

The  
CRUEL SIDE  
of WAR





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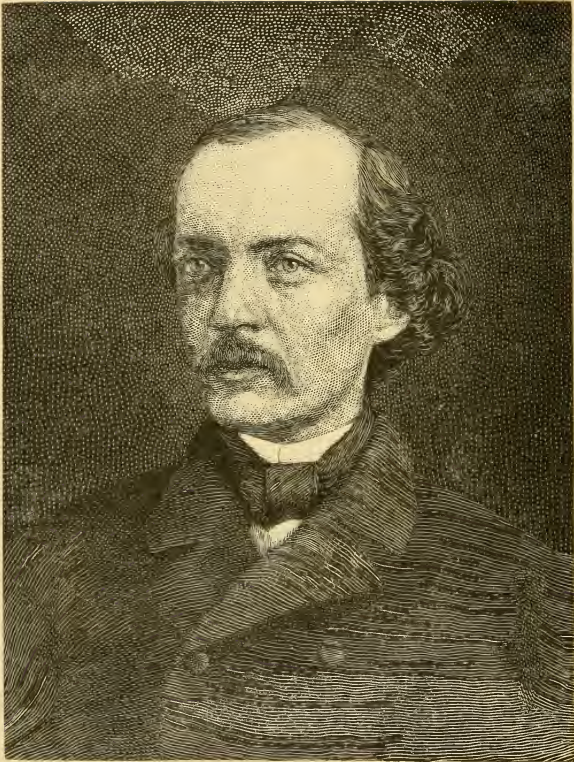


THE CRUEL SIDE OF WAR









FREDERICK LAW OL MSTED.

# THE CRUEL SIDE OF WAR

WITH THE

## ARMY OF THE POTOMAC

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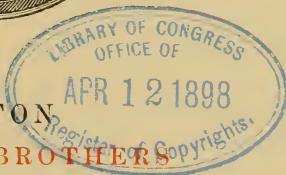
LETTERS

FROM THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE UNITED STATES SANITARY  
COMMISSION

DURING THE PENINSULAR CAMPAIGN IN VIRGINIA IN 1862

BY

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY



BOSTON

ROBERTS BROTHERS

1898

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BY KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY



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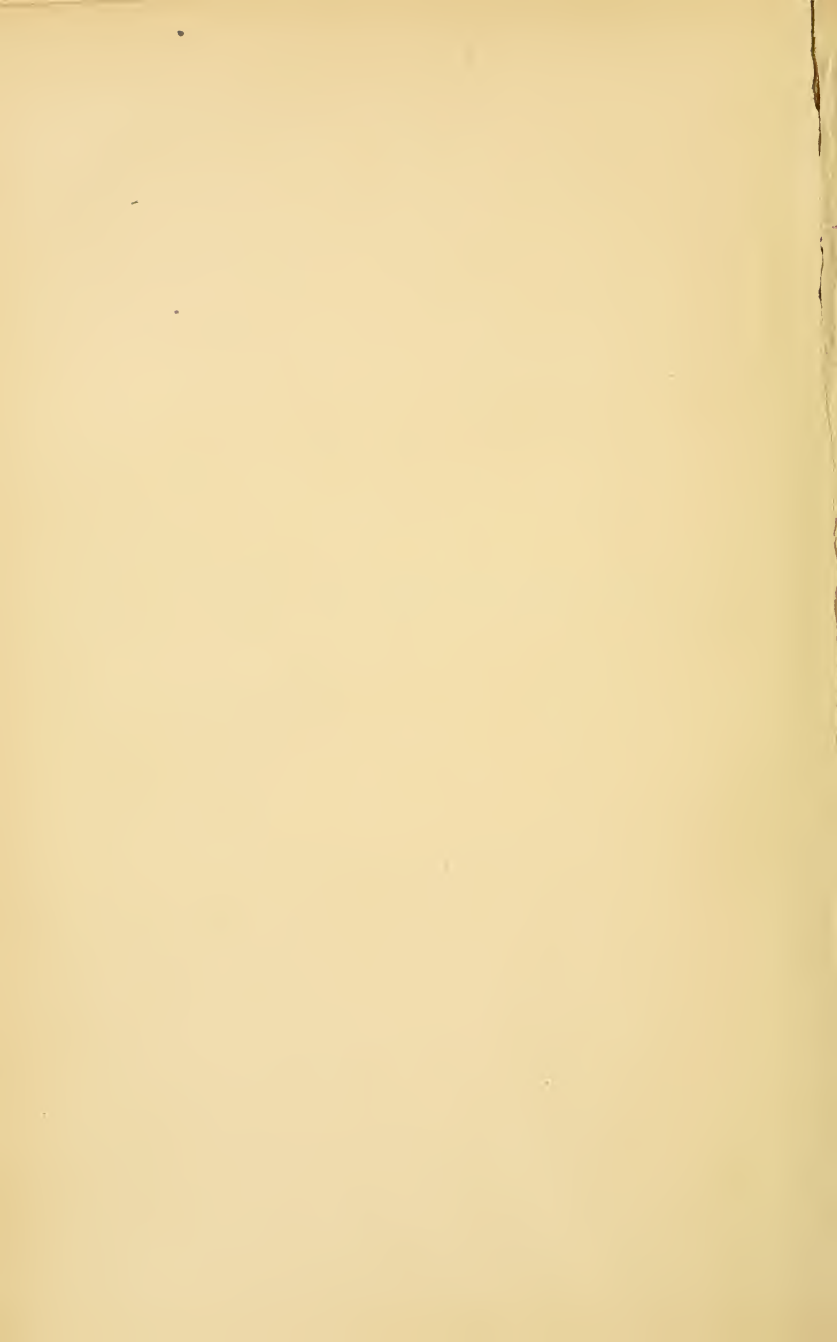
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THE CRUEL SIDE OF WAR



## WRITER'S NOTE.

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THE extremely personal character of these Letters obliges me to say that it was the affectionate interest of the Massachusetts Commandery of the Loyal Legion in all that proved the comradeship of those who took a part, however small, in the war which led to their original publication.

The Commandery having lately made me a present of the plates of the book, it is now republished, though perhaps scarcely worth it. The name is changed from "The Other Side of War" to "The Cruel Side of War," because it was so frequently mentioned, and even noticed, as "The Other Side of *the* War," which conveyed an impression of some political meaning.

THE SÄTER,  
JACKSON, N. H., 1898.





## PREFATORY NOTE.

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MILITARY ORDER OF THE LOYAL LEGION OF THE UNITED STATES.  
COMMANDERY OF THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

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MOST of the writings relating to the War of the Rebellion have been confined to accounts of battles, or to adventures so closely connected with battles as to seem an essential part of the conflict itself. The book here given to the public as "The Other Side of War" touches on matters almost entirely outside the noise and smoke, the glory and pomp, of military operations. Yet it presents scenes so intimately related to the army that they seem an essential part of a soldier's experience.

The general work of the Sanitary Commission has been fully set forth in histories and in its own invaluable papers and reports. This more personal record of its earlier labors tells a story not elsewhere told, of how it began, and under what circumstances it first carried on its heroic work. As such, these remembrances of the HOSPITAL TRANSPORT SERVICE are

presented by the Commandery of the State of Massachusetts of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States to its Companions as a portion of its contribution to the history of those eventful days, and in grateful acknowledgment of the loyalty and devotion of those men and women whose fortitude and grace have given to the Sanitary Commission its honored place in the story of the great conflict.

ARNOLD A. RAND,  
WILLIAM P. SHREVE,  
HENRY STONE,

*Committee on Library.*

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE United States Sanitary Commission was an organization of private gentlemen whose voluntary and unpaid services were accepted by Government at the beginning of the late Civil War to make up the deficiencies of the Medical Department of the army.

It was the outgrowth of a demand made by the women of the country; for in the great uprising nothing was more marked than that the principle which actuated the nation was shared alike by men and women. As the men mustered for the battle-field, so the women mustered in churches, school-houses, and parlors, working before they well knew at what to work, and calling everywhere for instruction. What were they to make? Where were they to send? The busy hands went on, but where was the work to go? Some supplied regiments with articles that were practically useless; others sent to various points on suggestions afterwards shown to be untrustworthy. Little circles and associations of women were multiplying, like rings in the water, over the

face of the whole country; but they were all in need of guidance and of information, and they felt it. Time and the Sanitary Commission were to show them that by a great united effort their work was to broaden out into a fundamental good to the whole army; that lives were to be saved, the vital force protected; and that women, led by the experience of men, were to bear no small part in helping to maintain the efficiency of the troops, and thus to share upon the field itself the work of husbands and brothers.<sup>1</sup>

At a meeting of women informally called in New York, April 25, 1861, the providential idea of attempting to organize the whole benevolence of the women of the country into a general and central Association ripened into a plan, and took shape in an appeal addressed to the women of New York and others "already engaged in preparing against the time of wounds and sickness in the army." This met with such an answer as showed the deep-felt need of it; and thus began the "Women's Central Relief Association" in New York.

<sup>1</sup> The earliest of these Associations of women were formed in April, 1861, within fifteen days after the President's call for seventy-five thousand men. The names of those organized in April that have remained on public record (there were others) are: Soldiers' Aid Societies of Cleveland, Ohio; Bridgeport, Conn.; Charlestown and Lowell, Mass.; Women's Central Relief Association, New York; Women's Aid Society, Newport, R. I.

But still the need of instruction, and the futility of trying to carry on the Association without better knowledge of the work to be done, pressed anxiously on the minds of its members. At this juncture the Rev. Dr. Bellows came forward with the sound advice to make inquiry from the only safe sources, — to ascertain first what the Government was prepared to do, and would do, and then to aid it by working with it and doing what it could not; in short, to act upon information derived from the Government itself. Accompanied by three gentlemen, afterwards members of the Commission, he went to Washington, where he discovered, in that moment of national emergency and inadequacy, the need of a larger machinery and a far more extensive system than any yet contemplated; and thus, under difficulties which need not be stated here, he laid the foundation of the United States Sanitary Commission. The far-seeing wisdom of those men gained on that day for suffering humanity the greatest relief ever, perhaps, effected by any one organization.

Their success was the result of the forces of patriotism and love which began to bear with strength upon the Government. For not only did the nation, in its merciful and patriotic instincts, need the Commission as its guide and means, but the Government needed the Commission to protect it against the vast tide of home-feelings and the ardor of a people

pouring down upon it in indiscriminate benevolence, and clogging the machinery, already too limited, through which alone a real good to the soldier could be applied. It needed, even if it did not desire, something to eke out and supplement the existing system. That was small enough, to be sure, for it was a system made for a few thousand men suddenly called on to provide for an army of several hundred thousand ; but at least it was the organized nucleus of something larger. The Commission came in, with pledges of obedience, to supplement and aid the Medical Department in the difficult work before it.

The powers granted to this Commission by President Lincoln and the Secretary of War, June 9, 1861, were substantially as follows. It was styled "A Commission of Inquiry and Advice in respect to the Sanitary Interests of the United States Forces ;" it was to inquire into the *matériel* of the volunteer army, to inspect recruits, and examine the working of the system by which they were enlisted ; it was to keep itself informed as to the sanitary condition of the regiments, their camps, sites, drainage, etc. ; as to the means of preserving and restoring the health and promoting the general comfort and efficiency of the troops ; as to the proper provision of cooks, nurses, and hospitals ; and as to all other subjects of a like nature. On the information thus acquired it was to base such suggestions to the

Medical Bureau and the War Department as should bring to bear upon the health, comfort, and morale of the army the fullest teachings of sanitary science.<sup>1</sup> It was also to give to the Medical Department, wherever that unavoidably failed, such supplementary aid in the care of the sick and wounded as the generosity of the people, and especially the efforts of the women of the country, might enable it to give.

This brief Introduction does not allow space for any account of the actual work of the Commission; but the outline of its duties just given will show the reader that such an enterprise, springing up in the minds of private gentlemen, needed a vast and wise organization to make it equal to its own design. Fortunately a man of experience, whose name is well known for other services to his countrymen, was at hand. The organizing genius of Mr. Fred-

<sup>1</sup> During the first two years of the War (to May, 1863), eight hundred and seventy regiments in camp had been inspected, and fourteen hundred and eighty-two Reports received, together with a vast array of hygienic and physiological facts, all of which were recorded and tabulated by Mr. E. B. Elliot and Mr. T. J. O'Connell, actuaries of the Commission, and reported upon, in a treatise of lasting value to military science and vital statistics, by Dr. B. A. Gould, of Boston.

Special inspections of all the general hospitals in the country were made by Dr. Henry G. Clark, of Boston, with a corps of sixty assistants, and reported upon, in twenty-five hundred folio pages, to the Medical Committee of the Commission, — Dr. W. H. Van Buren, Dr. C. R. Agnew, Dr. Wolcott Gibbs. These and all other records of the Sanitary Commission are preserved in the Astor Library, New York.

erick Law Olmsted made the Sanitary Commission what it practically became,— a great machine running side by side with the Medical Bureau wherever the armies went; an authorized power fitted to seek out and relieve suffering wherever and however the Government failed in doing so; an organized system where no inefficiency was tolerated, where the work was thoroughly and conscientiously done, but which, nevertheless, was so wisely controlled that it not only did not give offence to the Military authorities, but wrung from them a hearty and universal approval.<sup>1</sup>

An enterprise springing from the hearts of the people, and planting itself firmly on their generosity, was not likely to fail for want of means. During its existence it received four millions, nine hundred and twenty-four thousand, four hundred and eighty dollars in money (\$4,924,480.99), and the value of fifteen millions (\$15,000,000) in supplies. But it is estimated that \$2,000,000 more were raised by its Branches, which they expended themselves, and which, though

<sup>1</sup> Members of the United States Sanitary Commission : Henry W. Bellows, D.D., president ; Alexander Dallas Bache, LL.D., vice-president ; George T. Strong, treasurer ; Frederick Law Olmsted, general secretary ; Professor John S. Newberry, Western secretary ; Dr. W. H. Van Buren ; Dr. C. R. Agnew ; Dr. Wolcott Gibbs ; Dr. Elisha Harris ; Charles J. Stillé ; Dr. S. G. Howe ; Bishop Clark, of Rhode Island ; Horace Binney ; Rev. J. H. Heywood ; Hon. Mark Skinner ; J. Huntingdon Wolcott ; Ezra B. M. McCagg ; Fairman Rogers ; Robert C. Wood, Surgeon U. S. A. ; G. W. Cullum, General U. S. A. ; Alexander E. Shiras, General U. S. A.



equally serviceable for its purposes, never came into its treasury.<sup>1</sup> The supplies and the proceeds of the great "Sanitary Fairs" (amounting to \$2,736,868.84) came chiefly from the women of the country, and were increased in value by the labor which they gave in making up materials. Branches of the Sanitary Commission, under the control of women, were established in several of the great cities. Each Branch had a wide district from which it derived its supplies; and throughout these districts were "Centres of Collection" in the lesser cities, where, from every town and village, the supplies flowed in. The work done by the gentlewomen of the land in the offices and storehouses of the Branch Commissions was that of an immense shipping business. The cases came in from every part of their district of supply; the goods were examined, sorted, and stamped "U. S. Sanitary Commission." Each kind of every article was then repacked in separate cases, which were closed up, marked, and held ready on demand from the Central Office in Washington. Once a week an account of the stock in hand and of its distribution was sent

<sup>1</sup> Probably the amount was much greater. On a tabulated list of donations Rhode Island is credited with \$11,823.96. But the writer received from the city of Newport (unsolicited), in money and supplies, rather more than \$20,000, — which was used in the service of the Commission, though it did not appear on its records. It would be nearer the truth to place the sum given by the people to the people's army through the Sanitary Commission at twenty-five million of dollars.

from each Branch, to the Central Office, and the relief agents with the armies who had received these supplies accounted for them weekly to the same office; so that a knowledge of all articles in the possession of the Commission and of their distribution throughout the United States, was available at any moment to the central head. In like manner, when pressing needs were telegraphed to Washington from distant fields of action, the news was passed on quickly to the Branches, through them to their numberless Societies, and in a few hours the women of the distant towns were at work to supply them. Mr. A. J. Bloor, the Assistant-Secretary of the Commission in Washington, bore the heavy responsibility of this department.

Thus organized almost before the War began, the Sanitary Commission was ready to meet the first call for the relief of troops in active service. In the West at Gauley Bridge, Fort Donelson, and Pittsburg Landing; in the South at New Orleans, New-Berne, and Beaufort; in the East at Ball's Bluff and Drainesville, — it began during the first year of the War its great work in the field. During the winter of 1861-62, while the Army of the Potomac lay in cantonments around Washington, the condition of each regiment was examined by the inspectors of the Commission, and the standard of health and sanitary practices raised by their advice and assist-

ance given courteously to the regimental officers, and almost as courteously received.<sup>1</sup>

When the Peninsular campaign in Virginia opened, in 1862, it was found that the Medical Department was unable to meet the needs of an army actively employed in a low, swampy, and malarious region. Seeing this, and acting with the consent of the Medical Bureau, the Sanitary Commission applied to the Secretary of War for the use of some large steamers to be fitted up for the reception and conveyance of the sick and wounded. The Quartermaster-General at once ordered as many as could carry a thousand men to be detailed to the Commission, which, on its part, entered into an agreement with the Medical Bureau to take charge and proper care of at least that number of sick and wounded.

The first vessel, the "Daniel Webster," was assigned to the Commission April 25, 1862. Mr. Olmsted himself took charge of her. A hospital company and stores were immediately embarked, and she reached the York River April 30, being refitted

<sup>1</sup> For all information relating to the Sanitary Commission, the reader is referred to the following sources: History of the United States Sanitary Commission, C. J. Stillé (pp. 553, 8vo, Hurd & Houghton, 1866); United States Sanitary Commission, Henry W. Bellows, D.D. (in Johnson's "Universal Encyclopædia"); United States Sanitary Commission, K. P. Wormeley (pp. 300, 12mo, Little, Brown & Co., Boston, 1863); Archives of the Sanitary Commission, deposited in the Astor Library, New York.

as a hospital on the voyage down. The army was then before Yorktown, from which it advanced a few days later. The ship was ready for duty on her arrival; her stores, of which she brought a large quantity over and above her own needs, were placed in a warehouse ashore (additional supplies coming down in tenders), and the work of relieving the sick in camp and hospital at once began. Meantime the "Daniel Webster" shipped two hundred and fifty sick men and carried them to New York, part of the hospital company going with her, and part remaining behind with Mr. Olmsted. It was on her second voyage from New York to Yorktown that the writer of the following letters went down in her, to join the "Hospital Transport Service."

These Letters may be allowed, after this brief Introduction, to tell their own story. It is proper to say that they are published exactly as they were written. If they have any merit, it is only so far as they photograph the life of which they tell. To touch them up and improve them as a picture would destroy this merit, if it exists. Nothing has been omitted except a few details having no reference to the work in hand: about that work nothing was found that it seemed necessary to alter or suppress.

K. P. W.

NEWPORT, R. I., 1888.

## THE OTHER SIDE OF WAR.

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NEWPORT, R. I., April 27, 1862.

DEAR A.,— I am thinking of going to Yorktown. How should you view it? The Sanitary Commission has to-day sent off from Washington a large steamship to be fitted up as a hospital transport. Mrs. Griffin has gone down in her with Mr. Olmsted, and by his request. I have great confidence in her. She is a lady, whose presence is guarantee enough that I, or any other woman, may go there with propriety. She is very efficient, and I should be satisfied in working under her. In short, I have written to her to send for me if they want me; the letter went yesterday. I suppose this will rather startle you. But why should it not be done? My work here is closing. Colonel Vinton (Quartermaster-General in New York) sends me to-day the flannel for the last ten thousand

shirts which close my present contract ; I have just drained the community dry as to hospital supplies, and the churches have lately sent in \$1,800 (making \$5,500 which I have received since we began in April, 1861). A drawing together of circumstances seems to point to this thing, and I enter upon it as if it were obviously the next thing to be done.

I have said nothing about it to any one, nor shall I till I hear from the Commission. You must stand by me if the plan meets with disapproval here.

May 7.

I RECEIVED a telegram from Mrs. Griffin to-day, telling me that the "Daniel Webster" steamship had arrived at New York with the first load of sick and wounded, and that if I wish to join the Hospital Transport Service, I must be in New York to-morrow morning. So I leave to-night. Have telegraphed you to that effect.

U. S. FLOATING HOSPITAL "DANIEL WEBSTER,"  
OFF SHIP POINT, May 10.

DEAR FRIEND,— I write with a pencil, because it is so comfortable. We left New York yes-

terday at 5 P. M., and came down the bay through wonderful effects of evening light and shade and color. We stayed on deck by moonlight till eleven o'clock, when I turned in, to sleep all night, and get up lazily to breakfast at nine this morning. Since then I have helped to make our hospital-flag, and have dreamed away the day, lying on deck in the sweet air, where I could see the bluest sky and the bluest water (when the vessel dipped), and nothing else. Four ladies are attached to the ship, — Mrs. William Preston Griffin, Mrs. Trotter,<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Blatchford, and I. As far as I can judge, our duty is to be very much that of a housekeeper. We attend to the beds, the linen, the clothing of the patients; we have a pantry and store-room, and are required to do all the cooking for the sick, and see that it is properly distributed according to the surgeons' orders; we are also to have a general superintendence over the condition of the wards and over the nurses, who are all men. What else, time and experience will show, I suppose.

I am inclined to like the surgeon-in-charge,

<sup>1</sup> Now Mrs. Charles Henry Parker, of Boston.

Dr. Grymes, very much. He commands here ; the captain, named Bletham, — a truly honest, kindly, sailor-like man, — being, under present circumstances, only second. Dr. Grymes is suffering from consumption, and to-day he is hanging about, languid and nerveless ; they tell me that to-morrow he will be taut, tireless, hawk-eyed, and the spirit of an emergency. There are eight medical students on board (“dressers” they are called), and perhaps twenty other young men, ward-masters and nurses, — all volunteers. The Government furnishes the vessel, and the rations of all on board. My stateroom, which I share with Mrs. Griffin, is on deck ; it opens directly to the outer air, and has a large window and ventilator.

Since writing the above, I have done my first work, — making the beds. How you would have laughed to see me, without a hoop, mounted on the ledge of the second tier of berths, making the beds on the third tier !

OFF YORKTOWN, May 11.

UP at five o'clock to give the last finishing touch to the wards. At seven called to break-



fast, and found Mr. Olmsted and Mr. Knapp on board; McClellan nine miles beyond West Point. We are to get *sick* men on board this afternoon, and sail to-morrow, — unless Mr. Olmsted wants us to go elsewhere; Mrs. Griffin and I have volunteered to do so.

Last evening, as we entered the Chesapeake, we saw the crimson glow of a great fire in the direction of Fortress Monroe or Norfolk; and this morning early we heard the dull, heavy sound of an explosion or brief cannonading in the same direction. We are now going ashore to look at Yorktown, for the wards are all in perfect order, and the men can't be shipped till evening. The press of work here is overwhelming, they say. I am writing with everybody about me. Surgeons are coming off to us in tugs and row-boats, clamorous for brandy, beef-stock, lemons, and all stimulating and supporting things.

Good-bye! *This is life.* It is by mere luck that I am here, for Mrs. Griffin never received my letter, and only heard by chance that I had written it.

HEADQUARTERS U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION,  
STEAMER "WILSON SMALL,"  
OFF YORKTOWN, May 12.

DEAR A., — Transferred to this boat. Mr. Olmsted came on board at twelve o'clock last night and ordered Mrs. Griffin and me off the "Daniel Webster." We had just received, stowed, and fed two hundred and forty-five men, most of them very ill with typhoid fever. The ship sailed at eight o'clock this morning, and will be in New York to-morrow night. Mrs. Trotter went back in charge of our department, and Mrs. Bellows (wife of the president of the Sanitary Commission) accompanied her.

The "Webster" could not get up to the wharf, so the sick men were brought off to us in tug-boats. As each man came on board (raised from one vessel and lowered to the second deck of ours in cradles), he was registered and "bunked." In my ward, as each man was laid in his berth, I gave him brandy and water, and after all were placed, tea and bread and butter, if they could take it, or more brandy or beef-tea if they were sinking. Of course it was painful; but there was so much to be done,

and done quietly and quickly, that there was no time to be conscious of pain. But fever patients *are* very dreadful, and their moans distressing. The men were all patient and grateful. Some said, "You don't know what it is to me to see you." "This is heaven, after what I've suffered." "To think of a woman being here to help me!" One little drummer-boy thought he was going to die instantly. I said: "Pooh! you'll walk off the ship at New York. Take your tea." He was quite hurt that I could ask it; but presently I found he had demolished a huge slice of bread and butter, and was demanding more. Then the doctors made their rounds; and after that, such as were in a condition to be handled were put into clean hospital clothing. Some, however, were allowed to rest until morning.

