

BY DR. A. W. ACHESON.

[CONTINUED.]
1864.

The Rebs were suspected of undermining it and our division was brought up to defend the line in case of attack.

The regiment had been laying in a Fort on the Appomatox, where they were subjected to the fire of two batteries. One they dubbed "Chesterfield," the other "Gooseneck," and whenever a shell came no matter from what direction, "Look out for Gooseneck, there comes Chesterfield," were the cries heard on all sides.

Every morning at three o'clock we went on the hillside close to the front line and stood under arms until daylight.

There were some gophers near which we occupied.

Quite a traffic was carried on in rings made from plugs of Reb shells, some selling for three dollars.

Nov. 11 A shell lit in the tub where a soldier was washing his handkerchief, whereupon one of the bystander swore he'd have it made into rings before the Johnnies could shoot another.

One of the 100th P. V. was telling us about two companies of Indians in their corps. They called their Colonel "Little Chief," and one of the captains, whom they did not like "Big Bull." One of them captured a sharp-shooter who was bothering them, by covering himself with "Ox feathers" and creeping up under the tree. The Johnny did not see him until he called on him to surrender.

Dr. Hill had a darkey named Wyatt. I asked him one day how he came to run away from his master. "I was a wukin in de cawn feal, an I heard sumpin jinglin, and I looked roun, and four Yankees was a cumin at me. Dey tole me for to mount one ob de mools. I didn't ax no questins but got up, while dey led de other three away. I lowed massy lost about sixteen hundred dollahs dat day.

Every night or two we had a brisk interchange of shots between the batteries. The mortar shell winking through the air was a pretty sight.

Nov. 15. We had a Brigade drill. Our regiment could only turn out ninety men.

Hancock went away and Humphreys took his place about that time.

Was appointed on Court Martial. It met at Division Headquarters in a house full of bullets and shell holes. Col. Scott, 61st N. Y. was president.

A BRAVE BOY.

Captain Patterson 148th P. V. told us of a drafted man in their regiment, who had been wounded twice and recovered. Grant ordered a charge to be made by two hundred men of their regiment to see if Lee was weakening his line any. This drafted man was in the attacking party. They advanced at double quick about three A. M., and captured the Fort, taking some prisoners who were sent back under guard. He was one of the guard. After delivering the prisoners at Headquarters he started back, climbed our works, and approached the Fort, not knowing that his companions had retired, and it was again in possession of the Rebs. As the morning was a little cloudy, and clear day break had not yet come, he did not see the Reb picket until within ten feet of him. Afraid to retreat least he would be shot, he quietly dropped into a pit intending to escape under cover of the next night. He lay there all the day in the hot sun, without food or drink. In the evening before it was quite dark enough to start, a vidette was thrown out ten feet from him, between him and our lines. He lay quiet all night. In the morning the vidette was removed. The second day was like the first. For six days and nights he laid there. On the seventh he thought of surrendering, but put it off until night; when to his joy the vidette was not stationed. He crawled into our lines, and weak as he was brought his gun (a seven shooter) and accoutrements with him. Miles recommended him for a furlough and gold medal.

Lt. Sweeney told us of a Reb Colonel he had under guard, who appeared worried, and at last beckoning him told him he had a gold watch he would like to put in his care. Alex said, "You need have no fear, our men do not rob prisoners as yours do. They are honest." The Colonel was quite taken aback.

Nov. 18. Our camp was moved back on the ridge, whence Gen. Hartranft afterwards made his famous charge. Lt. Bell and I dug a hole in the bank, built a chimney and put up our tents.

For three days it rained. The men were all drowned out, and stood around the camp fires hallowing at every person on horseback who passed.

The Artillery regiment next door were about to lose a Surgeon by promotion, and there was considerable "vitality" circulating in consequence. After 72 hours of rain, and every man wet to the skin, what could they do better than laugh at each other and make fun of everything that passed.

Every Orderly that went to or from the Artillery was greeted with "There goes more commissary." "Have you three seals?" "Put him in a canteen," "Lie down," and similar expressions.

A squad of Rebs and Contrabands passed who had deserted the night before. They said a Reb Captain was busy, ferrying the discontented across the river, although he charged a hundred dollars in gold or greenbacks.

The 5th N. H., composed mostly of

Canadians had a number of deserters to the Rebs. So many of them went over that a Reb called back, "send over the colors and Colonel of the 5th New Hampshire, we've got all the men."

One soldier received a thirty day furlough for shooting one of them attempting to desert. It created a good deal of talk in the Brigade, and many wanted to go on picket near them, as they were in need of furloughs.

They were called nothing but the Fifth Canada. Before being filled with recruits it was one of the best regiments in the service.

One day standing in our tent door we saw a shell explode on the plain. No gun had been fired and we went over to get an explanation. Two men had put it on fire, and it burst striking one in the knee.

