the old home may answer to it in its dilapidation, but no other spot is half so dear—no other roof, though lofty and gilded high, can draw over us the peaceful restfulness of that moss-patched house-top.

There dwells the old father, and the old mother, there brothers have grown up, and gone thence into the world's great conflict. There childhood played, and youth dreamed of an unclouded future, and woke to maturity to find earthly hopes a cheating vision, and then turned again to its welcoming shelter, glad to escape from the rude buffetings of the stormy sea.

How dear the memory of the old home is to the helpless soldier, as he moans on his hard bed, and cannot sleep for the pain—how he thinks if he could only be *there*, and they who are always in his thoughts could minister to his wants, that health and strength would soon flow back into his chilled frame.

Alas! oh, alas! for those who shall never see this earthly home again; and why alas! Doth not the promise of the *heavenly* home await them, with far exceeding loveliness, and the spirit oftimes yearns for it with a longing nigh unto death, and the grave lies peacefully under the sunshine, and they rest from all wars and sickness there.

It is reported that General Sheridan is at the White House, but everything remains quiet at the front, as yet. It is nine o'clock, and bed-time, and I

can sleep if the mice and wind hush their unwelcome clatter long enough to-night.

March 23.

The wind continues to blow, rocking my tent like a boat on the billows; it would not surprise me if it broke from its moorings in some sudden blast, and drifted off into the unknown water.

I had a letter from home, and was as glad to get it as a child would be to see the face of its mother after long absence. How cheered up and hopeful I feel after reading it, and being assured that they wait and watch for me. The transport has again left with its load of precious sick.

March 24.

Oh! for the summer weather, and the ceasing of these doleful March winds. I had a visit from Lieutenant French, a good friend, with whom I could converse at ease.

March 25.

We have had a severe battle. The rebels took our troops by surprise, and many were killed as they slept. Our loss has not yet been estimated, but they are bringing in the wounded by scores. Our men drove them back, unprepared as they were for fight, and took many prisoners.

March 26.

Over four hundred wounded men have been brought in, of which number about forty are rebels,

nearly all with terrible wounds. It is a hard sight to see them, and I feel desperate toward everything and everybody, and yet know not on whom to rest this dreadful suffering.

I have all I can do dressing wounds, and waiting upon them. I am so thankful (oh! selfish heart) that my brothers have escaped.

March 27.

Still they come in, with about fifty more of the rebels. They look starved and wild, but here they will have enough to eat, and will be cared for as our own men. How strange it seems to see them lying so close to those whom they met so lately with bloody intent—now all powerless to harm them, even if rage had not died out in their hearts.

I have looked in upon them, and find one fine-looking lieutenant from a North Carolina regiment suffering great agony. How I pity him, and pity them all, and wish I could do something to comfort them. Strange that I should yearn toward those whose hands only a little while ago were turned toward my brothers, eager to slay them.

March 28.

The day is lovely, but I hardly enjoy it, I am so worn with constant toil. I am hungry, too, for I have not had time to eat, and no one to relieve me for a moment. I have visited nearly all the tents, and done all I could to make the inmates comfortable.

The gun-boats are lying off here to protect us, in case we are disturbed by the rebels, which I think is very improbable. They know we have wounded men from their own ranks with us, and we should be no great spoil.

March 29.

The weather continues pleasant, and the men seem to be doing well. We have lost none to-day. I have many things to try my patience. The doctor gives me orders to get things for the sick from the cook-house, and when I go after them I hear mutterings and growlings, and am denied often, while the sufferer has to go without the coveted article of food.

I wish I could order an evacuation of that post by some certain ones. I think I would institute a new order of things without much delay.

A terrible battle must be raging at the front; we hear the cannonading like near thunder, and the battle is so close we can hear the cheering of the men as they go to the wild charge. I went to bed, but not to sleep; visions of horrors too dark to portray haunted my mind, and when sleep wooed me, the vivid fancy brought sounds of stifled groans and cries issuing from lips growing cold on the clay before Petersburg, and roused me to full consciousness again.

Our steward, and the steward of the Third Regiment Maryland Volunteers, made me a call in the evening, and after retiring, I arose, and wrote a letter, finding it impossible to sleep with my mind so overwrought.

I have quite a useful little present made me by Ed Smith of the One Hundred and Ninth Regiment. It is a mortar, and I oftentimes find occasion to use such an article.

It is now ten o'clock—the cannonading is very heavy yet. I will go to bed again, and if I do not sleep, I shall rest, and I will need all my strength in the work preparing for us at the front.

March 30.

It is raining again very hard, and I can go out but little, for I am sick myself. I slept but little, and that in snatches, which seemed so little refreshing; the cannonading was very heavy nearly all night. The result is not yet known. I have been driven out to go over to the Second Corps, to find a place for some one to sleep, and returned about dark.

My brother and Joe Allen were in my tent for a short time, and the remainder of the evening I passed alone.

March 31.

It rained all night, and is still pouring, but I slept well, and have been out all day, for I could not endure the silence of my tent. The wounded are doing well, and it makes my heart feel lighter to see them so.