We did not get them all settled and the watches set till 1 A. M; after which Mrs. Griffin and I packed up, to leave the ship at daybreak. Oh! if I had it to do over again, I'd have an organized carpet-bag, with compartments for everything. As it was, all was poked in and stamped upon.

This is a little boat, headquarters of the Sanitary Commission, Mr. Olmsted, the General Secretary, in charge of the whole transport service, and Mr. Knapp, his second in command, living on board. At present she is filled in every available corner by severely wounded men brought from the battle-field of Williamsburg, — wounded chiefly in the legs and thighs. To-day Mrs. Griffin and I are supernumeraries, the ladies on board being sufficient for all purposes. They are, so far as I have yet ascertained, Mrs. George Strong, wife of the Treasurer of the Sanitary Commission, Miss Mary Gardiner, of New York, Mrs. Joseph Howland, wife of the colonel of a regiment in the advance, a tall, symmetrical Miss Whetten,<sup>1</sup> and a pretty little creature, half nun, half soubrette, whose name I don't know. They all seem easy and at home in their work, as if they had been at it all their lives. I use my eyes and learn, and have taken a hand here and there as occasion offered. Terrible things happened yesterday. Many of the wounded of the Williamsburg battle were found lying in the woods with their wounds not dressed, and they

<sup>1</sup> Now Mrs. Gamble, of Intervale, N. H.

starving. Mrs. Strong saw them, and says it was like going over a battle-field.

There is a general cry throughout the female department for "Georgy." "Where is Georgy?" "Oh, if Georgy were here!" "Georgy" is on board a hospital boat called the "Knickerbocker," which appears to be missing. As I have nothing to do, I speculate a good deal as to who and what "Georgy" may be.

Yesterday we went all over Yorktown. I sent a few relics to Ralph by the "Daniel Webster," one of them much envied, — an iron pulley from the celebrated gun which McClellan telegraphed had been "impertinent this morning," and which afterwards burst, to the great relief of our men. It is amazing that Yorktown was so soon evacuated. Its strength seems very great, not only from its defences, but from the lay of the land, — range after range of hill and ravine, every hill commanding the plain over which our army had to creep up, and which was also covered by the water-batteries at Gloucester, until the gunboats silenced them. We went round the fortifications and saw everything, the siege-guns, eighty of them; the firs,

houses of the men ; the ten thousand abandoned tents, many of which were still standing. Guards were placed about the magazines ; and at various points, in the paths or by the way-side, we came upon placards marked "Dangerous," as a warning of torpedoes. I saw the fragments of a flour-barrel in which one was buried, killing the man who dipped into it ; also a walnut-tree under which the earth was torn up, and where six men were yesterday blown to fragments by somebody stepping on the fuse of one. We saw what was once Lafayette's headquarters, — now supposed to be a prison, where the prisoners seemed to be very little guarded or regarded ; then we paid a visit to General Van Alen, commanding the post, and called upon Miss Dix at the Hospital, — Lord Cornwallis's headquarters ; the best house in the place, with a wide-panelled hall and staircase. The rooms above were crowded with wounded men, all looking clean and comfortable. It is wonderful how in the midst of our own excitements these historical places impressed us, and it was hard wough to believe that the confusion, destruction, 'th about us were making a new history.

We did all this in three hours before the sick men could be brought off to the "Webster." We shuffle about without hoops; Mrs. Griffin says it is *de rigueur* that they shall not be worn in hospital service. I like it very well on board ship: it is becoming to Miss Whetten, who is symmetry itself; but it must be owned that some of us look rather mediæval. I have no idea what we are to do, and I ask no questions. Mr. Olmsted is the law-giver; he knows the fact of my existence, and will use me when he wants me. It is very cold, and the air has the texture of your worst Boston weather, — steel-filings and all.

"WILSON SMALL," May 13.

DEAR MOTHER, — Yours of the ninth received. The mails come with sufficient regularity. We all rush at the letter-bag, and think ourselves blighted beings if we get nothing. Yesterday I came on board this boat, where there are thirty very bad cases, — four or five amputations. One poor fellow, a lieutenant in the Thirty-second New York Volunteers, shot through the knee, and enduring more than mortal agony; a fair-haired boy of seventeen, shot through the lungs,

every breath he draws hissing through the wound; another man, a poet, with seven holes in him, but irrepressibly poetic and very comical. He dictated to me last night a foolscap sheet full of poetry composed for the occasion. His appearance as he sits up in bed, swathed in a nondescript garment or poncho, constructed for him by Miss Whetten out of an old green table-cloth, is irresistibly funny. There is also a captain of the Sixteenth New York Volunteers, mortally wounded while leading his company against a regiment. He is said to measure six feet seven inches,—and I believe it, looking at him as he lies there on a cot, pieced out at the foot with two chairs.<sup>1</sup>

I took my first actual watch last night; and this morning I feel the same ease about the work which yesterday I was surprised to see in others. We begin the day by getting them all washed, and freshened up, and breakfasted. Then the surgeons and dressers make their rounds, open the wounds, apply the remedies, and replace the bandages. This is an awful hour; I sat with my fingers in my ears this

<sup>1</sup> Now General N. M. Curtis, the hero of Fort Fisher.



morning. When it is over, we go back to the men and put the ward in order once more; re-making several of the beds, and giving clean handkerchiefs with a little cologne or bay-water on them,—so prized in the sickening atmosphere of wounds. We sponge the bandages over the wounds constantly,—which alone carries us round from cot to cot almost without stopping, except to talk to some, read to others, or write letters for them; occasionally giving medicine or brandy, etc., according to order. Then comes dinner, which we serve out ourselves, feeding those who can't feed themselves. After that we go off duty, and get first washed and then fed ourselves; our dinner-table being the top of an old stove, with slices of bread for plates, fingers for knives and forks, and carpet-bags for chairs,—all this because everything available is being used for our poor fellows. After dinner other ladies keep the same sort of watch through the afternoon and evening, while we sit on the floor of our state-rooms resting, and perhaps writing letters, as I am doing now.

Meantime this boat has run up the York River

as far as West Point (where a battle was fought on Thursday), in obedience to a telegram from the Medical Director of the Army, requesting the Commission to take off two hundred wounded men immediately. A transport accompanies us. But we pay little heed to the outside world, and though we have been under-way and running here and there for hours, I have only just found it out. Don't fret if you do not hear from me. I may go to Washington on a hospital transport, or — to Richmond with the army! and you may not hear of me for a week. Let no one pity or praise us. I admit painfulness; but no one can tell how sweet it is to be the drop of comfort to so much agony.

“WILSON SMALL,” May 14.

DEAR FRIEND, — Last evening we parted from all our poor fellows, except Captain Curtis, the extensive hero, who is said to-day to have a chance for life. Our men were put on board the “Elm City,” which has been detailed to the Commission. She filled up this morning with four hundred and forty patients, and sailed for Washington. Mrs. George Strong takes charge of the women's

department, and Miss Whetten goes with her. I was sent on board this morning to assist them, and remained there till the boat sailed. The "Elm City" is a large river-steamboat, with wide spaces on all her decks, where badly wounded men can be laid in rows on cots and mattresses, — they could not be put in bunks or berths. She cannot make a sea-passage, and is therefore sent up the Potomac to Washington.

It is an immense piece of work to get the patients (many of them very low, or in great agony) on board and into their beds, and stimulated and fed and made comfortable. So much is needed, — quick eyes and ears, and, above all, some one to keep severe order in the pantry, or rather the kitchen for the sick-food. Mrs. Griffin is magnificent at that. I never saw her hurried or worried for a moment; consequently she saves time and temper, and does the very best that can be done. She spent this morning on the "Elm City" watching over three men until they died, receiving their last wishes, which she is now writing to their wives.

You will get little public information from

me. I am told we went some way up the Pamunky River yesterday. Mr. Olmsted landed, and went over the Williamsburg battle-field with incredible difficulty and jolting. It is two and a half miles long, with the fences all broken down. The enemy are expected to make a desperate stand at Bottom Bridge — wherever that may be. The army is now making its way along the banks of the Pamunky; great regret is felt that General McDowell was not allowed to co-operate at Gloucester. The spirit of our men, their confidence in their leaders, their pride in belonging to McClellan and the Army of the Potomac, is splendid, so far as I see it; and everybody says the same. Many fine traits of character come out,—such as their self-forgetfulness and tenderness in caring for sick comrades—their endurance of suffering, and even contempt for it. A poor little boy of seventeen, shot through the lungs, was so unwilling to speak of himself, never murmuring, but roused into excitement on the arrival of the New York papers with accounts of the battles. I began to read to him about the battle of Williamsburg, where he was wounded; but he gurgled out:

“Not *that!* I know all about that. What did our boys do *next?*”

The fire we saw on our way across the Chesapeake was the burning of the Navy-yard at Norfolk, and the dull explosion which we heard was the blowing up of the “Merrimac.”

“WILSON SMALL,” May 14.

DEAR MOTHER, — If I can write amid all the fun and nonsense that is going on around me, I will try to give you a general idea of the state of things here. The “Elm City,” filled with wounded men, sailed this morning. The “S. R. Spaulding,” a large ocean steamship, is to be fitted up for hospital service; and that appears to be our next work. Meantime “Georgy” has returned with another vessel, the “Knickerbocker,” in perfect order. It seems that the Quartermaster’s department ran away with the boat for some purpose of its own, carrying the ladies in her,—for Georgy is a lady, sister of Mrs. Howland.<sup>1</sup> Miss Rosalie Butler accompanied her. They made the most of their time, and have brought back the runaway boat in perfect hospital order. I’ve just been over her. They

<sup>1</sup> Miss Georgeanna M. Woolsey, now Mrs. Francis Bacon of New Haven, Conn.

have had her cleansed from top to toe, that is, from the hold to the hurricane-deck. The "Knickerbocker," you must know, is a large river-steamboat, and is intended for surgical cases. Then they prepared the cots, mattresses, and bunks, and made the beds; arranged every ward with all necessary appliances; filled the linen-closets with the proper quantity of bed-linen, hospital-clothing, socks, bandages, lint, rags, etc. (which were packed in cases and bales), got ready the hospital-kitchen, stole a stove for it, as far as I can make out, and had all the necessary stores unpacked and moved into places where they would be at hand when needed. These girls must be splendidly efficient. It is not the *doing* it, but the knowing how it should be done, and handling the whole affair with as much ease as if they were arranging a doll's house, that delights me.

We are all now sitting idly on carpet-bags or on the floor, in a little covered saloon or passage on to which our staterooms open. Our dinner-table, the stove, is being removed, and Dr. Ware is improvising a better, with a plank across the railing of the stairs. The moment

the pressure is taken off, we all turn-to to “be as funny as we can.” I am astonished at the cheerful devotion — whole-souled and whole-bodied devotion — of the surgeon and medical students attached to this boat.<sup>1</sup> These young men toil day and night at the severest work, quick, intelligent, and tender. Their business is to ship the men, move them carefully from one boat to another, and register their names and all their belongings; to attend to the dispensaries, keeping them amply supplied with stores; to give medical and surgical attendance, dress the wounds, and often to sit up all night, after working hard all day. Then they turn in wherever a mattress comes handy, take a long sleep, and come out of it refreshed and full of fun, — in which we join until the next work comes, and then we are all fresh to work in cheerful concert together. This seems the best way to do the work; nothing morbid comes of it, — which is the danger.

We are now making ready to run up the Pamunky River as far as the advance of the army

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Robert Ware, surgeon; Messrs. David Haight, Charles Woolsey, George Wheelock.

at Cumberland. This boat, the "Wilson Small," is disabled. She was twice run into to-day, — the second time by the huge "Vanderbilt," which nearly demolished her. We are to be towed by the "Knickerbocker" (for we can't even get up steam) as far as West Point, where there is a ship-yard. You must get a good map and follow us and the army, — or rather the army and us. General Franklin's corps, with those of Porter and Sedgwick, are at Cumberland and New Kent Court-House. This is the *right* wing. The *left* is moving towards the Chickahominy at Bottom Bridge, where the enemy are supposed to be rallying for a stand. Meantime McDowell is coming down from Fredericksburg *at last*, Banks from the direction of Gordonsville, and perhaps Burnside may get up along the line of the Petersburg Railway. The general opinion is that a fearful struggle will take place before Richmond. Alas! But it is not a battle which destroys so many lives as it is the terrible decimating diseases brought on by exposure and hardships and the climate of marshes and water-courses. The majority of the cases of illness which I have seen were men who dropped



exhausted from the army on its march, and had painfully made their way to the banks of creeks and rivers, where they were picked up by passing boats and brought down to us. A number of men who came to-day (one lad who died almost immediately) were in the battle of West Point, and took the fever from exposure and fatigue afterwards.

A telegram is just brought on board, saying that a hundred sick men are waiting at Bigelow's Landing for transportation; the telegram says, "They are dying in the rain." This message is to the United States Medical officer at Yorktown; but he seems to think the obvious thing to do is to hand it over at once to the Sanitary Commission. Mr. Olmsted is not on board; when he is found I suppose we shall start. The "Knickerbocker" is all ready for three hundred men, and I think it likely we shall run up in her and be at work all night; but nothing is too much with such efficiency as we have on board, — order, calmness, promptitude. I only wish we might be kept working together.

Mrs. ———'s mother writes dismal letters, which

try her very much, — saying, for instance, that a lady must put away all delicacy and refinement for this work. Nothing could be more false. It is not too much to say that delicacy and refinement and the fact of being a gentlewoman could never *tell* more than they do here. I read your letter to Mrs. — to make her envious.

“WILSON SMALL,” May 16.

DEAR FRIEND, — I have asked every one within reach what day of the week it is: *in vain*. Reference to Mr. Olmsted, who knows everything, establishes that it is Friday. Is it one week, or five, since I left New York?

As I wrote the last words of my last letter, the “Elizabeth,” our supply-boat, came alongside with Mr. Olmsted and Mr. Knapp, and just behind them a steamer with one hundred and eighty sick on board. All hands were at once alert. The sick men were to be put on board the “Knickerbocker,” whither we all went at once, armed with our precious spirit-lamps. Meantime Mr. Olmsted read a telegram we had received in his absence, saying that a hundred sick were lying at Bigelow’s Landing and

“dying in the rain.” Mr. Knapp took charge of the “Elizabeth,” saying, “Who volunteers to go up for them?” Three young men, Miss Helen Gilson, and I followed him. Not a moment was lost, — Mr. Knapp would not even let me go back for a shawl, — and the tug was off.

The “Elizabeth” is our store-tender or supply-boat. Her main-deck is piled from deck to deck with boxes. The first thing done is to pick out six cases of pillows, six of quilts, one of brandy, and a cask of bread. Then all the rest are lowered into the hold. Meantime I make for the kitchen, where I find a remarkable old black aunty and a fire. I dive into her pots and pans, I wheedle her out of her green tea (the black having given out), and soon I have eight bucketsful of tea and pyramids of bread and butter. Miss Gilson and the young men have spread the cleared main-deck with two layers of quilts and rows of pillows a man’s length apart, and we are ready for the men some time before we reach them; for the night is dark and rainy, and the boat has got aground, and it is fully ten o’clock before the men are

brought alongside. The poor fellows are led or carried on board, and stowed side by side as close as can be. We feed them with spoonfuls of brandy and water; they are utterly broken down, soaked through, some of them raving with fever. After all are laid down, Miss Gilson and I give them their suppers, and they sink down again. Any one who looks over such a deck as that, and sees the suffering, despondent attitudes of the men, and their worn frames and faces, knows what war is, better than the sight of wounds can teach it. We could only take ninety; twenty-five others had to go on the small tug which accompanied us. Mr. Knapp, the doctor, and one of the young men went on board of her. Meantime the "Elizabeth" started on the homeward trip, so that Miss Gilson and I and a quartermaster were left to manage our men alone. Fortunately only about a dozen were very ill, and none died. Still, I felt anxious: six were out of their minds; one had tried to destroy himself three times that day, and was drenched through and through, having been dragged out of the creek into which he had thrown himself just before we reached him.

We were alongside the "Knickerbocker" by 1 A. M., when Dr. Ware came on board and gave me some general directions, after which I got along very well. It was thought best to leave the poor wearied fellows to rest where they were, until morning, and the night passed off quietly enough; my only disaster being that I gave morphia to a man who actually screamed with rheumatism and cramp. I supposed morphia could n't hurt him, and it was a mercy to others to stop the noise. Instead of this, I made him perfectly crazy. He rose to his feet in the midst of the prostrate mass of men, and demanded of them and of me his "clean linen" and his "Sunday clothes." I picked my way to him, but could do nothing at first but make him worse. At last I was inspired to say that I had all his clothes "*there*" (pointing to a dark corner behind a bulkhead): "would he lie down and wait till I brought them?" To my surprise he subsided. I hid in trepidation for a few minutes, and at last, to my great joy, I saw the morphine take effect. One little fellow of fifteen, crushed by a tree falling on his breast, had run away from his mother, and was

very pathetic. I persuaded him to let me write to her.

The next morning, after getting them all washed, I went off guard, and Mrs. Griffin and Miss Butler came on board with their breakfast from the "Knickerbocker," where the hundred and eighty whom we had left arriving the night before, were stowed and cared for. Getting them all washed, as I say, is a droll piece of work. Some are indifferent to the absurd luxury of soap and water, and some are so fussy. Some poor faces we must wash ourselves, and that softly and slowly. I started along each row with two tin basins and two bits of soap, my arm being the towel-horse. Now, you are not to suppose that each man had a basinful of clean water all to himself. However, I thought three to a basin was enough, or four, if they did n't wash too hard. But an old corporal taught me better. "Stop, marm!" said he, as I was turning back with the dirty water to get fresh; "that water will do for several of us yet. Bless you! I make my coffee of worse than that."

Soon after breakfast my men were trans-

ferred to the "Knickerbocker." She still lies alongside, and we take care of her. She is beautifully in order. The ward-masters are all excellent, and the orderlies know their duty. The men look comfortable, and even cheerful. It is a pleasure to give them their meals. I gave the men in the long ward (where they lie on mattresses in two rows, head to head, two hundred of them) their dinner to-day, and their supper yesterday. Ah, me! how they liked it, — some of them, of course, too worn to do more than swallow a few spoonfuls and look grateful; others loud in their satisfaction. The poor, crazy man who tried to destroy himself at Bigelow's Landing has some vague idea about me now; and sometimes, when he utterly refuses his milk-punch, and thrashes and splutters at every one who comes near him, I am sent for, when he subsides into obedience with a smile which is meant to be bland, and is so comical that people around retire in convulsions.

To-day I am "loafing." Everything is in perfect order on the "Knickerbocker;" and as I scent a transfer this afternoon of the whole corps to the "Spaulding," to fit her up, I am

determined to husband my efforts. This boat, the "Wilson Small," is finally smashed up; we call her the "Collida." The hospital-boats usually lie alongside of each other, with their gangways connected; and sometimes we run through four or five boats at a time.

Captain Curtis is still on board, doing well. He goes North on the "Knickerbocker" to-day. Now that our wounded men are gone, we have a dinner-table set, and the Captain lies in his cot on one side of the cabin, laughing at the fun and nonsense which go on at meals. Mrs. Howland has her man-servant, Maurice, on board. He is capital. He struggles to keep us proper in manners and appearance, and still dreams of *les convenances*. At dinner-time he rushes through the various ships and wards: "My ladies, *j'ai un petit plat; je ne vous dirai pas ce que c'est*. I beg of you to be *ponctuelle*; I gif you half-hour's notis." The half-hour having expired, he sets out again on a voyage of entreaty and remonstrance. He won't let us help ourselves, and if we take a seat not close to the person above, he says: "No, no, move up; we must have order." His



*petit plat* proved to be baked potatoes, which were received with acclamation, while he stood bowing and smiling with a towel (or it may have been a rag) for a napkin. But I must tell you that Maurice is the tenderest of nurses, and gives every moment he can spare to the sick. He serves his mistress, but he is attentive to all, and, like a true Frenchman, he so identifies himself with the moment and its interests that he is, to all hospital intents and purposes, "one of us."

You are not to be alarmed by the word "typhoid," which I foresee will occur on every page of my letters, nearly all our sick cases being that or running into that. The idea of infection is simply absurd. The ventilation of these ships is excellent; besides, people employed in such a variety of work and in high health and spirits are not liable to infection. Nobody ever thinks of such a thing, and I only mention it to check your imagination. In a boat organized like the "Knickerbocker," we women stand no regular watch, but we are on hand at all hours of the day, relieving each other at our own convenience. As for the ladies among

whom my luck has thrown me, they are just what they should be, — efficient, wise, active as cats, merry, light-hearted, thoroughbred, and without the fearful tone of self-devotion which sad experience makes one expect in benevolent women. We all know in our hearts that it is thorough enjoyment to be here, — *it is life*, in short; and we would n't be anywhere else for anything in the world. I hope people will continue to sustain the Sanitary Commission. Hundreds of lives are being saved by it. I have seen with my own eyes in one week fifty men who must have died without it, and many more who probably would have done so. I speak of lives saved only; the amount of suffering saved is incalculable. The Commission keeps up the work at great expense. It has six large steamers running from here. Government furnishes these and the bare rations of the men; but the real expenses of supply fall on the Commission, — in fact, everything that makes the power and excellence of the work is supplied by the Commission. If people ask what they shall send, say: Money, *money*, stimulants, and articles of sick-food.

“S. R. SPAULDING,” PAMUNKY RIVER,  
May 17.

DEAR MOTHER, — This has been a delightful day. The “Knickerbocker” got safely off at five o'clock this morning, after a rather anxious night. One of the men from the “Elizabeth” died, and another jumped overboard. He rushed past me and sprang from the bulwark. I heard the splash, but all that I, or any one, saw of him were the rings in the water widening in the moonlight. Boats were put off immediately, but he never rose.

Last night, being off duty, I went round to a number of Rhode Island men who were on board, and wrote letters or took messages for them. A coincidence—a real coincidence—occurred. I had heard Mr. Knapp telling Mr. Olmsted of the death of a Newport man, David A. Newman, Fourth Rhode Island Volunteers. I asked for his effects, that I might some day take them home with me. In searching for them, a knapsack marked “Simeon A. Newman, Fourth Rhode Island Volunteers,” turned up without its owner, who had died in Washington in December, 1861. This knapsack had wandered on

with the regiment; by chance it got on board our boat; by chance it came under my notice; by chance I spoke of it to one of the Rhode Island men, who said: "I know a man who knew Simeon A. Newman, and he is sick on board here now." I hunted him up; he proved to be the nearest friend of S. A. Newman, who was color-sergeant of the regiment, and was with him when he died. He told me that after his death the widow wrote to beg that his sash might be sent to her; but though every effort was made, the widow writing again and again for it, it could never be found. I went at once to the knapsack, and *there was the sash*. I have sent them by express to Bristol, R. I., where the widow lives.

After the "Knickerbocker" was off we "took it easy;" came out to breakfast at ten o'clock, and transferred ourselves leisurely to this ship, which is a palace to us. We were rather subdued by our grandeur at dinner. Hotel-fare and men to wait upon us is rather elevating after eating salt-beef with our fingers. After dinner we ran up to West Point, where the York River forks, the northern branch being

the Mattapony (pronounced *Mattaponi*); the other the Pamunky, along the line of which the army has advanced, — through the thirteen thousand acres granted by Charles II. to Ralph Wormeley 2d; strange, isn't it, that I should be here now? They have had the pluck to run this huge vessel up this little river, without a chart, and not a soul on board who has been here before. The passage has been enchanting; we ran so close to the shore that I could almost have thrown my glove upon it. The verdure is in its freshest spring beauty; the lovely shores are belted with trees and shrubs of every brilliant and tender shade of green, broken now and then by creeks, running up little valleys till they are lost in the blue distance. I saw the beginning of the battle-field of Williamsburg ("long fields of barley and of rye" but a week ago), and the whole of the battle-field of West Point, still dotted with the hospital-tents, from which we have cleared out all the wounded.

