

# PRISON LIFE IN THE SOUTH:

AT

RICHMOND, MACON, SAVANNAH, CHARLESTON, COLUMBIA,  
CHARLOTTE, RALEIGH, GOLDSBOROUGH,  
AND ANDERSONVILLE,

DURING THE YEARS 1864 AND 1865.

BY <sup>LIEUT.</sup> A. O. ABBOTT,

LATE LIEUTENANT FIRST NEW YORK DRAGOONS.

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## CONTENTS.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
CAPTURE, AND ARRIVAL AT LIBBY PRISON.....	13
CHAPTER II.	
IN LIBBY .....	22
CHAPTER III.	
FROM LIBBY TO MACON, GEORGIA.....	42
CHAPTER IV.	
AT MACON, GEORGIA.....	58
CHAPTER V.	
AT SAVANNAH, GEORGIA.....	81
CHAPTER VI.	
AT CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA.....	102
CHAPTER VII.	
AT COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA—CAMP SORGHUM.....	124
CHAPTER VIII.	
AT COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA—ASYLUM PRISON.....	150
CHAPTER IX.	
HOMeward BOUND.....	176
CHAPTER X.	
AT ANDERSONVILLE. (By Ira E. Forbes, Corporal 16th Connecticut Volunteers.).....	192
CHAPTER XI.	
AMONG THE NEGROES. (By H. B. Seeley, Adjutant 86th New York Volunteers.).....	207

A 2

CHAPTER XII.	
IN SEARCH OF LIBERTY. (By —, Major, — New York Volunteers.).....	Page 219
CHAPTER XIII.	
IN THE HOSPITAL NEAR CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA. (By A. F. Tipton, Lieutenant, 8th Iowa Cavalry.).....	239
CHAPTER XIV.	
AN ADVENTURE. (By F. Murphy, Lieutenant, 94th New York Volunteers.).....	241
CHAPTER XV.	
IN THE CELL AT LIBBY. (By A. C. Litchfield, Lieutenant Colonel, 7th Michigan Cavalry.).....	257
CHAPTER XVI.	
ESCAPED AND RECAPTURED. (By Professor J. Ogden, Lieutenant, 1st Wisconsin Cavalry.).....	260
CHAPTER XVII.	
FIVE WEEKS AMONG THE LOYAL LEAGUE AT CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA. (By W. H. Telford, Captain, 50th Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteers.).....	296
CHAPTER XVIII.	
REBEL BARBARITIES. (From <i>Harper's Weekly</i> .).....	303

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## APPENDIX.

Containing the Name, Rank, Regiment, Date, Place of Capture, and Post-office Address of the 1500 Officers who were confined at Columbia, South Carolina, 1864 and 1865.....	317
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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

1. Tunneling.....	<i>Frontispiece.</i>
2. Captured.....	Page 16
3. Fresh Fish.....	58
4. Camp Oglethorpe, Macon, Georgia.....	59
5. Washing.....	65
6. Shoulder-straps on Police Duty.....	67
7. "Bucked".....	71
8. Filling up the Sinks at Savannah, Georgia.....	96
9. Washing—under Difficulties.....	99
10. Jail-yard, Charleston, South Carolina.....	105
11. Work-house, Charleston, South Carolina.....	110
12. Roper Hospital, Charleston, South Carolina.....	114
13. Burnt District at Charleston, South Carolina.....	120
14. Capture of the Fugitives.....	130
15. Hauling Wood, Camp Sorghnm.....	137
16. Drawing Meat Ration.....	147
17. Shanties, Columbia, South Carolina.....	148
18. Asylum Prison, Columbia, South Carolina.....	153
19. Dividing Wood.....	156
20. Sutler's Establishment.....	158
21. Delivering the Mail.....	163
22. Skirmishing.....	185
23. Passing the Line for Exchange, North Carolina.....	188
24. Pursuing Knowledge under Difficulties.....	271
25. Recaptured.....	289
26-33. Rebel Barbarities.....	304-313

# SKETCHES OF PRISON LIFE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### CAPTURE, AND ARRIVAL AT "LIBBY PRISON."

THE morning of the 3d of May, 1864, was an eventful one to the Army of the Potomac; for on that day began the grand movement, which, it was hoped, would finish the rebellion. General Grant had been called from his victorious Army of the West, placed in command of the ill-fated Army of the Potomac, and of all the forces of the East. He came with the prestige of a success which had an excellent effect upon the soldiers who had been so long trying, but unsuccessfully, to take Richmond.

For nearly five months active preparations had been going on in both the Federal and Rebel armies, each determined to strike a telling blow for its interest; the *one* for a Nationality and Republican institutions, the *other* for an Oligarchy founded upon human slavery. From December till May these two armies had confronted each other, both picketing the line of the Rapidan and Rappahannock Rivers, each waiting the signal of settled weather to begin the forward movement which was to drive its foe back upon Richmond or Washington. The public feeling, both North and South, had been wrought up

to its highest pitch. Much confidence was reposed in General Grant by the loyal ones, and many prayers ascended daily for him and his noble army.

My brigade broke camp from the base of Pony Mountain, near Culpepper, Va., on the morning of the 5th of May; took the Stevensburg Road, and encamped at night three miles from Germania Ford. The infantry had preceded us, and, as is always the case at the commencement of a spring campaign, the roads were strewn with blankets, overcoats, knapsacks, etc., cast off by the soldiers to lighten their load. As our train did not come up that night, we had to content ourselves with such rations as we chanced to have in our haversacks or could borrow, not an unusual thing in a campaign.

