

## SOME EPISODES OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR.

THE "late unpleasantness," styled by way of eminence, "the War," was in some respects a blessing, though in a horrible guise. It afforded subjects for historians, poets, biographers, essayists, and will, doubtless, do so for a century to come. It broke up for a while a most unromantic prosperity. Peoples, like some rare spices of the east, do not give out their fullest fragrance until the heart is broken. The world has to thank tyranny, persecution, and strife, for some of the most brilliant pages of the historian, and the finest effusions of the orator and the poet.

"The War," then, being a subject of perennial interest, we will give some events hitherto unpublished, described to us at the time of their occurrence by one who took part in them. Others still living kindly supplied notes; and the writer visited the points mentioned, to secure the accuracy of detail so essential in writing of this kind.

### I.

In 1860, Bishop Vérot secured a colony of Sisters of Mercy from Providence, Rhode Island, for his episcopal city, St. Augustine, Florida; the Mother Superior, Sister M. Liguori Major, a convert, was accompanied by three Sisters, soon re-inforced by two more, whom Mother Warde, hearing that their labours were ever on the increase, kindly sent to their aid. They were cordially welcomed to the ancient city, and were well pleased with the people of that land of *marana* (to-morrow) where it always seems to be evening. Their soft speech and gentle apathy of manner contrasted with the sharp tones and stirring ways of New England. The first convent was a house on St. George's Street, opposite the old cathedral. In Autumn, 1860, the foundations of a new convent were laid. The material used in its construction was coquina. It was built in the old Spanish style. On the lower floor were five rooms, and a large hall designed for a chapel. Another hall in the shape of an L projected from the rear, to which it was joined by an immense arch supported by three square

pillars. The parlours and domestic offices were on the ground floor; on the second floor were class rooms, dormitories, and community room. The official known in conventual parlance as *Vigilatrix* had quarters in a cell at the head of the stairs. Everything was well adapted to the duties of the Sisterhood. The schools were full. Children from the interior came to be prepared for the Sacraments. To the colored population special attention was given. Bishop Vérot, who was devoted to the blacks, appreciated the zeal of the Sisters in instructing them. The children learned to sing with spirit the hymns taught them: their favorite, rendered with great vigour and staccato movement, was:

“ I am a little Catholic,  
And Christian is my name,  
And I believe in the holy church,  
In every age the same.”

## II.

Little occurred to break the soothing monotony of Convent life in the old Spanish city. Once indeed the whole community was aroused in the witching hour by the cry: “Robbers! O good Mother, the house is full of robbers!” There was a general alarm. The corridors were soon alive with terrified creatures, in various stages of *deshabillé*. Two of the bravest, armed with poker and tongs, descended to search for the intruders. The rest remained on the staircase as guards. Nothing had been disturbed in the store-room. In the refectory they found a window open, and a basket of clothes half way through it. The children’s forks, spoons, and goblets had disappeared. Next morning to her great surprise the refectorian found the same window open, and under it on the floor a knife marked *Sanchez*.

This was shown to the Bishop, who took it to Mr. Sanchez, a neighbour. He said: “The knife is mine. A slave borrowed it of me yesterday.” This led to the arrest of the thief, a great, burly negro, who, when brought into court, acknowledged the theft. While at the Convent the day before with splinters, he saw the laundress take the clothes off the line, and watched where she put them. At 11 p.m., he carefully reconnoitred the Convent premises, opened the shutter with the knife, raised the sash, and entered. He lit his pitch-pine torch, took the basket to the yard, filled his

pockets with the silver, and was taking out another bundle when he slipped and fell back, knocking over a stool and quenching his light. This was the noise that disturbed the light slumbers of the Sisters. Not knowing the way out in the dark, he was actually in the room when they entered, and "dodged" behind a pillar, or hid in the shadows. "The ladies were frightened," said he, "so I wouldn't come out, for I didn't want to hurt them."

When they left, he groped his way to the open window, and stole off. But his trouble did not end here. Though he returned his booty, he was summoned to court, and his master had to pay the costs of his trial. To the great sorrow and annoyance of the Sisters, he was taken to the whipping post, and lashed to the full extent of the law. At the next recreation each related her experience of that eventful night. But that a poor slave should be flogged on their account was most painful to their feelings.

