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Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society
of Rhode Island

Personal Narratives

SIXTH SERIES, No. 4

Extracts from my Diary, and from my Experiences while Boarding with Jefferson Davis, in Three of His Notorious Hotels, in Richmond, Va., Tuscaloosa, Ala., and Salisbury, N. C., from July, 1861, to June, 1862.

By WILLIAM J. CROSSLEY,

[Late Sergeant Company C, Second Rhode Island Infantry
Volunteers.]



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PERSONAL NARRATIVES

OF EVENTS IN THE

WAR OF THE REBELLION,

BEING PAPERS READ BEFORE THE

RHODE ISLAND SOLDIERS AND SAILORS
HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

SIXTH SERIES.—No. 4.

1893

PROVIDENCE:
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[Edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies.]

EXTRACTS FROM MY DIARY.

[READ BEFORE THE SOCIETY OCTOBER 15, 1901.]

COMRADES AND FRIENDS:

When I promised you this paper some months ago I did not realize what a blundering mistake I was making, but I did soon after, when I began to look over the few pages of a wretchedly kept diary, and to think I had nothing but a badly faded memory to fill the blank spaces; and then to try to squeeze a life of over three hundred days into about sixty minutes, and make those minutes at all interesting to you I was afraid was beyond my ability. Besides, it occurred to me that many of you had read books or heard papers read on this subject, written by scholars, when memory and the incidents of that life were fresh with them, and new,

strange and interesting to you, and before such books and papers had become repeatedly monotonous. For these and similar reasons I have tried to be as brief as the subject would allow, and to avoid putting overmuch stress on the serious or doleful part of our confinement, that you already may have been bored with. So if you find this effort of mine dry and dull try to be thankful it is no worse, and that you will not be obliged to listen to it again, and if you find at its close that you do not know any more than you know now be charitable, and try to think it is from no fault of the writer.

Some of you may wonder why, as I intimated just now, the diary was wretchedly kept, when we had so much spare time. Simply from the inability to own, keep or borrow a lead pencil. Would you believe such a trifle could become such a luxury in the capital of the Old Dominion? Now to those of you who are not familiar with my military record previous to the battle of Bull Run, I would say, I enlisted in Providence in May and was sworn into the United States service June 5, 1861, for

three years, as a member of Company C ("The Lambs") Second Rhode Island Volunteers. From that date we camped and drilled on Dexter Training Ground until June 19th, when we sailed from Fox Point for New York, then by train to Harrisburg, Baltimore and Washington, where we arrived on the 22d, and went into camp just out and north of the city, and adjoining the First Rhode Island, at "Camp Sprague." Our camp was named "Clark," after the present venerable bishop of this diocese. Here we drilled daily until July 16th, when we left for old Virginia, and I, it seems for Richmond.

By the way, the able and unquenchable executive of our State Prison, General Viall, was then my captain, and the Hon. Edward Stanley one of the assessors of the town of Cranston was my first lieutenant.

To resume, July 17th, we arrived at Fairfax, where some of the smart ones made themselves conspicuous in a few of the houses evacuated by the Confederates, by smashing portraits, pianos, mirrors and other furniture, without cause or provoca-

tion. Thursday, 18th, bought a hoeecake and went a mile to milk a cow, with and from which I had a rare supper. The boys are shooting pigs and hens to kill. At 7 P. M. we marched away three or four miles to a place we named "Brush Camp," where four men came to us from the fight we had heard two of three miles beyond, at a place called Centreville. They were gunless and hatless, and two of them were wounded. On the 19th, with rails and brush, we made a shelter from the fierce sun. Fresh meat was issued to-day; I made a soup, first in the campaign; rather but not awful salt,—for a fresh-made soup. Dress parade tonight. Sent a letter Home. Have to begin Home now with a capital "H" since we have seen rebel-made blood.

Sunday, July 21st. This is the day we celebrate the occasion of this melodrama. Left camp about 2 A. M., arrived at Bull Run about 9 A. M. Here the Confederacy received us with open arms and refreshments galore. We had barely time to exchange the compliments of the season with them, when one of the Johnnies with much previousness passed me a peppermint drop in the shape of a bul-

let that seemed to be stuffed with cayenne. Out of courtesy, of course, I returned a similar favor, with but little satisfaction however, for he was so completely hidden down in the grainfield that his colors and the smoke from his guns were all we had for a target. Well, the cayenne was getting warmer, and the blood was getting out of my eyes into my trousers' leg, so I was taken to the rear, and down to where Surgeons Wheaton and Harris were dressing wounds, and had mine dressed; and, as the rebs began just then dropping shot and shell so near to us as to be taking limbs from the trees over our heads the doctors ordered that the wounded be moved away. I was put in a blanket and taken to another part of the woods and left. Soon after, an old friend of mine, Tom Clark, a member of the band, came along, and, after a chat, gave me some whiskey, from the effects of which, with fatigue, loss of blood and sleep, I was soon dozing, notwithstanding the roar of fierce and murderous battle going on just over the hill. When I awoke a tentmate of mine was standing over and telling me we were beaten and on the run. I wanted

to tell him what Pat told the Queen of Ireland, Mrs. Kelley, but after looking into his ghostly, though dirty face, I said nothing, but with his help and a small tree tried to get up. That was a failure, so I gave him my watch, said good-bye to him, and he left. Up to date it was also good-bye to the watch. Well, after this little episode, I turned over, and, on my hands and one knee, crawled down to the road, four or five hundred yards away, and tried to get taken in, or on an ambulance, but they were all full (though not the kind of full you are thinking about). Then I crawled up to a rail fence close by a log cabin, and soon the rebs came along, took account of stock, *i. e.*, our name, regiment and company, and placed a guard over us. Being naturally of a slender disposition (I weighed one hundred and eleven pounds just before leaving Washington) and from the fracas of the last twelve hours, was, perhaps, looking a little more peaked than usual, so when one of the rebel officers asked me how old I was, and I told him twenty-one, maybe he was not so much to blame for smiling and swearing, "He reckoned I had got my lesson nearly

perfect." I didn't know then what he meant, but it seems they had heard we were enlisting boys, and I suppose he thought, in my case at least, the facts were before him.

