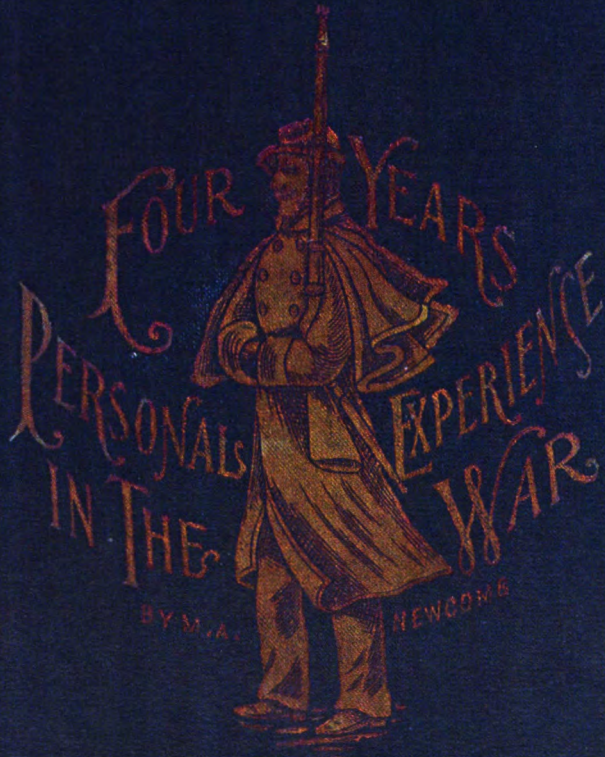

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Mrs. A. Meucomb

FOUR YEARS
OF
PERSONAL REMINISCENCES
OF THE WAR.

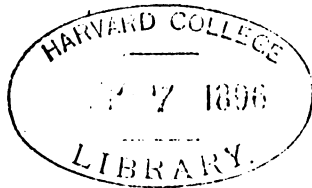
By Mrs. Mary A. Newcomb

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TO THE
RAPIDLY DIMINISHING RANKS
OF
THE BOYS WHO WORE THE BLUE
THIS
RECORD OF FOUR YEARS' WORK
FOR
THE RELIEF OF THEIR SUFFERINGS
ON BATTLEFIELD AND IN
HOSPITAL,
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED
BY
"MOTHER NEWCOMB."

PREFACE.

This work is written at the earnest request of some of my best and most influential friends. And as I make no pretensions to being an author, or even a good epistolary correspondent, I do not expect to rank as an author or a historian. I shall only give the facts as they occurred at the different places where I was stationed.

You will ask, "Who is it that wrote this book?" We very naturally like to know not only what we are reading about, but also who wrote it. I was born in Cayuga county, New York, in 1817, and attended the schools of Cayuga county and of Geneva, New York. In the year 1833 I was married in the city of Rochester, then my home, to Hiram A. W. Newcomb. The marriage was performed by the Rev. Mr. Fillmore, a cousin to President Fillmore, a resident of Buffalo, N. Y.

In this volume I shall tell you what occurred in connection with my own work in the different hospitals; on the boats that conveyed the sick and wounded from places of conflict; on the battle-field; in tents; in the woods; on the march; and in the various camps. Now after thirty years have passed I am still here; but my hair is as white as the paper on which I write, and my days are fast waning; and before I leave the world, I want to leave a record, from my own personal knowledge and observation, of the terrible hardships and privations many of the brave boys passed through, that we might have a home and a republic.

No merely historical events will be related in this book; the history of the war has been often repeated, and it would take a far abler pen than mine to trace correctly the movements of a large army, as it was constantly moving over thousands of miles in different sections of country. I leave all that to the historian, whose writings I gladly peruse with interest.

It is my purpose to give the reader a view of the work of an army nurse, in its true light. No fictitious matter

is presented here ; and as you peruse these lines, remember that the half has not been told. If memory served me better, I might make the story more interesting ; but there is no pen made, nor any hand to guide it, that could tell all the hardships our dear soldier boys passed through during the years 1861-5. We often read of war and say it is sad ; but one must see the battle-field and be with the wounded and dead to have an adequate idea of war. Although I passed through the last war and saw many conflicts and many hard scenes, I still feel that I realized but little of the actual hardships that the soldiers endured during those five years of struggle for the liberties that you and I enjoy. And as they gather around their camp-fires and sing the old familiar war songs, and tell the oft-repeated story, and smoke the pipe of peace ; and as they sit under their own vines at home, with wife and children about them listening to the story of their hard-fought battles and their sufferings on the field and in the hospital, I feel to join with them and wish them joy, as I ever shall while I am able to get to their camp-fires. When I am gone will some other, more worthy than myself, take up the story.

And when the last veteran has laid aside his knapsack, unbuckled his sword and laid away his canteen ; when the drum beats his last tattoo, and younger comrades bear him away to his last resting-place, and the bugler at the head of his grave sounds "lights out"—remember it was he who helped to put down the greatest rebellion the world ever heard of ; and as the decoration days return, lay a wreath of fragrant flowers upon his grave. When he enters the haven of rest, may he find the gates ajar.

Sons of veterans, never pass a poor, broken-down soldier without a friendly word to cheer his old age. Rally around the old flag, and cherish the memory of those noble men who fought for the liberties you enjoy. May God bless you and keep it ever in your minds, that your freedom was dearly bought with many a soldier's life.

M. A. NEWCOMB.

PUBLISHER'S PREFACE.

It is with sincere sorrow that we announce the recent death of the author of this book. While the manuscript was in the hands of the printer the death angel's bugle sounded "lights out," and Mother Newcomb passed over to join the hosts of the boys in blue whose last hours were soothed by her ministrations on the battle-field and in the hospital.

We are reminded anew that the surviving fragment of the past generation who shared in the unhappy strife now more than a quarter of a century past, is daily growing smaller, as nature spreads the successive green and white mantles of oblivion over scarred battle-fields and shallow graves.

Survivors of the civil war will feel added interest in this story of a noble woman's heroic work now that the record of her life is closed. This volume was her last and cherished work. Mother Newcomb is no more on earth, but her memory will be cherished as long as an old soldier lives.

MY ARMY WORK OF FOUR YEARS.

CHAPTER I.

MY FIRST VISIT TO THE ARMY.

You all remember the first call that was made by President Lincoln for troops to quell a riotous affair that had been stirred up by a few hot-headed rebels in the South, who thought they would own the whole of the North as well as the South.

In 1861, on a beautiful April morning when the sun shone out in all its splendor ; the tiny blades of grass were putting up from Mother Earth ; the birds were beginning to build their nests and nothing seemed to mar the happiness of all, there came wafted over this beautiful land the clamor of war and the fife and drum sounded to arms. Lincoln had issued a call for seventy-five thousand men.

You loved your homes ; you loved your country, and all her institutions, because here the poor man's child could climb the steep ladder of fame to the topmost round ; you loved the constitution, framed by men of intelligence and character. Above all these, because it was the symbol of all these, you loved the dear old flag that had waved triumphantly over the battlefields of the Revolution ; and you love it to-day because it waves victoriously over a reunited land.

That flag had been insulted. Sumter had been fired upon, and the brave Anderson had been forced to surrender. A few Southern States had said :

“We want a government of our own, and we will secede from the Union. We will plant the Stars and Bars on our own soil, and the North can do as they like.” But Lincoln said: “No! you cannot do that. There is one flag and one government. We will teach you better how to treat your neighbors north of the Potomac and the Ohio.” And when the drum beat to arms the boys responded nobly. Farmers, merchants mechanics, students—men of every vocation rallied at the first call, and soon too many were ready to march to conflict and to victory.

Some were not accepted, and they returned home feeling a little slighted, and wishing that the war was a little more extensive, for they wanted a taste of the romance of a short experience of war. As the accepted regiments one after another were drawn up in lines ready to go to the place of mustering into service, how little they realized that theirs was the last good-bye to many a loved one. Nearly every one expected to return;—as I heard some say: “We’ll whip those rebs and be back by planting times.”

I was at that time so full of patriotism that if I had had a dozen boys I have no doubt I should have said, “Go! the country needs you.” In my absence my husband enlisted in the Eleventh Illinois Infantry, for ninety days, and was at once sent to Villa Ridge to guard a bridge on the Illinois Central Railroad, a few miles north of Cairo. Villa Ridge was full of rebels, and as a large number of troops were carried over the bridge it was in danger of being destroyed, and many lives sacrificed. It was guarded during the whole term of enlistment.

At this place the boys had no taste of war. They had a good time—no battle, not much guard duty, and but little picket duty—and they concluded that war was a holiday and that they would eat, drink and be merry. They arrived at the hasty conclusion that the rebels dare not fight, and the war was not going to amount to anything, and they would all be at home in a few weeks. When the next call was made, for three years, or “during the war,” they re-enlisted almost to a man. War had no terrors, for they had not been in any conflict. My husband said he would cast his lot with the rest, and he was again mustered into service. Some of the boys said they wanted a chance to fight the rebs, as they had had nothing to do but have a good time, so far. They realized that the war had only begun.

The Eleventh Illinois Infantry was sent to Cairo, a small place at the terminus of the Illinois Central railroad, a place of not much account; low and flat, and at some seasons entirely under water. At the time I mention the levees had given away at many places, and Cairo was set upon pins, or stilts. It became a place of much interest after the troops began to land there, and from a military point of view was almost indispensable for the transportation of troops and supplies. The little town was filled with soldiers and all the accoutrements of war. The men stayed here a few days and then were sent across the river to a place called Bird's Point, named after the owner. It was of no interest, and contained only one house, a saw-mill, and an old building that had once been used as a depot.

Everything looked lovely, and the woods were gay with singing birds. I became very lonesome at home, and on a sudden impulse started off to see the boys, as I knew quite a number of them before they enlisted. I found at Bird's Point a large number of soldiers, and they made an impression on me that I shall never forget. There were stationed here, the Eleventh, Twentieth, and Twenty-second Illinois, and the Second Iowa Infantry; the Second Illinois and Tenth Iowa Cavalry, and Taylor's Battery.

After I had been there a few days the boys began to build barracks. Each regiment built for its own men, and every company had nice little rooms. They tore down the old mill and used the lumber for floors and tables, and the large chimney they converted into nice bake ovens. The Eleventh was commanded by Colonel W. H. L. Wallace, a splendid officer and a good man.

Very soon the black measles broke out and became epidemic. Almost every one had them. We had at that time no sanitary supplies, and the boys were compelled to lie on the ground with nothing to protect them but the tent—a very poor protection with a disease that was so dangerous when one was exposed to damp weather; and it seemed to rain daily. The old depot was used as a hospital and was soon filled to overflowing.

I went about among the boys doing the best I could with nothing to do with. Colonel Wallace told me to do what I thought best. I could not get anything at Bird's Point, so I went across the river to Cairo for supplies.

The commanding officer, Colonel Wallace, was a noble-looking, well-poised man, of fine appearance and a pure gentleman in every respect. He had a generous heart and sympathized with every man's troubles. When the men were sick it was his daily custom to call at each tent and inquire how each man felt; for men who had so lately been civilians could not so soon forget the home, the neighbors and the friends. It was so with the officers as well as the men; they laid aside all military ceremony and were simply men. Every day several, from the colonel to the corporal, called to inquire after the welfare of the men. Many of them were young and had been tenderly cared for at home, knowing no hardships. In such a place and in such circumstances their sufferings seemed more than they could bear. But they were brave, and only wanted to get well so they could go into battle and whip the "rebs," as they called the Southerners.

I had always been caring for the sick, having passed through the three sieges of cholera that visited this country, and, not fearing it in the least, I was always on hand to do the best I could. I felt the need of many things essential to the comfort and welfare of the sick, and as they were not to be had at the Point, I almost daily crossed the river to Cairo to procure them. They had only pork, beans, bread, and plenty of coffee, tea and sugar.

After about a week an order came that no woman should be allowed to care for the sick unless commissioned by Miss Dix, of New York. As I walked through the camp and saw the poor fellows lying on the ground with only a blanket for a covering and a

knapsack for a pillow I felt it my duty to care for them, notwithstanding the order, as I had always been called a good nurse; and when the order was put in my hands Colonel Wallace came and said to me: "You keep on, and we shall see." Doctor Goodbrake and Colonel Marsh of the Twentieth also told me to pay no attention to the order. In those days it required the unwinding of a good deal of red tape to do anything; but I concluded that it was not the best plan to let the boys suffer until a commissioned nurse was sent. They were very sick, and several died. It is possible that Miss Dix was a very nice woman; she had power invested in her and she meant well, but she knew as little of the wants of a hospital as Queen Victoria, and she delegated authority to a Mrs. Yates, of Chicago—a woman but little known and very slow to act. During the three months that I was here no commissioned nurse put in an appearance.

We were very poorly supplied with sanitary goods. The old hotel was fitted up the best we could, and filled as full as it would hold. The boys seemed delighted to have me there, and at once commenced calling me "Mother," a name that has clung to me ever since. The colonel furnished me with money for little delicacies that the boys would relish; and, having some knowledge of medicine, I, unknown to the medical department, prepared cordials and sympys. The boys improved, and the doctors, seeing the change, said I was doing a good work. One day as I was in the hospital feeding a very sick man, Mr. Bird came in, and said to me: "I have five girls, and if I should see them doing as

you are doing, I would feel like shooting them down. That work is only fit for slaves to do." I merely replied that I "hoped he would have less secesh to fight." I felt like slapping him, but would not let him know my feeling.

At Cairo we began to get supplies from the north ; and the sickest men were sent across from Bird's Point to Cairo for better care. In Cairo I met Miss Safford, a resident of Cairo, whose brother I think was a banker. She was as loyal as an angel and devoted to the care of the soldiers, being always ready to do for them, and spending money freely for their comfort. She often said : "I wish I could do for all of them." She was not the only woman devoted to the soldiers, the loyal heart of woman was always ready to aid them.

Like many other regiments, the Eleventh Illinois had its pet, Wade Matthews, of Company G. He was the son of a prominent physician living in that part of southern Illinois called "Egypt." Wade was only sixteen, a delicate boy, pale and small, but determined to 'be a soldier. His father tried every argument to dissuade him, but finding it useless, finally consented. While I was at the Point, Colonel Wallace, seeing how frail and young he was, had him detailed to wait on me, do errands, get wood and water. He seemed very contented. He had seen no hard service ; but when the boys were sent to Charleston, Missouri, after Price, Wade wanted to go, as he had never been out of camp. They started very early in the morning and were gone two days, but did not get very near Price. It began to rain soon after they started, and continued

through the first day. Wade came back covered with mud, so wet and cold he could hardly undress, and so tired he could hardly speak. He crawled to his bunk, saying as he threw his clothes down: "I can't put them on in the morning." He went to sleep without his supper. I saw that his clothes were cleaned and ready to don in the morning. The next day he said: "I don't want to go after Price again; I would rather stay here and wait on you."

During this time no commissioned woman had been sent to take care of the boys. It seemed that the hospital at this place had been left in my care. Miss Dix did not interfere in the appointment of nurses so I had my own way. The doctors seemed satisfied that I did as well as anyone could under the circumstances. We sent the men across the river as fast as places could be made for them there, but Cairo was not well provided with hospitals and we were soon full, and some were so very sick it seemed to me the boys were all going to die, and I was in constant fear that the rebels would soon surround us and we would all be prisoners. I often wrote letters for the boys to their homes. I had never seen so many sick. Every day some one died and it made me very sad, for I knew so little about war.

Every bed in the hospital was filled and not another one could be placed there, when the black measles broke out. The boys said they had "had the measles," but the doctors said these were very different and far more dangerous. I soon learned that the boys were in a very critical condition. Lieutenant Murray's wife was with us, and we took

under our special care the worst cases, which were in the tents, taking turns in watching at night, and leaving those in the buildings to the care of detailed nurses. I sent to Chicago for butter and took special care to see that each boy had something prepared for him to eat that he would relish.

I had so little idea of war that I thought it would be over before spring. But my husband did not think so, and he tried to get me to go home to Chicago; he said it was too hard on me, and he was afraid I would get sick with such a constant burden of care. But I felt it my duty to stay and care for the boys, who called me "Mother." It sounded a little harshly on my ears at first, but it followed me through the war, and has continued till the present time, only in later years it has become "Grandmother." I was then only forty-four years old, and felt as young as a girl of twenty, had never seen any hardship, and felt a little reluctant to be called "Mother" by men as old as I was. Mr. Newcomb laughed at me, and said I was the oldest woman in America. He did not seem to like it, as he thought I was only a young woman. But if the boys liked to call me "Mother," let them do so. I surely had care enough on my shoulders, for it was "Mother" here, and "Mother" there, all the time. It seems to me I can almost hear them yet, calling for a little of this or that.

One day Colonel Wallace came in with General Grant, Colonel Nevis and two other officers whose names I have forgotten, on a tour of inspection; and as they saw me preparing some food they spoke up at once and said: "We will all get sick if you will cook

for us." They were to dine with Colonel Wallace, and I sent them a fine cranberry pie, for which I received many thanks. I have always found that officers as well as privates appreciate little things done for them.

When Mr. Newcomb urged me to go home I said I would stay till cold weather; then the boys would be better, and I could go. Wade, my pet, stayed with me, and was always ready for any service. The boys got better; the measles had nearly disappeared, and while some were left with bad lungs, as a general thing the condition of things was much improved. We had read up—pretty thoroughly as we supposed—on the wars in Europe, and the Mexican war, but when I met war face to face I found that I knew as little of its actual hardships as a child.

The first of December, 1861, I informed the boys I was going home to remain through the remainder of the winter. You should have seen the sad, forlorn look on their faces. They said at once: "If it is money you want, we will all pay you so much a month to stay." I said I was not after money, but Mr. Newcomb thought I ought to go; but that I would come back in the spring and stay as long as they needed me. At home it was very lonely. I had no one there to care for. The ladies were organizing for sanitary work. They wished me to join them; but if I worked for the army it must be where the men were, and where I could do the most good. I would rather cook for the sick than scrape lint and make shirts and bandages for the wounded. I had never seen any wounded, and I could not

realize that we would ever need half of the things that were being made. It seemed to me that nearly the whole army must be located at Cairo and Bird's Point. It is true I read of other places; but it seemed almost impossible that men should be scattered all over the country in the same condition, and with the same needs as they were here at the very seat of war, as I supposed Cairo to be. And I was vain enough to suppose that I was about the only woman that was willing to be a Florence Nightingale; for women were scarce in the army at that time.

I had been home but a few days when I received a letter from Colonel Wallace and Colonel Nevis to come back. They said there was the greatest difference where there were ladies, and that the boys wanted me. As my husband was there I wanted to be near him, and as I had nothing to keep me at home, I told my friends I was going back to enlist and be a soldier. They all said: "Go; we will pack you a box for your New Year's dinner." They packed a large store box full of turkeys, chickens, cookies, fried cakes, mince and apple pies—a plenty to feed a hundred men that made a company.

On my way back I stopped at Effingham, Illinois, to visit my only son, who had not then enlisted in the army.

I arrived at Bird's Point on the 25th of December and at once set about the preparations for the New Year's dinner. The boys were all glad to see me, and Company G all turned in to help me. New Years was to be a day of rest for them, no drill nor dress parade; only pure fun. The colonel and sev-

eral others were invited to join Company G in the feast, and after dinner the doctors and the officers joined the boys in all sorts of games: Foot races, sack races, climbing greased poles, rolling hoops, playing ball, swinging, and some of the younger ones played leap-frog. They were in for fun and they had a good time. Many of them spent a part of the day in writing to their friends at home. It was the last New Year's day many of them ever saw; long before the next one they had laid down their equipments and gone over to the other shore.

There was a rumor that bushwhackers were prowling about in some of the farming districts over in Kentucky, and as General Grant was not the kind of a man to be caught napping, he ordered an exploring expedition. Colonel Nevis, Lieutenant Murray and Captain Rose were placed in command of a detail of men and sent over the river. While some of the boys were out on a foraging trip for themselves they came to a farm house and ordered a good supper of fried chickens and everything good, paying a dollar apiece in advance for it. While the woman was preparing the dinner the men strolled off a little ways from the house. After this expedition had been ordered out General Grant had followed them, with his staff, to see how the land lay and what the boys were doing, and he happened to be passing this farm house just as the woman came to the door to announce that supper was ready. Seeing some soldiers, she supposed they were the ones who had ordered the meal, and said: "Come in to supper." General Grant took in the situation at once, and went in with his party and

ate the supper. While they were eating one of the foragers came back to the house to see how the supper was progressing. When he saw General Grant and his staff at the table he returned to his party and reported the state of things. The boys felt chagrined, but as they had been skylarking, they would be liable to a court-martial if found out, so they dared not say a word. When the expedition returned they were careful to keep it very quiet, but it was too good a joke. General Grant sent for them and inquired how things were across the river. There was not much to report as to military movements, and after a few inquiries General Grant said: "Well, boys, how did you enjoy your supper at the farm house?" Some of them answered at first that they had fared very well, but they soon saw the point, and finally said: "Well, General, you might have left us a little of the supper."

At Bird's Point the pecan trees grew in great abundance. There were several large fine ones near the camp, loaded with fruit. I had never seen them before, and wanted some of the nuts to send home. Colonel Wallace let some of the boys cut down a couple of fine trees and they picked about a bushel of nuts which I sent north. Mrs. Murray and Mrs. Rose were at the camp, and we became very warm friends.

The measles still prevailed to some extent, and several of the men died. I had never seen black measles before coming to Bird's Point, and when I saw them turn as black as night, after death, I confess I felt a little nervous about the disease; but I kept well, and my husband, who was an orderly

sergeant, also escaped. It taxed us all to the utmost to provide something that the boys would relish as their appetites failed—a little tea, a little toast, a poached egg, a baked potato, a delicate custard, some rice nicely cooked, a baked apple, or a little broiled mackerel—a thousand and one things to be seen to every day; no time to visit nor entertain. Even when people came to visit the hospital I let them go about alone rather than take time that I needed to care for our one hundred and fifty boys. Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Rose and myself took entire care of them all until some time in January, sending the worst cases to Cairo and St. Louis as fast as they could be received.

Company G had a lieutenant who was very gay, and he used to say: "If I have to be shot, I want them to take aim right here"—placing his finger on his forehead to indicate the exact spot. I shall mention this lieutenant later.

CHAPTER II.

OUR FIRST EXPERIENCE ON THE BATTLE-FIELD.

As we arose one morning in February the long roll beat to arms.

It was the first time the boys had ever heard the long roll; and they knew as little as I did about its real meaning; but we all soon found out. The river had been filling with boats for two days, and we had surmised that we would soon be moved from our comfortable quarters. Now the boys were ordered to strike tents, and in a surprisingly short

time they were ready to march. Before dark our cabins had been taken down, and the Eleventh, Twentieth and Twenty-second Illinois Infantry, the Tenth Iowa Cavalry, and the Chicago Battery were loaded on the transports.

Everything was in confusion. I thought I would return North; but Colonel Wallace and my husband said I had better go with the army, and if I did not wish to remain I could return on the boat. As I wished to be as near Mr. Newcomb as possible, without being in the way, I decided to go.

As we were embarking Colonel Wallace's brother slipped and fell into the river at Cairo. The colonel spent the night searching for the body, but could not find it. I do not know that it was ever found. The sad occurrence cast a gloom over all; he was a bright, lovely boy. The colonel was so depressed for several days that he scarcely spoke, and seemed unable to attend to his duties. It made us all feel the cruelty of war.

Before leaving the camp I filled an officer's chest with good substantial food to use on the boat and after we should land.

As we moved from the levee no one, not even Colonel Wallace, seemed to know where we were going. There were about twelve transports, all heavily loaded, and led by Commodore Foote's gunboat. As we went down the Ohio river it rained and snowed at intervals and the weather was very disagreeable; but after we entered the Tennessee the sun shone out, and the days passed pleasantly. The scenery was lovely. Vegetation was far in advance of the North. The trees were loaded with huge

bunches of mistletoe ; the green grass and early flowers already clothing the river banks, made us feel as if spring were near. We spent the days in viewing the scenery and taking notes; in the evening some danced, others played cards. It seemed more like a bridal party than an army of soldiers on the way to death.