### III.

Nothing occurred to mar the prosperity of the new establishment. The schools flourished beyond the expectations of the most sanguine. But the days of peace were numbered. The war going on between the North and South was coming nearer. In August, 1861, the community had removed with high hopes to the new convent. The opening school-year saw their pupils more than doubled in number. But in May, 1862, it was necessary to dismiss the day scholars and send the resident students to their homes. The children continued to come on Sundays for instruction, and the blacks were cared for as in the beginning. But in the excitement and uncertainty as to the fate of the city little could be done.

One Sunday in June, while the Sisters were at High Mass, and the priest, Father Aulance, was preaching, a gentleman came hurriedly into the church, and whispered something to a confederate officer who at once went out. Gradually a panic ensued. The commotion became general when some one whispered: "The Yankees are landing!" The children screamed wildly and clung to the Sisters. The Federals had really come, and were landing on the island opposite the old Fort.

The Confederate soldiers marched out of the city, and a flag of truce was unfurled. Next day the Northern soldiers, or, as they are universally called, "the Yanks," thronged the streets.

The schools were now permanently closed. The warriors were in excellent health. As many people as could get away had abandoned St. Augustine, and no work remained for the Sisters. This state of things of course could not last. But it alarmed the Bishop. No one knew anything for certain. The most sensational reports were on every lip. All feared the worst. Neither party could guess what was likely to happen to-morrow. It was said, but causelessly, that the Sisters' lives were in danger. Their Convent might be blown up any moment. The summer wore on tediously. Nothing occurred to allay their apprehensions. August 6, they went into retreat, and remained "in the desert" till August 15. Full of hope for better days, they wished to struggle on, but the Bishop had made up his mind that their lives depended on their seeking another home.

#### IV.

In July, 1861, Bishop Vérot was translated to Savannah, retaining the administration of the Vicariate of Florida. Two years previously Dr. Barry, Bishop of Savannah, a native of Wexford, died the death of a saint. Two Bishops, Dr. Barron, brother to Sir Henry Winston Barron, a Catholic celebrity of Waterford; and Dr. Gartlan, of Dublin, had died in Savannah, martyrs of charity, during yellow fever epidemics. Bishop Vérot now succeeded men who had shown themselves pre-eminently good shepherds, and in devoting themselves to the plague-stricken had literally laid down their lives for their flock.

The calamities of the South are matters of history. One small town in Georgia in its obscurity and distance from probable war centres seemed to offer the Sisters a safe refuge--Columbus, where their convent had been eagerly desired for years. The Bishop decided, and the Sisters reluctantly agreed, that they should leave the Catholic city of St. Augustine, where they had

"Loved to pray where saints have prayed,  
And kneel where they have knelt."

Ever hopeful of a place they tenderly loved, they felt that the troubles of St. Augustine would be but temporary. The event proved the correctness of their judgment. But the Bishop wanted to preserve them in his new diocese as a good seed. He thought his charge over Florida at an end, and wished the Sisters to be where he was. Yet he died Bishop of St. Augustine, and Savannah passed to another prelate.

On August 17, the Sisters left the beautiful old Spanish city, and set out on a journey which they never forgot. There were no railroads, and stages were not allowed to leave or enter the city. As all the horses had been seized by the soldiers, mules were brought into requisition. To the Bishop a young mare just broken to the harness was given, and the antics of that sportive animal afforded much amusement along the route. Harnessed to her was the body of an old waggon, the Bishop's conveyance. On account of the ill-health of one of the number some Sisters were placed in an old tent-waggon, covered with a dilapidated carpet, to keep out the rain. The two other vehicles which made up the procession were sand carts, popularly called dump carts, propelled by mules, harnessed with ropes. The cortège ranged thus: the waggon with the frisky mare contained the Bishop, two trunks, a box of provisions, and Cooper, a white lad of 15, for driver. The tent-waggon had Rev. Father Dufau for driver, three Sisters, and a trunk of provisions. The two dump-carts had each two Sisters, one trunk on which they sat, and a white boy of 14, to drive.