Monday, July 22d. Well, here I am, a prisoner of war, a lamb surrounded by wolves, just because I obeyed orders, went into a fight, and, by Queensbury rules, was punctured below the belt. So much for trying to be good. And just here I would like to add a few lines pertaining to that (to us, then) strange expression, "Prisoner of war." From the day of my enlistment to the morning of this notorious battle I had never heard the word mentioned, nor had I even thought of it. I had been told before leaving Providence that I would be shot, starved or drilled to death, that with a fourteen-pound musket, forty rounds of cartridge, a knapsack of indispensables, a canteen of,—of fluid, a haversack of hard-tack, a blanket and half a tent I would be marched to death under the fierce rays of a broiling sun, with a mule's burden of earth—in the shape of dust—in my hair, eyes, and ears, up my nose and down the back of my neck, or, wad-

ing through miles of mud so thick that I must go barefoot or leave my shoes. That I would return home—if at all—with but one leg, one arm, one eye, or one nose, and with but very little of the previous large head; but with all this gabble about war and its alluring entertainments not a solitary word about “Prisoner of war.” So you see, it was not merely a surprise to us, a little something just out of the ordinary, but it was a shock, and not an every day feeble and sickly shock either, but a vigorous paralyzing and spine-chilling shock, that we couldn’t shake off for days or weeks after we were captured. But to continue.

It rained all of last night; I got thoroughly soaked. This morning the rebs made our able ones go out on the battlefield and get rubber blankets, put them over rails and make a shelter for us in the yard of the cabin. The cabin is full of wounded and dying, and I don’t know how many are in the yard. When the surgeon was dressing my wound to-day, we found the bullet inside the drawers where they were tied around my ankle. Oh, but wasn’t I lucky; there was but one puncture and that one below wind

and vitals. That's where the infantry lap over the navy, you see, Mr. Shell-back.

July 23d. Colonel Slocum died at one o'clock this morning. Penno, of the First, had his leg cut off. The major had both of his taken off. We had some porridge made from meal the men brought in from the woods.

July 24th. Colonel Slocum was buried this morning at the lower end of the garden. Major Ballou's and Penno's legs in same place. The Major is getting better; so am I. As the men were going past me here with the Colonel's body, I was allowed to cut a button from his blouse (I have it yet), at the same time they found another bullet wound in one of his ankles.

July 26th. Had ham and bread for dinner right from the field, and gruel for supper. T. O. H. Carpenter, another of my friends, and of my company, died to-day, up at the church.

July 27th. No bread to-day, only gruel. McCann, of Newport, died.

July 28th. Major Ballou died this P. M. Gruel for supper, with a fierce tempest.

July 29th. The major was buried beside the colonel at dark.

July 31st. Have had an elegant headache the past two days; to-day it's singing. Started for Manassas Junction about noon, in ammunition wagons, and with those infernal drivers hunting around for rocks and stumps to drive over; it did seem as if the proprietors of the bullet holes and stumps in the wagons were getting "on to Richmond" with a vengeance. At the Junction we were put into freight cars and started at dark for Richmond.

August 1st. When we arrived at Gordonville this morning, the most of us hoped to be delivered from another such night, for the way that engineer twitched and thumped those cars all night long would have made Jeff Davis & Co. smile, if they could have heard the cursing and groans of the tortured and dying in those cars. This afternoon some are scraping the maggots from their rotten limbs and wounds, for the heat has been sweltering all day, and the stench almost unbearable, as you know, there is no ventilation in the ends of a box

freight car; but the most of us lived through it, and finally arrived at Richmond, one hundred and fifty miles from Manassas, at the speed of nearly seven miles an hour. Did you ever hear of Uncle Sam treating a train load of gasping and dying strangers quite so beastly and leisurely as that? As we were being unloaded from the cars to wagons a nice looking old gentleman with a white necktie, standing nearby, said to me, "How old are you, my little man?" I told him twenty-one, but from his insinuating that I must be a near relative of Ananias, I did not pretend to be over seventeen after that while in the Confederacy. From the cars we were taken to a tobacco factory, near the lower end of the city, and on the left bank of the James River, afterwards known as the famous "Libby." We were dumped on the first floor, among the tobacco presses for the night, and next morning taken upstairs, and, "bless my stars," put on cots, and given bread and coffee for breakfast. What was the coffee made of do you ask? I don't know, and, as you didn't have it to drink it need not concern you; and we had soup for dinner, and it's none of your affairs

what that was made of either. And now we are allowed to send letters home, but have to be very careful as to quality and quantity, for Mr. Reb has the first perusal and will throw them in the waste basket if a sentence or even a word is not to his liking. I tell you if we needed a capital "H" for home, when at Brush Camp, the entire word should be written in capitals here, for *there* we were surrounded by friends, not an enemy in sight, while *here* we are surrounded by thousands of enemies and bayonets and not a solitary friend within miles.

While writing this paper I have tried to think of some parallel or similar case to that of ours, that I might give you an idea in a more condensed and comprehensive form what that life was, but I can think of none. Possibly some of you may think that board and lodgings at "Viall's Inn" for a few months might be comparable. I don't think so; but as we are cramped for time I will not argue the matter with you, but drop it after a single comparison. If you were to be sent to General Viall's you would be told before leaving the Court House how long you were to stay. There is where much

of the agony, the wear and tear came to us, that everlasting longing, yearning and suspense.