I have just witnessed a sight which made my blood boil, and my hands clench convulsively, as if they were at the throat of the cruel, cruel man. A poor soldier, who the doctor thought was playing off,

was kicked, yes *kicked*, by a miserable man who was acting as captain in the Fifty-Sixth Mass. Regiment. I could have torn him in pieces, as a wild beast tears the destroyer of her young. I could have seen his heart lie quivering at my feet, while the passion was on me, for I knew the man was *sick*, and if he were not, what right had that wretch to touch the sacred body of a man, and a soldier?

I wish I were out of the sight of mankind, when I see such exhibitions of cruelty; my whole nature rises up with the hatred of revenge; and then to hear them laugh over the affair when they get together at the dinner table! Oh, such scenes often repeated would turn me wild with the terrible passions which they stir up, like tigers in their lair.

April 1.

April has come, and the morning is sunny, but the winds, so long rampant, are loth to go with the dead March, and continue to moan, and shriek, and sigh. I have a narrow bed, and last night I took in a great fat Irish woman for a companion, and consequently kept awake all night for fear one of us would fall out of bed. She came down to see her husband, and left this morning on the transport Connecticut, with the wounded.

Very many have gone from the Ninth Corps, and many more ought to go, for the freshly-wounded are arriving fast, most of them from the Fifth, Ninth, and Twenty-Fourth Corps. We have a great number in hospital now, and nothing is to be heard but

the rumbling of wagon wheels, and the incessant roar of the cannonading. There is still heavy fighting on the left, but as yet the rebels have the advantage.

Bed-time again. I hope my bed-fellow of last night has a comfortable cabin berth now, to repay her for the weary hours passed here.

April 2.

The wounded have come in which belong to this corps and the Fifth—three hundred in number—and all with bad wounds. The fighting continues, and our troops are in Petersburg, and rapidly pushing forward. Two from our regiment have arrived, and we expect more to-night. Oh, how my heart throbs with its anxious waiting. Who may those wounded be?

April 3.

The procession pours in constantly. We have men from the Fifth, Twenty-fourth, and Second Corps, besides our own men, and it is almost impossible to give them the necessary attention. It is dreadful to see the suffering, and hear the groans, and know that you cannot ease one throb of their pain.

We have a hundred wounded rebels, and some will die. All night they were coming in, and many prisoners have passed to City Point. One little boy of only seventeen years, from a Carolina Regiment, has both legs off, and a wound in his wrist. How can we ever forget such sights as meet us here at every turn?

April 4.

I am very tired. I think I can hardly stand upon my feet another moment; and then some one wants me, and I find I am not yet entirely exhausted. I have been with the wounded all day, and a part of the night.

The streams still pour in, bloody and ghastly. *Richmond is ours*, and where, Oh where is our poor regiment? No one can tell me, and my heart beats wild with fear.

April 5.

We have fourteen hundred men now in our hospital. I hear their groans all the night long, and my work is very heavy. So still the air seems without the constant roar of cannon, it whispers of the advent of peace.

We have lost a captain to-day, and two privates.

April 6.

The transport has taken away some who were not badly wounded, but they keep the quota full as they come straggling in. My work is hard, but the little I can do seems so inefficient when there is so much to do. If we had a score of the good wives and mothers who so yearn to be with their dear ones now, we could do more.

We have twenty-five hundred wounded men in now, some with arms and legs off, and the most frightful mutilations. A captain and a corporal have died to-day. How our grave-yard fills up with the

hero-dust. I have worn out my feet, as I did at Fredericksburg, for so many are wounded through the mouth, that all they eat has to be fed them by our hands. I had a letter from home, but hardly had time to be glad over it.

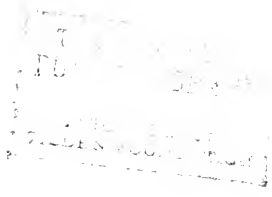
April 7.

Our President has this day honored our hospital with a call. It has been one of our sunshiny days, and in anticipation of his coming, every one who was able to do light duty had a share in the work of cleansing and beautifying the camp. He looked pale and careworn, but had a smile for every one, as with pleasant words he passed through the lines formed, and shook hands with the men, telling them they should all go home soon.

He was accompanied by a number of people, who seemed so gay and careless that I felt a sort of contempt for them, where so many were groaning with wounds.

One lady in rich garb sauntered through our worn walks, leaning on the arm of a Congressman, noting what we lacked in our appointments. My bed-tick dress made a sorry contrast to her costly-attired figure, but I looked at my hands, which were not afraid to touch the dirty blouse of a wounded soldier, and wondered if her jewelled fingers would shrink from the contact.

"There should be a greenhouse yonder," she said, pointing out the spot, and as her companion spoke of the cost, said disdainfully, "What of the expense?"




CORN STARCH

and there were men who had not had a change of clothing in weeks, and to whom the smallest dainty from the cookhouse was sweeter than could be concentrated from all the greenhouses in America, beautiful as they were, and rare with perfume.