Early on the 17th August, 1862, Mass, Holy Communion, and Benediction were offered in the Convent chapel for the success of the journey. After breakfast, the procession started. As the rain fell in torrents, some proposed to defer the journey, but the Bishop said: "Our pass-ports are signed for to-day, and, rain or shine, we must go." The priest got an extension of time from the Commander of the United States troops stationed at St. Augustine for himself and party. At eight the contingent moved on, the Bishop leading the way. As Father Aulance, the convent chaplain, gave his parting blessing and bade the Sisters good-bye, he said: "God bless you, my children—you will have many crosses now"—a prophecy amply verified.

## V.

Before the procession, which passed through the gates of the old city, had gone a mile, the travellers were completely drenched. On reaching the Federal outposts the Bishop had to show his pass-ports. The officer whose duty it was to inspect them, being engaged, there was a long delay. The Bishop told the boy-driver, Lopez, to go on, as he professed to know the way. The other cart and its occupants remained with the Bishop—a more sagacious measure. When Lopez had gone some furlongs into the Twelve-Mile Swamp, he discovered he had taken the wrong road. The water covered the trunks of the wheels. In trying to turn, he broke the rope harness. The Sisters were obliged to get out and wade through water two feet high, holding on to the branches, and stepping from one palmetto root to another, praying meanwhile to St. Patrick to save them from snakes. As briskly as possible they retraced their steps, and were soon cheered by the Bishop's voice, calling to them through the forest, for he thought they were lost. They had no umbrellas, their shoes were filled with water, and their clothing saturated with swamp water, so heavy that they could hardly walk. When the harness was mended, the journey was resumed. Renovated by the brief rest, all made a burst of speed through the swampy path, but the mare got tired. Every few moments she would stop, and no coaxing, urging, or even whipping was of avail to make her push forward. The Bishop tied a rope about her neck and fastened the other end to the dump cart, and in this way pulled her on for a while.

Apart from the depressing rain, the country looked dreary and desolate. Small, unpainted huts here and there, all deserted; a narrow winding path amid stunted trees in the "everglade," a field of stubble, a lean bullock or two, an old cart tilted down—everything dark, dismal, dreary. But the scene changed when these commonplace objects were tipped by the glowing rays of the sun, and the soft delicious air grew fragrant with the breath of wild flowers.

When the procession had been on the road some four hours, a stentorian voice in the rear shouted, "Halt!" The travellers looked at each other, completely bewildered. The summons was repeated in a shout that reverberated through the forest. "What

is that?" they asked. A third tremendous roar was heard, with the added threat: "We will fire into you!" In a few moments they were hemmed in by United States cavalry, every man having his bayonet pointed towards them. That they were terribly frightened goes without saying, nor did the sequel re-assure them. The captain told the Bishop the report had reached head-quarters that he was taking to Georgia slaves dressed as Sisters of Mercy! Hence the rapid pursuit. The soldiers dismounted, looked into the faces of the Sisters, and examined their hands. The Rev. Mother was rather dark. So was a charming Cuban lady who had recently joined the Sisterhood. But even excited Northern men could see that the rich brown of their complexions was not due to any admixture of negro blood, and their hands, especially the nails, proved them to be of the Caucasian race. The examiners were soon satisfied on that point. The other Sisters were extremely fair,

But might not blacks be hidden in their boxes? The commander requested them to rise. The poor trunks were pulled in every direction, and vigorously shaken, but nothing counterband, dead or alive, was discovered. The officer said it was unsafe for the party to proceed, as the woods were full of *guerillas*. These "skulking fellows," he further informed them, were Southern men, harrassing the Federal army. "We are now," said he, "going to meet these rebels, and have a skirmish." The Bishop politely thanked the officer, but heeded not the warning.