When settled down to our daily routine, I find on the cot beside mine a little Belgian Dutchman, about thirty-five years old, with a head round as a pumpkin, eyes that would snap like stars in January, and a moustache that puts his nose and mouth nearly out of sight. He was seldom murmuring, but flush with sarcasm. His name was Anthony Welder, and he belonged to the Thirty-Eighth New York. He was wounded the same as I, just above the knee, so he could not walk, but he did not lack for friends and fellow countrymen to call on him and help use up many weary hours with their national and lively game of "Sixty-Six." I wish you could have seen them play it. I was a real nice boy at that time and didn't know even the name of a card, but seeing them getting so much fun out of it I asked Anthony one day to show me how to play, but with a very decided No, he said, "I tell you; I show you how to play, and you play awhile for fun, then you play for a little money, you win, then you play for a pile, and you win, then you play for a big

pile, and you lose him all, then you say, "Tam that Tutchman, I wish the tevil had him before he show me how to play cards.'" But there wasn't much peace for Dutchie until I kewed how to play Sixty-Six." And just here is another illustration of the havoc my evaporated memory has made with some of the tidbits of those days, that I would occasionally like to recall; for to-day I know no more about that game of "Sixty-Six" than the Chaplain of the Dexter Asylum.

August 4th. A First regiment man died, and on the 6th Esek Smith, also three other Rhode Island men died. And her I should say I make no mention of the dozens and scores belonging to other states and regiments that are carried out daily. One day as a body was being taken out past us I said to Welder, "There goes another poor fellow that's had to give up the ghost," and Welder says, "Well, that is the last thing what he could do."

August 7th. Had services this p. m. by an Episcopal clergyman.

August 10th. Grub very scarce. Cobb of the

Second died, and H. L. Jacques, of Company E, from Wakefield, bled to death this evening.

August 13th. Johnnie is whitewashing the walls. It makes the dirty red bricks look a little more cheerful.

August 21st. To-day we are a month away from Bull Run, and a month nearer home.

August 26th. Light breakfast, no dinner and small supper. The front of my stomach and my spinal column seem to be about three-quarters of an inch apart now.

September 5th. My birthday. The anniversary of my beginning to see things in a different light. Have cut several eye teeth in the past six weeks.

September 6th. Moved down stairs, with a beautiful headache, a sore throat, and my first ague chill.

Since I began writing this paper I have had another, and if those two were the only ones I had ever had, you might not have been afflicted with this mess of pottage this evening.

September 21st. And now it is two months since we left Father Abraham on the wild plains of Manassas. Doctor Harris and his assistants left

for home to-day. Perhaps a little explanation should attend that last sentence. It seems Colonel Jones of the Fourth Alabama, was seriously wounded and taken prisoner at Bull Run, and was being attended by Dr. Harris and assistants, when the Federal retreat began. The colonel's attendants were going to leave him, of course, as they didn't care to be scooped, but he pleaded with them to stay with him until he should get to Richmond, and he would then and there have them released. So they stayed, but he was, as you may know by this date, a long while getting their release.

September 25th. Chris. Rodman, of Peacedale, died of typhoid fever.

Sunday, October 6th. All with stumps sent home to-day. I, with no stump, am permitted to walk across the street, and into another tobacco factory. This one is four stories high, beside a loft, where are stored tons of tobacco. I was sent to the fourth floor. And now, perhaps, that we have moved into new quarters, the program for a single day, in this den of ours, giving you an idea of how we used up some of the anxious hours and weeks, would be more

edifying and interesting than a little dab of this and that, here and there.

So, to begin with, if you please, picture to yourself this slumber chamber of ours, this parlor, reception and dining room, sitting and standing room, library and smoking room, bath room and kitchen. That bath must be a joke. a dry one, too, for I never knew or heard of Yank having a bath with Jeff. Of course they were in hot water frequently, but then they didn't have on their bathing suits, only but just fighting togs. Well, this room was about 35 x 80 with a chimney, a sink and James River water, and directly after a shower the water was almost thick enough for plastering. The furniture was one solitary pine table, the chairs were out of sight. Comrade Chenery had not yet sent in his card. Say, did you ever realize what a droll-looking place a hotel would be, filled with guests, but not a chair in it? Or did you ever think what it meant to sit on the floor, not for a day, or a week, but for months? Sometime, when you have been real good and wish to repent, try it for a few weeks, just before Easter.

But to resume. The men—about one hundred—at night, lie with their heads to the wall, away around the room, with another double column, heads together, up and down the middle of the room. Some may have a block for a pillow, others a shoe, but seven-eighths of them have nothing between their heads and the floor, and the rest of the poor body is served in the same way. The covering, too, is as scant as the bedding, except for a few, who may have saved a blanket from the battle-field, and even they must pay for their comfort by sleeping with one eye open, or they cannot see their blanket next morning, with two eyes open, notwithstanding, most of us were familiar with number eight of the decalogue. Soon after daylight all but the filthy ones are sitting up, all around the room, like so many athletes, stripped for the fray, with blood in their eyes and on their thumbnails, slaying the descendants of Pharaoh's pets with much zeal, but with little encouragement; for poor Yank is beaten now worse than at Bull Run; he is outnumbered here one thousand to one, and worst of all, has no ammunition, *i. e.*, hot water, and the