In the party was Mrs. Dr. Long, the surgeon's wife ; very much of a lady, but very gay. Mrs. Yates also put in an appearance for the first time. She was the only woman in the West commissioned by Miss Dix. I must confess I did not take to her like a duck to water. She was the gayest of the party, and entered into the festivities like a girl in her teens.

The boat stopped at several large plantations, and we were permitted to go ashore and take a look at the grand old houses once occupied by wealthy slave owners, but now left to the tender mercies of the soldiers of either party. Our boys had not the least inclination to destroy or injure anything. They seemed to enjoy the trip, not knowing what was before them. Ignorance was bliss.

After two days' traveling we landed about three miles below Fort Henry, which was well manned by confederates, who were determined to hold it in spite of Grant's gunboats. Along the river was a low, flat piece of ground, with hills rising farther back. The night was cold and frosty. No tents were pitched, for they expected to move in the morning. Boats were constantly arriving with troops, and soon there was a large army bivouacked in the woods that covered the low ground and the

hill-sides beyond, where the boys made their coffee and ate supper.

During the landing a soldier fell from the boat and instantly another plunged into the river after him. As they were both brought ashore a captain stepped up and expressed his thanks to the rescuer, and shook both men by the hand. He had been very sick and his men advised him to lie down, but he said, in the kindest tone: "Look after the rescued men first, they are worse off than I am." He was one of the first men I became acquainted with in the army; a strict disciplinarian, but a Christian man who loved his men.

I shall never forget the scene as I looked from the deck of the boat and saw those thousands of camp fires, around which the half-frozen, shivering men gathered for warmth. Some one would strike up a familiar song and in a few moments it would spread through the entire camp. The boys were in good spirits, and ready for any emergency. It would have done all loyal people good to hear those thousands of voices singing "Rock of Ages" on the lonely bank of the Tennessee river, and, later the chaplains offering their evening devotions praying God to protect them from harm and give them victory. There were many thoroughly good men in our army.

In the morning the boys were ordered to get ready to march. I began to look for my box of good things, thinking I would give some of them to the boys for their breakfast. But it was not to be found, and never put in an appearance; so some other poor fellows had a good breakfast.

As the Eleventh was drawn up in line Colonel Wallace came and said I would better go and bid the boys good-bye "for," said he, "you may not ever see them all again." I was anxious to see Mr. Newcomb, for, as he was a soldier, he could not be with me; and I wanted to see my pet, Wade. So I left the boat and walked down the whole line. I could not say good-bye, but as each man gave me his hand I said "God bless you and save you." Some of them gave me money and watches to be given to friends. I would smile as some would say: "Tell them I am in for it, and never expect to get home again." This was the first time I had realized that danger was ahead, and it was the last farewell to a large number of those boys.

The troops were to march across the country and the gunboats were to make the attack from the river. The rebels had withdrawn most of their men, leaving only enough to man the guns of the fort. Commodore Foote brought his guns into position, and firing continuously as he advanced, in one hour and ten minutes he silenced the guns, the white flag was thrown to the breeze, and Fort Henry was ours.

Here I saw the first killed soldier I had ever seen, and it sent a shock through me that I cannot describe. Eight of the men had been shot down and had fallen in a heap on top of each other, in the place where they stood—a place dug out of a bank of clay, which was full of mud and water from the late rains. The men were buried on the spot where they fell.

We took several prisoners, who were put on a boat and sent North. We remained at Fort Henry

for the arrival of other transports, which brought troops, and as fast as they came they were unloaded and started on the march across the country to the rear of Fort Donelson, where there was a large force of rebels. As this large body of our men started off across the country, I thought there were men enough to whip the world. There could be no doubt of the success of our army, for it would not take half of these men to use up the South!

Mrs. Rose and Mrs. Murray had gone North when we left Cairo, so I was alone. After the troops had been landed and started for Fort Donelson I returned to Cairo on the boat that took the prisoners from Fort Henry. In Cairo was a delegation from Chicago, among whom were Dr. Collier, Mr. Williams, Mr. Downs, and several others, who had been sent with supplies from the sanitary commission, knowing there was to be a battle in the near future. They were waiting for transportation southward, which they secured after considerable difficulty. I did not intend to go back to the field, but these men thought I ought to go as there would be need of me there, so I went. As we approached Fort Donelson we could hear the gunboats belching forth shot and shell into the fort. After three days we saw the white flag floating over the fort, and knew that we had gained the victory; but no one realized at what a loss.

While we were lying on the boat several officers came on board and said it was a terrible battle and both sides had lost heavily. As soon as we reached the landing I ran ashore to learn the result of the battle. I had been on shore only a moment when a

soldier met me and said: "Mother, Mr. Newcomb is wounded, but not badly; he is back on the hill."

I started up the hill in a hard rain, and the mud, which had been tramped into a paste, was almost impassable. As I got near the top of the hill several persons from some of the other boats, who were searching for friends, tried to turn me back, but I said I was after my husband and meant to find him. I made several inquiries, and all said he was back near the woods. Everything was in confusion; ambulances were constantly passing toward the river to transfer the wounded to the boats. I kept on at a slow pace and finally reached a little elevated spot, where I stopped. It seemed impossible to take another step. It still rained as hard as I had ever seen it, and I began to think I should have to spend the night in that most dismal place on God's footstool.

How long I stood there I could not tell. After a while a lot of cavalry men passed, and I asked them where the Eleventh Illinois was camped; they said about two miles to the left. I looked at the mud, then at the skies, then at my muddy feet and drabbled clothes, and I was so tired I finally sat down to rest. Regiments of infantry were marching hither and thither, and no one seemed to know where or what for. Then came a large troop of cavalry, some on horses and some on foot, then more battalions of infantry.

I started on. It seemed as if every step would be the last, I was so tired, and the mud was over my shoe tops. But I must find my husband, and as I inquired where the Eleventh Illinois was camped,

every one said : " Back in the woods. " It seemed like hunting for a needle in a hay-stack, but I could not give up, for I had heard that my husband was wounded, but did not know how badly nor in what way.

After walking as I supposed, for three or four hours I began to think I would have to stop; and where to stop was the next thought, for there was no house nor even a tent near me. I dared not think of being exposed to such weather during the night (although it was really not later than eleven o'clock in the morning). I was about to give up and turn back to the boat for protection.

While trying to decide what to do an ambulance came along and some one called out to me " Mother ! " They stopped and I went to the ambulance and found Mr. Newcomb, not badly wounded, but, unable to walk. There were four wounded men inside, and it would hold only two comfortably, so I got up with the driver, and we went on to the river where I took Mr. Newcomb to the hospital boat City of Memphis. The boat was rapidly filling, and some of the dead were being brought on—among them the lieutenant I have already mentioned. He had been shot in the forehead at the exact spot where he had placed his finger! He had said to Newcomb: " If I am killed, take me home ; if you are I will take you. " His young wife of a year was thus left a widow, and her sweet babe of only three weeks an orphan. There were hundreds of others similarly bereaved as the result of this one battle.

Mr. Newcomb did not seem very badly wounded. He kept about and tried to care for others. He

was shot through the left lung, the ball passing out at the back. The surgeons were few and there was so much to do, and Mr. Newcomb did not get any treatment for several days. They said he would get along all right; and he said he did not suffer any, and I depended on them, as I had no experience in the care of wounds.

The boat was filled with wounded men until every available spot was occupied and many were taken down to the coal pit in the hold to keep them warm, as those on deck were terribly exposed. It snowed and froze every night and they were without covering. Many were badly frozen, and all suffered severely, for they were so badly wounded that they could not move much.

A number of Company G were wounded, and among them I found Wade. He was a pitiful sight. The poor boy had both hands and both feet frozen, and one foot had been shot. How I pitied the little pale-faced boy! I washed him, combed his hair and gave him to eat such as we had—for by some means the supplies sent from Chicago had been transferred to other boats, and we had but little to do with; about a barrel of crackers and a barrel of meal to be made into gruel or mush was about all we had, and nearly a thousand starved, thirsty, dying men. Dr. Collier, seeing the mistake, hurried to some other boats, and came back loaded with lemons and jellies. He was one of the ever faithful, always doing for the men; here giving crackers, here lemonade; lifting this one and that one, trying to encourage them by his genial smile and pleasant conversation. He was ever at the side of those who

suffered most, and many a soldier will gratefully remember Dr. Collier.

The boat was in charge of a Dr. Turner and lady, and a Miss Hadley, of Chicago. No one without experience can realize how hungry and thirsty wounded men become. They would beg me for only one mouthful of meat, and when I asked Dr. Turner or his wife for meat they said they had only enough for themselves. At table one morning, when we had ham and eggs for breakfast, I took mine on my plate, but did not taste it, and after breakfast took it to my husband, who could not eat corn meal. Mrs. Turner did not seem to like it, she said she did not think the doctor would like it very well. It made little difference to me whether the doctor liked it or not. I told her that I had a husband who had been wounded while fighting, and was cold and hungry, and that I would go without my meals to give them to him, for those frozen, hungry boys needed all they could get. I went to the cook on the boat and gave him twenty-five cents for a ham bone that did not have a half-pound of meat on it. I sliced it very thin with a sharp knife and gave each man a mouthful. If this ever meets the eye of Captain Churchill, he will remember that he received a mouthful. It did me good to see those hungry boys chew it, I only wished I had a dozen hams to give away.

I did not shut my eyes for two nights, and only lay down once on the trip to Mound City. Some of the wounded were left at Paducah, Ky., and among them was my pet, Wade Mathews, to be taken to a hospital in Indiana.

I had no "Eleventh" here. All were soldiers; all alike needed care; it made no difference whether private or officer. There was a scene I shall never forget. A boy named Allen, from Effingham county, Illinois, a member of Company G Eleventh Illinois, was shot through the lungs, the ball passing out at his back. It was very difficult for him to breathe; he had to be propped up with pillows. As I would pass him he would call to me: "Mother! Come here and sit down. I want to tell you what to do." He gave all his accounts to me, and I took them down as fast as he could collect his thoughts. "Now," said he, "will you see that my body is taken to my father? He will pay you for all your trouble." He talked about dying as calmly as if he were only going to sleep; gave his orders as deliberately as a veteran on the battlefield. He suffered terribly, but did not complain. One Sunday morning he saw the sun rising, and called me. Dr. Collier, who was sitting by him, said: "Let her sleep"—for I had just lain down. He said: "I want Mother." I got up and went to him. We raised him up and he rested his head on his hand; then, looking toward the end of the boat, he saw the flag, and said, as a heavenly smile lit up his face: "We fought to the very last, and the flag still waves!" Then raising his hand—already dead—he waved it to and fro, and shouted: "Hurrah! hurrah! the flag still waves and always will!" He sank back and was dead.

On the way to Cairo we lost one hundred and fifty men. They were laid together, side by side, and covered with blankets. It gave us more room

to get around, for the boys were laid as close as they could be, with only room enough to walk between them. No one was prepared for such sad sights at that early stage of the war; but we could not linger over the dead, for there was more than we could do to care for the living, and little to do with.

On Wednesday we arrived at Mound City, where a large hospital had been prepared in a large brick building. It was well filled when we unloaded the boat, which was at once sent back to Fort Donelson for more wounded. I stopped at Mound City with my husband. He had been able to walk about all the time, and when I would go to attend him he would say: "Do for those that cannot walk." But he was now beginning to feel badly; and I got a cot and made him just as comfortable as possible.

As I was walking through the ward I heard some one call me. I went to him and found he was one of Company G's boys, Eleventh Illinois. I could not make out who he was. He said: "Don't you know me? Why, I'm Hiram Thouse; you *do* know me." I had known Hiram Thouse, but not the one I saw before me. He had one of his thumbs shot off; a ball had passed through his arm at the elbow; one of his feet was badly shot; he was so dirty you could not have told whether he was black or white, and his hair was in mats over his head and face. He had been taken there on one of the first boats that had brought the wounded, and had had no attention, for there were not half enough doctors, and many of them were young and inexperienced. As soon as I got Mr. Newcomb to sleep I got a basin of water, used my handkerchief for a wash-cloth

and by careful management, after two hours' work I got him cleaned up.

This was about ten o'clock at night, when a ward-master came tripping up to me and said: "Madam, you are violating the orders of the head surgeon." I said: "In what respect?" "You have a light burning, and they are to be extinguished at nine o'clock." I said: "Who pays for this light?" "Oh! well," he said, "that was the order." "Well," I said, "you tell that surgeon, whoever he is, I will burn just as many lights as I please. I am no hired nurse. I volunteered my services free and there shall be no red tape, but I will break it when humanity demands it." "Well," he said, "will you put out the light?" "No," said I, "you mind your business, and I will attend to mine." I kept the light burning and was not troubled any more. I had to sit in a chair, as there was no place to lie down.

In the morning Mr. Newcomb was much worse and could only sit up a few moments at a time, but he insisted on my attending to several badly wounded men—among them Hiram. His arm was covered with what are called "toad stools," a light frothy substance resembling a thick lather. I got a piece of oil-cloth, and after careful sponging for more than an hour I got it clean. When the doctors came around with their instruments to amputate his arm, they looked thunderstruck. There were four of them, and among them an oldish man, with a most fatherly look on his face. I told him I thought the boy could keep his arm; but one of the men said: "No, it must come off." I protested that

it could be saved. He got quite angry and said to me: "We are sent here to take care of these fellows, and we don't propose to have anyone interfere." "I am well aware of that fact," said I; "but I persist that that boy's arm shall not come off. I don't care who sent you, nor what authority you work under. I am no hired hand, and I expect no pay for my work. I wear no shoulder-straps, but that boy's arm shall not come off while I am here." In the melée the old doctor came and examined the arm and finally said: "I think the lady is about correct. I guess the arm can be saved; at least there will be no harm in waiting a little." They wanted to know how long I was going to stay. I told them only till I could get transportation for myself and my husband to the North.

I asked the old doctor to examine Mr. Newcomb, for I had no faith in the young doctors who came there only to experiment on the poor boys. In our conversation he learned that Mr. Newcomb was a member of Company G Eleventh Illinois, and said that he was hunting for his boy who was in that Company. I asked the boy's name and when he told me "Wade Matthews," I said: "Oh! he was my pet." I told him that his boy had been sent to a hospital in Indiana and explained how he was wounded. He said: "He was too young, but if I had not told him to go, he would have run away. You must be the woman he wrote to us about while at Bird's Point; he used to say he had 'found a mother,' and we felt better when we knew he had some one to look after him." From that day we were warm friends till the old doctor died in the

winter of 1873. He remained in the hospital several days, and stood by me in my determination that the boy's arm should not be amputated. I washed and cared for it daily for five days, and then it was so much better that the doctors concluded to let it alone for a while at least.

I found an opportunity just then to take Mr. Newcomb to Cairo. The place was full. I could not find a place to lay my sick husband. The St. Charles—then the only hotel—was so crowded that not even a cot could be secured. I finally got the use of a lounge from ten o'clock a. m. to nine o'clock p. m. by paying a dollar for it, and laid him on the porch. Even the sidewalks were literally covered with wounded men. The sight was enough to make one sick, but I had no time to think. Mr. Newcomb became much worse, and the doctors told me to get him away as soon as possible. The Illinois Central train did not leave till eleven o'clock, and there was a good deal of red tape about the transportation, but it was finally arranged, and two men got a stretcher and carried Mr. Newcomb on the cars. A fairly good bed was improvised by turning two seats together, and he rested quite well, but suffered from constant thirst caused by the inflammation of his wound. The train was crowded with limbless, armless, sightless men going home to be cared for by loved ones. Lieutenant Murray and Captain Rose were both badly wounded, and as their wives had gone North, I tried to do what I could for them.

We arrived at Effingham, the home of my son, at noon Wednesday, only to find that he had enlisted in the Twenty-sixth Illinois Infantry, and was

already gone; but his wife was at home to receive us. My husband grew worse rapidly, and at eleven o'clock on Thursday evening he died—just nine days after he was wounded. The last word he said was: "Mary, go back and take care of the boys, they need you."

Alone among strangers, in a rebel community, and my only son gone to the army, I felt very lonely. Mothers know that an only son means much, especially when one has laid a husband upon the country's altar. It seemed more than I could bear. My son was then in Missouri, near Cairo. He was telegraphed for, but army regulations would not permit him to come.

On the 2d of March, 1862, they laid away my loved one. At that time there was a strong rebel sentiment prevailing in Effingham county, and it was said I could not get a loyal minister to officiate at the funeral. I said I would have a loyal one or none at all. Mr. Newcomb was a strong Presbyterian, but there was no Presbyterian minister to be had. A Methodist minister sent me word that he would take the risk, and I gladly accepted his offer. There was great danger of a riot at the funeral, for the court house was the only place that would hold the people, and some of the rebels said we should not use it; but I found a few loyal friends who stood by me, and we laid my loved one in his grave—the second soldier buried in the cemetery.

On the same train that had brought us from Cairo I had brought the body of the loyal boy who had died cheering the flag, and had sent word to his father, who lived a few miles in the country, and he

came and took the body. Until his death a few years ago, he ever remembered me with many manifestations of gratitude.

But war had begun, and there was work to be done. After the battle of Fort Donelson the troops were concentrated at Pittsburg Landing. It was thought that a battle would take place there soon, but no one knew except those in command. When the troops had camped, Colonel Wallace, now promoted to the rank of brigadier-general, called together the remnant of the Eleventh Illinois, and as he viewed the thinned ranks, that told too plainly that they had been in the thickest of the fight—and even the few that were left, tired out and half-frozen—he stood for several moments unable to speak. At last he said: "Boys, you fought nobly and bravely. You have lost heavily, but God will bless you, and history will find a place for the gallant Eleventh Illinois Infantry." His voice failed and he shed manly tears.

There were very few women at work with the army at that time. The Christian Commission of Chicago, which afterward became so efficient, had only just begun operations. There were a great many women at work at home; but it was necessary for some to go the seat of war and be ready to go on the field. I received letters from officers and privates asking me to come and be near them; they seemed to think that a battle would take place soon. I left Effingham, March 18, 1862, and went to Cairo, where a number of boats were loading for Pittsburg Landing. Governor Yates, the soldiers' friend, was there and urged me to go on as there

would be need of me. Dr. Goodbrake and a number of other physicians were waiting to go.

We remained in Cairo two days. They were sad days, for Cairo was then full of wounded and dead soldiers on the way home to friends. Every spot where a man could lie was occupied by some mangled soldier; and many others were on crutches, while the coffins were piled up in long rows. General Strong, who was then in command at Cairo, did not wait to untie any red tape nor ask any useless questions; but as fast as furloughs could be written and passes made out he sent the men where they could get better care. If I had been of a nervous temperament I could never have staid with the army four years amid such scenes. Neither glory nor big pay would have made it possible.

At last we started down the Ohio on the Uncle Sam. Governor Yates was in the party and was a very jolly fellow, fond of a good joke and devoted to the ladies, but also very much devoted to the soldiers. There was a lieutenant's wife on board who was very gay, and whom the governor breveted "Major."

We went up the Tennessee river as far as Savannah, a small, but rather pretty, thriving country town, where Grant had his headquarters at that time, in a very pretty little cottage. Several boats had preceded us and were already at Pittsburg Landing, a place with only a name. We arrived Friday, April 4th. It rained constantly during the day, but cleared away during the night, and the sun shone out Saturday morning bright and beautiful. Who does not remember Saturday night, April 5,

1862, when thirty-eight thousand men were camped on the shore of the Tennessee, ready to march at the word of command? Saturday is always a welcome day to the soldier when in camp. No tiresome drill on Saturday, nor everlasting roll-call; on the morrow he can write to the loved ones at home. They felt secure as they lay down on this Saturday night, to dream of wife and babe. Everything about them was calm and lovely. The scenery was beautiful, the orchards were already in full bloom, the grass was green, birds were singing in the dense woods; the odor of wild flowers was in the air. Everything told that spring had come.

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE OF SHILOH.

At the dawn of day the long roll called to arms, and in a few minutes every man was ready to move.

A dispatch was sent to General Grant at Savannah to bring him to the scene of action. I stood at the bow when the General's orderly led his beautiful black horse off the boat, and the General, with an unlit cigar in his mouth, waved a salute to the crowded boats, mounted his horse and galloped off up the hill.

Pittsburg Landing is only a "landing," to which the farmers hauled their crops for transportation to other points. A stretch of level ground skirted the river; this was churned into a mortar bed by the teams that had hauled army supplies, and the mud was a foot or more deep. Back of this level was a

steep high hill, and the soldiers had made roads across the level through the woods and up the hillside and for several miles back from the river, leading to the camps of the different divisions. There was one old house on the top of the hill overlooking the river—the only one for two miles from the river.

While the heavy firing by the gun-boats up the river was in progress, I started out to gratify my curiosity by a walk to the top of the hill. I must have walked farther than I intended, for I came to the tent where there was a very sick lieutenant of an Iowa regiment. He was very low with typhoid fever, and had a soldier caring for him. They were both alarmed, as the firing seemed quite near. I sat by him a few minutes, and then returned to the boat, promising to come again in the morning.

As I went back the roads were so full of soldiers that it seemed almost impossible to pass. Nearly the whole army had been driven back to the river, and the side of the hill and the level by the river were filled with soldiers as thick as they could stand. They stacked their arms and made a little coffee, but there was not much sleep for the poor tired boys. It seemed to be certain that we were beaten and would all be taken prisoners.

About five o'clock Sunday morning, the musketry firing was so plain it seemed to be just on the top of the hill. To keep my promise, I started up the hill with a bucket filled with things for the sick lieutenant to eat, and reached him safely. The soldier who was with him wanted to join his regiment at Shiloh Church. As I sat in the tent, General Wal-

lace came riding by getting his brigade into line, and he said he would send an ambulance to take us to the river. The poor fellow was suffering from fear as well as a burning fever. Sometimes his mind wandered and he would say: "Mother, it is hard, but I will soon be home with you." When his reason returned he would beg me not to leave him. As I was trying to cheer him all I could a bullet passed through the tent. He did not realize that he was shot for he said: "They are close by us, now." The ball had passed through his body and he was dead in less than ten minutes. Some of the boys lifted him from his cot and laid him on his rubber blanket; then we covered him with his blanket and set the cot over him. His body was afterward sent to his home in Iowa.

It was about three in the afternoon before I got back to the boat. The men were too tired and worn out to care which side was victorious. All at once a tremendous shout went up from the men near the river, and the word was rapidly passed that Buell was on the opposite bank. Instantly twenty thousand men opened their mouths and sent up one long loud hurrah. It really seemed as if they could not contain themselves. They forgot that they were tired and hungry, they danced and sang and cheered; I really thought they would turn somersaults. Boats were sent across the river to bring Buell's men over. The boys did not sleep much that night, for there was not room to lie down. Buell's men were in no condition to fight, for they had marched through the mud till some of them could go no farther.

As soon as day began to dawn the next morning the men were on the march and the battle was renewed with vigor. We could see a great difference in the men; they did not lag as they had done on former days, but all seemed ready to do their best, and were confident of victory; as one boy said: "Come to my heart, old flag, you shall never be trailed in Tennessee mud."

The gun-boats up the river kept up a constant booming, and the wounded began to come in. The house at the top of the hill was used for an amputating room, and the limbs were thrown out of one of the windows until they made a pile *five feet high just as they fell*. It was a sickening sight; and every limb meant a cripple for life.

Two ladies from some other boat came to me and said they wanted to do something for the helpless wounded men; so we got some tin buckets and went about two miles back from the river to a point where there had been fighting a short time before. The dead and dying lay so thick that we might have walked a mile with every step on a dead body. Mrs. Vail, from Iowa, fainted, Mrs. Dr. Hood, of Ohio, stood it a little better. We filled our buckets with water from the springs and gave the thirsty men. We tore our aprons in little squares, filled them with grass and leaves and stopped some gaping wounds that were bleeding. We made bandages from our garments and bound up shattered limbs. Meanwhile the ambulances were busy carrying the men to the old house on the hill where the knife and saw could do their work.