The sun set as we rounded the last bend in the Pamunky; the sky and the water gleamed golden alike, and the trees suddenly grew black

as the glow dazzled our eyes. We dropped anchor off Cumberland at dusk, and have just left the deck (on sanitary principles), where we were sitting to enjoy the lovely lights and listen to the whippoorwill. This is yachting on a magnificent scale; we feel rather ashamed of our grandeur, and eager to get back to a tug-boat again. This vessel, which used to be a fine passenger steamship, has been employed by the Government as a transport for major-generals and their train. This accounts for the style in which she is equipped and manned. She is now filled with workmen, putting up three tiers of hospital-bunks in the hold and on the forward main-deck; after that is finished we shall begin to fit up the wards. To-day we have organized the pantry and store-rooms.

“S. R. SPAULDING,”

OFF HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF THE POTOMAC,  
WHITE HOUSE, May 18.

DEAR A., — My date will excite you. Yesterday, after getting off the “Knickerbocker” with three hundred sick on board, we transferred our quarters to this vessel, and started to

run up the Pamunky. It was audacious of us to run this big ocean-steamer up this little river, without a chart and without a pilot. In some places we brushed the trees as we passed, for the water is said to be fifteen feet deep a yard from the shore. What a garden land it is! Such verdure of every brilliant shade lining the shore, and broken into, here and there, by little creeks running up through meadow-lands into the misty blue distance. We anchored for the night off Cumberland,—the limit of my aspirations; and I went to sleep in the still lingering twilight, listening to the whippoorwill. In the morning when I came on deck Mr. Olmsted called me forward into the bows: and what a sight was there to greet us! The glow of the morning mist, the black gunboats, the shining river, with the gleam of the white sails and the tents along the shore, made a picture to be painted only by Turner. We ran up to the head of the fleet, in sight of the headquarters of the army, to the burned railroad bridge, beyond which no one could go.

After breakfast we went ashore, where General Franklin met us and took us through part

of his command, — through trains of army-wagons drawn by four mules ; through a ploughed field across which mounted officers and their staffs were galloping at full speed ; through sutlers' tents and commissary stores, and batteries and caissons. It was like a vast fair-ground. We met one man eating six pies at once, and not a man without one pie ! I wished intensely to stop at General Headquarters as we passed it. But to-day General McClellan is overborne by business : the army arrived here on the 16th ; twelve scouting-parties are now out, some coming in every hour ; McClellan himself is not able to speak an unnecessary word ; a council is to be held this evening, to arrange the last details for the move to-morrow, — so we felt we ought not even to wish to see him.

General Franklin took us to the White House, — a house and estate just quitted by the family of a son of General Lee, whose wife was a Custis. I copied the following notice, written in a lady's hand on a half sheet of note-paper, and nailed to the wall of the entrance : —



NORTHERN soldiers! who profess to reverence the memory of Washington, forbear to desecrate the home of his first married life, the property of his wife, and now owned by her descendants.

A GRANDDAUGHTER OF MRS. WASHINGTON.

Underneath was written (in the handwriting, as I was told, of General Williams, Adjutant-General of the army):—

LADY,—A Northern soldier has protected this property within sight of the enemy, and at the request of your overseer.

And so it was. On reaching the spot, General McClellan would not even make his headquarters within the grounds. Guards were stationed at the gates and fences, on the lawns and the piazzas. Within, all was beautiful, untrodden, and fresh, while without was the tumult and trampling of war. Already the surrounding country was a barren and dusty plain. We walked through the grounds, across the peaceful lawns looking down upon the river crowded with transports and ammunition-barges. We went through the house, which is a small cottage, painted brown, and by no means a *white house*. The carpets and a great

part of the furniture had been removed, but enough remained to show that modern elegance had adorned the quaint old place. Washington never lived in the present house, which has been built on the site of the one in which he spent his early married life.

General Franklin allowed me to gather some ivy and some holly. We stayed nearly an hour, sitting on the piazza and talking to him. He struck me as an officer of *power*, — large, with square face and head, deep-sunk, determined blue eyes, close-cropped reddish-brown hair and beard. He told us that the battle of Williamsburg was full of anxiety from first to last, and that it took much to decide the final fortunes of the day; but at West Point, after the men were landed, he was not for a moment uneasy, the game was in our hands from the beginning. He feels confident that the enemy will make a great resistance before Richmond; if not, it will be a virtual surrender of their cause, which he thinks they are far from making. Everything, he said, depended on the strength of our army, and he told us that McDowell was at last coming down on our

right wing, which is to be extended to meet him. He spoke with the deepest confidence in McClellan, who, he said, was in good spirits, though fearfully overworked.

As we were leaving White House, General Fitz-John Porter came to meet us, and walked with us to our wharf, where we met General Morell; and they all came on board and stayed half an hour. I felt great interest in General Porter, who commands one *corps d'armée*, General Franklin commanding another. General Morell is also an interesting man; looks like dear father, but wears a long white beard. He received the command of a division yesterday. General Porter spoke of McClellan just as we all feel, — as a patriot as well as a general, as a man who wisely seeks to heal, as well as to conquer. There is a fine spirit in General Porter. He probably has less power than General Franklin, is more excitable and sympathetic; but there is an expression of devotion about him which inspires great confidence. They were all very guarded, of course, in what they said of the future; but two hours' talk with such men in such places teaches much.

This afternoon General Seth Williams, Adjutant-General, came on board to pay his respects to Mrs. Griffin. His visit gave us all great pleasure. I am told that if any man possesses in an equal degree the respect and attachment of others, he does; and yet his quiet, modest manner and plain appearance would hardly instruct a stranger as to his position in the army. These gentlemen were accompanied by many young officers, all spurs and swords and clanking. They were thankful for some of our private stores, — needles, buttons, and linen thread were as much prized as beads by an Indian; and even hairpins were acceptable to General Porter, one button of whose cap was already screwed on by that female implement.

I am happy to say that there is no immediate chance of my being anywhere but here. We came up for medicines and general information; the result is that Mr. Olmsted finds such a state of disorganization and sixes-and-sevenness in the medical arrangements that he has determined to make his headquarters here for the present. Mr. Knapp has therefore just started

in the tug for Yorktown to bring up the supply-boats, and leave orders for our hospital-fleet to follow us up the river as they arrive from the North.

The state of affairs is somewhat this: when the march from Yorktown began, and the men dropped by thousands, exhausted, sick, and wounded, the Medical Department, unprepared and terribly harassed, flung itself upon the Sanitary Commission. When it became known that our transports were lying in the river, the brigade-surgeons made a business of sending their sick on board of them; and the Medical Director sanctioned the practice. The hospitals at Yorktown, Fortress Monroe, and Newport News are full; the Commission has therefore been forced to take these men to the North. Nothing, of course, is more desirable for those who are seriously ill or badly wounded; but every man who falls exhausted from the ranks is sent to us. This will prove in the end actually demoralizing to the army if not checked. The men will come to think that illness, real or shammed, is the way to get home. Already suspicious rheumatic cases have appeared. Mr.

Olmsted remonstrates against the system, but of course he has to act under the medical authority. What is wanted is a large receiving-hospital in the rear of the army, which would keep the cases of exhaustion and slight illness, take good care of them for a week or two, and send them back to the front. Mr. Olmsted telegraphed to-day, advising the Surgeon-General to send sufficient hospital accommodation, bedding, and medicines for six thousand men. This ought to be done. Meantime we lie here, and may fill this ship, which is now all in order, to-morrow.

Could you but see the lovely scene around me! We have had a little service of prayer and hymns in the cabin, and now we are all — the “staff,” as we call ourselves — sitting at sunset on the deck, under an awning. We are anchored in the middle of the river, which is about three hundred yards wide at this point, and are slowly swinging at our anchor. We have dropped down the stream since morning. Scores of vessels — transports, mortar-boats, ammunition-barges — are close around us, and several gunboats. The regiments of Franklin’s corps are

camped along the banks; the bands playing on one side, "Hail Columbia!" and, farther down, "Glory, Hallelujah!" The trees which fringe the shore lean towards us,—locust, oak, and the lovely weeping-elm. One of the latter throws its shadow across my paper as we have slowly swung into it. I have told Mr. Olmsted that, now that I feel at home in the work, I am not tied to Mrs. Griffin, but consider the protection of the Commission sufficient, and that if he wants me, I will stay by the work as long as there is any. I like him exceedingly, autocrat and aristocrat that he is; I feel that he would protect and guard in the wisest manner those under his care. The other gentlemen on board are Mr. Frederick N. Knapp, second to Mr. Olmsted, in charge of the supplies; Dr. Robert Ware, chief-surgeon; Messrs. Charles Woolsey, George Wheelock, and David Haight, his assistants.

Direct to me in future to the care of Colonel Ingalls, Quartermaster's Department, Army of the Potomac — think of *that!*

“SPAULDING,” May 20.

DEAR MOTHER, — It is so uncertain whether you receive any of my letters (I receive none of yours) that I write to-day by the “Daniel Webster,” though I have but little to say. The “Webster” and the “Elm City” came up the river yesterday. We were invited to tea on board of the former, and were much pleased to find how we are missed. Dr. Grymes is still in charge of her, and Mrs. Trotter reigns over the women’s department with great success. Mrs. Strong, Miss Whetten, and Miss Gardiner returned on the “Elm City.” The “Webster” came up in perfect order, ready to ship her men as soon as her cargo was discharged. She is now loading, and sails for Boston this afternoon. We ourselves remain here. Mr. Olmsted is anxious to keep his “staff” at the heels of the army. I like this much better myself. It is more interesting, and the work, though harder, is more satisfactory in every way. The weather is delightful. At present we are idle,—kept so, I am told, in reserve for the expected battle. The “Elm City” is to remain here as a receiving-ship; this vessel



(the "Spaulding") and the "Daniel Webster" are to be used as ocean-transports, and chiefly for sick men; the "Knickerbocker" and the "Daniel Webster No. 2" as river-transports for wounded men, — "surgical cases," as they are called. The former make the sea-passage to New York, Boston, or Philadelphia; the latter run to Washington or Fortress Monroe. These five ships can transport about two thousand men a week. Mr. Olmsted is struggling, with probable success, to bring the Medical Department to establish a large receiving-camp-hospital for the lesser cases that ought not to go North. Meantime the "Elm City" is to be used as a receiving-ship for them *pro tem*.

"SPAULDING," May 21.

DEAR FRIEND, — We are just where we were, — swinging at anchor under the elm-tree, and doing nothing. This galls us a little; but, after all, we women are but a drop in the bucket of relief, every one on board, except us, being worked to his very utmost, — Mr. Olmsted in organizing the work and endeavoring to get the medical authorities to fall into some kind of

system ; Mr. Knapp in getting up and issuing supplies ; Dr. Ware and our young men in putting a receiving-hospital ashore in something like decent order. It started last night with one hundred tents, twenty-five men in each ; ambulances coming in every hour, and nothing for the men but the bare tents, unfloored. Our gentlemen have been there all day ; and Mr. Knapp has sent up straw, bed-sacks, bedding, food, and clothing. Mr. Olmsted declines to let us women go there ; I don't know why. A few wounded men came down to-day, and were taken on board the "Elm City," where Mrs. Strong, Miss Whetten, and Miss Gardiner take care of them.

Mr. Olmsted gave me to-day a draft of the "Rules" which he has drawn up for the regulation of the service on board our ships. I inclose a copy, as it will give you a fair idea of our interior system after the men come on board, and until they are landed at their destination. It reads very well on paper, and you may be sure that it is carried out, with Mr. Olmsted at the head of affairs : his are no paper orders. But there are hidden rocks and snags

under that smooth surface which make, in fact, the anxiety of our female lives. For instance : our boats belong to the Quartermaster's Department ; the captains and crews object, as a general thing, to being used in hospital service, and have to be forever coaxed and conciliated. The kitchen arrangements are a never-ending plague. The cooks and the galleys are not looked upon as being for the use of the hospital, and yet there is no way of getting others ; so they must be persuaded to do the work which we have no absolute power to make them do. The twenty or thirty bucketsful of soup daily for the "house diet" (the sick food we prepare ourselves) are an achievement if they are forthcoming at the right moment. We order, make ready, prepare ; and then it *is* hard to find that the instant our backs were turned everything came to a standstill, and that dinner for the sick men can't be ready at the right moment without some superhuman exertion on our parts. As for hot water (about which you may observe a delicate reference in the "Rules"), our lives are made a burden to us on that subject, and we might as well be in it at once, — if it could

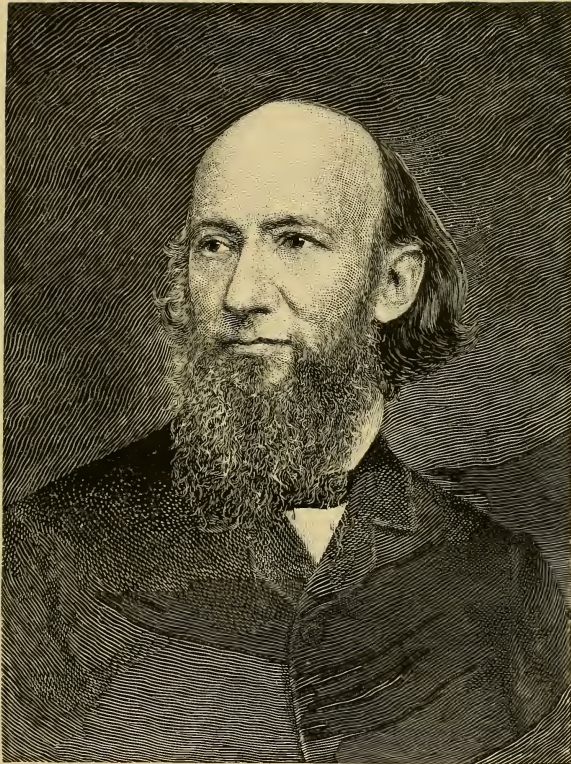
be got. You will see from my letters that we women do more than is set down for us in the programme; for, in fact, we do a little of everything. We of the "staff" are specially subordinate to Mr. Olmsted; and though we are not his right hand — Mr. Knapp and Dr. Ware are that — we are the fingers of it, and help to carry out his ideas. The duties of the men and women of the staff are chiefly as follows: to superintend the shipping of the sick or wounded on board the boats which return from the North for fresh loads; to fit up those boats, or others coming into the Commission's hands; to receive at the landing, to sort and distribute according to orders, the patients who are sent down from the front; to feed, cleanse, give medical aid and nursing to all these men, and otherwise take care of them, until the ships sail again for the North; and, finally, to be ready for all emergencies.

I think I have not yet described our "Chief" to you. He is small, and lame (for the time being only) from a terrible accident which happened to him a few months ago; but though the lameness is decided, it is scarcely observable, for

he gives you a sense that he triumphs over it by doing as if it did not exist. His face is generally very placid, with all the expressive delicacy of a woman's, and would be beautiful were it not for an expression which I cannot fathom, — something which is, perhaps, a little too severe about it. I think his mouth and smile and the expression of his eyes at times very beautiful. He has great variety of expression: sometimes stern, thoughtful, and haggard; at other times observing and slightly satirical (I believe he sees out of the back of his head occasionally); and then again, and not seldom, his face wears an inspired look, full of goodness and power. I think he is a man of the most resolute self-will, — generally a very wise will, I should think; born an autocrat, however, and, as such, very satisfactory to be under. His reticence is one of his strong points: he directs everything in the fewest possible words; there is a deep, calm thoughtfulness about him which is always attractive and sometimes — provoking. He is managing the present enterprise (which is full of responsibility, without having any rights) with the largest views of what is best for the

army, and compelling the acquiescence of the Military authority in his plans, while he scrupulously keeps within the understood position of the Sanitary Commission as subordinate to it. You may also see how carefully he attends to details by the sketch of them which he has given in the "Rules." He is a great organizer—as the past history of the Central Park and the Sanitary Commission will show—and he is a great administrator, because he comprehends details, but trusts his subordinates: if they are good, he relies on them; if they are weak, there's an end of them.

As for Mr. Knapp, he is our delight. A thin, bald-headed man, with a flowing brown beard and a very fine, sweet, energetic face; always overwhelmed with work; caught at here, there, and everywhere by some one who has important business, yet able to give and take any saucy drollery that comes up between us. It is not easy to say positively what he is, for he is never still, and he has certainly not been for five consecutive minutes under my observation; but there's one thing which my mind is clear about: it shines out from every point of him,—



FREDERICK N. KNAPP.





he is a philanthropist *without* the hateful aspects of that calling. He is in charge of the supply department, — the commissariat of the Commission, as it may be called. The entire business of ordering and receiving supplies from the North, and issuing them, when on hand, either to our own vessels or upon the requisition of brigade and regimental surgeons for camp and field hospitals, is an outline of his work. He is always in a hurry; he forgets our names, and calls us everything that we are not, but says it is “a system;” he is lain in wait for at all corners by some one with a tale of distress and a prayer for stimulants, beef-stock, straw, sheets, bandages, or what not, all of which is duly given if the proper requisition from a United States surgeon is forthcoming. He is in a chronic state of worry about “transportation,” — I declare I think I hear that word oftener than any other, except “brandy” and “beef-tea.”

The railroad is open to-day to within ten miles of Richmond: so says Colonel Ingalls. The cars and locomotives came up the river yesterday. This enables them to send forward

supplies with great ease. Hitherto, everything has depended on wagon-trains, half of which stick in the mud and clay of Virginia roads. The one question asked by everybody is: "Where's McDowell?"

"SPAULDING," May 23.

DEAR A., — Your welcome letter came yesterday. It is great happiness to know that you enter into the thing so heartily. You are right; it is worth five years of other life, setting aside the satisfaction of doing something directly for the cause. We are still on board this ship, comparatively idle. Yesterday sixty men were sent down from the front; but the surgeon of the Shore hospital refused to take them, alleging that he had no room. A tremendous thunder-storm came up, in the midst of which we ran up to the landing-place in our little tug, the "Wissahickon," and found the men, who were lying on the ground by the side of the railway. We gave them brandy and water, tea and bread, washed them a little, brought off a dozen of the worst cases, and left the others comfortable for the night, with blan-

kets and quilts, in two covered freight-cars. This morning we went up with their breakfast, and had the satisfaction of seeing them off in ambulances for the Shore hospital, owing to Mr. Olmsted's strong remonstrances.

This vessel, the "Spaulding," is filling to-day, and sails for New York on Sunday. We shall then go on board the "Elm City," and the hospital company of that boat, including two ladies, Miss Whetten and Mrs. Strong, will take charge of this one. Mr. Olmsted has the greatest difficulty in preventing the authorities from forcing on our pity by their neglect the sick men who are now here and coming down daily. These men ought to be taken care of in tents ashore. If forced upon us and a battle occurs, our boats will be off with men who ought not to go, and we shall have no accommodation for the wounded. Yesterday and to-day we have heard cannonading at the bridge over the Chickahominy; and these slight skirmishes send us down a dozen or two of wounded daily, who are placed at once on board the "Elm City."

General Van Vliet, Quartermaster-General of

the Army of the Potomac, came to see us to-day, accompanied by Captain Sawtelle, Assistant-Quartermaster. The General was full of kindness and gallantry, — quite bubbled over with it; and offered us a railway-car to take us into Richmond as soon as it is occupied! We heard last night that McDowell's pickets had met ours: God grant it may be true! There is little doubt that McDowell's not being allowed to co-operate at Gloucester prevented the overthrow of the Rebellion at Yorktown; and yet this McClellan keeps on with a sunny heart, and, as General Franklin said, "does his best alone!"

On Wednesday we were invited on board the "Sebago," Captain Murray. A gun-boat is very interesting. She carries two large guns and a few howitzers. The large guns (Parrotts, these were) stand in the middle of the deck, one aft, and the other forward, and turn on pivots in every direction. The bulwarks can be turned down, to allow the guns free range; they are turned up for a sea-voyage: but even then these boats ship a great deal of water. It was delightful to be on a trig man-of-war.

The officers seemed so clean and fresh, after the dusty, thread-worn look of the army-officers. It is easy to keep neat on board ship, but very hard to do it on the march, especially through the red clay soil of Virginia. The "Sebago" was the gun-boat which, accompanied by a tiny propeller with one hundred and fifty infantry on board, ran a few miles farther up the Pamunky the other day, — at sight of which the enemy burned two steamers and twenty schooners.

Not much has happened to interest us out of our own world. To us the arrival of our various steamers, and the consequent visits, inquiries, and *thefts*, are matters of great importance. We go on board some newly arrived ship, and find up the parties in charge of the invoice: "Sixteen pails! we'll take eight;" "Essence of beef! we want all that;" "What! fifty cans?" "Fifty! we must have a hundred," — and so on through sugar, arrowroot, farina, spices, lemons, whiskey, brandy, etc.; while the doctors make a raid of the same kind on the dispensary. Kleptomania is the prevailing disease among us. We think nothing of watching the

proprietor of some nicety out of the way, and then pocketing the article. After such a visit, Georgy's unfathomable pocket is a mine of wealth as to nutmeg-graters, corkscrews, forks and spoons, and such articles. I, being less nimble at pilfering, content myself by carrying off tin pails with an abstracted air. Perhaps our visits do not give the keen satisfaction to others that they do to us. But *they* are going back where they can get more; while to us who remain here, such articles are as precious as if they were made of gold.

I am perfectly well. To please others, I "prophylac" with the rest. I drink coffee in excess, and whiskey (with quinine) occasionally, and eat alarming dinners. We shall be thankful to get off this ship, where we have green velvet chairs to sit upon, and are unable to get proper cooking arrangements for the sick. We regret our dear "Wilson Small," where we lived on a permanent picnic, which was in keeping with our business and our spirit.

To-day Mr. Olmsted invited Mrs. Griffin and me to row with him along the shore. You know I dread little boats; but it was a prospect

of enjoyment, and I could not forego it. The start was lovely. Mr. Olmsted rowed us close in shore, where the knotted roots of the outermost trees made a network, or paling, behind which drooped or glowed in their spring beauty the lovely trees of this region, among them the magnolia, the flowering catalpa, and the beautiful white fringe-tree. Presently some quartermaster hailed us, and we turned back to the "Spaulding," which had swung to her anchor in the mean time, making the business of getting on board again so dreadful to *me* (Mrs. Griffin did not seem to mind it) that that moment is laid aside to come into play some day when I have brain-fever; and then I shall see the huge, black, bulging sides of the great ship hanging over me as I pop up and down in a paper boat.

Mrs. Griffin looked to-day so like a mediæval Madonna, with her heavenly complexion, her golden hair, and the extremely angular appearance which we persist in keeping up without our hoops, that I was forced to suggest the idea to Mr. Olmsted, who entered thoroughly into it.

“SPAULDING,” May 24.

DEAR MOTHER, — I seize five spare moments for you, as I have not written for three days. Last night we half filled this ship with the worst cases from the shore hospital. She will probably fill up to-day from the “Elm City,” and sail to-morrow. The men are mostly very sick, but no deaths occurred last night. Oh! what stories I shall have to tell you one of these days. Instances of such high unselfishness happen daily that, though I forget them daily, I feel myself strengthened in my trust in human nature, without making any reflections about it. Last night a wounded man, comfortably put to bed in a middle berth (there are three tiers, and the middle one incomparably the best), seeing me point to the upper berth as the place to put a man on an approaching stretcher, cried out: “Stop! put me up there. Guess I can stand h’isting better ’n *him*.” It was agony to both.

There is great discussion among the doctors as to the character of the fever; some call it typhoid, others say it is losing that type and becoming malarial remittent. It matters little to



me what it is ; the poor fellows all look alike, — dry, burned-up, baked, either in a dull stupor or a low, anxious delirium. They show little or no excitement, but are dull, weary, and sad. The percentage of sickness is thought to be small for an army on the march through such a region.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The death-rate of the British forces during the first year of the Crimean War was : July, August, September, 1854, 293 per 1000 men ; October, November, December, 511 per 1000 men ; reaching in January, 1855, the fearful rate of 1174 per 1000 men, of which 97 per cent was from disease, — in other words, a rate at which it would be necessary to replace a dead army by a living one in  $10\frac{1}{4}$  months. Then it was that the British Government established sanitary operations ; and as soon as their influence was felt — May, June, July, 1855 — the death-rate fell to 250 per 1000, and from that time rapidly diminished, till in January, 1856 (one year from its culmination), it was 25 per 1000 men. The mortality of the United States army during the campaign in Virginia of 1862 was 165 per 1000 men. To what was this difference owing ? Not to the fact that our troops brought a greater amount of health into the service, for their mortality during the preceding period of inaction was much greater than that of the British army during a like period. It was owing in part, undoubtedly, to lessons learned from the Crimean War ; but it was also in a great degree owing to the Sanitary Commission, to its careful inspection of recruits, camps, regiments, and to the advice which the military authorities so wisely allowed it to give on all sanitary and hygienic subjects to the regimental commanders. Surely the Commission has a right to point to the comparatively small mortality of our forces (small when we consider the nature of the climate and the unseasoned condition of volunteers), and claim a part, at least, of the credit of it.