We crossed the Rapidan at Ely's Ford by fording, the pontoons being used by the infantry and artillery; took the old Chancellorsville Road, and picketed it for three miles beyond Chancellorsville. As we passed over the battle-field, I could see very plainly the marks of the terrible struggle of last year. The tops of the trees looked as though they had been measured and trimmed by a skillful hand, while their trunks and limbs were scarred and broken. But little of the *débris* of the battle remained on the ground, it having been picked up and carried off by the inhabitants of the vicinity last year, for the benefit of the Rebel government, who made a practice of sending out agents to collect all such spoils from the inhabitants. This I learned from one of the residents near Ely's Ford.

We had no fighting to do until Saturday, being kept on picket on the Fredericksburg Road. On that day (the 7th) we were ordered, at 12 M., to Todd's Tavern.

The weather was intensely hot, and the clouds of dust through which we rode almost suffocated us. After a halt of a few moments at Todd's Tavern were ordered out on the Spottsylvania Road to discover the position and movements of the Rebels; soon found they were advancing down the road, supported by two brigades of dismounted cavalry, intending, no doubt, to drive us from our possession of the roads leading to Richmond, and, if possible, thus turn the left flank of our army. Colonel Gibbs, of the 1st New York Dragoons, who was in command of the third brigade, first division, at once comprehended the situation, and ordering the 6th Pennsylvania to dismount, sent them in on the right of the road, while my regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Thorp in command, took the left. We at once opened on them with our "seven-shooters," and sent their skirmish-line tumbling back to their supports. As we charged up a little rise of ground, we at once discovered them intrenched behind some bushes that hid them from our view. We held our position in their front till they brought down five times our numbers, when they made a dash on our line, and, just as our support was coming in sight, "scooped out" six officers and about forty men. I was in a thick piece of underbrush, closely watching matters in my front, when I heard a shouting behind me, and, as I turned round, a Rebel captain confronted me, and, presenting a loaded revolver at my breast, said, "Do you surrender?" Looking him calmly in the face, after a moment's reflection, I replied with a smile, "Of course I do. I don't see any sight for any thing else right here." "Give me up your sabre, then." I did so, and then the captain ordered two men to take me to the rear on the double-quick.



Captured.

"Come out of them boots," said one, as soon as he saw that I had on a pair of good ones. "Give up them boots." "I want them ar boots." "You 'Yank,' leave them boots." "You d—d son of a —, take them boots off, or I'll blow your brains out," as he prepared to fulfill his threat. Such and like expressions greeted me upon my first introduction to Southern chivalry. I kept my boots, however, but had to appeal to an officer to save them. After the boot question had been settled, they turned their attention to arms, and found I had a belt and pistol, which they then took from me. They marched me back about half a mile, where I found Lieutenants West and Lewis, of my regiment, and soon after we were joined by Captain Britton also, 1st New York Dragoons, Captain Carpenter and Lieutenant Hazel, of the

6th Pennsylvania. We were tired completely out, had had nothing to eat since breakfast, and no immediate prospect of getting any thing for some time, and were nearly sun-struck. While sitting by a tree, an officer rode up to Lieutenant West, and, without saying a word, reached down and snatched a good new hat from off his (Lieutenant West's) head, put it upon his own, and replaced it by an old worn-out cap, which was so small it could with difficulty be kept upon his head at all, and then left. While awaiting orders, an officer rode up to me, when the following conversation took place between us:

*Reb.* "What regiment do you belong to?"

*Fed.* "A cavalry regiment, sir."

*Reb.* "What one?"

*Fed.* "One just over there, sir."

*Reb.* (*A little nettled*). "What is the name of it?"

*Fed.* "First New York Dragoons."

*Reb.* "Whose division is yours?"

*Fed.* "The first, sir."

*Reb.* "Who commands it?"

*Fed.* "I don't know, sir."

*Reb.* "Where is Wilson's division?"

*Fed.* "I don't know, sir."

*Reb.* "Where is Gregg's division?"

*Fed.* "I don't know, sir."

*Reb.* "Were we fighting Wilson's division this forenoon?"

*Fed.* "I don't know, sir."

*Reb.* "What are your folks going to do over there?"

*Fed.* "We are going to *fight* you, sir."

While we were resting a little while, our people sent

over their compliments in the shape of a shell, which at once started us, with our guards, farther to the rear.

We had not remained there long before we could see that the tide of battle had turned, and that our gallant boys were driving them. Back they came pell-mell, horses, artillery, and ambulances, drivers and skulkers, crying out, "The Yankees are coming—the Yankees are coming;" and *we* said, "Let them come, for *we* are not afraid of them."

While moving back, Captain Britton and myself in company were overtaken by a Rebel soldier, a mere boy, who was greatly excited. Seeing we were Yankees, he at once cocked his carbine, and, bringing it to his shoulder, swore that "these two Yanks should pay for the life of his brother just slain;" and, had not the guard interfered, there is no doubt but that he would have carried his threat into execution.

They marched us back, with their train and lead horses, till nearly dark, when we went on ahead to Spottsylvania Court-house, about five miles from the battlefield. We halted a few moments in a large field on our way, and here, for the first time, we began to comprehend our situation. We could hear the sharp firing of the carbines of our own brave comrades, and we hoped that soon again we might strike telling blows for our holy cause. But this privilege was to be denied us. We were no longer to campaign, march, fight, and win glorious victories with the "Army of the Potomac." We were torn away from them by *traitor* hands, and were now powerless and under their control. With sad hearts and bitter tears, we bade "good-by" to our brave comrades in the distance, regretting deeply that we could no longer

share their toils and trials, and, as we *expected also*, their triumphs over Lee, and the downfall and capture of Richmond.

