

BY DR. A. W. ACHESON.

[CONTINUED.]
1864.

On the line of battle to our left was a hut to which we went out of curiosity. Found there an old colored man and woman. Their house was in confusion, having been ransacked. Asked him how it happened. He said our soldiers told him he had better go back as there would be a fight there. They went but no fight taking place they returned and found their house in this condition. Some one had added to their mental suffering by telling them the gun boats were coming up on wheels. "Good Lord," said the old man, no man can lib in de same township widem." The fact was, the Rebs, as well as negroes, had a horror of gunboats, and no wonder. One shell hurling up the valley made more noise than a half dozen machine shops.

Lay at Deep Bottom all night.
July 18. At noon we were moved to New Market Cross Roads, only six miles from Richmond.

We marched through a woods with trees two feet in diameter in it, yet the furrows could be seen where it had been last plowed, twenty years before.

A brisk skirmish was inaugurated in our front, but we were not called out, although at one time the boys had their muskets cocked.

That night we went on picket. Symptoms of dysentary began to develop themselves in me, and the swamp we stayed in all night did not better it much.

July 19. Were on picket all day and until midnight, when,

July 20. We were withdrawn and started back across the river. On the other bank of the river the column halted, laid down and slept until daylight.

Halted at the Appomattox to rest. There met Captain Dawson and Lt. McGregor, 82d P. V., who said the mine explosion had taken place that morning, but was a failure. Then we saw that we had been sent to Deep Bottom, merely to make the enemy believe we were concentrating a heavy force against Richmond, and draw his attention away from the real point of attack.

At Butler's Headquarters near Point of Rocks, was a signal station two hundred feet high.

As we neared the mine we met ambulances, wounded and troops.

Our Brigade was lying on a hill behind the mine. A Whitworth battery was all that had range of us, and it was three miles away. It threw a number of bolts, one of which lit under the table at Brigade Headquarters while they were at supper, yet no one was hurt.

At ten P. M. we got back to our old camp.

July 31. Sunday. Lay in camp all day expecting to move. Felt no better, and all next day kept getting worse. My wound was not quite healed, and there were returning signs of erysipelas.

SOUTHERN MANSIONS.

Aug. 2. Surgeon advised me to go to the hospital, and I did so. It was at the house of Mr. Pritchard, a two story frame, with the chimnies outside, like other Southern mansions.

Had often heard before the war of the magnificent residences of plantation owners, but after we got into the army we found them a hoax. During all our tramps through Virginia we never saw any houses, which would surpass the average of farm houses North. And considering that there are ten houses North to one South, it might truthfully be said that those north are better. The Southerners generally owned large farms, and all made off them was spent as fast as made. The son seldom improved on what his father left him, except in negroes; and the old mansion grew older, dilapidated, and out of date, until it would have been an eye sore, had not the pine trees grown up around it, giving it an air of snugness, at the same time hiding it from view. Time and again have we looked forward on the weary march to see some attractive house, but looked in vain. And had that same spot been North, a neat little cot, with white fence, apple orchard, garden, out houses, and stacks of grain, would have been on it, to cheer the traveler's eye.

But the Pritchard house what can be said of it? It was a little above the ordinary run of country houses, but being only four miles from the city, we were led to expect something better. It looked comfortable. There was a large flower garden, without any flowers, in front of it. The borders of the beds were of box wood—very pretty. The trees on all sides afforded an excellent shade for the Surgeon's tents. The principle feature in the surroundings was the slave huts, Could it be possible human beings lived in them? They were frame buildings neither lathed or plastered; there was nothing to hinder the winter wind from whistling through the cracks; there were no windows; a hole in the wall with a slide door (such as is used for dung holes in stables) let in the light, and when it rained or was cold had to be let down. They were butts Northerners would not quarter horses in—little fifteen feet square concerns, and only five for fifty negroes.

But where were the negroes? According to Mrs. Pritchard's story her husband went into the city, to see his daughter taking his slaves along, and before he could get back our army settled down, That story sounded very well by itself but unfortunately, the occupants of every house in the neighborhood gave the same answer. Three slaves were left at the house, and they were working hard to get money to take them away.

Staying in hospital is decidedly the meanest business ever a man was at. Could offer no objections to the rations, for the Sanitary and Christian Commissions furnished us with canned chicken tomatoes and lemons. But it was the loafing, with nothing to do, we disliked so. Very little was going on and we were not well enough to appreciate that.

To get an insight into how matters stood about the house, we talked with one of the little remaining darkies. He said "Mudder an sum ob de res, dun gone off to de Yanks. Don't know wheter Massa is a rebel or a bushwacker. Misses tells us to be yanks while youens is heah."

DEEP BOTTOM AGAIN.

Aug. 2. The Second Corps started on a move, and the hospital was cleared out to follow. We were loaded in ambulances and started to City Point hospital, where we were put in ward. The Corps marched up and camped close by. We heard they were to be loaded on boats to go North. I wanted to go along. I got out of bed to start a way to the regiment.

Aug. 18. The Corps went to the Appomattox and bathed. At noon went to City

Point wharf. Thought I would faint, drop or do something similar.

With some delay all the troops got on board. We went down the river a mile, where all the boats were collecting. Sweeney secured me a berth and some bread. Mr. Milligan got me a little brandy, and I laid over and went to sleep. It was just getting dark, and the red lanterns were hoisting in the fleet.

Aug. 14. Sunday. I was awakened by some one.

"What time is it?"
"Four o'clock."
"Where are we landing?"
"At Deep Bottom."

Unloaded myself struggled up the bank to where the troops were forming, and sat down. Sleep had refreshed me so that I felt stronger. But as the sun began to rise I began to wilt. About nine o'clock we moved towards the woods. It was only a half mile, but seemed longer than a mile on a road measured with a yarn string. At the edge Miles told me to deploy company C as skirmishers, and advance into the woods far enough to let the regiment deploy. Did so, and sent him word. The regiment was deployed. Dragged my tired bones through that woods more than a mile, until I could hardly stand. A detachment of Heavy Artillery was sent on the right for me to take care of, but it was as much as I could do to take care of myself. My feet dragged in the leaves, or caught in the brush. I staggered around trees, dodged under limbs, and rested on stumps. Oh! what a farce for me to be there, pretending to command men, when I hardly knew which end was up. Went as far as possible, and then told Captain Stockton I was going back.

To be Continued.