I turned to my tent, sick of folly—sick of fashion —sick of that species of my sex which trailed costly silks and laces in the dry dust, when the help for which many died even, could not be given from their hands.

I thought how poor the glitter of life would seem to me there, when hungry soldiers, with eyes hollow from long suffering, starved for the crumbs which they threw to the dogs. I am not sure but wealth and position transform people into other beings, but if they would have rendered me insensible to the miseries of poor humanity, God be praised that he has withheld them from my hands.

More of the wounded have gone to Washington; we have enough left to tax us to the utmost, and then feel conscious that more should be done. Another of our regiment has come in, with an arm off. We have many officers, and I don't see why they should be any more trouble than privates, unless they expect the straps to be considered—and I don't choose to do that—I came out to nurse the private soldiers, and I wish some one who understands their cases would attend to these particular officers. The *State of Maine* has again left.

April 8.

The sun shines so brightly I begin to think of flowers, and see that others do also, by the beds of every shape which adorn the nooks by tent-sides, and by the barracks, and along the walks. Corps badges and all manner of fanciful patterns are represented, and the sun is warming the tender germs, and calling up leaf, bud, and flower, almost unheeded in the excitement of the hour. The transport leaves on her daily trip, and so we drift along—waiting—hoping—fearing.

April 9.

Oh, such joyful news! *Lee has surrendered*, and the rebel capital is in our hands. Oh! soon we shall go home now—the war must be at its close. Such cheering from the men was never heard. Every man able to get out of his bed is following after the drum, and the cripples have hoisted their crutches, and put their tattered hats upon them for banners, and the whole camp is wild with the clatter. Home—children—friends—soon we will hasten our war-wearied steps toward you, and bathe our souls in your rest!

April 10.

I am completely worn out in body, but this joyful news renovates my soul, and in prospect of speedy release I drag myself about. There will be but little if any more fighting, in all probability, and the wounded are feeling so glad over thoughts of the homes soon to be seen.

I have had several calls to-night, but could hardly hold my head up, and saw them depart with feelings of relief.

April 11.

I am unable to sit up much to-day, and I long for quiet to think over this great joy which has come to us, and try to realize that home is so near, and this summer will not be desecrated by the slaughter of men. The wounded are dying by scores. Oh! how sad it seems when they were so near the last.

April 13.

It is very pleasant, but I do not feel like enjoying the sunshine myself—and I am tired of this loud demonstration. Why cannot people be heart-glad without shouting, and drumming, and doing anything and everything to make a noise? And then they think I must want to talk of what lies in my mind all the time, and so throng my tent to say over the same things, and anticipate the homeward journey.

More men have died to-day, and our ranks keep full from the flowing stream off the battle-fields of a few days ago.

April 14.

The cold rain is dropping sadly to-day, and our joy is turned to grief, for the Nation's Chief lies low,—stricken down by the hand of the assassin, and the ship drifts towards the black rocks in danger of foundering. The flags are at half-mast, and any demonstration which made the first days ring with the

clangor is hushed to-day, with the tidings which were borne to us. The sadness of death pervades our camp, and on the eve of victory everything seems to point to defeat.

Oh! how will they bear it, and how will they fill his place, who with so firm and gentle a hand guided the helm, and had seen the old ship almost into port? Life so uncertain—how little we thought who looked upon his pale face one week ago, that it would wear a heavier pallor now—the hue of death.

But his work is finished, and a nation is in mourning. The rain is a fitting tribute paid by this April day to his memory, and how could the world look glad with the cloud of blackness overhead.

On my rounds I found all sad, and some strong men in tears, and with an aching heart I tended the last moments of one of our regiment, Private Carson, from Danby, N. Y.

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My diary is here broken off rather abruptly, for, in daily anticipation of leaving, and having an opportunity, I sent my small effects to Washington, packing my writing materials and diary, hoping soon, and very soon to follow.

CHAPTER XXVI.

I SHARED with all the excitement of the hopes newborn, yet tempered by the sorrow which had thrown its shadows over the most joyous tidings ever borne to us. Yet we tended the wounded, lingered in the sunshine, talked of the pleasant weather, and thought of separations which would be hard to bear.

I wished to obtain my pay, as it was due, and went up to Washington on the transport with the wounded, one of those bright days in April, and my "pass" being of the regular, I expected to have lodging on the boat on my return, as it would be a night-trip. Calling for it near dark, I was told that to obtain a stateroom, I must pay seventy-five cents.

A woman on her way to Fortress Monroe occupied the cabin in company with me, and several officers were scattered about lounging on chair and sofa. I said to the captain who informed me, "Your sofas are very comfortable, I think I can rest here;" and, folding my shawl, I made myself ready for sleep, better lodged than I had been before in months.

Persisting in his wish to furnish me with a stateroom *for seventy-five cents*, the captain soon sent a chambermaid to inquire if I was not yet ready to take

one, and an officer, taking my refusal as the result of an empty pocket, very courteously offered to pay the required sum, if I would allow him to do so.