Richmond louse has no more fear of cold water than the proverbial milkman. But wasn't Stumps lucky in being sent away before getting to this place of torment, for what would the poor fellows have done while we were scratching, or rather, digging? Stumps was the fellow without hand or feet and how could he scratch without them? Next of note after the hunt, is the appearance of his mightiness, the notorious Sergeant Wirz, with pistol in hand, his guard with their guns by his side, to call the roll. In very good Dutch, he tells us to "Fall in, and pe tam quick about it, too," but his bluster does not seem to frighten the boys much, and while we are getting into line the careless ones make it merry for Dutchie; from the four corners of the room in ventriloquistic tones they give him his pedigree, telling him he is the son of a good dog or of an old smooth bore; they send him on long journeys to—to—Halifax, or maybe to Jericho; they call him sweet and spicy names, and one curious cherub from the rear rank wants to know why he talks Irish. That staggers him, for Dutchie is not fond of the Irish, and if he dared would skiu alive

every "Mac" on the roll. So this query is the climax; up comes the pistol, he glares over it with fire in his eyes and speech, and gives the last speaker just two minutes to step two paces to the front. The cherub is, perhaps, a Freshman from Yale, and does not understand the Rotterdam language, so he does not take the two paces; then there is not even a smile for the next two minutes, then the gun begins to droop, the time is up, Dutchie has cooled off, and the roll is called. You see he had a similar experience each morning on the three floors below, and doubtless those people down there would worry him to the verge of nervousness. But I wish you could have heard him call that roll just once; and often those scamps would get him so badly twisted he would have to close his book and count us, and if it was music to hear him call the roll 'twas equal to a band to hear his 'ine, swi, thri, fear, finf and so on down the line. Soon after roll call came the regular 9 o'clock Confederate feast. A four-ounce picce of bread with three ounces of boiled rib, then go to the tap and wash it down with a dose of the James River. With the three courses (bread, rib

and water), we have lost nearly four precious minutes, for you must not think we are a set of drones in this hive, and have lots of time to squander over a little mess of bread and bone, "Nowt of sort."

Perhaps it would have been more in order to have told you, before gormandizing, how this feast was served. The fifty eight-ounce loaves of bread, and maybe twenty pounds of meat, were brought in by darkies and put on our solitary table. Then our own selected and angelic commissary cut the loaves in two, placed them on the table and put on each piece of bread three ounces, or less, of choice boiled rib; the men then formed in line, walked past the table and each took a ration. Now, after the feast comes the daily round of exercise. Over in yonder corner a bondholder, having invested in a *Richmond Examiner* or *Dispatch* (ten cents), is holding the attention of a score or more with an extended account of the last Confederate victory. Always a victory, of course, for when Johnnie was beaten, not even a bondholder could buy one of his papers. That group over there are watching a pair of jackals, who are having a quiet game of pitch for the

crust and the bone that lies on the floor between them, and all about the room you may see pairs and fours, busy at all the variety of games with cards, and a generous sprinkling of more studious and sedate ones at chess, checkers, and dominoes, from morn 'till twilight. The squad over there by the grand stairway are arguing about the rumors of our being released, or sent south, or out on the Confederate fortifications with the chain gang. Then some loafer or rascal would come from somewhere down stairs and sing out, "Hurrah, fellows, going home next week!" In our early prison days such a toot would set the swarm to buzzing, but soon became shopworn. Then another party, with pickets posted away down the stairs (that they be not surprised by Mr. Wirz and his gang) are going aloft for tobacco to take down stairs to be pressed, for they alone on the lower floor have the presses, while we on the upper, command the tobacco loft. So we lend them our tobacco for the use of their presses. How the fellows fared between the upper and lower millstones I don't remember, but you can rest assured they didn't go

without their smoke. Oh, what a comfort that was for Yank in prisondom, that he could smother so many cravings for home and loved ones; that he could stifle so many aches and pains, so much torture and misery from dawn to dark with beautiful time-killing smoke, nor having to take one thought of where the next was coming from; for didn't we have tobacco to burn? A couple of years afterwards, I used to think frequently of the poor fellows at Andersonville, and how much they would have enjoyed such a privilege.

The really industrious ones you see about the room are the artists, the Boney-parts, who, with their knife, file, and wax, patience and perserverance, take the bones from their meat and make such artistic chessmen, checkers, dominoes, rings, shields, badges, etc., that even the women of the Confederacy come in to see and buy.

Then there is the drill squad, having sword and bayonet exercise, while sailor-Jack is prodding a ship, or the girl he left behind him, into the breast of his shipmate. The chap yonder with the book and restful visage, is having a royal treat, which

many of us anticipate from the same source. The bachelor-appearing fellow beside him, you see, has a needle and thread, and may be trying to bridle a button or take a piece from the corner of his blanket, to fill a vacancy in the resting place of his trousers; and I tell you it was quite a task to keep that part of our uniform fit for Sunday morning inspection.

Now the barber could be the busiest one in the hive, but he doesn't like to work for nothing, and very few of us are flush, but he must cut hair, for we have no combs and as I have told you just now neither have we any hot water. The innocent looking boy over there, Slim Bailey, with his six feet five, curled up in smoke, is the rascal who will borrow of you a handful of Egyptian vermin, trot down stairs to the guard at the door, and deliberately pour them down the back of his neck, thinking perhaps, that it is only proper to render unto Cæsar the things that do not belong to us. About 12 M., daily, a very select few would have an interlude in the shape of hasty pudding, griddle cakes or a stew. These few were mostly from the Seventy-first New