On our way we saw a rebel bearing one of the guidons of my regiment, which had been captured at the same time I was. We all noticed it, and kissed our hands to it as it passed out of sight, and bade it a long, last "good-by." One corporal had been killed, and the second one was shot through the arm, when the Rebels wrenched it from his hands.

We arrived at Spottsylvania Court-house soon after dark, and, after some delay in trying to find us quarters, they turned us out into an old orchard, backed us up against a board fence, put a guard around us, and told us we would stay there all night. We asked the sergeant of the guard who had us in charge for something to eat, as we had had nothing since breakfast; but he very politely informed us that "they could not get enough to eat for themselves," consequently could not divide with prisoners.

The night was cold and damp, and, as we had no blankets or extra clothing, the guards built us a small fire out of rails. I remarked to them that "they need not be so afraid of their rails, for our boys would be along there next week, and *they* would not spare *many* I was very sure."

"No," said Johnny Reb, "you'ens army will never come here, and by next Wednesday we will have Grant back across the Rapidan."

After an hour's talk over our condition, we prepared for our night's rest; but the air was too cold and damp for us to sleep much, and we welcomed the morning light

as the harbinger of warmth, and more comfortable circumstances.

We started at daylight for Guinea's Station, twenty miles distant, without a mouthful of breakfast or any thing to appease our hunger, having been up to that time twenty-four hours without food. As the sun came up, the day began to be very hot; and, being cavalrymen, we were not much accustomed to marching on foot, our feet soon got sore and we tired out, so that the latter part of the distance we could not march over half a mile without stopping to rest. The guard marched us *very* fast, would not even allow us to stop at the creeks long enough to wash our faces. We reached the railroad at about 12 o'clock, so much exhausted we could not sit up, but threw ourselves upon the ground while the sergeant went to get us some rations. After a few moments' rest we were ordered on board the train. Soon after the sergeant came back and told us that, as it was Sunday, he could get nothing for us, but that when the train arrived at Hanover Junction rations would be put on board for us, and our wants would then be supplied.

The train left Guinea's Station at 2 P.M. for Richmond, but no rations did we see at Hanover. As we passed Ashland Station, a number of *ladies* (I suppose they called themselves such) came up to the train with delicacies for their sick and wounded, and, although we told them how long we had been without food, yet not one of them deigned to give us a particle, but made up faces at us, called us "Yankee thieves," murderers, scoundrels, etc.; and one, more bitter than the others, threw a handful of water in our faces, saying, "Take that, you miserable

wretches." Some of the old men asked, "What you'ens all want to come down here and steal we'ens' farms, and run off our niggers, and burn our houses for?" As we did not feel in an argumentative mood, I suppose they were left in ignorance of the matter.

We arrived in Richmond about 4 30 P.M., just as the churches were out. The streets were filled with people, whose countenances betokened anxious hearts in regard to the terrible struggle that was then going on in the Wilderness. As we were the first prisoners sent to Richmond from the Wilderness, I suppose we were regarded with unusual interest. Guards were at once placed around us, with orders to allow no one outside to hold any intercourse with us. They marched us first to General Winder's office, detained us a few moments while a gaping crowd satisfied their curiosity, and then we passed on through some of the principal streets of the city. As we marched along we could hear the doors and windows open around us, while men, women, and children looked out upon us as Yankee prisoners. A troop of boys followed in our rear, hooting, hallooing, and calling us names.

After a walk of a mile or more we came up before a large three-story brick building, dark and frowning, and from the corner of which hung an old weather-beaten sign, "Libby & Son, Ship-chandlers." All at once I comprehended the fact that this was the infamous "Libby Prison," and we were to be confined in it as prisoners of war. I confess I did not like the idea of being a "ship-chandler" so far from home, but their arguments were too powerful, and we all entered the prison Sabbath, May 8th, 1864, to come out when—Ah! that was an interesting question to us.

## CHAPTER II.

## IN LIBBY PRISON.

As soon as we were inside the prison the officers were separated from the enlisted men, and we were not permitted after that to be near enough to them to hold any conversation with them. We were then marched into the office of the prison, where were registered our names, rank, company, and regiment, when and where captured. While waiting for my turn, I looked around the office, and through an open door in the rear I saw the battle-flag of the 25th Missouri, filled with bullet-holes and stained with blood. I gazed upon it with intense interest, for I thought it might be a long time before I should again see the "dear old flag" that I had followed for nearly two years, and for which so many precious lives had been given. My eyes filled with tears as I looked upon it, and, as I marched out of the office, I said to myself, "Good-by, old flag, till I see you again." We were then taken into the hall in the rear of the prison, and were politely requested to give up all the United States money we had in our possession. If we gave it up voluntarily they would keep it for us, and perhaps we might get it again, and perhaps not. If they searched and found it upon us, they would confiscate it. We gave it up at once, when they ordered us to strip for a search, which we did, and they *went through* us till they were satisfied. The sergeant then led the way, and we followed to the

third story of the building, and, taking us to the northeast corner of the upper west room, told us "that place would be our quarters for the present." We then asked him for some rations, as it had been thirty-six hours since we had eaten any thing. He politely informed us "that it was past prison ration hours, and we would have to wait till next day." He then left us "alone in our glory." One remarked, "Well, boys, we are *here*," to which we all replied "we thought that was so beyond a doubt." "What are we to do?" said another. "*Stay here*," replied the third; and then we began to look around to see what we could find.