I said to him, thanking him for his kindness, "I am a government nurse, on government duty, and my pass calls for lodging as well as transportation, and I have money enough to pay the required sum, but I am not disposed to humor this captain by putting seventy-five cents even into his pocket. *My* pay is twelve dollars a month, and rations."

And I slept soundly on the sofa in the cabin all night, replying to the captain's rather impudent stare in the morning, that I was delighted with my couch, and greatly obliged to him for his kindness in providing it.

Wishing once more to see the regiment before they broke up at the front, I went up one day in the cars loaded with provisions for the horses, feeling as grand as a queen on a bag of oats. I enjoyed my seat, coarse cushion as it was, and the ride was one of keen pleasure, for all was so quiet, and no anticipation of its being broken by martial sounds.

The Thirty-Seventh Wisconsin Regiment lay by our own, and as the band came out to play for us, Major Eaton stepped in wonder to the door of his tent, thinking they were doing honor to some captain of renown, and beholding only Aunt Becky in her worn and faded dress, retreated in silent awe.

I learned of the death of Charlie Morgan, of Co. G, of our regiment, who was in our hospital for weeks, low with a nervous fever. Some days I

thought it would be impossible for him to recover, and took charge of his medicine and diet myself. With careful nursing, the tide of life turned in his favor, and he was able to join his regiment before the last battle was fought. Strength and health came back slowly to him, but his nerves seemed bared to the least touch or sound, and at times he seemed to be going into convulsions.

When once, as many times it did, the wild rumor floated down that the rebels were trying to break through our lines, and every patient able to carry a gun was ordered out a short distance from the hospital, he was so struck that I thought he would die of the excitement, and gave him a morphine powder to put him to sleep, after vainly exerting my whole strength to quiet him down.

At the last battle, poor Charley was ordered up with his company, and was struck with the nervous feeling fatally, was sent to the rear, and in a few hours lay a corpse.

I think it was no coward fear which filled his soul; it was an absorbing excitement, which he had no strength to bear, and it broke the pitcher at the fountain.

Our women at the same time, through fear, packed their worldly possessions ready for retreat, and sat up all night in anxious expectation. I went to bed, desiring to be waked at six in the morning; and as I had on the best and only dress in my wardrobe, I had no effects to worry me, and slept soundly, finding myself on waking undisturbed in my cozy tent.

Poor Charley had gone beyond all danger now, and I mourned, because he could not have lived to return home, and enjoy the sweets of peace, when he has suffered so much mental agony under the banners of war.

Our men were jubilant at the front. The sadness which the death of the President had thrown over them, was not strong as the life which imbued those mortal hearts with love of home, toward which their eyes turned with eager longing; and although they mourned him who had fallen, yet eyes were bright with hope, and voices glad in their joy that the war was virtually ended.

I returned from my visit, on the engine, as the cars were loaded with wood, resuming my work like a child which sees its task almost done, and the reward nigh.

We had many painful operations to perform and to witness. One mere boy from the Thirty-first Maine had a ball pass through his throat, and the flesh had to be cut in order to take up the arteries, and for three weeks was fed through a glass pipe of the size of one of common clay. He would smile as I called him my little cut throat, and seemed very cheerful under his affliction. I never knew whether or not he recovered, if he did and these lines should ever meet his eye, he will remember Aunt Becky in her bed-tick dress, who used to come daily into his ward, and try to cheer up his drooping spirits. I think he lived, for Dr. McDonalds was one of the most skilful surgeons in our corps, and in difficult operations was nearly always successful.

Days passed, and we heard no sound of booming cannon. Hope built her airy castles, and we talked of what the summer should bring forth for us, amidst the peaceful hills of the North. Our gardens in the camp were growing with rich promise of an abundant yield. Peas were up many inches, and other vegetables were rank and green under the April skies.

So much we had prided ourselves on what we should gather from those growing ranks, that the order to make everything ready for Washington gave a little heart-pang to us all. If the war was ended, we could well go, leaving everything behind us, but if new battles were to be fought, and new hospitals to grow in deserted corn-field, and on waste hill-sides, it would be a sad day when we left City Point, bound —no one knew whither.

The regular working machinery had been wrought by the experience of months, and we had grown into the groove, and disliked to be thrown out unless for a purpose.

I received from some of the boys a picture of the dispensary, showing the stewards and clerks, and it is something always to remind me of those anxious days.

Our regiment, with a Wisconsin and Michigan regiment came down near our hospital, just before we left, and if ever men were joyous those were, in the prospect of speedy release from duty in camp and field.

The time drew near for our departure, and I had not thought it possible for me to feel so badly,

almost in sight of home, but when I bade the boys "Good bye," knowing that I should never see them again, and that in after years my memory even would fade from the hearts of those over whom I had watched with so much anxious solicitude, I could not keep the tears back, and I would not if I could.

I went up to the peaceful burial-ground on the hill. The fresh earth was uncovered by sod, or flowers, and the white head-boards bore many a name whose owner's soul had gone up into the presence of its Maker, while I stood by the bedside, and saw the struggle with death.

