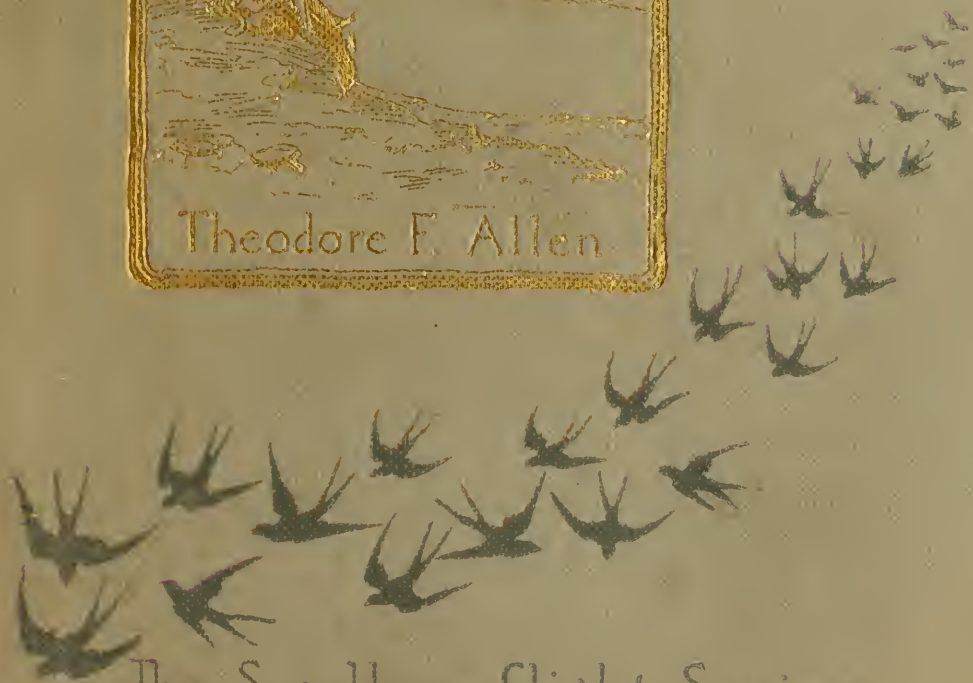


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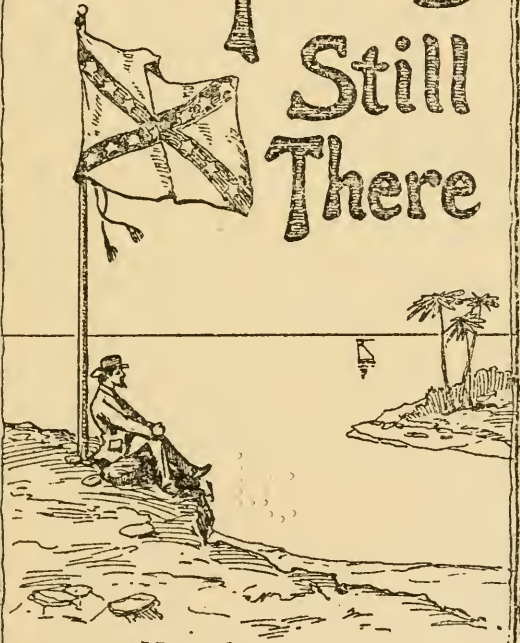


THE FLAG STILL THERE.



GEN. JOHN H. MORGAN.

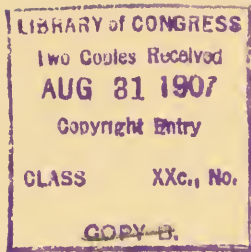
The Flag Still There



Theodore F. Allen

The Western Literary Press, Cincinnati, O.

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Printed by W. E. Taylor,
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DEDICATED
TO
THE VANISHING ARMY
OF
"MORGAN'S MEN."

THE FLAG STILL THERE.

AN ANTIPODEAN SURVIVAL OF "THE LOST
CAUSE."