York, the Brooklyn Zoos, and First Rhode Island Infantry. They were of the elite, the upper crust, blue bloods, they had money, and with it they would get the guard to bring them flour, rice, sugar, tea, vegetables, etc. Of course the flour and vegetables must be cooked, but where was the stove? The Confederacy had no stoves for Yanks. Well, in that loft I spoke of, besides the hogsheads, barrels, boxes and caddies of tobacco, there were piles of sheet-tin, in squares about nine inches by twelve. So Yank took some of them down stairs, dug a hole in the chimney, laid the bricks on the floor with the sheets of tin over them, and on top of these placed rows of bricks to connect with the hole in the chimney, and covered the last with more sheets on which to put the cooking furniture, and that was the style and make of the Model Grand, the Richmond Range of 1861. Years after Comrade Spicer cabbaged the entire plant. Did you notice I mentioned cooking furniture? Well, you see these select few must have dishes to cook in, and so they did, by taking more of those sheets of tin and turning up the sides and ends so nicely that they were liquid tight, and that

too, without solder. Then these shoddy autocrats must have fuel, so they go aloft once more and anything in the shape of staves, boards and boxes that is breakable is utilized. Oh, but were not those mudday doses torture for the eyes and nostrils of the poor fellows who had no money, meal or potatoes; no nothing but an appetite fit for a shark, and a desire to turn our noses over or plug up the blow holes.

Now comes 4 o'clock, and up come the darkies again with piles of bread and buckets of broth. This broth is the fluid in which the ribs were boiled, and to each gill of the same has been added one bean, and to each Yank is given, daily, one standard gill of this Confederate swill. Sometimes it was very fresh, and then again it would be so odorous you would swear it never was fresh. After this threat out come the pipes, "only but just pipes," take notice, nearly a hundred well colored, loyal dudeens, and not a two for or arbitrator, or any other sort of a traitor in sight. And now this final soothing, nerve-killing, quiet smoke, and the day is done.

October 25th. Had trial of a fellow for stealing meal.

Sunday, November 3d. Service by chaplain of the Third Maine.

Friday, November 8th. Two men shot on the third floor this evening as they were going away from the faucet and from the window through which they were shot. Tibbetts shot through, from back to breast, died soon after, and the same bullet lodged in the arm of Weeden, in front of him. The guards told his officer the men were trying to escape. 'An unlikely story.

Sunday, November 10th. Service, subject, "The Leper of Syria," told to go wash seven times. The lepers of "Libby" would have been pleased to receive just such an order, and I assure you that several times seven would not have been too many to have gotten beneath the accumulation of the previous four months.

November 24th. A lively rumor that we are to be taken south soon, and as the next tavern we stop at may not be so bountifully supplied with tobacco, we adjourn to our loft and take all the loose tobacco

we think we can keep out of sight of the guard. The plugs we pressed are already stowed away for just such an emergency. I don't know how many plugs I took away, but I know I gave a darkie twenty for his pocket-knife, when we were going down the Alabama, thinking I could make rings and badges as well as some others. So I made a ring; you should have seen it. I never made another. I brought home two of the plugs of tobacco; one I gave to this Society many years ago. The other I have here.

November 25th. Left Richmond about noon. At Petersburg were put into freight cars, no dinner or supper.

November 27th. Four crackers and a piece of bacon to-day. Arrived in Wilmington at dark, crossed Cape Fear River on steamer, and again put in freighters.

November 28th. Four more crackers for twenty-four hours. Now, if our reckless host will continue thusly for a few days more, we may soon be rid of the balance of our bloat.

November 29th. Arrived in Montgomery, Ala-

bama, just before dark, and transferred to steamer *Waverly*, and sent down the Alabama River. The next day we turned up into the Tombigbee, and next day into the Black Warrior.

December 2d. We arrived in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and put up at the United States Hotel, Market Street, and most of us Rhode Island chaps, with a few Massachusetts, New York and Jersey's, about twenty-five in all, were put in a guest chamber, second floor front.

Are you a trifle doubting about that hotel name? Well, I was surprised at its being left for us to see; until I saw it was not on a signboard, but painted directly on the clapboards, and I don't suppose the poor things had had time, paint or ambition to brush it out.

December 4th. Bread and bacon for breakfast, ditto for supper, after which, for a regular every day bill of fare, we had corn bread, made from corn and cobs ground together, mixed with water, but no salt,¹ and baked in dripping pans about three inches deep.

¹ Salt was nearly one hundred dollars per barrel in those days, and a little later was much more.

December 6th. The corn dodgers are entertaining us merrily.

December 7th. The cob and corn syndicate seem "To Have and To Hold" the balance of power here just now, and if Uncle Abe doesn't come to the rescue soon, Yank will have to put in a requisition for a bucket of Jamaica Ginger, or some other pain-killing cordial, if he ever expects to see Washington again. You chaps that are familiar with old Virginia hoe-cakes, may be a little bit skeptical about the cobs being in our cake, but if they had been straight goods and no shoddy do you believe a pack of starving hyenas would have made bricks of them for pillows, or used them as grapeshot at midnight to quiet his too chatty roommate? But the cob-cake was not all bad. Let me tell you how we fixed him once; as a treat, we were given rice and molasses for Christmas, and then some smart Yank took his tin plate, and with a nail, nearly filled it with holes, then turned it over and pushed his hard dry dodger over the grater, and behold it was meal again, but as an improvement over the Confederate method of mixing with water only

Yank used the molasses given him for his rice, and, without asking twice others were pleased to pool their molasses rations with him. Then we tried out two or three of our rations of fat pork, and, in the grease we fried this mixture of second-hand cob-meal and molasses; and, by the splendor of Rome if it didn't turn out doughnuts, and such doughnuts! Why, after eating one of them you could speak in seven languages, if you had the key. You may wonder where we did this cooking. Well, there was a fireplace in this chamber of ours, but I have not the least idea where we got the fuel. Diary and memory both fail me here. The tin plates we made by unsoldering our canteens.