We are all well, and cheerful now that our work begins once more. Idleness depressed us a little. We now have over one hundred very sick men on board. Mrs. Griffin and I have just finished our morning's work below; Mrs. M. and Georgy have taken our places, and we have come on deck for a mouthful of fresh air. This morning, before I was up, I heard a crash and a cry, and the bowsprit of a large vessel, which the tide had swung upon us, glanced into the port-hole at the foot of my bed, tore through the partition, and, I believe, demolished the berth on the other side of it. The captain, who takes great pride in his ship, and has employed these leisure days in getting her painted, is now leaning over the side, looking at the defaced and splintered wood-work with a melancholy air.

Good-by. *Called off.*

“KNICKERBOCKER,” May 26.

DEAR MOTHER, — I believe my last words on Saturday were that I was “called off,” — and so effectually called that this is my first quiet moment since then. We were called to go on

board the "Wissahickon," from thence to the "Sea-Shore," and run down in the latter to West Point, to bring off twenty-five men said to be lying there sick and destitute. Two doctors went with us. After hunting an hour through the fleet for the "Sea-Shore" in vain, and having got as low as Cumberland, we decided (*we* being Mrs. Howland and I; for the doctors were new to the work, and glad to leave the responsibility upon us women) to push on in the tug, rather than leave the men another night on the ground, for a heavy storm of wind and rain had been going on all day. The pilot remonstrated, but the captain approved; and if the firemen had not suddenly let out the fires and detained us two hours, we might have got our men on board and returned comfortably soon after dark. But the delay cost us the precious daylight. It was night before the last man was got on board. There were fifty-six of them, — ten very sick ones.

The boat had a little shelter-cabin. As we were laying mattresses on the floor, while the doctors were finding the men, the captain stopped us, refusing to let us put typhoid fever

cases below the deck, — on account of the crew, he said, — and threatening to push off at once from the shore. Mrs. Howland and I looked at him. I did the terrible, and she the pathetic; and he abandoned the contest. The return passage was rather an anxious one. The river is much obstructed with sunken ships and trees, and we had to feel our way, slackening speed every ten minutes. If we had been alone, it would not have mattered; but to have fifty men upon our hands unable to move was too heavy a responsibility not to make us anxious. The captain and pilot said the boat was leaking (we heard the water gurgling under our feet), and they remarked casually that the river was “four fathoms deep about there;” but we saw their motive, and were not scared. We were safe alongside the “Spaulding” by midnight; but Mr. Olmsted’s tone of voice as he said, “You don’t know how glad I am to see you,” showed how much he had been worried. And yet it was the best thing we could have done, for three, perhaps five, of the men would have been dead before morning. We transferred the deck-men (who were not very ill) at once to

the "Elm City," and kept the others on board the tug till the next morning (Sunday), when they were taken on board the "Spaulding," all living, and likely to live. Later in the day the "Spaulding" filled up to three hundred and fifty very sick men.

No one who has not shared them can form any idea of the hurry — unless it is kept down by extreme quiet of manner — and the solid hard work caused by this sudden influx of bad cases. Dr. Grymes taught me a valuable lesson the night I was at Yorktown on the "Webster." A man with a ghastly wound — the first I ever saw — asked for something; I turned hastily to get it, with some sort of exclamation. Dr. Grymes stopped me and said: "Never do that again; never be hurried or excited, or you are not fit to be here;" and I've thanked him for that lesson ever since. It is a piteous sight to see these men; no one knows what war is until they see this black side of it. We may all sentimentalize over its possibilities as we see the regiments go off, or when we hear of a battle; but it is as far from the reality as to read of pain is far from feeling

it. We who are here, however, dare not let our minds, much less our imaginations, rest on suffering; while *you* must rely on your imagination to project you into the state of things here.

At eleven o'clock (Sunday night), just as I had collected the weary in the pantry for a little claret-punch or brandy and water, after getting on what we thought the last man for the night, Captain Sawtelle came on board looking very sad. He had received orders to send every available transport to Acquia Creek. He told us that General Banks had been defeated, with the loss of two regiments; and he presumed the present order meant that a force was to be thrown back to guard Washington, and that McDowell was recalled to support Banks. Sad, sad news for us!

Of course there was nothing to be done but to give up the "Elm City" and get the men and stores out of her and into the "Spaulding" at once. The transports were to sail for Acquia Creek at 3 A. M., and had to be coaled in the mean time. So we went to work again. Poor weary Mr. Knapp was off at once; the

wearry doctors and the weary young men began once more the work of hoisting on board, classing, registering, and bunking the poor fellows, — ninety in all; while the weary women brewed more milk-punch and beef-tea, and went once more upon their rounds. The last things were got off the “Elm City” about 2.30 A. M., when a telegram arrived countermanding the order!

I can give you *no* idea of the work thus accumulated into one day. But there were cheerful things in it after all. One thing I specially remember. A man very low with typhoid fever had been brought on board early in the afternoon, and begged me piteously to keep the bunk next him for his brother, — his twin brother, — from whom he had never been parted in his life, not even now in sickness; for his brother was sick too, and had come down on the same train. But, alas! in shipping the poor helpless fellows they had got separated. Of course I kept the next bunk empty, even taking out of it a man who had been put in during my absence; and all day long the painful look in the anxious eyes distressed me. Late at night, as

the last men were coming off the "Elm City," and I was standing at the gangway by Dr. Draper, receiving his orders as he looked at the men when they came on board, I heard him read off the name of the brother! You may be sure I asked for that man; and the pleasure of putting him beside his brother cheered even that black night. Nor shall I ever forget the joy of a father who found his son on board, and, though ill himself, waited on him with infinite tenderness, — only, alas! to lose him soon.

What a day it was, — and a Sunday too! So unlike Sunday that I had forgotten it until we were asked to go ashore and be present at the funeral of five men who had died on board. Mrs. Griffin went; but one lady was all that could be spared. What days our Sundays have been! I think of you all at rest, with the sound of church-bells in your ears, with a strange, distant feeling.

We got to bed about 3 o'clock, and at 4.30 the ladies from the "Elm City," Mrs. George T. Strong and Miss Whetten, who take the "Spaulding" to New York, came on board and shared our staterooms. We left the ship



just before she started, with three hundred and fifty men on board, at 12 M. this (Monday) morning, and came on board the "Knickerbocker." We let her go with cheers from this vessel. She looked beautiful with her black hull and much brass about her; but she is not well adapted for our work. I had a strange feeling as I looked at the outside of what I knew but too well within.

At present we shall remain quietly on this vessel. There are fifty sick men on board, brought from the "Elm City" last night; but there are ladies enough belonging to the ship, and we need rest for the battle which they say is just at hand.

There was some excitement and a great gathering of doctors to-day for a *post-mortem* on board the "Elm City," and they found what they call "mulberry spots,"—which establish, I am told, the typhus character of the disease.<sup>1</sup>

A good many wounded are now coming on board and filling the cots on the main-deck. I

<sup>1</sup> The disease proved, in the hospitals at Fortress Monroe, to be an epidemic typhus or spotted fever, sometimes cerebro-spinal meningitis,—a modern edition of the ancient plague.

am writing in the upper saloon, listening to the typhoid moans of a poor fellow at my elbow. But I am too inexpressibly weary to keep my eyes open a moment longer. I need not tell you that I am well as ever, only so sleepy, oh, so sleepy! Yesterday, Captain Murray, of the "Sebago," and General Van Vliet came to see us; but of course we could not see them. Oh, these Sanitary Commission men, how they work, — early and late, sleepless, unflagging! Even as I write, come Dr. Ware and David Haight, — dragging a bed-sack which they have filled with fresh straw for me, because they found out that the one I have was last used by a patient with typhoid fever. Kind friends! Oh, how well I shall sleep to-night!

"KNICKERBOCKER," May 27.

DEAR A., — I wish I could have you by me this delightful afternoon to look at the lovely scene, where "every prospect pleases, and only man is vile" and wretched. The "Spaulding" got off yesterday with three hundred and fifty sick on board, and we then transferred ourselves to this vessel, where we are living a life which Mr.

Olmsted feels to be one of such utter discomfort that we all try to make the best of it for his sake. Still, I will admit to you that it *is* wearing to have no proper place to eat, sit, or sleep. No matter! our dear "Wilson Small" will be back soon, and we shall go back to our happy home life on the top of the old stove.

This boat is in disorder. Her last voyage was made in incompetent hands, — not incompetent as to care of the patients, but as to general organization. These parties are about to be detailed elsewhere, which will leave us free to go to work and reorganize the vessel. Meantime we are busy arranging the "Elm City," which lies alongside, and was not taken by the Government after all.

We were invited to dine to-day on board the "Webster," which arrived this morning, prompt as usual, and in perfect order. The rest have gone; but I, like a fool, am *hors de combat* with an aggravating pain down my leg. We all "prophylac" with exemplary regularity; the last words of our delightful Dr. Draper, as we parted from him on the gang-plank of the "Spaulding," were: "*Don't* forget your qui-

nine!" How intimate this life makes us with those we recognize as true grit; how heartfelt our greetings and our partings with them are! Dr. Grymes and Captain Bletham brought me all my precious cases filled with supplies from dear Newport friends. The Captain says his first thought on arriving is: "Now for the ladies' cases;" and he always brings them off in the first boat. This vessel ("Knickerbocker") is full of Zouaves, detailed to the Commission for nurses. I can't endure them. It might be all very well, and in keeping, to get up a regiment of negroes *en Turcos*; but for an American citizen to rig himself as an Arab is demoralizing.

Wednesday Night, May 28.

Have nearly finished the "Elm City," with five hundred beds. Our linen-closets, store-closets, and pantries in perfect order. The hardest piece of work I have done yet was to keep two colored ladies (from the Lee estate) steady to the work of scrubbing the lower deck. They escaped so many times on pretence of getting fresh water that, weary of running after them, I came to think it was easier to run after the

water ; so, pressing David Haight into the service, he and I kept up a solemn procession to and from the ship's boilers, bearing the steaming buckets.

Mrs. Reading, an excellent surgical nurse trained in the Crimea under Miss Nightingale, who has been attached to the "staff" from the beginning, went up to the Shore hospital to-day. Mr. Olmsted has promised, with great reluctance which I do not comprehend, to let me go to-morrow ; so we are to start early, with as much beef-stock, stimulants, and other supplies as we can carry. Mrs. Reading has taught me a great many things. I pump her extensively in our leisure moments. She was at Kulali throughout the Russian War.

"KNICKERBOCKER," May 30.

DEAR MOTHER, — Yesterday I took Mrs. Reading and two Zouaves to carry the supplies, and spent the day at the camp hospital. There are one hundred tents, each *censé* to hold twenty-seven persons ; but they were not more than half full, many of the first set of men having recovered after a week's rest and returned

to the front, while nearly two hundred of the worst cases went North on the "Spaulding." I found the condition of things far better than I expected, and infinitely better than it was a week ago. We visited nearly all the tents, and gave supplies of beef-tea, milk-punch, arrowroot, and eggs for the worst cases, of which there were comparatively few, for such cases are put on the Commission boats. I found four or five men for whom nothing could be done but to help them to die in peace, and perhaps twenty other bad cases. The remainder needed little more than a week or two of rest. The tents were both floored and trenched, the day was cool and bright, everything smelt clean and wholesome. A tent had been pitched for me in the middle of the hollow square of the camp, where I cooked painfully by one small spirit-lamp. We used up everything we took with us, and saw the surgeons, who were very cordial, particularly Dr. Green, of Massachusetts, and a lesser light, Dr. A. A. Stocker, of Cambridge, Mass., who gave me his card, whereby I know his name.

Nearly all the camp needs is some respon-

sible person who could prepare the sick food systematically under the surgeons' orders. The ordinary diet seemed good and plentiful, and quite suited to the majority of the cases. We started for home at 4 P. M., and found four hundred prisoners just arriving by the railway from General Porter's command. They were nearly all North Carolinians, — fine-looking men, well fed, and in good spirits. One man wanted to buy one of our tin cups; I laughed, and gave it to him. Another asked Dr. Ware to change a ten-dollar Confederate note, and expected ten of our dollars for it. Dr. Ware said: "If we beat you, what good will those notes be to you?" "Oh!" said he, "the United States Government will take them." General Van Vliet told me that a great many of these men had asked to take the oath of allegiance.

This has been a busy day. We all — "all" this time means Mr. Olmsted, Mr. Knapp, we four ladies, and Mrs. Reading — started with breakfast for eighty men; a young surgeon having rowed down to us to report that they had arrived in the night and were lying in the cars without food. We found the birds flown, however, — I

suppose to the camp hospital. But General Van Vliet and some telegrams from the front met us at the landing; and the result is that we are to clear off, as fast as we can, all the sick and wounded now on our hands. The "Webster," fills up to-morrow; the "Daniel Webster No. 2" left immediately for Yorktown with four hundred sick on board; the "Elm City" will fill to-night, and sail at daybreak. We ourselves came back at once to the "Knickerbocker," from which the sick men have been removed, and we have been all day unpacking and arranging stores, and getting pantries and closets in order. I am writing on the floor, interrupted constantly to join in a laugh. Georgy is sorting socks and pulling out the funny little balls of yarn and the big darning-needles stuck in the toes, with which she is making a fringe across my back. *Do* spare us the darning-needles! Reflect upon us rushing in haste to the linen-closet and plunging our hands into the bale of stockings! I certainly shall make a collection of sanitary clothing. I solemnly aver that yesterday I found a pair of drawers made for a case of amputation at the



thigh. And the slippers, — only fit for pontoon-bridges! We are at last in perfect order, and are told that the wounded will arrive about 4 A. M., — such a nice, comfortable hour! There are two hundred and fifty to come down, — mostly from Hanover Court-House, where General Porter had a brilliant success on Friday.

The Sanitary Commission is not treated in the handsomest manner; its benevolence is imposed upon. Squads of civilian doctors are here, waiting about for “surgical cases.” There must be dozens of them doing nothing, and their boats doing nothing, — waiting for a battle. They would not look at a sick man; bless you, he’s not their game! It is “cases” they want; and their whole influence goes to getting off the sick upon the Commission, instead of taking their proper share of the work, so that they may, when a battle occurs, get a harvest of wounded. Now the reason why we complain of this is that Mr. Olmsted is anxious to keep his ships (which are perfectly organized and well-managed) running in a regular manner, so that if a battle occurs, he may be prepared for it. If he is overwhelmed with the sick

(who could be easily and regularly transported if all did their share), he is liable to be unprepared for an emergency; and if the Commission is unprepared, I am afraid it will go hard with the poor fellows when the evil day comes.

Since I began this page a furious gust or storm of wind, rain, thunder, and lightning has come up. We are plunging up and down at our anchor on the sweet river as if it were mid-ocean; and in the midst of it the dear "Wilson Small" tumbles up alongside, true to her colliding principles. Alas for the wounded who are on their way to us!

Our evenings are the pleasantest hours of the day. The Chief and Mr. Knapp and the staff collect on a broken chair, a bed-sack, and sundry carpet-bags, and have their modicum of fun and quinine. The person who possesses a dainty — chocolate or gingerbread, for instance — is the hero for the time being.

Good-by! The storm is just going over. Oh, how good it will be to sleep in a bed once more! I found to-day one of the bed-sacks we made in such a hurry last autumn; and in

unpacking stores I have several times come across packages labelled in my handwriting. Tell this to the Women's Aid Society. Tell them also that flannel shirts are never in sufficient quantity; the flannel can be heavier and coarser than what we have hitherto used. Socks are always wanted. Gray and red flannel shirts are precious; we keep them for special cases. If anybody proposes to send me anything, say: *Good* brandy; gray, white, or red shirts, *army pattern*; canton flannel drawers, not too large; pocket-handkerchiefs (boxes of spotted ones can be bought cheap in New York), towels, nutmegs, bay-water, coarse flannel in the piece, Muringer's beef-extract, — this is precious as gold to us; Soyer's and other soup preparations are comparatively worthless for our purpose. We have plenty of fresh beef for the "house diet," and we make a good deal of our beef-tea out of it with muriatic acid; but even that takes time. What we want is something available at a moment's notice; therefore send Muringer's beef-extract. It comes in small cakes looking like a dark glue. Send also condensed milk, lemons, and sherry.

If gentlemen ask what they shall send, say MONEY to the treasury of the Sanitary Commission.

“KNICKERBOCKER,” May 31.

DEAR MOTHER, — The long letter now enclosed I was too utterly tired out to carry even the length of the ward to post last night. As I finished it, two steamers came alongside, each with a hundred sick on board, bringing word that the “Louisiana” (a side-wheel vessel, not a Commission-boat) was aground at a little distance, with two hundred more, having no one in charge of them and nothing to eat. Of course they had to be attended to. So, amid the wildest and most beautiful storm of thunder and lightning, Georgy, Dr. Ware, Mrs. Reading, and I pulled off to her in a little boat with tea, bread, brandy, and beef-essence. (No one can tell how it tries my nerves to go toppling round at night in little boats, and clambering up ships’ sides on little ladders!) We fed them, — the usual process, — poor fellows, they were so crazy. Dr. Ware says I have particular luck with delirium, and he made me try my hand

on a man with whom he could do nothing, and I succeeded.

Soon after, the "Wissahickon" came alongside to transfer the men to the "Elm City." Only part could go in the first load. Dr. Ware made me go in her to avoid returning in the little boat. Just as we pushed off, the steam gave out, and we drifted stem-on to the shore. Then a boat had to put off from the "Elm City" with a line to tow us up. All this time the thunder was incessant, the rain falling in torrents, while every second the beautiful crimson lightning flashed the whole scene open to us. Add to this that there were three men alarmingly ill, and (thinking to be but a minute in reaching the other ship) I had not even a drop of brandy for them. Do you wonder, therefore, that I forgot to mail your letter?

To-day (Saturday) has been a hard-working day. It is something to feed two hundred and fifty men, and prepare all the food for the very sick. . I wish you could hear the men after they are put into bed. Those who *can* speak, speak with a will; others grunt or murmur their satisfaction: "Well! this bed is 'most *too* soft.

I don' know as I shall sleep for thinking of it!" "What have you got there?" "This is bread; wait till I butter it!" "Butter — on *soft* bread!" he slowly ejaculates, as if not sure that he is n't Aladdin with a genie at work upon him.

The Women's Central Relief Association are constantly begging us for anecdotes relating to the gratitude, and so forth, of the men. These have great effect, they say, upon the public mind, and bring the money down. So one day Georgy set out upon a pilgrimage, resolved that she would have something touching to report. She found a little drummer-boy who seemed a promising subject, so she began: "That's a nice shirt you have on; I know the ladies who made it: have n't you some message to send them?" "Wal!" said he, with that peculiar nasal twang which belongs only to a sick soldier on the Pamunky, "you tell 'em it's 'most big enough for two."

Mrs. Griffin is well, and very efficient. It requires great thought and care and sweetness of temper to get along with this work, and she has all of them. I met with the serious misfor-

tune of breaking the crystal of my watch yesterday. My watch is a part of myself: what shall I do without it?—and there's so little to mark time, or even to distinguish day from night, in these vast ships. They are strange places, and I often feel like a cockroach, running familiarly as I do into all their dark corners.

“WILSON SMALL,” Sunday, June 1.

DEAR A., — I write amid the distant booming of cannon and the hourly arrival of telegrams from the scene of action. The battle<sup>1</sup> began yesterday afternoon. Up to 11 P.M. the accounts received were not wholly favorable. The attack was made on our weakest point, General Casey's division, which is the advanced body on the Chickahominy. It was attacked on front and flank, and retreated; but being reinforced by General Heintzelmann, the ground and a lost battery were recovered. The second telegram to Colonel Ingalls was written off by the operator on the envelope of your letter of the 26th; I shall keep it as a souvenir. It says: “General Kearny has driven the enemy a mile at the

<sup>1</sup> Fair Oaks, otherwise called Seven Pines.

point of the bayonet. General Heintzelmann is driving back the enemy. Prisoners, General Pettigru and several field and staff officers." A little later, and we heard: "We are driving them before us at every point;" and now the last word is, "Our victory is complete."

The wounded are pouring in. *All our ships*, except the "Spaulding," are here. Even the "Elm City," which started with five hundred sick for Yorktown at four o'clock this morning, has just returned, beds made and all,—a triumph for her hospital company! The "Commodore," a Pennsylvanian boat, the "Vanderbilt" and "Whilldin," Government boats, are full. The "Knickerbocker" filled up, before we left her, with three hundred men from Casey's division,—a sad sight. We left her this afternoon, after the men were comfortably settled, in the hands of those who are to take her to Newport News, and came home here, "Wilson Small," with all our belongings. Mrs. Howland and Georgy went off soon after to fit up the "Daniel Webster No. 2."

I am writing on our little after-deck by the light of the moon. The shore resounds with



cheering; even the wounded are elate. All around me lie hundreds, well-nigh thousands, of the poor fellows. Noble boys!

“WILSON SMALL,” June 2.

DEAR A.,—The “Daniel Webster” is filling, to sail to-night. This letter shall go in her. What a day and night we have had! What a whirlwind of work, sad work, we have been in! Immediately after closing my letter of yesterday, Mrs. Griffin and I were whisked away in a little boat, at the peril of our lives, and hustled, tumbled, hoisted, first into the “State of Maine,” where we lost our way amid frightful scenes, until we finally reached the “Elm City,” where we were going as night-watch to relieve the ladies belonging to her, who had been up all the night before. She had four hundred and seventy wounded men on board. We passed the night up to our elbows in beef-tea, milk-punch, lemonade, panada, etc. The men were comfortable. The surgeons let them, for the most part, have a night’s rest before their wounds were opened. Not so, however, on the “State of Maine,” where operations were

going on all night ; the hideous sounds filling our ears even in the midst of our own press of work.

Our men were so touchingly grateful. There was a poor fellow lying close to the door of the pantry where we were making and dispensing the food and drinks : his leg was amputated. I noticed, after a time, that he was stretching and straining to get at a bundle or something in his berth. I went to him as soon as I could. He turned his face to me, covered with tears, and put a little crumpled roll of pink paper into my hand, saying : " I heard you tell that man you gave him the last pin out of your dress : don't give us everything ; please take these," — precious little roll ! will I ever part with it ! Such things are better for us than all the quinine in the country. We stayed chiefly in our pantry, giving out to the dressers and nurses all that was wanted ; also to a detail who came from time to time from the " State of Maine."

Oh, when shall I forget the sunrise that morning as it looked in through the little window beside me ! When can I cease to remember the feelings with which I saw it !

Mr. Olmsted sent peremptory orders at nine o'clock that we should return home; and we left the "Elm City," sure that the men had everything needful, and were safe in the faithful hands of Mrs. Balestier and Miss Charlotte Bradford. We were no sooner washed and dressed than the "Small" scudded up to the landing to take on forty wounded just arriving by the railroad. The forty proved, as usual, to be eighty,—ghastly objects: this was like being on a battle-field. The men were just as they fell, in their muddy clothing, saturated with blood and filth. From then until now, when we have just put them on the "Webster," Mrs. Griffin and I have been with them. One died in her care, and one in mine; there were some too far gone to know anything more in this world, but there were others, almost as badly hurt, who were cheerful, bright, and even talkative,—so different from the dreary sadness and listlessness of sick men. They seldom groan, except when their wounds are being dressed, and then their cries are agonizing: "Oh, doctor, doctor!" in such heartrending tones.

General Devens, wounded in the knee, Colonel

Briggs, Tenth Massachusetts, wounded in the thigh, and several other wounded officers, were among the eighty ; but they had their staff-officers or orderlies, and though we saw that they had what was necessary, we stayed ourselves with the men. We have just put part of them on the "Webster," which sails for Boston this evening, and the rest on the "Elm City," which sails for Annapolis at the same time. The "Spaulding" has just come up the river, and the quartermaster hails me that there are cases on board for me. Thank you all! Dr. Grymes has invited us to dinner on the "Webster," that we may swallow necessary food, which we could not do on the polluted decks of the "Small."