The great field was regularly laid out, each grave marked with name and regiment, and here and there the mournful inscription, "UNKNOWN." I thought, in so many homes they had waited long, and waited in vain for tidings from their soldier after the battle. "Not known to have been killed or taken prisoner," the letter said, and then hope struggled a little way, and they thought soon to hear from him in hospital, or from some place where death had not found him.

Meanwhile, too weak to tell his history, he had been brought with the maimed thousands to the hospital, and his life had ebbed away, and God only knew how to comfort those waiting hearts, which, in the uncertainty of his fate, should never know perfect peace again.

Unknown, their bones will be gathered up when years hence they pile these relics of the dead under some huge marble, which, pointing heavenward, shall tell how nobly they died.

I could not bear to think that these graves should ever be disturbed, only as friend after friend searching here should find the remains of the dear son, or brother, or comrade, and with reverent hands gather them up, the dust and bones, and bear them away to the home grave-yard, to sleep under their native sod.

It seems a desecration to disturb in any other way the bones of a dead soldier. Let them sleep in the trenches, where the hands of comrades laid them down after the bloody fight was over, and piled the sod sorrowfully over the bleeding breast. Let them sleep in the solitary graves where they were laid when they dropped out of the line in weary marches, and the solemn wind playing through the tall trees which overshadow the lone graves shall seem a requiem forever chanted over the fallen hero. Wherever they found sepulchre, by light of the pale spectral moonbeams, or where the rain dropped sorrowfully into their shallow beds, there let the soldier await the sounding of the last trump.

The embalming tent had always been a place of interest to me. I had obtained many a garment from the Christian Commission with which to replace the dirty, ragged ones in which the soldier died—for I felt it a duty to soften as much as possible the shock of the return of him who went out so full of pride and hope.

There were often delays in sending for the embalmed dead, and one soldier's remains lay for three months within the tent. His name was Thomas, and I was beside him when he died. I used to go to his

coffin and lay back the sheet, and wipe away the dust which accumulated on his hair and face, brushing his hair again to its old natural position.

I thought much of the comfort which it must be to those who loved him, to see him again with the look of life on his pale dead face.

Bodies were brought here to be deodorized, previous to transportation home—bodies which perhaps had been buried for months, retaining no sign of the comeliness which in living they wore. My own brother might have lain before me, and I could not have told him—no look which you remembered would be found on those blackened features, and it would seem poor consolation to take such a token from the hands of one who did not positively know the grave from which it was exhumed.

There was so much room for fraud—so many unscrupulous persons eager to prey even on the anxious credulity of sorrowing friends, and willing to do unholy deeds to gratify their lust for gain. I would rather let the remains of a friend rest in the grave wherein he first reposed, than to feel the uncertainty which such imperfect recognition must always produce.

The wish to be taken home after death was a feeling strong as life with some. I never felt the neglect to conform to this wish as I did in the case of one member of our regiment, who had repeatedly expressed his desire not to be left there when the war was over. We knew where he was buried. I wrote to his friends stating the embalmer's terms, and

charges for coffin and transportation—had an ambulance ready engaged to bring his remains to City Point, from Petersburg, where he fell, and had even the clean shirt and drawers laid away in which to enshroud him, but no order ever came.

His own back-pay was more than sufficient to cover all expenses: whether his friends, from prudential motives or careless thoughts of him, neglected to fulfil the last request of this dead soldier, I never knew, and doubtless never shall.

CHAPTER XXVII.

So much for us to leave—so hard it was to go away from the little tent which had brooded over me with its white wings so lovingly and long, that I scarcely believed I was glad to go home, and yet, contradictory soul, I was glad beyond measure. Whoever has felt this, let him comprehend and explain if he can this strange complexity of feelings.

I passed a sleepless night, and then all was soon over in the morning, and I on my way to Washington, on board the *Daniel Webster*. When we arrived we found the transports which had taken up our sick and wounded, and thus again I saw some whom I had thought never more to meet on this earth.

It was still uncertain when we were to go home—a delay of weeks might intervene,—we must wait what seemed to us in our impatience the slow action of Government in giving us full discharge. No one had proclaimed yet that the war was over, yet we accepted it as past, and every one acted in accordance.

I found one man in my rounds who had suffered an amputation of an arm, close to his shoulder, and in his sleep afterward had fallen from his narrow bed on to the bare, unhealed stump, and was in great

agony of body. He was a lieutenant from a Rhode Island regiment, and bore the distress with no complaint from his white lips.

Another officer—a captain from a Pennsylvania regiment—was enduring great suffering, but his mother stood at his side, and I saw many an eye turned wistfully that way, as though they envied him his happiness even in his agony.

I could leave him contentedly with the one who cradled his infancy on her bosom, and watch by others who had no mother near to stand by them, as she did by him.

In Washington my first business was to see Miss Dix in reference to my pay, which I had not received in ten months, although I had been once from City Point to obtain it, and failed through the neglect of some necessary form.