We had expected to find in prison some of the conveniences of a soldier's camp life, but we were sadly mistaken. We found not, in all the prison, a bunk, table, blankets, conveniences for eating, or any thing of the kind. Bare walls and a wet floor greeted us whichever way we looked.

The eight hundred Federal officers who had been confined there during the winter had, on the 7th inst., been sent to Georgia. The order that came to them the night before was to prepare to march twenty miles, to Petersburg. It was subsequently shown that the order was thus given, not because they were actually to *march* that distance, but because it would oblige the *Rebel officers*, if the prisoners had to leave behind a large quantity of the delicacies that they had received a short time before by "flag-of-truce boat" from kind friends at the North. But the Yankees were too sharp for them, for, upon consultation, it was decided to destroy what they could not carry. Accordingly, coffee, sugar, flour, butter, lard, soap, candles, tobacco, ham, every thing they had, was broken



up, cut up, feather and cotton pillows ripped open and contents scattered over them, and then the whole trodden under foot. The bunks and benches they had made of their boxes were also destroyed, thrown in a pile, and, when they left the next morning, some venturesome fellow, not having the fear of Major Turner or the Rebel authorities before his eyes, set the pile on fire, but, unfortunately, it was discovered in time to save the building from any material damage.

"Libby Prison" takes its name from its former owner, who carried on the ship-chandler and tobacco business in it. It is located in that part of the city known as the Rocketts, it being in the southeast corner, on the bank of the "James River Canal," near the James River. From its windows we could look out across the river and see the green fields, leafy forests, and the beautiful summer residences of Manchester, a small village opposite Richmond.

The prison stands on such ground that it has three stories front and four in the rear. It is about 130 feet in length and 100 in width, built of brick, and contains six rooms, each 40 by 100 feet. The partitions are of brick, two feet thick. The lower west room is partitioned off and used for offices to the prison. The lower middle room was furnished with stoves, and was used for a kitchen. In one corner of this kitchen was a room or cell, in which were confined "General Kilpatrick's raiders."\*

The lower east room was the prison hospital. The sashes from all the windows had been removed, and the places supplied by grates made of one-inch rods of iron, passing through three cross-bars, two and a half by three

\* See Colonel Litchfield's experience.

fourth inches; the whole firmly imbedded in the walls. A flight of stairs led from each room to the one above, but at night those leading to the lower story were taken down, and sentinels were stationed to prevent any attempt to escape that way. A hydrant in each room supplied us with water from the river, and an apology for a bath-tub was placed in each for our use. A line of guards were stationed around the outside of the prison, with orders to shoot any who approached the windows from the inside. It was not an uncommon occurrence for them to send up a bullet to us when one ventured near to get a breath of fresh air.

It is generally known that Brigadier General Winder was Commissary General of Prisons, and we were under him, but the immediate command of the prison devolved upon Major Turner, one of Winder's pets. Dick Turner, a cousin of the major's, had the control of the inside of the prison, kept the records, counted us, issued orders governing us, acted as sutler, and robbed the officers generally, so far as he could do it, under any pretense whatever. I think he was one of the smoothest and most polished villains I have ever known. Several times I sent out money by him to purchase articles, and he usually kept any change that might be due, without even saying it was to pay charges.

Our rations while in "Libby" consisted of corn bread, beans, or cow pease, or, in lieu thereof, rice and bacon. The bread was made of unsifted meal mixed with water, without salt, and baked in cards of twelve loaves; each loaf being two and a half inches square by two inches thick, a single loaf constituting a ration. The beans were small, red or black, a little larger than a pea, with

a tough skin, a strong bitter taste, emitting a flavor very much like an old blue dye-tub. It was almost impossible for one to eat them *at first*, but hunger soon brought us to it. Those we got while in "Libby" were generally filled with black bugs which had eaten out the inside and then died. It was not an uncommon thing to see the pail of soup they brought up to us with the top spotted over with their cooked carcasses. When we got bacon, it was strong, rancid, and maggoty, and we received about two ounces per day. We had been there about a week before we received any meat, and when they brought in this, we were so rejoiced to get it that we gave it a hearty welcome.

We were put upon half rations as soon as we arrived, and before we left were reduced to quarter rations. Dr. Ferguson, of the 8th New York Cavalry, who was with us a short time, gave it as his opinion, that "the quantity of food we received there was not sufficient to keep one in good health." We were very hungry all the time, and often, when the bread came in on the wheelbarrow, did we crowd around it to snatch the crumbs that might chance to fall from it. What we did get was usually eaten at once, and then we went without till the next day. Before we left, some officers came in who were fortunate enough to have saved some of their money, and enlisting the services of the negroes who came in to sweep and mop the floors, managed to get something "extra" to eat. They allowed us papers, provided we would pay for them in advance; yet they had taken all our money from us, and there was little prospect of our getting it back, but we managed to get a paper somehow every day.

During the first week of our stay in "Libby," we were much elated at the prospect of Sheridan with his cavalry coming into the city and taking us out. Thursday morning, May 12th, we got the "*Examiner*," and from its editorial news column we learned that Sheridan was indeed near the city, with a good prospect of capturing it. The authorities were very much alarmed, for the governor issued at daylight the following address:

"To the citizens of the state and people of Richmond:

"The enemy are undoubtedly approaching the city, and may be expected at any hour, with a view to its capture, its pillage, and its destruction. The strongest considerations of self and duty to the country *call every man to arms*—a duty which none can refuse without dishonor. All persons, therefore, able to wield a musket will immediately assemble upon the public square, where a regiment will be found in arms, and around which all can rally, and where the required direction will be given for arming and equipping those who respond to the call.