Sunday, December 8th. Preaching by Lieutenant Church, of the Second, in the parlor and hall. He was, previous to 1860, a preacher for the Baptists at Wakefield, and his daughters were schoolmates of mine.

December 9th. They have made a lieutenant of Wirz, and put him in charge here. He has taken Burt, my chum, and of my company, for his book-keeper. On the 11th we had the play of "Macbeth"

rendered, with one H. W. Eagan, of Michigan, as the star. Many of the rebel officers came in with chairs and placed themselves in front, where they seemed to enjoy the play very much. For me, it was a treat, as I had never seen one of Shakespeare's plays before, and as I found out later, Eagan was no novice in the business, for I met him in Washington about two years after, managing a genuine theatre.

Christmas Day, 1861. Shade of Alexis Sawyer; bread, white bread in our hose this morning. Such fat living must finally lead to gout.

January 1, 1862. Four of us sat up last night and bade the old year farewell, and hoped the last half of it would never come our way again.

January 4th. No meat to-day, on account of a broken door.

January 8th. Yams for supper. What luxuries! Where is the Confederacy drifting to?

January 9th. Captain Bowers and Lieutenant Knight left for home.

January 25th. I bet Charles Bean a dollar we

would be out of this hotel by March 1st, and so we were, but I never saw the dollar.

February 4th. No meat to-day.

February 12th. The anniversary of the birth of our ever memorable Lincoln.

February 15th. Our first snow in Dixie.

February 22d. This is the day we would celebrate. It's a beautiful morning, a regular holiday for the darkies, and the common in our front is full of them. We throw up our windows (against all rules or practice, and if we had done such a thing in Richmond, would have been shot before we could have gotten away from the window), but we throw up our windows and we, the white minstrels, like a score of howling wolves, give the grinning black audience such a treat with the "Star Spangled Banner," the "Red, White and Blue," and others, that the cavity under those darkies' noses looked like a fiery furnace with marble trimmings. Then you should have seen them, men, women, and pickaninies, rolling, dancing and jumping over one another, hats and arms in the air, and at every stop we made, shouting for more, until, from down the

street, with coat tails on the horizontal, comes old Wirz, up the stairs, two at a clip, and into our room, chirping, "What in Hades you tam fools trying to do? I thought you Rhode Island chaps pretty good fellows, but py tam you get no more meat for two, three, four days, do you see?" No, we didn't see any meat for two days, then Burt (so he told me afterwards) interceded for us.

February 26th. Signed a parole of honor this p. m. Here is a copy of it: "Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Feb. 26, 1862. We, the undersigned, prisoners of war to the Confederate States, swear that if released we will not take up arms against the Confederate States during the existing war, until regularly exchanged and that we will not communicate in any manner whatsoever anything that might injure the cause of the Confederate States which may have come to our knowledge of which we may have heard since our capture."

Saturday, March 1st. Good-bye, old Tuscaloosa, we are off on the steamer *George Sykes*. Just think of it, we are homeward bound, that joyful sound,

and yet it may not be, but we'll think of that as we laugh and chat with the boys who now are free.

March 3d. Turned up into the Alabama, and this afternoon met the steamer *Jeff. Davis*, with troops and artillery going down to Mobile. The pump of our ship gave out about dark, but our boys fixed it.

March 5th. Did not run much last night, it was so dark our pine torch at the bow was little better than a candle. The pump got tired again this morning, so the boys had to give her another dose of Yankee goose grease. Arrived in Montgomery before noon and left before dark. Again in freight cars, but we do not mind them now as the doors are wide open, no guard, and nearly as many of the boys outside as in. Three cheers for the fellow who shook from us our shackles, and dissolved the dream, which was not all a dream.

March 7th. About dark we are reminded we had two crackers for breakfast, no dinner or supper. It must be we are on the air line or the fast express, limited (to six miles an hour), though there doesn't seem to be much limit to the fast, and the air,

though filling, does not seem to soothe the inflamed appetite we have acquired since getting out of doors, and since those few days we had on the laughing riplets of the Alabama and Tombigbee. Before noon of the 12th we had turned up in Raleigh, North Carolina, about eight hundred and fifty miles from Montgomery, at an average speed of less than five miles an hour. Of course, if we were going the other way that would be plenty fast enough, but with liberty to the right and left and in front of us, and Uncle Sam almost staring us in the face, it did seem tantalizing; but after all, the jog was too fast, we arrived too soon; too soon to dodge the most unkind cut of all; ingratitude that cut close to the vitals. The parole had collapsed, the motto, "Hope," and visions of Little Rhody had gone from us; we were driven back into our cage, given a couple of crackers, the doors were closed, the guard replaced, and away we go for another dose of perdition and purgatory, Oh, why couldn't they have kept their meanness to themselves for just another week?

Thursday, March 13th. Arrived in Salisbury,

North Carolina; our host gave us some bread and bacon about 10.00 A. M., but nothing more for the day. Guess this must be another hotel "Cavity."

March 14th. Bread and fat pork for breakfast; broth and pork for supper. The broth was "*out of sight*" in two minutes, and the pork would have been real nice if we had had a little fresh castor oil to pour over it. Now just a few words about our quarters here. At the time we left Richmond last fall, another batch of several hundred were sent to New Orleans, and just before we arrived here those same Orleanists had come to town and taken possession of an old three-story cotton or shoddy mill. This mill was near the centre of several acres that were enclosed with a board fence, about nine feet high, and around the inner side of which were one and a half story brick cottages, belonging, we suppose, to the mill proprietors, and built for their employees. We Tuscaloosa chaps were the tenants now, and the ever-thoughtful Confederacy, to keep us Yanks from family quarrels, from ruinous gossip, and the borrowing of our neighbor's salt, had separated these cottages from

each other by the same style of fence as that around the outside, and then had put another on the inner side to keep us and the Orleanists from swapping gum. So we have a little yard now, but Mr. Reb knows very well we can't use it with our shredded and soleless shoes.