We stayed on the field from nine in the morning

till five in the afternoon. The men were begging for water, some were crying, others wanted to be taken home to mother or wife. We tried to encourage them, and said: "Be patient, they will come after you soon." But it seemed hardly more than mockery to stay when we had nothing to do with but a little water to cool their fevered tongues, so we returned to the river.

When we reached the river I learned that General Wallace was on one of the boats mortally wounded, and as soon as possible I went to him. He was surrounded by the best physicians that could be found, but he only lived a short time. His death left a vacancy not easily filled. He was a man very much beloved by all who knew him.

The sanitary boats were soon loaded, and we started for Cairo with a heavy load of as badly wounded men as it was possible to find—though no worse than those from Fort Donelson, and we were in a little better shape to care for them, as we were better supplied with beds and provisions. Thirteen died before we reached Paducah, and were taken off and buried. At Paducah we left the number, as we were badly crowded, and the weather was getting very warm.

One young man was put on the boat with a badly shattered arm that needed the most careful attention; it had not been touched since it was shot, and gangrene had set in, so that it was necessary to have it amputated as soon as possible, to save his life. Through some mistake there was no chloroform on the boat—only some ether. When they told the boy he said he could stand it. He had suffered very

much and was very pale and weak. The arm had to be taken off near the shoulder, and every one said he would never live through the operation. I stood by the table and gave him brandy and ether and applied cold cloths to his forehead till he was quite unconscious, and three doctors commenced the operation. It was quickly over, and not a groan escaped the boy. Governor Yates and four or five other men were watching the operation, and as the arm came off and the governor saw the blood he turned as white as paper, reeled and would have fallen to the floor if some of the men had not caught him; but he soon rallied and came back. We had the boy on his cot and I was fanning him when the governor came and told him who he was, and said that he would write to him, and that he should have a gold medal for his bravery. The governor took his name and address, and said he was the bravest boy he ever saw. The boy's home was in Peoria, and we left him at Mound City, from which place I telegraphed his father to come for him.

At Cairo we got new supplies, as the Sanitary Commission had sent large quantities to that point; then we returned to Pittsburg Landing.

We had to remain at Pittsburg Landing several days, as it required some time to get the wounded all brought in from the more distant parts of the field. While waiting one day I took an ambulance and went to the historical "Shiloh Church." It was an old log-house, so poor that we would not consider it better than a shed. Near by were long rows of graves, like trenches, where the boys had been buried side by side. Many of the tents were filled with

men too badly wounded to be moved. Some of the graves were marked so that friends could find and remove the bodies. The dead were still unburied, many of them; trenches were being dug in which to bury the dead horses that were scattered all through the woods; several pieces of artillery were left on the field, and everything belonging to war was scattered about. The sight was too saddening, and I hastened back where I could be of some use, for there was more to be done than hands to do it.

On the way back with a load of the wounded, when at Savannah, as Governor Harvey, of Wisconsin, was helping to transfer some sick and wounded from one boat to another, he made a misstep and fell into the river between the boats. The eddy carried him under and out of sight; and although diligent search was made, the body was not recovered until several days after, when some colored women found it washed ashore several miles down the river. The sad event cast a gloom over us all; and yet it was not more sad than the death of any one of the thousands of private soldiers who gave their lives for the country. The common soldiers who did the hard work of the war were equally heroic with their commanders.

This load of wounded were all left at Paducah and Mound City, none going to Cairo. This was my fourth trip up the river, and as yet I had not seen any of Miss Dix's nurses. I heard that Miss Yates was in an officers' hospital. I met Mother Bickerdike, a blessed old lady, not afraid to go anywhere, even into the worst places, if she could do good. Mrs. Dr. Hood, from Ohio, also did good work.

CHAPTER IV.

IN LEW WALLACE'S CAMP OF CONVALESCENTS.

After the battle of Shiloh, Dr. Goodbrake told me that there was work for me at Hamburg, where Gen. Lew Wallace had a large hospital for those too sick to be moved. I had heard that Pope was to be near there, and as my son was with Pope I might be able to see him.

The boat was going to Fort Donelson soon, and I decided to go there, for at the time of the battle there we left before I had a chance to see the battle-field. So, after the wounded from Shiloh had been disposed of in the various hospitals, we went on board the Clara Belle, which had been fitted up in very good shape, with supplies sent from the Commission at Cincinnati.

Arriving at Fort Donelson, I got an ambulance and went out to the field where the great battle of February 26 had been fought. Here were the same long trenches, in which the killed had been buried. The Eleventh Illinois had selected a little mound on which to bury their dead. In the center of the mound was a tree, which the boys had cut down, leaving about five feet of the trunk in the form of a monument. On this the names of the eleven men who had fallen had been burned in with a hot iron. I could not keep back the tears as I stood there, for I had known every one of the eleven men who were buried there, and it seemed like my own family. For miles the land was covered with the graves of both Union and rebel soldiers. As I walked over that battle-field in search of loved ones, and saw the

terrible work that war had made, and thought of the wave of woe that was surging over the land, I felt to say in my heart: "O God, how long must we suffer?" The dead lay all over the field as far as the eye could see, their faces hidden from view by handkerchiefs, coats and blankets, while soldiers were digging trenches to bury their dead comrades. After the first day's work was accomplished, and the first shock of feeling had subsided, some of the boys started the old, familiar "Battle Song of the Republic":

" Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the wine-press where the grapes of
wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible, swift
sword;
His truth is marching on."

The ground was literally covered with cavalry and artillery horses; they had to be buried to prevent disease. In this work of burying the dead the boys were kept busy and tired and hungry, and sometimes their was little to satisfy their hunger, but they seldom complained. It was hard for the boys to lay their comrades in the trenches—in a common grave—with only an army blanket for a shroud, and sometimes not even that; but the government has since provided for all who can be found, a marble slab, with the name when known, and company and regiment to which they belonged.

The Clara Belle was filled with a cargo of convalescents to be sent North. When we reached Savannah I left the boat and went across the country to the convalescent camp at Hamburg, about twenty miles from Shiloh. About five hundred sick

and wounded men were encamped here, lying on the ground under tents, with their knapsacks for pillows and bundles of straw for beds. They lay as close together as possible, with just room enough to walk between them, and the tents extended in every direction. The men were wounded in every possible way, and suffering from fever, gangrene, putrid wounds and thirst.

I remained here only a short time, doing what I could to relieve the suffering of the men. Sometimes a young doctor would question my authority or ask who had commissioned me to do the work, and "usurp the privileges" of the hospital. To one of them I said: "I have a commission from a higher power than any on earth, and you need not interfere. I shall go where I please and stay as long as I please."

After a short time I went to Corinth, a little distance from Hamburg, where a large hotel, the old Tishmingo House, was filled with sick and wounded. A large number of officers were there at first, but as the space filled up they were ordered back to their regiments. When we had filled up so that not another one could be received, a large seminary building about two miles away was fitted up for hospital use; and here we had plenty of room, so that those who had been out in tents were brought inside. My work here was much the same as elsewhere.

We learned that Pope was at the left, and I was anxious to see my boy. So many newly wounded men came in that we knew there had been fighting not far away. Leaving Corinth, I found the army

back near Hamburg, and at Farmington I found my boy, in the Twenty-sixth Illinois Infantry. He looked pale, and was not fit for service; he could not stand hard marching. He wanted to resign and go home, but the officers were unwilling to spare any of their men. I went to General Pope and asked for his release, but he said no, they could not spare him. Colonel Loomis said the same, and I applied to the other officers in succession, telling them that he was all I had, and that he would not live if kept in the service. At last I secured his discharge, and he got his papers and went home—but only to re-enlist, soon after, in the Forty-second Illinois, as first lieutenant, the same rank he held in the Twenty-sixth. He could not stay at home, but remained in the army until mustered out at Springfield in 1865, with ruined health which was never restored.

After my son's discharge I returned to the convalescent hospital. The new arrivals had made it necessary to put up a large tent one hundred feet long for their shelter. Constant changes were necessary; every day several men died, and as fast as the boats could carry them those who could be moved were sent North where they could have better care.

There were not enough ambulances to take the men to the river; and it was impossible to get necessary supplies. There was not a building in sight, and not a house occupied for over a mile and the men often had not enough to eat. There was nothing beautiful in that country except the flowers, the forests and the birds. Every morning the

mocking birds would wake us with their sweetest songs, and the air was full of the perfume of wild flowers!

One night about eleven, I heard the guard call out, "Halt!" The night was still and everything could be heard very distinctly. Then the guard said: "Give the pass-word." Some one answered: "I can't; I am lost and can't find my way back to the river." "Can't let you in," said the picket; "got to obey orders." "I admire you for your fidelity," the other said; "but I have been out on the battle-field and went farther than I supposed, and can't find my way back." "Can't let you in; if it was General Grant he could not get in without the pass-word." "Well, have you no officer in command who has authority to let us rest? We are very tired. We are no rebels, but loyal men." I knew there were two of them. The guard came to the surgeon's tent and woke him and he went out. I heard one of the men say: "Morton, of Indiana," and I knew it was Governor Morton; he had a newspaper reporter with him. The doctor called me and asked me to assist in getting them something to eat. I had just made a loaf of "salt-rising" bread and I knew that two hungry men would soon demolish it, but it could not be helped; the hungry must be fed. We had a nice kettle of bean soup left from dinner and a large piece of boiled pork, and soon set a neat little supper. They ate off tin plates and cups with as much relish as if they had been the finest of China, and insisted that it was the best meal they ever ate. In the morning I helped the cook get them a good breakfast and then invited them to go

THE LAST WORK OF FOUR YEARS.

They had never been in an hospital. As we passed through, the governor said a word to each of the boys and gave them some of them, as the reporter also said seven o'clock for the river, with so many roads and paths that it was very difficult to find

and myself remained at this command ten months until the removal of the death or recovery of others necessary for me to remain, and to Birmingham to go down the road where I was more needed. On the way I saw a horse of corduroy road. I was carrying a load of army equipments such as blankets. It was raining very hard and we were going through a ravine in the road and it was some time before we reached. We finally brought up at the camp of Cogswell's battery boys. I went to rest and I dismounted and saw a table which I saw arranged for the men were just about to sit down and were having dinner with them. The invitation was accepted, for I was tired and I enjoyed the dinner of bread, meat and no milk. After dinner we went to camp. There were about twenty men over others with rheumatism and they were all in tents where there should have been a hospital exposed to all the changes of

weather and had to keep their heavy military clothes on with the fever burning them up; a blanket for a bed and a knapsack for a pillow; without proper supplies; with only a camp kettle and a frying pan to cook in; nothing but army bread, beans and meat to cook and the cooking to be done out of doors in the rain and mud. The country had been stripped by the rebel army and it was impossible to get any supplies.

The doctor in charge was quite sick. He seemed to be a very kind man and he asked me to stay. Captain Coggs well also asked me to stay and gave me his tent. He furnished me a team and driver and we drove five miles to a sutler's and bought rice, crackers, lemons and butter.

The first thing to be done was to have the men bathed. All their blankets were hung up and aired. The swollen limbs were rubbed with oils and liniments. I prepared their food myself, and in one week there was a marked improvement. Captain Coggs well said that God had sent me down there for the purpose of taking care of his men. He was devoted to his men and spared nothing for their comfort. Not one died during the three weeks I was there, and they were to be sent to Corinth—a hard journey over the corduroy roads, up the hills and through the ravines.

As the boys were better I started down the river, for I began to feel the need of rest and thought I would go home. On the way down the river I met some Quakers, who were going to look after the freedmen who had deserted their masters and homes as fast as they dared to. A great many of them

1862, when thirty-eight thousand men were camped on the shore of the Tennessee, ready to march at the word of command? Saturday is always a welcome day to the soldier when in camp. No tiresome drill on Saturday, nor everlasting roll-call; on the morrow he can write to the loved ones at home. They felt secure as they lay down on this Saturday night, to dream of wife and babe. Everything about them was calm and lovely. The scenery was beautiful, the orchards were already in full bloom, the grass was green, birds were singing in the dense woods; the odor of wild flowers was in the air. Everything told that spring had come.

CHAPTER III.

THE BATTLE OF SHILOH.

At the dawn of day the long roll called to arms, and in a few minutes every man was ready to move.

A dispatch was sent to General Grant at Savannah to bring him to the scene of action. I stood at the bow when the General's orderly led his beautiful black horse off the boat, and the General, with an unlit cigar in his mouth, waved a salute to the crowded boats, mounted his horse and galloped off up the hill.

Pittsburg Landing is only a "landing," to which the farmers hauled their crops for transportation to other points. A stretch of level ground skirted the river; this was churned into a mortar bed by the teams that had hauled army supplies, and the mud was a foot or more deep. Back of this level was a

steep high hill, and the soldiers had made roads across the level through the woods and up the hillside and for several miles back from the river, leading to the camps of the different divisions. There was one old house on the top of the hill overlooking the river—the only one for two miles from the river.

While the heavy firing by the gun-boats up the river was in progress, I started out to gratify my curiosity by a walk to the top of the hill. I must have walked farther than I intended, for I came to the tent where there was a very sick lieutenant of an Iowa regiment. He was very low with typhoid fever, and had a soldier caring for him. They were both alarmed, as the firing seemed quite near. I sat by him a few minutes, and then returned to the boat, promising to come again in the morning.

As I went back the roads were so full of soldiers that it seemed almost impossible to pass. Nearly the whole army had been driven back to the river, and the side of the hill and the level by the river were filled with soldiers as thick as they could stand. They stacked their arms and made a little coffee, but there was not much sleep for the poor tired boys. It seemed to be certain that we were beaten and would all be taken prisoners.

About five o'clock Sunday morning, the musketry firing was so plain it seemed to be just on the top of the hill. To keep my promise, I started up the hill with a bucket filled with things for the sick lieutenant to eat, and reached him safely. The soldier who was with him wanted to join his regiment at Shiloh Church. As I sat in the tent, General Wal-

lace came riding by getting his brigade into line, and he said he would send an ambulance to take us to the river. The poor fellow was suffering from fear as well as a burning fever. Sometimes his mind wandered and he would say: "Mother, it is hard, but I will soon be home with you." When his reason returned he would beg me not to leave him. As I was trying to cheer him all I could a bullet passed through the tent. He did not realize that he was shot for he said: "They are close by us, now." The ball had passed through his body and he was dead in less than ten minutes. Some of the boys lifted him from his cot and laid him on his rubber blanket; then we covered him with his blanket and set the cot over him. His body was afterward sent to his home in Iowa.

It was about three in the afternoon before I got back to the boat. The men were too tired and worn out to care which side was victorious. All at once a tremendous shout went up from the men near the river, and the word was rapidly passed that Buell was on the opposite bank. Instantly twenty thousand men opened their mouths and sent up one long loud hurrah. It really seemed as if they could not contain themselves. They forgot that they were tired and hungry, they danced and sang and cheered; I really thought they would turn somersaults. Boats were sent across the river to bring Buell's men over. The boys did not sleep much that night, for there was not room to lie down. Buell's men were in no condition to fight, for they had marched through the mud till some of them could go no farther.

As soon as day began to dawn the next morning the men were on the march and the battle was renewed with vigor. We could see a great difference in the men; they did not lag as they had done on former days, but all seemed ready to do their best, and were confident of victory; as one boy said: "Come to my heart, old flag, you shall never be trailed in Tennessee mud."

The gun-boats up the river kept up a constant booming, and the wounded began to come in. The house at the top of the hill was used for an amputating room, and the limbs were thrown out of one of the windows until they made a pile *five feet high just as they fell*. It was a sickening sight; and every limb meant a cripple for life.

Two ladies from some other boat came to me and said they wanted to do something for the helpless wounded men; so we got some tin buckets and went about two miles back from the river to a point where there had been fighting a short time before. The dead and dying lay so thick that we might have walked a mile with every step on a dead body. Mrs. Vail, from Iowa, fainted, Mrs. Dr. Hood, of Ohio, stood it a little better. We filled our buckets with water from the springs and gave the thirsty men. We tore our aprons in little squares, filled them with grass and leaves and stopped some gaping wounds that were bleeding. We made bandages from our garments and bound up shattered limbs. Meanwhile the ambulances were busy carrying the men to the old house on the hill where the knife and saw could do their work.

We stayed on the field from nine in the morning

till five in the afternoon. The men were begging for water, some were crying, others wanted to be taken home to mother or wife. We tried to encourage them, and said: "Be patient, they will come after you soon." But it seemed hardly more than mockery to stay when we had nothing to do with but a little water to cool their fevered tongues, so we returned to the river.

When we reached the river I learned that General Wallace was on one of the boats mortally wounded, and as soon as possible I went to him. He was surrounded by the best physicians that could be found, but he only lived a short time. His death left a vacancy not easily filled. He was a man very much beloved by all who knew him.

The sanitary boats were soon loaded, and we started for Cairo with a heavy load of as badly wounded men as it was possible to find—though no worse than those from Fort Donelson, and we were in a little better shape to care for them, as we were better supplied with beds and provisions. Thirteen died before we reached Paducah, and were taken off and buried. At Paducah we left the number, as we were badly crowded, and the weather was getting very warm.

One young man was put on the boat with a badly shattered arm that needed the most careful attention; it had not been touched since it was shot, and gangrene had set in, so that it was necessary to have it amputated as soon as possible, to save his life. Through some mistake there was no chloroform on the boat—only some ether. When they told the boy he said he could stand it. He had suffered very

much and was very pale and weak. The arm had to be taken off near the shoulder, and every one said he would never live through the operation. I stood by the table and gave him brandy and ether and applied cold cloths to his forehead till he was quite unconscious, and three doctors commenced the operation. It was quickly over, and not a groan escaped the boy. Governor Yates and four or five other men were watching the operation, and as the arm came off and the governor saw the blood he turned as white as paper, reeled and would have fallen to the floor if some of the men had not caught him; but he soon rallied and came back. We had the boy on his cot and I was fanning him when the governor came and told him who he was, and said that he would write to him, and that he should have a gold medal for his bravery. The governor took his name and address, and said he was the bravest boy he ever saw. The boy's home was in Peoria, and we left him at Mound City, from which place I telegraphed his father to come for him.

At Cairo we got new supplies, as the Sanitary Commission had sent large quantities to that point; then we returned to Pittsburg Landing.

We had to remain at Pittsburg Landing several days, as it required some time to get the wounded all brought in from the more distant parts of the field. While waiting one day I took an ambulance and went to the historical "Shiloh Church." It was an old log-house, so poor that we would not consider it better than a shed. Near by were long rows of graves, like trenches, where the boys had been buried side by side. Many of the tents were filled with

men too badly wounded to be moved. Some of the graves were marked so that friends could find and remove the bodies. The dead were still unburied, many of them; trenches were being dug in which to bury the dead horses that were scattered all through the woods; several pieces of artillery were left on the field, and everything belonging to war was scattered about. The sight was too saddening, and I hastened back where I could be of some use, for there was more to be done than hands to do it.

On the way back with a load of the wounded, when at Savannah, as Governor Harvey, of Wisconsin, was helping to transfer some sick and wounded from one boat to another, he made a misstep and fell into the river between the boats. The eddy carried him under and out of sight; and although diligent search was made, the body was not recovered until several days after, when some colored women found it washed ashore several miles down the river. The sad event cast a gloom over us all; and yet it was not more sad than the death of any one of the thousands of private soldiers who gave their lives for the country. The common soldiers who did the hard work of the war were equally heroic with their commanders.

This load of wounded were all left at Paducah and Mound City, none going to Cairo. This was my fourth trip up the river, and as yet I had not seen any of Miss Dix's nurses. I heard that Miss Yates was in an officers' hospital. I met Mother Bickerdike, a blessed old lady, not afraid to go anywhere, even into the worst places, if she could do good. Mrs. Dr. Hood, from Ohio, also did good work.

CHAPTER IV.

IN LEW WALLACE'S CAMP OF CONVALESCENTS.

After the battle of Shiloh, Dr. Goodbrake told me that there was work for me at Hamburg, where Gen. Lew Wallace had a large hospital for those too sick to be moved. I had heard that Pope was to be near there, and as my son was with Pope I might be able to see him.

The boat was going to Fort Donelson soon, and I decided to go there, for at the time of the battle there we left before I had a chance to see the battle-field. So, after the wounded from Shiloh had been disposed of in the various hospitals, we went on board the Clara Belle, which had been fitted up in very good shape, with supplies sent from the Commission at Cincinnati.

Arriving at Fort Donelson, I got an ambulance and went out to the field where the great battle of February 26 had been fought. Here were the same long trenches, in which the killed had been buried. The Eleventh Illinois had selected a little mound on which to bury their dead. In the center of the mound was a tree, which the boys had cut down, leaving about five feet of the trunk in the form of a monument. On this the names of the eleven men who had fallen had been burned in with a hot iron. I could not keep back the tears as I stood there, for I had known every one of the eleven men who were buried there, and it seemed like my own family. For miles the land was covered with the graves of both Union and rebel soldiers. As I walked over that battle-field in search of loved ones, and saw the

terrible work that war had made, and thought of the wave of woe that was surging over the land, I felt to say in my heart: "O God, how long must we suffer?" The dead lay all over the field as far as the eye could see, their faces hidden from view by handkerchiefs, coats and blankets, while soldiers were digging trenches to bury their dead comrades. After the first day's work was accomplished, and the first shock of feeling had subsided, some of the boys started the old, familiar "Battle Song of the Republic":

" Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
He is trampling out the wine-press where the grapes of
wrath are stored;
He hath loosed the fateful lightning of His terrible, swift
sword;
His truth is marching on."

The ground was literally covered with cavalry and artillery horses; they had to be buried to prevent disease. In this work of burying the dead the boys were kept busy and tired and hungry, and sometimes their was little to satisfy their hunger, but they seldom complained. It was hard for the boys to lay their comrades in the trenches—in a common grave—with only an army blanket for a shroud, and sometimes not even that; but the government has since provided for all who can be found, a marble slab, with the name when known, and company and regiment to which they belonged.

The Clara Belle was filled with a cargo of convalescents to be sent North. When we reached Savannah I left the boat and went across the country to the convalescent camp at Hamburg, about twenty miles from Shiloh. About five hundred sick

and wounded men were encamped here, lying on the ground under tents, with their knapsacks for pillows and bundles of straw for beds. They lay as close together as possible, with just room enough to walk between them, and the tents extended in every direction. The men were wounded in every possible way, and suffering from fever, gangrene, putrid wounds and thirst.

I remained here only a short time, doing what I could to relieve the suffering of the men. Sometimes a young doctor would question my authority or ask who had commissioned me to do the work, and "usurp the privileges" of the hospital. To one of them I said: "I have a commission from a higher power than any on earth, and you need not interfere. I shall go where I please and stay as long as I please."

After a short time I went to Corinth, a little distance from Hamburg, where a large hotel, the old Tishmingo House, was filled with sick and wounded. A large number of officers were there at first, but as the space filled up they were ordered back to their regiments. When we had filled up so that not another one could be received, a large seminary building about two miles away was fitted up for hospital use; and here we had plenty of room, so that those who had been out in tents were brought inside. My work here was much the same as elsewhere.

We learned that Pope was at the left, and I was anxious to see my boy. So many newly wounded men came in that we knew there had been fighting not far away. Leaving Corinth, I found the army

back near Hamburg, and at Farmington I found my boy, in the Twenty-sixth Illinois Infantry. He looked pale, and was not fit for service; he could not stand hard marching. He wanted to resign and go home, but the officers were unwilling to spare any of their men. I went to General Pope and asked for his release, but he said no, they could not spare him. Colonel Loomis said the same, and I applied to the other officers in succession, telling them that he was all I had, and that he would not live if kept in the service. At last I secured his discharge, and he got his papers and went home—but only to re-enlist, soon after, in the Forty-second Illinois, as first lieutenant, the same rank he held in the Twenty-sixth. He could not stay at home, but remained in the army until mustered out at Springfield in 1865, with ruined health which was never restored.

