

DONALDSONVILLE

CANNONIERS.

Recollections of a Louisiana Command in the Civil War.

The Part It Took in the Siege of Pe- tersburg, Va.

Waiting in Idleness for the Day of Battle.

The Unique Celebration of the Fourth of July in the Trench in 1864.

III.

June 26, 1864—Went on a foraging expedition, in company with Delesdernier, and was fortunate in procuring milk at a dollar per quart. By the way, the lacteal fluid was almost as much debased as the currency of the realm. After an "al fresco" breakfast, the cannoniers and horses enjoyed a bath in Swift's Run, a limpid stream which empties into the Appomattox. The weather continues intensely hot. At intervals through the day could be heard the pounding of field pieces and the deep bellow of heavy artillery as the enemy fought to establish lines about the Cockade city, while the indomitable Lee, with wonderful prescience, placed the veterans of the Army of Northern Virginia where they checkmated every move of the stupid Grant. Our turn will soon come again to mingle in the fray for dear old Virginia and state's rights. Strange how confident we always feel of ultimate victory, despite those terrible three days at Gettysburg, and our bloody experience during the wonderful campaign from the North Anna to this point. But it does seem that we are fighting against the mercenaries of the whole world, for that last batch of prisoners from Burnside's corps was composed of men from all parts of Europe. The problem of how to feed the accumulated army of prisoners is another puzzle, as our meager rations barely suffice to keep body and soul within hailing distance. The negro prisoners seldom get to the rear, however—they get lost in the shuffle somewhere. The money question is another hard conundrum to crack. It takes a bushel measure of Confederate scrip to buy a barrel of flour; while the greenbacks, borrowed from the pockets of dead Yankees, are little more in favor among those who speculate on the necessities of the army. Well, it is not for us to reason why, and the main consolation lies in the fact that it does not cost a pinyon to bury a fellow.

Monday, June 27—After the morning bath, wrote letters to the old folks in Mobile. The knowledge that they were forced by order of "Beast" Butler to leave our happy and luxurious home is in itself sufficient incentive to fight on until our beloved Confederacy takes her place among the nations of the world. Beauregard has now his chance to smash Butler, for he has the best troops on earth with which to inflict punishment. We often debate whether, if Butler should be captured, he should have the benefit of the usages of civilized warfare.

Adjacent to the field on which our bivouac has been established, and bordering on the romantic Swift Run, is the Dunlop estate, one of the finest in Virginia. Here, in the groves of majestic trees, or in sweet summer-houses bordering the water, we enjoy a well-earned rest. Yet the yearning for action is in our hearts and we long to get back to those scenes and surroundings that make ambition virtue.

Tuesday, June 28—News from the north, reproduced in to-day's Richmond Examiner, indicates that a financial collapse is imminent. I consulted Dr. Hill, at the corps hospital, about a slight malady which he ascribed to too much salt food, and jestingly suggested a trip to the south of France. Orders to march arrived. The guns are to report to Colonel Richardson. We moved around the town, crossed the Appomattox at Campbell's bridge, and in marching through Petersburg noticed that the enemy's shells have done little damage, except to the spirits of the inhabitants. There were a few breaches in roofs and walls, and the streets are almost deserted. There appears to be a vast deal of suffering among the poor—those who cannot possibly leave the town. As the battery halted at the town pump, I noted the appearance of mental and physical suffering indicated by the sallow complexions and careworn faces of the poor "huckra." The women, clad in faded calico dresses, their wan faces way back in shabby sunbonnets, barefooted and frowzy-haired, look the personification of misery. What means the cause of liberty to these ignorant creatures? By 8 o'clock the guns were parked at the junction of the Baylor road and Halifax street, where we passed the night.

Wednesday, June 29—Showers have cooled the air. Good news from Joe Johnston as to the thrashing he gave Sherman's army at Marietta. No firing along the front to-day. Even the sharpshooters have taken a rest from slaughter.

