

DONALDSONVILLE CANNONIERS.

Recollections of a Famous Command in the Civil War.

The Monotonous Life of a Soldier in the Trenches.

Glimpses of General Lee and His Illus- trious Lieutenants.

Swapping Newspapers With the Federals—Visits to Petersburg. Gen. Johnston's Removal.

V.

I continue the extracts from my diary, written in the trenches before Petersburg, Va.:

July 9, 1864.—Within twenty yards of my gun stands a solitary locust tree, the sole remaining representative of the noble grove that once graced the lawn of the Rives mansion. Charred by the burning of the house (an act of vandalism by the federal cavalry) and torn by shot and shell, it stands as a terrible memento of "grim-visaged war." Amidst a tuft of foliage that clings to the top-most bough there dally sits a mocking-bird, which, with the rising of the sun, carols forth its superb madrigals until the first cannon fires, when it seeks a more congenial scene. What a subject for contemplation does this gleam of heaven afford in the midst of a hell that the fierce passions of men has wrought. How vividly does this winged messenger of peace remind us of our once happy homes in the Louisiana lowlands!

Ah! duty calls, there is no time now for romance! The gun detachment worked all day at the earthworks that our over-provident battalion commander, Major "Buck" Miller, thought proper to remodel. The weather is very hot. Throughout the afternoon we threw shells at the enemy's working parties whenever they appeared in our front. We repaired the embrasures with bags of sand, and received frequent reminders from the sharpshooters of the dangerous nature of our work. It is not pleasant to know that at every turn a dozen expert riflemen are looking for an opportunity to plug a fellow in a vital part; the practice is decidedly unhealthy. Much sickness prevails because of the extremely hot days, followed by cool nights, aided by insufficient rations of bad food. However, the boys buckle their belts tighter, and live principally on the expectation of whipping Grant's legions whenever "Marse Bob" gives the word. How consoling is the fact that hope was left in Pandora's box!

Sunday—A scouting party of Mississippians drew the fire of the Yankee line of battle at 8 o'clock this morning. The long roll sounded, officers shouted commands, and in a minute every man was at his post, eager for action. A few minutes later the affair of the picket lines was over, and we returned to our lairs, cursing everybody, from the commissary up to the commanding general.

Two men of each gun detachment are allowed to go to town each day, thus relieving the horrible monotony and mental strain of life in the trenches. My turn came to-day, and the first person I met at Jarrat's Hotel was that bird of ill-omen, General Bragg. "Nothing succeeds like success," and as this gallant soldier has never won a victory, he is despised among the rank and file of this army in proportion to his misfortunes.

The "Cockade city" looks mighty dilapidated, as the big shells now smash roofs and walls, causing many fires. The people, in imitation of the soldiers, have constructed bombproofs, into which they retire during the period of actual bombardment. I went to a friend's store and wrote letters. Dinner consisted of a plate of hash (no questions allowed as to ingredients) and pone of corn bread, cost \$5; but 25 cents silver is accepted as the equivalent of the Confederate currency; so much for patriotism, "the last resort of fools!"

The extra Richmond Whig contains news of the sinking of our celebrated cruiser Alabama by the United States warship Kearsarge, off the coast of France. Seumas showed too sentimental a spirit in accepting a challenge from a war vessel, when his business was to destroy the commerce of the enemy; such is the opinion here.

On returning to the front I found that the guns had been engaged during the day, and that the enemy had put three shots through the embrasure of gun No. 3 without hurting anyone.

Monday—The sweet mocking-bird came back to the tree in our rear for an hour. All quiet in front. Played chess with an officer from Finnegan's Florida brigade.

The country around Petersburg consists of a succession of gently rolling chains of hills, intersected by ravines filled with a scrubby growth of trees. On our extreme left the Yankees are within a hundred and thirty yards of our main works, consequently their guns enfilade portions of our line, causing many casualties.

There must be a special Providence watching over our battery, for, while hardly a day passes but that Grandy's or Moore's batteries, our neighbors on the right and left, have some of their gallant men to mourn, we pass unscathed through the same dangers. Looking back through the numerous battles and skirmishes in which we have been engaged, from the siege of Yorktown to the present time, it does appear remarkable that our loss by wounds and death has been comparatively small. "Le bon Dieu" and divers patron saints are supposed to exercise especial care of the men of this battery if heaven ever intervenes in such affairs as the wholesale murder which was dignified by the name of civil war.

Our engineers are constantly engaged in laying out protective traverses, so that a labyrinth of earthworks exists at the front. Between us and the city negro,

laborers are employed in constructing detached crescent-shaped redans ready for light artillery, which are designed, in case the front line of works should be forced, to cover retreat and delay the advance of the enemy. A short distance to the left of our position, and in advance of the main line of field works, is an immense seven-gun lunette, shaped like a fish hook, which is "No. 20" in official parlance, but its garrison has dubbed it by a less euphonical title. Opposite this salient, at a distance of about 400 feet, is a federal fort, mounting several thirty-two-pound rifled guns, that has gained a resounding soubriquet. When one opens on working parties, or sweeps the front preparatory to a dash of our pickets, the other always has a finger in the pie; then we little fellows, with light field pieces, are signaled to fire on the guns diagonally opposite, and dirt flies from the parapets on both sides; an occasional lucky shot enters an embrasure and injures or dismounts a gun, when a wild shout of triumph makes the welkin ring above the roar of big and little guns.