After my son's discharge I returned to the convalescent hospital. The new arrivals had made it necessary to put up a large tent one hundred feet long for their shelter. Constant changes were necessary; every day several men died, and as fast as the boats could carry them those who could be moved were sent North where they could have better care.

There were not enough ambulances to take the men to the river; and it was impossible to get necessary supplies. There was not a building in sight, and not a house occupied for over a mile and the men often had not enough to eat. There was nothing beautiful in that country except the flowers, the forests and the birds. Every morning the

mocking birds would wake us with their sweetest songs, and the air was full of the perfume of wild flowers!

One night about eleven, I heard the guard call out, "Halt!" The night was still and everything could be heard very distinctly. Then the guard said: "Give the pass-word." Some one answered: "I can't; I am lost and can't find my way back to the river." "Can't let you in," said the picket; "got to obey orders." "I admire you for your fidelity," the other said; "but I have been out on the battle-field and went farther than I supposed, and can't find my way back." "Can't let you in; if it was General Grant he could not get in without the pass-word." "Well, have you no officer in command who has authority to let us rest? We are very tired. We are no rebels, but loyal men." I knew there were two of them. The guard came to the surgeon's tent and woke him and he went out. I heard one of the men say: "Morton, of Indiana," and I knew it was Governor Morton; he had a newspaper reporter with him. The doctor called me and asked me to assist in getting them something to eat. I had just made a loaf of "salt-rising" bread and I knew that two hungry men would soon demolish it, but it could not be helped; the hungry must be fed. We had a nice kettle of bean soup left from dinner and a large piece of boiled pork, and soon set a neat little supper. They ate off tin plates and cups with as much relish as if they had been the finest of China, and insisted that it was the best meal they ever ate. In the morning I helped the cook get them a good breakfast and then invited them to go

through the hospital. They had never been in an army hospital and as we passed through, the governor spoke a cheerful word to each of the boys and gave money to some of them, as the reporter also did. They left at eleven o'clock for the river, with an escort, for there were so many roads and paths through the woods that it was very difficult to find the way.

Mrs. Dr. Hood and myself remained at this convalescents' camp about ten months until the removal of the worst cases and the death or recovery of others made it no longer necessary for me to remain, and then I started back to Farmington to go down the river to Cairo, where I was more needed. On the way we passed over a piece of corduroy road. I was riding on top of a big load of army equipments such as kettles, tents and blankets. It was raining very hard, and as we were going through a ravine in the dense woods, the load upset and it was some time before we got righted. We finally brought up at the camp of Captain Coggswell's battery boys. The teams stopped to rest and I dismounted and walked along to a table which I saw arranged for dinner. Some officers were just about to sit down and the captain asked me to dine with them. The invitation was gladly accepted, for I was tired and hungry, and I enjoyed the dinner of bread, meat and coffee with sugar, but no milk. After dinner we walked through the camp. There were about twenty men sick, some with fever, others with rheumatism and two with black measles. They were all in tents and three in a tent where there should have been but two. They were exposed to all the changes of

weather and had to keep their heavy military clothes on with the fever burning them up; a blanket for a bed and a knapsack for a pillow; without proper supplies; with only a camp kettle and a frying pan to cook in; nothing but army bread, beans and meat to cook and the cooking to be done out of doors in the rain and mud. The country had been stripped by the rebel army and it was impossible to get any supplies.

The doctor in charge was quite sick. He seemed to be a very kind man and he asked me to stay. Captain Coggsell also asked me to stay and gave me his tent. He furnished me a team and driver and we drove five miles to a sutler's and bought rice, crackers, lemons and butter.

The first thing to be done was to have the men bathed. All their blankets were hung up and aired. The swollen limbs were rubbed with oils and liniments. I prepared their food myself, and in one week there was a marked improvement. Captain Coggsell said that God had sent me down there for the purpose of taking care of his men. He was devoted to his men and spared nothing for their comfort. Not one died during the three weeks I was there, and they were to be sent to Corinth—a hard journey over the corduroy roads, up the hills and through the ravines.

As the boys were better I started down the river, for I began to feel the need of rest and thought I would go home. On the way down the river I met some Quakers, who were going to look after the freedmen who had deserted their masters and homes as fast as they dared to. A great many of them

were scattered over the country wherever there were soldiers. I accompanied them as far as Helena, Arkansas. It was the most desolate place I was ever in that was called a city; full of mud, darkies and soldiers.

General Steele had just come across the country from Missouri with a large army, and nearly all were sick. They had marched through swamps and drunk so much cyprus water that they were ready to lie down and die. General Washburne was in command, and hearing of my arrival he came and asked me to stay awhile, and secured board for me where he and his staff were boarding, at a Mrs. Howerton's. They were rank rebels, but we did not say "union" nor "rebel." The mud was very deep, and I secured a pair of high rubber boots and went out to look over the situation.

Every available place was filled with sick soldiers. The Methodist church, a good-sized brick building, had been arranged for hospital use and was as full as it would hold. There was a sanitary room here and the agent—a Mr. Plattenberg—sent us several loads of ticks, pillows, sheets and a large box filled with pillow cases, towels, underwear and socks. General Washburne sent into the country and got a load of straw for beds. A bath-room was improvised by hanging sheets across one corner of the room, and every man was taken there and thoroughly scrubbed after having his hair cut, and then clean clothes were put on him and he was laid on a new, clean bed. It made new men of them.

Half a dozen negroes were pressed into service, but they were mostly field hands and knew very

little about inside work and were so "shiftless" that I could not do anything with them by either coaxing or scolding, so I gave it up. After the boys were fixed up, the cob-webs were brushed off the windows and the mud on the floor was attacked. Some of the blacks were put at this work, but they were worthless, and I finally pinned up my dress and with cloth and broom was just finishing the floor when General Washburne, General Logan, General Grant and their staffs came in on a tour of inspection. I felt a little mortified to be caught in such a predicament. General Washburne came to me and said: "I told you to make the blacks do this work." I told him I could not take the time to teach them. He told me to take a club and they would work. The party all seemed pleased that there was so much improvement in the men and surroundings. The next morning, a big kettle of water was heated outside with soap in it and all the soiled clothes were boiled until there was nothing left *alive* in them. Then they were rinsed in clear water and every man had a clean suit to put on as soon as he was ready for it. You see there was something for a woman to do.

A few days after General Washburne's colored boy came and handed me an envelope without saying anything. I expected to find myself dismissed, but instead, I found a \$100 bill. There was no name but a slip of paper with the words "Reward of merit." I knew the boys, so I knew where it came from. At supper, General Washburne said: "Did you get any mail to-day?" I said: "Yes, thank you."

After four weeks of hard work, Miss Mertz, of Decatur, came. General Washburne was paying twelve dollars a week for my board; so rather than make double that expense, we got a room near the sanitary room and the general got a little sheet iron stove and we boarded ourselves. The stove was very complete in its outfit, and the government furnished us our food. We had access to the sanitary room and prepared a great many little dishes for the boys in the hospital. The general gave us the amount of our board bill for the purchase of such things as we needed for the boys, but could not get from the quartermaster nor the sanitary agent; it was all spent for the boys.

After everything was running smoothly, I left Miss Mertz in charge and went to the field to see how the boys in camp were getting along. There had been no fighting and there were but few wounded; but there were many sick who had come in from Steele's army, worn out with hard marching and exposure. Some of them had the scurvy so bad that their teeth were ready to drop out. There was a sanitary boat at the river; the quartermaster furnished a team and it was loaded with potatoes, onions, cabbage and a barrel of pickles, all of which were distributed among the boys at the different camps. Here I met Colonel Abercrombie—of the Eleventh Iowa, if I am not mistaken—a fine specimen of a soldier. He said I had been the means of saving hundreds of his men. I claimed no credit, but I did just what I could as there was opportunity.

In a few weeks the rain set in and continued until Helena was a vast river, and we were obliged

to go about in small boats all over the place. Even the mules would sink out of sight in many places. We had to move our quarters and found a very large house back on a hill, suitable for a hospital and a good dry place for a convalescents' camp such as there must be with every brigade for those who are too sick to do duty but not sick enough to be in the hospital; they cannot endure the chilly dampness of the rainy winter of the South. We heard that Captain Colwell and his Fifth Cavalry were a few miles below us, and as I had known some of his men before the war, Miss Mertz and I procured ponies and rode down to his camp. He had a very nice place and not many sick. We visited his camp several times. Captain Colwell is a near neighbor of mine at the present time.

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It was sad, after they had given one messages to mother or wife, then to go into the ward next morning and find the cot vacant, and the dead boy in the dead-house. We did not have much to cheer us and many things to make us gloomy. But we always tried to put on a smile and speak a good word to the boys.

About this time I was sent back to Fort Donelson to bring in a load of sick on the Emma Duncan. Doctor M. C. Granger was in charge and we had a very sick load. I think I never worked harder in

my life. We left the men in St. Louis, although by this time the hospitals were so full that it seemed impossible to get a place to lay them down.

We had on board a lieutenant of an Ohio regiment, very badly wounded. He was a picture to look at; the most lovely hair and eyes, and a perfect form. He was a college student from Cincinnati. When the boat was unloaded he could not be taken into the hospital, as he was an officer, and had to go in an officers' hospital; but no such place could be found. A place was finally found in a Sisters' hospital, at seven dollars a week in advance. He gave me fifty dollars, and after paying for the first week the balance of the money was put in one of his stockings which was then drawn on his foot. A sister was in the room when this was done. He had also a fine suit of military clothes, boots and valise—all in his room. He wanted to have me stay as long as possible, and asked for a Presbyterian minister, as he was the son of a minister, and had always been a religious boy, and now wanted to be baptized. When the minister came we had quite a service, and I stayed till nearly dark. The next morning his father came in response to a telegram, but his boy did not recognize him and died about ten o'clock. I told the father about his clothes, valise and money; everything had been removed, and not a thing would they give up. The money had disappeared. The father said they might keep the money, but his boy's clothes and sword he must have. When the Sister Superior found she had a man to deal with she came to time, and the clothes and money were produced.

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CHAPTER V.

AT LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS.

There was so great a need of woman's work at every place where there were soldiers that I only stayed at home about two weeks.

On the way back I stopped at Memphis, where there was a soldiers' home full of men, and several large hospitals. The sanitary arrangements were splendid; the commission had supplied them with everything that was needed for the comfort of the boys.

There was great need of more help down the river, but the doctors said I must go to Little Rock, Ark.

At Little Rock I met and roomed with Mrs. Governor Harvey, of Wisconsin, whose husband was drowned at Savannah. She was trying to secure the discharge of some Wisconsin boys who were unfit for service and would never be able to do duty again; and she succeeded in getting several furloughed.

The hospitals were overcrowded, and the sanitary condition of the place very bad. There were many men here who would never be fit for service again, and the doctors knew it; but they were afraid of discharging too many, lest they should be criticised. I am sure that many who were carried to the dead house would have been living yet if they could have gone home where they would have had better care. The doctors had human hearts, but there was too much red tape, and it was hard to reach the generals, and secure their consent to anything. But discharge papers were finally secured for seven of the boys who were sent home and I went to the river with them, and paid their transportation and sent them on.

One of the doctors, with his assistant, had gone in for making money. They opened a sutler's tent, and then drew the sanitary supplies on orders, and sold them to the boys. All the supplies the sick got they had to buy. The boys knew that the women of the North were sending supplies, but they were told that they did not get to Little Rock. I saw a soldier pay twenty cents for a pound of crackers and forty cents for a can of tomatoes. I asked why he had to buy these things, and he said

they could not get them any other way. I went to the sanitary rooms and found that the doctors were drawing, daily, regular quantities. I went in where the men were eating, and found that they were swindled out of nearly everything that they should have had. For their dinner they had a little poor bean soup—about six parts water to two beans—a little bread without butter, and not a thing else. I said nothing but went to the general's office, and had a talk with him, and he promised to help me trap them. The next day at the dinner hour we went first to the kitchen where they were dishing up the soup. The general said that *good* bean soup was very good for wood choppers, but not very good for sick men; he then tasted it, and said *that* soup was not fit for a dog, and inquired who issued the rations. It is the duty of the orderly to issue rations, but in some cases the quartermaster does the work, with the aid of some others detailed for the work; but here it was left to the doctor and his assistant. We went through the wards and found some who were too sick to eat the poor, tasteless soup, eating dry crackers. The general had the doctor and his assistant dismissed in disgrace, and reduced to the ranks two others who were concerned in the shameful business. It was learned that they had been selling supplies to the citizens, on the sly. If all the rascally things had been found out, the people of the North would have given up trying to do for the boys; but in most cases the supplies were honestly handled, and always appreciated.

I stayed at Little Rock till the hospitals were in good shape, and the Christian commission had good

cook rooms and a sufficient number of good nurses, and I knew I could be spared; then I went back to Helena. Grant was pounding away at Vicksburg, and every day loads of sick men were brought in to be cared for. There was a great deal of sickness on the canal which Grant had built, and all along the river. The hospitals and the convalescents' camp were soon filled and a large number overflowed into additional camps.

I heard of a woman who had several cows, but was being supported by the government. She sold her milk for a dollar a gallon. General Strong, who was then in command, told me to get five gallons a day, for hospital use. The woman said I could have it, but she did wish she could put poison in it. I reported to headquarters, and the result was all her cows were confiscated. I then had all the milk I wanted.

In a skirmish out back of the town, a number of prisoners were taken and a good many wounded men were brought in. Among the wounded prisoners was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen—black, wavy hair, black eyes, and white, even teeth. He was very badly wounded and had only a short time to live. I did for him just the same as for my own boy, and he seemed to know that he was being well cared for. He often said: "You uns is real good to we uns. I did not want to fight you uns, but they made me. Mamma does not know where I am." He had an old watch that seemed worthless, which he gave me. I have it yet, and shall have occasion to mention it again as it proved to be of value to me. The boy died after four days of terri-

ble suffering and was buried by two colored boys. When the rebel women heard that he was dead they had the body taken up and put in a handsome casket and buried in the cemetery with a good deal of pomp. Then these same women came to me and wanted to furnish delicacies to the wounded rebel prisoners; I told them that all were treated alike. This enraged them, and they were constantly on the watch to see how matters were progressing, until finally the surgeon had to refuse them admission.

You will see that it was not all sunshine. I had a very disagreeable class of people to deal with. But there were in the South many real ladies who sympathized with the South, but deplored the terrible sufferings caused by the war. Some of them came to me with tears when the dead were carried out, and said: "When will it stop?" I could only say: "When the war is over."

A large number of men were being gathered from points up the river, to be concentrated at Vicksburg. A number were taken from Helena; and the doctors thought I ought to go with them. Most of the boys were taken away, only enough being left to guard the fort. So I went on the transport, and we were hurried away to Vicksburg, but the boat tied up to the bank at night on account of the bushwhackers who infested the country along the river. Here I found the Eleventh—what there was left of it, after the terrible loss at Fort Donelson and Pittsburg Landing; it did not seem like the same regiment, but Wade Mathews was there; a big fat fellow. Soldiering agreed with him.

The troops were landed about a mile from the famous canal. Here we loaded with the sickest men I ever saw; they had been in the water so long that they were lifeless below the knees. The boat was in charge of Dr. Jessup, and it required the utmost skill and hard work by both of us to do what was necessary; for three days and nights I scarcely shut my eyes, and stopped only long enough to eat.

We took the load to Memphis, and returned for more; twenty died on the way to Memphis. Here there were the "City of Nashville," "City of Alton" and "City of Memphis"—boats fitted up for floating hospitals. I was transferred to the "City of Nashville," a splendid boat finely fitted up, that would accommodate a thousand men at least. I remained on the "Nashville" till we landed the next load in Cairo.

Dr. Jessup had been transferred to the "City of Alton," and he had me also transferred as matron of the "Alton." I had learned to dress a wound, and in many things connected with the treatment the boys preferred me to the doctors. The men were constantly transferred as fast as their condition warranted it, and we were constantly facing new cases.

After a little we went the third time down to the famous canal, which had not been a success and was now about to be abandoned. This was in early spring and the scenery was beautiful; trees were already green, orchards were in full bloom, and wheat well toward heading; everything around was in contrast to the sickness and horror of the war.

As we were going down the fourth time we were met by a boat and informed that Grant had gone

around by the Yazoo river, and that Vicksburg would have to surrender very soon. We were then transferred to transport boats to take the sick back to Memphis or Cairo. The steamer "Superior" was not filled with sick as it had not been fitted up for a hospital, but the officers had put about a dozen sick men on the boat, and I was asked to go and take care of them. During all the first day the men had nothing to eat, and no protection from the weather. I went to the clerk and asked for seven mattresses to be laid inside. He made no reply. A moment later the boat landed on the opposite bank in response to a flag signal, and six men and seven women—all rebels—came on board from a gun-boat that was lying there. I had heard that the officers of many of the boats sympathized with the South, and only served the government for the money they got; and the crew of the "Superior" were of that sort. They gambled and drank wine, and one of the women lost five bales of cotton gambling.

I went to the clerk again to get the mattresses. He said I could not have them; that the men had no business on the boat. I said that I had not put them there, but had been asked to take care of them and proposed to do so. He positively refused to let me have the mattresses. I got a little of the Brown stirred up; Brown was my maiden name and they always said I was my father's girl. So I said I would have the mattresses; that the men should not lie out in the cold, damp air when there were plenty of mattresses to lay them on. He said the men were put on without his consent, and he should not put himself out for them. I told him I

should go to the end of the boat and get them. There were more than fifty stacked away there. He said I would better not, and went away. I paid a colored boy a quarter to go with me, and we soon had the boys all in the end of the boat under cover, on a good mattress, with a good pillow and well protected. Then I went to the clerk and said I had my boys well fixed and that I wanted seven cups of tea and as many pieces of toast; I had crackers of my own. All the poor boys had was hard tack and a little cold coffee in their canteens. He said he should not provide them with their board, and I told him I did not expect him to give it to them; I was willing to pay for it. He was very impudent and said I was a perfect nuisance—which I did not doubt in the least—but I had been among men just long enough to think they were not any better than other people. So I told him that I was going to have the things I needed. I had a little trouble but finally a tray was sent to me with the things. I offered to pay, but he said he would make out the whole bill at once.

The rebel people on the boat said: "Look at that old Lincolnite; it's beautiful." They took delight in flinging slurs at me. It made my blood boil, but I had no time to waste on them, and to avoid a scene I let it pass. While I was bathing the sick boys, preparing them for their meal, the women called me a "mudsill," a "Lincoln jade," a "low, contemptible Yank." As I was feeding one of the boys one of them spoke up and said: "See that mudsill straddling around among them low Yanks; the mean, contemptible thing!" I paid no atten-

were scattered over the country wherever there were soldiers. I accompanied them as far as Helena, Arkansas. It was the most desolate place I was ever in that was called a city; full of mud, darkies and soldiers.

General Steele had just come across the country from Missouri with a large army, and nearly all were sick. They had marched through swamps and drunk so much cyprus water that they were ready to lie down and die. General Washburne was in command, and hearing of my arrival he came and asked me to stay awhile, and secured board for me where he and his staff were boarding, at a Mrs. Howerton's. They were rank rebels, but we did not say "union" nor "rebel." The mud was very deep, and I secured a pair of high rubber boots and went out to look over the situation.

Every available place was filled with sick soldiers. The Methodist church, a good-sized brick building, had been arranged for hospital use and was as full as it would hold. There was a sanitary room here and the agent—a Mr. Plattenberg—sent us several loads of ticks, pillows, sheets and a large box filled with pillow cases, towels, underwear and socks. General Washburne sent into the country and got a load of straw for beds. A bath-room was improvised by hanging sheets across one corner of the room, and every man was taken there and thoroughly scrubbed after having his hair cut, and then clean clothes were put on him and he was laid on a new, clean bed. It made new men of them.

Half a dozen negroes were pressed into service, but they were mostly field hands and knew very

little about inside work and were so "shiftless" that I could not do anything with them by either coaxing or scolding, so I gave it up. After the boys were fixed up, the cob-webs were brushed off the windows and the mud on the floor was attacked. Some of the blacks were put at this work, but they were worthless, and I finally pinned up my dress and with cloth and broom was just finishing the floor when General Washburne, General Logan, General Grant and their staffs came in on a tour of inspection. I felt a little mortified to be caught in such a predicament. General Washburne came to me and said: "I told you to make the blacks do this work." I told him I could not take the time to teach them. He told me to take a club and they would work. The party all seemed pleased that there was so much improvement in the men and surroundings. The next morning, a big kettle of water was heated outside with soap in it and all the soiled clothes were boiled until there was nothing left *alive* in them. Then they were rinsed in clear water and every man had a clean suit to put on as soon as he was ready for it. You see there was something for a woman to do.

A few days after General Washburne's colored boy came and handed me an envelope without saying anything. I expected to find myself dismissed, but instead, I found a \$100 bill. There was no name but a slip of paper with the words "Reward of merit." I knew the boys, so I knew where it came from. At supper, General Washburne said: "Did you get any mail to-day?" I said: "Yes, thank you."

After four weeks of hard work, Miss Mertz, of Decatur, came. General Washburne was paying twelve dollars a week for my board; so rather than make double that expense, we got a room near the sanitary room and the general got a little sheet iron stove and we boarded ourselves. The stove was very complete in its outfit, and the government furnished us our food. We had access to the sanitary room and prepared a great many little dishes for the boys in the hospital. The general gave us the amount of our board bill for the purchase of such things as we needed for the boys, but could not get from the quartermaster nor the sanitary agent; it was all spent for the boys.

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As we were going down the fourth time we were met by a boat and informed that Grant had gone

by the Yazoo river, and that Vicksburg would have to surrender very soon. We were then transferred to transport boats to take the sick back to Memphis or Cairo. The steamer "Superior" was fitted up with sick as it had not been fitted up for a transport, but the officers had put about a dozen sick on the boat, and I was asked to go and take care of them. During all the first day the men had no blankets and no protection from the weather. I went to the clerk and asked for seven mattresses to be put on the boat. He made no reply. A moment later the boat landed on the opposite bank in response to a flag signal, and six men and seven women—all taken on board from a gun-boat that was being shelled. I had heard that the officers of many of the gun-boats sympathized with the South, and only served the government for the money they got; and the officers of the "Superior" were of that sort. They smoked and drank wine, and one of the women was a devotee of cotton gambling.

I went to the clerk again to get the mattresses. He said I could not have them; that the men had no blankets on the boat. I said that I had not put blankets on them but had been asked to take care of them and proposed to do so. He positively refused to let me have the mattresses. I got a little of the Brown matter up; Brown was my maiden name and they always said I was my father's girl. So I said I would have the mattresses; that the men should not be out in the cold, damp air when there were plenty of mattresses to lay them on. He said the men were put on without his consent, and he should not put himself out for them. I told him I

should go to the end of the boat and get them. There were more than fifty stacked away there. He said I would better not, and went away. I paid a colored boy a quarter to go with me, and we soon had the boys all in the end of the boat under cover, on a good mattress, with a good pillow and well protected. Then I went to the clerk and said I had my boys well fixed and that I wanted seven cups of tea and as many pieces of toast; I had crackers of my own. All the poor boys had was hard tack and a little cold coffee in their canteens. He said he should not provide them with their board, and I told him I did not expect him to give it to them; I was willing to pay for it. He was very impudent and said I was a perfect nuisance—which I did not doubt in the least—but I had been among men just long enough to think they were not any better than other people. So I told him that I was going to have the things I needed. I had a little trouble but finally a tray was sent to me with the things. I offered to pay, but he said he would make out the whole bill at once.