The trouble the medical authorities give Mr. Olmsted is terrible. They send the most conflicting orders, and there is no United States medical officer here, at this most important point, to refer to. Captain Sawtelle, Assistant-Quartermaster, is so good to us. He and Colonel Ingalls and General Van Vliet are constantly shielding the Commission from annoyance. How nobly the Commission has done its work, how thoroughly, how wisely ; with what lavish dis-

regard of labor and care and fatigue, so long as the *best possible* is done for the service! Day and night, without sleep, sometimes without food, Mr. Olmsted and Mr. Knapp are working their brains and their physical strength to the utmost. Good-by! we are just going on board the "Webster." No, we have only run along-side to give her the order to sail. So good-by to our dinner! I hoped to have sent this letter by her. The victory *is* a victory; but oh, the lives and the suffering it has cost!

"WILSON SMALL," June 4.

DEAR MOTHER, — I write a line — only a line — that you may not be anxious: you can't conceive under what circumstances. I am perfectly well. I have no time to write, no power to withdraw myself from my surroundings enough to write.

Conceive of the Medical Director sending down over four thousand five hundred wounded men without — yes, almost literally without — anything for them: without surgeons; no one authorized to take charge of them; nothing but empty boats to receive them.

Of course the Commission throws itself in and *does all*. Mr. Olmsted is everything, — wise, authoritative, untiring; but he must break down. You *can't conceive* what it is to stem the torrent of this disorder and utter want of organization. We are all well, and can only thank God that we are here, with health, strength, and *head*. To think or speak of the things we see would be fatal. No one must come here who cannot put away all feeling. Do all you can, and be a machine,—that's the way to act; the only way.

Good-by! No head to write more: Mr. Olmsted, Mr. Knapp, and I are sitting on the floor, resting, with a pitcher of lemonade between us. My cases have arrived — oh, so thankful! Thank that good Newport for me.

“WILSON SMALL,” June 5.

DEAR MOTHER, — I finished my last letter (to A., I believe) on the afternoon of the day when we took eighty men on the “Small,” and transferred them to the “Webster.”

We had just washed and dressed, and were writing letters, when Captain Sawtelle came on

board to say that several hundred wounded men were lying at the landing; that the "Daniel Webster No. 2" had been taken possession of by the medical officers, and was already half full of men, and that the surplus was being carried across her to the "Vanderbilt;" that the confusion was terrible; that there were no stores on board the "Daniel Webster No. 2" (she having been seized the moment she reached the landing on her return from Yorktown, without communicating with the Commission), nor were there any stores or preparations, not even mattresses, on board the "Vanderbilt."

Of course the best in our power had to be done. Mrs. Griffin and I begged Mr. Olmsted not to refrain from sending us, merely because we had been up all night. He said he would n't send us, but if we chose to offer our services to the United States surgeon, he thought it would be merciful. Our offer was seized. We went on board; and such a scene as we entered and lived in for two days I trust never to see again. Men in every condition of horror, shattered and shrieking, were being brought in on stretchers borne by "contrabands," who dumped them any-

where, banged the stretchers against pillars and posts, and walked over the men without compassion. There was no one to direct what ward or what bed they were to go into. Men shattered in the thigh, and even cases of amputation, were shovelled into top berths without thought or mercy. The men had mostly been without food for three days, but there was *nothing* on board either boat for them; and if there had been, the cooks were only engaged to cook for the ship, and not for the hospital.

We began to do what we could. The first thing wanted by wounded men is something to drink (with the sick, stimulants are the first thing). Fortunately we had plenty of lemons, ice, and sherry on board the "Small," and these were available at once. Dr. Ware discovered a barrel of molasses, which, with vinegar, ice, and water, made a most refreshing drink. After that we gave them crackers and milk, or tea and bread. It was hopeless to try to get them into bed; indeed, there were no mattresses on the "Vanderbilt." All we could do at first was to try to calm the confusion, to stop some agony, to revive the fainting lives, to



snatch, if possible, from immediate death with food and stimulants. Imagine a great river or Sound steamer filled on every deck,—every berth and every square inch of room covered with wounded men; even the stairs and gangways and guards filled with those who are less badly wounded; and then imagine fifty well men, on every kind of errand, rushing to and fro over them, every touch bringing agony to the poor fellows, while stretcher after stretcher came along, hoping to find an empty place; and then imagine what it was to keep calm ourselves, and make sure that every man on both those boats was properly refreshed and fed. We got through at 1 A. M., Mrs. Howland and Georgy having come off other duty to reinforce us.

We were sitting for a few moments, resting and talking it over, and bitterly asking why a Government so lavish and perfect in its other arrangements should leave its wounded almost literally to take care of themselves, when a message came that one hundred and fifty men were just arriving by the cars. It was raining in torrents, and both boats were full. We went on shore again: the same scene repeated. The

wretched "Vanderbilt" was slipped out, the "Kennebec" brought up, and the hundred and fifty men carried across the "Daniel Webster No. 2" to her, with the exception of some fearfully wounded ones, who could not be touched in the darkness and rain, and were therefore made as comfortable as they could be in the cars. We gave refreshment and food to all; Miss Whetten and a detail of young men from the "Spaulding" coming up in time to assist, and the officers of the "Sebago," who had seen how hard pressed we were in the afternoon, volunteering for the night-watch. Add to this sundry Members of Congress, who, if they talked much, at least worked well. One of them, the Hon. Moses F. Odell, proposed to Mr. Olmsted that on his return to Washington he should move that the thanks of Congress be returned to us! Mr. Olmsted, mindful of our feelings, promptly declined.

We went to bed at daylight with *breakfast* on our minds, and at six o'clock we were all on board the "Daniel Webster No. 2," and the breakfast of six hundred men was got through with in good time. Captain Sawtelle kindly

sent us a large wall-tent, twelve caldrons and camp-kettles, two cooks, and a detail of six men. The tent was put up at once; Dr. Ware giving to its preparation the only hour when he might have rested during that long nightmare. We began to use it that (Tuesday) morning. It is filled with our stores; there we have cooked not only the sick-food, but *all* the food needed on the Government boats. It was hard to get it in sufficient quantity; but when everything else gave out, we broke up "hard-tack" into buckets full of hot milk and water a little sweetened, — "bread and milk" the men called it. Oh, that precious condensed milk, more precious to us at that moment than beef essence!

Tuesday was very much a repetition of Monday night. The men were cleared from the main-deck and gangways of the "Daniel Webster No. 2" on to the "Kennebec." The feeding business was almost as hard to manage as before. But still it was done, and we got to bed at 1 A. M. Mrs. H. and I were to attend to the breakfast at six next morning. By some chance Mrs. Howland, who was ready as soon as I was, was carried off by the "Small," which

started suddenly to run down to the "Spaulding." I had, therefore, to get the breakfast alone. I accomplished it, and then went ashore and fed some men who were just arriving in the cars, and others who were in tents near the landing. The horrors of that morning are too great to speak of. The men in the cars were brought on board the "Daniel Webster No. 2" and laid about the vacant main-deck and guards and on the deck of a scow that lay alongside. I must not, I ought not to tell you of the horrors of that morning. One of the least was that I saw a "contraband" step on the amputated stump of a wretched man. I took him by the arm and walked him into the tent, where I ordered them to give him other work, and forbade that he should come upon the ships again. I felt white with anger, and dared not trust myself to speak to *him*. While those awful sights pass before me I have comparatively no feeling, except the anxiety to alleviate as much as possible. I do not suffer under the sights; but oh! the sounds, the screams of men. It is when I think of it afterwards that it is so dreadful.

All yesterday (Wednesday), after the early morning, things went better. Our tent-kitchen worked to a charm. Dinner was well through by 2 P. M., and we had time to look after the men individually, and to make preparations for two hundred more, who were expected by the railway at 4 P. M. They did not come, however, till 1 A. M. While my letter has been in progress (with countless interruptions) Mrs. Griffin and Mr. Woolsey have come in to report that the two Government boats, the "Louisiana" and "State of Maine" (which have taken the place at the landing of the "Vanderbilt" and the "Daniel Webster No. 2"), are in good order, have excellent hospital stewards; that the Commission has supplied them with ample stores; and that the two hundred men who came down this morning have gone quietly on board the "State of Maine" and are comfortable. I hope, I pray, the worst is over.

About nine hundred wounded remain to be brought down. Mr. Olmsted says *our* boats have transported one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six since Sunday; the Government and Pennsylvanian boats together about three thou-

sand. Mr. Clement Barclay was with us on Monday night on the "Vanderbilt." I believe he went with her to Fortress Monroe. He was working hard, with the deepest interest and skill. I went with him to attend to a little "Secesh" boy, wounded in the thigh; also to a Southern colonel, a splendid-looking man, who died, saying to Mr. Barclay, with raised hand: "Write to my wife and tell her I die penitent for the part I have taken in this war." I try to be just and kind to the Southern men. One of our men stopped me, saying: "*He's* a rebel; give that to me." I said, "But a wounded man is our brother!" (rather an obvious sentiment, if there is anything in Christianity); and they both touched their caps. The Southerners are constantly expressing surprise at one thing or another, and they are shy, but not surly, at receiving kindness. Our men are a noble set of fellows, so cheerful, uncomplaining, and generous.

Remember that in all that I have written, I have told you only about ourselves, — the women. What the gentlemen have been, those of our party, those of the "Spaulding" and of

the other vessels, is beyond my power to relate. Some of them fainted from time to time.

Several regiments have come up yesterday and to-day as reinforcements. Their bands are gay, and the trim look of the men almost amusing. The Southerners wear no uniforms, and are the shabbiest set of fellows. Short gray spencers, and trousers of any color or no color, are the nearest approach to regimentals that I have seen.

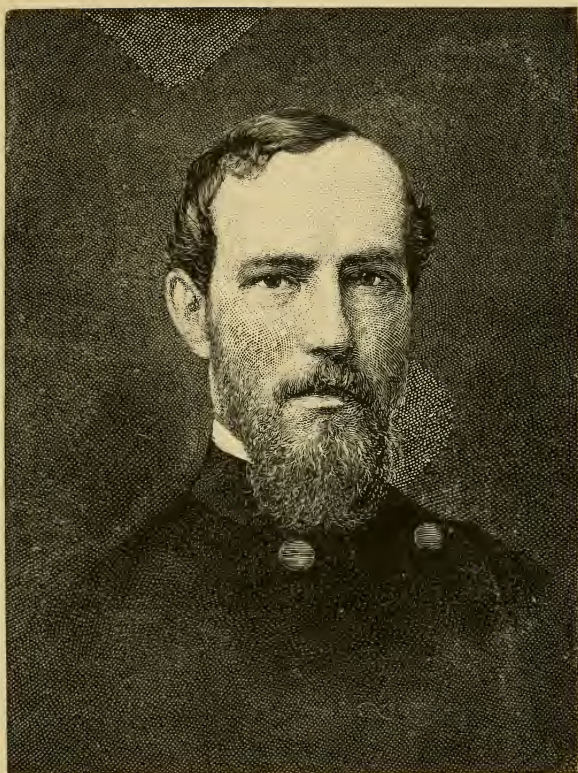
Last night, shining over blood and agony, I saw a lunar rainbow; and in the afternoon a peculiarly beautiful effect of rainbow and stormy sunset, — it flashed upon my eyes as I passed an operating-table, and raised them to avoid seeing anything as I passed.

“WILSON SMALL,” June 8.

DEAR FRIEND, — This is the first quiet Sunday since we have been here. How long it will stay quiet, no one can tell for an hour together. The past week is wholly indescribable. Our own boats filled up calmly and comfortably on Sunday and Monday with the wounded of Saturday. Then the Government boats began to fill; and such fearful scenes as we have passed

through since then until noon of yesterday, I would not tell you if I could. From five to eight hundred wounded men have been sent down daily: no authorized officials to receive them; no arrangements made of any kind. The boats which have been lying here idle for weeks, waiting for "surgical cases," wholly unprepared, and their surgeons off to the battlefield. No stores, no beds, no hospital stewards, no food, no stimulants. Then it is that the medical authorities fling themselves on the Sanitary Commission, and the Commission gives everything with a generous hand. It has done all that has been done on three fourths of the Government boats, and *that* at the last moment, without notice, and when its supplies were heavily taxed in fitting out its own boats, — which, happily, were all, except the "Spaulding," here, and ready to ship the first wounded that came down. Never did men work as ours have worked. It would be hard to say who did best where all did so well. No description can give you a full idea of the pressure upon them, of the necessities they strove to meet; and all to be done out of their regular system, hurried and





ROBERT WARE.



confused by the hurry and excitement of the one medical officer who appeared to have any authority upon the ground.

As for us women, all we could do was to give drink, stimulants, and food to the poor fellows, and what other little ease we could. We take great comfort in a tent-kitchen provided for us by Captain Sawtelle, from whom we receive much thoughtful, kind attention. From it we have fed four thousand men this week; on Thursday we served twelve hundred meals. We also receive kindness from other officers. Far from meeting with any of the usual army opposition, our help is claimed and warmly acknowledged.

To-day things look brighter. The "Elm City" and "Knickerbocker" are back and in perfect order. A new medical officer has been placed in charge of the transportation from this point. He began his duties yesterday after the departure of the "Louisiana." *She* was fifty per cent better than any of the other Government boats, and yet this officer said to me to-day, when I took him through the wards of the "Knickerbocker" (she filled up at midnight): "Oh, what happiness to look at this boat after

that accursed thing of yesterday!" I find I can bear anything with calmness and, in one sense, indifference so long as I am beside it and engaged with it. To feel acutely at such times is merely selfish. But no tongue can tell what I suffered yesterday afternoon when I was obliged to stay on board here for a little rest, and listen to the groans of men undergoing operations on the gangway of the "Louisiana," to which we were moored. No trial of nerves ever equalled that. But why speak of such things? I beg you to offer the Prayer for the Sick, and that for the Afflicted, every Sunday in the Chapel. Can you not change and add something to them, to fill out and express all that we feel? It would be a great satisfaction to me to think that this were done.

I trust the worst is over. How little you all realize the magnitude of our necessities at your distance from them! Think of a handful of us here to keep order for the wounded of this great army,—I might almost say to keep life in them. I cannot adequately tell you of the work these Commission men have done. The lives saved are theirs. "Day" and "night" are words

of no meaning to Mr. Olmsted and Mr. Knapp. I think they must break down under the pressure of care and physical effort. The young men of the Commission are most praiseworthy. Nothing is too hard, or too humble, or too constant for them to do, and do gladly, as if they rejoiced to do it. Dr. Robert Ware has more upon him than any one but Mr. Olmsted and Mr. Knapp; he is all that is sensible, energetic, and *successful*.

I have seen many men die, but never one to whom such a word as one might wish to say could be spoken. Our work is not like regular hospital work. It is succoring men just off the battle-field, and making them easy, clean, and comfortable before we turn them over into other hands. Those who die are too low when they come to us to know much; and when you think that four thousand men have passed through our hands this week, you will understand that we can do little beyond the mere snatching from physical death.

Good-bye! I hope you may be happy this summer, — it would be something to be able to think of happiness as existing somewhere.

I send you a little poem written to Mrs. Howland, by a private soldier who had been in her care on one of our boats. If you knew her you would see that there is a poet's insight in what he says of her:—

From old Saint Paul till now,  
Of honorable women not a few  
Have left their golden ease, in love to do  
The saintly work which Christlike hearts pursue.

And such an one art thou, — God's fair apostle,  
Bearing his Love in war's horrific train ;  
Thy blessèd feet follow its ghastly pain  
And misery and death, without disdain.

To one borne from the sullen battle's roar,  
Dearer the greeting of thy gentle eyes  
When he aweary, torn, and bleeding lies,  
Than all the glory that the victors prize.

When peace shall come, and homes shall smile again,  
A thousand soldier-hearts in Northern climes  
Shall tell their little children in their rhymes  
Of the sweet saint who blessed the old war-times.

“WILSON SMALL,” June 8.

DEAR A., — I have written to mother and to Mr. M—— of the battles of the 1st and 2d of June. I refer you to those letters for the sad story of those days. The Commission boats

were all here when the wounded began to come down in freight-cars from the front. They filled and left with their accustomed order and promptitude. After that, other boats, detailed by Government for hospital-service, were brought up. These boats were not under control of the Sanitary Commission. There was no one appointed to take charge of them; no one authorized to receive the wounded at the railroad; no one to ship them properly; no one to see that the boats were supplied with proper stores. Of course the Commission came forward to do what it could at a moment's notice; but it had no power, only the right of charity. It could neither control nor check the fearful confusion which ensued as train after train came in and the wounded were brought and thrust upon the various boats. But it did nobly what it could. Night and day its members worked, — not, you must remember, in its own well-organized service, but in the hard duty of making the best of a bad case.

On board the Commission boats we see the *unavoidable* miseries of war, and none else. As soon as the men come on board, all suffering,

except that of illness, ceases (this is a fact to be thought of and dwelt upon); we know and see that every necessary comfort and every chance for life is freely supplied. I often think of the money and supplies which by the kindness of the people of Newport passed through my hands before I left home. How little I then knew their value! How little I imagined that each article was to be a life giving comfort to some one sufferer! Believe me, you may all give and work in the earnest hope that you alleviate suffering; but none of you realize what you do, — perhaps you can't conceive it, unless you could see your gifts *in use*. I often wish, as I give a comfort to some poor fellow and see the sense of rest it gives him, and hear the favorite speech, "Oh, that's good; it's just as if mother was here!" that the man or woman who supplied that comfort were by to see how blessed it is.

I refer you to my other letters for the details of that week, — I *cannot* write of them again. And to-day, at the close of such a week, comes an "excursion party" from Washington, — Congressmen and ladies in silks and perfumes



and lilac kid gloves! "Sabbath-breaking picnickers on a battle-field!" as Georgy called them in a rage. I took one lady, with a little honest pride, through the wards of the "Knickerbocker," where everything was sweet and fresh, the men all quiet in their white beds and clean hospital clothing, — nothing, comparatively, to shock any one. She wished to call her sister; but a gentleman who was with her said: "Oh, don't; don't let her see such an awful sight!" Now there was nothing painful to be seen; at that moment the awfulness of war was but *an idea*, — then why did n't that idea keep them away from here altogether?

The "Elm City" is back to-day; the ladies have put her in order as she came up the river. There have been no arrivals of wounded; those who came down last night were the wounded of last Sunday. Their wounds were in a frightful state, — alive with maggots.

Your letter ("not dated," as gentlemen say) telling me that you have sent another spirit-lamp is received to-day. You can't tell what your letters are to me; I actually put them under my pillow to read when I wake in the

morning, — like Ralph. I am well; but excitement, fatigue, and quinine have made me deaf, which bothers me a good deal. Mr. Knapp has broken down, as I knew he would. Oh, what a sad loss he will be to us! Dr. J. Foster Jenkins has arrived to take his place. Mr. Olmsted's health begins to give the doctors serious uneasiness, — so they tell me; but *he* says he is well.

“WILSON SMALL,” June 9.

DEAR MOTHER, — I can't retain the least recollection of when I write, or what I write, or to whom it is written. I only know that I do write to somebody nearly every day. You owe the multitude of my letters partly to the fact that they are written here and there at odd moments, and partly to the other fact that when we go off duty we go *utterly off*, and come up to our little haven of rest, the “Small.” When we get here we can't sit and do nothing, we can't think, we can't read; what can we do but write? Sometimes the intense excitement of our lives finds vent and ease in writing; but at other times, when we have nothing

pressing to do, we feel so inert that the effort to collect our thoughts to write even a line is too great. We have so many letters to scribble for the poor fellows that materials must always be handy. I go about with my note-paper rolled up in a magazine and stuck, with pens and ink, into an apron-pocket; and so it sometimes happens that a letter to you is begun, continued, or ended while on duty. Beside the letters we write and send off for the men, we have many from friends inquiring after husbands, sons, and brothers who are reported wounded. Such letters will never cease to be a sad and tender memory to us. One came last week from a wife inquiring after her husband, but none of us could attend to it until to-day. "Give him back to me dead," she says, "if he *is* dead, for I *must see him.*" Mrs. Griffin remembered the name; he was one of the men whose funeral she attended ashore one Sunday evening. So to-day I went up and found him under the feathery elm-tree. I made a little sketch of the place and sent it to her,—all I could send, poor soul!

I am sitting now on a barrel in the tent,

waiting for a train of sick men who were telegraphed to arrive an hour ago. A million of flies are buzzing and whirling and settling about me. If you doubt the number, "Count them, \*sir, count them," as the waiter at Vauxhall said to the man who asked if there were *really* five millions of lamps, as advertised. Flies are much harder to count than lamps, so I let you off four millions.

I hear that inquiries are being made as to how the Sanitary Commission uses its supplies. If they are made of you, say that so far as I have seen (and it is not too much to say that more than half of what is used on our boats passes under the women's knowledge), there is no waste, but the most careful use. The Commission is not only doing in the best manner its own work, but it has supplied stores of hospital food, stimulants, and every thread of clothing, lint, bandages, sheets, articles and utensils of hospital use, and much else of a miscellaneous character, to the Government boats, besides the daily, I might almost say hourly, requisitions from the regimental hospitals. If people ask whether more can be wanted, let

them consider this. Let them reflect that four times a week our own boats have to be fitted out. To be sure, the same things are to some extent used again; but, without waste, much must be lost. For instance, washing cannot be done here or on the boats; on the latter it would be dangerous. Much that is used has to be thrown overboard; it would be a risk to life to do otherwise. Large cases of soiled clothing, sheets, etc., are nailed up and sent North on the ships. Perhaps each of them carries two or three thousand of such articles. Of course the supplies diminish; though from time to time the washed articles come back.

Oh! if those at home could see all that I see, no trouble, no expense, no sacrifice would be thought too great to strengthen the hands of this Commission so that its work may not fail. I know of my own knowledge how the articles supplied by the women of the country go; and I *know* there is no waste. When hour by hour some direful necessity is brought to sight, much has to be given which never comes back into our hands; all given to the Government boats is, of course, never returned,

— nor could that be expected. On our own boats, however, economy is practised just so far as not to interfere with the success of the work. Oh, how pressed we are for some things! Tin pails, lanterns, and things of that kind we are always begging for, and “annexing” where we can.

I ought to say that I believe the confusion and neglect on the part of the Medical Department which occurred last week was exceptional, and not likely to occur again. At least the authorities have now been warned, and I believe they will profit by the warning. Probably no army in the world ever advanced with so much to alleviate its hardships. Notwithstanding the suffering I see, I feel this; and when I reflect that I see all, or nearly all, there is of misery, I am ready to say that this war is not as dreadful as war once was. The men are well clothed and shod and fed; the ration (on which we live also) is excellent; the beef, rice, flour, and coffee as good as need be.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I found this to be the case when I became, later, superintendent of a large United States Army General Hospital, where the articles composing the ration came directly under my observa-

“WILSON SMALL,” June 10.

DEAR MOTHER, — Being the happy possessor of a pen-holder (pilfered from the “Elm City”), and having nothing to do, I shall write you a long letter. We are all collected, shivering and idle, under piles of blanket-shawls. All the wounded have come down and gone, and we have nothing to do, at least for to-day. If the weather were but mild, we could be comfortable and enjoy our rest; but never in the depth of winter did I feel the cold as I do to-day. I am chilled to the heart.

*Keep my letters*; they will remind me to tell you many things now forgotten. I wish it had been possible to keep a journal, so much that is interesting and droll in men and things occurs every minute; such armies of queer

tion. I never saw one of inferior quality. The ration of the United States soldier is:  $\frac{3}{4}$  lb. of pork or bacon, or  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lbs. of fresh or salt beef; 22 ounces of bread or flour, or  $1\frac{1}{4}$  lbs. of corn-meal; to every hundred rations, 10 lbs. coffee,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. tea, 15 lbs. sugar, 1 lb. sperm candles, or  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. tallow ditto, 4 lbs. soap, 2 quarts salt, 8 quarts beans or peas, 10 lbs. rice or hominy, 4 quarts vinegar, 1 gallon molasses (twice a week), 100 lbs. of fresh potatoes or 100 ounces dessicated vegetables (three times a week). Bacon means ham or middlings.

people turn up! Quartermasters are among the queerest. We have our own chief dragon on the "Elizabeth," with whom I am supposed to get along better than the others, therefore I conduct all difficult negotiations. I rush to him for something important a dozen times a day. He is resolute not to give it to me till I write and sign a requisition. Of course I am wanting it for something pressing, so after a slight blandishment I get it under promise of sending the requisition, — which is never sent. Then we have squads of comical "contrabands" (who like us very much until it becomes a question of *work*), and a detail of kind, nimble, tender Zouaves. I have become a convert to them after a long struggle, — their efficiency, their good sense, their gentleness are so marked. Even their dress, which I once hated, seems to take them in some sort out of the usual manners and ways of men. They have none of the dull, obstinate ways of that sex, — they are unexceptionable human beings of no sex, with the virtues of both.