## VI.

At three o'clock the clouds began to break, and everything looked prettier in the sunny afternoon than in the bleak morning. The sun gilded the primeval forest, and its heat speedily dried the dripping garments of the travellers. The waggons were stopped and provisions unpacked. A wholesome dinner of bread and cold meat was very acceptable after their long fast. Scarcely had they finished their alfresco repast, when the officer came "thundering" back, the ground trembling under his horse's hoofs. Again he assured the Bishop it was not safe to proceed, but, alas! neither was it safe to return. On hearing this, a young lady who had lately joined the Sisters began to cry. The Bishop bade her be of

good cheer, for God always protects religious families. But his kind words failed to soothe her; she continued uneasy during the whole journey. He asked if the others were afraid; they declared they were not. The officer repeated his warning, but the Bishop was determined to proceed. The horseman turned his animal's head in the direction of St. Augustine, and started back followed by his aide-de-camp. A Sister was so glad to see them depart, that she said "The sound of receding horses' feet was a sort of music in her ears."

They resumed their journey, and had not gone far when they saw a miserable, emaciated creature come out of the woods, his clothes hanging about him in rags. He wore old shoes, but no stockings, and looked perfectly wretched. He said he was an invalid, the Yankees had chased him, he was weak from his long run, and anxious to get to his brother's house, a mile distant. The Bishop kindly took him up, and said he wondered why Captain Westcot did not come out and give these cavalry battle. The Sisters gave the refugee bread and meat, and did all they could to make him comfortable. In an hour he alighted, thanked the party, and set off in the direction of the woods. Later, they learned to their cost that he was a spy.

They stopped before an old house which had evidently been deserted in a hurry, as the furniture had not been removed. The Bishop decided to stay there for the night, which made his companions glad, for they were in a sorry plight. One room had a large fire-place; there were two sleeping apartments adjoining. The boys put the poor animals in a wretched shed used for stables, and gave them fodder they found in the loft. They then brought in pine and lit a fire. Refreshing tea was soon made, which the good Bishop enjoyed as much as any of the party. He talked and laughed over the events of the day, announced they had twenty miles further to go, and must start by day-break. After supper he helped to bring in wood to make a big fire, and everything in use was soon clean and dry. Conveniencies for the night were taken from the trunks.

In one room was a large bedstead with two mattresses. Boards placed on stools, a mattress spread over them, made a comfortable bed for the Bishop. The Sisters took turns keeping up the fire to dry the clothing, resting occasionally on the large bed. About midnight, the sleepers were aroused by a crash in the episcopal



chamber. The boards had given way, depositing his lordship on the floor, where he wisely remained the rest of the night. There was a slight titter at the mishap, in which the prelate joined. The boys slept in the fodder.

At day-break, the Bishop aroused the party with a hearty *Benedicamus Domino*. Little sleeping had been done, and all were glad to rise from their uneasy slumbers. The Bishop unpacked his portable altar. The Sisters procured fine altar linen from the recesses of their trunks. The deserted dwelling was transformed into a chapel, and Mass celebrated by the zealous prelate, to the great joy of all. They made coffee and partook of a frugal meal. When grace was said, the Bishop's first words were: "Did you hear me fall last night?" As no one answered, he said: "I know you did, for I heard you laughing." He described his sensation on his rough awakening. He thought a bombshell had exploded under the house, and was terribly frightened—to his own great amusement, for the old rookery that afforded them shelter was entirely out of the line of warfare.

## VII.

The boys and the animals having satisfied their hunger as well as their betters, seven o'clock found all again on the trail. The sun was up betimes and his rays scorching. All day the wanderers suffered intensely from the heat, especially about the head and shoulders. The jaded mare amused all with her pranks. She always stopped short when they particularly wished her to go on. The rains had filled the hollows, and in many places the wheels were covered. It was a desolate region. But the rich and varied colors of a semi-tropical sky and a rank foliage, gave it interest.