The rebel people on the boat said: "Look at that old Lincolnite; it's beautiful." They took delight in flinging slurs at me. It made my blood boil, but I had no time to waste on them, and to avoid a scene I let it pass. While I was bathing the sick boys, preparing them for their meal, the women called me a "mudsill," a "Lincoln jade," a "low, contemptible Yank." As I was feeding one of the boys one of them spoke up and said: "See that mudsill straddling around among them low Yanks; the mean, contemptible thing!" I paid no atten-

tion to her until finally a colored boy ran in front of us, and one of the women said: "I suppose you would like one of his color to be your president; but we don't recognize such people. They are plenty good enough for you." "Well," I said, "you may yet be under a president of that color; if you are give the credit to the loyal army, for we are going to whip you and we shall hang old Jeff Davis. I would walk to Washington to help hang him. Every one of your leaders was educated at the expense of the government he is now trying to destroy." I felt that I was getting angry, so I turned away and said no more, until as this one woman continued to abuse me, I turned on her and said: "If you speak to me again or call me any more names, I will pitch you in the river; no rebel shall abuse me when I am in my own country." I was not troubled with her abuse again.

One of the boys, whose home was in Champaign, Ill., was very sick, and knew he could not recover. He made me promise to see that he was taken to his home, and gave me his mother's address and twenty dollars in money to be sent to his mother. While I was taking down the items he said: "I have a brother in an Indiana battery, there are only two of us. How it will hurt my poor sick mother to know I am dead!" About eleven he died. I gave the boat carpenter a dollar to make a box to put his body in, and put his knapsack and blanket in the box with him, and had the box nailed up and taken to the lower deck. The next morning the boat landed at Hickman, a small place in Kentucky. I was fearful they would take my boy off, so I went

down and sat down on the box. Soon some darkies came and asked me to get up, as they wanted to take the dead man ashore. I told them they could not take him ashore there. In a minute the clerk came and said: "Get up, we want to take this body off here, to be buried." I looked at him and said: "No, I won't get up." He turned to the hands and said: "Take all ashore?" I said: "You touch that box and it will be the dearest box you ever lifted! I promised that dead boy that his body should go home to his mother, and you shall not prevent it. I will report you to General Strong as soon as we land." We lay there a long time for no purpose but to tire me out. The clerk tried coaxing and said the body would smell bad before we reached Cairo. I told him that if it was kept six weeks it would not stink so bad as the rebel crowd up in the cabin. He then sent me a note, saying that if I would go ashore he would return my pass and refund my board bill, because I made it so unpleasant for his passengers. I wrote at the bottom of the note. "If this boat goes to Cairo, I go too; if it sinks I sink too!" After several hours the clerk gave it up and the boat went on. We reached Cairo that night, and early the next morning I asked the men to take the box off the boat, but they "had not time," so I went to the quartermaster and he sent some soldiers to take it off. Then I got a coffin and had the body put in it and sent to his home on the Illinois Central railroad. I afterward received a great many beautiful letters from his mother.

After the sick men had been put in hospitals, I started back with a load of soldiers who were on

their way to join Grant and the others on the Yazoo behind Vicksburg. When we reached Helena, the great number of sick demanded more nurses and I stayed there a day or two before going on to Vicksburg. As we proceeded on down the river, we could see the city of Vicksburg plainly—the courthouse and churches were in plain sight. The mouth of the Yazoo was three miles from the city. It was a low, unhealthy place and the boys were constantly exposed to the rebel sharpshooters who picked them off as they lay in the trenches under the hill back of Vicksburg; and the boat was rapidly filled with wounded.

General Grant's headquarters were a short distance from the river. One day he came on the boat and asked me to go out to the tent hospital, saying that there were a great many wounded there and only men to care for them. He said if he was hurt or sick he wanted a woman to take care of him. In the morning he sent an old broken-down buggy for me, and I reached the general's tent about eleven o'clock. While we sat talking a bullet passed through the top of his tent. It startled me, but he told me not to be alarmed; it was an every day occurrence! I had met him at Bird's Point and at Helena, and was quite well acquainted with him. He asked me to dine with him and I did so. He could eat as plain and poor food as any man in the army. After dinner he went with me to the hospital. It was a horrid place, not fit for well men, and as full as it could hold.

A few days afterward an assault was made up the hill back of the city, and there was a terrible

battle in which Colonel Nevis was killed. He was a noble officer and a model man. I was on the boat when he went with his men down the river to join Grant. Several officers were playing cards and invited him to join them. He said: "No, thank you gentlemen. When I was ready to enlist my mother put her arms around my neck and asked me to promise not to play a game of cards nor drink a drop of spirits, nor utter an oath except the oath of allegiance to my country. I have not broken that promise." His body was sent to his mother, he was her only son.

It was impossible to care for all the wounded at the tents, and several boat loads were sent North; those who remained suffered for want of proper supplies, and were greatly worried by the vicious mosquitoes, until they could not rest. I found it impossible for me to stay there, and proposed to the doctors that the sickest be transferred to the boats at the river, and taken North as fast as possible—which was done. We left the convalescents to take the tent hospital; loaded four boats, and I went with them to Memphis; and then returned to the Yazoo.

The gun-boats were busy at the mouth of the Yazoo, pounding away at Vicksburg. It took a long time to starve the rebels; but they were cut off from supplies, and Grant knew that they could not live on nothing; so he said little, but kept busy. A little tug boat used to go down from the camp to the mouth of the river every night to see the firing from the gun-boats. Captain Club and his wife invited me to go, and for twenty-six nights we went down, and the tug would tie up to one of the gun-boats. When the

they could not get them any other way. I went to the sanitary rooms and found that the doctors were drawing, daily, regular quantities. I went in where the men were eating, and found that they were swindled out of nearly everything that they should have had. For their dinner they had a little poor bean soup—about six parts water to two beans—a little bread without butter, and not a thing else. I said nothing but went to the general's office, and had a talk with him, and he promised to help me trap them. The next day at the dinner hour we went first to the kitchen where they were dishing up the soup. The general said that *good* bean soup was very good for wood choppers, but not very good for sick men; he then tasted it, and said *that* soup was not fit for a dog, and inquired who issued the rations. It is the duty of the orderly to issue rations, but in some cases the quartermaster does the work, with the aid of some others detailed for the work; but here it was left to the doctor and his assistant. We went through the wards and found some who were too sick to eat the poor, tasteless soup, eating dry crackers. The general had the doctor and his assistant dismissed in disgrace, and reduced to the ranks two others who were concerned in the shameful business. It was learned that they had been selling supplies to the citizens, on the sly. If all the rascally things had been found out, the people of the North would have given up trying to do for the boys; but in most cases the supplies were honestly handled, and always appreciated.

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I heard of a woman who had several cows, but was being supported by the government. She sold her milk for a dollar a gallon. General Strong, who was then in command, told me to get five gallons a day, for hospital use. The woman said I could have it, but she did wish she could put poison in it. I reported to headquarters, and the result was all her cows were confiscated. I then had all the milk I wanted.

In a skirmish out back of the town, a number of prisoners were taken and a good many wounded men were brought in. Among the wounded prisoners was the most beautiful boy I had ever seen—black, wavy hair, black eyes, and white, even teeth. He was very badly wounded and had only a short time to live. I did for him just the same as for my own boy, and he seemed to know that he was being well cared for. He often said: "You uns is real good to we uns. I did not want to fight you uns, but they made me. Mamma does not know where I am." He had an old watch that seemed worthless, which he gave me. I have it yet, and shall have occasion to mention it again as it proved to be of value to me. The boy died after four days of terri-

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After four weeks of hard work, Miss Mertz, of Decatur, came. General Washburne was paying twelve dollars a week for my board; so rather than make double that expense, we got a room near the sanitary room and the general got a little sheet iron stove and we boarded ourselves. The stove was very complete in its outfit, and the government furnished us our food. We had access to the sanitary room and prepared a great many little dishes for the boys in the hospital. The general gave us the amount of our board bill for the purchase of such things as we needed for the boys, but could not get from the quartermaster nor the sanitary agent; it was all spent for the boys.

After everything was running smoothly, I left Miss Mertz in charge and went to the field to see how the boys in camp were getting along. There had been no fighting and there were but few wounded; but there were many sick who had come in from Steele's army, worn out with hard marching and exposure. Some of them had the scurvy so bad that their teeth were ready to drop out. There was a sanitary boat at the river; the quartermaster furnished a team and it was loaded with potatoes, onions, cabbage and a barrel of pickles, all of which were distributed among the boys at the different camps. Here I met Colonel Abercrombie—of the Eleventh Iowa, if I am not mistaken—a fine specimen of a soldier. He said I had been the means of saving hundreds of his men. I claimed no credit, but I did just what I could as there was opportunity.

In a few weeks the rain set in and continued until Helena was a vast river, and we were obliged

to go about in small boats all over the place. Even the mules would sink out of sight in many places. We had to move our quarters and found a very large house back on a hill, suitable for a hospital and a good dry place for a convalescents' camp such as there must be with every brigade for those who are too sick to do duty but not sick enough to be in the hospital; they cannot endure the chilly dampness of the rainy winter of the South. We heard that Captain Colwell and his Fifth Cavalry were a few miles below us, and as I had known some of his men before the war, Miss Mertz and I procured ponies and rode down to his camp. He had a very nice place and not many sick. We visited his camp several times. Captain Colwell is a near neighbor of mine at the present time.

Up to this time I had written hundreds of letters for the boys, and they had given watches, money and other things to me to be sent to friends after they were gone. Miss Mertz was of great help; she had been educated on the continent, and could write and speak several languages fluently. The boys looked to her as their private secretary, when she had time. She, like myself, held no commission and drew no pay.

One day there walked in on us an elderly lady with quite an orderly appearance. She said: "Are you appointed to this work?" Miss Mertz said: "I am not." She then looked at me and asked the same question. I said: "No, I volunteer my services. I did not come for pay, and I will accept no commission from any one." She then said: "I am Miss Dix." "Oh!" said I; "You are the lady who

appointed Mrs. Yates to fill all the responsible positions in the armies of the West. When the doctors don't want me they will say so, and I will go, but you can't give me a commission. I am doing the work my husband wished me to do when he died." She seemed pleased with the way the hospital was managed. She said a Miss Yateman, of St. Louis, could give me an appointment; but I told her that when any one in authority at the hospital was tired of me, I would vacate. She was talking with a doctor and he told her they had tried the commissioned nurses and did not like them, and that they could not get along without me.

During this time Grant was digging a canal to get below Vicksburg, and we had a great many sick sent to us. There were always more sick than wounded, except just after a battle; but now the hospitals were full and crowded with men who were sick with a great many diseases. Chronic diarrhoea became epidemic and baffled the skill of the best physicians. Then chills and fever set in, and left the men weak and shaky. We lost a great many.

It was sad, after they had given one messages to mother or wife, then to go into the ward next morning and find the cot vacant, and the dead boy in the dead-house. We did not have much to cheer us and many things to make us gloomy. But we always tried to put on a smile and speak a good word to the boys.

About this time I was sent back to Fort Donelson to bring in a load of sick on the Emma Duncan. Doctor M. C. Granger was in charge and we had a very sick load. I think I never worked harder in

my life. We left the men in St. Louis, although by this time the hospitals were so full that it seemed impossible to get a place to lay them down.

We had on board a lieutenant of an Ohio regiment, very badly wounded. He was a picture to look at; the most lovely hair and eyes, and a perfect form. He was a college student from Cincinnati. When the boat was unloaded he could not be taken into the hospital, as he was an officer, and had to go in an officers' hospital; but no such place could be found. A place was finally found in a Sisters' hospital, at seven dollars a week in advance. He gave me fifty dollars, and after paying for the first week the balance of the money was put in one of his stockings which was then drawn on his foot. A sister was in the room when this was done. He had also a fine suit of military clothes, boots and valise—all in his room. He wanted to have me stay as long as possible, and asked for a Presbyterian minister, as he was the son of a minister, and had always been a religious boy, and now wanted to be baptized. When the minister came we had quite a service, and I stayed till nearly dark. The next morning his father came in response to a telegram, but his boy did not recognize him and died about ten o'clock. I told the father about his clothes, valise and money; everything had been removed, and not a thing would they give up. The money had disappeared. The father said they might keep the money, but his boy's clothes and sword he must have. When the Sister Superior found she had a man to deal with she came to time, and the clothes and money were produced.

I told the father that I had paid them seven dollars in advance, but he gave them ten dollars more.

Then he got a lovely casket and took his boy home. After that I always had a rather hard feeling about the Sisters, although they were good nurses and the boys loved them very much.

Soon after I got permission to go home for two weeks to rest, as I was getting worn out. The doctors said they could not get along more than two weeks without me. I took the steamer "Uncle Sam" for Cairo, and there boarded the Illinois Central railroad train; and when I reached Carbondale a man got on the train, and said, as he took my hand: "I should not have this hand now if it had not been for you." It was that Hiram Thouse whom I had left in Mound City. He is now a prosperous physician in Davenport, Iowa. He sent me his photograph and an invitation to his wedding a few years ago. If I saved one man's arm, I am paid for all my work.

CHAPTER V.

AT LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS.

There was so great a need of woman's work at every place where there were soldiers that I only stayed at home about two weeks.

On the way back I stopped at Memphis, where there was a soldiers' home full of men, and several large hospitals. The sanitary arrangements were splendid; the commission had supplied them with everything that was needed for the comfort of the boys.

There was great need of more help down the river, but the doctors said I must go to Little Rock, Ark.

At Little Rock I met and roomed with Mrs. Governor Harvey, of Wisconsin, whose husband was drowned at Savannah. She was trying to secure the discharge of some Wisconsin boys who were unfit for service and would never be able to do duty again; and she succeeded in getting several furloughed.

The hospitals were overcrowded, and the sanitary condition of the place very bad. There were many men here who would never be fit for service again, and the doctors knew it; but they were afraid of discharging too many, lest they should be criticised. I am sure that many who were carried to the dead house would have been living yet if they could have gone home where they would have had better care.

The doctors had human hearts, but there was too much red tape, and it was hard to reach the generals, and secure their consent to anything. But discharge papers were finally secured for seven of the boys who were sent home and I went to the river with them, and paid their transportation and sent them on.

One of the doctors, with his assistant, had gone in for making money. They opened a sutler's tent, and then drew the sanitary supplies on orders, and sold them to the boys. All the supplies the sick got they had to buy. The boys knew that the women of the North were sending supplies, but they were told that they did not get to Little Rock. I saw a soldier pay twenty cents for a pound of crackers and forty cents for a can of tomatoes. I asked why he had to buy these things, and he said

they could not get them any other way. I went to the sanitary rooms and found that the doctors were drawing, daily, regular quantities. I went in where the men were eating, and found that they were swindled out of nearly everything that they should have had. For their dinner they had a little poor bean soup—about six parts water to two beans—a little bread without butter, and not a thing else. I said nothing but went to the general's office, and had a talk with him, and he promised to help me trap them. The next day at the dinner hour we went first to the kitchen where they were dishing up the soup. The general said that *good* bean soup was very good for wood choppers, but not very good for sick men; he then tasted it, and said *that* soup was not fit for a dog, and inquired who issued the rations. It is the duty of the orderly to issue rations, but in some cases the quartermaster does the work, with the aid of some others detailed for the work; but here it was left to the doctor and his assistant. We went through the wards and found some who were too sick to eat the poor, tasteless soup, eating dry crackers. The general had the doctor and his assistant dismissed in disgrace, and reduced to the ranks two others who were concerned in the shameful business. It was learned that they had been selling supplies to the citizens, on the sly. If all the rascally things had been found out, the people of the North would have given up trying to do for the boys; but in most cases the supplies were honestly handled, and always appreciated.

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After a little we went the third time down to the famous canal, which had not been a success and was now about to be abandoned. This was in early spring and the scenery was beautiful; trees were already green, orchards were in full bloom, and wheat well toward heading; everything around was in contrast to the sickness and horror of the war.

As we were going down the fourth time we were met by a boat and informed that Grant had gone

around by the Yazoo river, and that Vicksburg would have to surrender very soon. We were then transferred to transport boats to take the sick back to Memphis or Cairo. The steamer "Superior" was not filled with sick as it had not been fitted up for a hospital, but the officers had put about a dozen sick men on the boat, and I was asked to go and take care of them. During all the first day the men had nothing to eat, and no protection from the weather. I went to the clerk and asked for seven mattresses to be laid inside. He made no reply. A moment later the boat landed on the opposite bank in response to a flag signal, and six men and seven women—all rebels—came on board from a gun-boat that was lying there. I had heard that the officers of many of the boats sympathized with the South, and only served the government for the money they got; and the crew of the "Superior" were of that sort. They gambled and drank wine, and one of the women lost five bales of cotton gambling.

I went to the clerk again to get the mattresses. He said I could not have them; that the men had no business on the boat. I said that I had not put them there, but had been asked to take care of them and proposed to do so. He positively refused to let me have the mattresses. I got a little of the Brown stirred up; Brown was my maiden name and they always said I was my father's girl. So I said I would have the mattresses; that the men should not lie out in the cold, damp air when there were plenty of mattresses to lay them on. He said the men were put on without his consent, and he should not put himself out for them. I told him I

should go to the end of the boat and get them. There were more than fifty stacked away there. He said I would better not, and went away. I paid a colored boy a quarter to go with me, and we soon had the boys all in the end of the boat under cover, on a good mattress, with a good pillow and well protected. Then I went to the clerk and said I had my boys well fixed and that I wanted seven cups of tea and as many pieces of toast; I had crackers of my own. All the poor boys had was hard tack and a little cold coffee in their canteens. He said he should not provide them with their board, and I told him I did not expect him to give it to them; I was willing to pay for it. He was very impudent and said I was a perfect nuisance—which I did not doubt in the least—but I had been among men just long enough to think they were not any better than other people. So I told him that I was going to have the things I needed. I had a little trouble but finally a tray was sent to me with the things. I offered to pay, but he said he would make out the whole bill at once.

The rebel people on the boat said: "Look at that old Lincolnite; it's beautiful." They took delight in flinging slurs at me. It made my blood boil, but I had no time to waste on them, and to avoid a scene I let it pass. While I was bathing the sick boys, preparing them for their meal, the women called me a "mudsill," a "Lincoln jade," a "low, contemptible Yank." As I was feeding one of the boys one of them spoke up and said: "See that mudsill straddling around among them low Yanks; the mean, contemptible thing!" I paid no atten-

tion to her until finally a colored boy ran in front of us, and one of the women said: "I suppose you would like one of his color to be your president; but we don't recognize such people. They are plenty good enough for you." "Well," I said, "you may yet be under a president of that color; if you are give the credit to the loyal army, for we are going to whip you and we shall hang old Jeff Davis. I would walk to Washington to help hang him. Every one of your leaders was educated at the expense of the government he is now trying to destroy." I felt that I was getting angry, so I turned away and said no more, until as this one woman continued to abuse me, I turned on her and said: "If you speak to me again or call me any more names, I will pitch you in the river; no rebel shall abuse me when I am in my own country." I was not troubled with her abuse again.

One of the boys, whose home was in Champaign, Ill., was very sick, and knew he could not recover. He made me promise to see that he was taken to his home, and gave me his mother's address and twenty dollars in money to be sent to his mother. While I was taking down the items he said: "I have a brother in an Indiana battery, there are only two of us. How it will hurt my poor sick mother to know I am dead!" About eleven he died. I gave the boat carpenter a dollar to make a box to put his body in, and put his knapsack and blanket in the box with him, and had the box nailed up and taken to the lower deck. The next morning the boat landed at Hickman, a small place in Kentucky. I was fearful they would take my boy off, so I went

down and sat down on the box. Soon some darkies came and asked me to get up, as they wanted to take the dead man ashore. I told them they could not take him ashore there. In a minute the clerk came and said: "Get up, we want to take this body off here, to be buried." I looked at him and said: "No, I won't get up." He turned to the hands and said: "Take all ashore?" I said: "You touch that box and it will be the dearest box you ever lifted! I promised that dead boy that his body should go home to his mother, and you shall not prevent it. I will report you to General Strong as soon as we land." We lay there a long time for no purpose but to tire me out. The clerk tried coaxing and said the body would smell bad before we reached Cairo. I told him that if it was kept six weeks it would not stink so bad as the rebel crowd up in the cabin. He then sent me a note, saying that if I would go ashore he would return my pass and refund my board bill, because I made it so unpleasant for his passengers. I wrote at the bottom of the note. "If this boat goes to Cairo, I go too; if it sinks I sink too!" After several hours the clerk gave it up and the boat went on. We reached Cairo that night, and early the next morning I asked the men to take the box off the boat, but they "had not time," so I went to the quartermaster and he sent some soldiers to take it off. Then I got a coffin and had the body put in it and sent to his home on the Illinois Central railroad. I afterward received a great many beautiful letters from his mother.

After the sick men had been put in hospitals, I started back with a load of soldiers who were on

their way to join Grant and the others on the Yazoo behind Vicksburg. When we reached Helena, the great number of sick demanded more nurses and I stayed there a day or two before going on to Vicksburg. As we proceeded on down the river, we could see the city of Vicksburg plainly—the courthouse and churches were in plain sight. The mouth of the Yazoo was three miles from the city. It was a low, unhealthful place and the boys were constantly exposed to the rebel sharpshooters who picked them off as they lay in the trenches under the hill back of Vicksburg; and the boat was rapidly filled with wounded.

General Grant's headquarters were a short distance from the river. One day he came on the boat and asked me to go out to the tent hospital, saying that there were a great many wounded there and only men to care for them. He said if he was hurt or sick he wanted a woman to take care of him. In the morning he sent an old broken-down buggy for me, and I reached the general's tent about eleven o'clock. While we sat talking a bullet passed through the top of his tent. It startled me, but he told me not to be alarmed; it was an every day occurrence! I had met him at Bird's Point and at Helena, and was quite well acquainted with him. He asked me to dine with him and I did so. He could eat as plain and poor food as any man in the army. After dinner he went with me to the hospital. It was a horrid place, not fit for well men, and as full as it could hold.

A few days afterward an assault was made up the hill back of the city, and there was a terrible

battle in which Colonel Nevis was killed. He was a noble officer and a model man. I was on the boat when he went with his men down the river to join Grant. Several officers were playing cards and invited him to join them. He said: "No, thank you gentlemen. When I was ready to enlist my mother put her arms around my neck and asked me to promise not to play a game of cards nor drink a drop of spirits, nor utter an oath except the oath of allegiance to my country. I have not broken that promise." His body was sent to his mother, he was her only son.

It was impossible to care for all the wounded at the tents, and several boat loads were sent North; those who remained suffered for want of proper supplies, and were greatly worried by the vicious mosquitoes, until they could not rest. I found it impossible for me to stay there, and proposed to the doctors that the sickest be transferred to the boats at the river, and taken North as fast as possible—which was done. We left the convalescents to take the tent hospital; loaded four boats, and I went with them to Memphis; and then returned to the Yazoo.

The gun-boats were busy at the mouth of the Yazoo, pounding away at Vicksburg. It took a long time to starve the rebels; but they were cut off from supplies, and Grant knew that they could not live on nothing; so he said little, but kept busy. A little tug boat used to go down from the camp to the mouth of the river every night to see the firing from the gun-boats. Captain Club and his wife invited me to go, and for twenty-six nights we went down, and the tug would tie up to one of the gun-boats. When the

guns were fired the little tug would be tossed about like a cork.

Every day the wounded were brought in, and I was kept busy caring for them and writing letters for them. One day when Grant was visiting the hospital, as he saw me writing for one of the boys, he came to me and said he wished I would do his writing, but I told him I would rather write for the boys; he was able to do his own.

For forty days the gun-boats kept up the bombardment of Vicksburg. During that time their sharpshooters picked off our boys in the trenches so fast that sometimes ten a day would be brought in, and it became necessary to have as many boats as possible to receive the sick and wounded; and I was on a boat most of the time. Grant and Sherman came to the boat almost daily. Sherman was often morose, and would speak to one like a bear; but he could be very pleasant, and he always talked more than Grant did. As I was on the quartermaster's boat I saw many of the officers. Several ladies came to see their husbands, but none cared to assist in the care of the sick, and so they were only in the way.