Then we have every style of arrogant army surgeon and presuming volunteer surgeon, no



end of army officers, and some few naval officers: all of whom come trooping on board the "Small" after Mr. Olmsted, — chiefly, I observe, about dinner-time. The Commission is sadly imposed on in this way; it is used as a hotel. Last night four ladies arrived on the mail-boat, and instantly transferred themselves to the "Small." They have no business here, and nowhere to go. If such women are given a duty to do, they leave it, after a while, on the general principle that they are "wanted at the front." When they get there, the surgeons will have nothing to do with them; and, finally, this morning two, who are thought to be of doubtful character, have been returned whence they came. The wonder is how they get the passes to come at all. No lady should attempt to come here unless accepted or appointed by the Government or the Commission. Ardent women with a mission should not come in any other way, if they value their own respectability.

Our dear Mr. Knapp has broken down, as I knew he would, and is gone home with typhoid fever. I think I told you that a new surgeon-

in-charge had been appointed to the Shore hospital, with superintendence of the ship-transportation. He seems a kind man, and desirous to keep on good terms with the Commission and work with it. He is very cordial to us women, and begs us to come and do what we can at the hospital. Mr. Olmsted, however, frowns upon the idea, — frowns? No; but he remains impenetrably silent, — which is worse, for we can't rebel at it.

I often feel the pleasantness of our footing among all these persons, — official, military, naval, and medical. They clearly respect our work, and rightly appreciate it; they make no foolish speeches, but are direct and sensible in their words and acts; and when work is over, they do not feel towards us as “women with a mission,” but as ladies, to be with whom is a grateful relaxation.

Dr. McClellan, on the General's staff, came in from the front, and stayed with us last night, on his way to Fortress Monroe. He thinks there will be a gigantic battle before Richmond, and speaks of twenty thousand wounded. It is overwhelming to think of it. The nation must

send us more sheets, shirts, drawers, and money — MONEY.

The "Elm City" is lying alongside, between the "Small" and the shore. There is little for her to do at present. A dozen or so of wounded come down occasionally and go on board of her. A standing order now exists that none but wounded shall be put on the boats; all the sick are to go to the Shore hospital. Our tent is at the head of the wharf, just where the railway ends abruptly at the burned bridge. Dr. Ware selects the cases from the freight-cars, on the bare floor of which they are jolted down from Savage's Station, — the terminus of the road at the front. The worst cases are put inside the covered cars, — close, windowless boxes, — sometimes with a little straw or a blanket to lie on, oftener without. They arrive a festering mass of dead and living together, — or did, during the battle-week. Now they are sent down more comfortably; the bad cases have plenty of straw and plenty of room within, and the slight cases are perched upon the roof, or come down on long trains of trucks. Meantime we have ready in the tent proper food and stimulants,

and administer them to all after their hard journey, and before they go either on board the boats, or are taken in ambulances to the Shore hospital.

I shall send this letter by Monsieur de Trobriand, who goes home to-night, having had a severe attack of typhoid fever, from which he is not recovered; ill as he is, he is delightfully amusing, though I suspect him of being slightly out of his head. I think sometimes, when I am idle, of the happiness of getting home again. Oh! I never, never will grumble at anything again. But *also* I will never eat beef when once I escape from army rations; and I will never again own a carpet-bag. The misery those carpet-bags have cost me! I rush up for something that is wanted in a hurry; it is at the bottom of the bag, — things that are wanted always are. I tip it over into the berth, seize what I want, and am gone again. But then comes midnight! I creep up tired and sleepy, and find a mound of books, boots, cologne-bottles, and other brittle and angular things which must be cleared away before I can fling myself down. Amelia, our black servant, says: “Laws

me! I do wonder if you sleep on all dat muss!"

Reinforcements are arriving daily. I suppose from eight to ten thousand of McCall's division (a small portion of McDowell's corps) have arrived within a week. At first I scarcely noticed their coming. I heard their gay bands, and the loud cheering of the men as the transports rounded the last bend of the river and came in sight of the landing; but such sounds of the dreadful *other* side of war filled my ears that if I heard I heeded not. For the last night or two the arrivals by moonlight, the cheers and the gay music have been really enlivening. *We* see the dark side of all. You must not, however, gather only gloomy ideas from me. I see the worst, short of the actual battle-field, that there is to see. You must not allow yourself to think there is no brightness because I do not speak of it.

"WILSON SMALL," June 12.

DEAR A., — Yours of the 4th received, telling me you have sent some cases. How eagerly I shall look out for the "Webster!" I wish

I could instruct you fully as to the late battle; but our work so fills both time and mind that I feel as if I lived out of the war now that I live in it. You have much fuller accounts in the New York papers than I can give you. The little that I know is, however, true, and that is more than can be said of all the papers tell you. The late battle was not a general engagement. The enemy attacked us on the left. Our left is composed of two *corps d'armée*, — General Keyes's and General Heintzelmann's. Each corps has two divisions, each division four or five brigades, each brigade four regiments. Our left has been for some time across the Chickahominy, although not so near Richmond as our right, which is now bridging the river and the swamps to cross higher up, and is composed of two corps, — General Franklin's and General Fitz-John Porter's; the latter stretching away to the right to form the desired junction with McDowell. The bed of the Chickahominy is narrow; but in wet weather it becomes nearly treble its width, making the bridges and causeways which we have built nearly impassable. The enemy, tak-

ing advantage of the great storm which flooded these bottom lands (destroying, so they hoped, our communications), attacked General Casey's division on three sides. This division is part of General Keyes's corps. It was clearly a surprise, some of the officers being killed at dinner in their tents. We were forced back, losing guns and ground, — which were recovered, however, when General Couch's division (also of Keyes's corps) came up. It is said that when General Kearny's division (of Heintzelmann's corps) reached the ground, the day was already redeemed. Our right was from four to seven miles distant from the scene of action, which was at a place called Seven Pines, on the line of the railroad. General McClellan, whose headquarters are on the railroad this side of the Chickahominy, and about the centre of our lines, crossed the river Saturday afternoon with General Sumner and his corps, and the next day (Sunday) defeated the enemy at all points.

This is all I know ; and you won't understand it without a map. I am sorry to say General McClellan is very unwell, if not seriously ill.

I am told he has had the fever, which has left him with camp dysentery. I inclose a printed letter of Mr. Olmsted's about the work of the Commission which we all like very much. I have made some notes to it, for I comprehend the family egotism about me enough to feel that you will read the letter with double interest if you know where I fit into it.

Last evening we made our first pleasure excursion. Mr. Olmsted begged us ("us" always means himself and staff) to take a run in the "Wheelbarrow," "Wissahickon," or "Wicked Chicken," as we indiscriminately call our tug-boat, up the river beyond the burned bridge. We generally have one or two pleasant outsiders not far off. Last night it was Colonel Howland, who had come from the front to spend a day with his wife. Oh, how we enjoyed our little holiday! It was sweet to run suddenly out of the noisy bustle of the wharves and the camp, out of the breath of hospitals, into the still river, shining with amber lights of sunset, where nothing broke the silence but the cranes — and we. We came home by moonlight, refreshed and happy.



To-day (very suddenly, and just at dinner-time) the Chief discovered that an ice-boat was missing; so we have dropped down to Cumberland in search of her. In other words, we have had a peaceful family dinner, safe from loafers and spongers; and now we are sitting on the after-deck, dreaming, reading, writing, and some of us, of course, smoking. I can't tell you what a pleasure it is to be with these people who go *right in* to a thing thoroughly. Nobody is head here (except the Chief). We all do a little of everything, and pretty much what we please. I am, if anything, at the foot. This is not humility, but truth; the others are so prompt and efficient that they often take out of my hands that which I might do.

We are just passing the charred bones of a burned rebel gunboat. Oh, this pretty river! How I wish you could be beside me now! If you were, you should occupy our best chair, which once was cane-bottomed, but now has only the frame-work of the seat, on which we poise ourselves.

I am well, and shall last, I think, till we get to Richmond. Don't be uneasy about me; if

I should be ill, I shall take the mail-boat, and be at home before you can hear of it. To-morrow I take a ride in an ambulance, which equipage the surgeon-in-charge of the Shore hospital is to send down for us, that we may go up and organize a special diet kitchen for him, where proper sick-food can be prepared under the surgeons' orders. All good hospitals ought to be self-supporting. Government furnishes an ample ration, which can be drawn in money ("commuted" they call it) and spent in proper food for the sick, instead of the ordinary mess diet. I should like to have charge of a hospital now. I could make it march, if only I had hold of some of the administrative *power*.

We have little to do at the present moment. From twenty-five to seventy-five sick men come down daily. We give them a meal as they arrive, and then they are taken to the Shore hospital. When a wounded man comes down he is put on the "Elm City," now lying alongside the wharf. We have done nothing on board of her since we last fitted her up before the battle. She has her full complement of service, and the women's department is in the

competent hands of Mrs. Balestier and Miss Bradford. At present our time is divided between the tent and the "Small," — the dear "Small!" I wonder whether we should like her as well under any other name. We have given quite a home-look to our little cabin, which is never without its bouquet of magnolia, jessamine, and honeysuckle. Our orderlies gather the flowers as an attention to "the ladies," and every now and then Captain Sawtelle sends a bunch.

Heavy orders for intrenching-tools were filled and sent forward last night. This looks as if a battle were not in prospect. It is all very well for political idiots and men at ease to talk about "cutting our way into Richmond." If they want it done, why don't they give McClellan strength enough to do it? Col. Howland says we must trust him; that whatever he does, be it *act* or *wait*, will be well done. When will the nation learn that it is in the hands of its greatest man, and wait calmly for *his results*, only taking care in the mean time to strengthen his hands?<sup>1</sup> I hope you keep my

<sup>1</sup> It is perhaps as well to say here that my present opinion of General McClellan is somewhat different from what it was.

letters (for my own benefit). I have no recollection of where I have been or what I have done. You can form no idea of the bewilderment and doubt in which we live as to times and seasons, hours of the day and days of the week. It is really absurd. I am told to-day is Thursday ; but I certainly thought it was Tuesday.

“ WILSON SMALL,” June 14.

DEAR MOTHER,—If I can give you a clear account of what occurred last night, I shall do a clever thing ; for everybody is asking everybody else if he has any positive idea as to what the fuss was all about.

We were waiting in our tent for a train of sick men which had been due more than an hour. It was nearly seven o'clock, and every-

I still think that he was an able general, and a noble and patriotic man, who sought to heal as well as to conquer. But he was, it seems, too slow for the work he had to do. He was an accomplished and careful soldier, even a great one ; but he had not the genius of War, nor the dash that sometimes takes its place. On the other hand, we must remember that no great commander was ever so trammelled and thwarted by civilian ignorance and scheming. Had the powers ultimately given to General Grant been intrusted to General McClellan, he might, perhaps, have ended the war in this campaign.

thing was ready ; presently the train came in, and five men, *bleeding from fresh wounds*, were brought out. The train had been fired into, a quartermaster had been killed, and five of the sick men wounded.<sup>1</sup> All this had happened about three miles from White House. We did not pay much attention to the story, for we were busy giving and sending food to the rest of the men. But presently Mr. Olmsted came up with an order from Colonel Ingalls: "The ladies will return at once to their boat." Of course we obeyed, but as slowly as we could, asking questions as we went along. A second order came: "Report the ladies on board *at once*." We obeyed. Presently Mr. Olmsted followed with a third order: "The wounded will be moved from the 'Elm City' to the 'Small' instantly; the latter will run down to the 'Spaulding.' This arrangement is made, as the shipping may have to be burned. Put the ladies behind the iron walls of the 'Spaulding.'" Then came another hurrying order: "Let the 'Elm City' go down with her wounded on

<sup>1</sup> Stuart's raid. See Colonel von Borcke's account of this "gallant" deed in "Blackwood's Magazine" for September, 1865.

board, and rendezvous with the 'Small' alongside the 'Spaulding.'” So away we went.

But Mr. Olmsted was not satisfied. I believe he felt that our right place was where we might be of service ; and after seeing the order obeyed, he took a boat and rowed himself back to the landing. The result was that an order was sent down soon after to bring the “Small” back to the wharf and take on the sick men who had arrived on the train. So we took a detail and thirty mattresses from the “Spaulding,” and went back as fast as we could. Captain Sawtelle came on board at once. Nothing very definite was known. A gap had occurred in our lines somewhere near Hanover Court-House. A regiment of cavalry was supposed to have got through. A good deal of harm had been done. Our hearts beat for the railroad-bridges (two distinct fires could be seen), and for a moment we felt gloomy. It would have been a serious business to cut off even one day's supply to the army ; it would have played into the enemy's hands, — perhaps by forcing on a general engagement. Captain Sawtelle was arming every man capable of bearing arms,

— teamsters, etc., — and was preparing to burn everything, shipping and all, if necessary. Two of our party, Mr. Woolsey and Mr. Mitchell, volunteered their services, and were under arms all night. A battery of artillery was hastily got together of guns that had arrived the night before; and this morning we learn that the Bucktail Rifles, Colonel Biddle's regiment, which had gone up two days earlier, has returned to guard the railroad-bridges. These and the track are perfectly safe. The telegraph-wires have been cut. The two fires we saw were only some shipping — two or three schooners — five miles up the river. It is said that a body of guerillas from the country between the Pamunky and the Rappahannock, hearing of the dash of their cavalry, came across the Pamunky on five scows, and did some damage. I wonder if they were looking at us the other night from behind the cranes!

This is the *résumé* of what we have heard from Captain Sawtelle, who pays his morning and evening momentary visit or look at us. Now you know all about the affair historically, — at least, as much as anybody knows; but

there's a dark, private aspect of it to me, and though I dare say I can tell it as a joke, it is like playing with something that has not yet lost its sting. Georgy and I were highly indignant at being sent away; we thought it shirking our duty, and very inglorious. At last our tongues got loose; we said all we thought, — at least I did. I said more than I *thought*, because I was in a passion; and all I got for it was the sense of having hurt and wounded Mr. Olmsted. Of course he was right; I can see now that he had to take care of us, even though it seemed absurd. This happened as we were going down to the "Spaulding." Presently Mr. Olmsted was missing. He had taken a small boat, and was rowing himself back to the landing. I saw him shoot into the darkness, and I felt like a brute; I was so sorry for what I had said; I felt I had somehow goaded him, — and I thought of him, so delicate, and now really ill, making his way into danger in a horrid little boat.

Just then Dr. Jenkins told us that if we had valuables on board, we had better secure them, as the "Small" might have to be burned.



While I was getting my bags ready, I remembered that Dr. Ware and David Haight were ashore, in charge of the sick who were left in the tents, and that all their things would be burned unless somebody saved them. So, without further thought, I went into the stateroom which they shared together, and spreading a huge shawl of Robert Ware's on the floor, I proceeded to fill it with the entire contents of the room. I had just finished, and was knotting the ends of the shawl together, when Georgy came by. She stood like a mocking fiend, gazing at that wretched blue bundle; she drew such a picture of the possible morrow, and of my shame and confusion when I should have to explain what I had been about, that I was completely beaten down and humbled; and when Mr. Olmsted's order came, recalling us, and I perceived that the "Small" was not likely to be burned, I fell into a perfectly abject state of mind. This mollified her. "Come," said she, relenting, "there's time enough; let's go to work and put the things back." How grateful I felt to her while I quickly untied the "pack," as she persisted in calling

it. I had a general idea where the coats and trousers ought to go; but where the minor articles belonged, who could tell? But I would n't show perplexity under Georgy's eye, and I popped them here and there with a semblance of order that stateroom did not wear when I went into it. Alas! This morning, through the ventilator, came the fatal cry: "Haight, take your things out of my bed!" "Where's my hair-brush?" "Where's *mine*?" "Upon my soul, I believe you've even got my tooth-brush!" Oh! if any one ever repented himself of philanthropy, I did then; and who shall guarantee me that Georgy will not come out and tell the whole story, and put me to open shame?

It took a very short time to turn our little home into a hospital. By 2 A. M. the men were all on board, and by four o'clock they were comfortable for the night. They are very sick, — perhaps the worst set together that I ever saw; scarcely any are in their right mind, some are raving, one is screaming now for "something hot," "lucifer-matches." They have been much shaken by the attack on the train, which has, I

think, greatly aggravated their condition. One of them died this morning, unconscious, as usual, and so quietly that it was some minutes before I believed it, though Dr. Ware said it was so. He was speechless when he came into our hands, — sent down with no indication of name or regiment; and so he dies. There is another dying man lying next to where he lay; and though his eyes are bright and intelligent, he can give no sign, and I cannot discover anything about him. So many nameless men come down to us, speechless and dying, that now we write the names and regiments of the bad cases and fasten them to their clothing, so that if they are speechless when they reach other hands, they may not die like dogs, and be buried in nameless graves, and remain forever “missing” to their friends. This was Georgy’s thought, — so like her! How I love her practical tenderness!

Mr. Olmsted is puzzled what to do with these men. There is a standing order against any but wounded going upon the boats; but they can hardly be sent to the Shore hospital until the question as to what this raid really is, set-

bles itself. I have no time to write more. We are short-handed, and can spare but little time from the men, and they, poor souls, are so noisy and crazy that they give us unusual care and anxiety. I am now going below to the main-deck saloon, where they are, for the night-watch.

The "Daniel Webster" reported herself at 4 P. M. Dr. Grymes and Captain Bletham came on board at once. The latter was much gratified by D. and A.'s visit to the ship at Boston. My precious cases are on board; but in the present condition of the "Small" they must remain on the "Webster."

IN OUR TENT, June 18.

DEAR A., — All my delightful cases and letters are received. You have *just no idea* of the pleasure they give. I wrote last on the 14th. Sunday was a very distressing day. Our sick men were still with us, for Mr. Olmsted could neither get permission to put them on the "Elm City," nor induce the surgeon of the Shore hospital to send his ambulances for them. Expecting every hour to move them,

we were unable to put them into hospital clothing; and as they were very restless and crazy, this made our work less satisfactory than usual. In all other respects they were well cared for.

The painfulness of the day was greatly increased by a visit from a Sunday picnic of Congressmen and ladies. One of the former went to Mr. Olmsted and complained to him of what he saw on our boat. He said the men were in "an awful state. I saw — I saw with my own eyes — flies settling on them and biting them!" This gentleman came into the ward with a rose held to his nose; and when told they were all typhoid-fever cases ("That one by you is the worst case I ever saw," Georgy said maliciously), he went abruptly away. Had he stopped to examine the condition of things, he would have seen that every man who could not brush the flies away had a mosquito-netting over him, and all the others had fans. The thermometer is at 90°, and the flies are an Egyptian plague; but all was done that could be done to alleviate it. I could see that this affair pained Mr. Olmsted exceedingly. It was essen-

tially unjust; but the outward circumstances of the case, as I have stated them, did not permit that ample refutation which a mere glance into one of the wards would usually afford. I think he felt it the more as it was our very own castle thus 'invaded by reproach. But a few hours later a thing occurred which must have wiped from his mind the sting of reproach from such a quarter. Colonel ——, who was on the "Elm City," very ill with typhoid fever, was madly anxious to get home. He knew he must die, and he craved to see his wife. The gentlemen of the excursion-party were asked to take him back on their boat. They refused; alleging that they were "a select party," and "not prepared to incur infection:" they made the ladies the ground of their excuse. So Mrs. Griffin went at midnight to the ladies and begged them to consent to take him; and *of course* they did so. I could enlarge upon this, but the subject is hateful.

Sunday evening we moved our men to the "Elm City," where I found them all comfortably placed on Monday, when I went through the wards with a member of the New England

Women's Association, who had come down on the "Webster" to make up her mind as to whether we were doing our duty. She went back with them on the "Elm City" yesterday.

Dr. Henry J. Bigelow arrived early in the week. He came on a private mission from the Secretary of War to see and report upon the state of the Medical Department, and find out where the hitch really is. I wish he had come from the Surgeon-General instead. The Secretary of War is apt to send missions of private inquiry by which he forgets to profit; so that the best man for the work of inspection is likely to go back from here and have his observations disregarded. Mr. Olmsted has paid him all the attention in his power. Matters of importance are, however, pending at this moment between Mr. Olmsted and the Surgeon-General, and this throws some *gêne* into his intercourse with Dr. Bigelow. I gather that he cannot open himself freely to him. I do not know, of course, how matters are between Mr. Olmsted and the Medical Department, and if I did know I should not speak of them; but I may certainly say this: that the Department

feels the greatest gratitude to Mr. Olmsted for what he has done, and would gladly give him much wider power, if that were what he is seeking. That is not his object, however; indeed, the object of the Commission itself is not sufficiently understood. Those who admire its wise and noble work naturally feel the wish that larger power should be given to it. But the object of the Commission itself is not this. It seeks to bring the Government to do what the Government should do for its sick and wounded. Until that object is accomplished, the Commission stands ready to throw itself into the breach, as it did during that dreadful battle-week, as it does more or less all the time. The thing it asks for is not the gift of power, but that the Government should take the work away from it by doing it thoroughly itself. A Medical Inspector is to be sent here immediately, at Mr. Olmsted's earnest request, and we shall see what that will bring forth. But, after all, I fear the principle of active war is, and perhaps must be,—every marching man is precious; when he drops, he's a dog. Ah! what would have become of him so far without the



Sanitary Commission? I am not afraid to say that no enterprise ever deserved better of the people. Alive to the true state of things, ever aiming at the *best* thing to be done, and striving to bring everything to bear towards that, it has already fulfilled a great work, — let those who have reaped its benefits say how great and how indispensable.

I am sitting with Georgy in the tent, waiting for the arrival of a train of sick men, due notice of which is always telegraphed to us from Savage's Station. The "Wilson Small" has dropped down the river to coal. Mrs. Griffin is, I grieve to say, knocked up, with curious symptoms of fainting and wandering. Dr. Ware says she must go home, and she leaves on the mail-boat to-morrow, — a most serious loss to us at any time, but especially if an emergency occurs.

Yesterday we did nothing special but dress in clean clothes (I mean the cleanest we had) and go down to the "Webster," where we were received with all honors, and had a *good* dinner, — Georgy and I eating an incredible number of raspberry tartlets. Dr. Grymes drank

to us in his happiest manner: "Ladies, I give you a *welcome* where you have a *right!*" The ship was dressed with magnolia, honeysuckle, and the lovely white fringe blossoms, in our honor. The "Webster" is a constant satisfaction to the Chief, being thoroughly all right, — thanks to Dr. Grymes and Mrs. Trotter and her good captain.<sup>1</sup>

IN OUR TENT, June 20.

DEAR MOTHER, — For the first time I have neglected you, — and not from hard work either, but from a scattering sort of work, which has left us no time of absolutely needed rest in which to write. All your Newport cases have arrived; also four cases of brandy and one of beefstock, marked "F. Gordon Dexter;" four of sherry, from Mrs. J. Howland Shaw; one of lemons, marked "Mrs. Kuhn;" also a case of

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Grymes's health was steadily giving way. As we looked at him, so full of energy and ardor in his work, we used to think he knew he was a dying man, and chose to alleviate death and suffering in others as long as life was in him. After the campaign was over, he became surgeon of the Sanitary Commission "Home" in Washington. His residence was a few paces off, and he resolutely came to his work until it took him half an hour, supported on each side, to get over that short distance; then he died.

assorted liquors, and a box of *lemon-squeezers*, from the Honorable Ezra (can't make out the name), of Walpole, Mass., who says he had seen a letter of mine somewhere, in which I told that I had squeezed eight hundred lemons on one occasion. The cases sent by the "St. Mark" are also in my possession; but for the last three days I have had no time to open them, and I won't sacrifice my present hour of writing to do it now.

The Fourth Connecticut came down to-day for its siege-guns. We, who have seen the blackness of battles, rejoice, and trust it is a sign that there may be no more. God grant it may be so! How deluded the body of the Southern troops and people have been by their leaders! I go as much as I can among the prisoners, that I may judge for myself how they feel. I find *surprise* their chief emotion. "I never thought of this." "I could change the feelings of half my county if I told them what I know now." One man told me he had never fired his gun. They look shy, and are unwilling to meet your eye; but if you make any way with them, you are almost sure to see tears in theirs. I have

written letters for several of them, which General Wool and General Dix have been very kind in forwarding from Fortress Monroe on the flag-of-truce boat. The men are eager to write, "because their friends are thinking them so badly treated, and they want to tell them how it is." Of course there may be exceptions to this spirit; but I have, so far, met with none. Just now I asked a handsome young fellow, with a clear eye which at first he rather veiled, if he had all he wanted, — "*All*," he said; "more than I deserve to have."