A shallow stream which the rain had thickened to a puddle had to be crossed. The mules and their freight got safely over. But the episcopal equipage stopped short in the middle, and nothing could prevail on the mare to proceed. Finding it useless to urge her, the Bishop asked Cooper to get out, and stand bent over in the water, so that he could put his foot on the youth's back and jump to the opposite bank, somewhat after the manner of the game called leap-frog. The Bishop was in his 59th year, and rather stout;

while poor Cooper though strong and wiry was lean as a ramrod. The episcopal foot had scarcely touched his back when there was a dull heavy sound, followed by a vigorous heavy splashing, and the elderly gentleman and the youth were floundering in the muddy bayou. The rest could not preserve their gravity. The Bishop was helped out, covered and almost blinded by the slush. That morning he had donned dry clothing, anxious to appear neat and tidy at the next stopping place. Yet he very good-naturedly joined in the peals of laughter his ludicrous appearance excited. As Cooper was barefooted, and had rolled his nether garments above the knee, his case was not so pitiful. The mare remained stuck in the mud, viciously "exulting apparently in the ruin she had made." Finally she was dragged out of the slush with a rope. The cortége then went forward. In the gathering twilight, short indeed in that latitude, the travellers soon caught glimpses of the blue, bright river, St. John. It was quite dark when they reached the ferry in which they crossed to Jacksonville. They dismissed their fleet of carts which had been as boats, and which the boys took back to St. Augustine. Their trunks were piled as a barricade in the middle of the boat. It was very dark, some stars, but no moon appeared. As she pushed off, they could see lights glimmering on the other side. Soon they were greeted with a volley of rifle balls. Huddling behind the trunks, they kept perfectly still. A second volley fell hissing into the water. They thanked God no one was hurt, but all were very much frightened. A boatman raised a lighted lantern on a pole to signify that friends were coming, and the firing ceased. At nine the weary travellers reached Jacksonville, where they tarried a night and a day, some pious Catholics giving them hospitality.

At Jacksonville, August 20, they took the train for Lake City, and began their northward progress on the only bit of rail-road left in Florida. When they had journeyed three hours, the train was stopped and boarded by Captain Westcot's *guerillas*, who swarmed on the platform and crowded the aisles of the compartment. They were wild-looking fellows in bandit costume, red shirts, black pantaloons, leathern belts with huge daggers and pistols stuck in them, and broad-brimmed straw hats. With them, we grieve to relate, was the wretched-looking man whom the Bishop had taken in his waggon, and with whom the Sisters had shared their scanty rations.

To the terror of all, Westcot, in a most arbitrary manner, ordered the Bishop to come out, and answer for some remarks he had made about himself and his troops. The conductor refused to let the Bishop from his custody until the captain had pledged his word that no harm should come to him. Turning to the Sisters, the gallant official (guard) said: "Do not fear; I will answer for the Bishop's life with my own." He then followed the Bishop to the platform, and confronted the irate officer. Loud words and angry threats followed. But the Sisters were re-assured when they saw the Bishop return, unmolested, about an hour afterwards. All this trouble came from the spy who had reported at head-quarters, the Bishop's remark: "Why does not Captain Westcot bring his men out and fight these Union soldiers?"

At Lake City they remained all night at the house of a Mr. Bigbu, who entertained them royally. At daybreak they took the stage and pushed on day and night, merely stopping for a meal wherever they could find one. Their dinner and supper consisted of sweet potatoes and buttermilk, but not enough of either. From 4 a.m. to 7 p.m. they stayed at the house of General Finnegan, an Irish gentleman, well known to the Bishop. The general put all he possessed at their disposal and showed to them a princely hospitality.

### VIII.

After supper they began their night's drive. A stage with two strong mules and an experienced negro driver, made up their equipage. At the next stopping place they were to take the train for Savannah. Their baggage was to follow on a dray. The prospect of reaching their final resting place before winter, cheered them, and they started in good spirits from General Finnegan's hospitable ranch. The whole party got inside the stage which could hold comfortably five or six. The sky was brilliant with stars, and the weather cool and pleasant. When tired of gazing on such beauties of nature as could be seen in the star-light, they gradually dozed off, an occasional jolt of the stage, or an unusually loud snare being the only noises that disturbed the wakeful. Soon all fell asleep. They awoke in a deep ditch. The driver had slumbered with the rest. The mules left to them-

selves stepped off the bridge, and a tremendous lurch awoke the sleepers, at what hour they knew not. The lanterns were crushed in the fall, the stage smashed, the harness ruined. The passengers, rubbing their bruises, crawled out of the shallow water as best they could. The Bishop, aided by the driver, pulled the mules and the remains of the stage out of the muddy brooklet.