July 12—Having occasion to write to relatives in Philadelphia, I went down between the rifle pits, swapped a piece of tobacco for a postage stamp and some hard tack, and met a polite New Hampshire officer of Burnside's Corps, who promised to mail my letter. Our short talks while on the neutral zone are generally anent the hopes of the soldier. The Yanks are as tired of fighting as we are, but seem confident of wearing us out. Both armies are homesick. Light showers of rain fell during the night.

Wednesday, 13th—I was on leave of absence for twelve hours. Visited our calson camp at Banks' farm, washed and mended my ragged clothing; then went to town for an adventure. While seated on the front step of an elegant old mansion the hostess invited me in to breakfast. It is a part of the religion of a soldier never to refuse a good offer. Here I made the acquaintance of the charming and fascinating Mrs. White, a patriotic lady of the old regime. I called on Dr. Shepherd to have my teeth examined, but, finding that it would cost \$100 to have a masticator filled, decided that the Yankees might save me the expense and inconvenience.

At dark the enemy opened with twenty-four-pound mortars on the Rives salient; the shells kept us busy dodging. Some fifty shells came to our share, but little harm was done, except to some of the shelters in the ditch and on the inner slope of the ramparts.

July 14—Some boys of the Twelfth Virginia dropped in to breakfast and shared our short commons. Northern newspapers obtained at the picket line announce Early's triumphant advance towards Baltimore, and the incidental panic of the citizens of Maryland and Pennsylvania. Generals Lee and Malone scrambled up the earthwork in front of my gun to-day and reconnoitered the enemy's position through field glasses. Judging from the expressions of their faces they are not pleased at the way that Grant is moving towards us by the slow but sure process of parallel approaches. They peered earnestly towards the enemy's right flank as if calculating what an assault there might accomplish. After the generals had gone, every man announced his plan for circumventing Grant's movements. Strange how many thousands of military geniuses this war has developed! We received pay for the months of January and February, amounting to \$24.

July 15—Heavy artillery firing on the river about Chesterfield Heights, but all serene in our front. The Yanks refuse to exchange newspapers to-day, and the inference is that Early has "done them dirt" again. A duel occurred between the mortar batteries to-night, with fine scenic effect, but little else.

July 16—A distinguished group gathered near my shanty this morning, consisting of Generals Lee, R. H. Anderson, A. P. Hill, Fields, Mahone and Heath; they held a lengthy conference.

July 17—I heard to-day from the home folks through Price, of the Washington Artillery. The enemy continues to erect new works and strengthen old ones by day and night. A drunken Yankee soldier came down to the picket line and, although ordered back by our officer, persisted in making a speech on the war question, much to the amusement of the spectators, who crowded the ramparts on both sides.

July 18—There was to have been an assault made by Fields' Division, First Corps, early this morning, but the design was frustrated by the desertion of some of our pickets. Our infantry has evidently been much demoralized by being kept behind earthworks and fed on nigger food, so that the mention of an offensive move is not particularly relished.

July 19—The enemy's mortar shells to-day are too much in evidence. One fell ten feet from my shelter, and all in the vicinity prostrated themselves in honor of the visitor. The effect of such an incident is to render the artillerymen nervous, as there is no chance to return the fire, besides, the tremendous report causes a ringing in the ears that frequently results in deafness. Rain fell all day. I went to town and slept on the portico of Jarrott's Hotel, among a crowd of jolly, noisy soldiers.

July 20—I took a swim in the Appomattox to get half-way clean. I met a comrade and went to a restaurant for breakfast. Steak, eggs, coffee (so called) and bread cost \$15 each, but as we had been lucky at poker the night before, it was a good investment of earnings.

July 21—I formed the acquaintance of Captain Rush, Lieutenant Levy and his brother, Sergeant Levy, all from Augusta, Ga., members of the Twenty-second Georgia Regiment, Wright's Brigade. The tragic fate of these brave soldiers will be told later. The news of the removal of General Joe Johnston from command of the Army of Tennessee has caused a very uneasy feeling in this army. When we remember his admirable conduct of the retreat from Yorktown, the battle of Williamsburg and the battle of Seven Pines, our special wonder is evoked. The Richmond Examiner comments on this change of commanders in the west as a national calamity, the result of an intrigue at Richmond. Can it be possible that our noble president has permitted prejudice to sway his judgment? His name has been associated with all that is brilliant and honorable in the history of our country since he entered the cabinet of President Pierce. Can he have been swayed by bad advisers? We blame Bragg and Hood for advising this terrible blunder, the turning point of the Georgia campaign. It is evident that professional jealousy has on this sad occasion overbalanced patriotism! "Deianda est Oar-thage!"