CHAPTER VI.

SURRENDER OF VICKSBURG.

Thus the time passed till the third of July, 1863, when Vicksburg surrendered to Grant, and the Union troops entered the city on the Fourth.

The gallant John A. Logan with his Third Division was given the honor of marching in at the head of

the column. As Logan advanced with the Forty-fifth Illinois, he said: "You are to march in as a reward for your gallantry. Your flag, though tattered, is the first to be thrown to the breeze on the court-house."

We had gone around to the wharf, and could hear the boys shouting as the old flag was thrown to the breeze. Even the sick boys on the boat shouted; and I felt very much like it; and I believe the rebels themselves wanted to shout, but did not dare.

I went ashore and climbed the hill into the city, and as I walked about and saw how the people had lived in underground rooms to protect themselves from the shells, I thought that they were after all sincere in their loyalty to their part of the country, although it was in rebellion.

In the hospitals there was a sad state of things; the men looked famished and forsaken. They had nothing to eat except a few sweet potatoes and a little corn meal; no meat, no salt, no sugar—and no care; in fact nothing that the sick needed. None of the people were any better off. A lady came to me and wanted to exchange six sweet potatoes for two Irish potatoes. She said they had lived on sweet potatoes so long they could not eat them. They begged for some good coffee, saying they had not smelt it for a long time. I was not able to do anything for them, but told them as soon as we got regulated, I would try to do something for their sick.

While I was viewing the city the boats were being loaded with prisoners. Among those brought

on the boats where I was there was a fine-looking officer from Alabama, dressed in elegant military gray, and wearing epaulets denoting high rank. As I passed him he seemed to be reading a paper, but was really looking at me. Finally he came to me and said he believed he had seen me before, and asked me if my name was Mary and if I had lived in Rochester. I said yes, but I did not remember him. Then he asked if I ever knew a young man named Delplain Lambert. I answered: "Yes, but you are not he, for he was a West Point graduate; he could not be a rebel." He stood a moment and then stepped forward and gave me his hand and said: "Yes, I am the man, and as you say and of course believe, a traitor; but I believed we were right and you were wrong. But now that victory has crowned the Union armies I am glad that we can go home." He asked me about his old father and mother, and said he did not want them to know about him. He had not heard from home since the war began, and knew it would grieve his father to know that he had taken up arms against his country. He had a wife and three children in the South. He was sent to Put-in-bay island, on Lake Erie, where we had a camp of captured Confederate officers. His father died soon after, but after the war he took his mother to his Southern home, where she died in 1870.

While the boats were loading with wounded to go up the river, there was one boy who had his furlough and transportation, but when he applied for passage the captain refused, as he had too many, already. The poor boy sank down and called out to

me as I stood on the boat: "Take me, too! Let me go home to die!" I ran down the plank to him, and in some way I got him on the boat. How it was done is told in the following verses:

Grandmother Newcomb of Illinois,
Known to hosts of the army boys
For numberless deeds of kindness done;
Widowed at bloody Donelson,
She took far more than her husband's place
In the conquering march of the loyal blue,
In deeds of mercy and motherly grace,
To the blue coats first—but the gray coats too.

Grandmother Newcomb of Effingham,
That July day, when the great boats swam
At the foot of Vicksburg's yellow bluff;
When the Stars and Bars had fluttered low,
And the Stars and Stripes were fluttering high,
And for one day there was glory enough;
Grandmother Newcomb, out of the glow
Of jubilant triumph, heard the cry
Of one of her wounded soldier boys:—
"Take me back to my Illinois;
Take me back to my home to die!"

Onward swinging, the huge boats prow
Slowly swinging, a moment more
Had left the agonized boy ashore
In all the frenzy of wild despair,
To die in this far, hot land of sands;
And his cool, green prairies even now
Stretching their myriad healing hands
To gather and shelter and heal him there.

"No soldier can come aboard this boat!"
Hoarsely its sullen captain said,
In a growl from the depths of his bearded throat,
With an angry shake of his vicious head.
"Dying or living, you stay ashore,
We have one load, and we'll take no more!"
And at his command the long stage plank
Slowly rose from the sandy bank,
And, rending the air with a pitiful moan,
The sick man sank to the ground, like a stone.

How she did it nobody knew,
And nobody knew it less than she.
But right in the face of the wondering crew,
Right in the teeth of the angry mate,

As the plank came up, she walked elate,
 Bearing the wounded boy somehow,
 In the burst of indignant ecstasy,
 O'er swinging plank, and onto the bow,
 Into the midst of the cheering crew.
 "There!" said she, as she laid him down,
 And facing the mate with a threatening frown,
 "You throw him out, and you throw me too!"

Cheer after cheer went up from the bank ;
 Cheers from the boats—crew after crew—
 As the great boat, slowly hauling its plank,
 Northward into the channel drew.
 And happy visions of prairie bright,
 Happy visions for one of their boys,
 Taking his hopeful homeward flight,
 Under the more than motherly care
 Of the Dorian matron, standing there—
 Grandmother Newcomb of Illinois.

I had forgotten the circumstance till the verses were given me. The boy got well and is a lawyer in Quincy, Ill.; but he often said if he had been left in that sultry place, he never would have recovered. The rebel prisoners did not seem to care much about going home, for they got better fed and better cared for; some of them were very young and did not know what they were fighting for; and they were so near starvation they could not have stood it much longer and were glad they were taken.

The sick prisoners we left in Cairo, the well ones were taken to Chicago. They were well-treated and had plenty to eat. Among the wounded Union boys was one from Wisconsin, who had been shot in the hand and suffered terribly. Gangrene set in and the hand had to be amputated. He asked me to write to his mother. The boys always said "mother" if the mother was living. As I wrote to his mother—a Mrs. Davidson—he said: "Tell her to be good to Ollie." I did not need to ask him

who Ollie was. He was very much depressed and I tried to cheer him up. After directing the letter I left it with him to be put in the mail bag. He turned his face to the wall, and when I returned half an hour later, he seemed so quiet that I leaned over to see if he was asleep. He was dead. I took a plain gold ring from his hand to be sent to his mother and then got the letter and added a statement of his death. I received several letters from his parents. He and Ollie were to have been married as soon as the war was over; and she grieved her life away after his death.

The Union sick were left in Memphis where there was plenty of room and good sanitary supplies. I returned to Vicksburg where the hospitals were more than full, and was at once sent down the river where there were a great many sick to be cared for.

At Natchez we loaded with the sickest men I ever saw. While there I took a walk along the bank of the river and came to a place where several of the boys had been buried. Probably they had been properly buried, but the heavy rains had washed away the soil until several were more or less exposed. It was not a suitable place for burial, for the frequent changes in the channel of the river made it likely that they would be washed away—as many were at different points, and carried to the ocean.

At Vicksburg we had taken the house previously occupied by Pemberton. It was a fine, large house, with a large greenhouse and trellises covered with vines and lovely grounds full of beautiful flowers and magnificent trees. But everything about the

place, inside and outside, had been completely riddled and shattered by the shot from the gunboats. However, we found it a very convenient place for a hospital. There were two or three hundred men in the house and in the convalescent camp. As fast as they were able they were sent North and their places filled by others who were constantly coming in from the Yazoo and from down the river, some of them from New Orleans where Banks had arrived. We had five doctors at Vicksburg and all were kept busy.

As I had not lost over three weeks for nearly three years of hard work, I felt the need of rest, and asked for a furlough. It made the doctors laugh, for they knew that as I was not under military discipline, I could go whenever I chose. I asked General Grant for transportation to Cincinnati, and he said he would give it if I would promise to come back; if not, he thought they would better keep me. I promised to return in a month, so my papers were all made out and I started eastward. General Burnside was in command at Cincinnati and gave me a warm reception, and provided me with regular coupon tickets to New York, with a letter to Dr. McDougall. I called on the old hero. He knew me at once, having been medical director at Corinth when I was there. He gave me a pass to visit his hospital down the river, one of the finest in the country. His flowing white locks gave him a venerable look, but his eye had not lost its lustre. He gave me transportation to Washington. I had been there before the war, and wanted to see if it had changed.

Arriving at Washington I retired for the night, and early next morning I started out to see the sights. I walked down Lafayette avenue till I reached the Capitol. As I approached the building and was mounting the steps I saw a man sitting on the porch, apparently reading a paper. When he saw me he arose and came to me with extended hand, saying: "I think you are from Illinois." He gave me a chair on the porch, as it was very warm inside; and we talked for an hour. He was pleased to know that I had come from Grant, and said the ladies of the North were doing a noble work. We spoke of the days when he and Douglas had stumped the State of Illinois together. When I told him that I had visited Dr. McDougal's hospital, and wished to visit those in Washington, he took my address and the next morning sent a carriage to take me to the different ones. I spent three days in the hospitals; there was plenty of room, well arranged, and with plenty of supplies. They were full, although a great many sick and wounded had been sent out through the Northern States to their homes or to hospitals. I thought of early days in the West, at Pittsburg Landing and even at Cairo in 1862, when we had nothing to do with.

Mr. Lincoln also sent me to the Soldiers' Home, where he was himself then staying, Mrs. Lincoln being at the White Mountains. The Soldiers' Home was about two miles from the city—a beautiful place, almost a paradise for the living as well as a resting-place for the dead. Every one of the thousands of graves there is marked by a marble slab bearing the name of the soldier, with the com-

pany, regiment and State, when known. The buildings are of marble and stone, and finished in fine hardwood inside. The officers quarters are elegant. Seventeen years after the war was over I was told of a young lady, still beautiful, who, loyal to the first love of earlier days, went every year more than a thousand miles to decorate the beautiful monument erected by herself in memory of a lover who had fallen at the battle of Gettysburg—a private in a Baltimore regiment. The inscription on the monument was: "In memory of my beloved till death." My brother, who was in charge of the Soldiers' Home, told me that she came every year, and spent hours at his grave.

After spending a week in Washington, and visiting the White House and other Government buildings, I started on my return. I visited my aged father and mother in Rochester—long since gone to their reward—stopped in Toledo a few days; spent a few days with my daughter in Dayton; and within a month from the time I left Vicksburg, I was on my way back.

At Cincinnati I took the "Belle Memphis" for Vicksburg. There had been a great change; new ward masters; nearly all the help in the hospitals were men who had been sent in from the field, unable to do duty. They did the best they could, but they knew nothing about sickness nor about the preparation of food. Most of the boys I had left there had been sent away, but those who remained gave me a grand reception; they said I could not go away again.

One of the first things they said was that they had a preacher, and Sabbath services. A Mr. Eberhart

had been appointed, who, with his wife, did a great deal of good among the boys. They all enjoyed the Sabbath services; the stronger ones went into the ward where the sickest ones were. The singing was very grand, some of the men had very fine voices. Major Geo. T. French, one of the doctors in charge, was a very earnest Christian man, and did much to encourage the chaplain in his work.

The hospital was filled to overflowing. It required no little work to get the men ready to go North. They must have a bath; their hair cut; all the clothing made clean; then they were put in an ambulance and taken to the river and put on the boat. Usually this was done once in two weeks. The beds were always filled as soon as vacated, so we seldom had a vacant bed. It was my business to give out all the linen, and keep an exact account of every piece; to see that all food was properly prepared, and that the men were prepared to be sent off. Sometimes I went to the convalescent quarters and helped the cooks prepare special dishes for the boys.

I heard that the Eleventh Illinois was camped about two miles back on a bluff not far from the Yazoo river; and I took the opportunity to visit them. I took a large lump of ice, a bucket of lemons, a lot of oranges and some sugar, and started out over the worst roads—over almost impassable hills, down through gullies and low, marshy places. At last we reached the camp. I had not seen the boys for a long time, since they left Helena on the transports to go to the Yazoo. They gathered around me and almost lifted me from the wagon. I took the things I had brought out to the field hospital where

there were several sick. Wade Mathews was there, not sick, but visiting some of the boys. He remained in the army till the close of the war and was mustered out, and is now a druggist in Salem, Oregon. I stayed to tea with the boys and made a bucket of lemonade and sliced some oranges, and they enjoyed them very much.

Just at this time a Miss Guest, of Cincinnati, was sent to me. She was a lovely woman who had been a teacher in a female college, but gave up that position to work for the soldiers. She was a great help to me and very pleasant company; but she was soon sent to Natchez to a soldiers' home.

CHAPTER VII.

We were getting loads of sick men from New Orleans. Banks had taken possession of the city and was sending out of it all the sick who could be moved.

I was asked to go to New Orleans and care for a load on the way up, and took the opportunity to visit the city.

We went down on the "H. D. Newcomb," a lovely boat, not fitted up as a hospital, as we had no sick going down; only a regiment of well men returning to their brigades. The trip was a very pleasant one; we passed large, fine plantations with fine houses and beautiful surroundings—all left to the mercy of the armies. But our boys were not disposed to molest anything. We did not travel at night, for fear of the bushwhackers.

At Baton Rouge the Eleventh Illinois had been stationed to protect the boats as they passed; some of the boys saw me and came on board while the boat stopped. We reached New Orleans September 3d, and I was not allowed to land until I had taken the oath that I was loyal, would not in any way help the disloyal States, and a lot of other tomfoolery.

I was disappointed in New Orleans, for I had always heard that it was a lovely place. It was much cleaner than before Banks arrived. There were many pretty places and some beautiful streets, Canal street being the prettiest. There were some fine parks and noble statuary, especially Webster's statue. The cemeteries were different from those elsewhere; the dead were not buried, as the ground is so low a grave would fill with water at once, but piled up in tiers several stories high. The driveway to Lake Ponchartrain is made of rolled shells and was as white as salt.

As soon as I was a little rested I went to the hospitals. There were quite a number here and all were full. Miss Mertz was here and had been here quite a time. I was kept busy writing for the boys, some of whom had not been able to write since they had been in the hospital. It rained every day, but the walks were of sand and the water drained off very quickly.

As soon as a boat load was ready to go up the river I was glad to get away. So I accompanied the boys to St. Louis and then returned to Vicksburg, but only to be sent back to New Orleans repeatedly, until I had made seven trips.

Before the war I had an uncle named DeLack, who lived in Vicksburg and afterward went to New Orleans and built a college called Lack college. He had died there, a bachelor, some years before my visit. The college building was now used by the Government for a hospital, and the owner had gone to Havanna to get away from the war and the Northern "mudsills." So I got no bonanza out of the property, as I might have done at another time.

The second load was taken to Memphis. After the last load was started, the boat stopped at Bayou Sara, and General Sigel and his staff came aboard. He was not a large man, but fine-looking, with a frank, open countenance, which made it easy to understand the frequent expression by his men: "I fights mit Sigel." The boat was not much crowded, and when Sigel and his men came some one brought a wretched, sick fellow and laid him on the bow, exposed to the wind, and it seemed that a storm was approaching. I did not see him until late, when one of the officers called my attention to him. I went to him and found him in a terrible condition; his clothes were too large and so filthy one could not approach him; so weak he could hardly speak and he had not tasted food that day. He was only fourteen, and his mother would not let him enter the rebel service, but a captain hired him to wait on him, and when the boy became sick he was left on the ground in the hot sun. I had him thoroughly washed, his old clothes thrown into the river and his hair cut close; then he was dressed in clothes given me by the officers on the boat and put in a clean bed, which I secured from the captain with some

difficulty, after telling him I should give up my own berth if I could not get any other. The boy was very grateful, and the next morning he put his arms around my neck and kissed me, saying that he would have died but for me. He improved very fast, but when we reached Natchez none of the hospitals would receive him because he was not a soldier nor a prisoner. But Rev. Dr. Brown and his wife, of the soldiers' home, said they would care for him. I have had several letters from him. He lives in North Carolina and is in the turpentine business.

I was now in my fourth year of service; and when theseventh load from New Orleans was landed in Cairo I thought I would go back to Vicksburg and rest. There were several sick men on the boat which I took from Cairo, and they were having very little care, and were without provisions or money. I had with me the watch given me by a rebel prisoner, and asked one of the captains to arrange to sell it for the benefit of these sick men. A rebel woman who was on the boat wanted the watch and offered me ten dollars for it, but the officer put it up to be raffled off at twenty-five cents a piece. It was drawn by a lieutenant who returned it to me with twenty dollars, saying that it would be worth more to me than to him. The woman was angry that I had not let her have it, and began to abuse me; but I presently went to her and told her that I would not be abused by any rebel, even if she was a woman, and that if she said another word I would throw her overboard. That quieted her.

After these sick boys had been disposed of in Helena, I took a boat back to Vicksburg, intending

to go North for a good long rest, but the doctors thought I ought to stay till cold weather, when the boys would be in better health.

As it was then near Thanksgiving, I began to arrange for a good dinner for the boys. The general gave me a fund sufficient for all I needed to buy. The boys turned in to help me, and cleaned and trimmed the dining-room and some helped to seed the raisins. I sent invitations to the Eleventh Illinois, and to a number of others. Among those present were: Lieutenant W. S. Johnson, a physician now at Hyde Park, Ill.; Thomas Griffith, at present chaplain of the penitentiary at Chester, Ill.; Dr. C. Goodbrake, surgeon-in-charge of Second Division of the army of the Mississippi, now a resident of Clinton, Ill.; Alexander Long, of the Twentieth Iowa, since dead, and Wade Mathews. Five surgeons, two lieutenants and their wives were present from other regiments. To say we had a good time would only give a faint idea of how the boys enjoyed themselves. One of the invited guests sent a letter to a Western paper, which was put in my hands to read the first time five years after, when the war had closed.

There were many pleasant occasions like this, and I always tried to keep the most cheerful side of things before the sick boys; but we could not escape the dark side. One night the ward-master called me up at about twelve, to go to some boys in ward three. There were three whose deaths were constantly expected. One lived in Marquette, Mich.; one in Kankakee, Ill., and the other in New Albany, Ind. They wanted to have me write to their homes and

send their money, watches and knapsacks. I tried to make them think they would be better, but they said they could not live any longer. The chaplain and his wife, and Dr. French were called, and all three of the men were baptized and received the sacrament. It was a very solemn service, at midnight, with the sick all about us. Mr. and Mrs. Eberhart sang one verse of "Shall we Gather at the River," at the close. The next morning one was dead, and the others died in a day or two.

Dr. Goodbrake called frequently, and always had a good story or some good news to tell. While I am writing this the good old doctor has passed away, seventy-two years old.

One day several were brought in from a Wisconsin camp, and soon I was called to write the last letter home and send the keepsakes, for one of them. A day or two later I did the same thing for another, and as he gave me his name and address I said that another of the same name had died a few days before. He said it was his brother, and asked me to see that they were buried near so that his father could get their bodies. He gave me twenty-five dollars, and a nice gold watch to be sent home. He told me he was a member of the Baptist church, and had been superintendent of the Sunday-school. After speaking of his parents and how they would grieve for their two sons, he sang "Jesus, Lover of my Soul," and then prayed earnestly for his parents. The father came a day or two before his death, and he was buried beside his brother.

Sleep, brother soldiers, side by side;
To save this land you both have died;

Together in one grave you lie;
Together walk with God, on high.

A lady named Tarwater came from Missouri to see her sick husband and if possible take him home. She had left her two children with friends and was now entirely without means. Her husband died a week before her arrival, and when she found he was dead she broke down and was under the doctor's care for some time. One of the boys collected fifteen dollars for her and I secured her transportation to St. Louis, and went to the boat with her.

One day a lot of men were brought in from the Red River country where they had been with Banks. They were on a boat coming north and bought some milk at a farm house where the boat stopped. They had a feast of mush and milk and all ate quite heartily; soon after they were all sick, and one of the doctors died. The milk had been purposely poisoned.

So far we had never seen any commissioned nurses. I hoped they would come, for I wanted to go home. Generals Logan, McPherson and others said we had the best kept hospital they had seen. Mrs. Governor Harvey was here trying to get furloughs for some who could not get well unless sent North, but it was hard to get the doctors to see that it was the quickest way to get them back into their regiments. One boy who had been very low gained very rapidly when told that he could go home, but when it was time to take them to the boat, it was found that he had no furlough. He was up and dressed, but he sank back on his cot and never rallied again, but died the same day.

The boys at the hospital conducted a lyceum with regular meetings; it was conducted by privates and Dr. French attended often. They gave a festival to raise funds for a library—the first soldiers' library in the country, if not in the world. Many of the boys spent their evenings there, reading or writing to friends, instead of playing cards.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTRABANDS IN VICKSBURG.

Colored people from all parts of the South had been coming to Vicksburg from the time of my first arrival there; but now that the Union armies had penetrated the South in all directions, increased numbers were moving westward and northward.

Most of the time until now I had been so busy with the soldiers that I had not been able to give much attention to anything else.

About this time I had as a servant a beautiful girl with auburn hair, large blue eyes and a perfect form, that would have served for a French model. She had with her her little daughter, a lovely child with yellow curls, blue eyes and a pink complexion. One would hardly suspect that there was in either a drop of negro blood; but the young woman and her child had both been slaves and were only liberated by Lincoln's emancipation proclamation, and had come to Vicksburg from Red River, after Banks went there.

I was interested in her history as she told it to me. She said her mother was so nearly white that she

was often taken for a white woman, but was the slave of a man who had a white wife and three pretty daughters who all spent the summers in the North. During their absence this white slave was compelled to serve as her master's wife, and the young woman now with me was his child. When this girl was ten years old her slave mother died and then the girl was forced to take her place as the master's wife, and by him she had two children—this little girl here with her, and a boy whom the master sold to a woman in New Orleans before he was two years old. He wanted to sell the little girl, too, but his lawful wife would not let him separate her from her child-mother, who was only thirteen years older than her own child. The young woman was very intelligent, and could converse very fluently. She herself would have been sold for five thousand dollars, to be the "wife" of another man, but the "Missis" would not let her go, as she did all the family sewing. She said she knew the name of the woman who had bought her little boy, and was going to get him as soon as possible.

This was only one of thousands of cases when fathers sold their own flesh and blood, some of whom were far more intelligent, and all of them far more loyal than any of the white refugees who drew regular rations from the Government, while the blacks were mostly left to take care of themselves. They were always ready to do anything for "Marse Linkum," who was to them the whole United States Government; while most of the white refugees were very ignorant and many of them wholly disloyal. One old woman who lived near one of our camps in

Missouri had never seen nor even heard of a Union flag. She asked what it was; said it was "mighty purty," and would make a fine *bed quilt*, and wanted to know if our boys had any to *sell*. Every negro in the South knew all about the flag. These same white refugees who were being fed by the Government were many of them rank rebels, and many of them remain so to this day.

We had an ebony-black cook who had been a slave in Alabama. She was tall and wiry; and had been a field hand picking cotton in the summer and a cook in the winter. In the cotton field she had a mate who was consumptive and could not pick her regular stint of cotton; and she was often whipped and then of course could not do so well and that brought more whippings. This woman would help her on the sly, and then when some of the other slaves told of it both were whipped. She said: "Massa took me to a yard where the stocks were—a place just big enough to let me in. I had to take off all my clothes to my waist, and he tied my hands behind me, and tied my legs below my knees, and sent a man to give me twenty-five lashes. I begged them not to do it, but it did no good; they left me standing there all that cold night, with the blood running down my back. In the night I had a baby. You will think I was wicked, but I stepped on that baby and stood on it until I knew it was dead. I would not let it live to be a slave and be whipped as I had been. I had never been told that there was a God; but I hope He will forgive me."

The poor woman's body and limbs were one mass of welts as thick as one's finger!