Wednesday, the "Small" went down to coal, and Georgy and Dr. Ware and I spent the day in the tent, and dined with our old black aunty on the "Elizabeth," — or the "Fiend," as she is commonly called, from her habit of rushing up at all hours of the day and night, making unearthly noises with her steam-pipe. The usual number of men, about a hundred, came down. The process is this: I will describe it, and you can imagine it, once for all.

We have thirty-three Sibley tents along the line of the railroad on the other side of the track. On this side, and just at the head of the wharf,

—an old scow and a few planks which we dignify by that name,—stands *the* tent, filled with stores, and the kitchen behind it. The “kitchen” is *al fresco*, and consists solely of two long trenches about a foot deep, with forked upright stakes at each end and a pole across, on which the camp-kettles are hooked over the fire built in the trench below. Alongside *the* tent we have two large wall-tents, where we put the worst cases, so as to have them close at hand; the others, which are mostly waiting for the hospital ambulances, are put in the Sibley tents. We take great pride and satisfaction in these arrangements. It is true that *the* tent is smoky and hot, not pleasantly odoriferous, and filled with flies; but when the smoke is very bad we make believe it kills the flies. In short, we admit nothing evil of our tent; and when Dr. Agnew, peeping round in the smoke, said in the kindness of his heart: “Oh, how uncomfortable for you!” we were seriously angry with him.<sup>1</sup>

A train arrives, and the principle on which we proceed is as follows: The wounded men

<sup>1</sup> “It was not the vale of Cashmere,” as Dr. Ware wrote me in his last letter, just before his death, “but many dear associations cluster round it.”

are sent at once on board whichever transport lies at the wharf (the "Small," the "Elizabeth," and the "Wicked Chicken" always lie outside of the large vessel). As they pass our tent, we give them something refreshing or stimulating, as the case may need. The sick men are put into the tents, and we give them a meal. They ought to be moved promptly to the Shore hospital; but the surgeon-in-charge is not prompt, so they are often a day or a night in our hands. This gives us an average of a hundred men to feed and attend to daily; but they are constantly changing. Dr. Ware has the entire charge and responsibility of them and of the shipments upon our boats. As soon as a train comes in he selects the cases. Meantime we despatch, by our four orderlies, buckets of soup, or tea, or milk-porridge, and other food; then we follow Dr. Ware into the train with the inevitable brandy and beef-tea. The cars are large, double freight-cars. The worst cases lie upon the floor inside; the slight cases sit upon the roof. Dr. Ware is everything to us,—so sensible, so self-sacrificing, so prompt, so careful. We owe all the comfort of this tent to

him, for he takes pains to keep it well supplied, and thus efficient. His fault is that he thinks too little of himself; and I fear it will always keep him back in life.

On Thursday we went down in the "Small" to Yorktown. Mr. Olmsted wished to inspect the "St. Mark" (it ought to be "St. Luke"), — a large clipper-ship sent down by the Sanitary Commission. The surgeons and ladies were ashore when we arrived, so we could go over the ship with an eye to her real merits. She is magnificent; but so wholly out of the pale of the necessities of *our* work that, though we heartily admired, we could not feel the intense pleasure and sympathy with which we hail some lesser good on the other vessels. She is not fit for transport service, drawing too much water to get up the rivers, and having no steam. She should be kept as a floating-hospital off Fortress Monroe; for that she is perfect, — giving noble accommodation for a few, say two hundred, men. Our work, on the other hand, requires us to give life and some comfort to the many.

The Quartermaster, an old friend, gave us many valuable things. Case after case rattled

on to the "Small," and tin pails *almost* in abundance. We dined on board. Dr. Draper is in charge,—his wife and Mrs. George T. Strong among the ladies. Soon after dinner a telegram arrived, recalling Mr. Olmsted to White House; and we had the sweetest run up the river by every light imaginable,—sunlight, sunset, twilight, moonlight.

Orders had come to send the "Webster" and the "Spaulding" to Fortress Monroe immediately, and empty the hospitals there as fast as possible. Mrs. Griffin went in the "Webster," which sailed at eleven o'clock last night; so one of our four fingers is missing.

To-day the Chief and the "Small" have gone to Yorktown on "special business." Mrs. H., Georgy, Dr. Ware, and I are waiting in the tent for one hundred and fifty men now due. To-morrow, I fear, we shall have many wounded; heavy firing on our right has been going on all the afternoon, and a good deal of musketry.

This is a very rambling letter; but it is hard to keep any ideas in one's head, being interrupted every tenth word by cooks, Zouaves, and obnoxious persons of many kinds, who per-



sist in looking into the tent and asking questions. This afternoon, as I was attending to some men in the Sibley tents, I came upon one of the exhortative kind, who often afford us much amusement. He made a rapid survey of the history of the world, to prove that no women had ever done as we were doing, no men had ever been succored as they were succored. Whether he was out of his mind, or simply one of the irrepressible, I could not tell; but he looked so funny, declaiming in his hospital rig, that I slipped out of the tent, convulsed with laughter, — for which I felt sorry, and rather ashamed, a moment later, when I saw the tears in the eyes of a gentleman, new to the work, who was with me. But we must either laugh or cry; and this work teaches us that we had better laugh, if we mean to be good for anything. I hope I have not seemed to you heartless in the tone which I have taken; it is that which we all adopt, and, though perfectly genuine, it answers as a mental prophylactic.

Good-by! I mean to go to sleep. The train is not in, and may not be till morning. I have

learned to sleep on my arm, and it is very "comfy." As for Georgy, she curls herself up anywhere, like a little gray kitten, and is asleep in a minute.

"WILSON SMALL," June 22.

DEAR MOTHER, — Yesterday was a hard day, and not a very useful one. The result is that I am a little befogged this morning, — deaf, drowsy, and dull. Five hundred men came down last night, — the clearings-out of the regimental hospitals on the right. Our gentlemen were up all night. I was safe in my berth; but Georgy was in the tent till 3 A. M., though she had been up all the night before.

The Great Mogul, the Medical Inspector, Co'onel Vollum, for whom Mr. Olmsted has been begging, has arrived. He is staying on board the "Small." He ranks every other medical officer; therefore on him our hopes depend. The run to Yorktown on "special business" was made to give the Chief and the Inspector a chance of quietly discussing the whole matter. Mr. Olmsted has just been, full of brightness, to tell me that everything is arranged satis-

factorily, and to read me the signed agreement. The Commission is to take : 1. All badly wounded men, all amputations and compound fractures of the lower extremities, and all other cases which ought not to travel at first (say five hundred, — a large estimate), and keep them, on board the “Knickerbocker” and the “St. Mark,” in the river until they can be moved. It engages to spend a sum not exceeding ten thousand dollars on the means of carrying out this first item. 2. It agrees to receive at Fortress Monroe three thousand other bad cases able to bear transportation, *whenever* a battle occurs ; and four thousand five hundred more within twelve days of it, and transport them to New York, Washington, or elsewhere.

Thus, you see, the Commission gains the certainty that the worst cases and the greatest suffering shall be under its own eye and care. The rest — the slightly wounded, or those so wounded as to be able to help themselves — are the ones that are left to the Government. The country may feel assured that when the great battle occurs, provision is made for those who shall suffer most ; and the Commission feels that

the country will provide that it shall not fall short in its engagement. This enables us to contemplate a great battle with less of a nightmare feeling than we have had while there was nothing to expect but a repetition of past scenes. We feel that *something* is impending; the clearing out of the hospitals, the arrangements thus decisively made for the wounded, all seem to point to a coming emergency. Oh! can we help dreading it?

General Van Vliet has just been here,—a jolly old gentleman, with his shock of yellow-white hair, and his nice, old-fashioned *politesse* for “the ladies.” We fire a volley of questions at him. First, and before all else, “How is the General?” (meaning, of course, General McClellan.) “Ho! he’s well; quite got over that fever of yours,—what do you call it, typhoid?” Then we try to get out of him some information about the state of affairs. He said he dined at General Porter’s headquarters with several of the corps commanders yesterday, and it was universally agreed that General Porter’s position was not tenable any longer; that our line was far too long (I told you that our right was

stretched out to touch McDowell). "Well," says the General, "Porter is in what you may call a deadlock, — *can't* get across the river; *there's* a battery" (making a lunge at our best chair). "What they'll do will be to try and turn our flank. Perhaps they'll do it; perhaps not." "And we?" we cried. "Oh, you!" he said, with his jolly laugh, "*you'll* have to cut and run as best you can, and *we'll* go into Richmond." "Shall we go up the James River?" "How are you going into Richmond?" "Has Burnside got Fort Darling?" Here the General became impenetrable, but looked so profoundly wise that if he did not tell his secret, he at least told that he had one.

Captain Sawtelle sent me a present of mint to-day (his orderly could not restrain a smile as he gave it to me), and the Captain came just now with an eye, I fear, to that improper thing called a "mint-julep." You may think it very vulgar, but let me tell you it is very good; and you would think so too if you had been up all night, with the thermometer at 90°. Georgy is flitting about, putting things to rights (or wrongs) with as much energy as if she had

not been up two nights. She has hunted me into the smallest corner of the cabin, while she dusts and decorates the rest. Her activity is a never-ending marvel to me. I saw her to-day spring from the ground to the floor of a freight-car, with a can of beef-tea in one hand, her flask in the other, and a row of tin cups tied round her waist. Our precious flasks! They do us good service at every turn. We wear them slung over our shoulders by a bit of ribbon or an end of rope. If, in the "long hereafter of song," some poet should undertake to immortalize us, he'll do it thus, if he's an honest man and sticks to truth:—

A lady with a *flask* shall stand,  
Beef-tea and punch in either hand,—  
Heroic mass of mud  
And dirt and stains and blood!

This matter of dirt and stains is becoming very serious. My dresses are in such a state that I loathe them, and myself in them. From chin to belt they are yellow with lemon-juice, sticky with sugar, greasy with beef-tea, and pasted with milk-porridge. Farther down, I dare not inquire into them. Somebody said, the other

day (*à propos* of what, I forget), that he wished to kiss the hem of my garment. I thought of the condition of that article, and shuddered. This state of "things" has reached its climax. "Georgy," I said the other day, "what am I to do? I *can't* put on that dress again, and the other is a great deal worse." "I know what *I* shall do," says Georgy, who is never at a loss, and suggests the wildest things in the calmest way: "Dr. Agnew has some flannel shirts; he is going back to New York, and can't want them. I shall get him to give me one." Accordingly, Santa Georgeanna has appeared in an easy and graceful costume, looking especially feminine. I took the hint, and have followed suit in a flannel shirt from the hospital supplies; and now, having tasted the sweets of that easy garment, we shall dread civilization if we have to part with what we call our "Agnews."

Just as I was writing the last words, Dr. Coolidge came on board. I was delighted to see him. He has a sad story from his place of action,—as sad as ours; as sad as all that come from honest hearts and capable heads wherever

they are. But let us hope for better things to come, — especially to-day.

Good-bye! I have so many letters to write that sometimes I feel as if I *could not* write another word. I have twelve lying by me now, ready to go off, — soldiers' letters, and answers to the friends of the dead. We receive such pathetic, noble letters from the parents and friends of those who have died in our care, and to whom it is a part of our duty to write. They will never cease to be a sad and tender memory to us. The mothers' are the most noble and unselfish; the wives' the most pathetic,—so painfully full of personal feeling.

[The letters of the following week are missing. The mails were stopped on account of the preparations for the "change of base," and probably the letters were lost in them. The above is the last letter mailed from White House which came to hand; the next was brought down on the "Small," and mailed from Fortress Monroe.]

"WILSON SMALL," OFF WHITE HOUSE,  
Friday Afternoon, June 27.

DEAR MOTHER, — Yesterday we went down the river, at Captain Sawtelle's request, to clear



the way, order the transports and barges quietly down, and prevent confusion. All the steamers towed all the sailing-vessels. Imagine a fleet of several hundred vessels streaming down the shining river. The Pamunky twists and turns so much that one day, after passing the "Webster" on her voyage down, we met her again, half an hour later, with only a narrow belt of land and a few trees between us.

We returned last evening and found the whole place transformed. All the trees along the shore for half a mile had been cut down and toppled over into the river. The gunboats were drawn up ready for action, with their guns pointed to sweep the plain laid bare by the felling of the trees. Every hospital tent, two hundred and fifty of them, was down. All articles of value, commissary stores, ordnance stores, medical stores, etc., were on transports and barges, and on their way down the river. Nothing was left but the Quartermaster's Department tents, our tent, the camp of the Ninety-third New York Regiment, and a few stores and sutlers' quarters. Soon after, we saw the dear tent dismantled before our eyes, all her

contents going on board the "Elizabeth," — Dr. Ware rescuing for me, at the last moment, my invaluable Lund's patent corkscrew.

The truth is, the whole thing has been preparing for days. Captain Sawtelle told us this morning that seven hundred thousand rations and a large amount of forage were sent up the James River a week ago. This is doubtless a masterly strategic movement of McClellan's, compelled by the want of reinforcements. As for what is going on with the army to-day, it would be simple folly to attempt to give you any account of it. The wildest and most contradictory rumors are afloat. We lie at the wharf, and all around us are people eager to tell absurd and exaggerated stories. I make it a rule to believe nothing that I do not pick up from Captain Sawtelle. Yesterday there was an impression that Stonewall Jackson was coming down upon us to destroy this depot; and that has hastened the removal which was already prepared.

Stripped of all exaggeration, I suppose the truth is this: General Porter, being flanked in immense force, has wheeled round and back.

He crossed the Chickahominy at four o'clock this morning. The whole army is now across that river; the enemy are in part on this side of it. We may now go into Richmond on the left, — Burnside co-operating. In that case this base of supplies will be more available up the James River. Meantime Colonel Ingalls and Captain Sawtelle are sending forward supplies in trains and army-wagons as fast as possible. The troops have six days' rations in their knapsacks. The enemy evidently hope to ruin us by seizing this station, — hitherto the sole source of supply to our army. Instead of which, everything has been sent away; the few things that remain are lying on the wharves, ready to go on board a few vessels at the last moment. The "Elm City" is waiting for the Ninety-third New York Regiment, which is stationed here on guard-duty. We have had our steam up all day, ready to be off at a moment's notice; and *even as I write* comes the order to start, the enemy having got the railroad. And so rapidly have we gone, that between writing the words "Elm City" and "railroad" we are off!

Such a jolly panic! Men rushing and tearing

down to the wharves, — these precious civilians and sutlers and “scalawags”! The enemy are in force three miles from us; they have seized the railroad, and cut the telegraph. We privately hope to get a glimpse of them as we go down the river; it would be something to say that we had *seen* the Confederate army of Richmond!

We have just enjoyed the fun of seeing the last of the shore-people rushing on board schooners and steamers, — the former all yelling for “a tow.” I never laughed more than to see the “contrabands” race down from the quarters and shovel into barges, — the men into one, the women into another. The “*Canonicus*” stayed behind to carry off Colonel Ingalls and Captain Sawtelle, who are highly pleased with the way the whole thing has been done, — as well they may be, for it reflects the greatest credit upon them.

All our army is now across the Chickahominy: General Porter crossed at four this morning; only General Stoneman and the cavalry are this side of the river. The order which finally moved us was in consequence of a message from General Stoneman to General Casey,

which came by mounted messenger while Mr. Olmsted was with the latter. It said: "I hold the enemy in check at Tunstall's [three miles from White House, on the railway], and shall for a short time. I shall then retreat by White House." Then the great gun of the "Sebago" boomed out, and we all slipped our moorings. The gunboats were in line of battle; we passed between them and the shore; the men were beat to quarters, and standing at their guns, — the great ferocious guns!

We had scarcely turned the first bend of the river before we heard explosions, and saw the smoke and fire of the last things burning, — such as locomotives, cars, a few tents, whiskey, etc. Before leaving, we saw clouds of dust, and General Stoneman's baggage-train came trotting in; and at the same moment a *corral* of invalid horses and mules, kept here by the Quartermaster's Department, seven hundred of them, were let loose and driven towards Cumberland. The last I saw of the White House, General Casey was sitting on the piazza, and the signal-men on the roof were waving the pretty signals, which were being answered by the gunboats.

And now we are streaming down the winding river; the "Elm City" ahead, with two or three schooners; the little "Wissahickon" racing along as fast as she can go, like a crab, and blessing herself that she is too little to be detained for "a tow." By and by we come, hauling slowly two big schooners; then comes the "Daniel Webster," towing ammunition-barges; after her the "Vanderbilt," towing something of which I can see only the masts above the trees as the river winds. At each bend there is an excitement. Somebody is sure to be within an ace of getting foul of somebody else. The smoke at White House is growing denser and denser, and we hear cannon,—which we take to mean that the gunboats are getting a chance at the enemy.

The "Spaulding" here comes quietly up the river, and asks, bewildered, for orders. Mr. Olmsted replies: "Go up for the first heavy tow you can find, and report at Yorktown." So the Commission, having no sanitary business on hand, does its best for the service in another way.

[To this letter I venture to add the following extract from one written some months later by the Chief of the party who left White House that Friday evening, June 27, 1862:—

“All night we sat on the deck of the ‘Small,’ slowly moving away, watching the constantly increasing cloud and the fire-flashes above the trees toward White House; watching the fading out of what had been to us, through those strange weeks, a sort of home where we had worked together and been happy,— a place which is sacred to some of us now for its intense living remembrances, and for the hallowing of them all by the memory of one who, through months of death and darkness, lived and worked in self-abnegation; lived in and for the sufferings of others, and finally gave himself a sacrifice for them.”<sup>1</sup>]

“WILSON SMALL,” OFF FORTRESS MONROE,  
Saturday, June 28.

DEAR A., — You will see my letter to mother, which gives an account of the removal of the depot at White House. We left last evening at the last moment, and rendezvoused for the night off West Point. Captain Sawtelle sent us

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Robert Ware, who died at his post, as surgeon of the Forty-fourth Massachusetts Volunteers, during the siege of Washington, N. C., March 12, 1863, aged twenty-seven.

off early from there with despatches for Fortress Monroe. This gave us the special fun of being the first to come leisurely into the panic then raging at Yorktown. The "Small" was instantly surrounded by terror-stricken boats; the people of the big "St. Mark" leaned over their bulwarks to question us. Nothing could be more delightful than to be as calm and monosyllabic as we were, — partly from choice, and partly under orders from Colonel Ingalls. They knew nothing, except the fact that the enemy had possession of White House. It seems that General Van Alen, commanding at Yorktown, had telegraphed to Colonel Ingalls *after* we left White House, and received from our successors a polite request to "go to —"

We find no news here at the Fortress. We hoped to meet some from the James River; but, on the contrary, it is we who have brought all the news as yet. Our eyes are strained towards the James, and every time a black hull shows in that direction we are feverish with anxiety and hope. The universal feeling here is that this movement of McClellan's is a grand stroke to wring a triumph out of adverse circum-



stances. I *feel* it is so. "What profit lies in barren faith?" was the thought I fell asleep with and dreamed of all night.

Meantime we are here in Hampton Roads, breathing life in the salt air. May I never see the pretty poisonous Pamunky again! Keep my room ready for me; I may be home any day. Oh, to sleep in a bed once more! It seems too great a rest ever to be reached. I am writing on the upper deck at 3 A. M., looking out upon the dawn, which slowly shows me, one by one, the places we have read of, — the Rip-Raps, Sewall's Point, Craney Island, and the ruins of the old church at Hampton.<sup>1</sup>

OFF NORFOLK, Sunday Evening, June 29.

We are coaling here to-night, and leave at daybreak for Harrison's Bar, James River, where our gunboats are said to be. We hope

<sup>1</sup> How well I remember the night when this letter was written, and the feelings which were not expressed in it! Our minds had been strained to the utmost, and the disappointment and uncertainty striking sharply upon them were more than we could bear. I remember well what a dreadful day we passed off Fortress Monroe. At night I could not sleep, but went out and sat on the deck and wrote by the light of my lantern, and wondered if my mind were leaving me, and whether it would right itself again.

to get farther up, but General Dix warns us that it is not safe. What are we about to learn? No one here can tell.

OFF BERKLEY, HARRISON'S BAR, JAMES RIVER,  
Tuesday, July 1, 1862.

DEAR MOTHER, — We arrived here yesterday to hear the thunder of the battle<sup>1</sup> and to find the army just approaching this landing. Last night it was a verdant shore; to-day it is a dusty plain. The feelings with which we came up the James River I can't describe, our anxiety, excitement, and breathless desire to know *something* were so great. Not a vessel was in sight after we left Newport News, except the "Canonicus," Quartermaster's Department boat, which was just ahead of us. No one could guess what knowledge any moment might bring to us.

We were just admiring a fine old colonial house, when some one standing in the bows cried out: "I see something white among the trees to the right!" and in a few minutes more we made them out to be army-wagons.

<sup>1</sup> Of Malvern Hill.

We had met our army! What next were we to learn? Never shall I forget the look of the first officers who came on board, — one a major, the other a chaplain. They were gaunt and haggard, their hair stood out from their heads stiffened with dust and dirt, their faces were nearly black, and to their waists they were literally moulded in Virginia clay. “Oh! what is this?” we cried. “Is it a defeat?” “Defeat! No; we have retreated, but we never turned our backs on them. We have faced and fought and beaten them for five days!”

Just as we arrived, General McClellan came down on the “Galena” to see Colonel Ingalls. Think what a relief it must have been to his anxious mind to learn the perfect success of our removal from White House, and to know that supplies were already here, and following us up the river, for his exhausted army! I saw the gunboat he was on, but I did not see him; and he was gone almost immediately.

The “Spaulding” has just come up the river and gone ahead of us (Miss Whetten and Mrs. Balestier on board); her iron sides can carry her safely past the rifle-pits which line the shore, and

Mr. Olmsted thinks her stores may be serviceable higher up. Dr. Jenkins has gone with her to judge for himself. No one can tell what work there is for us; the wounded have not come in.

“WILSON SMALL,” HARRISON’S LANDING,  
July 3.

DEAR A., — As I write I glance from time to time at the Army of the Potomac, massed on the plain before me, — an army driven from its position because it could not get reinforcements to render that position tenable; forced every day of its retreat to turn and give battle; an army just one third less than it was: and yet it comes in from seven days’ fighting, marching, fasting, in gallant spirits, and making the proud boast for itself and its commander that it has not only marched with its face backward to the enemy, but has inflicted three times the loss it has borne, and that the little spot of its refuge rings with its cheers.

And yet the sad truth cannot be concealed: our position is very hazardous. What I hear said is such as this: “Unless we have reinforcements, what can we do? Must McClellan

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fight another bloody battle in a struggle for life, or surrender? Give us reinforcements, and all is well. We have got the right base now. We could not have it at first; we made another; that other the Government made it impossible for us to maintain. Day by day we saw it growing untenable. We now have the true base of operations against Richmond. The sacrifice? Yes! but *who compelled it?* The nation must see to that. The army and McClellan have done their part, and nobly have they done it. Let them now be strengthened, and all is well, or better than before." This is the one tone. No wonder that they feel in spirits, they have done their duty; and I look in their poor worn faces and feel that their deepest honor in life will be that they belonged to the beaten Army of the Potomac—and yet, *not* beaten; everything that that is, except precisely the thing it is.

I am sitting on deck. Poor Miss Lowell, whose gallant brother was killed yesterday, is beside me. She belongs to the "Daniel Webster," which is to load up this afternoon. We are lying a stone's throw from a long wharf, and

a little in-shore of it. My eye can follow the lines within which our army lies. The immediate prospect is a sandy shore, with a sandy slope behind it, up and down which the cavalry are ceaselessly passing to water and swim their horses in the river. At the head of the wharf are General Keyes's headquarters; to the right are General Franklin's; and a little farther back, General Porter's; while the eighth of a mile back upon the left, General Headquarters are said to be. The long wharf is a moving mass of human beings: on one side, a stream of men unloading the commissariat and other stores; on the other, a sad procession of wounded, feebly crawling down from the Harrison House and along the beach and wharf to go on board the transports. The medical authorities are doing well by them. The Harrison House is made into a hospital, and the men are comfortable (so say our gentlemen, who have been among them); the slight cases are lying on the lawn and under the trees. To-day — thank God for the great mercy! — is cloudy, without rain. I know nothing of them personally. We women are not yet permitted to go ashore, and I try to

believe, as I am told, that it is impossible we should.