"The governor confidently relies that this appeal will not be made in vain.

"WM. SMITH, Governor of Virginia."

Upon this the "*Examiner*" remarked editorially as follows, viz.:

"Nor was the appeal in vain. In a short time the entire arms-bearing population of Richmond turned out, and repaired to the capitol square, where they awaited information from the enemy before they should march to the field. In a few hours came the following dispatch from General Stuart, at Ashland:

“Headquarters, Ashland, May 11th, 1864, 6 30 A.M.

“To General Bragg:

“GENERAL,—The enemy reached this point just before us, but were promptly whipped out, after a sharp fight, by Fitz Lee’s advance, killing and capturing quite a number. General Gordon is in the rear of the enemy. I intersect the road the enemy is marching on at Yellow Tavern, the head of the turnpike, six miles from Richmond. My men and horses are tired, hungry, and jaded, but *all right*.  
J. E. B. STUART.’

“Sheridan within six miles of Richmond, and pressing on!!”

When we read that, and saw the commotion in the streets—troops marching each way; a citizen guard put around the prison; officials of the prison looking sour and cross—we rejoiced over the prospect. “Will he come?” “Will he succeed in capturing the *hated* city?” passed from lip to lip, and, with intense anxiety, we waited for farther developments; at the same time we could hear the booming of Butler’s guns—all of which served to keep us excited, and to while away the lonely hours of prison life. So great was our anxiety concerning the situation we could scarcely sleep, and when we got a morning paper, nothing was done till it was read aloud to *all*. There was about the prison a force of about twenty negroes, the most of whom had been free in the North; had entered the service as waiters for officers, and had been captured, and were kept to do the dirty work of the prison. These were always our friends, and kept us posted as to the situation, so far as they were able. Sometimes the rumors they brought us were of

the wildest kind, but in the main they were more or less correct. The next day after this stir in the city they were more excited by the news of a raid upon the Danville Railroad by General Kautz and Colonel Spear. The “*Examiner*” thus whistled to keep its courage up:

“The situation is unchanged. The said situation is that precise state of things which has been predicted in this journal repeatedly during the last four months. The enemy is making a most determined effort to capture Richmond, and is employing extraordinary means to accomplish that purpose. They have collected several armies of the largest size known in modern times, and set them in motion from different points to attack this city, with peremptory injunctions to the generals that they do not return unless the main order is accomplished. To do this, every other enterprise has been abandoned. Since the commencement of the year, troops have been in motion toward Virginia from every corner of the United States. \* \* \*

“If Richmond stands the storm, the whole military power of the United States is beaten, and the war is virtually ended. Perhaps the Confederate government has not been alive to the extent and reality of the grand fact; but nothing has been lost, and all will turn out well if it is never infected with the spirit of panic which seized upon the Southern Congress and Southern Executive when the true nature of the similar, though less dangerous crisis of 1862 became slowly palpable. Richmond is in no real danger so long as the authorities keep their heads and hold their hearts firm.

“In 1862, Congress adjourned at the first appearance of danger. Their last sessions were secret, and a bad ru-

mor grew out of them, that they had been discussing a law to change the seat of government. Then commenced the irresolution of the executive. Congress adjourned on the 21st of April. On the 27th arrived the news of the fall of New Orleans; on May 5th Yorktown was evacuated; on the 11th Norfolk was deserted, and then the Merrimac was blown up. What followed is well remembered. The departments were all moved; the families of members of the government, with all their household goods, followed; and the train was kept in readiness for the government itself. Had it gone, the Southern Confederacy would now be not only *non extant*, but *forgotten*. \* \* \*

"It is hoped that the recollection of these things will prevent the recurrence of some incidents in the history of these times. The Confederate authorities were inexperienced then, they are not so now. They know now where lies the true road to safety. They have vast forces at their command. The enemy, powerful indeed, has been firmly held at bay for a week, and can be kept back at bay for weeks more by the magnificent troops and splendid officers in the front. Time, fixed resolution, and energetic action by the central authorities, are all that the occasion requires to render Virginia the grave of those armies which now menace her capital. \* \* \*

"The aim of the enemy in the neighborhood of Richmond is evidently to cut the railroads; but, even if they succeed, the effect will be temporary and trivial. Cavalry can not stay, and roads can be repaired."

The first intelligence from the "Army of Northern Virginia" was received in an "extra" from the office of the "*Enquirer*," headed as follows, in leaded capitals:

"Latest from General Lee's Army!!!

"Our Troops Victorious!!!

"Great Slaughter of the Enemy!!!

"Saturday, May 14th, 2 P.M., }  
Guinea's Station, May 12th. }

"Very little of interest transpired yesterday. Heavy skirmishing occurred at intervals during the whole of last night. This morning at daylight, the enemy, having massed heavy forces in front of Johnson's division, made a most vigorous assault upon Jones's brigade. For a while our line of battle was broken, and the enemy pressed over our breast-works, gaining possession of several pieces of artillery, and capturing a number of prisoners.\*

"Forces were quickly sent to the relief of those thus engaged, and the enemy was driven back. \*

"About 10 o'clock this morning, the enemy made most vigorous and repeated assaults upon Field's division, but were driven back with great slaughter. At 2 P.M. the enemy are making a most desperate fight in Ewell's front, but all accounts agree that we are driving them back and punishing them with great slaughter. The musketry firing to-day was the heaviest of the war.