HE four years of our Civil War, with its kaleidoscopic changes, wrought singular effects upon the young men of those days. One of the results of their service in the army, especially in the cavalry, was to create a spirit of unrest in many of the boys of '61-65, and this effect was produced in a marked degree upon my old friend and comrade, Captain Martin Schuyler, of company C, Seventh Ohio Cavalry, who, in the many years since the disbanding of the armies of Grant and Lee, has circled the globe three times—and there is scarcely a habitable region on the

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face of the earth that has not felt the imprint of his foot. I never know when to expect a visit from Captain Schuyler; but at long intervals my office door flies open with a bang, and the cheery, hearty voice of Schuyler is heard as he grasps me with both hands and says, "Here I am again." The Captain is now about fifty-nine years of age, and has such a large repertoire of stories of adventure that an hour's visit from him gives one three months' enjoyment. He wears a deep sabre-scar across his face, this being the mark of one of his adventures in the cavalry service. In response to an inquiry as to how large a scar the other fellow wears, the Captain laughingly says, "Oh, well, it's about as large as the one he gave me." He also has a perceptible limp from a bullet-wound in the right leg, received from one of Forrest's cavalry-

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men, while resisting the advance of Hood's Army on Franklin, Tennessee, November 30th, 1864.

It had been nearly three years since I had a visit from my old comrade, when recently, while traveling from Norfolk, Virginia en route to New York City, on board one of the steamers of the old Dominion Line, the first to greet me was Captain Schuyler. Having a twenty-four hours' run between Norfolk and New York, we had ample time for recalling events of the past. In reply to my inquiry as to what he had been doing since I saw him last, the Captain told me he had but recently returned from the Philippines, where he had served as an officer in one of the Volunteer regiments,—the Thirty-ninth, if I remember correctly,—and, in this connection, he told me an exceedingly interesting story, which I will under-

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take to relate, using his own language as nearly as possible.

“At the expiration of our term of service in the Philippines,” said the Captain, “I decided to return to the United States at my leisure, and visited many interesting points on the way, my tour taking in some fields hitherto unknown to me, and altogether outside the usual line of travel.”

“I was in no hurry; and as you know I have visited nearly every habitable region of the earth, I had some difficulty in finding new fields; but as I had never made an extended tour of the Navigator Islands in the South Pacific Ocean, I concluded to visit that region. I spent several months in that interesting part of the world, and while there a singular episode occurred which carried me back to the far distant past,—to the time our blessed old Seventh

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Ohio Cavalry was having jousts with 'Morgan's Men,' when we tilted with both Duke and Cluke, Pegram and others of the Blue Grass 'Critter Companies,' during the 'Immortal Sixties.' I was spending a few days on one of the Islands, the sea in front of me being dotted with sailing craft, manned by the natives, who are superb navigators and great fishermen. It is the custom among these people to fly a flag on each boat. There are all sorts of flags, as each native feels it incumbent on him to fly his own colors, and many of these are grotesque and not in the least attractive. One evening, while wandering along the beach, I observed a fisherman standing in towards the shore, who carried on the mast of his boat a flag quite different from anything I had ever seen in that part of the world, and upon inspecting the same with my field

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glass, it looked like one of the old Confederate flags. I kept my glass on this fisherman as he stood in towards the shore and made for the point of his landing. Upon his coming ashore, I asked permission to examine his flag, which request was readily granted, and, sure enough, I found it to be an old Confederate flag. I asked this half-naked fisherman where he got the flag, but he was not inclined to give me any information. Later I undertook to purchase the flag, and asked him what price he would take for the same; but he was not disposed to sell, and, in fact, seemed inclined to avoid me, and get away from me without imparting any information. I therefore adopted another course, seeking to win his favor, and presented him tobacco and inexpensive trinkets, such as might please an aborigine, whereupon he seemed to

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open up a little bit, and invited me to visit him at his home on one of the neighboring islands, something like thirty miles away. I accepted this invitation, accompanying him to his home, a fisherman's hut, on an island about five miles long and three miles wide, where, after much persuasion, he told me the story of the Confederate flag which had been flying at the mast of his boat. He stated that many, many years ago there had come to him a man, an American, who was not a sailor, but said he had been a soldier, and the principles for which he had fought had become a 'Lost Cause.' Thereupon he had left his native land, bringing the flag with him, this being almost his only possession. For many, many years the soldier had lived on this little island in the Pacific Ocean, where, in fair weather, he had kept the flag flying in front

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of his little house; but about three years ago this old soldier had died, leaving his few effects to the native fisherman. I asked the fisherman for permission to inspect the things left by this old soldier, and after much urging this permission was granted. I found among his time-worn papers a few scraps, these being portions of an old diary, which may lead to his identification. These scraps have apparently been wet by sea-water, and are mouldy and difficult to decipher, but, as near as I can make out, the man's name was Henry Clay Renfrew, and he was a member of either the Second Kentucky Cavalry or the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry, or possibly he may have been a member of both these regiments at different times, as one portion of his diary refers to Colonel Basil Duke having been the Colonel of his regiment, and of his