About the last of June the hospitals were all cleared and the convalescents sent North. We received an invitation to spend the Fourth of July at a big dinner on Jeff. Davis's old plantation a few miles below Vicksburg. Some one had taken the place and put a large number of negroes there to raise cotton. So we chartered a boat and at about seven o'clock in the morning steamed down to the old traitor's place. I would have liked to see the old chap viewing us—about a hundred and nearly all soldiers—tramping about his grounds, and some of his own former slaves cooking our dinner! I have no doubt he would have felt very much as he did when he was caught in petticoats. We had with us Miss Guest, who wrote and read a beautiful poem; and Mrs. Francis D. Gage, who made a rousing speech, saying that she had five sons in the army and if she had five more they should all go. Some of the doctors made addresses and the colored folks sang songs and we had a good time, and got back in time to attend to the sick in the hospital.

About a week later there was to be the execution of a negro soldier who had killed his roommate. The scaffold was about half a mile from the hospital and Mrs. Eberhart, Mrs. Oberley and myself took an ambulance to go out and witness the execution. But when we came in sight of the scaffold and saw the man led along, our hearts failed and we had to turn and look away. It was hard enough to see men die a natural death, but this was too hard.

General John A. Logan was ordered to go to Chattanooga, and had to leave his command here. We had all become very much attached to him, for

he often visited the hospital; and his men always loved him. When he drew up his division in a hollow square and made his last address to them, there were tears in many eyes. Mrs. Oberley and I were in an ambulance near by and as he closed his address he turned his horse and came up to the ambulance. We had prepared a bouquet of choice flowers and as he received them he thanked us and said he would try to send them to Mary. We bade him good-byé with a promise to spend the evening with Dr. Goodbrake and the other physicians. That was the last time I saw General Logan until he took the stump for Grant, when he made an address here at my home, and I called on him at his hotel. He has joined his old comrades on the other side.

About four miles from Vicksburg was a place called "Magnolia Hall," or sometimes "Lovers' Lane." Some of the boys made a visit to the place, and invited us, the three ladies at the hospital, to accompany them. We were glad to get away from the sight of wounded men and breathe pure air again. On the way we passed through the most beautiful landscape, and for about two miles the road was lined on either side by large, beautiful magnolia trees, alternating with crepe myrtles, full of pink blossoms and giving a delightful perfume. The magnolias were very close together, and some of them twenty-five feet high, and the tops of magnolias and myrtles mingled. It was the most beautiful place I ever saw or ever expect to see. We drove into an elegant yard in the center of which was the house, built like most of the southern houses, quite plain but very large, and arranged for comfort.

The large windows extended to the floor and opened on the porch which surrounded the entire house. The place was being cared for by the former slaves of the owner, who said the massa was good to them and they did not care to leave him. There was an elegant grand piano and a large pier glass. One of the soldiers took his knife from his pocket and before I could stop him he threw it and shattered the glass in a dozen pieces. Some of them wanted to destroy the piano, but finally concluded to take it to the hospital. They took down all the window shades, very fine and expensive, and the next day they went back with a team and brought away the piano and curtains and other things. There were some musicians at the hospital and the boys enjoyed the piano very much. A day or two after I went into the convalescent quarters, and, to my astonishment, saw the lovely curtains on the ground in front of the beds, for rugs. I said it was too bad to use such nice curtains in that way, but they said that the owner was "an old rebel" and could get more if he wanted. They afterward gave them to me and I kept them many years. The boys made some pretty little mirrors from the pieces of pier glass from Magnolia Hall.

All the time soldiers were arriving and being sent on north. Most of them were from field hospitals, where they were not properly cared for, and they had to be sent here before they could go on. They were in very bad shape, and I never believed that half of them would recover. We had the reputation of sending north the cleanest loads of men that came from the hospitals. The men knew that the doctors

agreed with me that no man could leave until he was clean and had on clean clothes. When they arrived they were very filthy from neglect, and we had a number of colored men constantly at work washing the old clothes, which after being thoroughly cleaned, were used for later arrivals, as Uncle Sam's clothing was all of the same style.

In a box of sanitary goods from Massachusetts we found a pair of long blue stockings with the following lines pinned on them :

“Dear soldier on your lonely beat
May these blue stockings warm your feet,
And when from war and strife you part
May some fair knitter warm our heart.”

At one time I went to Memphis with a load of sick men, and as we left the boat General Sigel and his officers came up to bid me good bye, and handed me an envelope containing a fifty dollar bill. Money was often given me in this way, but I always spent it all for the boys.

Shortly after I went on the hospital boat, City of Memphis, to Cairo with a load of sick, among whom were several who had no money and very little to eat. The watch of which I have already told proved a friend again, and sold for forty-one dollars. It fell into the hands of a lieutenant, who gave it back, saying it would be of more use to me than to him. It brought me over two hundred dollars in all, every cent of which was spent for the boys. I have the watch yet and prize it as a keepsake.

One day, after all who could go north had been sent off, as I was passing a desolate piece of low ground I heard a groan, but seeing no one, was about to

pass on, when a voice called to me. I followed the sound and found a man lying beside some lumber. His name was Lee and he belonged to the Twentieth Illinois Infantry—Colonel Marsh's old regiment. He had been discharged from the hospital to go home to Urbana. He had no money and his clothes were very poor but clean. He was a mere skeleton, and had to lie down on his way to the quartermaster's to get his transportation northward. He was so weak he could hardly stand, but I got him up and secured a pass and gave him some food and five dollars and sent him on his way rejoicing.

On my way back from Cairo I stopped at Helena, Ark., and visited the field hospitals about a mile from town where several regiments were in camp, and there was plenty to do. Two ladies were at work there, and they wished to have me stay and help them. I had been matron of the Vicksburg hospital a year and three months, and wanted a change as I had worked very hard there, and as long as I remained the officers would not try to get anyone else. I had during that time drawn from the sanitary stores over four thousand dollars worth, and rendered a correct account. Everyone said it was a splendid record, but I wanted a rest and less care. So I concluded to stay a few days at least.

While walking among the tents I found a boy who had been shot the night before while on picket duty. He was propped up with pillows and was writing. I offered to write for him, as he seemed tired, but he told me he was writing his farewell to his mother. When he had finished he gave the paper to me to be sent to his mother, and also gave me

permission to copy what he had written. I do not know that they have ever been printed before. He only lived a few hours after he finished writing.

BENJAMIN WHITNEY'S FAREWELL TO HIS MOTHER.

"Do not cry, Mother darling, when you read what I have to say.
I write propped up with pillows, while life is ebbing away.
I was shot last night, on duty; I know you will almost rebel,
So I thought I'd write, dear Mother; it would seem more like
farewell.

And bitter thoughts have crossed my mind, as I lay here all alone
To think no cheering voice is near, no Mother's gentle tone.
And then it seemed so very hard, for it was but yesternight,
While out on duty I was blessed with many a vision bright.

I thought of home and Mary; and you were with us, too;
And tented plain and battle-field had faded from my view.
I felt once more your clinging arms, your kisses on my brow;
O! could I but recall them—how I would prize them now.

I had been hoping, all along, that I could strike a blow
For our country and her noble cause, but now I have to go.
And I have crushed all that, Mother, and laid me down to die,
As calmly as to slumber when loving ones are nigh.

Be tender with my Mary; I leave her in your care;
O! Mother how that wrings my heart—and she so young and
fair!

But I am growing weaker; my sight is growing dim;
I almost see the portals that open to let me in.
So good-by darlings, I will guard you where I now shall dwell.
Don't grieve, my darling Mother; Mary, my love, farewell."

It was night, and slowly from the tent they bore the soldier
brave:

And there, beneath the rich green sod, they laid him in his grave.
While many a manly cheek was pale, and tears were freely shed
O'er that young form, the patriot brave, now numbered with
the dead.

The fair young girl, with hopes all crushed, no hand to clasp
her own;

The Mother feels how great and sore her burden has become.
But far above such thoughts as these, they rise both firm and
brave;

He died,—but by his very death he helped our land to save.

CHAPTER IX.

MY FIRST TRIP TO NASHVILLE.

After staying a few days at Helena I met there Mother Bickerdike, who was on her way to Hamburg.

Soon after that I went to Nashville, and found there a very bad condition of things. General Sherman had taken all the available men and started for the sea. The men who were left were in very bad condition—poorly cared for, and without suitable food or clothing.

The officers left in command at Nashville were careful to see that they did not want supplies for *themselves*. In the mess where I ate there were six physicians and three women. The women had been sent there by the Sanitary Commission, and were very nice women, but were afraid to speak out. Our table was supplied with an abundance of everything to make army life endurable; but in the hospitals there was only bread, coffee, tea and a little meat. I found that the ward-masters were well fed, and I began to look about to see where the trouble lay. I found that the sanitary agent delivered all that the physicians ordered, but they did not go in person for their supplies, but sent written orders by the ward-masters, who, instead of using the things for the patients, took out a supply for themselves and sent the rest to the physicians' mess. When I found how things were going I reported the facts to the surgeon-in-chief, and took pains to let the doctors know that they were robbing the sick men.

One evening after the tables were set I went in and took from the officers' table a nice plate of butter, a large plate of crackers and a dish of canned peaches and another of pickles, and took them to the wards and gave them to the sick men. One poor fellow said: "You stay with us; we don't get such things from anybody else." Of course the doctors were very angry. They asked me what business I had there anyway, and said they had all the help they wanted without me and could run the hospital themselves without me. I told them that it was plain they were running the hospital, and I did not propose to help them; but they should not rob the boys while I could prevent it, and that was just what I was there for—to see how much rascality was going on. I told them they had the other women so completely under their own control that they dared not speak, but I was not afraid to tell the truth and should do it. It does a great deal of good, sometimes, to let the doctors know that you are not afraid to give them a little wholesome advice. I found that the agent was as deeply involved as any of them, and a new agent was soon placed there, and things went on better. In some of the hospitals the Christian Commission had cook houses with Northern women in charge, and there the boys were well provided for. The doctors had little use for me, but that made little difference to me. I was not there to look after their comfort unless they were sick, and I knew the Northern women did not send supplies down there for well officers, but for the sick privates. If there had been enough for all nobody would have objected; but the doctors were

well paid and could buy their own luxuries, while the privates got almost nothing, and were sometimes without a cent of pay for six months.

New Year's day was fast approaching, and I gladly accepted a very urgent invitation to spend the holidays in Vicksburg, as the boys were making great preparations. General Grant himself could not have received a more cordial welcome than the boys gave me. There had been some changes, but most of those I left were still there. New Year's morning, they gave me a nice roll of money; the doctors gave me a solid silver cream pitcher; and the ward-masters gave me a lovely album, with the pictures of most of them, and their autographs. In the afternoon, General Washburne and Doctor Goodbrake called, and each gave me his photograph and autograph. I value these highly, as both have gone to their rest.

About this time, we learned that Sherman had nearly reached the sea; we hoped that Grant would be able to compel Lee to surrender, and we knew that then we could all go home; but the time had not come. However, we were all thankful because the boys in the hospital were improving; so it was a "Happy New Year" after all.

After about a week in Vicksburg, I went to Helena, Arkansas, where there was greater need of work than at Vicksburg. Soon after my arrival we received a box of supplies from Massachusetts. It was always a real treat to get a box from there. When the box was unpacked, we found a shirt, with the front beautifully embroidered, and sent "to the soldier who never stole nor drank liquor." I knew

such a soldier, and he received the shirt. His name was Harry Pond, then with a Chicago battery, and now a commission merchant on South Water street, Chicago. The embroidery was as follows:

TO THE BOY WHO DON'T DRINK, STEAL OR LIE.

Soldier, brave, will it brighten the day,
And shorten the march on the weary way,
To know that at home the loving and true
Are knitting and sewing and praying for you?

Soft are their voices when speaking your name;
Proud is their glory when hearing your fame;
And the gladdest hours of their lives will be
When they greet you after the victory.

Harry was delighted with the shirt, and seemed to feel unworthy of it, but I had known him long before the war, and knew that he deserved it.

Several new arrivals were brought to the hospital—some of them badly wounded. Some of our boys had been out foraging and ventured too far when a party of bushwhackers fired on them from a hill-top, wounding several. Then they turned and ran, but our boys followed and captured six, who were sent North to be exchanged. One of our men had to have his arm amputated near the shoulder.

The daily routine of life at the hospital seldom varied; new arrivals, and shipments northward. The boys often became very impatient to have the war end; or else to get well so they could go back and help whip the rebels: It was very seldom that one wanted to go home.

There were a good many Iowa boys in the hospital, and as I would carry them delicacies they would say: "Mother, if ever you come to want in your old age, you just put a piece in an Iowa paper and we will all chip in and you shall never want."

The spring was approaching, and the sick men began to long for some old-fashioned "greens." I said nothing to the doctors, but went out a little way from the hospital and got a nice lot, had them carefully cooked, and then went through the wards and gave each man a good spoonful. You should have seen them! They said: "That is what we want; they go to the right spot; give us some more; those will cure us." The doctors never knew it, and they would have hooted at the idea of giving greens to such sick men.

There were two men who had been in the hospital for five months, and they were just walking skeletons; barely alive, but not able to be sent North. When I bade them good night, I never expected to see them alive the next day. One of them said he wanted a piece of pickle, and was sure it would not hurt him. The other boys joined in, and they all begged for pickles. I knew the doctors would be very angry if I should make them worse by giving them pickles; but a number of them could not live anyway in the condition they were in, and I did not believe that a little pickle would hasten their death. So I got a napkin full of pickles and slipped into the ward and gave each man a good piece, trembling lest I should be doing harm. The next morning I accompanied the doctors in their rounds to prevent the boys from exposing me in case any bad results should follow. But Dr. Varney said: "Why, boys, you are better than you have been for a month! The *warm weather* will bring you out all right so you can go North!" I did not tell the doctor—but I gave the boys more pickles.

Most of our officers were good men, and they did the best they could for the boys, but some of them abused their authority. I knew a good many cases of extreme cruelty to the men; but one or two will suffice.

There was with us at the hospital a Mrs. Lincoln who was waiting to go to her husband. One beautiful morning she and I went out for a walk. As we went out over the hills we came to a grove of small trees and sat down on the grass to rest. As we were talking I thought I heard a groan. I listened and soon I heard it again, very faintly. I went in the direction of the sound, and to my astonishment I saw a soldier—yes a soldier!—tied up by his thumbs and drawn up so that his toes only just touched the ground! Two large blocks of wood were forced into his mouth so tight that his jaws were nearly unjointed. His weight had pulled his thumbs out of joint, and his tongue was swollen so that he could not speak. Mrs. Lincoln was frightened, and said she would go back and tell the doctors. I told her to stay there and I would attend to the poor fellow. I took my knife from my pocket and cut the cord and the man fell to the ground; he could not stand at all. Then I untied his thumbs, and with his help we soon got the blocks out of his mouth. We found a spring and tin cup near by, and got him some water to drink, and bathed his hands, and after a long time he could speak. As I sat by him two men, one of them a lieutenant, came along. The lieutenant took in the situation at a glance, and I knew by his angry looks that he was the man who had ordered the soldier punished. As he approached he

said: "What right have you to interfere with military discipline?" I was so indignant that I did not wait for choice words. I said: "Shoot your discipline! What has this man done that he should be abused beyond human endurance!" The lieutenant said the man had *refused to salute him as his superior officer*, and he was punished for that! Then he went on to say that he would have me arrested for disobeying military rules and interfering with military discipline. When he had finished his royal chastisement I said: "I have less respect for you than I have for a *rebel*; and I would hang you if I could! I am here to relieve the sufferings of our Union soldiers, and I intend to do it; and whenever I find a man abused like this I shall instantly release him, and do all I can for him. If you want to have me arrested, *just you do it*; I think you will have your hands full. I have been in the army long enough to know that you are liable to be court-martialed and reduced to the ranks, where you ought to be! You are not fit to command a dog!" I learned afterward that they both belonged to the same Wisconsin regiment, and had been school-mates. I know many cases where privates who were so abused swore to be revenged, and often carried it out. More than one officer has been shot in battle by his own men whom he had tortured.

About two weeks later Mrs. Governor Harvey and I were out walking and turned into a secluded place about half a mile from the hospital and sat down on a log to chat. Soon we noticed a little way off a man sitting on the ground with his hands tied behind him and his feet tied so he could not move

them, and in his mouth was something like a bow with both ends pushed in so they pushed his cheeks out terribly. He could not speak nor move his tongue and the water was running from his mouth. Mrs. Harvey wanted to go to the house for some of the men, and started off a little ways; but I knew that none of the men would dare to interfere. In less time than it has taken you to read this the man was free; the only difficulty was in getting the bow out of his mouth. In about two hours three men in battery uniforms came in, and as I knew very well what they were after, I went straight up to them. They said: "Are you the woman who is releasing privates who are punished for misconduct? If you are we demand that you shall be at once dismissed from this place." "Yes," I said, "I am the very woman you are after. You are quite welcome to my services. And if you are punishing any more men in these barbarous ways just let me know and I will go at any time and release them. As for having me dismissed, you will not find anybody about here who has any authority to dismiss me, for I am not hired nor paid by anybody. Now, I advise you to go back to your quarters, where you belong, and treat your men in a human way and you will not be under any more obligations to me." They left me then, but went to the doctors and demanded that I should be sent away. But the doctors said I was the most efficient woman they had ever had in the hospital work, and was indispensable, as I had not only cared for the sick, but had detected frauds in the administration, particularly in one case where the orderly had stolen several hundred pounds of

rations from the convalescent camp every month and sold the goods to citizens. They got no comfort from that source. I never had a word with any doctor or patient at Helena. The man whom I released was from an Ohio battery. I still have his picture. He was always very grateful to me for my kindness to him.

One day a very sick patient was brought in from the camp. The doctors thought he was coming down with typhoid fever. When I went through the ward I noticed a peculiar odor, and knew that the man had small-pox. I reported to the doctor, who questioned him as to his having been exposed, but he did not know. The next day he was burning with fever, but the doctors would not believe me until I called in the head surgeon and brushed back the man's hair and showed a number of red pimples. Then they had a very elaborate examination and finally pronounced it a case of genuine small-pox. There were about a hundred men in the hospital and they were terribly frightened. The man was taken to the pest-house, in the woods, but never recovered. I did not wonder when I visited the place, for it was a wretched place. There were about twelve patients there, and they had no sort of proper care nor suitable food. Three men had died within two weeks. As soon as possible I sent them a lot of canned fruit and a half-barrel of crackers.

CHAPTER X.

ISLAND NO. 10—VICKSBURG — DEVIL'S BLUFF—LITTLE
ROCK.

Helena was not the only place where the colored people gathered. A great many were sent to other places.

About this time Island No. 10 was one of the points where there were swarms of them. I had received several large boxes of goods especially for the colored people; so I sent them on to Island No. 10, and soon after went there myself.

I found a few teachers there, and a great number of the worst and most wretched beings I ever saw. Many of the women wore nothing but an old coffee sack fastened around the waist with a drawstring; and men perfectly naked. The teachers were delighted that the poor things could be made more decent and comfortable, and we spent five days distributing the goods. Many were unprovided for, but the boxes were empty.

As I was starting back an old man came to me and gave me a roll of twenty dollars in Confederate scrips to buy him a pair of shoes. I took the money, although it would not buy shoes in Union territory. But as I was telling the story to some of the boat passengers, one gentleman offered to give me enough good money to buy a good pair of shoes, in exchange. So the old man got his shoes.

Mr. Shepherd, of Chicago, gave a letter to me certifying to my efficiency, and requesting the department to furnish me transportation and supplies, but I

never needed to use it, for I was so well known that I could go anywhere and get anything I needed. Other officers also gave me similar letters at different times.

All this time I kept a little oversight of things at the Vicksburg hospital. I had resigned the position of matron, but I still felt at home there, and a sort of right to oversee. I was there whenever I was not needed elsewhere. Mrs. Eberhart was very kind-hearted and did all she could, but her manner was a little reserved, and she did not know just how to make the sick most comfortable in little ways. It requires a special knack to make a sick man comfortable. The boys never liked a man for a nurse. A man goes into the ward in the morning and he says: "Well, boys, I see you haven't all kicked the bucket!" Then he goes on to the next ward and says: "Well, boys, you are all here yet, I thought some of you would have passed in your checks before this!" Then to another ward: "Why, I expected to see some of your toes turned up this morning!" That sort of talk was not particularly *cheering* to a sick man. Now, a woman goes into the ward with a pleasant face and takes each one by the hand and says: "Good morning! How do you feel this morning? You are looking better! Did you have something good for breakfast? Keep up good courage! You will soon be able to go home." It made a great difference with their feelings who was the first to greet them in the morning. It was the duty of the ward-master to go through the wards every morning to see that all were bathed and had breakfast, and their beds changed if necessary. Then the convalescents

would go to the doctor's office for examination and medicine; and about half-past ten o'clock the doctors made the round of the wards; but for more than a year I always went to the wards first in the morning and gave the boys a word of cheer. Even at home, among friends and in pleasant surroundings, the sick need to be cheered and encouraged; how much more here, away from friends, on rough cots laid in rows as near together as possible, and the dead being daily or hourly carried out.

When I resigned as matron I told the boys I should only come occasionally to see them, but they protested against my leaving for good, and to gratify them I called it home there, and from the fourth of July, 1863, till we all came home, I was there very often. There was a great deal of hardship and many trying scenes, but I was given strength according to the work. It seemed as if there was no end to the work. Just back of Vicksburg there was a large army encamped, and there were also daily arrivals by boat from the Yazoo. I often went down to and from the Yazoo on the boats, to care for any especially bad cases.

About the last of August on one of my trips to the Yazoo, there came to us a Mrs. Eliot, who had been sent for by the physician—a resident of the town where she lived—to come and care for her son who was dangerously ill with typhoid fever. She had been there about three weeks. One day the boys brought in some luscious blackberries. We thought we would like some more; so Mrs. Eliot and I started out one day with a soldier to show us the way. We were walking leisurely along when I

stepped up on a log about as big as a man's leg. The log began to move, but I thought it was only rolling, so I kept my balance and stood still. But the thing kept moving, and began to move *toward the river*. I did not wait to investigate, but stepped off that *log* about as lively as possible, and it kept on and tumbled into the river, and I began to realize I had been standing on an *alligator* about six or seven feet long. Mrs. Eliot was so frightened she could not walk alone.

It was a terrible place on the Yazoo. The mosquitoes would bite through anything, and there was no way to avoid them. We took back six sick men to Vicksburg, and I told Mrs. Eliot to bring her son as soon as he could stand the trip. During my absence Chaplain and Mrs. Eberhart had taken a trip to Paw Paw Island to see what the condition of the colored people was there ; so I had the entire care of the men for a while.

A large quantity of supplies for the refugees had been received from the North, and on the return of Mr. and Mrs. Eberhart I took a lot of these supplies and went to Devil's Bluff where there was a large number of colored people camped, and in great suffering.

After distributing these supplies I went to Little Rock, where there were a great many blacks and also a lot of "white trash" from western Tennessee. These poor whites were the most wretched creatures I ever saw. They were landed from the boats on a low flat piece of muddy ground. I went one day with the quartermaster who had to register them as they arrived, in order to issue rations. There were

about two hundred people in this lot, most of them in rags, and with the most absurd lot of stuff that they had brought along—beds, broken chairs, pillows, saddles, harness, kettles, bundles of old clothes, baskets of live geese, even young calves. They used the negro dialect so that we could hardly understand them. The quartermaster asked one woman her name and she told him, "Sall." "Have you a husband?" "Yes." "What is his name?" "John." "What is his other name?" "Hain't got no other name." "How many children have you?" "Dunno; ask John." So John was asked and he called off the names till there were nine. "Is this your wife?" "Yes." John told the quartermaster his "other name," and the quartermaster turned to the woman again: "If that is John's name, it must be yours, too." "I 'spect so, but I never thought on't afore." "How old is your big girl?" "Dunno; she was born in corn-huskin' time." Many of them did not know their names; few of them knew their own ages; most of them could not read or write; and they did not know how to do a single thing except to hunt game. The blacks were far more intelligent than these poor whites. Among this lot were half a dozen clay-eaters. They were as white as paper, and could not get along without their clay. I saw boys seventeen years old begging to go to the hills to dig clay. It was not as good as they got in Tennessee, but they ate it greedily. It is probable that there are now no poor whites in the South so utterly ignorant as these were. Their surroundings have changed and they have become better educated.