Fortunately a large farm-house was near. Here they succeeded in borrowing an open waggon with three seats. Into this the whole party crowded, the Bishop sharing the driver's seat. Their drive for the rest of the night was anything but comfortable. In due time they reached the station, and were soon steaming off to Savannah which they reached about 8 p.m. To their dismay their baggage was nowhere to be found. They were kindly received at the Savannah Convent, but could not remove their travelling garb, as their wardrobe was in the missing trunks. The Mother asked all to join in a Novena to St. Joseph, promising to name the new Convent after him if he would get their trunks. Before the Novena ended, said trunks were landed on the corridor, and the prayers were continued in thanksgiving.

September 3rd, they left Savannah for Columbus, where they arrived on the morning of the 4th. They at once repaired to the church. The Bishop said Mass. They then went to the house of a widow, Mrs. Adams, which had been rented for them. October 1st, 1862, they opened St. Joseph's School, with a great crowd of pupils. The winter was exceedingly severe, and the Sisters coming from St. Augustine, where there is scarcely any winter, were ill prepared for its rigours. Scarcity of food and clothing were felt even in remote Columbus. It was very difficult to procure the common necessaries of life. They were limited for breakfast to one slice of corn-bread and two spoonfuls of homing (corn meal) tea made of dried blackberry leaves, or coffee of parched corn, without milk or sugar. A Catholic lady lent them a cow. They saved cream to make a little butter for their two delicate members.

Some poor beef, a little rice or a few sweet potatoes, formed the bill of fare for dinner; corn-meal, gruel and buttermilk for supper; bread they never tasted. Sleeping conveniences were painfully scanty. Two Sisters slept on a quilt. One day the Mother remarked to some visiting ladies that it was rather cold for the Sisters to sleep on the floor. One said she had a friend in the country who could give soom mattresses. In a few days two nice

looking ones arrived and were gratefully accepted. But the Sisters who used them, after a restless night were covered with vermin in the morning. The mattresses were burned and the Sisters took to the floor again. In spring, a friend gave them some dry-goods boxes which answered for beds till "the cruel war was over."

The shoes they brought from St. Augustine were fast wearing out, and none could be procured in Columbus. They were obliged to save one pair each for going to Mass, the church being a square mile distant. For house use, they made slippers of any stuff they could get, with thick paper soles. This kept them busy cobbling. A gentleman who received a box of shoes from the country kindly offered it to them. It contained unlined cowhide shoes, made by slaves. But they were a treasure. The Sisters took any size they could get; as none fitted, there was little choice. One who wore twos was glad to get into sevens. But the noise she made walking, flip-flap, was intolerable.

Later, a Catholic gentleman smuggled a ship load of shoes from Nassau, and brought them in by the river. The Sisters were able to get a few pairs. Their habits were cotton, dyed black. For Sundays they managed to keep the remains of their serge habits. At that date there were scarcely any books printed in the South, and none could be got from the North. The scarcity of school materials made the school work difficult and unsatisfactory. At times they suffered the want of all things. Often they went to bed feeling the pangs of hunger so intensely that they could not sleep.

Sherman's army had driven the Southerners further into Georgia, and about Spring, 1865, the commissary stores became more accessible. Flour and bacon were procured for the Convent by a confederate officer for confederate money. In March, rumours were rife that the army would soon be down on Columbus. Those who had jewellery or plate took care to secret them, or gave them to the Sisters for safe keeping. General Lee surrendered April 9. The war was virtually at an end. But as there were no means of communication between the States, the news came only when General Wilson had destroyed the little city.

General Wilson was actually marching towards Columbus by way of Alabama with a large force. The Chattahoochee River on which Columbus is built form the boundary between Georgia and Alabama, but Georgia claims the whole river. At Columbus

it was spanned by two bridges, one of which was fired and destroyed when it was known for certain that the Federals were coming. The few men left in the city took up their position on the remaining bridge, determined to dispute every inch of Georgia ground with the invaders—a brave but fruitless resolve. They were borne down by an overwhelming force and completely routed. On Holy Saturday, intense excitement prevailed. A cannon fired three times was the signal for attack. Easter Sunday, April 16, after a sleepless night, the remaining men and every boy large enough to handle a musket were marched to the bridge, and awaited the signal in suspense. About 1 p.m. the first cannon boomed. Ladies and children who lived near the bridge rushed to the Convent for safety. The second and third boom brought the dread news that the unequal fight had begun.