Sunday, April 6th. Three of our men shot last night.

April 20th. They let the boys out of the factory into the large yard, one floor a day now, and some of them they are having to bury alive, up to their chins. Doubtless many of you have seen or heard of "deadheads," but here was the other kind, a droll as well as sombre spectacle. A dozen or more, live and human heads, sticking up just above the ground; just heads and nothing more. A queer looking crop, and how it would have pleased some of the ladies of the Confederacy to have gotten into that lot with a lawn mower or a tennis racquet. So much for scurvy.

May 1st. Received my first letter from home. Just think of it, there are people yet living in the United States. I wonder if the Richmond papers

know about this, we should have supposed from the way they talked last fall that the last of the "Mudsills" would have been wiped out before this. The above letter was the only one I received of many that were sent to me.

May 8th. Rumors floating around that we are to have another start for freedom, and maybe that accounts for Johnnie allowing us to have a concert in the big yard this afternoon.

May 16th. Signed another parole.

May 19th. Had another dose of ague, chills, and fever, yesterday; not much better to-day.

May 21st. Ten months ago, Johnnie, there were too many of you, but to-day, this scratch lot of Jack-o-lanterns are thinking they would like to try it over again with you. And to-day the great game of baseball came off between the Orleanists and Tuscaloosans, with apparently as much enjoyment to the Rebs as the Yanks, for they came in hundreds to see the sport; and I have seen more smiles to-day on their oblong faces than before since I came to Rebeldom, for they have been the most doleful looking set of men I ever saw, and that

Confederate gray uniform really adds to their mournful appearance. The game was a tie, eleven each, but the factory fellows were skunked three times, and we but twice. Good, Mr. Reb, we will overlook quite a little of that black Friday business at Raleigh for the pleasure you have permitted us to partake of this afternoon.

May 22d. About two hundred of the boys started for home this morning. We signed another parole this afternoon, and after so much of this parole signing we are reminded of the fellow down in Richmond over a hundred years ago who wanted liberty or death, and that's the condition we have arrived at. only we would substitute for death sixteen ounces of broiled porter house, a pot of Mocha Java, and a clean shirt each morning during the remainder of our stay here.

May 23d. Left Old Salisbury this morning and are in high hopes the hardened Pharaohs will let Israel go this time. Passed through Raleigh and at dark came up to where the boys had a breakdown yesterday. Arrived in Goldsboro about 9,

where we stayed in the cars the remainder of the night.

May 24th. Had some crackers for breakfast, and away we go again. Arrived at Tarboro, and taken to the Court House for the night, where we found the party that left Salisbury the day before us. Now is the winter of our discontent beginning to fade away, and the clouds of doubt and despair, to disperse by this soothing dose of tar cordial.

Sunday, May 25, 1862. Left Tarboro and the final of our bondage in this ghostly wilderness of torture and famine at 8.00 A. M., on two scows or flat boats, towed by the tug "Col. Hill," down the Tar River for over seventy miles, and until nearly sunset, when we came in sight of that beautiful, that glorious old Star Spangled banner at Little Washington, North Carolina. Then you should have heard that drove of wild skeletons shout and howl. The Johnnies tried to squelch us with fearful threats, but the returned exiles told them they would pour them overboard, guns and all, if they dared interfere, for you see we had nothing in us but ten months of compressed air and suppressed shouts,

and they had got to come out now, to make room for a renewed and more loyal admiration of George Washington, Abraham Lincoln and the flag of the free. Well, good-bye, Jeff, sorry to leave you, wish you would go along with us. The boys on the Potomac would be awfully glad to see you and exchange grips, and, if you would come over and just let Uncle Abe talk to you about thirty minutes the war would be over to-morrow. But Jeff wouldn't listen to us, so we pulled up alongside and landed on the deck of the *Pilot Boy*, and from there were transferred to the *Eastern Cossack*, where we were fed and then allowed to scrub up and put on a clean shirt if we could get one. Say, comrades, but you ought to have seen that uniform we landed in, and did you ever try to wear a single suit, *i. e.*, shirt and trousers, continuously for ten months, nights as well as days? If not, don't begin now, it's too monotonous. Then, for over three hundred days we had been waiting for just such an opportunity as this to satisfy a ceaseless longing for food, and here it was in abundance and we didn't care for a crumb.

May 26th. Left Little Washington just after sunrise and came to anchor at 3 P. M., a mile below Newbern. Coffee, soup and crackers for supper. Oh! but wasn't that coffee rich? And can I ever forgive those Confederate thieves for robbing me of so many precious doses; just think of it, in three hundred days there was lost to me, forever, so many hundred pots of good old Government Java. I don't know about it; though I have been taught to forgive, seventy times seven is a good many, and it's a long way back to last July. Of course, I expect to forgive them sometime, but I do not wish to decide hastily and then have to use up all my leisure in repenting.

May 27th. Hauled up to the wharf about noon. The boys, thirty at a time, got a pass to go ashore. Gilmore's Band came on board at dark and gave us a treat that set our spinal column shivering from truck to keel.

May 28th. I received a pass, went ashore, shook hands with General Burnside, and saw three of my old schoolmates belonging to Auditor Chase's Battery F, stationed here. Returned to ship at noon.

The general came to see us in the afternoon, then we left the dock and got aground twice before getting back to our anchorage.