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belonging to the company commanded by Captain John B. Castleman; and in another part of his diary he refers to Colonel Henry Giltner as having been Colonel of his regiment, and Captain Bart Jenkins as commander of his company. There was also found a picture (an ambrotype) of a little girl about five years old, marked in faded letters, 'Lela Giltner, the Daughter of the Regiment.' This may have been the Colonel's daughter. His home is mentioned as having been near Midway, Kentucky. Turning over the mouldy leaves of his diary I found mention of Captain E. O. Guerrant as having been Adjutant-General of his brigade, and the name of Lieutenant T. M. Freeman as having been adjutant of the regiment. I infer from this that Renfrew may have been a soldier detailed at brigade or regimental head-

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quarters, serving with either the adjutant general of the brigade or the adjutant of the regiment. He also speaks of Brainard Bayless and Dallas Mosgrove as chums and mess-mates. In one part of his diary he refers at great length to the last days of the Confederacy, and his last hours' service in the army, and tells of the march, ragged, hungry and weary, through South Carolina into Georgia as far as the town of Woodstock; and also states that the brigade is commanded by General Duke, and refers to the fact that it was the last body of organized Confederate soldiers escorting Jefferson Davis and his party through South Carolina into Georgia. He says that Duke's Cavalry followed the flag to the last hour of the last day of the Confederacy.

“At this point in his diary the soldier refers to the fact that, Gen-

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eral Duke having at last decided to accept the terms of surrender, he (the writer) took from the flag-staff the colors they had been carrying, and concealed them by wrapping them about his body under his clothing, with the intention of leaving the country for foreign lands. Further along in his diary I find mention of the fact that this soldier is in Mexico. Then I find from the diary that he had drifted down along the west coast of South America, spending some time along that coast. His diary does not give the date of his arrival at the Navigator Islands, but, from the testimony of the native who had possession of his effects, it must have been twenty-five or thirty years ago that our ex-Confederate soldier decided to make his permanent home among these far-away islands of the sea in the South Pacific Ocean.

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“The native who had possession of his effects declined absolutely to allow anything to be taken away, telling me that the old soldier and himself had been great friends for many, many years, and upon the soldier’s death-bed he had given a promise never to part with any of the mementoes left by him. Therefore I was not able to bring back the Confederate flag, which for more than twenty-five years had been flying over this little ‘Island Empire’ of the sea. But the information I bring may lead to the identification of this man, who, for more than a third of a century, had never seen home or kindred, and who voluntarily expatriated himself when the cause for which he fought became ‘The Lost Cause.’ ”


Continuing the narrative, Captain Schuyler told me of having visited the grave of the ex-Confederate, this

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grave being situated upon a rocky headland of the island, overlooking the sea. The body lies with the feet to the east, and the grave is marked with substantial stones at both the head and at the foot. The grave is kept in most excellent order by the simple native fisherman, who for many years had been the friend of the old soldier who rests there, with his "Old Kentucky Home Far Away."

Captain Schuyler said that he visited this grave with the intention of erecting thereon some marking stone, but that with infinite care the simple native fisherman had done all that the most loving hand could do, and this lonely grave, thousands of miles away from the "Blue Grass State," on a little rock-bound island in mid ocean, is cared for with loving attention, and our ex-Confederate soldier sleeps peacefully, "where the sun woos out the day."

APPENDIX.

OL. ALLEN'S little semi-historical episode, originally published in "The Indicator: a Hesperian Leaflet," in 1901, attracted much attention throughout the United States, particularly in the Southern States, as indicated in the following, from the New York Sun of September 15, 1901:

RENFREW AND HIS FLAG.

THE CONFEDERATE SOLDIER WHO TOOK THE
STARS AND BARS TO A SOUTH-
SEA ISLAND.

[From the Louisville Courier-Journal.]

"During the past few weeks General Basil Duke and General John B. Castleman have been overwhelmed with letters from old Confederate soldiers, asking them what they knew of the story of Henry Clay Renfrew, an ex-Confederate who carried away the last flag of the Confederacy, and escaped with it to the Navigator Islands. Renfrew was supposed to have been a member of the Second

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Kentucky Cavalry under General Duke. A reporter called on General Duke to learn the facts in the case.

“‘No,’ said the General, ‘Renfrew’s name has slipped my memory. I thoroughly believe the truth of the story. The fact that his diary shows him to have been in both the Second and the Fourth Kentucky Cavalry is a point that goes far toward establishing the authenticity of the tale. If it were simply a cooked-up yarn the author would never have thought to put him in two regiments.