"The battle has extended along the whole line to-day, and has been fought by the Yankees with more *vim* and *bravery* than any other fought on Virginia soil. We captured 2000 of the enemy's wounded, left by them at the Wilderness. Yankee papers of the 7th instant contain letters written from Grant's head-quarters acknowledging a loss of 20,000 men in the Wilderness fight. Yankee

\* Their account of the capture of Johnson's division by the 6th and 9th Corps.

prisoners say General Grant is putting fresh troops in the fight to-day. At 2 o'clock severe and continuous fighting has occurred all along our lines, but had every where been repulsed, and, *in some cases, we have driven the enemy before us.* \* \* \*

"Our men are buoyant and resolute, and we have achieved grand results, but the enemy are still pressing the battle with desperation. Our loss to-day is not heavy, as we have been fighting mostly behind breast-works. The enemy are fighting in the open field, and their loss must be *terrible*. Hill's whole corps has been engaged all day recovering, in some instances, the ground lost by other troops; and Mahone's and Law's brigade, about 2 o'clock, made a most gallant charge, capturing about 300 prisoners, and a number of stand of colors.

"Second Dispatch!

"Battle-field, Spottsylvania Court-house, }  
May 13th, via Guinea's Station, May 14th. }

"The battle yesterday lasted all day and late into last night. Our men, after a temporary repose in front of Johnson's division, successfully resisted every onset of the enemy, who repeatedly assaulted our lines with troops massed in, as some say, as many as ten columns deep. Our boys stood nobly to their work, piling the enemy's dead thickly before our breast-works. The lowest estimate of the enemy's loss in the battle of yesterday is 20,000. These figures are corroborated by a Yankee colonel wounded and in our hands. Our losses are estimated at 2000. There was continuous fighting for ten hours on one point yesterday, and so severe was the musketry fire that trees were cut down by it. Prisoners say

that General Grant expressed a determination not to recross the river while he has a man left.

"Our troops fought yesterday with more than usual bravery and gallantry, and the enemy fought more stubbornly than ever. Our men are as resolute as ever, while accounts from the Yankee side show that their troops are growing dispirited."

The following article I copy from the "*Examiner*" of May 16th, to show their appreciation of General Grant's tactics, and their manner of figuring up our losses. In speaking of the battle of the 12th instant, it says:

"Grant had received a full corps of fresh troops, kept back up to that moment to defend the trenches of Washington, and risked, with the recklessness of a true gambler, on the cast of a die. He attempted no manœuvre, he relied on main strength, bringing up his ten lines at a run, each one close behind another, and dashed them, like the waves of the sea against the rocks, on the breast-works of the South.

"By these tactics, either a perfect victory is won or an attacking army is lost. The first rush was successful on one point. The enemy broke through the blaze of the living volcano upon Johnson's men, leaped the works, took 2000 men and 10 guns. But reserves were ready, and a charge of greater fury than their own drove them out in brief time. On all other parts of the line they were entirely unsuccessful; they were *utterly repulsed!* with scarcely any loss to the Confederates, who fired with the advantages of rest, aim, and cover, but with a slaughter of the foe which is represented by universal testimony to have been the most terrible of modern warfare.

"In these two battles the Army of Northern Virginia has enjoyed the advantage of firing into the enemy with grape and rifle-balls from lines of substantial breast-works; and, if one may judge from the high spirits and unbounded confidence of the wounded who have come to this city from the battle, it has been highly gratified by the new position. 'We just mowed them every time.' Such is the only account they give of the struggle.

"The Confederate loss, killed, wounded, and missing, in all these battles, beginning with the Wilderness, and including that of last Thursday at Spottsylvania Courthouse, was under 15,000. The *Washington Chronicle*, the organ of Lincoln, that sees all these things in the rose's color, announces the depletion of Grant's army, by the battle of the Wilderness and 'other causes,' to have been on Tuesday evening ascertained at 35,000. To this awful figure must now be added the two days of unsuccessful assault on the breast-works of Spottsylvania—assault without manœuvre, full in front, with deep columns, each forcing the other on the muzzle of the guns, wherein the carnage and the loss *must*, in the necessity of things, have been many times greater than in the open battles of the Wilderness and succeeding days. Putting the two data together, it is impossible to doubt the deduction that Grant's depletion by killing, wounding, and 'other causes'—that is to say, by straggling, desertion, etc., has surpassed 70,000. \* \* \*

"Nevertheless, we have no idea that Lee and Grant have yet settled their accounts in full. Grant will get up the last rakings of the Northern army, and try again. He is said to have made every body about him understand that he will not recross the river while he has a living man under his orders.

"There are butchers of humanity, to whom the sight of their fellow-creatures' blood affords an intoxicating pleasure. They are indifferent whose blood it is, so it does not come from their veins. And Grant is one of those charming individuals. His government and his generals will not balk him in the present instance. A large part of the army now in his hands is composed of the regiments enlisted for three years, and their time expires in this coming summer. They have resisted every inducement to re-enlist, and have formally notified the Secretary of War that they will obey orders so long as they are legally given, *but no longer*. The government is entirely willing that Grant should save it the trouble and mortification of giving the discharge to these veterans. He *will* use them, and he is using them."

Such was the *news*, the kind of lying trash we had to read from one of the leading journals of the capital of the Southern Confederacy.