When the first charge was made, the Sisters and their terrified guests were on the piazza. The Convent was near the bridge, and the shrieks and shots of the combatants fairly chilled the hearts of its inmates. The battle lasted four hours, when the Confederates broke lines, and their antagonists rushed into the city by thousands shouting "Rebels! Rebels!" A Confederate soldier whom the Sisters nursed later in the hospital, told them that when his lines broke, he threw down his gun and ran into the street, shouting "Rebels!" as loudly as any Federal. Under the cover of night his gray uniform was unnoticed. He ran three miles into the country without stopping, and thus escaped. Many citizens were captured and marched off as prisoners of war, but released when the news came that the war was over.

As the Federals rushed through the streets shooting every man they met, the refugees at the Convent were filled with terror. The night was dark; the street lamps were not lit. The Convent grounds were surrounded by a high fence; every gate and door were locked for fear of attracting the enemy; there were no light in the house save the sanctuary lamp. The Sisters remained all night in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, disturbed by the shots and yells of the victors, and the groans of the vanquished. They besought the God of armies to put a speedy end to the sufferings of their poor people.

About 2 a.m. a tremendous knock at the back gate was followed by heavy, hurried tramping on the piazza. The soldiers had come. A candle was lighted and two Sisters went to the door. As they

threw it open, five guns were pointed at their faces. The men started back when they saw that it was nuns they had disturbed. "Well, gentlemen," said one, "what do you wish? Can we do anything for you?" The leader touched his hat and said: "We did not know this was a Convent: we are searching for rebels." "There are none here, but you are welcome to search." "O, no, Sister, we take your word for it. But we are very hungry. Please give us something to eat." The best the pantry afforded was speedily placed before them. After doing justice to the humble fare they thanked their hostesses, and retired as they had entered by jumping over the fence.

## X.

About an hour later a second knocking startled the community. On opening the door the portress found the intruders to be an officer and a private. The officer introduced himself as second in command to General Wilson, and said he had come to put a guard over the Convent. The portress thanked him, and gave the guard a chair. He established himself in the front garden, under the grape arbour. A lady who had seen the burning of the Columbian Convent, South Carolina, sent a note telling the Sisters to watch the guard, as it was that functionary who had set fire to the Convent at Columbia. This made the poor Sisters very uncomfortable. During the three days the guard remained they watched him constantly. The Convent was besieged by the daughters, wives, and mothers of the men who had gone to battle. "O," exclaimed one poor mother, searching for her only son, "if I could only find his body to bury it I should be content." "But this was well nigh impossible, for the bodies of the slain were flung into the Chattahoochee.

Easter Monday, at 9 a.m., a proclamation was issued by General Wilson, ordering all women to stay indoors, as the soldiers were given the freedom of the city. The work of demolition now began. Factories, machine shops, and all public works were utterly ruined. The flourishing oil-cloth factory, and the gun and pistol dépot have never been rebuilt. The shops were pillaged, and their heavier contents turned into the streets. Dusty roads became a conglomerate of molasses, salt preserves, pickles, hams, flour, match

boxes, all kneaded together by the feet of the soldiery, who took care that nothing should be saved for the hungry people, and trampled all in a general amalgamation. The few pieces of cotton left in the stores after the long war were dragged out and burned. Monday and Tuesday this terrible work went on without the slightest intermission. The soldiers were like mad men. From the horrors of these awful days, the little Georgian City has never fully recovered.

Easter Monday evening the Sisters saw a citizen jump over their wall, and run into the back schoolroom. The poor fellow begged to be hidden somewhere, as the "Yanks" were after him. He was locked into a safe place, not a moment too soon. For five soldiers besieged the Convent, and made escape impossible. After reconnoitering some hours they concluded he was not there, and left. At night he escaped to more private quarters, and remained concealed during the Federal occupation of the city. Meanwhile, the Magazine was blown up, and the shock was so dreadful that it seemed as if the earth were being shattered to pieces. The soldiers visited every dwelling, and took possession of anything they desired to have—horses, mules; everything.