“‘The matter of which flag he took must be a bit uncertain. You know, we old Confederates were so busy that we could not worry much about flags. I don’t think I had a brigade flag. Renfrew probably got his company flag, as most companies had some emblem or pennon.

“‘I have talked to several of my men and they say they remember Renfrew perfectly. He came from somewhere near Midway. From what they tell me, he was a gallant soldier.’

“The reporter then hunted up one of the men, who was a private under General Duke.

“‘Renfrew?’ exclaimed the old soldier. ‘Of course I remember Renfrew. He was one of the finest fellows in the army. When I knew him he was about twenty-three years old and in Bart Jenkins’ Brigade. Renfrew, Bayless

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and Mosgrove were mess-mates. They were all college graduates and naturally drifted together in the company. They messed together all the time. Every one of them was a brave soldier. Bayless now lives in Cincinnati. I know that Renfrew was in that last march as one of President Jefferson Davis' escort. Most of that last command surrendered at Mount Sterling. Some of them, however, tried to work west to join Kirby Smith. The command split and I lost sight of Renfrew. Bayless, of Cincinnati, could tell all about him.'

"The story is to the effect that out in the far Navigator Isles floats an old Confederate flag that has never been surrendered. And now, all over the country, old soldiers are rousing themselves and overwhelming General Duke with inquiries concerning the story of the young Kentuckian who bravely bore that flag, then willingly expatriated himself rather than surrender it. Four years he followed it, and then, for twenty-five more, it floated proudly unsundered before his hut on a little Pacific Island.

"Now private Henry Clay Renfrew, C. S. A., lies buried in a rocky headland of that far isle. He lies so, that, rising his face would look toward the East, toward the land of his youth and his love. And over the grave of the dead soldier floats the tattered

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battle-flag; the Stars and Bars for which he gave up home and friends and all that made life tolerable. The native who befriended him takes care of the grave.

“Captain Martin Schuyler, formerly Captain in the Seventh Ohio Cavalry, brought back the story from the Philippines. He told it to Colonel T. F. Allen, also of the Seventh Ohio Cavalry. Captain Schuyler met the native and from him learned the story of the flag. The native told him that many years ago an American, who said he had drifted along the western coast of South America, after passing through Mexico, settled in the Navigator Islands and lived alone, flying before his hut the Confederate battle-flag, which he said was carried by the cavalry escort that travelled with Jefferson Davis in the last stages of his flight from Richmond before his capture by the Federals. The ex-soldier said that he had escaped with the flag, which he loved too well to permit him to live again under the United States flag. The American refugee lived his isolated life for years, dying three years ago and leaving his flag to his native friend, with the injunction that he never part with it.

“Captain Schuyler finally got the native’s permission to examine the dead American’s effects. He found papers and diaries indicating that the ex-Confederate was Henry Clay

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Renfrew, a member of either the Second or Fourth Kentucky Cavalry, or both, in the Confederate Army. In some places he referred to Colonel Basil Duke, as the Colonel, and Captain John B. Castleman as his Captain; in others to Colonel Henry Giltner and Captain Bart Jenkins as his Colonel and Captain respectively. He wrote of Brainard Bayless and Dallas Mosgrove as his chums. In one of the diaries Renfrew referred at length to the last days of the Confederacy. Then followed the statement that he was with the last body of organized Confederate soldiers that escorted Jefferson Davis, General Duke commanding. And that when Duke's surrender was agreed upon, the writer took the flag from the staff, concealed it about his body and escaped, with the intention of taking the flag to some foreign land."

In his charming book entitled "The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come," published since the above, Mr. John Fox, jr., the distinguished Kentucky author, having Col. Allen's episode of "The Flag Still There" in mind, makes frequent mention of "Renfrew the Silent," and in one of the concluding chapters refers to the self-exiled Confederate

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soldier and his Unconquered Banner as follows:

“Renfrew the Silent was waiting at the smouldering fire. He neither looked up nor made any comment when General Hunt spoke his determination to surrender. His own face grew more sullen and he reached his hand into his breast and pulled from his faded jacket the tattered colors that he once had borne.

“‘These will never be lowered as long as I live,’ he said, ‘nor afterward if I can prevent it.’ And lowered they never were. On a little island in the Pacific Ocean, this strange soldier, after leaving his property and his kindred forever, lived out his life among the natives with this blood-stained remnant of the Stars and Bars over his hut, and when he died the flag was hung over his grave, and above that grave to-day the tattered emblem still sways in Southern air.”

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