Begging pardon of my readers for copying so much, I wish to show them one more article from this same paper, and, read in the light of the developments from the time it was written to the present, May, 1865, it proves just what it says: *They hate the Northern people*. It is entitled "*The Price of Liberty*."

"The Yankee warfare is becoming desperate. The press reports from North Georgia declare that, in their advance through the country, they levy contributions as they march, and burn all the mills, factories, and *residences*. One can imagine the devastation. What stealing of spoons and forks; what chopping of pianos; what burning of libraries, appropriating of pictures and wearing apparel; women taking shelter, cowering and shivering.

ering in the woods, with their homeless little ones, and looking out from their covert upon the blazing roof-trees of their own houses.

“Such is the great feature of this campaign *every where*. On the Peninsula also, and on either bank of the York and James Rivers, destruction of private property and outrages upon peaceful citizens have been reduced to a more perfect system than ever before; and the constant employment of negroes in these operations of war has given them an additional character of brutal ferocity which is grateful to the Yankee soul in its present mood. Seeing that they can not subjugate the South, they mean to make it a desert, and a wilderness of ruins and ashes. They are happy in the thought that they can revenge the slaughter of their troops in open battle by torturing the unarmed and helpless people along their line of march. If they can not trust their negro brigands to *fight*, they can at least trust them to burn, murder, crucify, and ravish. This we call desperation. It must be they have given up all hope of conquering these Confederate States, and that, feeling the effort is a failure, their malignant hearts can devise nothing better than to hurt and harm us to the utmost extent in their power, and make our independence cost us dear. And the cost is the very bitterest we could be called on to pay—the agonies and terrors of our unprotected people. If it be any pleasure or glory to them, we may freely avow that we have been deeply hurt in our affections and in our pride, on the continually recurring tale of our noble and devoted people, subjected to the brutal atrocities of that offscouring of creation which makes up the Yankee armies. It is sad enough to have our people burned out and pillaged, our

women bullied and insulted, but it is doubly humiliating to suffer such evils at the hands of a people we have *always* despised. It does, indeed, cost us heavily to rid ourselves of all connection with the Yankee nation; but then this riddance is worth the cost, and perhaps we should never have set the right value upon the independence we fight for, if it had not cost us so dear. We might never have been so fully and deeply conscious of the great necessity that was upon us, for our honor and our children's well being, to cut off that abandoned nation from our society, if it had not been permitted to develop and display, at so many points, and for so long a time, all the dark depths of its hateful character—all its dastard cruelty, and mean thievery, and unparalleled fertility of falsehood.

“Now we know fully from what a rotten carcass we have cut ourselves loose; and, to escape its pollution, no price is too great.

“Rather than submit to that foul embrace again, we would bid higher, and still higher, until nothing was left to the few survivors of us but bare life.

“In this sense, we may almost be said to be under some sort of obligation to the Yankee nation. It has more than justified our secession, and has left in the regions of our country which have once fallen within its military lines certain bitter and burning memories, which, in ages to come, will cause mothers to teach their little children to thank God in their nightly prayers for the rescue of their native land out of the clutches of an evil generation. The many unmistakable symptoms of desperation visible in this year's campaign; the employment of Grant himself with absolute dictatorial powers, because he was known to be the man who would either

effect his purpose or throw away his army, the insane drunkenness with which he drowned the senses of his troops before he hurled them against the muzzles of Confederate cannon, the reckless and unsparing ferocity with which quiet country places are devastated, and covered with smoking ruins, and soaked with the blood of unresisting people; all these things *ought* to encourage us. They consist well with what the enemy's public press has plainly avowed, that if the grand combined movement of '64 should fail, then *all* was lost; that armies could no longer be raised to continue the invasion, that anarchy and financial ruin would break up their whole social system, and that the United States would be no more a nation!

"And that campaign, may we not already say, HAS failed; its force is expended and broken. Of its four grand armies, one in the Trans-Mississippi is no longer an army; another at Bermuda Hundreds has no care save to protect itself from destruction; in front, by intrenchments; in rear, by a fleet. The two other armies, and the two greatest, have advanced indeed, with tremendous waste of men and material, to the points at which Lee and Johnston, at the head of fresh and eager troops, say to them, 'No farther hitherto shalt thou go!'

"All the *elan*, all the drunken vigor of the opening campaign is gone; the pluck is taken out of it, and the invincible Yankee hosts, or what is left of them, can do no better than to turn upon the already plundered population in their rear, rob a few houses, ravish a few women, crucify a few '*secesh*' planters, and go home. \* \* \*

"On the whole, we can afford to make the rogues welcome to all the profits they have got out of their in-

vasion, especially as with the last day of the campaign, our cost ends and theirs begins. Nations, having no future state, always expiate their crimes in this world, and no nation ever run up such an account of crime, or so richly deserved a hell upon earth. 'There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

In keeping with the above is the following, clipped from the same paper of March, 1864:

"GOODIES FOR THE GHOULS.

"The last 'flag-of-truce boat' brought up several tons of precious freight for the prisoners confined at 'Libby' and Americus, Ga.

"Boxes of fine raiment for the scabs and riff-raff of Germany and the North; hampers of cured meats and delicacies for the blue-bellied and gold-braided officers who commanded the '*scabs*.' The Confederate government is the consignee, and the United States government the consignor. Happy commercial relation! At the time these boxes were being gingerly handled by the official stevedores at City Point, unclean hands were plundering the boxes sent to our poor prisoners at Point Lookout and other places. At the same time a portion of the vandal horde were rearing and pitching over the unprotected portions of the Confederacy, burning mills, houses, barns, destroying property, stealing horses, and insulting God and man by their high-handed deviltry and outlandish vandalism.\* Truly we are a Christian people, and our rulers the most exemplary of all the earth."