The Sisters had one cow given them in payment of a debt. Their barn was an old shanty of four rooms; near it was a lumber room. The laundress was hanging out clothes, when she saw a soldier jump the fence and enter the barn. She followed him up the rickety stairs and found him rummaging old trunks. "What do you want?" she said. "Nothing," returned the warrior. Then, rushing past her to the fodder loft, he seized as much as he could carry, and was running downstairs when she caught him by the coat and held him. He could not go up or down, and the steps were so shaky that both were in danger of falling. He pressed her to release him. "No," said she, "not till you throw down the fodder." Another Sister hearing her voice, called the guard, who made his brave comrade give up the booty, and leave the premises.

The Commander having heard of this little affray, stationed another guard in the rear of the Convent. Tuesday the soldiers who had been drinking freely were very lawless. One thrust his head inside the front gate, and demanded hospitality. The portress, who was saying her rosary in the garden, seeing his condition, refused to admit him. He swore he would enter, and made a forward movement, and a gesture as if to strike her. Just



then a second Sister appeared, and, seeing how things were, made a bound towards him, and in the twinkling of an eye planted her fists in his chest, and knocked him flat on the side walk. The heavy gate was then securely fastened. This catastrophe sobered the prostrate warrior. He knew the inmates of the Convent never acted on the offensive. But he learned that two at least were foes not to be despised when on the defensive. Till circumstances called it forth, no one suspected they had in them some of the stuff of which Amazons are made. The poor guard, who always appeared on the scene when danger was over, now removed his quarters to the front garden. But the word had gone abroad that there were some valiant and noted fencers among the Convent gentlewomen, and their premises were not again invaded.

On Wednesday the troops left the city, after having battered down every warehouse, brick-store, and building of any pretensions, and made the whole place a perfect wreck. All money had disappeared. Exchanges were affected by barter. Currency began to circulate towards winter. In May, the schools were re-opened. The children had much to relate about the events, sad and amusing, that had taken place during the terrible three days and nights. No one had any heart for school, and vacation was given early. The Sisters had other work trying to assuage the misery by which they were surrounded. Everyone was in trouble. Poverty, suffering, bereavement everywhere. Amid all this, the United States officials called on the Sisters to take the oath of allegiance.

“ I solemnly swear allegiance, fealty, and obedience to all the laws of this Federal Government, as they are explained by the United States of America. So help me, God.”

Each member of the community had to read this formula and sign it. “ And thus,” writes one to whose copious notes we are deeply indebted, “ we who had never been rebels, were reconstructed.”

As we crossed the Chattahoochee, from Georgia to Alabama, a generation later, the river was afire with the red rays of the setting sun. We thought of the sad Easter time when a handful of Georgians strove to keep the bridge against the victorious legions of the North, and how the brave boys found a grave beneath its waters, empurpled that day for miles of their course.

The gentle pen above mentioned writes—“ Peace has spread her blessings over the land. For us, hunger, cold, anxiety, and

the terrors of war, have long since passed away. But sad remembrances of lost ones will remain until

“The silver cord is broken, and the golden bowl released.”

Of the ecclesiastics and religious who made the journey from Florida to Georgia as we have described, 1862 only one ancient religious remains to tell the tale. The rest have made the great journey. May they rest in peace.

M. A. C.

“IF I WERE A BILLIONAIRE!”

WHAT should I do if the world were mine?  
 Mine with its treasures of silver and gold;  
 Lands untrodden and wealth untold;  
 What should I do if the world were mine?

Before the fire in my old arm-chair,  
 I sit on silence and build alone,  
 Castles fairer than castles of stone,  
 Castles built in enchanted air.

Friends so many and poor have I,  
 Friends so many and wants so few;  
 George! there would be a wife for you,  
 Whom all the wealth of the world can't buy.

A house I would build for you and Kate,  
 A house as never before was seen;  
 And I would dance at the wedding, I ween,  
 If I came into my world-estate.