A new Medical Director of the army has been appointed, for which we are deeply thankful. He is now on board the "Small," and has just stood near me for a few moments, talking to some one, so that I could observe him, — one looks *into* faces so much here! His gave me a sad calmness. Such a worn face, — worn in the cause of suffering; full, it seemed to me, of a strong earnestness in his work. How much at this moment is freshly laid upon him!<sup>1</sup> I can't tell you anything of my own knowledge about the wounded; but I judge from what I am told that there is not much suffering, and no privation among those who are here. They are chiefly slightly wounded and exhausted men. But where are the others? Alas! where? *This is war*, and there's no more to be said about it.

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Letterman. Soon after his appointment he reorganized his department, remodelled the medical corps, established a plan for division field-hospitals after a battle, and got an efficient ambulance system into good working order. Thus when the battles of Antietam, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, etc., occurred, the Medical Department, its surgeons and supplies, were well prepared, and nothing at all like the suffering after Fair Oaks occurred again.

But I was telling you what I see from the deck as I sit writing, — of course with countless interruptions and runnings below to give this poor surgeon or that poor chaplain as many comforts for their sick men as they can carry off in their saddle-bags, or tied up in pillow-cases. Now, suppose I tell you that I am seeing and hearing war at this moment in the shape of shells bursting within our lines directly in front of me! And there's the wonderful little "Monitor" firing her great eleven-inch gun — there it goes, boom! and then the screwing, screaming, rushing sound of the great rifle-shell! Talk of wonders! there never was anything in that line like the "Monitor." You don't imagine what a little tray of a thing she is, — I did n't. Why, the sides of her captain's gig, which is towing aft, are higher than hers! She lay close by us for an hour this morning, and at first I could not believe she was the real thing.

CHESAPEAKE BAY, Friday, July 4.

WHILE I was writing the above letter Mr. Olmsted came out from a long interview with



Dr. Letterman, the new Medical Director, in which the latter had urged him to go to Washington and see and advise the Surgeon-General about the state of things here. So Col. and Mrs. Howland went on board the "Daniel Webster" (then loading to sail that night), we took Mrs. Trotter in exchange, Doctors Ware, Coolidge, and Jenkins were left on the "Elizabeth" to misery and business, and we came off at once. We passed the "Monitor," roaring and whistling away, at one of the doubtful points of our position. I looked down upon her as we passed: she is literally nothing but a flat tray, a foot and a half out of water, with what looks like a small gasometer in the middle of her.

As we passed Fortress Monroe this morning we heard of the President's call for three hundred thousand men. Very good; but we wish he would send fifty thousand here at once.

"WILSON SMALL," HARRISON'S LANDING,  
Monday, July 7.

DEAR MOTHER, — We reached Washington Saturday morning. Mr. Olmsted transacted his

business, and we started on our return Saturday afternoon, bringing with us a cargo of tents for the army. This destroyed our blissful visions of a bath and bed at Willard's.

I can't tell you how Washington oppressed me. Its bitter tone towards McClellan fell strangely on our ears, which yet rang with the cheers of the army. We met Commodore Wilkes, who told us he had that moment received his appointment to the naval command on the James River.

On my return here to-day I find your letters, Nos. 16 and 17; also one from the Mayor of Newport, telling me of the munificent gift of the churches, and asking how I should like to have it spent. I have replied, asking him to send half in supplies to us here, and half in money to the treasurer of the Sanitary Commission. How well Newport has done her part in the work! I am often reminded by different branches of the Commission that she was among the very first to send supplies. In Washington I heard it again. Even the particular character of the things she has sent has been praised to me. I wish you would let the community

know that my last cases by the "Webster" arrived the night before we left White House. The Medical Director telegraphed Mr. Olmsted to send supplies for the wounded to Savage's Station. The "Elizabeth" had been seized to tow something; but our other boats had plenty of everything *except* brandy, so I was delighted to have the cases to send. They went on the last train that got through, together with the cases marked "Miscellaneous." Please let my generous friends know that coming when they did, their gifts were doubly blessed. Oh! if they could but form an idea of what those things were to those poor wounded, cut off from getting down to our care, and lying parched and agonized and necessarily abandoned by the army. The same day (the day before we left White House) I received a most kind letter from Colonel Vinton, calling my attention to his advertisement for bids, and offering me another contract. I answered gratefully, making proposals for one if I could begin it in September. The letter came, as usual, to Colonel Ingalls' care; and its official appearance, on business of the Quartermaster's Department, must have

created some curiosity, for it was sent up in hot haste by special messenger.<sup>1</sup>

I had the dearest letter from A. to-day. She says, "Can such things interest you?" Why, nothing interests me so much. I shall come back sick of great events and armies. I want never to see a blue-coat or a gun or an ambulance again. I am glad my letter from Fortress Monroe reached you. To have you say that you get clear ideas from my letters, astonishes me. I write them as one in a dream.

We have come back to find that the army, which we left massed just here, has got into position, and is intrenched or intrenching. General headquarters is moved about a mile and a half inland. General McClellan says

<sup>1</sup> This, with the allusion on page 1, refers to a contract for the making of flannel army-shirts, given me by Deputy Quartermaster-General D. H. Vinton, U. S. A., for the purpose of giving employment to the families of volunteers and other poor women. During the winter of 1861-62 we made over seventy thousand. The Department paid me fourteen cents a shirt, and furnished the flannel and the buttons. I paid the women eleven cents a shirt (they could easily make four a day, without a machine), and the remaining three cents just covered the cost of linen-thread, transportation to and from New York, office and workroom expenses. The ladies of Newport helped me to cut the shirts.

positively that he can hold the position. The wounded are all in, and either shipped or cared for on shore. When I say "all," I mean those within our lines; the most severely wounded we shall never see. Forty of our surgeons are with them, scattered along the line of march; they are prisoners by this time. This is the worst horror of war, and one I cannot trust myself to think of. The Medical Department is doing well by the sick and wounded who have reached this Landing. Four thousand have been already transported on their boats and ours, which come and go with their usual regularity. The gentlemen of the Commission are busily at work issuing stores, and fitting out and sending off the vessels; but it is evident that our work (I mean that of the women at these Commission headquarters) is over. I feel this so much that I begged Mr. Olmsted to let me take the mail-boat as we passed Fortress Monroe last night. But he was unwilling; and in little things as well as in great things no one opposes his will.

We look and hope and pray for reinforcements. Immediate levies should be made, the recruits used in garrisons, and the older troops

sent here. The whole question is, Are we in earnest? Is the nation in earnest? or is it the victim of a political game? For God's sake, for the sake of humanity, let us strike one mighty blow now, and end this rebellion! Surely it *cannot be* that the nation can't do this! Then let it be done; and oh! do not sacrifice this noble army. Let every man take arms that can take them, and fill the places of tried men who could come here. At this moment "a strong pull and a pull altogether" would end this rebellion, and send its wretched leaders to their just destruction. This is not my opinion only, it is the sum of all I hear.

The weather is intensely hot. My hand wets and sticks to the paper as I write. The thermometer at the door of my stateroom is 98°. We cannot put our faces out upon deck without blistering them in the fierce glare of sky and water. How I wish Ralph could see the great balloon which is just going up from headquarters!

“WILSON SMALL,” July 8.

DEAR MOTHER,—For the last two hours I have been watching President Lincoln and General McClellan as they sat together, in earnest conversation, on the deck of a steamer close to us. I am thankful, I am *happy*, that the President has come,—has sprung across that dreadful intervening Washington, and come to see and hear and judge for his own wise and noble self.

While we were at dinner some one said, chancing to look through a window: “Why, there’s the President!” and he proved to be just arriving on the “Ariel,” at the end of the wharf close to which we are anchored. I stationed myself at once to watch for the coming of McClellan. The President stood on deck with a glass, with which, after a time, he inspected our boat, waving his handkerchief to us. My eyes and soul were in the direction of general headquarters, over where the great balloon was slowly descending. Presently a line of horsemen came over the brow of the hill through the trees, and first emerged a firm-set figure on a brown horse, and after him the

staff and body-guard. As soon as the General reached the head of the wharf he sprang from his horse, and in an instant every man was a-foot and motionless. McClellan walked quickly along the thousand-foot pier, a major-general beside him, and six officers following. He was the shortest man, of course, by which I distinguished him as the little group stepped on to the pier. When he reached the "Ariel" he ran quickly up to the after-deck, where the President met him and grasped his hand. I could not distinguish the play of his features, though my eyes still ache with the effort to do so. He is stouter than I expected, but quicker, and more *leste*. He wore the ordinary blue coat and shoulder-straps; the coat, fastened only at the throat, and blowing back as he walked, gave to sight a gray flannel shirt and a — suspender!

They sat down together, apparently with a map between them, to which McClellan pointed from time to time with the end of his cigar. We watched the earnest conversation which went on, and which lasted till 6 P. M.; then they rose and walked side by side ashore,—



the President, in a shiny black coat and stove-pipe hat, a whole head and shoulders taller, as it seemed to me, than the General. Mr. Lincoln mounted a led horse of the General's, and together they rode off, the staff following, the dragoons presenting arms and then wheeling round to follow, their sabres gleaming in the sunlight. And so they have passed over the brow of the hill, and I have come to tell you about it. The cannon are firing salutes,—a sound of strange peacefulness to us, after the angry, irregular boomings and the sharp scream of the shells to which we are accustomed.

All day we have had the little "Monitor" and the ugly "Galena" (flag-ship) and the "Maritanza" beside us, a stone's throw off. Last evening Commodore John Rodgers, at present commanding on the James, came to see us, and rowed us up the river and round the "Monitor" and his own vessel, the "Galena." Ugly as she is, I must confess the latter has the most fighting look of anything that I have seen connected with war; she reminds me of Rab in a dog-fight. But they say she is a failure, and a downright fraud upon the Government.

She looks something like a Chinese junk, broad at the water-line, and running in from that. She has two large lumps on one side, caused by shots that have passed through her and lodged in the iron casing on the other side.

There is a funny little Rebel gunboat close beside us, captured on Friday by the "Maritanza." A shell exploded in her boiler, tearing out her intestines, as it were, and doubling her up into the drollest little object. The "Teaser" they call her. The prettiest sight I see is the signalling, — flags by day, and lamps by night; the most incomprehensible, graceful thing that can be seen. The "Galena," the "Monitor," and the "Maritanza," which went off this morning to prevent General Longstreet with twenty thousand men from attempting to cross the river, are just coming in to their evening anchorage, and beginning the pretty signals, which are being answered from the roof of the Harrison House.

Things are not as gloomy here as you fear. The tone and temper of the army are magnificent. If reinforcements are sent, all will be well. Everything depends on the Administra-

tion at this moment, — not on the army; that is now made up of *veterans*, and knows and rejoices in its strength.

Commodore Rodgers has just been to invite us on board his ship. We have accepted for nine o'clock to-morrow morning, though it is a chance if she is not on duty at that and every other hour. He offered also to take us over the "Monitor." After *that* — having seen the "Monitor" and McClellan — I wish to go home. There is no more work for a woman here. The Government is doing well by the sick and wounded. The Sanitary Commission may justly claim that it has led the Government to this; and it can now return to its legitimate supplemental work, — inspecting the condition of the camps and regiments, and continuing on a large scale its supply business. But as for us, we ought to go; to stay here doing nothing, is a sarcasm on the work we have already done.

"WILSON SMALL," July 10.

DEAR A., — This morning I went ashore with Mrs. Barlow (Arabella, wife of the General) without orders and, indeed, without permission.

But Mrs. Barlow offered to take me, Mr. Olmsted was not on board, and I was so anxious to see for myself the state of things that I could not forego the chance. The hospital occupies the Harrison House, called Berkley (how familiar all those names are to you and me!), and a barn, out-buildings, and several tents at the rear, containing, or I should say able to contain, in all, about twelve hundred men, — perhaps more, at a pinch. About a third of those now in hospital will be fit for duty after a week or two of rest.

The influence of the new Medical Director is already manifest. It would be too much to say that all the wants of the sick and wounded are met as they would be on our own boats, where the men are as well cared for as in a city hospital, — it would be absurd to expect as much as that in a temporary hospital hastily arranged, and especially after such an exhausting march as the army has just made; but I am quite satisfied that the men have every essential care; the situation is the healthiest to be found about here, there are surgeons enough, and an excellent hospital-steward, with properly appointed ward-masters and nurses. I told

the hospital-steward how much we depended on beef-stock and milk-punch, because they are so quickly and easily prepared ; and I promised to send him (I felt as if I were making a will) my spirit-lamp and kettles, and to get our commissary to give him an ample supply of Muringer's beef-extract, and condensed milk. I have just filled two pillow-cases for him with all the odds and ends that remain to me, — fans, pads, handkerchiefs, towels, bay-rum, cologne, band-ages, flannel, pins, needles, tapes, buttons, paper and pens, etc., and my precious lamp, with all its adjuncts.

We stayed about three hours with the men, writing letters for them. Such letters are often very funny. Some few told the horrors of the march ; but as a rule they were all about the families at home. Did you ever notice how people of limited education seem unable to relate anything that is happening about them ? They go over a string of family details quite as well known to their correspondent as to themselves.

I am glad I went ashore, for now I am quite content to go home. Our work — I mean the

women's work — is over, except on the “Webster” and the “Spaulding,” which must still make two or three trips in the service of the Commission. All that now remains to be done for the army on the James is the regular work of inspecting camps and issuing from the store-boats such supplies as may be needed.<sup>1</sup>

I did not go on board the “Monitor” on Wednesday, after all. The others went, but I

<sup>1</sup> *Supplies furnished by the Sanitary Commission to the Army of the Potomac, from July 1st to August 31st, 1862.*

HOSPITAL FURNITURE.	PERSONAL CLOTHING.	HOSPITAL DELICACIES.
Quilts . . . . 30,197	Shirts . . . . 87,994	Condens'd milk, cans 2,624
Blankets . . . 13,500	Drawers . . . 48,303	Jelly, jars . . . . . 6,959
Sheets . . . . 42,945	Socks . . . . 80,322	Tea, lbs. . . . . 541
Pillows . . . . 35,877	Slippers . . . 14,984	Spirits, bottles . . . 1,026
Pillow-cases 49,096	Handkerchiefs 43,606	Wine, dom. gals. . . 570
Pillow-ticks . 2,269	Towels . . . . 65,164	Wines, foreign, gals. 450
Bed-ticks . . 11,716	Wrappers . . 10,235	Vinegar, bottles . . 692
Rubber cloth	Flannel bands 3,684	Syrups, bottles . . . 1,435
Crutches	Oiled silk	Beef-stock, liquid, lbs. 634
		Beef-stock, solid, lbs. 1,052
		Farinaceous food, “ 12,268

On Mr. Olmsted's return from Harrison's Landing he sent down, as the most pressing need of the army (the shadow of scurvy was hanging over it) a vessel freighted with vegetables. A cargo of ice had preceded it. These vegetables proved of invaluable service, and were distributed to all the regiments at Harrison's Landing.

had fallen into a weary and disconsolate condition, in which the effort seemed too great. Commodore Rodgers had tried to keep the President, who paid him an early visit, long enough to meet us; but Mr. Lincoln said: "No, he had promised to be with *Georgy* at nine o'clock, and *Georgy* must *not* be kept waiting." I liked the story; it seemed to picture such happy relations between the President and the General.

"WILSON SMALL," July 12.

DEAR MOTHER,—I wrote this morning by Dr. Ware, who left us on the mail-boat, that I should start for home to-morrow morning. Meantime our plans are changed. A flag-of-truce came down to-day to the "Maritanza," requesting us to go up and get our wounded who were left along the line of march, — four thousand of them, it is said. So the whole hospital fleet is to run five miles up the river, under convoy of the gunboats, to Haxall's or Carter's Landing. We are all ready, and waiting the order to start.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The enemy sent down only four hundred men, keeping the rest as prisoners. The former were shipped on board the "Spaulding" and another vessel.

Captain Sawtelle paid us a visit to-day, — the first for a week. He is promoted to Colonel Ingalls's position; Colonel Ingalls to that of General Van Vliet; while the General is on his way to Washington for unknown honors, — all this in just acknowledgment, I suppose, of their admirable management at White House. Captain Sawtelle thinks our losses have been greatly over-estimated, as a very large number of stragglers have come in this week. He places the number of killed, wounded, and missing at twelve thousand. The artillery corps of one hundred and fifty-six guns lost one hundred and forty-three men, — not a man to each gun. He told us that almost the last thing he did at White House was to order the engines upon the railroad to be run, with all the cars, to the end of the track and precipitated into the river. Just as the order was being executed, the train almost in motion, he recollected that a gunboat had gone up beyond the bridge, and that the train would block the river. He then ordered the cars and the engines to be piled up and fired, which, together with the White House, made the great blaze which we



saw ; the White House was fired by a drunken soldier.

I never felt the slightest desire to witness a battle until I listened to the accounts they all give of the battle of Malvern Hill, where our whole artillery was massed on the hill-side and hurled back a column of thirty thousand men as it debouched with three heads. I listened to the guns ; and even where we were it was a mighty thunder.

I have had one pleasant day, or part of a day. I was sitting alone, the rest were out rowing on the river, when I heard the regular beat of man-of-war's oars, and presently a trig captain's gig came alongside, and Captain George Rodgers, of the "Tioga," ran upstairs.<sup>1</sup> I was delighted ; it is really so *much* to see an old friend here. He urged me to go on board the "Tioga," and promised to take me first to the

<sup>1</sup> Captain Rodgers was killed in the turret of the monitor "Catskill," which he commanded before Charleston, S.C., in 1863. He was passing a U. S. A. General Hospital where I was stationed, the day after he received his appointment to her. He landed, and ran up to my quarters to tell me of it. I congratulated him. "Yes," he said, "I am appointed to my coffin," —alluding to the build of the vessel.

“Monitor,” and then down the river to shell out a battery which was troublesome. I forgot I was tired and ill; I felt a momentary pang at my dirty dress: but I put on a clean white apron, and went off with alacrity. Things did not turn out quite favorably. When we reached the “Monitor” the men were bathing, and we had to give up our visit. And we had scarcely reached the lovely “Tioga,” when a clumsy brig got foul of her, tearing away part of her paddle-box; and we did not get free till half-past ten at night, when there was nothing for me to do but go back at once to the “Small.”

The “Tioga” is a picture, — just out of dock, lovely in model, and brilliant in paint and brass. She carries eight guns, — one a ten-inch Dahlgren, the other a ten-inch rifled Parrott. Captain Rodgers gave me a piece of the only Confederate balloon (captured on the “Teaser”), made of ladies’ silk dresses of every pattern and color. The piece I have is partly a brown stripe, and partly a green *chiné*.

The other day as we came up the river, returning from Washington, we were ordered by the gunboat on guard to go single file past some

wooded bluffs. The "Juniata" was ahead of us, when a shot went through her pilot-house and hit the bell-wire, making the signal to stop. The engineer obeyed it and stopped the boat, when a second shot fell between us, — otherwise the "Small" might have caught it. Captain Rodgers told me he was convoying us, and had just left us, as he thought, beyond all danger from Fort Powhatan, when the shots were fired. He ran up immediately; but before he could get a gun sighted, the fellows had limbered up, and were off. It was a light four-gun battery. These batteries give a great deal of trouble, but, so far, have done very little damage. The men make breast-works of felled trees behind other trees which conceal them. Our gunboats keep up a constant straggling fire into the woods to prevent the enemy from settling in one spot. It was to dislodge one of these batteries, which seemed to have taken up a position near Fort Powhatan, that the "Tioga" was ordered down the river, when, unfortunately, she collided with the brig.

NEWPORT, R. I., July 25.

DEAR FRIEND, — I have slept in my own bed! or, rather, I did not sleep, — I lay awake thinking of a poor Southern fellow who said to me one morning: “I could n’t sleep, ma’am, for thinking how comfortable I was!”

We left Harrison’s Landing on Thursday in the “Daniel Webster,” with two hundred and thirty sick on board. At Fortress Monroe Mrs. Griffin came off from the “Euterpe”<sup>1</sup> to ask me to take her cousin, a captain in the regular army, to his friends in Newport. We had some difficulty in getting him on board, for the sea was running very high at midnight, when Mr. Olmsted put the “Webster” as close to the “Euterpe” as he dared. The captain had typhoid fever, with a good deal of low delirium; but he did very well during the voyage, having a comfortable berth on deck under cover. When we reached New York I took him over to the Newport boat in an ambulance, hunted up Captain Brown, and made him establish my patient on

<sup>1</sup> Sister-ship to the “St. Mark.” She was used as a receiving-hospital in Hampton Roads. Mrs. Griffin took charge of the women’s department on her for several weeks.

his stretcher in the airiest part of the boat. It was rich to see the state of fuss into which that worthy man was thrown, and to hear him exhort *me* to "keep calm"! As soon as I could, I went below, and made the stewardess give me oceans of warm water, out of which I emerged a new creature. When I went back to my captain I found a lady sitting by him, — his mother, who happened to be going to Newport on that boat! So I gave up my last patient into better hands, — though at night, when I found him moved out of the fresh air, so essential to him, into the close cabin, I wished I had held command over him till we landed, and sighed over the follies of private nursing.

I met several friends on board. Mr. Tweedy gave me his stateroom, and Mr. Edward King took me down to supper, — an excursion I never made in my civilized existence; but now (think of it!) the lights, the flowers, the feast, seemed to me delicious and magnificent, — an Arabian Nights' entertainment! No one will accuse us of having "eaten up the gifts of the people" on board the "Small." If they do, I shall make Dr. Bigelow give us a testimonial about it. He

owes it to us in return for all the grumbling which he did over our bad food. The last I saw of him was at the best restaurant in Washington, where we left him on the 5th of July ; but he tells me in a subsequent letter that he went to see Dr. Bellows, President of the Sanitary Commission, and that, owing to his strong representations of the horrors on board the "Wilson Small," "a cook, a cooking-stove, and something to eat" were to be sent down at once. "I told him," he adds, "that in all probability no one on board that boat would live to get home ; but that a few puddings, if administered immediately, might save one or two : and I gave him six excellent recipes." Can't you imagine them ?

The Hospital Transport Service is ended. We left the "Elizabeth" well supplied, and moored to the long wharf at Harrison's Landing, where the surgeons and chaplains and quartermasters can get at her with ease. Dr. Jenkins and Dr. Douglas remain to superintend the issue of stores and inspect the condition of camps and regiments ; but the transports are given back to the Quartermaster's Department : our reign is over. I wonder who'll succeed to

my cabin on the "Small," and hang his clothes on my gimlets (used for pegs), and inherit my other little inventions of that nature?

Georgy and Mr. Olmsted and I sat up the greater part of our last night on the "Webster," talking as people will who know that on the morrow they are to separate widely. Did I say somewhere that Mr. Olmsted was severe, or something of that kind? Well, I am glad I said it, that I may now unsay it. Nothing could be more untrue; every day I have understood and valued and trusted him more and more. This expedition, if it has done no other good, has made a body of life-long friends. We have a period to look back upon when we worked together under the deepest feelings, and to the extent of our powers, shoulder to shoulder, helping each other to the best of our ability, no one failing or hindering another. From first to last there has been perfect accord among us; and I can never look back to these months without feeling that God has been very good to let me share in them and see human nature under such aspects. It is sad to feel that it is all over.

The first thing Mr. Olmsted did on arriving in New York was to send down a cargo of vegetables to check the scurvy, that enemy having appeared in force. Mother was greatly amused by my reply to her inquiry: "What shall be done with that last hundred dollars?" "Oh, spend it in onions!" I cried, enthusiastically. The last I saw of Mr. Olmsted he was disappearing down the side of the "Webster," clad in the garb of a fashionable gentleman. I rubbed my eyes, and felt then that it was indeed *all over*. I myself had risen to the occasion by putting on a black-lace tablespoon [such were the bonnets of the period], in which I became at once conventional and duly civilized.

We are not yet forgotten on the James; at least I am assured of it in two letters, — one from the Great Mogul, the Medical Inspector-General; the other from that United States officer who did more than any other to make our work successful. They are characteristic. One writes: "How I miss the dear ladies of the 'Wilson Small' and their freshening drinks, — animal that I am! but how can I forget that which comforted me?" The other says: "The



departure of the 'Wilson Small' has left a sad blank in these waters. It always had a humanizing effect upon me to go on board, if only for a moment. I trust that when this weary war is over I may meet the friends I have made here under happier skies."

There! my story is done. A short three months ago I wrote to tell you it was beginning; but what a lifetime lies between now and then!



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