Now I needed the money sadly, and was determined to omit no formality which would keep it still in reserve.

Miss Dix ordered me to the surgeon-general to get my papers made out, and thence I was sent to the paymaster, and from him farther on, and in turn referred back to him, as the proper person from whom to obtain my pay.

Highly relishing this journeying backward and forward through the mud of the capital, I presented myself before the paymaster again, and he flatly refused to pay me, saying I was not in his line. So on to the surgeon-general I took my way, thinking my money more than earned over again, and received

from him a positive order for the payment of the withheld sum by the paymaster.

Returning for the third time I found the office closed, and so went up to Bladensburg to visit Mrs. Youngs, and try my fortune another day. Again I made my appearance before the gentleman in question, and found him obdurate—still refusing to pay me. Now I was a woman, and I was footsore and weary, and I wanted my money, and I said, "Well, you look very cosy here, and I will take a chair while you think the matter over, for I shall not go away till I am paid by somebody," and I sat down, taking up the morning paper, my thoughts so busy with all the outside circumstances surrounding me, that I failed to notice for the space of five minutes that I held the paper upside down.

Perhaps they saw defiance in my despair, for presently the paymaster sharply ordered the clerk to see how much it was, and pay me, for a woman sitting there in the office all day, was a nuisance not to be endured.

The clerk handed me the money, and I said to the *very gentlemanly* paymaster, "The war is at its close, and we nurses are about to lose a good job of twelve dollars a month, while you will be out just one hundred and twenty, to say nothing of what you can browbeat out of just such women as myself," and bidding him "good-day," I left, very much to his satisfaction, no doubt—certainly it was to mine.

A man in such a position can make himself *so* agreeable if he chooses, browbeating a woman, and those

women weary with months of toil and privation in a hospital. If he wishes thus to make a show of his authority, and display, like a peacock, every feather of his lately grown plumage, he can rest assured he will betray the lovelinesss of his character in grand proportions, and we have sense enough left in our souls to feel it keenly.

I went to Georgetown to see the wounded whom I had tended. Our corps was to be divided—a part at Alexandria and a part at Tenlytown, three miles distant. Our regiment lay at Tenlytown, and there I was to find my work during the remnant of my life in a hospital camp.

I found many who could not eat their coase rations—men who were slightly wounded, but who would not leave their comrades while it was possible to remain. Amongst these I soon disposed of ten dollars, and felt thankful that I had got my pay to enable me to do this slight charity.

Returning to Mrs. Youngs' at Bladensburg, I remained until the tents were put up for our hospital, and in a few days was again on duty, awaiting the hour of discharge. We had no wounded then—only those sick men in our hospital at Tenlytown.

We had the best of cooks, and everything was good and wholesome. We had much assistance from the agent of the Michigan Relief, Mrs. Brainard, one of our country's noble women, one with whom it was no question, when called upon for stores, if we had Michigan men with us. They were all Michigan's men, and every State's men—they had given the most

they had to give for the *whole* country, not for one State alone, and her noble soul comprehended it in full.

This miserable spirit which we saw so often displayed, which withheld from some poor soldier what would have done him worlds of good, because some other State was his birth-place—we had but little patience with it.

What could it matter in the spirit of humanity, so long as they were Union soldiers—had been fighting for its preservation, and were ill and suffering in her cause? I often thought the country ought not to be saved, just to punish such miserable specimens of humanity.

From the sanitary commission established there, we got many luxuries, and they did nobly for us, because the right men were in the right place.

I went one day to the New York Relief with an order from the head surgeon (for red tape was not cut asunder yet, if the rebellion was), and the gentleman in charge said, "Have you any New York State men under your care?"

I replied affirmatively, and he put me off with some excuse, asking me to call the third day. I did so, accompanied by the chaplain of the Twenty-seventh Michigan, fully expecting to have my requisition filled. I was suddenly dampened by the sneering remark, that "he did not believe we had any sick or needed anything; he would come up and see for himself.

He saw in the shortening of his supply of canned

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fruit and wine, a scantier table for himself, and I left, feeling as though emerging from a shower-bath in December. We went to the Christian Commission, and, blessings on its great human heart, we got a full supply of all we needed.

Again, I saw those who reminded me of the days passed at City Point. Miss Blackman, from Michigan, visited me, and we talked hopefully in the dawning summer weather, thinking of the peace which had so suddenly settled down upon us, that it seemed an unreal dream of the midnight, which the morning sun would dispel like the mists of the low green valley.

Our camp was on a rising hill-slope—a beautiful place, where the hitherto untrampled sod grew rank and green. A little grove lay a short distance aside, with trees full-leaved, and wild blossoms growing in the tangled hollows.

It was a peaceful place, and we soon made it home-like, as soldiers always try to do when pitching camp even for a few weeks.