About 10 o'clock this forenoon we had a large re-

\* Kilpatrick's raid.



enforcement to our number. Hearing an unusual noise in the street, while one watched for the guard, another determined to look out of the window and learn its cause. Soon he reported that a long row of officers and men had just come in. The officers were soon sent up to us, numbering twenty-one, among them a brigadier general. We were all driven into the middle and east rooms, and the doors connected with the west rooms nailed up, and the enlisted men were confined there. From these officers we learned that Grant had not been whipped as badly as the Rebel papers represented, but was still on the move toward Richmond.

The armies seemed to be in good spirits, and confident of final success. Even the prisoners were jubilant, for soon after being put into "Libby" they began to sing "Rally round the flag" and other patriotic pieces. From these officers also we obtained two Northern papers, the "*Baltimore American*," of the 14th inst., and the "*Springfield Republican*." We read and reread them with interest, till there was nothing left of them. Upon the arrival of these "boarders," it was found necessary to divide ourselves into *messes*, which we did at once. I was appointed commissary of the prison inside, and my duties consisted in bringing up stairs the corn bread, beans, rice, and whatever we had to eat, and then dividing it, giving each his portion. When these twenty-one came in, they did not issue them any thing to eat till the next day. We divided our little all with them, and went without supper and breakfast till we drew again. And this was common; for often prisoners would be brought in after having been marched twenty-five or thirty miles without any thing to eat, and then kept twenty-four hours more without receiving rations.

About this time the Rebel commissary informed me that we could draw our rations raw if we chose, and cook them on the stoves in the kitchen below. We concluded to try the rice and beans raw, and let them bake the bread. I experimented all one day in trying to cook a mess of the beans, and make them fit to eat. I first looked them over very carefully, throwing out the "buggy" ones, which took over one half. I then washed them three times, boiled them, pouring off the water as many more times, and yet, when done, they were about as bad as ever. The water, or soup, was thick, strong, and almost black; very unpleasant to smell, much more so to eat. I concluded to give up the beans till I was starved more than I yet had been. Daily we found our strength failing, for we were hungry, *hungry*, HUNGRY all the while. We had no lights in the prison, and, consequently, we retired soon after dark, and often you would hear one in the morning tell of his dream of home and plenty, which, alas! *was all a dream*.

About a week after this, in the kindness of their hearts, they brought up to us some old lousy pieces of blankets, rusty tin plates, and a few old knives and forks, or pieces of them, articles left by the other officers. We were glad to get even these, for we had been eating with our fingers, and bits of sticks, or any thing we could find, and sleeping on the bare floor. A few days before we left, they gave us a little bacon in lieu of the beans. So rejoiced were we to get it, we paid our respects to it by giving it hearty cheers, maggoty and rancid though it was. Dick Turner promised us the use of our money nearly every day, but not a dollar of it could we get. It seems that they cared little for our comfort or convenience, and tried to fret and annoy us in all the ways they possibly could.

## CHAPTER III.

## FROM RICHMOND TO MACON.

ON the morning of the 31st of May we were aroused at 5 o'clock by the sergeant, and ordered to get ready to go South at once. We had barely time to roll up our blankets when the drum sounded, and we were ordered to fall in and march down stairs in single file. As we passed out of the front door of the middle room we each received half a loaf of corn bread, and a slice of bacon one fourth of an inch thick and one and one half inches square, for a day's ration.

I had been an inmate of "Libby" but three weeks; yet when my feet struck the pavement I nearly fell, and many of those who had been confined there six or eight months could scarcely stand when they first reached the ground.

On both sides of the street was formed the guard, standing about five paces apart, who were to go with us to Danville. There were at this time but sixty-two officers in Libby, and one of these, who was too sick to accompany us, was left behind and sent to the hospital.

While waiting for orders to march, they brought up in the rear of our column 700 enlisted men, who were to go on the same train with us. They marched us over the James River to Manchester, and halted us alongside of the Danville Railroad, made up a train of box-cars and loaded us in, putting forty enlisted men in a car; but to

the officers they were a little more generous, giving us two cars. They were very filthy, and had no seats or any thing for us to sit on, yet we got along very comfortably. Before we left we could hear the dull, heavy thunder of Grant's guns, and knew he was not far from the city; and we interpreted the move as one to place us in a safer prison. We had not been in Libby forty-eight hours before they began to talk "*exchange*" to us; and when we spoke of sending for boxes, they told us we would not be prisoners long enough to receive them.

When we found we were to go South our hearts sunk within us, for it seemed to us that we were going beyond the reach of "*exchange*"; but there was no help for it, and here we were on our way. We had an opportunity to see some of the enlisted men who had spent the winter on Belle Isle. They looked as though they had had a hard time to live, for they were pale and sickly looking, and very many of them, from long suffering with the chronic diarrhoea, were so weak that they could scarcely walk.

The weather was intensely hot, and the guards would allow but one of the car doors open at a time; so these poor, and many of them sick men, had to ride for twelve hours, suffering for the pure air of heaven; but this was only the beginning of sorrows.

When we parted from our Libby Prison officials, they promised that our money, boxes, and letters should all be sent through to us with as little delay as possible. How well they kept their word the sequel will show.

We left Manchester at 7 30 A.M., the 31st of June, just as the battle of Cold Harbor was opening. We soon found that traveling on a Rebel railroad was very differ-