CHAPTER XI.

SECOND PERIOD OF WORK IN LITTLE ROCK—REMINISCENCES.

Here at Little Rock, as at other places, things were being badly managed in the sanitary department. Plenty of supplies were received, but the doctor in charge had a large part of them sent to a sutler's tent. The most that the convalescents got was a little bean soup with hard tack and crackers. If the boys wanted anything more they had to buy it from the sutler.

When I saw this going on I began to investigate. The boys were warned that if they reported to me they could not even buy any more; but I found out the facts, and soon had the general in command going with me on a round of inspection. The doctor who was running the sutler's tent was allowed to resign to escape being discharged in disgrace. We went to the kitchen and the general tasted the stuff they called bean soup, and took matters in hand so that very soon there was a different state of things. After a time the Sanitary Commission got a steam cooking plant in operation here and things went on better.

About two weeks I spent in writing letters and mending clothes. The boys always offered to pay me, but I never took a cent of pay for anything I did for them. I could have made thousands of dollars; some did, but I was not there to make money. I was constantly spending my own money for delicacies, transportation northward and other necessities which the boys could not buy themselves.

A number of the men here were wholly unfit for further duty. Some had rheumatism so bad they could scarcely move. I secured the discharge of several such, but it required several days, for it was hard to make the officers understand that they could be better cared for at home, and with no further cost to the Government.

Occasionally there would be a case of deception. The only one that ever came under my own observation was at Vicksburg, where a man who was so badly off he had to be turned in bed, and lost his appetite. He could sometimes move about with crutches, but sat in a big chair most of the time groaning with pain. Finally he was discharged by the head surgeon, and was carried in a chair on board one of the boats going to Cairo. Some of the boys bade him good-bye, and as the boat pulled out into the stream he jumped up, gave a shout, and threw his crutches into the river, saying: "Good bye; you have served me well, I'm going home. Good-bye boys, South, army and crutches."

Not one of the five doctors had ever suspected he was an imposter. Doctors don't know everything.

Some of the colored people brought in two large buckets of blackberries one day, which I bought for a dollar. At tea-time I dished them out so that each man would have a nice saucerful. The nurse who took them in on a tray reported that there were two short. I knew better; so I went into the ward and went to each cot and raised the cover. At last I came to an Irishman's cot and was about to raise the cover, when he said: "I heves 'em, be jabbers.

They loked so good I loike to ate two dishes; they won't hurt a feller." "Well," said I, "you have some one's else dish. I bought those berries with my own money, and there are just enough to go around." He looked across the room and said: "Mike, you moight as well confiss; Mither'l find 'em." So the other fellow pulled out his second dish. I had to scold them for trying to deceive me, but in my heart I could not really blame them much.

Sometimes after the boys were paid off they would lose their money, and there was not much doubt that the attendants took it. They soon got in the way of sending the money home, and after the paymaster's visits, I would go from one to another and write letters and send their money home.

One fine-looking young man sent all his money, \$36, to his young wife, who had a babe about three months old. He wanted very much to see the baby. He did not improve very rapidly and after awhile he ceased to get any news from home. One day a letter came from the postmaster of the town in Kansas where they lived, saying that the wife had died the day after the letter and money came, and that the child was with a neighbor, and the money would be held for his order. The poor fellow read only half the letter and turned away. I never saw such grief. He only lived two or three days. I could do nothing for him. I wrote the postmaster of his death and that was all I could do.

I have seen soldiers in all possible circumstances, and noted their loyalty; I have seen their blood stain the battle-field and the green grass grow above

their graves, and all my association with them made me like them better.

We were compelled to see and hear a great deal of treason from the rebel prisoners and sympathizers we met. Some of the prisoners were really loyal, but compelled to serve in the rebel army; but most of them were very bitter. If a Union prisoner had talked as freely as these rebels did to us, he would have been hung at once. And many of the rebels still think and talk treason. We were specially annoyed on the boats, where we were thrown in contact with traitors who were going back and forth.

At Cairo in 1862 or 1863, a boat arrived with some creatures in female dress who were rather suspicious. One of them was arrested. She had claimed to be the wife of a rebel captain, then of a Union major, then somebody else, and finally did not know whose wife she was. She was put in my charge with instructions to search her. On her person were found letters from doctors and generals in the rebel army, with directions for the purchase of large quantities of medicines in the North, and a money belt containing several thousand dollars in gold and a large roll of greenbacks with which to buy medicines in St. Louis. We could not confiscate the money, but the woman was kept a prisoner a long time and finally sent back to New Orleans, where she said she belonged.

With all the horrors of war there were some pleasant and romantic things. I recall that on one trip from Cairo I stopped a few days on the way and was invited to a wedding. A young lieutenant of cavalry had been engaged to a lady from Wisconsin.

She came to see him, and brought some supplies. He was unwilling to let her return until she became his wife. He procured a fine horse, and one morning as the regiment was drawn upon dress parade they rode up and the regiment formed a hollow square around them, and the chaplain of the Twenty-second Illinois made them one. After congratulations they went to the hospital and had a good supper, and the next morning she left for her home.

Back in 1861, when I first went to Bird's Point, one of the pickets in jumping off a stump discharged his gun and shot his forefinger, nearly severing it. He came into quarters bellowing as if he had lost a leg. Surgeon Goodbrake had gone over the river to Cairo. So I told the boy I could attend to it, and I took the instruments and took off the finger at the middle joint. When the doctor returned he pronounced it a good job. That was my first performance in surgery; but I had occasion many times afterward to assist in operations, until I believe I could have taken off an arm or a leg without flinching.

Some of our severe hardships have an amusing side as I remember them now. At the time we went from the old Shiloh church near Pittsburg Landing, to Corinth, a lieutenant's wife and I were on the top of wagons heavily loaded. Two ambulances were in the train with four or five sick men to be taken to the hospital at Corinth. We moved very slowly, and rain fell heavily all the time; of course we were wet through. At one o'clock we stopped to care for the sick and get dinner. There

was a house not far away where a cow was kept, and I got some milk for the sick. One of our men said we would have some hot biscuits for supper. The woman at the house did not know what biscuits were; so he told her to watch him make them. So he fried some pork to get shortening and then made some soda biscuit, rolling them with a bottle, as there was not a rolling pin to be found. He baked them in a "dutch oven" before the open fire. The woman had never seen them before. But that was in Tennessee and a quarter of a century ago. They have doubtless seen and eaten hot biscuits before now. After we started again we were tipped over in a low, marshy place, and finally camped for the night in the rain. The boys spread a lot of small branches on an elevated spot for the lieutenant's wife and me, and gave us rubber blankets—but we were thoroughly wet. We got the supper in a pouring rain. At four the next morning we were up and dried ourselves by a big fire, while we prepared something for the sick men's breakfast.

I did not endure these things for pleasure nor for glory nor gain. My time, efforts and much of my money was freely given without compensation, to relieve the sufferings of the soldiers. I would do the same thing again. With all the hardship there was never a word of disrespect. The boys always respected me, and in these later years they always seem to think I am entitled to a corner at their camp-fires.

CHAPTER XII.

VICKSBURG LETTER.

VICKSBURG, Miss., November 27, 1863.

Dear Loyalist: I suppose the national Thanksgiving day, with all its scenes, has come and gone. Around loaded tables families have gathered, but in how many homes the circle has been incomplete—here a husband or father, there a brother or son, a lover or friend or intimate acquaintance gone. Was there ever an old-fashioned family gathering where the circle was complete and none had been removed? And from the bounteous repast before them and the many comforts around them, how surely the thoughts have wandered far away to the scenes of war and the tented field; some seeing, in imagination, glorious victories and the return home, while others pictured to themselves the spot where lay the forms of brave ones who will always be missed—and Vicksburg, Champion Hill, Chickamauga and Gettysburg are sacred to the memory of the fallen. Although the day was a sad one to so many, yet it is a good thing to observe the day—a day of thanksgiving to the Supreme Ruler for mercies shown to our nation, and in which to recall at these family meetings the virtues of those who had given their lives for the republic.

My present purpose in sending you a few lines at this time is to tell you about our Thanksgiving dinner. Mrs. Newcomb, of Effingham, whose husband was our first orderly sergeant, and who was wounded at Fort Donelson and died a few days after, is now

matron of hospital No. 3, at this place. After laying her husband to rest she obeyed his wish and returned to the scenes of war to devote herself to the sick and wounded.

Several days before Thanksgiving she told us of her plans to have a dinner suitable for the sick and convalescent in the hospital. When General McPherson heard of her intention he sent her an order for one hundred dollars to be used in making purchases. Mrs. Newcomb is "Mother" to all the boys in the hospital, but she never forgets her Company G, and you may be sure we never forget her. So when she sent us an invitation to be present at the Thanksgiving dinner we were glad to accept.

As we approached the hospital we found many of the strongest of the convalescents gathered in groups under the lovely magnolias and the large overhanging evergreens talking of the coming dinner. The hospital is a large brick building, formerly a residence, and lately occupied as the headquarters of General Pemberton until we exchanged places with him and he went to the rear. Two weeks ago it contained two hundred and forty sick and wounded men, each on an iron cot; and about fifty assistants, cooks, nurses and surgeons. About fifty of the sick had been taken North on hospital boats. The grounds around the house are thickly set with evergreens and magnolias, water oaks and flowers, many of them still in bloom. There are two hot-houses with glass roofs and sides. It was once beautiful with delicate vines and tender plants, but our shot and shell have made sad havoc with the fragile roof and also with the arbor, the lattice and vines of which are much torn

and broken. The house itself has suffered severely from the iron hail. Every room is pierced, and only two iron mantels remain whole.

The dining-hall is a spacious room with four tables, set lengthwise, and two long side tables, all furnished with white china which Mrs. Newcomb has rented from a china store here. One table is arranged for the very sick, two for the convalescents, and one for the surgeons, chaplain, stewards, ward-masters and invited guests. The frescoed ceiling was decorated with cedar, and on the walls were a number of portraits and rare paintings.

At the sound of the second bell the soldiers fell in in two files and marched to their proper places. Surgeon French welcomed them to the feast, and Chaplain Eberhart asked divine blessing.

The supply of food was abundant and of a quality to tempt an epicure. The first course was excellent oyster soup; then baked and fricasseed chicken, sliced cold ham, roast beef, Irish and sweet potatoes, boiled tongue, bread and butter, custard, pie-plant, currant and mince pies and several kinds of cakes, jellies, tea and coffee and rich cream.

The tables were decorated with large vases filled with choice flowers—beautiful and fragrant even at this late season, here in this mild climate, while in the North we had been accustomed to see the flowers fade, forests drop their leaves, and snow mantle the earth before Thanksgiving.

The feast lasted nearly two hours. At the close Major French spoke a few stirring words to the soldiers, and bestowed a well-merited tribute of praise to the worthy matron who had arranged and

prepared the feast, and who so carefully attends to the wants of the sick and wounded.

The great Chicago fair was a grand success, as we all knew it would be if the ladies of the North roused themselves to united action. They do well to give what they can, to carry help and comfort to the sick soldier. How much better they do who, like Mrs. Newcomb, give their entire time to caring for the soldier amid the inconveniences, discomforts, perils and horrors of the battle-field, in hospitals, on boats and among the dying, dressing wounds, washing away blood, preparing limbs for amputation, arranging comfortable beds, preparing tempting food, administering remedies, writing letters, and soothing the discouraged and dying. The conditions are now unfavorable enough; but how much more so at first when Mrs. Newcomb began her work at Shiloh and Donelson.

A single incident will illustrate. On her way back to her home with her wounded husband, there was on the same boat, among several of Company G's boys, one with a shattered arm, which had not been washed nor dressed since the fight nine days before. The surgeons said the arm must come off. But Mrs. Newcomb went to the man and began bathing his arm and after getting it well cleaned she felt sure it could be saved. She would not let the surgeons remove it, and after several days it began to improve and they decided to let it alone. Several weeks after she met the same man on a train going North, with his arm rapidly recovering and he thanked her heartily for saving it for him.

Many a man remembers with gratitude her loving care. She has no commission and receives no pay. She has received some donations of money from officers, but she has spent it all and much of her own money besides, in caring for the sick.

Yours truly,

W. S. JOHNSON.

Co. G, Eleventh Illinois Infantry.

CHAPTER XIII.

REMINISCENCES—FREEDMEN.

When we first received news of President Lincoln's assassination we could not believe it.

The terrible conflict was nearly ended and Lincoln could soon say: "Well done, good and faithful servants."

The army stood still. Soldiers stood with bowed heads and streaming eyes; and when the order was given to *tie crepe* on the officers' swords they trembled, but still hoped it was not true. But when it was confirmed it was sad to see the grief of these strong men.

The colored people were most demonstrative. Their "Marse Linkum" was gone and they were in terror for fear they would have to go back to slavery.

We all knew that Grant was just as stubborn as when at Vicksburg; and there would be no letting up till Lee surrendered, if it took all of two summers. And Sherman was making trouble for the rebels in the South; they did not give him a warm welcome,

but he pushed on without waiting for an introduction.

I had spent nearly three years of constant labor among the soldiers, and now that the war was drawing to a close, I found that I had some spare time, especially after the Christian Commission had been so thoroughly organized. It made it seem almost like Sunday to think that we could change the beds Saturday morning and make each man comfortable before Sunday. I did not have enough to do to keep me busy.

I have told you of the great numbers and dilapidated condition of the colored people who swarmed after the army. Many of them were not fit to appear in public. I had in my possession several boxes of goods that had been sent for distribution among them, and so I took the boxes to Paw Paw Island where there were some two thousand, as nearly naked as Arabs. I got a tent and with the help of the teachers we soon had them in a presentable condition. They always called a dress a "coat." One pretty little girl, not half black, begged me to take her home with me. She was very sweet and cute, and I really would have liked to keep her.

All the goods were soon disposed of and I was about to go to Helena, when the news arrived that General Johnson had surrendered to Sherman, in North Carolina, and the old flag floated over Fort Sumpter again. Then we heard that Lee had surrendered to Grant, and we knew that the war was over.

It is impossible to describe the joy that took possession of the boys. All the well ones went to

Washington and had a grand review before the President and then were mustered out and went home. Many of them cared nothing for Andrew Johnson, for they doubted his loyalty. But the war was over and they were glad to go home. Yet how sad was the home-coming. How many hearts bled afresh as the wives and mothers saw others welcoming back friends while their own loved ones lay in Southern graves, many of them unmarked and unknown. As the Grand Army of the Republic annually decorates the soldiers' graves, let them not forget to lay a flower for the unknown dead.

A great many of the colored people who came inside the Union lines were sent to the different islands in the Mississippi river for protection and care.

Mr. Shepherd of Chicago, one of the managers of the Freedmen's Bureau, wished to have me take up their work among the blacks. I told him I must care for our soldiers first, but if I had any extra time I would gladly do all I could for the poor, starving, naked creatures. He sent me a number of boxes of goods for them, and I felt a great responsibility for their proper distribution.

This work brought me into contact with some of the best people I have ever met—the Friends, who were doing a great deal for the colored people. They always wanted to learn one's first name, and always used it in speaking to you.

On one of the boats down from Cairo I met twenty-three teachers on their way to different points where they were to work. Some went to Providence Lake, others to Milliken's Bend, Goodrich Landing, etc.

My first point was Goodrich Landing; then to Milliken's Bend. At both places we found a number very sick, and nothing for them to eat but the poorest kind of Government rations. Miss Guest was with me, and remained at Milliken's Bend to care for them as well as possible under the circumstances. Our army was camped at these points for a long time, and at Milliken's Bend many soldiers are buried. In fact from Milliken's Bend to Vicksburg is one vast cemetery where thousands of our dear boys await the resurrection.

Then a number of large boxes were taken to Lake Providence, where the Northern teachers were beginning the work of educating the colored youths. The little black urchins were greatly interested in this, to them, new business of school. They were as dirty as pigs, but the teachers were teaching them cleanliness as well as reading, and they were improving. They were a bright, intelligent, looking lot of children, eager to learn, and hard at study.

I was in a quandary as to what I ought to do. The soldiers at the hospitals did not want me to leave them, and thought they had the best right to me. Yet I felt it my duty to help these destitute creatures, so helpless and ignorant, and yet so ready to learn; for the colored people take to learning in some directions more quickly than the whites. They are specially fond of music; and are naturally very affectionate, particularly to those who help and befriend them.

In my association with the blacks, I found many an "Uncle Tom," who had had a "Lagree" for a master. I hate the word "hell," but if there is such a

place, surely the cruel slave-owner ought to be put there. When I have seen the backs and limbs of slaves covered with welts as large as one's finger, from a cat-o'-nine-tails, I have felt that hell is not bad enough for the perpetrators of such cruelties upon their own flesh and blood—for nearly half of the younger generation of slaves at the close of the war were mixtures of black and white. At Paw Paw Island, I saw girls of spotless skin, apparently pure Saxon, with auburn curls hanging in profusion around snowy necks, with large blue eyes, rosy cheeks and delicate hands, who had been slaves. One woman, almost as white as any Southern belle, had all the courtly dignity of the Southern race, mild and gentle in her manners, polite and obliging. Many of these white slaves had traveled in the North with the families of their masters, for most of them were house servants, and all were the children of their white masters.

The little steamer, Diligent, which took me back to Vicksburg, was full of refugees from the Red river. Many of them were sick, and there were a number of whites with them. Some of the colored boys were waiting on the white women who were sick as faithfully as if they were still slaves, and giving them ice to cool their fever. A young white man, about twenty, called out to one of the colored boys: "Give me a piece of ice!" The boy looked at him and said: "No! Yer don't git a bit from me; yer'd never give me a bit if I'd die. I know every one of yer. Yer all from Red river. Yer staid thar ez long ez yer could an' then yer came hyar fer Uncle Sam to take keer of, kase yer give all yer corn

ter the secesh an' all yer men is in the secesh army. Yer can't have nuffin I got. I reckon Uncle Sam got er place ter put yer ; if not, yer can crawl in some of the holes yer kin yuster stay in hyar." Then the boy turned to another white boy, about sixteen, and said : "Hello, Bill ; is yer hyar ? Where's your pony and rat-tail ? Reckon yer'd like ter lick the Yanks ! Whar on yarth d'yer git them ar Yank trousers—off 'n some dead Yank, I reckon. Don't make no sech on Red river. Now Bill, yer can't never lick me no mo', nohow. But I reckon I'll give yer a piece of ice, Bill, kase yer never lick niggers no mo', nohow." The white boy took the ice and the Southern pride sent the blood to his cheeks, but he finally said, in a very subdued tone : "Pete, you are better off than I am ; you have friends and I have none."

Many of the darkies would steal. But they had grown up as slaves, and they firmly believed that what belonged to their master was as much theirs as his, because they themselves were his. In that way stealing became a perfectly natural thing, and hardly a vice from their point of view. The poor whites were quite as bad, and much less trustworthy in other ways. I trusted the darkies with everything and not one of them proved false.

On the way to Little Rock I stopped at Devil's Bluff and left several large boxes of goods from Mrs. Fleckinger of Dayton, Ohio. They were taken in charge by an officer's wife, to be distributed. Here at Devil's Bluff was a girl who had swam the Tallehatch river three times to escape from her master, who was pursuing her with dogs. The river was

wide, rapid and dangerous, but she succeeded and finally reached the Union lines safely. There were thousands of colored people here. There was very little shelter for them, but they would fix up a place, sometimes by driving two crotched poles into the ground, laying a pole across the top in the crotches, and then throwing over it a carpet—usually confiscated from the house of the “Massa.” They would crawl under this tent as thick as they could lie. And some built huts covered with boughs and leaves or grass. These poor creatures had been most cruelly treated by their masters; and they always said that the Northern men were the hardest masters. Those who think the negro is hardly better than a brute do not know him. They love their children and suffer in being parted from them, as truly as a white person. They have the same affections; and they have souls to be saved. Some of them, even after two hundred years of slavery, with its cruelties, enforced ignorance, violent invasions of chastity, and humiliating contempt, have shown remarkable intellectual ability.

In Washington a few years ago I listened to an address by Senator Bruce, and it was as scholarly an address as I ever heard. He was a man of medium height and as black as possible, but dressed in exquisite taste, and as he entered the hall he was cordially greeted by the senators. He was perfectly gentlemanly in every respect. A short time before he had made a speech, and it had been charged that it had been written by Senator Hoar, of Massachusetts. On this occasion as he finished he turned to one side of the chamber and said: “Gen-

lemen, did Senator Hoar write this?" They deserved the rebuke, for some of them were traitors to the country's best good. My sympathies have always been with the colored people. I do not want them as bosom companions, any more than I do many white persons, and friendliness to them does not require it. But I am always ready to do them a kindness. I despise the Southern masters whose slaves were often their own flesh and blood, which they sold like cattle. They have found out that there is a just God who punished them for their wickedness.

In New Orleans I attended a Sunday school where there were over two thousand pupils, some old and gray and some very young; and of all shades from deep black to pure blond. Two boys were talking together and one said: "This ain't a bit like Sunday at Massa's, where we had to hitch up fer the white folks to go to Church, and then we went in the field and cut cane or picked cotton all day."

But I was not in the army to care for the negroes chiefly. My first work was for the Union soldiers; and there was need enough and opportunity enough for this work, to keep me busy until toward the close of the war, when the Christian and Sanitary Commission were established in nearly all the hospitals. But at Vicksburg, Helena and some other places they were not very successful, and I always found a warm welcome there, up to the very last of the war.

Through all the trying scenes of the four years I had an unchanging faith that God would sustain me, and that He would give victory to the right.

Some of the most painful experiences could not be adequately described. One case within my own observation was peculiarly painful. A nephew of the writer who was captured by the rebels was confined in Andersonville. He was so abused that his mind was unbalanced, and he would beg the boys to kill him; sometimes he tried to bury himself alive, and at other times he would purposely cross the "dead line," hoping that the guard would shoot him. He became so famished that he ate the flesh from his own arms as far as he could reach it; and finally died.

Lieutenant Thomas, of Company G Eleventh Illinois Infantry, was in Andersonville for months. He was obliged to take the clothes from dead soldiers, to cover his own nakedness. But through it all he kept his faith in God, and often said: "Though He *slay* me, yet will I trust in Him." He and about four hundred others were exchanged and sent home. They did not know what was being done, but were drawn up in line and marched out between two files of rebel guards, afraid to ask a single question for fear of being shot, but glad of any change, knowing that nothing could be worse than Andersonville. They were marched on board of a boat in squads, ragged, dirty, half-naked, barefooted, with old sacks tied around them for clothes, covered with vermin, and with hair and beard long, uncombed and matted. Some could hardly walk because of rheumatism; all were very weak from lack of food. They were packed on the boat under a flag of truce, but when they were well out on the ocean the flag of truce was hauled down and the old Stars and Stripes were run up. Then

they knew for the first time that they were going home. Three died from the shock of their sudden joy. All who could stand hurraed as loudly as their weakness permitted, at the sight of the old flag. Then they were taken below, bathed, cleaned and newly clothed.

There were thousands of similar cases in all the Southern prisons. The same malignant spirit that prompted these vicious cruelties still prevails in too many of the Southern people. They were subdued by powder and ball, but they are still rebels and always will be. But we can be patient, hoping that the next generation will have kindlier feelings, and we shall then be in reality one nation—no North, no South; one united land, under one flag, and one God over us all.

Most of the leading men of to-day were children when the war ended. They hardly realize the experiences of those who, in those dark days, deliberately and determinedly went forth to give their lives for the preservation of the integrity of the Union and a free land. The peaceful homes we enjoy to-day we owe to them. It is a grand thing to be an American. Let us never forget those who saved our liberties for us.

May God bless every old soldier while he remains upon earth, and at last take him to His bosom, is the sincere wish of one who saw much of his sufferings and hardships.

MARY A. NEWCOMB.

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