May 29th. Got underway early and went into Hatteras for coal, then farewell to old Carolina, and away we go for the deep blue sea. Quite rough outside, many of the boys seasick.

May 30th. George B. Atwood, of Providence, lost overboard the past night. Poor fellow, so near the goal he had been reaching for, and then lose all. Out of sight of land all day, came in sight of Barnegat at dark.

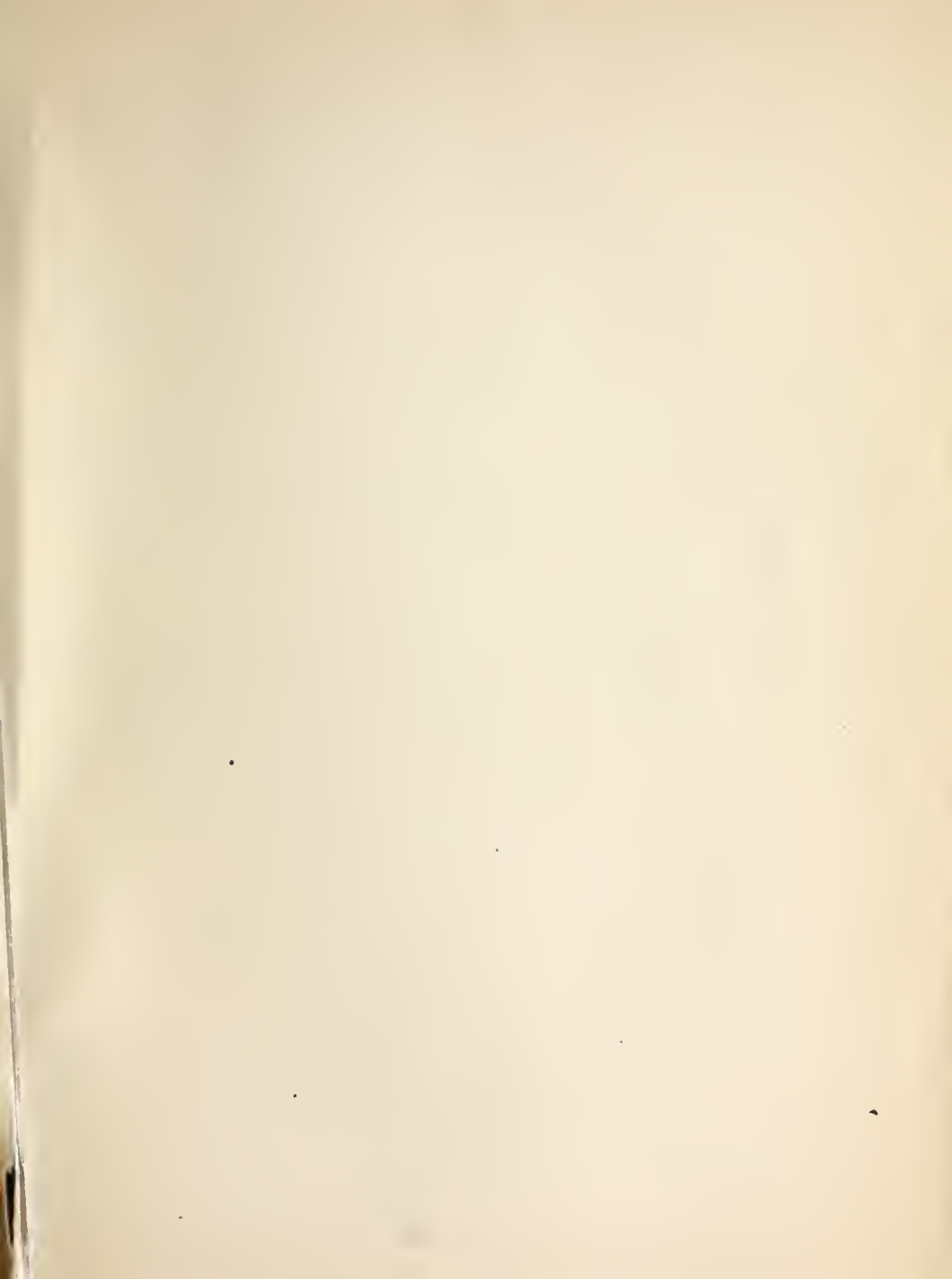
Saturday, May 31st. Arrived in New York at daylight. The *Great Eastern* is up the Hudson at anchor. She is not so monstrous-looking as I had imagined. Later she came down past us on her way out to sea. Just after noon we were taken ashore on tug *J. Chase*, and marched up to the Soldiers Retreat on Broadway, where we were given rations, and at 5 P. M., marched to the dock and on board the steamer *Comonwealth*, bound for Stonington. I had to back up to a steam pipe all the way to keep from shaking my bones out of joint, with another

charming allowance of my never-to-be-shaken friend, the chills.

Arrived in Providence at 4 A. M., where relatives and friends had been at the station waiting for us several hours.

After a furlough at home of five weeks I was ordered to report at "Camp Parole," Annapolis, Maryland, there to await orders for "an exchange," which came to us the following October. Then I started again for the front and joined my regiment at Downville, Maryland, Friday, October 10, 1862, after an absence of over fourteen months, and after nearly one-half the boys I had left in my company, had been wounded, killed, promoted, discharged or sent to some hospital. For myself, I got into trouble again with the Rebs at Fredericksburg, in December, 1862; Gettysburg and Chancellorsville, 1863; also again at Fredericksburg, 1863, and in 1864 at the Wilderness, Spottsylvania, Cold Harbor, where Johnnie gave me another reminder of his carelessness with a loaded gun.







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