The farmers had lowing herds roaming in the dewy pastures, and one in close proximity to camp was solicited to sell us milk for our use. He was loyal, of course; but he would not accede to our request, for some unknown reason, and the temptation to have a bowl of bread and milk for an occasional dish, proved too great for the boys. They often bribed the negroes who had charge of the cows, and for a few cents they would allow them to milk the herd unmolested, although still keeping up a show of resistance,

for effect, in case the owner should be watching proceedings.

Thus the sick had their milk without money, and without price, and the old farmer had to pocket his indignation, or vent his spite on the lax-moralled negroes.

The great review took place—when the Grand Army which had conquered the rebellion passed under the eyes of the officials at Washington. The day was intensely hot, and many a poor fellow was sunstruck, who had endured forced marches during the long, bloody campaigns. The strain of excitement was over; no more rebels with death-dealing engines confronted them; the artillery was tame in its slumbering wrath, and we could look upon the grand army with composure now, for were we not going home soon?

There were men who had just achieved the grandest march of the war, and men who had lain before Petersburg for many long months, all met together, with thought wandering far away from the capital and the soul-stirring pageant, of which they made a part. The roll of drums and the gleam of rifles waked a glow of patriotism in hearts which had well-nigh grown insensate with the dreadful blow that had been given them when some dear one fell out of the ranks, and his home knew him no more forever.

May it be long and long before another such gathering shall be possible in the national capital. The great mass has melted back into the bosom of

our country, and the pulses of industry throb faster, and the homes of the land are brighter for the presence of those whom they look upon with pride and joy, mingled with thanksgiving.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

We were daily expecting orders to leave, and as Sanitary was distributing its blanks ready signed, giving a list of what still remained in their stores, I thought, for the benefit of *our boys*, I would give them a parting call, and leave something substantial to those who would not depart as soon as we.

They had quantities of provisions on hand, and were profuse in certain qualities. I asked for things to distribute amongst the different regiments at Tenlytown, and was refused, as I had no blanks to fill up. I was surprised, but I bided my time patiently, waiting to see what might arise in my favor.

A clerk came in with several rolls of the requisite papers, and laid them on the table close at my side. One roll slipped down to my hands, as quietly and directly as though spirit hands had directed it, and I accepted it as quietly, putting it under the cloak which I wore when riding in the ambulance, and leaving the place, well satisfied with my success.

Call it not appropriating what was not my own—I had only taken what would bring those men the very comforts which had been sent to them from

every town in the North—and they were going to have their own.

On Saturday I went over to the camp, and distributed a supply of tobacco, combs, needles, thread, and nameless little things, which, being deprived of, add greatly to a soldier's discomfort. It was a sad visit for me. So long I had thought anxiously over them, that I could not separate them from my heart now; and when they stood in line greeting me, and I heard the words of thanks which one after another volunteered, with the band striking up its parting strains in the interlude, words are vain to express my emotions, and swelled my heart almost to suffocation.

We left for Washington on Monday morning, June 12th, at seven o'clock. I could not look backward on the pleasant grove, or the green, sun-checkered hill-side. I closed my eyes, and the ambulance rattled along, bearing me on the journey toward home. Bound for home! And who ever thought I should go one step towards it, and not feel the joy in every fibre of my nature?

Then were thoughts of the dead left mouldering behind in the grave-yard at City Point, and in the trenches of many a well-fought field. There were thoughts of the tales we must tell to waiting friends, how those whom they held dearest on earth met the death which laid them low from mortal care and woe; and we went not back the same exultant one thousand strong, which cheered with loyal throats when they made the downward journey, and rebellion held

high its serpent head. Only a little handful now—they had known wounds, sickness, battle, all but death, and were "*going home.*"

The troops marched the short three miles. Those feet were inured to longer and harder journeys than this, and with glad cheering they took the cars in Washington. The glorious old North, whose sons had conquered, was about to receive back into her welcome arms, from the sufferings of three years, the little band which remained of the strong host she lent to save the honor of the Republic.

Two of our regiment remained behind at Tenlytown, too ill to be removed—private Lester, from Binghamton, and private Cronk, from Waterbury. Both seemed to be doing well, and anticipated the same journey which we were about to take. But, alas! for human hopes! With the end in full view, all dangers and privations of war safely passed, Death met them in the tented hospital, and both sleep in the land of the stranger.

At the depot I bade adieu to many more of my boys—those from New Hampshire and Massachusetts who would take other trains for Baltimore. It was hard to part with noble Fred Emmerson, who had been at the head of the cookhouse so long, in the hospital, and had favored me again and again when messing for the sick and wounded.

One of the genuine good hearts which never fail you, he had scores of friends, and deserved them all.

Before we started, I saw the boys piling stones into the cars, which I was sure meant mischief for

some one. Hyattsville, Beltville, and Laurel they passed cheering lustily, but at Annapolis Junction no cheers went out—only the thud of the stones bounding against the houses, and then I knew it was for some insult long ago rendered—never forgotten or forgiven while they had faced death on the battle-fields of Virginia.

We had some sick, and some from different regiments on board—some three hundred were crowded on, without rations, and they grew ravenous as the day wore on, and hunger gnawed at their vitals. The cars moved slowly as we passed through loyal Pennsylvania, which had not forgotten the sound of rebel artillery, and the tread of hostile feet.