Thursday, June 30—Part of our company was detailed for fatigue duty with axes. We invaded a fine grove and cut and carried trees for building traverses. To-day we heard of the death of Corporal Cummings, of Shreveport, a splendid fellow and faithful soldier. Whose turn next? Is the thought that enters the mind, as we sit about the camp fire discussing the merry days that the members of Dreux's battalion passed on the Yorktown peninsula, under that elegant old soldier, General Bankhead Magruder. How full we got the general on the night of that glorious Mardi Gras procession at Williamsburg!

July 1—The enemy bombarded the city fiercely for a couple of hours, causing many fires among the wooden roofs. This day's experience decided many citizens to leave their homes in charge of the ever-faithful negro servants and seek safety at Richmond, or at farmhouses on the Chesterfield side of the river. The fact is that the burghers were badly "bung stung." Passes from our commanding officer allow us to visit the town for two hours at a stretch. The vivandiere is very much in evidence on these occasions, and her name is legion. Well! Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow—

Sunday, July 3—As nothing was doing at the front, I "ran the blockade" to go to town. Met "Little Billy" Kieley (now Martin's (Va.) Battery, and accompanied him to church, and afterwards home to dinner. The service seemed rather flat without sacred music, which always stirs the emotions. To dinner with the Kieley family, a delightful episode in the life of a soldier who has been for months deprived of the refining influence of female society. Truly does one relapse into semi-barbarism when men only are his companions! On returning to camp I found that marching orders had arrived, and by sundown the guns were in motion towards the front. My gun, No. 3, was planted on Tim Reeves' farm on the Jerusalem plank road, about two miles from town. At this point the line of

battle is formed fifty yards in advance of battery No. 27 of the city defenses. This line consists of a chain of redans, connected by parapets for infantry support, and at the foot of these formidable works are abatis and other impediments to the rapid rush of the foe. These works had been constructed some time since, and a portion of the first line of defense near the Appomattox (Lee's extreme left), had been captured by the enemy before the main body of our army had been rushed to the defense of the city. At this time our extreme right is on Hatcher's Run, and the fortifications cover our lines of communication to the southward. Hence the investment of Petersburg by Grant's immense army is not complete. Beast Butler is "bottled up" at Deep Bottom by the small force under Beauregard; while Richmond, twenty-two miles distant, is defended by its own chain of forts and earthworks. As to-morrow is the "glorious Fourth," and we anticipate some sort of celebration by the Yankees, the boys worked hard until midnight on the gun platform and traverse earthworks, so as to get our house in order, and at least die decently.

July 4, 1864—Contrary to universal expectation, the once glorious Fourth was ushered into existence without the discharge of a cannon. At sunrise the Yankee bands favored us with a perfect hurricane of national airs, while the star-spangled banner floated from a thousand flagstaves. Seven standards were visible directly in front of our fort, at a distance of six hundred yards. As a truce has been established between Wright's (Georgia) skirmishers and the opposing pickets, detailed from Burnside's Corps, the earthworks on both sides were black with spectators, who shouted at and jeered their opponents in ludicrous style. The "hip, hip, hurrah!" of the Yankees sounded right hearty, founded, as the cry is, on plenty of good grub and whisky galore; on our side the half-famished soldier would tighten his belt, so as to keep down the pangs of hunger, and give a sharp yell of defiance that sounded uncanny in that balmy Virginia air. By the aid of field glasses we could distinguish groups of elegantly-dressed officers among the "blue jays," looking our way with undisguised wonder at the temerity of the shabby rebels flaunting the "stars and bars" betwixt the wind and their nobility. After sundown our bands and those of the enemy indulged in a musical duet. The Yanks played "Dixie" to deride us, but which we cheered; then followed "Yankee Doodle," which elicited groans and catcalls from our side. At 8 o'clock a pretty exhibition of fireworks was displayed opposite our fort. At the campfire the sentiments of the boys on viewing the old flag were discussed, and the opinion holds that it is now but the symbol of oppression and tyranny.

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