The regiment had been in a fight at Ream's Station. The Corps was drawn up in the form of a horse shoe. The 140th was deployed between the heels to repel a Cavalry charge, but no charge coming they escaped. The rest of the Corps suffered severely. Some batteries were lost because all the horses were killed.

One battery had sixty horses killed inside of five minutes.

Colonel Beaver, 140th P. V., came back from a leave, went into the fight, and lost his leg so quickly, that he went back in the same ambulance in which he came up.

The mortars used along our lines were small brass ones that a man could lift. They are named Cohorn mortars, or, by the soldiers "cow horns." The largest mortar was mounted on a car on the railroad, and called the "Petersburg Express."

Behind our camp was a large tree which had a platform in the topmost branches. It was a signal station. Bell an I went up. From it we had an excellent view of the city. It was only two miles away, but that was a long distance while the Rebs were there.

On the top of Division Headquarters was another signal station, in which Moore of Company D. was on duty.

The Reb lines were quite close, and everything could be seen to advantage. The chief feature was an eight inch columbiad pointing towards us. The black hole in the muzzle looked as dark as futurity.

Cheerfulness on the part of a few, did much toward making men forget their hardships. One man could influence a whole regiment. On our way to Mine Run, after the artillery had begun in front, a fellow on rear guard began singing,

We're going down to Richmond, fair Richmond,
fair Richmond.
We're going to take Richmond, take Richmond
on the Jeems.

The army of the Potomac had so often started to take Richmond, that it seemed almost ridiculous to think of it. Officers and privates got interested in his song, and every man within sound of his voice listened so intently, that the danger in front was forgotten.

Being cheerful sometimes preserved life. Chaplain Vogel said he went into a hospital at Fair Oaks, and found one of his men shot through the lungs, who was despondent. "Cheer up my boy, cheer up, or you'll never get home." Home was the magic word. He passed that tent a few minutes later, and the soldier was actually whistling. And he said he believed his whistling home was the only thing that saved him.

Curiosity, it is said, will attract a deer to death. It is no less powerful with man. We have known men to do things, and go to places, who if ordered to do the same would have thought it very hard. We saw a Surgeon take the place of a private and dig down rebel works in front of Petersburg, to find out how hard the duties of a common soldier were. He was abundantly satisfied with one trial, and never came out again. Would it not have been well if some of the Generals had taken this plan to find out what picket duty was? As a consequence some of the useless though tiresome ceremonies might have been dispensed with.

We knew of one boy belonging to Co. I, who had so little fear in his composition and so much curiosity, that at Gettysburg when the whole line was lying down to protect themselves from that furious cannonading, he had his head up to see what was going on. His officers might command him to lie down, or shell bursting rather close would compel him to dodge, but after it was over up his head would go again to watch the progress of the battle, and for every shell of ours which damaged the rebels he would give a cheer. There was one of the 100 P. V. of the same disposition. The rebels could not fire a gun at Petersburg, but what he would hop on top of the works to see what it was about. And the minute he got there a dozen pickets would shoot at him. Men like those had a vast influence in a regiment. They did a great deal towards making men better soldiers.

There are probably hundreds of thousands who desired to be in one battle—just one. That was enough they never wanted in any more. We do not believe that man has been born who "delighted in a battle. We know there were many Generals who delighted to stay back in comparatively safe places and let them get slaughtered that they might get promoted. But to take a musket and go right in with the line of battle, with as many chances of being shot as shooting, one dose allays a person's curiosity.

We did know two boys of the 8th P. R. C. who besides their own infantry battles

went once to see our cavalry whip the Rebs. It turned out however, that the Rebs whipped ours, and one of them only escaped by seizing a horse which was careering over the field and getting aboard of him, while the other had to go home via Libby.

Curiosity sometimes took a geographical turn. There were men who could not keep in ranks, but they had to be wandering all over the country inspecting farms, roads, houses, streams and crops. Whenever an opportunity presented itself they went on a tour, and besides the pleasure of discovering the nature of the country, they took delight in posting themselves in Zoology and Ornithology. The number of specimens which found their way into camp in consequence of the research of these men were wonderful. In fact specimens at first rare became very common, and under a pursuit of knowledge again became rare. We knew one boy who, for the want of other rarity would bring in a pig rather than come empty handed, and took great pleasure in determining by it the certainty of the *cysticercus cellulosae Taenia medicamentata*.

We have already spoken of the Quartermaster who wanted to shoot the Johnny at Mine Run and got hit himself. We might speak of another man who was very anxious to shoot a reb, and in the Wilderness saw the long wished for opportunity approaching. He had secured a good position behind a tree and was just drawing a bead when Barlow ordered the line to fall back. An angrier man we have never seen. He just jumped and cursed, and swore Barlow was a coward, and he'd be d—d if he wouldn't stay and fight them himself. One or two others partook of his feelings and stopped, but all were ordered back again, and came through reluctantly.

(To be Continued.)