The boys would get off, while the women met them half-way with loaves of bread, and pies, and cake, and anything which was at hand, and it was all devoured as a hungry dog devours a bone—then waits for more.

At Williamsport, in one door-way, stood an old wrinkled woman, dancing for joy to see us on our homeward way. Many looked at us with tearful eyes, remembering those whom they should not welcome back even though the cruel war was over.

My heart was sore for them, and could hardly be glad with its burden of sad thoughts. We passed one town where the young ladies of a seminary, all dressed in pure white, came to the car-track, holding the stars and stripes—cheering us on our way.

We arrived tired and hungry at Elmira on the morning of June fourteenth, and were soon met by

our old colonels—Tracy and Catlin. The boys were marched up to the barracks, where they were to remain till paid, and mustered out, and then ate their bread and drank their coffee.

I went to the American Hotel with the steward, and at eleven A. M. took the passenger train for Ithaca, arriving at sundown, feeling that I had won my rest.

"What accommodations did you have in coming home?" one acquaintance said to me, and I told him, "cattle-cars." Yes—cattle-cars, hardly cleansed of the filth which had accumulated by long and continued use. No wonder the soldiers felt the degradation—drawn from point to point like cattle for the slaughter-pen. Denied air—was it any wonder that they thrust bayonets through the blank car sides, and admitted the free air and light of Heaven, if nothing else, into the dark noisome dens.

It is a foul blot on the nation's escutcheon that her defenders should have been transported as they were often in condemned vessels, and on cars on board of which a conscientious drover would hesitate to consign his choice market stock.

Who fought the battles—who endured the long, weary foot marches, and finally achieved the triumph of victory? Not the starred and epauletted men who rode noble chargers, and for whose service railway companies and steamboat captains tendered their most sumptuous conveyances. Not the Honorable Sirs whose advent from point to point, from city to city, was one continued ovation, but those brawny

men in dirty ragged blouses, with muskets in their horny hands, and knapsacks slung across their broad shoulders,—those men who were crowded into freight trains, and cattle-cars, from which light and air was was well-nigh excluded. They were our brothers, and our husbands, and our sons, each followed with tearful prayer—each with anxious hearts going down with them to the deadly peril, and throbbing with trembling fear for the news after the battle.

"Would you ask for them to be conveyed on velvet upholstery to the camp and battle field?" some one, disdainfully asks. *No, sir!* NO, SIR!—But I would ask for the precious freight decently ventilated cars—plain, even rude seats, and vessels which are in no danger of foundering at sea in a gale of common strength. I would ask, if the companies contracting to transport them were too poor to furnish these, that the General Government at Washington sell some of its superfluous ornamentation about the capitol, and build such themselves.

It is no light thing to those who have travelled over the roads in these filthy cars. I was offered a free transit on a passenger train through, but I chose to come with the regiment, and fare as well as they fared—and no better.

I hope ere the next war-breezes sweep over our land, the nation shall know how to appreciate and treat the common soldier, on whom it depends for its splendid success. Generals, and artillery, and gunboats, and fortifications are nothing unless the solid material of mortality man them, and in all conscience

let that thinking, breathing material be treated like men, or else let those who are able to ride in splendor, on caparisoned steeds, and in rich carriages, on land and sea, save the nation themselves. It is worth as much to them as to the man who, not one whit the less noble, earns his bread by the sweat of his brow.

To a man, I hope they would stand up to be allowed the decencies of travel in their route to and fro, or failing to obtain this, refuse to take up arms in defence of an ungrateful government, which with close hand withholds from the masses to lavish on the few rich and great.

I may be thought bitter; I feel bitterly on this subject of justice to the common soldier, when I have had tears of agony rain back on my heart to see them dead and dying, treated like swine driven before the butcher.

It may be only neglect, not a wilful oversight of Government, but if it is, it is none the less culpable, and asks for a remedy to be applied to all the future, —for the past is beyond recall.

The last token of regard from the dear old One Hundred and Ninth as a body, came to me—a check on the bank for one hundred and sixty-five dollars, "in appreciation of my kindness and faithful services," they said, when I had done no more than duty bade me, and nothing but what my hand was prompted to do for any one who wore the army blue.

Scattered abroad—some in the South, wooed there by gentle winds, and gentler voices, some in the old homes grown doubly dear since they first went from

them away, that band of patriots, who were like brothers for three long years, are separated widely now.

They will never more together hear the stirring beat of the drum, or the boom of battle cannon, yet my thoughts still cling to each and every one, and in all the future of my life no others can hold, as they hold, my heart's sincerest affections and its tenderest regards.

God bless them wherever they go,—whatever skies bend blue above them,—whatever flowers blossom at their feet. Others are remembered as the heart always remembers its tried and true friends—those who shared the toil and privations of camp and hospital, but the One Hundred and Ninth Regiment lies forever, a sacred memory, in the earnest heart of Aunt Becky.

THE END.